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Poetic Rhythm and Historical Account: The Portrait of Guru Nanak through Bhai Gurdas

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Bhai Gurdas (1551-1636) is the foremost theologian, historian, and poet of the Sikh religion. Chronologically and geographically, Bhai Gurdas was very close to Guru Nanak, and during his long life span, he not only witnessed but also participated in the origins and crystallisation of the Sikh faith in a very vital way. For example, it was in his hand that the first volume of the Guru Granth Sahib was written. His poetry *Varna Bhai Gurdas* (in Punjabi) *Kabitt Savaiyye* (in Braj) is accepted as part of the Sikh cannon, and is popularly sung in Sikh congregations. Bhai Gurdas's works blend art and reality together, here poetry and history do not remain bifurcated but rather fuse together lyrically and insightfully. My paper analyses Bhai Gurdas's first *Var*—how it poetically celebrates Guru Nanak as the founder of the Sikh tradition, and how it historically validates the independent origins of Sikhism.

The beautiful lyrics of Bhai Gurdas present a very significant portrait of Guru Nanak, the first prophet–mentor of the Sikh religion (1469–1539). In his compositions we discover a blending of art and reality; here poetry and history do not remain bifurcated, but fuse together and manifest the divine personality of Nanak. For almost five centuries the Sikh community has been nurtured on Bhai Gurdas' depiction of their founder. The vibrant images and metaphors underscore the divine dispensation of Guru Nanak; they illustrate him as the founder of a new and different religion. In poetic oeuvre, they unanimously validate the historical advent of the first Sikh Guru.

Yet, some of our modern objective historians deny the authenticity of Guru Nanak as the founder of the Sikh faith. In his groundbreaking *The Meaning and End of Religion*, W.C. Smith wrote: 'To call him

[Nanak] "the founder" of Sikhism, as is often done, is surely to misconstrue both him and history.'[1] W.H. McLeod, the renowned historian of Sikh religion, stated that the term 'founder' is not applicable to Guru Nanak. In *The Evolution of the Sikh Community* he says: 'The term "founder" is misleading, for it suggests that Guru Nanak originated not merely a group of followers but also a school of thought, or set of teachings.'[2] It is ironic that a historian who has analysed Guru Nanak's philosophy so closely, and presented it so eloquently,[3] would refuse to recognise that it creates a school of thought and a set of teachings. McLeod has withheld Nanak as an initiator, and instead presented the Sikh Guru expanding, reworking and reinterpreting the north Indian Sant tradition (which for him is a synthesis of Vaishnav Bhakti and Nath tradition, with a slight input from Sufism).[4] In recent years, McLeod has given more recognition to Guru Nanak's uniqueness. He recognises that Nanak's works are 'profoundly original' and that they eventually led to the Panth.[5] All this makes Guru Nanak a *unique* Sant, but still, a Sant all the same. Thus, McLeod continues to locate the Sikh Guru within the parameters of the north Indian Sant tradition. He uses splendid adjectives for Guru Nanak's poetry: 'There is in them an integrated and coherent system which no other Sant has produced; there is a clarity which no other Sant has equalled; and there is a beauty which no other Sant has matched....'[6] But the more McLeod attempts to praise Nanak as a Sant, the farther he remains from recognising him as an initiator of something new. McLeod's superlatives tend to latently reject Guru Nanak's role as a 'founder'.

Likewise, there are many other historians whose dismissal of Guru Nanak, in their varied ways, usually dismisses Sikhism as an independent tradition. The 'founder' is not accepted, and often the religion gets interpreted as a part of existing traditions. As a result, Sikhism has been seen as a sect of Hinduism or of Islam, or even as a syncretism of Hinduism and Islam. There are textbooks on world religions published in the West which insert Sikhism as a subsection of Hinduism, and some that carry chapters entitled 'Sikhism: A Study in Syncretism'.[7]

In contrast to such views, Bhai Gurdas' poetry celebrates Nanak as the founder and testifies to the independent origins of Sikhism. Bhai Gurdas was born in 1551, 12 years after the passing away of Guru Nanak, and lived to the ripe age of 85 years (d. 1636). His long lifespan made him the contemporary of five Sikh Gurus—Guru Angad (Nanak II) through Guru Hargobind (Nanak VI). Chronologically and geographically, Bhai Gurdas was very close to Guru Nanak and was himself an

important figure in early Sikh history. He was even closely related to the Gurus by blood. He was the son of Datar Chand Bhalla, a first cousin of Guru Amar Das (Nanak III). His mother, Bibi Jivani, was an active leader. She was assigned a seat of authority (*manji*) by the third Guru.[8] His name Gurdas (*das* or servant of the Guru), is indicative of his parents' close association with the Gurus. Furthermore, Bhai Gurdas' sister, Bibi Bhani, was married to Guru Ram Das (Nanak IV), and gave birth to Guru Arjan (Nanak V). Bhai Gurdas thus became the maternal uncle of Guru Arjan who provided the Sikhs their sacred space, the Harmandir (Golden Temple of modern day), and their sacred text, the Guru Granth. Guru Arjan chose Bhai Gurdas to be his special amanuensis: the first recension of the Sikh holy text installed in the inner chamber of the Harmandir on 16 August 1604, was, in fact, transcribed by Bhai Gurdas. Bhai Gurdas continued to be an important figure in the development of the Sikh tradition. When the Akal Takht was built during the period of Guru Hargobind (Nanak VI), Bhai Gurdas was assigned to manage the premises. A verse in *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth* vividly depicts Bhai Gurdas seated next to the Guru on the newly constructed colourful Akal Takht.[9] In the Guru's absence, Bhai Gurdas was appointed to all the spiritual duties of the Akal Takht.[10] Guru Hargobind also chose Bhai Gurdas to teach his young son Tegh Bahadur (who became the ninth Sikh Guru) classical texts and philosophies. Sikh literature maintains that at the death of his mother, Mata Gangaji, Guru Hargobind consulted Bhai Gurdas in selecting the most comforting verses from the Guru Granth.[11] Greatly honoured in Sikh learning and piety, it was Bhai Gurdas who was asked to offer the supplications (*ardas*) on that occasion. Bhai Gurdas not only witnessed but also participated in the origins and crystallisation of the Sikh faith in a very vital way. He is recognised by the Sikhs as their first apostle, historian and theologian. There is an excellent study of his life and works entitled *Bhai Gurdas: The First Interpreter of Sikhism*.[12] Another modern Sikh scholar views Bhai Gurdas 'as an integral link between the Gurus and their disciples...as the very first apostle who... educes an understanding of that [Sikh] community's faith and religious life during a very crucial phase of its development.'[13]

Surely, then, if we were to rely on Bhai Gurdas' point of view, would we not be, as claimed by some western scholars, 'misconstruing' both Guru Nanak and history?

This article seeks to comprehend the person and role of the first Sikh Guru through an analysis of the poetry of Bhai Gurdas. Bhai

Gurdas' poetry comprises two main forms: the *Vars* in Punjabi, and *Kabitt Savayye* in Braj.[14] The genre of *Var* is that of a heroic ode or ballad with several stanzas, and as a poetic technique used by Bhai Gurdas, it triumphs in presenting Sikh ideals, morals and society in a simple, bold and urgent way. Although the same cannot be said about the 666 *Kabitts* which were composed in the relatively difficult Braj language, the *Vars* instantly became very popular, and Sikhs began to memorise and quote them with regard to true belief and behaviour. Over the years, many of the *Vars* have also been put into melodious rhythms and have become an important part of *kirtan*, the Sikh devotional music. The opening of Stanza 27 (*Var 1*), '*Satigur Nanak pragatia miti dhundh jag chanan hoa...* (As Guru Nanak made his appearance, mist lifted light filling the world...)' is one of the most familiar verses in the Punjabi language. Bearing such evidence in mind, it is difficult to agree with McLeod that 'In practice, Bhai Gurdas, though deeply respected within the Panth, is seldom read or heard'.[15] Guru Arjan called the *Vars* the key (*kunji*) to the *Guru Granth*. Indeed, the *Vars* provide us with a key to comprehending Sikh scripture; they are a key to the treasury of Sikh knowledge. In this article, I will focus on Bhai Gurdas' first *Var*, for in it there is ample evidence to recover and remember the portrait of Guru Nanak as the founder of the Sikh tradition.

I

The very first stanza in the opening *Var* is known as the root/central (*mul*) verse, and it bears upon the entire text. It is very odd that McLeod would use Bhai Gurdas' first *Var* as a source for Guru Nanak's life, and yet pay no attention to its opening canto. Bhai Gurdas begins by paying homage to Guru Nanak:

namaskar gurdev ko satinam jis mantra sunaia

Homage to the Guru who revealed the Divine Word

At the very outset, Bhai Gurdas venerates the Guru for revealing the Divine Word. Literally, he expresses his homage as a bowing unto him. Bhai Gurdas uses 'namaskar', a common greeting to this very day, but in this case, a greeting addressed to a unique communicator—*jis mantra sunaia* (to one who brings forth the *mantra*). Grammatically, the verb 'to hear' is put in the causative form: he made us hear. Through the primal sense of hearing, the Divine Name is transmitted by Guru Nanak.

Sound reverberates into the inner being of a person, going from the conscious to the semi-conscious into the deeply unconscious realms. Clearly, Bhai Gurdas does not cast Guru Nanak in any historic lineage or mould. He is not seen as the disciple of any ancient or medieval saint; nor is Nanak perceived as an incarnation of any god or goddess, or of any angelic figure. Autonomous and independent, Guru Nanak is esteemed as the momentous bringer of an aural gift.

The mantra has no bearing on any previously existing traditions either. Without being esoteric or secretive, the mantra is simply the True and Eternal Name (*satnam*). Sikh tradition maintains that it was uttered by Nanak during his encounter with Divine Reality, and that it constitutes his revelatory experience.[16] Guru Nanak's epiphany of the Divine is encapsulated in the *mul mantra* which begins with 'Ikk Oan Kar, Sat Nam'. As the preamble to his *Japu*, it forms the opening of the *Guru Granth*, the Sikh scripture itself. Disclosed to all, this core formula of the Sikh faith asserts a singular, genderless, timeless and spaceless Reality. The numeral One at the outset of the *mul mantra* proclaims the existence as well as the utter unicity of the Sikh Ultimate Reality. This Ultimate Reality cannot be categorised under any gender specifications as god or goddess; it is simply called numeral 'One'. Space and time do not limit it in any way. It has no colour, no form. Nobody gave birth to it. Nobody brought it into existence. It has no fear. It has no enmity. Guru Nanak's 'Mantra of Sat Nam' is full of negations that characterise the absolute, unconditioned nature of Reality (*Sat*). It does not belong to any existing contexts; it does not hold on to any existing form of god or goddess; it does not claim inheritance to any established Hindu, Islamic, Buddhist or Jain precept or concept.

Rather, the mantra revealed by Guru Nanak is a radical departure from the past. Bhai Gurdas' verse celebrates its transformatory power:

bhavjal vichon kadhke mukati padarath mahi samaia
janam maran bhau katia sansa rog viyog mitaia

People were rescued from the flux of existence and ushered into the
    state of everlastingness
The fear of birth and death was ended, and all doubt, disease, and the
    pang of separation were erased.

Certainly, for Bhai Gurdas, the Divine Word brought forth by Guru Nanak is not a restatement, reinterpretation or reformulation; nowhere does he trace it to a school of thought or a set of teachings; neither does

he go searching for Vaishnava Bhakti, Nath or Sufi syntheses. Rather, for him, it is a new and profoundly liberating message which, dynamically directed towards the future, ends all kinds of fears, doubts, diseases and the pangs of separation. According to the Sikh poet, it is Guru Nanak who brings this new message, and it is his distinct message—and is his alone.

The result is that a new group of followers emerges:

charan gahe gurdev de sati sabad de mukat karaia
bhao bhagati gurpurab kari nam dan isnan driraia

They who have taken the Guru's shelter, they are imparted the True
    Word and are saved;
They have given themselves to loving devotion,
    to celebrating the Guru's festival,
    to cherishing the divine Name, and to charity and ablution.

Bhai Gurdas is obviously referring to a group of followers who become attached, literally, to the feet of Guru Nanak—'*charan gahe gurdev de*'. Once the seekers claim him as the Guru, they are imparted the True Word (*sati shabad*). A definite starting-point can be discerned here. The disciples begin to seek the Guru, and the Guru gives them the Word. The followers become imbued in loving devotion, and they begin to celebrate the Guru's festival. The term 'Gurpurab' is ambiguous, for it literally means the day of the Guru, and so it could denote the Guru's birthday or death anniversay or any other important event pertaining to his life. The overall import, however, is quite clear: for his followers, Guru Nanak's life begins to mark their history. Guru Nanak's way of life, with its stress on the Divine Name, charity and ablutions, becomes the paradigmatic mode of existence for his followers. A new pattern starting with Guru Nanak is identified.

It can be attributed to the poetic genius of Bhai Gurdas that in his opening stanza of the first *Var*, and that too in just eight lines, he significantly introduces Guru Nanak as the medium of Divine Revelation. The Revelation he brings is that of the Divine Word, ushering in a new and profoundly liberating experience.

The rest of the *Var* reiterates this thesis, and it beautifully illustrates Guru Nanak as the starting-point of a new spiritual and ethical mode of being. We obtain a sketch of Guru Nanak's life delineated in three phases which we will explore in depth while analysing the artistic splendours of Bhai Gurdas' portrayal. The first phase recounts Nanak's life prior to the Divine call in 1499; the second describes Nanak promulgating

the message he received; and, the third celebrates him as the founder of a new religious community. In all of them, Guru Nanak is portrayed against the infinite and transcendent backdrop. We see him as the axial point between a human figure and Divine Reality. Unfortunately however, this vital theme is simply ignored by McLeod. In his study of Guru Nanak, McLeod consults Bhai Gurdas, and especially his first *Var*, but in his keen search for biographical facts, including dates, names, places, itinerary and disciples, the core of Guru Nanak's personality is missed. Some of the most profound and poetically charged stanzas of Bhai Gurdas' first *Var* are dismissed by comments like 'their content is exclusively eulogistic',[17] or that they 'provide little more than eloquent panegyric'.[18] For our analysis, the very same stanzas of this first *Var* of Bhai Gurdas, to which McLeod devotes no more than a page-and-a-half, reveal Guru Nanak in a profoundly different light.

II

In the first phase, Bhai Gurdas describes Nanak practising intense devotion and asceticism:

> As Baba received Grace at the divine door, he devoted himself assiduously;
> He made sand and bitter plants his viands, pebbles and rocks his mattress.
>
> (Canto 24)

Bhai Gurdas often refers to Guru Nanak fondly as 'Baba', meaning father or an old gentleman—quite a common way of addressing elderly males in Punjabi villages. Sleeping on pebbles and rocks and eating but sand and bitter plants illustrate Nanak leaving the comforts of home and living rigorously in a desert-like region. But Bhai Gurdas' sequence manifests that Nanak is initially bestowed Grace at the divine door— '*bakhas dar*', and only then does he go on with his intense devotions. To begin with, then, Nanak is not an ordinary figure; he is endowed with an extraordinary divine potential. There is something *inherently* superior about Nanak which is different from his acquiring something. In the parlance of western Prophetic tradition, Guru Nanak would be the Chosen One.

In turn, the austerities that Nanak goes through lead to his winning the divine favour, to his reaching the Realm of Truth—'*sach khand*'.

Sikh philosophy enunciates' five stages of the human journey towards the Ultimate Reality, which constitute a passage leading to deeper and deeper levels of experience. They are attributed to Guru Nanak's experience and they form the finale to his *Japu*, the opening hymn in the *Guru Granth*. The first is *Dharam*, the Region of Duty, made up of the physical universe grounded in Time and Space. The second stage is that of *Gyan*, the Region of Knowledge, in which the individual becomes cognisant of the vastness of creation. The third is *Saram*, the Realm of Art, in which the human faculties and sensibilities are sharpened and refined. The fourth is *Karam*, the Region of Grace, described as the abode of those who cherish none other than the transcendent One. *Sach*, the realm of Truth, is the fifth and highest stage, but in fact, it is a return to Guru Nanak's primal mantra. Guru Nanak describes the 'Ikk Oan Kar' as 'Truth', and the fifth stage, the Realm of *Sach*, is the sphere of this Timeless One, the abode of the Formless Reality. As one enters into this fifth region, one is in the home of Ultimate Reality, at home with Ultimate Reality, that is, there is a total union between the human and the Divine. The benevolent glance of the Transcendent upon the Seekers, and their joyful vision of that One, come together in this realm. The individual partakes of the qualities of the True One. The finite individual becomes free from the cycle of migrations and transmigrations. As the microcosmic self is emancipated from the limitations of space, time, gender, and causality, there is the utter experience of joy.

According to Bhai Gurdas, Nanak had attained the Realm of Truth. Canto 24 continues to proclaim:

> Baba reached *Sach Khand*; he received the precious treasures—
>   the treasury of divine Name and humility.
> As Baba looked around he saw the earth ablaze.
> Without the Guru only darkness prevails
>   and all that is heard is the cry of pain.
> Baba came into the world and taught the world the lesson of dispassion.
> He set out to rescue the people.

In the Realm of Truth, Nanak receives the precious treasures—the Divine Name and humility. 'Name' is Nanak's personal experience of the Infinite. It is through the Name, the poetic voice, that Nanak hears the Transcendent One. It is thus the revelation of the Divine but it is also the way, the medium, the mode in which the Transcendent becomes

manifest to Nanak. At this exalted juncture, Nanak perceives the agony of the world around—sheer ignorance and wailing pain. The cause is attributed to the absence of an enlightener. Artistically, Bhai Gurdas establishes that Nanak in *Sach Khand* is charged with a mission, and is called upon to discharge it. He is made the 'Guru' (gu+ru), one who restrains ('ru') darkness ('gu'). Guruship is bestowed upon Nanak, and he sets out to rescue the people.

III

In the second phase of his life, we obtain a vivid picture of Guru Nanak as a young fellow taking up the ascetic role, wearing blue robes, carrying a medicant's staff, a bowl and a carpet. As Bhai Gurdas poetically goes on to record, Guru Nanak travels to deliver the message he received to people, visiting places important to people of different religious backgrounds. He goes to many different pilgrim spots and witnesses a variety of festivals and celebrations. Bhai Gurdas' portrayal of Guru Nanak's odysseys and travels for 20 years [1500–1520] is rather spirited and witty. We see Baba Nanak having interesting meetings with Hindus and Muslims, and we hear him engaged in fascinating discussions with people of other faiths.

One of his earlier dialogues takes place with a group of Siddhas. Siddhas, interchangeably known as Naths, were a significant yogic sect, prominent in northern India during the time of Guru Nanak. They traced their lineage to Lord Shiva, their first Nath (*adinath*), and besides Shaivite teachings, they incorporated techniques from Tantric Buddhism in their repertoire.[19] The scenario that Bhai Gurdas depicts is the top of Sumer mountain where the Siddhas with their leader Gorakhnath are known to reside after having obtained immortality through Hatha Yoga. Nanak climbs up and finds them sitting in a conclave.

> All the eighty-four adepts from Gorakh downward began to wonder in their hearts who could have thus reached their realm.
> 'Listen, young seeker', they spoke. 'What power do you possess which has brought you here?'
> 'I have but cherished the Supreme One; in love of the Supreme One have I sat meditating'.
> 'You must tell us at least your name, young seeker', spoke the Siddhas again.
> 'My name', said the Baba, 'is Nanak, revered Nathji; repetition of the

Divine Name my sole sustenance'.
The higher one ascends, the humbler one becomes.

(Canto 28)

Here we get a picture of Guru Nanak from the perspective of the Siddhas. They see him a naive young fellow climbing up to their mountain-top, and they wonder about the force which carries him up so high into their realm. We can almost trace in them the curiosity of modern scholars! They want to know which group he belongs to, and they wish to place him in some neat historical category. There is the urge to impose their own classifications onto the newcomer, which would only circumscribe his identity. From Guru Nanak's perspective, however, he is simply Nanak, whose sole identity is derived from the Supreme One: 'My name', said the Baba, 'is Nanak, revered Nath*ji*; repetition of the Divine Name my sole sustenance'. Politely and humbly, Nanak gives his name to their leader ('nath' means master; the suffix 'ji' is an additional form of courtesy). In this immediate response, Nanak situates himself within the context of his experience of the Divine Name. Repeatedly, Bhai Gurdas seems to make the point that it is Nanak's personal experience— his love for the Supreme One, and his cherishing and meditating over the True Name, that endows him with his individual personality and character. A modern view that Guru Nanak was 'unquestionably influenced by Kabir's thought'[20] is arrestingly reversed through Bhai Gurdas. Nanak is not handed anything from any ancestor or teacher, or school of thought; nor is he seen reworking any philosophical or spiritual legacy. According to Bhai Gurdas, whatever Nanak possessed was gained from his *own* intense love for the Supreme Reality.

The Siddhas then question the newcomer regarding the world of the mortals below:

'How goes it with the world of the mortals below, Nanak?' asked the
    Siddhas.
The Siddhas recognised that Nanak had descended in the Kaliyuga
    as the liberator.
'Nath*ji*', said the Baba, 'Truth is the moon and Delusion darkness,
Like on a moonless night, darkness engulfs the world
To search for the Light of Truth have I set out.
Evil has ensnared the earth, and the Bull of Righteousness below cries
    for help.
To the mountains have the Siddhas escaped,

Who, who will then save the world?

Devoid of insight, the ascetics sit smearing their bodies day and night with ashes'.

Without Guru, the enlightener, the entire world is doomed to drown.

(Canto 29)

Nanak's response is indeed sprightly: 'To the mountains have the Siddhas escaped; who, who will then save the world?' In juxtaposition to the Siddhas' resignation of the world of the mortals, Bhai Gurdas articulates Guru Nanak's metier: 'To search for the Light of Truth have I set out.' It is interesting to observe that the Siddhas also recognise the young Nanak as the liberator in the age of Kaliyuga (*sabh siddhi eh bujhia kali tarani Nanak avatara*). The metaphor of darkness is used: the world is densely dark, like a moonless night. But the recluses are oblivious of the situation. Having abandoned the world, they sit upon mountain-tops, smeared with ashes and absorbed in themselves day and night. In contrast, Guru Nanak actively sets out to search for the Truth. The Guru is one who seeks to bring illumination to society, for without the Guru, Bhai Gurdas maintains, the world is doomed to damnation.

In such instances, the way of the Siddhas or Naths is forthrightly spurned. Bhai Gurdas reports Guru Nanak's disdain for their attainment of immortality, and his disdain for their liberation from the world of the mortals below. He recounts how the Sikh Guru outrightly denounces them for smearing themselves with cremation ashes, a practice which represented their renunciation and celibacy. In light of Guru Nanak's harsh criticism of the Siddha ideology and rituals, how can we assume that the Guru belonged to or absorbed their tradition? Which of their principles did he choose to reinterpret or reformulate? The Siddhas surely were Guru Nanak's contemporaries, but centuries ago, Bhai Gurdas testifies the first Sikh Guru standing on his own—and not as their comrade or follower.

During Nanak's meeting with the Siddhas, we implicitly discover that the Sikh Guru is the initiator of a distinctive way of life and living. Bhai Gurdas narrates how the Siddhas wish to convert the young visitor to their own path: 'Such a yogi, they were convinced, would, in that dark age, shed lustre on their sect' (Canto 31). They give Nanak their bowl and send him to fetch some water. 'Pearls, diamonds and rubies in masses did the Baba see as he reached the pool. But infinite, un-paralleled was the holy Guru and none could indeed match his power',

extols Bhai Gurdas (Canto 31). The radiant Guru is not allured by the worldly treasures displayed by the Siddhas, and returning with the empty bowl he announces, 'There is no water at all in the pool, Nathji'. Bhai Gurdas sums up the unique style with which Guru Nanak wins over his contemporaries in the following verse from Canto 31:

sabadi jiti siddhi mandali kitosu apana panth nirala
kalijugi nanak namu sukhala

By the divine Word did the Guru becharm the Siddhas
    by the divine Word was his new religious order initiated
In Kaliyuga, the Divine Name revealed by Nanak, alone brings
    comfort.

Clearly, the precious jewels of the Siddhas are of no use in the age of darkness and ignorance. Nanak's revelation of the Divine Name is the only comfort, and it is through the Divine Word that he initiates his new religious order—*panth nirala*. Nanak does not imbibe the way of his predecessors, but starts a new and distinctive (*nirala*) religious order (*panth*) grounded in Divine Word (*sabad*) and Name (*namu*).

Bhai Gurdas' narrative depicts many historical events in the life of Guru Nanak. We see him going to Mecca and Baghdad where he catches the attention of the Muslims. Canto 32 reads:

Baba, the world preceptor, dressed himself in blue, and towards Mecca
    he now proceeded
The pilgrim's staff he carried in his hand,
The book under his arm and the ablution pot and the prayer mat [in
    the Islamic style].
He went and sat inside the mosque where the pilgrims had made their
    Hajj prayers.
At night the Baba lay down to sleep, his leg stretched out towards the Arch.
Jivan the caretaker struck him with his foot enquiring indignantly who
    dared to commit such sacrilege of sacrileges—
Sleeping so shamelessly with his feet turned towards God.
Clutching his legs he dragged him around.
But wonder of wonders he witnessed the Ka'bah moving too.
Amazed they vied with each other in making salutations to the Baba.

We picture Guru Nanak as a pilgrim, very much in the Muslim fashion. He visits the Ka'bah, the most sacred Islamic space. But here again,

as upon Mount Sumer, he ends up rejecting external formalities. The passage underscores Nanak's visit to Mecca, and his acceptance and veneration by people of another faith. The next canto begins with Muslim scholars, the Qazis and Mullahs, flocking to Guru Nanak and asking him questions regarding true religion. Clearly, the 'foreigner' has succeeded in winning esteem in a faraway land.

Canto 35 recounts Guru Nanak heading in the direction of Baghdad. He is accompanied by his Muslim companion Mardana, the *rebaba* player. They make a stopover outside of the city, and in the early morning, their holy chants imbue the entire city with profound silence. Once again, Bhai Gurdas shows how Guru Nanak's spirituality and devotion impress upon the residents of this Islamic area. Here he depicts Guru Nanak in the image of the Timeless One—'*baba akal rup*'. The passage begins with:

phiri baba gaia baghdad no bahar jae kia asthana
ikk baba akal rup duja rababi mardana

Baba, the revered one, then went in the direction of Baghdad
    and reaching near made a halt outside of the city.
Baba, the image of the Timeless One,
    accompanied by Mardana, the *rebaba* player.

The human figure of Nanak is envisioned by the poet as a medium of the formless Reality. This important aspect, however, is overlooked by McLeod, and his exposé of this crucial stanza reads but briefly: 'The Guru proceeded on to Medina, and from there to Baghdad where, with Mardana the Bard, he camped outside the city. From there he uttered the call to prayer whereupon the city at once became silent. A *pir* named Dastgir went out to investigate the newcomer's credentials and entered into a debate with him'.[21]

In McLeod's recounting, Nanak as the embodiment of the timeless Reality (*baba akal rup*), is eclipsed. The transcendent dimension of Guru Nanak's person is neglected, and the fullness of the emotive response that he elicits in his listeners is also overlooked. As Bhai Gurdas describes, Pir Dastgir is amazed by the overwhelming silence that strikes his region. Coming upon a grand faqir lost in rapture, Dastgir looks around anxiously. He walks up and asks, 'Who is this faqir and to which sect does he belong?—*pucchia firikai dastgir kaun fakiru kiska ghariana?*' Pir Dastgir does 'investigate' the newcomer, and like the Siddhas and many of us today, he too is curious about Guru Nanak's

lineage and about his spiritual ancestry. But there is no immediate entry into debate here; rather, what we receive is Mardana's response, expressing the Guru's greatness:

> *Nanak kali vihi aia rabu fakiru ikko pahichana*
> *dharati akas chahudis jana*

> Nanak has appeared in this age of darkness
>   The God Faqir has recognised the One.
> He is known throughout the earth, the skies, and the four directions.

Nanak's chief credential is his person: the Ultimate Reality and Faqir in one! To a Muslim audience, through Guru Nanak's Muslim companion, availing himself of Islamic vocabulary, Bhai Gurdas enunciates that Nanak is the metaphysical embodiment of *rabb* (Arabic term for God) in the physical form of a *faqir* (a person who lives an impoverished life). The Ultimate and the humble person are the same, because Nanak has experienced the absolute Oneness of the Transcendent. Our modern historian and the traditional Sikh historian differ at a very basic level: while McLeod merely searches for the 'man Nanak', Bhai Gurdas recognises Nanak as the Divine–Human nexus.

Throughout this second phase, we see Guru Nanak travelling with Mardana and visiting Hindu and Islamic places of worship and pilgrimage. But Bhai Gurdas' narrative always shows Nanak free of all sectarian associations. We noticed that when the Siddhas ask who he is, Nanak identifies himself with reference to meditation upon the Divine Word. The Siddhas are won over not by any miraculous deeds of his, rather, '*sabadi jiti siddhi mandali*—by the holy word (*sabadi*) did the Guru becharm the Siddhas' (Canto 31). In Canto 43, Bhai Gurdas reiterates the power of the True Name, attributing it to Guru Nanak himself:

> The Baba said, 'Listen revered Nath*ji*, what I say from my lips
>   this is the world of Truth
> Besides the name of the Divine One, I possess no other power.
> Should fire serve as my apparel,
>   should I be able to carve my temple in the Himalayan snows,
> Should iron be my food, should the entire earth be under my control,
> Should I gain such aptitude as to push the entire earth in front of me,
> Should I be able to weigh in a scale both earth and sky against the
>   tiniest pebble equally,
> Should I possess the power to make everyone do what I desire,

Without the gift of Divine Name, all this will be like the shadow of a cloud'.[22]

Without the True Name, Baba admits he has no other marvel—'*bajhon sachche nam de horu karamati asan na kai*'. Without the Divine Name, even the most mighty and invincible forces are regarded utterly insubstantial and feeble—like the shadow of a cloud (*satinam binu badari chhai*)

Even when Baba goes to Baghdad with Mardana, it is the holy chant which poignantly strikes at the hearts of the people:

diti bang nivaji kari suni smani hoa jahana

After the morning's devotions broke into holy chant
Hearing which the whole world fell into a trance.

(Canto 35)

There is something mesmerising about Guru Nanak's poetic outpour, for wherever he goes, men and women get transformed on hearing it. In Bhai Gurdas' words, '*charai savai dihi dihi kalijug nanak namu dhiaia*—day by day his fame grew and he made the age of Kali reverberate with the Divine Name' (Canto 45). People from different religious and social backgrounds start following Nanak because of the message that he brings to them. In Canto 38: '*bani mukhon uchariai hoi rusnai mittai andhiara*—from his lips flowed the holy Word which turned darkness into light'. Metaphysical verses in a dynamic rhythm and metre inspire the gatherings. From Bhai Gurdas we get the image of the holy word flowing spontaneously and immediately from Nanak's lips; it certainly could not have been one mediated by conceptualisations and citations from any previously existing text or school of thought. Gently Guru Nanak leaves his footprints on distant lands; peacefully he leaves his imprint on the hearts and minds of different people. Bhai Gurdas situates Guru Nanak upon the canvas of Diving Reality alone.

IV

In the third phase [1520–1539], we get a settled portrait of Guru Nanak. Though only 12 years lapsed between Guru Nanak and Bhai Gurdas, the latter recognised Guru Nanak as the founder of a new and different tradition. Poetically, Bhai Gurdas celebrates Guru Nanak as the definite starting-point of a unique ethical and spiritual legacy. In Canto 45, Bhai Gurdas recounts that after visiting Multan, Guru Nanak settles on

the banks of the river Ravi, having founded his own city of Kartarpur, Guru Nanak discards the ascetic garb he had been wearing; instead, he accepts the dress of a householder. He occupies his seat and begins to deliver the message to the people. A community of disciples grows around him here. It is not a monastic order, but a fellowship of men and women engaged in the ordinary occupations of life. Here the Sikh model for spiritual discourses is formed. Here a definite pattern of Sikh ritual is created. Bhai Gurdas informs us of the schedule established here at Kartarpur for the morning and evening recitations, which interestingly, has remained the custom to this very day. Here were fostered the important Sikh values of equality, fellowship and humility, and an affirmation of a new and dynamic sense of 'familyhood'. It is in this third phase that Bhai Gurdas keenly portrays Guru Nanak as the 'founder' of the Sikh religion.

When Guru Nanak discarded asceticism and began to live a settled life of a householder in Kartarpur, many of his contemporaries were not happy. As he resumed his engagment in worldly affairs, the Yogis questioned him:

Why have you soured milk by mixing vinegar with it?
Churning the pitcher filled with curdled milk yields no butter.
By discarding the garments of holiness why have you returned to the
    worldly custom?

Guru Nanak's response to their leader Bhangur Nath:

You have not been well served by your mother [intelligence].
The receptacle of your mind has not been cleansed and the milk
    inside it has gone bad.
Renouncing family to become ascetics, you still go back to families to
    beg your food.

(Canto 40)

Once the renunciate takes on the worldy affairs, his life becomes 'soured' for the yogis. It is, as if, vinegar were added to milk. The purity of milk is defiled and it becomes curdled. No churning thereafter can lead to any kind of knowledge or enlightenment. A common household chore, the churning of butter, metaphorically stands for epistemological insights. Indeed, it serves as an interesting literary device, connecting daily practical tasks with abstract philosophical speculations.

Bhai Gurdas shows Guru Nanak rejecting the Yogic ideal. In the above response, he disapproves of Bhangur Nath's intelligence—*'teri mao kuchaji ahi'*. The term *'mao'* (mother) is used for intelligence. But Guru Nanak is not putting down the 'mother' as such. Overall, in the Sikh tradition, the equation between mother and intelligence is a prevalent one: *'mata mati, pita santokh'* (mother is intelligence; father, contentment), an equation that actually underscores the importance of the feminine in Sikh epistemology.[23] What Guru Nanak criticises here is the yogic goal of renouncing the world. There is a sarcastic tinge that Bhai Gurdas lends to Guru Nanak's expression: 'Renouncing family to become ascetics, you still go back to families to beg your food.' The way of the yogis is not for the Guru, for in spite of all their giving up of their own homes and lifestyles, they still end up returning to the world.

While keeping the receptacle of the mind cleansed, Guru Nanak posits an active engagement in the world. Bhai Gurdas states that upon arriving in Kartarpur, Guru Nanak takes upon the dress of a householder. He occupies his seat and begins to deliver his message to the people:

> From his lips flowed the holy Word which turned darkness into light.
> Spiritual discourses flowed and constantly the unstruck melody resonated.
> Sikhs embraced the Guru's sayings forsaking the customary texts.
>
> (Canto 38)

The foundations of Sikh life are solidly stated here. We can even discern several major elements of the earliest Sikh community described by Bhai Gurdas, which to this day remain the centre of Sikh life. Guru Nanak, as the mediator, brings forth *bani*, the holy Word. The followers do not renounce the worldly customs but simply hear the Divine Word which alone 'turns darkness into light'. Light with its varied energies such as creation and sustenance, knowledge and elucidation, radiance and beauty, ultimate joy and liberation, is obtained by listening to Guru Nanak's utterances. Bhai Gurdas underscroes that for the followers of Nanak, ontological, epistemological, aesthetic and soteriological ideals are reached solely through the avenue of their Guru's message.

Spiritual discourses are carried on by this community as well. This gives us an image of a group of followers vibrantly discussing the content of Guru Nanak's verse. They could have been debating his theological concepts, analysing the multivalence of his symbols and

finding ways of imbibing it in their lives. Divine Word is heard at one level and at another level, reflected upon, commented upon, lived upon. Intellectual understanding and moral value go hand in hand. Guru Nanak's poetry was not just art for art's sake; Bhai Gurdas reveals a dynamic engagement with the metaphysical verse, and that legacy continues to this day.

Another element that Bhai Gurdas mentions is that of the constant resonance of unstruck melody—'*anhadi sabad uthe dhunkara*'. What pervades is a melodious atmosphere, saturated with immense aesthetic power. Somehow, the unstruck word reverberates deeply within the innermost self. Aesthetics and Religion are not demarcated into two separate realms; obviously, the Kierkegaardian hierarchy does not come into play in Bhai Gurdas' description. Nor is there any reference to rituals, or baths in special rivers, or pilgrimages. In the first Sikh community established in Kartarpur, celibacy, yogic methods and techniques, and all kinds of fasts and sacrifices, are totally rejected. Only the melody brought forth by the Guru's lips is given primacy. Bhai Gurdas' words have retained their veracity till today. Sikhs have continued to savour the Divine Word. Their sacred text is put into rhythmic melodies, and reciting or hearing it, forms the focus of all their rituals and ceremonies. All their rites of passage including birth, death, marriage, name-giving, are marked by the aural presence of the sacred Word.

Bhai Gurdas recounts a schedule of the daily devotions: 'In the evening were recited *sodar* and *arati* and in the ambrosial hour, the *japu*' (Canto 38). *Japu, Sodar* and *Arati* are sections of the *Guru Granth*. They form a part of the Sikh daily prayers. To this day, Sikh homes and their formal places of worship, maintain the routine of reciting *Japu* in the morning, and *Sodar* and *Arati* in the evening. The first prayer in the *Guru Granth, Japu,* encapsules the fundamental beliefs of the Sikhs. In 38 stanzas, it presents the quintessence of Sikh metaphysics, Sikh ethics and Sikh spirituality. It is as Bhai Gurdas recorded, recited at the break of dawn when the mind is fresh and the atmosphere is serene. Described as the ambrosial hour (both in the *Japu* itself and by Bhai Gurdas), dawn is considered most conducive to grasping the Divine Word. Similarly, when day and night come together during the reflective period of dusk, *Sodar* and *Arati* are recited by Sikhs. In the hymn of *Arati*, the usual forms of ritual and worship are denounced. Guru Nanak's *Arati* (which literally means worship) rejects all modes of external piety and rituals, and shows the entire cosmos worshipping in harmony. Instead of salvers with lamps and incense and offerings of flowers and fruits,

the skies become an integrated platter, the sun and moon the lamps, stars the beads, and all of vegetation a bouquet of flowers. Loud chanting is replaced by the inner unstruck melody playing motionlessly. Guru Nanak's hymn itself condemns prevalent rituals and customs. Bhai Gurdas provides evidence of a specifically 'Sikh' routine. Indeed, there is an amazing continuity between Bhai Gurdas' description of the first community of Nanak's followers established in Kartarpur and the ones today—be they in the Punjab, Toronto, London or Los Angeles. The pattern of the Sikh way of life was established in Guru Nanak's period, and contrary to claims made by scholars like W.C. Smith, we do not have to wait till the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to discern it.[24]

Another significant point that emerges from Stanza 38 is that the disciples themselves are drawn towards something new and distinct. As people begin to get attracted to Guru Nanak, they begin to give up their former scriptures. Bhai Gurdas' verse reads '*gurmukhi bhar atharbani tara*', which literally translates into, 'liberated by what comes from the Guru's mouth, the burden of the fourth Veda is thrown off'. As they embrace the Guru's Word, the devotees forsake the customary texts, which in itself suggests that there must have been something different and unique for them to adopt. Bhai Gurdas refers to the *Atharva Veda* in the vernacular (*atharbani*), and he views it as a burdensome weight (*bhar*) on society. Composed in Sanskrit, the traditional scriptures were meant for the upper castes only. They defined specific injunctions to specific castes at a specific stage of life (*varnashramadharma*). Bhai Gurdas is highlighting the new path opened by Guru Nanak: those who are drawn to the Guru's Word (*gurmukhi*) reject conventional texts; by the new, easy and simple path are they liberated (*tara*). Guru Nanak's single message for all four castes was crucial for Bhai Gurdas, and he forcefully states that 'the Guru made the four castes into one—*chari varan ikk varanu karaia*' (Canto 23).

Guru Nanak is unambiguously seen by Bhai Gurdas as the creator of a community—'*Nanak nirmal panth chalaia*'. The community he creates is *nirmal*—without pollution, denoting the purified state of self-lessness. But Bhai Gurdas is also keen to point out how Guru Nanak sees himself as the starting-point of a special heritage which he wished to keep intact. The first Sikh Guru is self-conscious of the distinct tradition he launches, and with a view to preserving it, he actively decides to pass his utterances and succession to Guru Angad. Bhai Gurdas vividly illustrates Guru Nanak's installation of Lahina as his successor:

He promulgated in the world the authority of the Divine Order
and created a community purged of the pollution [of egoity].
While still in this world he installed Lahina as his successor
and bestowed upon him the umbrella of Guruship.
Kindling another light with his light Guru Nanak changed his form.
None can describe the marvellous deed of the marvellous one.
He changed his body into that of Guru Angad who but reflected his
own light.

(Canto 45)

In order to preserve his vision, Nanak instals his follower, Lahina, as
his successor. Opting over his own sons, the devout Lahina is made
Angad (literally, part of his own body). In the above passage, Bhai
Gurdas describes this historical event in great poetic splendour. We
come upon an important illustration of Guru Nanak's crystallisation of
a heritage begun by him. It is the light that is passed on from Guru
Nanak to Lahina—the process is described in the image of one flame
kindling another (*joti jot milai kai*). The forms are changed by Guru
Nanak as he imparts his own light to Guru Angad, who, is turn, inherits
it.

The *Guru Granth* itself provides testimony for this transference of
light, which in Bhai Gurdas' words is 'the marvellous deed of the
Marvellous One':

And now the writ of Angad ran instead of Nanak's,
For, the Light [in him] was the same, the Way the same,
only the body had changed.

(*Guru Granth*, Rai Balvand, p. 966)

In consonance with Bhai Gurdas, the scriptural verse claims that between
Guru Nanak and Guru Angad, it was the same light, the same message,
though the bodies had changed. Thus, Guru Nanak had made Lahina
more than his successor: he had made him equal with himself, transferring
his own light to him.

In Stanza 46, Bhai Gurdas restates that Guru Angad received the
'same mark of anointment, the very same canopy over his head, and
the same throne. The seal of Guru Nanak came into the hands of Guru
Angad and he was proclaimed far and wide as the next Guru.' His
text, in the original, has a vigorous rhythm: *so tikka so chhatra siri
soi sachcha takhatu tikai / Guru Nanak handi muhar hathi gur Angad*

dl dohi firai. The repetition of '*so*' (meaning same) and the emphasis on '*soi*' (the very same), discloses the primary role of Nanak. His various marks and seal are resumed and sustained by the second Guru. These opening verses of the canto reinforce the view that Sikh faith is an accumulating tradition. Begun by Guru Nanak, grounded in his person, Sikhism continued to gain strength and substantiation over the years. In the subsequent sections, Bhai Gurdas narrates that Angad (Nanak II) left Kartarpur and retired to the town of Khadur where he passed the light that he received from Guru Nanak to Amar Das (Nanak III), who then raised the town of Goindwal (Canto 46). Bhai Gurdas sheds light on chronology of early Sikhism: beginning with Guru Nanak, the divine inheritance is maintained and passed from one Guru to another.

While declaring the newness and distinctness of Guru Nanak's faith, Bhai Gurdas is also meticulous about detailing the gentle method with which it was promoted. Guru Nanak did not forcefully advocate his message to his contemporaries; he did not harshly impose it upon others. Bhai Gurdas provides us with testimony of Nanak's delicate and gentle encounter with people of other faiths:

> As Baba spoke with the Siddhas, his words brought peace to the
> Siddhas' hearts.
> The entire festival of Shivratri paid homage to Baba as did all the six
> systems of thought.
> The Siddhas then spoke auspiciously, 'Praise to you Nanak, great is
> your accomplishment
> Person unparalleled has manifested himself
> bringing light into this age of darkness.'
> Departing the festival, Guru Nanak set out towards Multan.
> The Pirs of Multan came out and received him with a bowl filled
> with milk.
> The Baba produced a jasmine from underneath his arm and
> mixed it with milk in the bowl.
> It was like the River Ganga merging with the ocean.
>
> (Canto 44)

In this example, Bhai Gurdas portrays Guru Nanak inspiring people of different religious backgrounds, in particular the Hindus and Muslims. First, we encounter him attending a Shivratri festival. The very fact that he goes to this important Hindu celebration in honour of Lord Shiva shows his open attitude towards other religious traditions. In the

vibrant Hindu atmosphere, he does not raise conflict or antagonism, rather, touches the very hearts of the devotees with his simple words and manner: 'His words bring peace to the Siddhas' hearts'. The Hindus, who are joyfully celebrating the festival of their powerful God of Death, are moved by Guru Nanak's tranquil and serene approach. Bhai Gurdas then mentions how the six schools of thought are also overtaken by Guru Nanak. He seems to suggest that the practices, as well as the philosophical systems of the Hindus, are succeeded by the person and message of Guru Nanak. Obviously, to touch people as deeply as the Guru does in Bhai Gurdas' descriptions, Guru Nanak must have had something new and different and valuable to offer.

Departing from the Hindu festival, Guru Nanak sets out towards Multan. Multan in those days was an important Sufi centre, and we are presented with a lively scene of religious leaders coming out and receiving Nanak. They offer a bowl full of milk, which is a metaphorical statement that the area is already full to the brim with religious leaders, and that there would be no place for newcomer like Nanak. How does the newcomer react? There is no verbal or physical or philosophical tussle: 'The Baba produced a jasmine from underneath his arm and mixed it with milk in the bowl. It was like the River Ganga merging with the ocean'.[25]

From the artistic sensibility of Bhai Gurdas emerge two images which brilliantly depict Guru Nanak's peaceful encounter with the Islamic religion. Unfortunately, however, scholars have not paid full attention to them. For example, the image of the River Ganga merging with the ocean is totally ignored by McLeod, and the one about the jasmine, misunderstood. In McLeod's words, 'Guru Nanak responded by plucking a jasmine flower and laying it on the surface of the milk'.[26] In Bhai Gurdas' rendering, Guru Nanak does not pluck a jasmine flower, and nor does he place it on the milk. In the original Punjabi: '*babe kadhi kari bagal te cambeli dudh vichi milai / jio sagar vich ganga samai*'. To repeat:

> The Baba produced a jasmine from underneath his arm and
>   mixed it with milk in the bowl.
> It was like the River Ganga merging with the ocean.

Literally, Guru Nanak mixes a jasmine flower in the bowl of milk. Mixing is an active and dynamic endeavour; it is not merely placing something placidly on the surface. The flower is an entity separate

from the bowl within which it is placed, and it is different from the milk with which it is mixed. It is also important to note that the jasmine does not grow from within the bowl of milk, nor that it is plucked from some external sources. The Guru produces it from under his arm, as if he were carrying it—as his own belonging—all along. In Canto 32, Bhai Gurdas mentions Guru Nanak on his travels carrying a book tucked under his arm. The jasmine flower symbolically represents Guru Nanak's poetic utterances—his fragrant divine message which he carries as a manuscript with him. Bhai Gurdas' artistic narrative confirms that the Sikh Guru delicately takes his message to the Muslim centre of Multan. His 'adding' his message to this already religiously and intellectually rich area does not produce any kind of belligerency. For, with the addition of jasmine, the milk does not spill out from the brimming bowl; rather, it becomes fragrant and bright.

The second image presents the panoramic view of the River Ganges merging with the ocean. The scenery shifts from a bowl full of milk to a vast seamless ocean. But again, the dominant motif is one of peace and serenity. There is no antagonism, no attempt to win over the Other, no verbal or physical conflict. Like the jasmine flower, the Ganges is intrinsically separate and different from the ocean; nevertheless, it gently flows into the ocean. Bhai Gurdas implicitly advocates that Guru Nanak's teachings are different from those of his Muslim contemporaries, but they flow into the ocean peacefully and harmoniously. Nowhere does the poet mention any kind of spiritual influence of Hinduism or of Islam on Guru Nanak. Rather, Bhai Gurdas shows us how the Sikh Guru's message is taken into *other* worlds—like jasmine mixing into a bowl of milk or the Ganges mingling with the ocean.

The message that Guru Nanak peacefully brings into the diverse and plural society of medieval India—poetically be it a bowl full of milk or a vigorous ocean—is basically that of Oneness. The essential Oneness is reiterated and remembered as the white jasmine mixes with milk, or water with water.

It is important for the Sikh Guru that the Metaphysical Oneness be translated into the physical world, that the Transcendent One be seen in daily life. Society is to structure itself on its Ultimate Unity. Bhai Gurdas provides us with many instances which underscore Guru Nanak's point of view. When both Hindus and Muslims gather in the Sikh Guru's presence and ask him to judge between them, Guru Nanak simply responds by admitting the ineffability of the divine phenomenon: '*vadda sanng vartaia lakhi na sakai kudrati koi*—great is the divine miracle

for none can know it' (Canto 33). The Guru does not make any comparisons between Hinduism and Islam, nor does he judge one against the other. He does not have any preference for either. The fact that one tradition is not chosen over the other goes to prove that Guru Nanak did not adhere to either of them. Impartially standing apart from both Hinduism and Islam, Guru Nanak only articulates the experience of infinite wonder.

Bhai Gurdas paints yet another scenario. The two groups inquire the Guru about their holy texts. They wish to know which he deems higher, the Hindu or Muslim. Guru Nanak's answer:

> Without good deeds, neither Hindus nor Muslims will receive refuge
>> in the Divine Court.
> Evanescent is the colour of the Kusumbha flower
>> washed with water it quickly fades away.
> Forgetting Ram and Rahim—who stand in one position—
>> they bicker amongst themselves.
> The world is entangled in the ways of evil.
>
> (Canto 33)

Guru Nanak's central point is that both Hindus and Muslims are equal. Their Ultimate Reality is the same, though the names Ram (Hindu) and Rahim (Muslim), may vary. Literally, as Bhai Gurdas has him say, 'Ram and Rahim stand in one position—*ram rahim ikk thai khaloi*'. Guru Nanak here rejects the notion of a plurality of realities; in fact, he validates both religious traditions, for they have equal status. In his vision of Absolute Unity, Ram and Rahim are an articulation of the One; they are not conflicting or opposing theological godheads. The Sikh Guru draws the attention of the opposing religious groups towards a singular Ultimate source. He compares the external difference that they see between themselves with the colour of the Kusumbha flower which is insubstantial and impermanent, and quickly washes away. As usual, Bhai Gurdas avails himself of artistic similes, and in this particular instance, to reveal Guru Nanak's focus on the intrinsic and immutable identity of people across various faiths.

The vision of Oneness is the very heart of the Sikh religion, and Sikh metaphysics, ethics and aesthetics are founded on it. But this *weltanschauung* belongs to a person. It was Nanak who experienced Oneness, and experience, as Gadamer commented, 'has a definite immediacy which eludes every opinion about its meaning. Everything that is experienced

is experienced by oneself....'[27] Guru Nanak's experience of Absolute Unity is his, and uniquely his.

Bhai Gurdas' poetical testimony strongly repudiates McLeod's thesis that the Sikh faith is a part of the Sant tradition. The Sant tradition, as McLeod says, is a compound of Nath elements and Vaishnava Bhakti, with a limited influence of Sufism. But he does not elaborate the presence of such elements, and he provides no convincing evidence that Guru Nanak works within those parameters. To the contrary, Bhai Gurdas demonstrates Guru Nanak's independence from any previous system of thought. Through Bhai Gurdas' poetry, we meet a person located amidst a vibrant north Indian community—delivering his personal vision, and starting a new school of thought. Guru Nanak dynamically converses with people of diverse faiths but he does not 'integrate a somewhat disparate set of doctrines'.[28]

In many passages from Bhai Gurdas we hear Guru Nanak loudly rejecting Nath doctrine and practice. Now McLeod acknowledges Guru Nanak's explicit rejection of Nath beliefs, but he strongly believes that the Guru had indirectly absorbed them. McLeod claims that the Nath concepts were taken by the Sants, and through the Sants, they were imbibed by Guru Nanak. So, inevitably, Nath elements were 'naturalised' (to use McLeod's term) in his works.[29] The problem with this thesis of McLeod's is that he cannot come up with any telling examples of these Nath concepts. It is true, of course, that Nanak accepts such beliefs as the 'irrelevance of caste status as a means to deliverance, the folly of sacred languages and scriptures, the futility of temple worship and pilgrimage, and their general stress on interior devotion'.[30] But McLeod is quite wrong to claim that Guru Nanak ultimately got these four beliefs from the Naths through the influence of the Sants. They are essential universal beliefs, shared by many religious traditions, from the Prophets of Judaism to the Sermons of Lord Buddha.

As for the Vaishnava Bhakti contribution, it is again difficult to follow McLeod's argumentation. He seems to be saying that the Sants avail themselves of the method of Bhakti minus the Vaishnava focus—but surely that is a contradiction. How could the Sants possibly absorb the loving devotion and yet reject a personal deity so that all the incarnations of Vishnu would be discarded? If this were the case, what we would be left with is love for a metaphysical reality—a love that does not exclusively belong to Vaishnava Bhakti tradition as such, but one that mystics around the world have articulated in a rich variety of symbols and languages.

The Sufi influence on the Sants is marginalised by McLeod, and since he regards Nanak as a Sant, he likewise dismisses the possibility that Nanak shared Sufi ideals. He accepts Christopher Shackle's conclusion that the Persian terms in Sikh scripture 'concentrate much more heavily on images of royal authority than on the doctrines and practice of Islam'.[31] Guru Nanak validates many Sufi ideals, and was close enough to Islam to be included as a 'Son of Abraham' in the *Fils D'Abraham* series.[32] Guru Nanak shares many Sufi ideals like the absolute unicity of the Supreme Being, inner love, spiritual progression, bridal imagery, and McLeod is quite right in saying that there are 'affinities' between Guru Nanak's thought and Sufi concepts. The problem, however, lies in McLeod's artificial distinction between Sufi 'affinities' and the Sant 'influences'. Whereas Guru Nanak and the Muslim saints happen to bear affinities, the Hindu saints and the Sikh Guru have an immediate genetic relationship, for the Guru is regarded as a direct product of *their* system of thought. In fact, however, the Sikh Guru has affinities with both traditions but was independent of both. By dismissing the Islamic dimension, McLeod boosts his own argument and sets Guru Nanak even more strongly as a typical Sant.

Critical of this modern trend, a contemporary Sikh scholar makes a poignant statement:

> To see Guru Nanak allied to, or participant within, an earlier ongoing tradition however rich and variegated is to misconstrue not only the mission of a man but also the phenomenon of prophecy and the religious experience of a multitude of people over a course of five centuries.[33]

V

Throughout Bhai Gurdas' poetry, the Medium of Divine Revelation and the revelation itself are closely linked. But nowhere in literature or in visual art is the advent of Guru Nanak, or the convergence of the person and his message, expressed as captivatingly as in Bhai Gurdas' Canto 27. This poetic vision integrates the themes of my article, and I wish to conclude with a reflection on this passage.

> As Guru Nanak made his appearance, mist lifted light filling the world.
> Like the stars vanish and darkness recedes as the sun rises.

Like the deer scatters in panic as the lion roars.

Whichever spot the Baba set his foot upon that became the seat of worship.

Seats sacred to the Siddhas now laud the name of Nanak.

Every home has become a Dharamsal, joyously resonant with the sacred chant.

Baba reclaimed all the four corners and all the nine regions of the earth,

Bestowing upon them the gift of True Name.

In the age of darkness did the holy Guru make his appearance.

Bhai Gurdas depicts the primal occurrence of Guru Nanak's appearance in a powerful array of imagery which stresses the contrast between the cosmos prior to Guru Nanak and the one after his advent. The metaphorical moment is the early morning when darkness ends. The stanza begins with the visual simile of the rising sun and the disappearance of fog and darkness. With the emergence of radiance, all kinds of density and opaqueness becomes filled with clarity and transparency; the dark skies with twinkling stars give way to full brilliance and effulgence. Although night and day are strikingly different from each other, there is no harshness or hostility between them. For Bhai Gurdas, just as the rising sun does not acrimoniously strike out the dark, but rather, most delicately and harmoniously brings in light, so does Guru Nanak on the horizon of fifteenth century north-west India.

Now the aural image that Bhai Gurdas introduces is loud: hearing a lion roar, a herd of deer scatters in panic. Perhaps it could be attributed to the poet's device to accentuate the sonorous significance of Guru Nanak's message. We recall that Lord Buddha's first sermon in the deer park is popularly known as the 'roar of the lion'. Whether Gautama, the Enlightened One proclaims Dharma, or Nanak, the founding Sikh Guru, communicates the Divine Word, the analogy in both instances is that of the roaring of a lion. Overall, then, Bhai Gurdas' juxtaposition of the visual and aural images expresses that the gentle person of Nanak brings forth a verbal message charged with such power and vigour that it shakes the multitudes to their very depths. Hearing the new message, people are jolted from their lassitude, and almost terror-stricken, they excitedly run like a herd of deer.

These visual and aural images are repeated in Stanza 34: Guru Nanak and his message are strikingly visible and loudly heard. But here is an

added nuance: the dynamic appearance of Guru Nanak's presence and message cannot be concealed in any way. Bhai Gurdas writes:

> Like the sun risen on the horizon cannot be concealed
> and illumines the entire world.
> As when the lion roars in the jungle all the deer race away.
> Like the light of the moon in the sky cannot be hidden under a mud
> platter....

(Canto 34)

The sun illuminates the entire world; the lion is heard by all the deer in the jungle; the light of the moon spreads to the tiniest corners; Guru Nanak brings the message of True Name to all people, irrespective of their religious and social affiliations. Just as the sunlight and moonlight spread in all directions and the lion is heard in the entire jungle, so does Guru Nanak's message. Bhai Gurdas stresses on the universality of his message: open to all and not circumscribed to any sect or community.

As Bhai Gurdas goes on to illustrate the phenomenal appearance of Guru Nanak, he introduces yet another image which emphasises the tactile dimension of the Sikh founder: 'Whichever spot the Baba set his foot upon, it became a seat of worship.' With the touch of Guru Nanak, then, each spot becomes imbued with sacrality; it literally 'becomes a seat of worship'. While this very palpable image shatters the dualism of the sacred and the profane, it emphasises that whatever comes into contact with Guru Nanak becomes holy; wherever Nanak puts his foot, the place begins to permeate with majesty and tremendousness. Furthermore, we discern a merging of the tactile and the sonorous dimensions: 'Every home has become a *dharamsal*, joyously resonant with the sacred chant.' Bhai Gurdas, however, does not identify any special place with Guru Nanak; no pilgrimage spots are marked out; no particular precincts are fenced off; no places of worship are singled out. Rather, every home which echoes with the poetry of Guru Nanak becomes a place of worship—a *dharamsal*. As elaborated in Guru Nanak's *Japu*, *dharamsal* denotes the whole of planet earth, the place where righteous action is performed.[34] Any place visited by Guru Nanak or where his verses are recited, all become equally blessed. There is no intrinsic difference between secular or religious space, nor is there any distinction between a premise that Guru Nanak physically touched and a premise where the Divine Word is heard. In Bhai Gurdas'

portrayal, the person and message of the first Sikh Guru coalesce together, illuminating Nanak as the embodiment of Divine Revelation and not simply as an impersonal medium.

In the final verses of the stanza, Bhai Gurdas describes the all-embracing acceptance of Guru Nanak: the gift of Divine Name that Guru Nanak brings, spreads in all directions and to various regions of the earth. He ends with a reiteration of Guru Nanak's advent in Kaliyuga, the age of darkness, reminding the reader that when Nanak appeared, darkness disappeared. With Guru Nanak's advent, obtuse ignorance, empty ritual, and blind superstition recede, giving way to enlightenment, true worship and rejoicing. Throughout his verse, we find Bhai Gurdas artistically depicting Guru Nanak as the intersection between a particular entity and a universal phenomenon; as the intersection between a historical person and a timeless reality.

Bhai Gurdas was a close associate of the next five Gurus, and they shared his vision of Guru Nanak. In fact, all of the Sikh Gurus held the same vision, and they clearly perceived that Guru Nanak's heritage was completely different from all the existing traditions. What each received, he preserved it, built upon it, crystallised it—on the very model set up by Guru Nanak. Each continued to add his poetic utterances in the content and style of Guru Nanak; each added the name Nanak to his compositions. According to Harbans Singh, for all the later Gurus, the presence of Guru Nanak 'was a constant reality, an inspiration and the norm in the excercise of their spiritual exercise...in both utterance and deed later Gurus, Nanaks themselves as the followers believe, were acting out the inspiration mediated to them from Guru Nanak.'[35] Sikhism had its genesis in Nanak and from early times, the succeeding Gurus began to regard it as a special faith. In fact, Bhai Gurdas viewed Sikhism as the most elevated of all the existing religions. In his vibrant poetic repertoire, Sikhism is like a needle which sews materials that are ripped asunder, bringing harmony to the torn and conflicting groups of Hindus and Muslims (*sui sive jorkai vicharian kari mel milana, sahib eko rah doe jagu vicu hindu musalmana, gur sikhi pardhan hai...Var* 33: 4). Besides the sewing needle, he also avails himself of similes such as 'sharp as a razor' and 'fine as a hair' to concretise the value of this new faith *(tikhi khande dhar hai uhu valhun niki... Var* 9: 2). Sikhism is claimed by Bhai Gurdas as a narrow and difficult path, a path which erases all doubts and dualities and questions concerning what, why, where and when, and leads to the joy of complete oneness (*Var* 9: 11).[36] He creates all these similes as an attempt to describe and explain

something new and special. Bhai Gurdas is very much aware and conscious of the separate identity of this faith. Surely for the early Sikhs, including their Gurus and their foremost theologian, historian and poet, Sikhism was an explicity distinct tradition—one which commenced with the individual experience of Guru Nanak. From those early times to this very day, whenever Sikhs around the globe recite and reflect and live their life based upon their fundamental mantra of *Ikk Oan Kar*, they unequivocally remember Guru Nanak as the starting-point of their faith.

Notes

1. W.C. Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), 66–67.

2. W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1975), 5.

3. W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 148–226.

4. See McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, 150–52.

5. W.H. McLeod, *The Sikhs: History, Religion and Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 31.

6. Ibid.

7. See J.B. Noss, *A History of the World's Religions* (New York: Macmillan 1990). Noss first published his volume under the title *Man's Religions* (Macmillan, 1974).

8. Darshan Singh, *Bhai Gurdas: Sikhi de Pahile Viakhiakar* (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1986), 6.

9. *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*, 2408

10. *The Khalsa*, Lahore, 13 July 1930.

11. *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*, 2757–59. Bhai Gurdas' biographical details are discussed by Nripinder Singh in his comprehensive study, *The Sikh Moral Tradition* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1990), 20–23.

12. In the original Punjabi, the title is *Bhai Gurdas: Sikhi de Pahile Viakhiakar*. It is by a respected Sikh scholar, Darshan Singh (full citation above).

13. Nripinder Singh, *The Sikh Moral Tradition*, 23–24.

14. The edition that I am using was begun by Gyani Hazara Singh, the maternal uncle of Bhai Vir Singh. After doing a thorough study of the *Vars* and a full commentary on them, Gyani Hazara Singh passed it on to his nephew who was soon to become the most renowned Sikh poet and scholar. Gyani Hazara Singh passed away before the volume came out of the press for the first time in 1911. It was Bhai Vir Singh who brought it to completion, and he continued to revise and prepare several more editions. The final, his sixth edition of the *Vars*, came out in 1951 and since then, it has been

reprinted many times. I used the ninth edition which was published in Amritsar by the Khalsa Samachar in April 1977.

15. McLeod, *The Sikhs*, 94.

16. See *Puratan Janamsakhi Guru Nanak Devji*, prepared by Bhai Vir Singh. It was published in Amritsar (Khalsa Samachar, 1948). *Janamsakhis* are short narratives written in the Punjabi language, and they represent the earliest extant models of prose in that language. They are stories (*sakhis*) of the birth (*janam*) and life of Guru Nanak. The earliest *Janamsakhis* were written towards the end of the sixteenth century, and have come down the generations in a variety of renditions such as the Bala, Miharban, Adi and Puratan.

17. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, 15, fn.

18. Ibid., 34.

19. See ibid., 151–58; and McLeod, *The Sikhs*, 25–26. See also, Gurdev Singh (ed.), *Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition* (Patiala: Siddharth Publications for Academy of Sikh Religion and Culture, 1986), 59–75.

20. Karine Schomer and W.H. McLeod (eds), *The Sants: Studies in a Devotional Tradition of Northern India* (Berkeley and Motilal Banarsidass, 1987), 6.

21. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, 35.

22. *Var* 43, also check *Guru Granth*, 14.

23. I have discussed the significance of the feminine in Sikh epistemology in my book *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 69–77.

24. W.C. Smith, *Meaning and End of Religion*, 67. Actually for Smith, 'The development of the Sikh community historically cannot be understood except in the context of the attitude and behaviour of the Muslim community' (260).

25. *Var* I: 44.

26. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, 35.

27. Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroads, 1989), 60.

28. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, 7.

29. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, 157–58.

30. McLeod, *The Sikhs*, 26. These four essential points of Sant belief for McLeod constitute the impact of the Nath influence on the Sant tradition.

31. McLeod, *The Sikhs*, 28–29.

32. See the comprehensive Michel Delahoutre's *Fils D'Abraham: Les Sikhs* (Belgium: Editions Brepolis, 1989).

33. Nripinder Singh, 'Guru Nanak, Prophecy and the Study of Religion', in *Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion* (New Delhi: Guru Nanak Foundation, April 1989), 23.

34. *Guru Granth*, 7. The passage begins:

> Amidst nights, seasons, solar and lunar days
> Amidst air, water, fire, and netherworld
> The earth is placed, the place for righteous action....

35. Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith*, 224–25.

36. I found *Var* 9: 11, with playful alliteration and rhythm, to be one of his most difficult verses to translate.

'Being Cool and Classy': Style Hierarchies in a London–Punjabi Peer Culture[1]

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Collective identities and life projects are increasingly built around consumers and consumer choice. But what happens if you lack both the economic resources and the cultural competences required to be a fashionable, cosmopolitan teenager? What does being poor in a society of consumers mean and how does it derive its meaning from the 'plight of the flawed consumer'?[2] How do London–Punjabi teenagers construct hierarchies of style in their everday consumption of clothes? And, how do these hierarchies reproduce and/or transform power relations and class dispositions?

Introduction

This article examines how a group of London–Punjabi teenagers mobilise their economic and cultural capital, and negotiate their social identities through their consumption of clothes.[3] Based upon fieldwork in Southall, west London, over several years, it shows how teenagers construct and legitimate hierarchies of taste in style and fashion. It offers an analysis of the criteria of value which underpin the style distinctions they make, in particular the importance attached to notions of authenticity, originality and cosmopolitanism. The conspicuous consumption of clothes involves not only the public display of self, but also of rank and prestige. Strategies of consumption are shaped by, and expressive of, the complex interplay of social class and ethnicity, gender and subcultural affinity. However, most of the literature on social and cultural significance of dress and clothing focuses almost exclusively on issues of gender and ethnicity. This article hopes to begin to redress this imbalance. It analyses local consumption strategies in relation to class and status positions. These

local strategies are shaped by cultural forms and styles which are prestigious in transnational teenage consumer culture, particularly expensive fashion clothes. It argues that such local strategies can only be understood with reference to the non-local, translocal and transnational contexts in which Southall youth live. It explores the social meanings attached to the subtle grids of style classification which young people construct, and raises broader questions about the differential desires and capacities of London–Punjabi youth to perceive themselves as 'world teenagers', and to participate in the global teenage market. It also shows how social marginalisation and exclusion are reproduced in seemingly trivial decisions about choice of clothes. The first part gives an overview of the wider research project upon which this article is based, and the second part reinterprets a slice of this data, presents the case-study and offers a more focused analysis of hierarchies of taste and style in clothes and fashion.

Media and Youth in the South Asian Diaspora

The case-study to be presented on hierarchies of style and taste in fashion and clothes among Southall youth is based upon a more extensive ethnographic study which explores the interface between the cultures of migrant and diasporic communities and the cultures of media consumption. It examines issues of the translation/transnationalisation of cultures and identities that are a consequence of the twin impact of media and migration.[4]

The subjects of this study are young people of Punjabi family background, mainly in the 14–18 age group, living in Southall, west London, one of the largest settlements of South Asians outside the Indian subcontinent. Despite being a thriving commercial and cultural centre, it is a working-class area that has attracted migrant workers since the late-nineteenth century. Though Southall's families are predominantly of Punjabi Sikh background, this is by no means a homogeneous 'Asian community'. Cross-cutting religious, caste, class, linguistic and regional differences, variations in patterns of migration and socioeconomic status, as well as co-residence with smaller numbers of mainly London–Caribbean and Irish families, all mean that there is no neat equation here between culture and geography, culture and community or between community and ethnicity.

The study focuses on the recreative consumption of television in this locally specific youth culture between 1988–1992, highlighting the

ways in which it is shaped by both cosmopolitan and diasporic experiences. The central thesis of the study is that the embedding of television experiences into the conversational forms and flows of everday life generates a form of talk, 'TV talk', through which negotiations of ethnicity are made apparent, often in a particularly vivid way. This is because talk about television narratives enables discussions of self, family and significant others that might otherwise seem too personal or sensitive. In TV talk (initiated by the seemingly trivial conversational opener 'Did you see...?') young people collectively compare and contrast, judge and evaluate narrative styles and forms adopting a kind of 'folk', comparativist, cross-cultural methodology. The collective evaluation of their consumption of a transnational array of television programmes and films, first, stimulates an already heightened awareness of cultural difference. Second, it encourages cross-cultural comparisons and analyses, suggestive of the amateur armchair anthropologists that transnational television can make of youth, perhaps especially those living in diasporic contexts. Third, it intensifies processes of identity negotiation and encourages aspirations towards cultural change. But this is no linear process of change: what are considered to be Punjabi cultural traditions are just as likely to be reaffirmed and reinvented as to be challenged or subverted. The study thus sheds light upon broader issues of media, ethnicity and cultural change in a global age.

In recognition of the complex overlaying of transnational and translocal networks that are part of the post-migrant's experience, a diasporic perspective is advocated. It also helps to avoid the essentialising pitfalls of conventional 'ethnic community' studies which tend to reify ethnic cultures and then equate them a particular bounded community.[5] In contrast, a diasporic perspective situates London–Punjabi youth and their families in relation to the web of transnational connections between Punjabis in India, Pakistan, Britain, Germany, Canada and the USA. The connections and relations of 'absence' between these places are greatly strengthened by modern communications and transport systems, which in some cases are helping to strengthen a sense of diaspora consciousness in some families.

A diasporic perspective acknowledges the ways in which identities have been and continue to be transformed through relocation, cross-cultural exchange and interaction. The globalisation of media is deeply implicated in this process. Ever more sophisticated international communications technologies and the products of transnational media corporations dissolve distance and suspend time, and in doing so create

new and unpredictable forms of connection, identification and cultural affinity, but also forms of dislocation and disjuncture between people, places and cultures.

Stuart Hall has coined the term 'global–postmodern' to refer to a perceived breakdown of all established cultural identities, a pluralisation of styles, as well as to the global ubiquity of such features of youth culture as the jeans and trainers uniform:

> The more social life becomes mediated by the global marketing of styles, images and places by globally networked media, the more identities become detached—disembedded—from specific times, places, histories and traditions and appear free-floating.[6]

Yet, there are in fact limits to the extent to which identities can become entirely free-floating and self-selecting. The process of cultural globalisation is highly uneven and unequal. Also, tendencies towards cultural homogenisation are countered by opposing tendencies towards differentiation and pluralisation. The powerful revival of ethnicity and the growth of the politics of identity—drawing both on 'hybrid', 'symbolic' as well as on exclusivist and essentialist models of ethnicity—call into question the homogenisation thesis. It is possible to observe both a proliferation and a polarisation of identities, both a strengthening of existing local identities and a formation of new identities. An oscillation between 'tradition' and cultural 'translation'[7] is becoming evident on a global scale today. Thus, globalisation may mean neither universal assimilation into one homogeneous culture, nor a universal search for roots and revival of singular identities, but a complex, highly uneven process of many-sided translation by people who 'are irrevocably the product of several interlocking histories and cultures'.[8] 'Translated' cultural identities are the inevitable consequence of the simultaneous globalisation of media communications and growth of migration and transnational diasporic 'communities'. But while hybridity and translated identities are much theorised, there are few studies which give insights into the kinds of practices and processes involved in identity construction in particular local contexts. Nor do we know very much about how consumption practices, which are taking place in an increasingly globalised context, are implicated in constructions of identity.

Youth, Consumption and Ethnicity

It is now a common theoretical assumption among cultural theorists and anthropologists that social identities and distinctions are shaped and legitimated through consumption.[9] Bourdieu has given the now classic demonstration of the way in which distinctions of social class and status are expressed through distinctions in taste: 'Taste classifies and it classifies the classifier'.[10]

However, social distinctions, as expressed through youth consumption, would appear to be fading as cultural globalisation strengthens its grip. The pervasiveness of 'McCulture' and the forces of 'Coca-colonisation' seem to suggest that class, regional, national and ethnic divisions are eroding under the homogenising impact of the global leisure and media industries.[11] And yet it is obvious that those without access to the necessary economic and cultural capital, especially where inequalities of class and 'race' combine, are marginalised or excluded from dominant arenas of teenage cultural consumption.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the collapse of the youth labour market has brought changes in the social position of youth, especially working-class youth, in patterns of dependence and independence, and in the significance of consumption activities in their lives. Cuts in youth benefits have deepened financial hardship for youth and their families. State-run vocational schemes have extended the period of post-16 education in an unprecedented manner. They have also lengthened the period of financial dependence on families and domicile with them while keeping youngsters off the streets, and unemployment figures down. The subsequent delayed or non-entry of youth to employment and the postponement of financial independence effectively excludes many young people from the 'work and spend' ethos which is integral both to consumer culture and to an adult lifestyle.[12] Whereas the sphere of production and work used to be a primary source of social identification for adults and youth alike, social identities and distinctions are increasingly being expressed through consumption.[13] But we need to know more about how this works out in the practices of everyday life.

Youth markets depend on affluent youthful consumers. The emergence of youth cultures in the postwar period is intimately connected with the relatively greater affluence of youth and to the way they were targeted by fashion and music industries in particular. Between the 1950s and 1990s, patterns of youth consumption have been remarkably stable in that the bulk of expenditure continues to be on clothes and music.[14] In

the last two decades, with the expansion of global teenage markets, clothes consumption, from jeans and trainers to sportswear and designer-label clothing have become increasingly central to the establishment of teenage social identities and relations. At the same time, it is argued, there has been a weakening of conventional forms of youth subcultural identification based upon locality, territory and, in particular, class.[15] I want to demonstrate that class and status position remain highly significant factors in shaping not only access to material and cultural capital, but also that fine-grained style distinctions within local peer cultures express and embody class and status position. Furthermore, class and status may be juxtaposed and mapped onto ethnic categories and groups in different ways. As we shall see, in Southall, black youth, though of low socioeconomic or class position, nevertheless enjoy privileged status, power and prestige. In contrast, the situation is reversed for those Punjabi youth who position themselves at the top of the style hierarchy which they construct and consider themselves to be 'classy'. While the material benefits and the high socioeconomic position that they enjoy allows them the luxury of expensive fashion items of clothing, they have neither the cultural kudos, 'street cred', nor the power to shape local fashion that black youth exercise. Thus, high material capital does not ensure high symbolic or cultural capital. But the low material and cultural capital of those the 'classies' refer to as 'pendus' spells poverty, social marginalisation and exclusion. 'Pendu' is a highly pejorative term in widespread local usage, deriving from the Punjabi word *pind*, or village, and young people use it (both as noun and as adjective, correctly and incorrectly) as a term of abuse to encompass a range of derisory connotations from 'peasant', 'poor', 'backward', 'thick' and 'uncouth' to 'traditional', 'uncool' and 'lacking style'. Notions of class and status are further complicated in Southall by the overlaying of hierarchical structures of caste, as well as *izzat*. This is a concept fundamental to Punjabi and South Asian family life and social relations that connotes the indivisibility of family honour, self-respect, pride and social status.

Class and status, power and prestige are structured in very complex ways in Southall, but for the youth they are worked out and expressed through consumption practices in transnational teenage markets. Advanced marketing strategies entice young people into youthful consumerism while offering a potentially powerful source of generational identification with a transnational teenage world of images, styles, stars, characters and narratives. The teen dramas and advertisements of American and Australian popular culture are framed with a utopian

sensibility (freedom and fun) and an individualistic, therapeutic ethos ('let's discuss our problems openly'), that often appears to transcend class and 'race' divisions or, at least, to create an imaginary, utopian world in which such cleavages are no longer perceived as a problem or dividing factor.[16]

However, even if generational identifications are mobilised and strengthened through the consumption of teen soaps, music, fashion clothes, etc., and even if fashion, image and personal style are increasingly seen to cross-cut social cleavages,[17] class divisions persist and are reproduced through consumption. Globalisation does not erase such differences although discourses on globalisation seem to imply this at times. The so-called global teenage market remains highly stratified despite representing itself as a transcendent space for youth.

From a young person's perspective, exclusion from consumer culture relegates them to a position of subordination in the peer culture, reduces their confidence and acceptance within the group, and limits the resources with which they construct their identities. But, for those who can participate, it is precisely the apparent diversification of choice, the seeming autonomy exercised by the 'choosing self', and the individualisation of lifestyle and leisure which effectively ensures submission to consumer culture.[18]

The sphere of consumption is no less ambivalent for Southall youth. Cultures of youth consumption are strongly associated with autonomy and freedom, often from parents and, in Southall especially, from the local 'community'. However, gender differences in access to public spaces of leisure and consumption mean that young women's leisure consumption takes place to a much greater extent in the domestic realm. Also, survey data gathered as part of this study suggests there are striking gender differences in access to material resources.[19] Boys tend to receive much more pocket money, and higher wages when they work. They also spend more. They are not confined to working in the home or for family businesses as much as girls. While most expenditure for boys and girls is on food, drink and clothes, girls spend more money on beauty products and teenage magazines and boys on music and public leisure pursuits. Clearly, gender shapes consumption which in turn shapes gender.

Exercising taste and choice through consumption activities is also a a pragmatic way of negotiating ethnicity, or the relations between self and 'significant others'. Southall youth define themselves in complex ways in relation to significant others.[20] It is commonly thought that

only migrants have ethnic cultures and identities. However, we are all ethnically located in that our sense of self is shaped by our location in history, language and culture. Dominant ethnicities, however, tend to be taken for granted and are often perceived as superior. But dominant ethnicities are being profoundly challenged by the twin impact of migration and media. Not before time, British Asian cultural production (from pop bands like Babylon Zoo, Bally Sagoo, Apache Indian and Cornershop, as well as varied forms of Bhangra music to writers and film-makers like Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, Gurinder Chadha and, more recently, Meera [Goodness Gracious Me] Syal) is gaining increasing prominence in the British mainstream and transnational scene. This is challenging and transforming the very nature of British culture, as well as extending the range of options and points of identification available to British youth. Bhangra music is hugely popular among British Asian youth, and encourages an identification with a diasporic 'Asian' youth culture which transcends the religious, caste, national and regional differences which divide the parental culture. 'Asian' styles and fashions have also recently acquired a high profile in the British fashion industry. Indeed, since my fieldwork, British Asian style, fashion and club cultures have flourished. The British media have given a high profile to such 'rags-to-riches' tales as self-made millionaires Shami Ahmed, owner of *Joe Bloggs Clothing*, and Reuben Singh, owner of the fashion accessory chain *Miss Attitude*. But such high profile examples of success tend to mask enduring structural inequalities and the exploitation of women workers in the fashion industry as a whole.[21] The British press and fashion magazines designated 1997 as the year of the 'self-styled, second-generation Asian youth'.[22] Press reports suggested that British Asian women 'wearing a sari as a wrap skirt with funky trainers and a decolletage T-shirt' are setting fashion trends in London. The emergence of a new generation of British Asian fashion designers who are making their presence felt are regarded by the press as the 'new style gurus of British Asians' promoting a 'new Asian cool'. But as one commentator argued, 'Eastern style has mass appeal but that doesn't mean it's up for grabs'.[23] Such press reports reflect the suspicion among British Asian fashion designers and cultural producers of commercial attempts to appropriate and exploit the 'new' Asian dance culture and repackage their fashion, dance and music for mass consumption. This commodification of ethnicity, or 'ethnic chic' which is common in many commercial sectors, from fashion to home furnishings, rarely promotes or rewards the 'ethnic' producers themselves, and in many cases simply re-fashions

orientalist exoticism for a globalised consumerism which values 'difference' because it is lucrative and appealing to Post Fordist niche-marketing.

Such developments are nevertheless encouraging and strengthening the bonds of a broad-based, ethnic-cum-generational identification among 'Asian' youth in Britain and elsewhere in the South Asian diaspora. However, youthful rebellion against parents is perhaps a more compli-cated affair for British Asian youth. Negotiations of identity in one's youth are centrally concerned with distinguishing self from parents, and adults in general. However, the extended period of experimentation and rebellion against parents and prevailing societal norms associated with adolescence in the 'West' are complicated for minority youth by the prevalence of racism. Racism in British society heightens a sense of exclusion and marginalisation and tends to encourage solidarity with the parental culture. This often compromises, or makes ambivalent, youthful rebelliousness. To criticise or attack the parental culture may appear to signify complicity with racism. At the same time, because Southall [which is often referred to by locals as *Chota Punjab* or 'Little India'], has over the last 40 years developed as a sanctuary against racism. Southall youth are rarely directly exposed to racism in their daily lives in the way that their parents were post-migration, or in the way that Bangladeshis in East London are. A more common local com-plaint among Southall youth is that they are 'living in a ghetto' and they feel 'sheltered' from the wider society, and they are resentful of the close adult surveillance which arises from the close-knit networks of kin living locally. As a result, much youthful rebellion is directed towards Southall as a place, 'a dump' from which many wish to escape. Furthermore, the category teenager, which is intimately connected to the emergence of mass consumption and the teenage market in 1950s USA, is not an operational concept in widespread use among some parents where the transition to adulthood begins with puberty and poten-tial marriageability.

These factors complicate the way young London–Punjabis negotiate between the parental and peer culture, how they make the transition to adulthood, and the consumption strategies they adopt to present them-selves in everyday life. Some develop highly sophisticated skills in cultural brokering, and adopt strategic positionings in mediating between the complex, mobile sets of ethnic and generational, gender and class, religious and linguistic identifications with which they are presented and which vary according to context. Strategic responses to contests

of style are similarly both creative and constrained. Such is the ambivalence of consumption practices.

Hierarchies of Style

Style is self-defining and culturally defining. Clothes are part of the social and symbolic construction of a self which can be seen, classified and judged. They are part of the subtle grids of distinction and classification which define what and how we consume and where. The cultural importance attached to clothes, and the social and symbolic meanings they articulate and express, in everday life, on special occasions and in rites of passage, raises important questions about social identity and the criteria of group membership.

In Southall, youth recognise clothes as important markers of religious distinction. They distinguish between Punjabi Hindu women who tend to wear saris (often reflecting subtle sub-regional distinctions) and Punjabi Sikh and Muslim women who wear *salwaar kameez* and *chunni*. They distinguish Sikh men of East African and Punjabi background by the size and shape of their turbans while other markers, such as a bright orange turban, immediately identify the wearer as a supporter of the Khalistan movement. A very small number of girls and women now wear black turbans which local youth read as a sign of being a 'pure Sikh and having taken *amrit*'. However, some distinctions are fading in Britain (for example, some Sikhs are cutting their hair and no longer wearing turbans), while others are being emphasised (for example, more Muslim girls and women are now wearing *hijab* than a decade ago). Young people increasingly both conform to and experiment with a range of cosmopolitan styles and fashion. It is no longer a case of either 'Indian' or 'western' clothing reflecting some putative relationship with modernity or tradition.[24] Rather, the adoption of differing dress styles, the mixing, matching and 'crossing of different codes, and the meanings they generate, depends very much on the context and involve subtle and complex negotiations.

For young people, clothes are also subject to adult control. Clothes are often an explosive arena of struggle over changing norms of respectable dress, gender and sexuality. Codes of dress may be open or closed and are intimately connected with place and space. In 'controlled environments' such as family and religious celebrations, weddings or coming of age parties, a delicate balance between respectable femininity and flamboyant, glamorous elegance and attractiveness needs to be struck.

In less controlled environments, much greater emphasis is allowed on body display in more explicit sensual or erotic form.

Style and fashion are thus strictly gender-coded. According to youth local norms dictate that, in the presence of elders especially, the way a girl dresses should connote above all modesty and, by implication, chastity. Clothes may also symbolise revolt. For example, on Southall Broadway, a girl wearing a mini-skirt, tight, low cut T-shirt, high heel shoes and make-up, and a badge declaring 'so many men, so little time' (as I once saw) may be harassed and publicly called a 'slag', 'tart' or 'whore'. On the other hand, a girl who does not keep up with 'Indian' fashions is quickly labelled a *pendu.*

The style options available to young people and the kind of cultural distinctions, borrowings and cross-overs that characterise their lives are made explicit in the following interview exchange between two 16-year-old girls:

> *Harjinder:* At school we're all mixed up, English, black, white, coloured, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Hindus, but at home it's just one culture.
> *Kamlesh:* But you can't really say there's such a thing as British culture because within that you've got other people, you've got coloureds, English, Asians and blacks and sometimes you find each of these in a group [of friends] and they all mix their cultures together so you could pick up the way a *rasta* person dresses or talks or white people who learn the Indian lingo [...].
> *Harjinder:* And now Delhi is more westernised than Southall [...] they've got more variety there—more sari and suit [*salwaar kameez*] shops with brilliant and very modern styles. Lots of people in Southall are still living in the India they left behind them and they don't realise how fashions and other things have changed.

This paradox—the greater cultural conservatism of Southall than global cities in India—is frequently commented upon.[25] Compared with cosmopolitan, fashion-conscious, 'with-it' Bombay or other Indian cities which are open to change, Southall is seen by many as a *pendu* town dominated by village-bred, tradition-bound *Jat* farmers, who cling, often nostalgically, to a lost past.

But keeping up with styles and fashion is also very much dependent on one's access to certain cultural and material resources. Locally, status is achieved, and one's cosmopolitanism is expressed through knowledge

of the latest fashion codes of Bombay or Delhi. This may be acquired through the latest Bombay films and the glossy film, gossip and fashion magazines targeted at an Indian diasporic readership. But even greater kudos is gained by travelling to global cities like Delhi, shopping there and bringing style back to Southall. This obviously requires material resources.

In fact, most 'Indian clothes' are made by local women. Many grandmothers handed down skills of dress-making to daughters and granddaughters so they could make beautiful clothes that they would not possibly afford to buy ready-made. Some women learned to sew as a way of avoiding having to clean white people's houses.[26] Large numbers of Southall women, who are not employed in low-paid cleaning or service sector jobs, are seamstresses. Apart from doing piece-work at home for exploitative entrepreneurs and working in the appalling conditions of local sweatshops, many women make clothes for family and friends, displaying superb skills in recreating from glossy Indian fashion magazines or the latest Bombay blockbuster. The obsession with the right or 'authentic' label does not apply here where, in fact, authenticity means 'hand-made' and individually designed, and personally created as opposed to 'off the peg' and mass produced.

But in defining the hierarchy of taste in style and fashion, my informants concentrate mainly on 'western' clothes. This is because the hierarchy emerged primarily through their TV talk—through a discussion of their favourite advertisements on British television (which were mainly advertisements targeting the 'world teenagers' for jeans, trainers, body and beauty products, soft drinks and snack foods) which is still not a space where British Asian fashions are displayed. Below, I examine some of the meanings young people attach to clothes and the ways in which they communicate and establish shared values and social distinctions through tastes in style and fashion.

The following hierarchy was constructed by one mixed gender group of informants aged 16–18. This group was among the most academically successful among their peers, and reported higher than average expenditure on clothes and leisure pursuits. They were dominant in the peer culture in terms of access to educational, cultural, material and social capital. They considered themselves to be in the vanguard of local style wars. They identified three main categories of style among the youth of Southall: classy', 'subcultural and *pendu* (peasant). The three categories relate to a hierarchy of positions of power in the local peer culture which may be referred to as dominant, intermediary and subordinate.[27]

Perhaps not unsurprisingly, my informants put themselves in a position

of dominance at the top of the style hierachy and see themselves as 'classies', and their least stylish peers at the bottom are referred to as *pendus*. Though the vagaries of fashion dictate that by now the content of this hierarchy will have changed, its structure tellingly reveals the criteria of value which underlie perceptions of style difference and which change less quickly. I shall discuss these first with reference to the vernacular terms, and then introduce some key analytical terms.

Looking 'cool', is the ultimate style aim for boys and girls, although a wide range of gendered connotations are attached to the term—such as 'hard' and 'pure' for boys and 'fit' and 'sexy' for girls. It connects Southall youth to American youth and popular culture, the site of many projected fantasies of escape, and lifestyle aspirations. 'Having' or 'getting respect', or being admired, having status, is another important goal. It is associated with the concept of *izzat*. With a marvellous semantic economy and symbolic efficacy, the term respect (as used in discussions of clothes and style), instantly connects youth both to the culture of parents and elders, and to the culture of sreetwise, black youth with connotations of black pride. 'Looking or being safe' is another term, deriving from black street culture spanning connations of physical safety in a territory, group solidarity and social/body identity.

Three interlinked criteria of value mark distinctions between the different style categories and underpin all efforts at 'being cool', 'safe' and 'having respect'. The following are my own analytical terms: cosmopolitanism, authenticity and individualism. These terms of value provide the grammar for the production of self as a 'classy cosmopolitan'.

For Southall youth, the 'cool body' is dependent on detachment from specifically local, territorially-based styles. A style which is not so much 'westernised' as cosmopolitan is aspired to. It is cosmopolitan in Hannerz's sense of a certain orientation which he describes as:

> a willingness to engage with others [...], an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experience, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity [...], a matter of competence [...and] skill in manoeuvring more or less expertly within a particular system of meanings [...].[28]

The cosmopolitan disposition displayed by Southall youth is one that derives from a broad-based set of generational identifications constructed through common patterns of transnational teenage media consumption, as well as by their migrant status. It embraces a sense of self as a

'world teenager' eschewing any straightforward or mechanistic assimilatory trajectory.

'Wearing the right label', 'the real thing not a cheap imitation' signifies far more than material capital—it connotes authenticity. My data suggests that self-esteem, self worth and confidence accrue from wearing the authentic label. The wrong label can lead to mocking and bullying or to insults about ignorance of style norms (low cultural capital) or a person's family being too poor to afford the 'right' label (low material capital). In this way, conspicuous consumption and status competition between friends and rivals play an important role in the local striving to maintain and augment *izzat*.

Youth styles and 'street-cred' are often seen as expressing uniformity and conformity to dominant fashions rather than individuality. So, whereas authenticity is related to having the material capital necessary to buy the 'real thing', cultural and social capital enables individual style, 'originality'. Paradoxically, this implies a creative conformity to dominant fashions. Thus, young people are constrained to express their individuality and creativity through modes of consumption and associated lifestyles.[29] The task, according to Bauman, is 'one of establishing autonomy through submission: becoming an individual through belonging, making a statement about one's personality through impersonal means'.[30] Individuality on its own is not enough unless it is communicated and shared.

According to 'classies', 'being cool' means 'being "classy"'. It means 'looking good inside and outside Southall'; 'wearing the right labels' or the 'real thing'; creating a 'personal look'; 'knowing what to wear and when to wear it'. Classy clothes may be 'posh–smart' or 'casual–sporty' and although 'western' clothes are the primary reference here, a similarly constructed hierarchy could equally be applied to style distinctions in 'Asian' clothes.

In sharp contrast, the classies position *pendus*, at the bottom of the hierarchy, greeting them with scorn and derision. They are caricatured by classies as being trapped in Southall and wedded to a local style that is closed and lacks flexibility. It signals an entrapment which is doubly bound not only to the symbolic space of Southall, but beyond to the Punjabi village. According to 'classies', *pendus* lack the necessary material and cultural capital to become part of any youth culture, and as such, they are subject to marginalisation and exclusion. They are portrayed by the 'classies', at worst as 'ignorant', and at best as 'naive', and too much under the influence of Punjabi parental and popular film culture. They are deprecated for being incapable of exploiting what

classies take for granted as their consumer freedom and stylistic choice.[31]

'Southall style' is a variant *pendu* style, more 'image conscious' but equally bound to local, symbolic territory. Southallis 'try to keep up with fashions' but they wear cheaper versions of 'normal fashion'. They buy clothes in cheap shops in Southall: girls buy 'blouses with large lacy collars and double-breasted fronts' and 'cheap, imitation baggy trousers'; boys wear 'cheap versions of expensive clothes' from the down-market department stores 'but you can tell the difference'. The girls have 'masses of permed or *hennaed* hair'. They try to appear 'westernised' but display a lack of fashion awareness and consumer power which bind them to the culture of the local territory.

The same is true for the *pendus*, but more so. *Pendus* are 'out of place' among young people and belong in the parental culture. Often child and teenage migrants are denigrated as *pendus*. The caricature of a male *pendu* is 'someone who has just stepped off the plane from the Punjab, wearing flairs, huge shirt collars hanging out over a shrunken acrylic jumper, and platform boots'. His female counterpart 'wears ankle bracelets above white stilettos and a shiny satin-look, frilly blouse *outside* (speaker's emphasis) a pencil-thin skirt'. They are viewed disdainfully as 'modern versions of their parents' or as 'playing safe just to please parents': 'They wear what they can get away with in the eyes of parents without completely selling out to them, they try their best not to look out of it, they wear cheap jeans and lacy jumpers in horrible colours'. *Pendus* shop for cheap clothes in 'Indian' shops on the Southall Broadway, and wear 'tracksuits from cheap local markets'; or 'stone-washed, bleached jeans and jackets, checked shirts, and trainers from Woolworths'; or 'cheap, straight Farah jeans' (a local label). Girls wear *jutiya* (Indian sandals) from local shoe shops and boys wear 'trainers with trousers rather than jeans': 'Ugh! No-one else would dream of doing that!' They wear 'nasty jumpers with patterns or shiny beads on them', bought from stalls on the Broadway or in the local market.

The *pendu* wears strong, uncoordinated colours and inappropriate combinations of elements of traditional 'Indian' dress with a version of 'western' style which is itself associated with poorer 'Asians' attempting—and failing—to look 'westernised'. Their clothes are referred to as 'unclassy imports', implying cheap 'western'-style clothes manufactured abroad. This reference jars with the evidence in several of the above quotations that *pendus*, and to a lesser extent 'Southallis', are more likely than any other category to be wearing garments not only sold but manufactured in Southall itself. It is rather the wearers

of these clothes who appear as 'imports'; they might be in rural Punjab Their style is seen as an emblem of Southall's much-bemoaned statu: as an enclosed territory with few links to wider British society, whose inhabitants' links with India, furthermore, are not with the cosmopolitan modern India of the big cities, but with 'poor and backward' villages

In between these extremes come various subcultural style categories on an ascending scale of territorial boundedness, uniformity and conformity. The two most important are 'Hip-Hop' and 'Southall hard' or Gang-Style'. 'Hip-Hop' is seen as a 'black/American' style. The dynamism of cross-cultural interactions, cross-overs and borrowings among Southall youth is particularly apparent in the selective appropriation of black youth styles. Black American 'street culture' is a major force in popular youth cultures throughout Britain today, in terms of rap music and dance crazes as well as street fashion and style. Sportswear has become the popular 'street uniform' of local youngsters, and designer labels are of paramount importance.

Black youth collectively set dress trends in Southall and are much admired for their 'personal style'. Again, 'showing the label' is a way of creating a 'cool' image. They are 'honoury Americans', 'proud', 'tough' and 'not easily put down'. Most importantly, they 'look good outside Southall'. According to 'classies', they 'lack uniqueness', 'they follow fashion rather than use it to create their own look'. However, 'Hip-Hoppers' denigrate 'classies' for being 'straight' and 'yuppie', for following 'white' fashion.

Local 'black style' (itself powerfully shaped by consumption of black American popular culture) has a powerful and pervasive presence in Southall. Many elements of black youth and street culture are appropriated by local youth: not only dress codes, but also razor-styled hair, mannerisms like teeth-sucking to express disdain, posture and forms of 'crossing' between language codes are commonplace.[32] Black youth enjoy much more cultural power, symbolic status and prestige in Southall, despite their relatively low socioeconomic position, than do 'classies'. 'Classies' may have the money to buy expensive clothes but they 'sell out' and assimilate. They fail to mobilise the energy that black power inspires.

Finally, there exists a specifically local 'macho' style. 'Southall Hard' or 'Gang-Style' presents a 'hard', tough image and is associated with membership of one of the local gangs 'Holy Smoke', *Tuti Nangs*, and more recently *Shere Punjab*.[33] Some appropriate the symbols of Sikhism to convey a special type of warrior image, rebelliousness and machismo, combining Sikh emblems like the *kara* with jeans and leather jackets,

or casual but expensive sportswear, and plenty of gold jewellery—in order to convey locally specific meanings. This 'bricolage' of styles creates an ensemble which erases or subverts the 'straight' meanings of its component elements.[34] For those unfamiliar with the Sikh religion and with the specific position of Jats (landowners/landlords at the top of the caste hierachy in rural Punjab), it would be difficult to read the signs. This style, signifying membership of the 'Holy Smokes' (a Jat Sikh gang) is associated with proclaimed support for the Sikh separatist Khalistan Movement. Again, the style is doubly linked with a territory, but in contrast to the *pendu* style, which merely signifies an unreflected connection with place in the form of a lack of any economic and cultural alternative, the 'hard' style announces a claim to territorial power both on the streets of Southall and, for some, also in the Punjab.

Summary

The hierarchy of distinctions documented above reflects class stratification and positions of dominance and subordination in this local peer culture that, arguably, could be reproduced anywhere. The structure of the hierarchy and the terms of valuation (cosmopolitanism, authenticity and individualism) are not in themselves ethnically distinctive, nor do they in any obvious sense relate to inequalities of 'race'. The same structure and hierarchy, and criteria of valuation could equally apply to, for example, 'Asian' clothes in this peer culture or to 'white' clothes in a 'white' peer group.

The 'classies', as the term suggests, know the codes of style and fashion and can play with them. Their cosmopolitanism, as an expression of their relationship to place, is suggestive of their mobility, both social and geographic, and of their flexibility in terms of their ability to move across and between different versions of 'classiness'. They know how to dress for any occasion, anywhere. Their ability to buy 'authentic', status-enhancing labels is a marker of their access of material resources. But the labels in themselves carry little cultural cachet. It is in their ensemble that the uniqueness and personal style associated with individualism is communicated.

In adopting a subcultural style, by contrast, young people choose a specific transnational or local subcultural identity that is coded to be recognised but has limited flexibility and mobility in that it is only appropriate in certain social contexts. 'Hip-hop' style denotes a 'cool body', a proud and assertive posture, and someone with 'attitude'. 'Southall

Hard' or 'Gang-Style' is a creative and dissident way of asserting local and territorial power. At the bottom of the hierarchy, the *pendus* display of self reflects their lack of access to material, social and symbolic capital, their low status, powerlessness and local entrapment.

Yet, these youth styles are also ethnically and 'racially' coded. 'Classies' can be seen as fast-track assimilators into the white mainstream. 'Hip-Hop' is coded black and its adoption suggests an identification with an assertive, proud, black diasporic style. 'Gang-Style' is coded Asian-macho and *pendu* is Asian-subaltern.

All these styles provide insight into the subtle grid of classifications and distinctions through which London–Punjabi youth define what clothes to consume, when, with whom and where and the meanings they carry. Different patterns and modes of consumption of clothes become significant markers of difference. They are also a tangible manifestation of the dynamic of creativity and constraint, of the interplay of social structure and action as played out in cultures of youth consumption. In different ways, the various styles express the cross-cutting sources of identification around axes of class and 'race', gender and generation, ethnicity and locality, religion and language which, though structured, are in a state of permanent flux. We have seen how London–Punjabi youth mobilise the differential material and symbolic resources available to them strategically and creatively, rather than mechanistically, in constructing their social worlds, and their sense of self and other. Above all, we have seen how ethnicity is not based on some kind of essentialist or primordial identity, the property or baggage only of minorities, but it has to be reinvented by each generation anew even through such seemingly mundane and trivial acts of everyday consumption.

Notes

1. Words which are italicised are Punjabi terms while those which are in inverted commas are local vernacular terms. The term *Punjabi–London youth* is not a vernacular term but is used here to reflect what most of the youth in Southall who were part of this study say they share, namely origins in the Punjab, the Punjabi language and co-residence in a London suburb. (For details of the methodology of the more extensive research upon which this article is based, which included a survey of 330 Southall youth and fieldwork, see M. Gillespie, *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change*, chapter 3). Thus, despite

the fact that survey data reveals that religion is considered to be the most significant marker of culture and cultural difference in Southall, and that caste and other distinctions prevail, the majority of youth to whom I spoke on an informal basis, and when interviewed on the subject of preferred categories of self/group reference, stated that in the Southall context they would define themselves as Punjabi in the first instance. They argued that they wished to transcend the religious and caste divisions which they see as inherent in Indian subcontinental politics and society, and in the parental cultures. I use the term 'Punjabi', then, to express this prevalent and strong sense of solidarity among Southall youth, especially in the fact of what they see as rising religious tensions and conflict locally. However, I alert the reader to the multiple categories in use in different contexts. For example, when generalising experiences in the British context, the reader will notice that the term that my informants use most often is 'Asian'. The mobilisation of different categories in different contexts is a complex and intriguing area of study in itself which would merit much closer analysis than I am able to give here.

2. For a discussion of this see Z. Bauman, *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1988).

3. For further elaboration on this see J. Eicher (ed.), *Dress and Ethnicity* (Oxford: Berg, 1995).

4. For more comprehensive discussion see Gillespie, *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change* and A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

5. See G. Bauman, *Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

6. S. Hall, 'The Question of Cultural Identity', in Hall et al. (eds), *Modernity and Its Futures* (Cambridge: Polity Press: 1992), 303.

7. These issues are addressed by H. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), and K. Robins, 'Tradition and Translation: National Culture in its Global Context', in J. Corner and S. Harvey (eds), *Enterprise and Heritage: Crosscurrents of National Culture* (London: Routledge, 1991), 28–36.

8. See S. Hall, 'The Question of Cultural Identity', 310.

9. For a full discussion of this see A. Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); M. Douglas and B. Isherwood, *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978); G. McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); D. Miller (ed.), *Acknowledging Consumption: A Review of New Studies* (London: Routledge, 1995).

10. P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 6.

11. See G. Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society* (London: Pine Forge, 1996); D. Webster, *Looka Yonder: The Imaginary America of Populist Culture* (London: Routledge, 1988); A. Furlong and C. Cartmel, *Young People and Social Change: Individualisation and Risk in Late Modernity* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997).

12. See G. Jones and S. Wallace, *Youth, Family and Citizenship* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992).

13. See D. Miller (ed.), *Acknowledging Consumption: A Review of New Studies* (London:

Routledge, 1995).

14. Furlong and Cartmel, *Young People and Social Change.*

15. Ibid., 164.

16. For a discussion of local reception of Coca Cola advertisement see Gillespie, *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change*, 191–97.

17. For a discussion on this see P. Willis, *Common Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

18. For further discussion see N. Rose, 'Governing the Enterprising Self', in P. Heelas and P. Morris (eds), *The Values of the Enterprise Culture: The Moral Debate* (London: Routledge, 1992); D. Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 1997); U. Beck, *The Risk Society* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 1992); Furlong and Cartmel, *Young People and Social Change.*

19. See Gillespie, *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change*, 175–77.

20. For a discussion on this see Bauman, *Contesting Culture.*

21. See B. Malek, 'Not Such Tolerant Times', in *Soundings*, 6, Summer (1997); A. McRobbie, 'Bridging the Gap: Feminism, Fashion and Consumption', in *Feminist Review*, 55, Spring (1997), 90–98.

22. *Independent on Sunday* (London), 11 May 1993.

23. Ibid.

24. For earlier discussions of this see R. Ballard and C. Ballard, 'The Sikhs: The Development of South Asian Settlements in Britain', in J. Watson (ed.), *Between Two Cultures* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977); V. Saifullah Khan, 'Purdah in the British Situation', in D.L. Barker and S. Allen (eds), *Dependence and Exploitation in Work and Marriage* (London: Longman, 1976); E. Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (London: Virago, 1985).

25. See P. Yates, 'Interpreting Life Texts and Negotiating Life Courses: Youth, Ethnicity and Culture', in P. Spencer, *Anthropology and the Riddle of the Sphinx* (London: Routledge, 1990), 76–77.

26. McRobbie, 'Bridging the Gap'.

27. For further discussion see J. Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).

28. U. Hannerz, 'Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture', in M. Featherstone (ed.), *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalisation, Modernity* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 1990), 237–53.

29. See Z. Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).

30. Ibid.

31. A. Tomlinson, *Consumption, Identity, Style* (London: Routledge, 1990), 3.

32. B. Ramption, *Crossings: Language and Ethnicity Among Adolescents* (London and New York: Longman, 1995).

33. For a discussion of these gangs see Bauman, *Contesting Culture.*

34. See D. Hebdidge, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 1988).

From Pakistan to Punjabistan?
Region, State and Nation Building

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The phrase 'the Punjabisation of Pakistan' has become well-known amongst commentators and politicians of the minority provinces as a shorthand criticism of Pakistan's domination by its most populous province. The Punjab can thus be seen both as the cornerstone of the state and as a major hindrance to national integration. The Punjabisation thesis has previously been linked with the region's ties to the army, the major unelected institution of the state. But the alleged 'majoritarian autocracy' of Nawaz Sharif since his crushing victory in the February 1997 elections has added a further element to criticism of the Punjabi 'big brother'. The aim of this article is to explore the basis for Punjabi predominance in Pakistan's politics and to uncover both the myths and realities surrounding the Punjabisation claim.

On 31 December 1997, Rafiq Ahmed Tarar, the nominee of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) was voted into the office of Pakistan President. His victory was as controversial as it was predictable given the PML (N)'s dominant position in the legislature. Commentators expressed disquiet over the former Supreme Court Judge's public hostility to the minority Ahmadi community. It was also widely acknowledged that Tarar had been the choice of 'Abbaji' Mian Mohammad Sharif, the increasingly influential father of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, in political decision-making.[1] The cabinet was informed of Tarar's candidature just 12 hours before his nomination papers were filed. The obscure former justice's closeness to 'Abbaji' marked for many both the domination of the Sharif clan[2] and more widely that of the Punjab in the political life of the country. For with Tarar's elevation, the offices of Prime Minister, President, Senate Chairman and Chief of the Army Staff were all held by Punjabis. Opponents of what has been coined the Punjabisation of Pakistan have also pointed to

Nawaz Sharif's concentration of development funds in the province in such grandiose projects as the new terminal at Lahore airport and the Islamabad to Peshawar motorway. Simultaneously, projects have been starved of funds in Sindh and Balochistan. All development work was halted in the latter province early in 1998 because the federal government failed to pay its monthly revenue installment. Existing programmes were in themselves totally insufficient in this sparsely populated and under-developed province where less than a quarter of its inhabitants have access to clean drinking water.

The claim that Pakistan has become Punjabistan carries especial weight at the moment given that the province is Nawaz Sharif's power-base and the imperious Pakistan Prime Minister[3] has increasingly per-sonalised his authority since the February 1997 elections. The Punjab region has, however, played a key role throughout post-independence Pakistan history. It is the home of the Pakistan army which has wielded power directly for two-and-a-half decades and, indirectly, for longer still. During previous democratic dispensations to this, the region has also been of pivotal importance. This was recognised as early as March 1951 when the Pakistan Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan moved his own office from Karachi to Lahore during the Punjab provincial election campaign. More recently, during her first (1988–90) ministry, Benazir Bhutto found to her cost that a national administration in Islamabad could be undermined by a hostile provincial government in Lahore. It was, in fact, during the civilianisation of martial law during the later part of the Zia era that her bitter rival Nawaz Sharif had established Punjab as his powerbase. It remains so to this day. Despite the PML (N)'s unexpectedly strong showing in Sindh (where it won 12 seats) in the February 1997 elections, the bulk of its landslide majority of 135 seats was secured in Punjab. This was repeated in the provincial assembly results where it captured 211/240 seats in the Lahore legislature.

The Punjab has not only played an important role in the elected and unelected institutions of the Pakistan state, but in its economy as well. Since the breakaway of Bangladesh in 1971, the Punjab has also main-tained a demographic majority (around 56 per cent) of the total population. This situation, which is without parallel in India but may be compared with the northern regions in Nigeria, has drawn much adverse comment. Anti-Punjabi sentiments are held quite widely in contemporary Pakistan.[4] Indeed, they play an important component of both *mohajir* and Sindhi political identity. During the crucial opening decade of independence, the locus of conflict between Punjabis and the 'others' centred around

the Pushtun–Punjabi rivalries in the western wing and the clash between a Punjabi-led West Pakistan and the Bengali eastern wing. The denial of the Bengali majority's democratic urges climaxed in the human tragedy and national catastrophe of the unleashing of the Punjabi-dominated Pakistan army on the civilian populace of East Pakistan in March 1971.

A quarter of a century later, the consequences of the civil war are still working themselves out. Punjab has paradoxically been seen as both the bulwark of the rump Pakistan state and the major barrier to national integration because of the use of Punjabi military and para-military forces during civil unrest in Balochistan and Sindh. Fears were expressed in the mid-1990s of a Dhaka-like situation repeating itself in the troubled port city of Karachi. Scholars like Yunas Samad have coined the phrase 'the Punjabisation of Pakistan' to describe the region's post-1971 predominance.[5] Despite the Punjabi-bashing sentiments of some minority province politicians, the issue arises, however, whether Punjabi interests are as monolithic as they are sometimes portrayed? In other words, should the Punjabisation concept be problematised? Is it as much myth as reality?

In a number of important respects, Punjab's importance in Pakistan's political economy cannot be gainsaid. We shall look successively at the historical, economic and demographic reasons for this. The region's significance in post-independence politics is not interestingly rooted in its historical contribution to the Pakistan movement. Although the Punjab finally and decisively swung behind the freedom struggle, the Muslim League, because of the Unionist Party's predominance, was very much a latecomer in the future 'cornerstone' of Pakistan.[6] Indeed, the Muslim League had no experience of wielding power in the Punjab before the British departure, unlike, for example, in Sindh, Bengal and, albeit briefly, in the Frontier.[7]

The historical roots of the Punjab's subsequent importance for Pakistan lie elsewhere in the colonial pattern of economic development, military recruitment and administration. Clive Dewey's[8] empirical historical research has fruitfully traced the 'military–ethnic equation' in Pakistan to the colonial legacy of recruitment from a handful of 'martial castes' communities and regions of Punjab. This policy, based largely on the perceived threat from Afghanistan and the need for 'reliable' non-nationalist recruits, was buttressed by the martial castes ideology.

The continuation of colonial policies of making land available to servicemen has created a nexus of interest between the Punjabi land-owners and the military. Many servicemen acquired resumed land at

knockdown prices after the 1959 land reforms. Their entry into the rural and industrial elite continued apace during the 11 years (1977–88) of the Zia martial law period. Punjabi support for the military is not only based on a community of economic interests however, but by the presence of a large East Punjabi refugee population in many of the province's cities. Zia himself came from this background[9] and articulated its pro-Islamic and anti-India attitudes.

The continuation of the martial castes ideology since independence has ensured a predominant role for Punjabis in both the officer corps and the ranks of the Pakistan army. Punjab has thus been associated with the most important non-elected institution of the Pakistan state, one which has arrogated to itself the responsibility for defending the territorial and ideological boundaries of the state. The 'unrepresentative' character of the army has increased ethnic tensions. As Table 1 indicates, the Bengali majority of the pre-1971 Pakistani population was largely excluded from military service. This helped perpetuate racial stereotypes which exerted tragic consequences in the army crackdown on civil unrest in East Pakistan early in 1971. The Punjabi-dominated army has now become a Punjabi–Pushtun combine, but both Sindhis and *mohajirs* are as marginalised as were Bengalis earlier.

Table 1
Military Elite in Pakistan 1955

Rank	East Bengal	West Pakistan
Lt. General	0	3
Major General	0	20
Brigadier	1	34
Colonel	1	49
Lt. Colonel	2	198
Major	10	590
Navy Officers	7	593
Air Force	40	640

Source: Dawn (Karachi), 9 January 1956. Cited in Mizanar Rahman, 'The Emergence of Bangladesh as a Sovereign State', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research and University of London, 1975, 67.

Less well-known is the colonial inheritance of a Punjabi predominance in the bureaucracy. The Bengali pre-1971 marginalisation is again brought out in Table 2.

Table 2

Central Secretariat Elite Posts 1955

Rank	East Bengal	West Pakistan
Secretary	0	19
Jt. Secretary	3	38
Depty Secretary	10	123
Under Secretary	38	510

Source: Pakistan Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. 1, 7 January 1956, 1844. Cited in Mizanar Rahman, 'The Emergence of Bangladesh as a Sovereign State', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1975, 68.

Punjabi influence in the bureaucracy was shared in the early post-independence period with the *mohajirs*, but increased substantially following the Ayub (1958–69) and Zia (1977–88) martial laws. It originated not from deliberate colonial policy as with military recruitment, but resulted from the Punjab's greater educational development than that of the other 'Pakistan' areas. Hindus, as elsewhere in India, entered the new colonial educational institutions of the Punjab in much greater numbers than Muslims. The devolution of responsibility for education following the introduction of dyarchy was however seized upon by the Unionist Mian Fazl-i-Husain to improve the Muslims' standing. During the period 1921–26, when he served as education minister, he ensured a 40 per cent reservation of places for Muslims in such prestigious centres of learning as Government College, Lahore and Lahore Medical College, which had previously been Hindu preserves.[10] Punjabi Muslims thus entered the independence era with a strong position in both the army and the bureaucracy—the future unelected centres of power in the Pakistan state.

Finally, the massive irrigation projects introduced by the British in the late 1880s ensured that West Punjab would be the bread-basket of Pakistan just as it had been of British India. Before the advent of the 1880s canal colony development, the richest agricultural areas of the West Punjab lay in the districts of the Lahore division (especially the Lahore, Gujranwala and Sheikhupura districts). These enjoyed the benefits of good rainfall supplemented by canal or well irrigation. The unirrigated zones to the north and south (Upper Sindh Sagar Doab and the Bar and Thal) were far less productive.[11] Army recruitment increasingly sustained the economy of the former region whose population was crowded onto small farms. The southern dry zone was sparsely populated by nomadic herders with settled agriculture restricted to the

land inundated by the annual riverain floods. Tribal landholders controlled vast tracts of land. Still further to the west, there lay the even poorer trans-Indus Dera Ghazi Khan district. The canal colony development both increased the differentiation between the agriculturally poor and productive regions and shifted the region's agricultural wealth south-westwards. It also ensured that the infrastructure was present in the region to take full advantage of the green revolution technology introduced in the 1960s. Pakistan's agricultural output grew from Rs 7.7 billion in 1960–61 to Rs 12.2 billion in 1969–70, a growth rate of over 5.5 per cent per annum.[12] Output moved ahead much faster in the Punjab than the other Pakistan provinces as a result of the concentration of the new technology in the region. In 1976–77, the Punjab was producing 72 per cent of the country's output of major crops and 67 per cent of the foodgrains' output.[13] By the time of the 1981 Census, 80 per cent of all tractors and 88 per cent of all tubewells in Pakistan were situated in the Punjab.[14] There was not only a marked disparity in growth trends between Punjab and other regions, but within the province itself relatively few districts led the way. Agricultural growth increased at a rate of 8.9 per cent per annum in the Lyallpur, Multan and Montgomery districts during the peak 1959–60 to 1964–65 period. At its end, these three districts accounted for 46 per cent of the Punjab's gross production value despite occupying only 29.8 per cent of the cultivated area and containing only 32.6 per cent of the population.[15]

Akmal Hussain has revealed the polarisation in the size distribution of farms and increased landlessness which followed the adoption of the new technology. His field survey demonstrated for example that large farms of 150 acres or more increased their total area by 106 per cent during the years 1960–78. In the same period, the total farm area of farms less than 8 acres and between 8 and 25 acres both declined by 28 per cent.[16] His estimates, based on population census data from 1961 to 1973, reveal that 43 per cent of the total number of agricultural labourers in Pakistan had entered this category during these years.[17]

Akmal Hussain links the increase in the size of large farms to the attractions of owner cultivation following the introduction of new technology. In order to maximise their opportunities for profit, large landlords have resumed their rented out land from small and medium-sized tenant farmers. This process was associated with the purchase of tractors. Hussain's 1960–78 field survey data revealed a 67 per cent increase in tractor possession by farmers of 150 acres and above. His finding is corroborated by the 1970 Report of the Farm Mechanisation Committee. This showed

that 52 per cent of all the tractors at the All-Pakistan level were owned by landholders operating farms in the size class above 100 acres.[18]

The green revolution thus not only increased the differentiation between the Punjab and other Pakistan regions, but exacerbated the difference within it, between rain-fed and irrigated areas. The access to technology also further underpinned class divisions which were themselves historically rooted in the British bolstering the power of their landlord collaborators. Such differentiation within the Punjab on class and regional lines is sometimes overlooked by those who are keen to castigate the 'big brother' for Pakistan's ills.

Punjab's industrial importance cannot be traced to the colonial inheritance which was very sparse with the exception of the Sialkot Sports Goods industry and the establishment of the Ittefaq foundries by Nawaz Sharif's father in 1940. Far more important was the boost to industrialisation provided by the influx of refugee capitalists at the time of Partition. This was further assisted by the state's encouragement of development in the region during the extensive martial law eras. The mushrooming of the province's industries can be seen in the figures in Table 3. Symbolic of these processes was the emergence of Faisalabad, rich in refugee capital and labour as the 'Manchester' of Pakistan. Lahore itself also became an important industrial centre. The Punjab was of course always ranked second to Karachi in industrial development, although the balance tipped towards its favour with the 'capital flight' to Punjab following the 1990 troubles in the port metropolis.

Table 3

Industrial Development in West Pakistan 1969–70

Region	Reporting Est.	Value Fixed Assets (Rs) (000)
W. Pakistan	3,587	4,851,949
Punjab	2,052	2,178,582
Sindh	1,419	2,099,535
NWFP	98	554,208
Balochistan	18	19,624

Source: Adapted from *Census of Manufacturing Industries 1969-70*, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Development (Karachi, 1973), 5. Cited in M. Waseem, *Politics and the State in Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1989), 203.

We turn finally from the historical and economic roots of Punjab's significance to its demographic basis. Numbers of course only count

in a democracy. Much of Pakistan's pre-1971 history must be understood in terms of the ruling elites' efforts to dish the Bengalis of their democratic majority. This was achieved through such devices as the One Unit Scheme designed to give parity between a unified West Pakistan province and East Pakistan. It was also a factor in the decision to launch the 1958 coup and thus preempt the possibility of a Bengali-dominated government at the centre. No national elections were held during Pakistan's first decade of independence, although in the provincial elections of 1954 in East Pakistan, the ruling national party—the Muslim League—suffered a humiliating defeat. Significantly, soon after its election, the East Pakistan United Front provincial ministry was dismissed. This hammered another nail in the coffin not only of national unity, but of democracy.

While Pakistan suffered a dearth of elections before the 1980s, since the restoration of democracy in 1988 there has been a veritable plethora. Numbers now count and ensure that national power lies in the most populous province of Punjab. The region's demographic importance in the post-1971 Pakistan state is revealed in the figures in Table 4.

Table 4

Pakistan Population by Area, 1981

				Population (1,000s)
Area	Popn.	% change 1973–81	% total 1981	% urban 1981
Punjab	47,116	26.3	56.2	27.5
Islamabad	335	42.6	0.4	60.2
NWFP	10,885	29.8	13.0	15.2
FATA	2,175	–12.7	2.6	—
Sindh (ex. Karachi)	13,863	30.3	16.5	22.5
Karachi	5,103	45.2	6.1	100.0
Balochistan	4,305	77.2	5.1	15.6
Pakistan	83,782	28.3	100.0	28.3

Source: Adapted from *Main Findings of the 1981 Census* (1983), cited in C. Baxter et al., *Government and Politics in South Asia*, 3rd edn (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 169.

Table 5 reveals the demographic consequences for the regional distribution of seats in the National Assembly.

Table 5

Regional Distribution of Contested Seats for the 1988 National Assembly

Province/Area	Seats
Punjab	115
Sindh	46
NWFP	26
Balochistan	11
Islamabad	1
FATA	8
Total	207

Source: I.H. Malik, *State and Civil Society in Pakistan: Politics of Autority, Ideology and Ethnicity* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 36.

Two important consequences flow from this situation. First, to win national power, a party must possess a powerbase in Punjab. The PML (N)'s current eclipse of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is at least in part explained by the latter's declining institutional strength and electoral support in Punjab. Second, the Punjabi electorate's outlooks are important in shaping the political culture at the centre. At present, the growing Punjabi business class is a factor behind moves to improve Pakistan's relations with India. In the past, however, the large migrant community in Punjab adopted a more hardline attitude. The Kashmir dispute, for example, never carried the same resonance for Bengalis as Punjabis in pre-1971 Pakistan, nor since then have Sindhis been so committed as Punjabis.

Does this Punjabi military, administrative, economic and demographic predominance add up to a Punjabisation of the Pakistan state? The answer must be only a qualified yes, for the depiction of a monolithic and unified Punjabi interest is as much a myth as Punjabi economic and political dominance is a reality. It is for example, simplistic to regard Punjabi interests and those of the army as synonymous. Clive Dewey's historical scholarship reveals that the Punjabi-dominated army of Pakistani journalistic and polemical rhetoric is in reality an army recruited from just three Punjab regions: the Attock, Rawalpindi and Jhelum districts, although it is true that the economic multiplier effects of military recruitment ripple out to other areas of the province. Moreover, the Punjab itself is not as culturally or economically homogeneous as detractors of its role in Pakistani politics would have us believe.

As we have noted earlier, while Punjab was more developed during colonial rule than the other future Pakistan areas, economic growth

exerted a differential regional and class impact. The same has been true of the green revolution. Partition did not result in any significant land reform so that large areas of south-west Punjab were left under the domination of feudal landowners. According to government records, even after the 1959 and 1972 land reforms, large landholders (with a farm size of 50 acres and above) still owned 18 per cent of the Punjab area. This contrasts dramatically with the system of peasant proprietorship in the Indian Punjab which has produced higher rates of agricultural productivity, despite the impact of the green revolution in the Pakistani Punjab.

In addition to class divisions, Punjab is differentiated into four distinct economic and cultural regions. The northern region, which corresponds to the administrative boundaries of the Rawalpindi division, contains approximately 10 per cent of the province's population. From the colonial era onwards, the inhabitants of this hilly region have supplemented low agricultural earnings with army recruitment and latterly with remittances from the Gulf. The central Punjab contains virtually half of the province's population and includes not only the industrialised region around Faisalabad but also the fertile agricultural districts of the Lahore and Gujranwala districts. The concentration of population makes this the most politically important region of the province with 55/115 National Assembly seats. The south-west Punjab, which contains around one-fifth of the province's population comprises the Multan and Bahawalpur divisions. The Cholistan desert forms the boundary with India, the canal irrigation of the colonial era having transformed other previously barren tracts into major cotton growing areas. The poorest region of the Punjab remains its western districts, including Jhang district and the Sargodha and Dera Ghazi Khan divisions. In contrast with the central Punjab, its agrarian society and economy are organised on a feudal basis.

Cultural differences overlay these socioeconomic and climatic variations. To the north of the Salt Range, Hindko and Pothwari are spoken alongside Punjabi as regional languages; in the south-western Punjab, Siraiki, which is closely related to Sindhi, is spoken as a mother tongue by a considerable section of the population. By the mid-1980s, its leading organisation, the Siraiki Suba Mahaz was calling for a Siraiki Suba (province).[19] The regional variations in Punjab were reflected in the 1993 National Assembly election results. The PPP lost badly to the Muslim League in the northern Punjab, but captured 22/36 seats in the Siraiki-speaking divisions of Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rahimyar Khan and Bahawalpur. Significantly, charges of the Punjabisation of Pakistan

during Nawaz Sharif's current tenure of office relate to the diversion of development funds to the central Punjab and the influence of its political elite. This is represented at the apex of power by Rafiq Ahmed Tarar and by Nawaz Sharif's close friends and trouble-shooters, Ishaq Dar and Senator Saifur Rehman.

A further increasingly important source of division in contemporary Punjab has been sectarian conflict. At the same time, as mainstream religious parties have failed dismally in electoral politics, heavily-armed extremist sectarian groups such as Sipah-e-Sabha Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipah-e-Muhammad have been launching murderous assaults on each other. The Jhang district, with its Shia landholding class, has been the epicentre of this violence. During 1997, however, Lahore was the scene of a number of terrorist outrages, including a bomb-blast incident in the Sessions Court on 18 January and a sectarian attack on a mosque in the Gujjarpura area of the city on 6 August which claimed nine lives. The complex history of the rise of sectarian violence lies beyond the scope of this article, but it should be noted in passing that amongst its causes have been cited the legacies of the Zia Islamisation programme and the Afghan war, the return of Taliban militia to Pakistan, the sectarian indoctrination of the young in the widespread networks of *madrassas* and the sponsorship of a proxy war in Pakistan by the Saudis and Iranians. At present, it remains doubtful whether the Anti-Terrorism Act passed in the National Assembly on 13 August 1997 will contain the problem.

Punjab, it is clear, is thus by no means monolithic. We can therefore talk of the Punjabisation of Pakistan only in terms of the interests of the ruling establishment of feudal landowners, the military and their bureaucratic allies. The perception in the minority provinces is, however, of a unified Punjabi political interest. This stands in the way of cross-regional political linkages on a class basis. The Mohajir Quami Movement's (MQM) attempt to reinvent itself from an ethnic to a United National Movement (Mutahida Qaumi Movement) fighting against feudalism and corruption will form an interesting experiment in this respect.

Institutional reform, however, represents perhaps a more fruitful way to solve the 'problem' of Punjabi domination. By creating three new provinces comprising two divisions, with their headquarters respectively at Multan, Rawalpindi and Lahore, the imbalances in power which have undermined the country's stability will be addressed.[20] Moreover, such a constitutional step would also accelerate the pace of development

in the more backward parts of Punjab. Such experimentation would not be entirely out of keeping in a country whose post-independence history has been marked by 'the casting aside of older political forms for newer political experiments'.[21]

Notes

1. A. Mir, 'The Abbaji Factor', *Newsline* (Karachi), January 1998, 27–28.

2. It should be noted that Nawaz Sharif's younger brother, Shahbaz Sharif is the Chief Minister of the Punjab.

3. Nawaz Sharif's ouster of Syed Sajad Ali Shah as Chief Justice of Pakistan after a bitter conflict in November 1997 alienated opinion in the Judge's home province of Sindh. See H. Mujtaba, 'Sinned Against', *Newsline* (Karachi), January 1998, 32–33.

4. See for example, I.A. Rehman, 'Big Brother vs the Rest', *Newsline* (Karachi), October 1995, 67–68.

5. Y. Samad, 'Pakistan or Punjabistan: Crisis of National Identity', in G. Singh and I. Talbot (eds), *Punjabi Identity: Continuity and Change* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1996), 61–87.

6. See I. Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj, 1847–1947* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1988).

7. I. Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement: The Growth of the Muslim League in North-West and North-East India 1937–47* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1988)

8. See C. Dewey, 'The Rural Roots of Pakistani Militarism', in D.A. Low (ed.), *The Political Inheritance of Pakistan* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), 255–83.

9. Zia came from a middle-class Arain family which migrated from Jullundur to Pakistan in 1947.

10. Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 69.

11. The Pothwar Plateau was an exception in that it received greater winter rainfall.

12. M.H. Khan, *Underdevelopment and Agrarian Structure in Pakistan* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), 3.

13. Ibid., 11.

14. Shahid Kardar, 'Notes on National Unity and Regional Imbalances', in Iqbal Khan (ed.), *Fresh Perspectives on India and Pakistan* (Oxford: Bougainvillea Books, 1985), 228.

15. Carl Gotsch, 'Regional Agricultural Growth: The Case of West Pakistan', in *Asian Survey*, 8 (March 1968), 190.

16. Calculated from Akmal Husain, 'Land Reforms in Pakistan: A Reconsideration', in Iqbal Khan, *Fresh Perspectives*, 211.

17. Ibid., 212.

18. Cited in A. Hussain, 'Technical Change and Social Polarisation in Pakistan', *Viewpoint*, 30 September 1982, 27.

19. See C. Shackle, 'Saraiki: A Language Movement in Pakistan', *Modern Asian Studies*, 11, 3 (1979), 379–403.

20. The three new provinces would have roughly the same size population as Sindh, the Frontier and Balochistan respectively. The proposal for the creation of new provinces is not, in fact, as radical as it seems; it was put forward by the Ansari Commission during the Zia era. On the anniversary of Benazir Bhutto's first dismissal, Rashid Ahmad, a retired Additional Secretary to the government of Pakistan, argued strongly for such a proposal along with a fixed three-year term for provincial and national assemblies and local bodies. See *Dawn Magazine* (Karachi), 9 August 1991.

21. L. Ziring, 'Public Policy Dilemmas and Pakistan's Nationality Problem. The Legacy of Zia ul-Haq', *Asian Survey*, 28, 8 (August 1988), 797.

Democratisation in Pakistan: A Decade of Trials and Tribulations

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This article examines the strengths and weaknesses of the democratisation process in Pakistan during the decade which has elapsed since the death of Zia ul-Haq. It is argued that the way in which Pakistan made its transition to civilian rule—notably the impact of the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution—has exerted a profound impact on the course of political development. Nevertheless, Pakistan should now be understood in terms of the concept of a post-military state. The new democratic dispensation has seen the emergence of two competing groups of political alliances represented by the PPP and the Pakistan Muslim League. It is clear that a powerbase is required in the Punjab in order to win elections. The article also includes new material on the rise of judicial activism and its implications for the stability of the electorally-dominant second administration of Nawaz Sharif.

After Zia, the last military dictator who died in an air crash in 1988, Pakistan has completed 10 years of civilian rule. During this period, four elections for the national and provincial assemblies were held. Both Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Shariff were twice elected as prime ministers. The decade was characterised by a persistent constitutional wrangling over the controversial Eighth Amendment which had rendered the power to dissolve the National Assembly into the hands of the president. Three successive presidents—Zia, Ishaq and Leghari—dissolved the parliament four times, followed in each case by mid-term elections. Three caretaker prime ministers—Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Moeen Quareshi and Mairaj Khalid—presided over the exercise in mass voting in 1990, 1993 and 1997 respectively. The fourth caretaker prime minister Balakh Sher Mazari lasted for only five weeks (April–May 1993). On the other hand, no president left office voluntarily. While Zia died in office, Ishaq was sent on leave in July 1993, four months prior to completion of his term, and

Leghari resigned in a showdown between himself and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in December 1997. A parallel source of political instability was the controversy over the extent of the executive's power to appoint judges to the higher courts which directly related to the issue of judicial autonomy. This issue embroiled both Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif in confrontation with the Chief Justice of Pakistan. This weakened both the executive and the judiciary in terms of their loss of credibility and institutional decline.

In addition to constitutional and judicial conflicts, the power struggle possessed an ethnic dimension as well. It was widely believed by non-Punjabis that the Supreme Court had restored a Punjabi prime minister to office in 1993 whereas it had failed to do so in the case of a Sindhi prime minister who was dismissed on similar grounds in 1990. Likewise, it was claimed that the sacking of the Sindhi Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah in his showdown with the Punjabi Prime Minister Sharif in December 1997 exposed Punjab's hegemony over the state. The election of Tarar, a retired judge from Punjab, as President in January 1998 was perceived by smaller provinces as further evidence of concentration of all power in the hands of Punjab, because already the prime minister and chief of army staff (COAS) hailed from that province. The fact that democracy in Pakistan survived all these challenges makes it clear that the logic of representative rule has taken deep roots in the people's imagination and various elite groups and institutions have found it convenient and both politically and morally desirable to keep the system in place.

In the following pages, we plan to discuss the problems and prospects of democracy in Pakistan in three phases. First, we shall discuss the structural context of the process of democratisation in terms of civil–military relations. It is argued that in the post-military state of Pakistan, constitutional engineering undertaken by the army and the mode of transfer of power from the military to civilian hands have determined the present shape of democracy in the country. Second, we plan to focus on electoral politics. It is maintained that the non-party electoral dynamics in 1985 took issues and policies out of the national agenda. This pattern influenced subsequent elections in terms of localisation of polities as well as politics of alliance between one of the two Punjab-based mainstream parties on the one hand and ethnic parties from smaller provinces on the other. Finally, we shall discuss the way parliamentary democracy responded to the sub-legislatory role of the judiciary in terms of making and breaking of governments, in the perspective of the demand for judicial autonomy and what was increasingly described as judicial activism.

I

Analysing the civil–military relations in Pakistan during the period from the late 1980s to the late 1990s is the key to understanding the working of democracy in this country. The military withdrew from politics in two stages: first by getting the chief martial law administrator 'elected' as president in a referendum which was widely condemned as fraudulent, but which nonetheless served the purpose of keeping a serving army chief as head of state in the emergent post-military set up. This ensured that the transfer of power to civilian rulers after the 1985 elections was indeed a sharing of power between generals and politicians. Second, Zia forced the newly elected National Assembly to pass the Eighth Constitutional Amendment as a precondition for lifting martial law from the country in December 1985. This amendment transferred important powers from the prime minister to president, including the power to dissolve the National Assembly and appoint judges in the higher courts and chiefs of the armed services.[1] Co-habitation between President Zia and Prime Minister Junejo (1985–1988) represented a twilight period of democracy. After Zia, who had simultaneously worn the two hats of President and COAS, the top position moved into civilian hands. However, the dyarchical arrangement for power-sharing between the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary forces which was put into effect by Zia under the Eighth Amendment remained in place.

The political system of Pakistan in the following decade functioned as a dyarchy. The president typically represented the extra-parliamentary forces led by the army while the prime minister represented the majority in the elected parliament. The fact that successive presidents dissolved the National Assembly in 1990, 1993 and 1996 led to a bitter controversy over the loss of parliamentary sovereignty under the prevalent constitutional framework. However, the opinion on the right and within the military–bureaucratic establishment generally continued to favour the Eighth Amendment. It was argued that under this arrangement, a government's failure to resolve a political or administrative crisis in the country would not necessarily lead to martial law. Instead, the parliament could be dissolved and fresh elections held in order to put a new and more representative government in office. The military establishment considered the Eighth Amendment as an instrument of pressure over an incumbent government for 'good behaviour', failing which it could go. On the other hand, the weak coalition-based governments of Benazir Bhutto (1988–1990), Nawaz Sharif (1990–1993), and again

Benazir Bhutto (1993–1996), operated in an atmosphere of extreme political polarisation and thus failed to join hands with the opposition to repeal the Eighth Amendment. It was only after Nawaz Sharif comprehensively defeated Benazir Bhutto in the 1997 elections that he managed to get the 13th Constitutional Amendment passed by the parliament which took away the president's powers enshrined in the Eighth Amendment to dissolve the National Assembly and appoint the higher judiciary and services chiefs. This step elicited praise from all political parties for heralding an era of true parliamentary democracy in the country.

To judge the real position of civil–military relations in Pakistan and thus evaluate the democratic content of the polity at the end of the twentieth century, we need to focus on three aspects of military politics in the country. First, Pakistan is a post-military state. Ayub (1958–1969) took up a grand project of constitutional engineering which concentrated on centralisation of power in the hands of the president. He favoured a non-party political set up, restricted franchise in the form of a two-tier system of elections, a strong executive and a weak legislature. After an interregnum of parliamentary democracy under Bhutto (1971–1977), another spurt of constitutional engineering led by Zia (1977-1988) culminated in the holding of non-party elections in 1985 for what turned out to be a non-sovereign parliament. In structural terms, these projects of constitutional engineering undertaken by the army finally led to a low power potential of parliament.[2] This provided a strategic space for the army leadership within the political system even while it had formally withdrawn from politics. Especially, the mode of withdrawal of army from politics in 1985 significantly differed from its earlier withdrawal in 1971. Previously, it was based on an immediate loss of initiative after defeat in East Pakistan at the hands of India. This time, the transfer of power was gradual, phased and only partial.[3]

Second, Ishaq and General Beg inherited the two hats worn by Zia, President and COAS, respectively. The two positions, along with the newly-elected Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto together led to the emergence of what was widely known as the rule of 'troika'. It is interesting to note that the COAS continued to occupy a strategic role in the power structure as far as the public imagination was concerned. On the one hand, it reflected the popular notion that in the post-military state of Pakistan, no civilian government could hold on its own if it did not enjoy the full confidence of the army leadership. On the other hand, the Eighth Amendment had informally but effectively turned the president into a spokesman of extra-parliamentary forces led by the army. He

operated as an instrument of pressure on elected governments on their (the army's) behalf. This pressure defined the outer limits of the policy scope of these governments, for example, in the matter of internal security relating to ethnic conflict in Sindh and sectarian strife in Punjab. Alternatively, elected governments were obliged not to take independent policy initiatives on such matters as Pakistan's nuclear programme, the Afghanistan war and relations with India, especially in the perspective of insurgency in Kashmir from 1989 onwards. Benazir Bhutto's first government was sacked by President Ishaq ostensibly on the initiative of General Beg after a series of misgivings had bedevilled relations between the two.[4]

Third, the conflict between President Ishaq and Prime Minister Sharif in 1993 led to surrender of initiative to the COAS, who first tried to broker a deal between the two but then arranged for their simultaneous exit from their respective offices, as well as appointment of an ex-World Bank Vice-President, Moeen Qureshi, as the caretaker prime minister in charge of holding mid-term elections. The position of COAS as the chief arbiter of conflict between the holders of two offices again came into full play in 1997. After going through several rounds of 'shuttle diplomacy' between President Leghari and Prime Minister Sharif, he went for the former's exit from power. The fact that the COAS was able to exercise his deterministic influence over the shape of events even after the Eighth Amendment was repealed earlier in the year (1997) pointed to the army's essentially extra-constitutional input in matters of policy and personnel. On the other hand, the fact that the COAS favoured continuation of the parliamentary set up indicated the army's reluctance to adopt an overt political rule. It can be attributed to several factors, that is, the overwhelming majority of Nawaz Sharif in the Parliament; a rampant feeling among smaller provinces of Sindh, Balochistan and NWFP that the current federal system, based on a bicameral legislature, was the only viable option for them in the face of Punjab's domineering majority, especially as the army was generally identified with that province, as well as the international environment after the Cold War which shunned the prospects of another spell of military rule in new or restored democracies. In this way, the army's role moved from constitutional engineering to being part of the 'trioka' to finally emerging as the chief arbiter in civilian conflicts.

II

We outlined the structural aspects of the political system in Pakistan in the previous section with a view to understand the institutional and constitutional problems of public life and their relevance for the prospects of democracy in the country. In the present section, It is proposed to look at the processional aspects of democratisation, with a focus on electoral dynamics as it has defined the nation's march to democracy in terms and mass mandate. For this purpose, we shall focus on political parties and leaders as they contested elections and the pattern of voting followed by the electorate. The election system in Pakistan is based on the first-past-the-post system for the National and Provincial Assemblies held on the basis of adult franchise. On the other hand, elections for the upper house (Senate) are held on the basis of Proportional Representation–Single Transferable Vote (PR–STV). The Senate is elected by the four provincial assemblies carrying an equal number of votes. Thus, Balochistan with 5 per cent of population and Punjab with nearly 60 per cent are represented in the Senate at par with each other. This pattern of effective overrepresentation of smaller provinces in the territorial chamber is meant to constrain the majoritarian populism of Punjab which dominates the National Assembly. On the other hand, the asymmetrical policy scope of the two houses ensures that the National Assembly elected on the demographic principle far outweighs the Senate for the purposes of government formation and policy formulation in sensitive areas such as finance and international relations.[5]

The current phase of electoral democracy in Pakistan started after the 1985 elections and the subsequent transfer of power from the martial law to the civilian government. These elections were held on a non-party basis ostensibly to bar the Pakistan People's Party (PPP)—which was widely believed to be in a position to win a party-based election—from the field. In the event, the national alliance of parties called the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) which included the PPP, boycotted the elections. That paved the way for individual influentials everywhere to be elected. Later, the non-party parliament restored political parties. An absolute majority of the new Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) and Members of Provincial Assemblies (MPAs) joined the refurbished Pakistan Muslim League (PML). The party included most of the anti-PPP elements who had been defeated in the 1970 elections followed by the controversial 1977 elections. In this way, two conglomerations of groups and communities, immersed in adversarial relations,

emerged on the stage in mainstream politics, identified with the PPP and PML. The former represented the 'liberal' section of the middle class, progressive farmers and organised labour in Punjab, the landed elite, the embryonic middle class and peasantry in Sindh as well as religious minorities everywhere; the latter represented a cross-section of landlords, urban middle and lower middle classes in general and *ulema* along with their followers. The fact that the PPP was not present in elected assemblies from 1985 to 1988 left the field open for the PML to consolidate itself as a party of potential winners enjoying a massive support-base in the society.

By the time the 1988 elections were held, the political system of Pakistan had undergone a fundamental change as a consequence of the peculiar mode of elections in 1985 and the subsequent period of dyarchical arrangement for power-sharing between parliamentary and extra-parliamentary forces.[6] The non-party character of the 1985 elections meant that no individual candidate was in a position to promise a change in policy at the national or provincial level. Only local issues which traditionally surfaced during the local bodies' elections came up. Similarly, absence of extra-local input from political parties allowed the local dynamics to come into full play in the form of factional alliances, caste-based links (*biradaris*) and patron–client relations. In the process, policies disappeared from the national agenda. Patronage rather than policy emerged as the hallmark of electoral dynamics in the late 1980s. The basic candidate-orientation of the election campaign continued to operate even after parties were allowed to participate in the 1988 elections. On the eve of these elections the pro- and anti-Bhutto elements together occupied the centrestage of national politics represented by the PPP and the PML respectively. What the two parties lacked in terms of institutional maturity was compensated by their identity with the rival legacies of Bhutto and Zia on left and right respectively of the centre of the political spectrum. The two men fought the 1988 elections from their graves. A kind of a two-party model was born in an atmosphere of extreme polarisation with its centre of gravity lying in the majority province Punjab. It pointed to continuation of the grand divide in (West) Pakistan which characterised politics from 1970 onwards. Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif represented the two camps during the 1988, 1990, 1993 and 1997 elections even as the internal composition of the two sides constantly changed due to party defections.

One obvious consequence of the Punjab-based national divide was the emergence of alliance politics. The two mainstream parties PML

and PPP together secured a large chunk of popular votes which ranged from two-thirds to four-fifths of the polled votes. However, the former failed to obtain a majority of seats in any of the three smaller provinces in any of these elections. The PPP twice succeeded in securing a majority in Sindh (1988, 1993) but failed to do so in NWFP or Balochistan throughout the decade. On the other hand, ethnic parties continued to possess a firm footing in the smaller provinces, Awami National Party (ANP) in NWFP, Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP), Balochistan National Party (BNP), Pakistan National Party (PNP) and Pakhtunkhwa Milli Sawami Party (PKMAP) in Balochistan and PPP operating virtually as a Sindhi nationalist party along with the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) in Sindh. Alongside the mainstream and ethnic parties, Islamic parties contested elections and won seats in elected assemblies. However, unlike the former, these parties typically lack local strongholds. Their support base is thinly spread out in vast areas, a fact which has cost them in terms of actual seats. Their share in the National Assembly has progressively declined from 18 out of 138 seats for (West) Pakistan in the 1970 elections to 17, 18, 9 and 2 seats out of a total of 207 seats respectively in the 1988, 1990, 1993 and 1997 elections. The ratio of the mainstream ethnic and Islamic parties in the elections held on 3 February 1997 was 155, 26 and 2 seats respectively. Mainstream parties have generally sought alliance with smaller parties across differences of ideology and policy. Such alliances operated on the principle of exclusionary politics, that is, leaving space for the other party by excluding oneself from the contest in a specific constituency in exchange for the other party doing the same elsewhere. The mainstream parties find it hard to penetrate deep into the tribal, ethnic or Islamic—especially sectarian—strongholds which operate as rigid vote blocs. Following the logic of political expediency, they tend to forge electoral alliances and later coalitional arrangements to form governments at the federal and provincial levels. Thus, PPP entered into a coalition with ANP and MQM in 1989 while PML has kept a relatively stable alliance with these parties during the last three elections and twice formed governments in coalition with them in 1990 and 1997.[7] This pattern of electoral democracy in Pakistan has worked as a cushion against the breakdown of the federal structure. It redefined ethnic demands in terms of allocation of resources to various provinces within the context of Pakistan. Also, the fact that ethnic and Islamic parties were represented in legislatures and governments at various levels has worked to bring the level of violence down.

Elections in Pakistan during the last decade can be considered fairly competitive. Government changed hands after each of these elections, from PML to PPP (1988) to PML (1990) to PPP (1993) and back to PML (1997), often at the centre of coalitions in each case, the caretaker government functioned as a passive instrument for change of government through recourse to exercise in mass mandate. However, the major adversaries in these elections enjoyed relatively unhindered access of channels of political mobilisation in terms of mass rallies, public meetings, door-to-door canvassing, pamphlets, cassettes and posters along with the use of megaphones and loudspeakers. The English and vernacular press exhaustively carried political statements of leaders, constituency profiles and accounts of internal party-wrangling. Views and opinions critical of all parties and persons inside and outside the government abounded on the pages of dailies, weeklies and monthlies. Indeed, the relative freedom of the press tremendously contributed to making these elections meaningful and legitimate in the eyes of the political community. On the electronic media which was state-controlled, interviews of party leaders were broadcast and an attempt was made, obviously not to the satisfaction of the outgoing government, to keep the balance in coverage of party activities. It is true that the low power potential of the parliament meant that power continued to gravitate in favour of extra-parliamentary forces represented by the president. However, it was the elected government which presided over the process of allocation of resources and distribution of patronage in the form of posting and promotion of civil bureaucracy, issuing permits and licences and giving loans to businessmen and landlords. The elected government wielded tremendous power to shape the events and allocate resources to selected individuals and groups.

While electoral democracy in Pakistan has taken long strides forward, in terms of mass mobilisation the legitimacy of elections was often marred by malpractices of various kinds. Rigging has been a household word in Pakistan ever since the 1950s. Z.A. Bhutto was widely accused of rigging elections in 1977. He was later thrown out of office at the end of a four-month-old mass movement against electoral malpractices. In 1984, Zia held a referendum for his own election as president, whereby three out of four votes cast were allegedly bogus. The 1985 and 1988 elections were relatively free of large-scale rigging despite selective allegations to the contrary. The report of the National Democratic Institute (NDI), Washington noted serious irregularities and statistical anomalies in the 1990 elections and condemned the caretaker government's blatant

partisanship during the campaign, even as it 'certified' the overall fairness of the election results.[8] Other teams of international and national observers typically expressed scepticism over the results of these elections including the Commonwealth, EEC and SAARC observers. The element of rigging in the 1993 and 1997 elections remained minimal and localised wherever it occurred. Overall, the results of general elections have been accepted as making the qualitative input into the process of government formation even when polling in certain constituencies remained controversial, which led to the filing of dozens of election petitions. Among the widely alleged electoral malpractices can be included: faulty electoral lists, especially involving women's under-registration as well as voters' double registration; appointment of partisan officers in the 'target' areas including, in some cases, partisan judges in district courts; establishment of an election cell outside the Election Commission; partisan use of electronic media; payment of public fund outlays to various candidates in the name of development; harassment or even abduction of the other party's polling agents, bogus voting through impersonation and even changing results during the process of calculating results coming from polling stations.[9] Similarly, separate electorates for religious minorities rendered their elections into an elaborate farce as their constituencies covered whole districts, provinces or even the nation as a unit.

A general feature of the process of democratisation from the 1988 elections onwards has been voter apathy. The relative absence of ideas and ideals from the political discourse of the rival parties has narrowed down the differences between them and thus rendered the choice of policy for voters meaningless and irrelevant. There is rampant cynicism about the continuing domination over public life by the same faces from amongst landlords—known as feudal in common parlance—across the divide between government and opposition, between PML and PPP and between the older and younger generations of parliamentarians. A second contributory factor in this regard in 1997 was the general prediction about the outcome of elections in favour of Nawaz Sharif. It was widely believed that Benazir Bhutto's government was not dismissed simply to be allowed back into office, a logic which had similarly applied to the bleak changes of Nawaz Sharif in 1993. This inevitably dampened public excitement. Third, gross allegations about the corruption of Benazir Bhutto's government stuck to her during the election campaign. The Supreme Court gave its verdict only a few days before elections on Benazir Bhutto's petition against dissolution of the National Assembly in November 1996 by upholding the presidential action on

grounds of corruption. Not surprisingly, a large number of the PPP voters did not come out to cast their votes on the polling day. Finally, the voter fatigue reflected the continuing power of day-to-day administration in the hands of the local bureaucracy. In general perception, power lay outside rather than inside the legislature in the form of district administration's initiative to get things done through the courts, nation-building departments as well as regulatory institutions such as Excise and Taxation Department. The voter turnout had continued to decline over a quarter of a century from 54 per cent in 1970 (for West Pakistan) to 43.07 per cent, 45.46 per cent, 40.92 per cent and 35.92 in 1988, 1990, 1993 and 1997 respectively. Currently, as few as one-third of registered voters cast their votes. In some backward areas such as Balochistan, only 24 per cent voters went to the polls. In Balochistan and to some extent even in NWFP, voting percentages have been low due to lack of civic consciousness and certain cultural practices such as barring women from casting their votes, along with the vast geographical distances covered by single constituencies.

Successive governments in Pakistan during the 1990s suffered from various challenges to their authority. Some of these challenges came from within the state such as from the president who was equipped with the Eighth Amendment, from intelligence agencies—especially ISI—which allegedly tried to follow its own agenda on what it considered matters of national security in Karachi and elsewhere, and from the judiciary which demanded institutional autonomy and even took *suo moto* notice of official corruption in the spirit of what was generally hailed as judicial activism. Controversy about the Eighth Amendment occupied a central position in the political debate. On the one hand, it was considered a bulwark against martial law. Conversely, it represented the greatest challenge to rule by public representatives in terms of political stability. It symbolised the loss of parliamentary sovereignty. It was widely believed that successive presidents dissolved the National Assembly at the behest of armed forces or at least with their support. In the context of the continuing crisis of dyarchy, the president emerged as representative of army and bureaucracy as well as smaller provinces which were only partially controlled by central governments belonging to one of the two Punjab-based mainstream parties. The tensions between president and prime minister were finally resolved, first with the passage of the 13th Amendment in April 1997 which denuded the president of his discretionary powers, and later with the defeat of President Leghari in December 1997 in a showdown with the prime minister. With the

crucial powers of dissolution of the National Assembly enshrined in Article 58(2) (b) of the Eighth Amendment no longer in place and the last president who enjoyed powers under this amendment and used them to dissolve the National Assembly in 1996 being out, the political scene in Pakistan seems to be set for the completion of tenure by the incumbent government.

The parliament under Nawaz Sharif has become sovereign in a legal sense. However, it has yet to assert itself as a legislature. There has been a widespread concern in political circles about the grim prospects of concentration of powers in the hands of prime minister. Three developments in this field need to be mentioned: first, the heavy mandate of Nawaz Sharif in the 1997 elections, with 134 out of 207 seats won by him in the National Assembly, militates against the emergence of a tolerant political atmosphere. The PPP opposition has been reduced to a bare 20 seats. Second, Benazir Bhutto lost public credibility on account of the freezing of bank accounts belonging to herself, her mother and her husband Asif Zardari by the Swiss government on the basis of a prima facie case of corruption against them whereby the government's Accountability Cell was obliged to prove its case against Bhutto's corruption. This has further removed any credible challenge to the Nawaz Sharif government from the political field. Finally, the two important ethnonationalist parties, ANP in NWFP and MQM in Sindh became coalition partners in the PML-led governments in the two provinces respectively. In the National Assembly, the presence of ethnic parties from Balochistan such as JWP and BNP and the only Islamic party Jamiat Ulema Islam (JUI) is very small, with no potential to build up opposition against Nawaz Sharif.

A long history of party defections in the past has created a case in the public mind for controlling the members of parliamentary parties from floor-crossing and thus destabilising the incumbent governments. The parliament passed the 14th Amendment in the Constitution in 1997 which put a restraint on party members from voting against the party line or defecting from the party. This move was widely criticised on the ground that it would turn the prime minister into a virtual dictator. On its part, the government claimed that it would bring stability to parliamentary democracy and facilitate the process of legislation. Indeed, legislative activity on the floor of the parliament throughout the post-Zia decade has been far from satisfactory. Typically, governments issued presidential ordinances and later put them to vote in the two houses often without allowing elaborate discussion and scrutiny by select committees.

For example, 93, 133 and 125 presidential ordinances were issued in 1994, 1995 and 1996 respectively.[10] This pattern of law-making has considerably weakened the legislative wing of the state and reduced elected assemblies to the role of mere platforms for projection of local interests. It is not yet clear whether the second Nawaz Sharif government, with its dominant position in the parliament, will take decisive action in favour of stopping the practice of issuing presidential ordinances, allowing the full process of legislative scrutiny before passing a law and accommodating the opposition's point of view in a procedural sense.

The decade under consideration has seen two contradictory developments vis-à-vis the judiciary. On the one hand, the judiciary has increased in prestige and political significance. Under Zia's martial law, the higher courts suffered more than their fair share of beating. They were barred from hearing appeals against military courts vide amendment of Article 199 of the Constitution on 26 May 1980 and later Provisional Constitution Order (PCO) on 23 March 1981. The judges of these courts were ordered to take an oath to uphold the politico-constitutional set up of the military government. They were typically appointed on an ad hoc basis in order to keep them dependent on the goodwill of President Zia. However, after Zia dismissed Junejo's government and called for new elections, the judiciary started asserting itself in terms of giving 'independent' judgments. In the case of a petition filed by Benazir Bhutto challenging the amended Section 3B of the Political Parties Act, the Supreme Court ruled that requirements of registration and submission of accounts for audit were inconsistent with fundamental rights provided in the Constitution.[11] Later, the Lahore High Court declared the dissolution of the National Assembly on 29 May 1988 as unconstitutional. Soon afterwards, the Supreme Court upturned Zia's decision to hold elections on a non-party basis and restored the right of parties to contest elections. Obviously, the judiciary was keen to put into motion the process of party-based parliamentary elections. It has been suggested that courts compensated for 'incomplete constitution-making' in Pakistan and, along with the lawyers, constituted the state in a way meaningful to the common citizens.[12]

It is interesting to see the judiciary in Pakistan described as 'a political institution' because it reflected the ground realities in terms of the mood of the elite or the masses or both.[13] At the beginning of the current phase of democracy in Pakistan at the end of the 1980s, courts acted as guardians of the mode of transfer from a military to a civilian set up. In so doing, courts carefully preserved a conservative profile consistent with the establishment's view on the relative importance of the

state's institutions even as they moved to the centre of the political stage for purposes of adjudicating the issue of dissolution of elected assemblies and dismissal of governments in 1988, 1990, 1993 and 1996. The courts clearly upheld the presidential action of dissolving the parliament in 1990 and 1996. In 1998, they declared the action unconstitutional but refrained from restoring the parliament. In 1993, the Supreme Court actually restored the National Assembly which, however, could not last for more than two months and was dissolved again, this time through a deal between the president and the prime minister brokered by the COAS. The 1993 decision of the court was an exception which proved the rule that the judiciary displayed formalistic bias in its approach to democracy through strict adherence to constitutional provisions. Between politics and the state, whenever the two represented identifiably opposite positions taken by parliamentary and extra-parliamentary forces, the judiciary tended to go along with the latter and by default alienate the former. That set the stage for a lack of trust between successive governments and the higher courts during the last decade. The courts distinguished between the need to maintain the post-1985 democratic set up and the universally discredited Eighth Amendment which had actually made the transition to democracy possible in the first place. The end justified the means insofar as the thinking of the higher courts was concerned, as demonstrated by the approach of the Sindh High Court which dealt with several cases challenging the controversial amendment in 1989. The more the politico-constitutional issues landed on the desk of judiciary, the more its interpretative role left a mark on the executive which sought to manipulate its thinking and increasingly the make-up of the courts itself.[14]

The issue of the appointment of judges to higher courts occupied a central position in the following years in the context of a battle for judicial autonomy. Early in 1989, Benazir Bhutto stumbled into suspending three judges who were appointed by the caretaker government. She entered into a legal battle with the courts which additionally took up the longstanding issue of separation between the executive and the judiciary.[15] Under Nawaz Sharif, the passage of the Shariah Bill put the authority of courts which operated under the prevalent constitutional set up under a cloud inasmuch as it took Islamic injunctions away from all the purview of these courts and adversely affected the spirit of constitutionalism as a whole. Later, the 12th Amendment passed in 1991 amassed emergency powers in the hands of the executive at the cost of justiciability of human rights. When Jam Sadiq Ali's government in Sindh (1990–92) arrested and allegedly tortured the PPP workers,

the courts often provided relief to the latter, much to the consternation of the former. Similarly, during the army operation in Karachi under Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto (1992–1994), the courts provided relief to a large number of MQM workers and their families who were apprehended, jailed, prosecuted and allegedly tortured. However, it was in the matter of adjudication of successive cases of dissolution of assemblies that the judiciary's integrity became a potential casualty because of its perceived political role.[16] Benazir Bhutto was grossly incensed at the role of the higher judiciary because the Supreme Court had restored the Nawaz Sharif government (by 10–1) in 1993. Earlier, the same court had denied restoration of the dismissed PPP government in 1990.[17] Soon after the Court's decision, the PPP staged a demonstration against the judiciary outside the Supreme Court building and publicly showed its disgust over the behaviour of judges. Later, she made the only dissenting judge in the Nawaz Sharif case, Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, as Chief Justice of Pakistan over and above the two senior judges, clearly as a reward for his stand against the other Supreme Court judges. She also took up an ambitious programme of appointing the PPP cadres as judges of higher courts, a step which alienated political circles, the judiciary and the articulate sections of the public in general. Later, Justice Sajjad Ali Shah took a firm position on the issue of the famous appointment of judges case and disapproved the appointment of 11 judges to these courts by the government. The Supreme Court also ordered the government to make appointment of judges in higher courts on the basis of prior consultation with senior judges and to stop the transfer of judges at will.[18] Benazir Bhutto dithered and let the crisis continue for six months from 20 March to 20 September 1996 when she finally caved in to the immense pressure of the president, the legal profession, the media and the inner party circles. However, by that time the damage had been done and she soon lost the initiative to extra-parliamentary forces. When Leghari dissolved the National Assembly on 5 November, he charged Benazir Bhutto's government, among other things, of seeking to destroy the influence of the judiciary by subjecting it to control by a special committee of the parliament.[19]

The story of conflict between the judiciary and the executive on similar lines was repeated under Nawaz Sharif (September–December 1997). The prime minister responded to the Chief Justice's move to recommend the appointment of five judges to the Supreme Court by curtailing the size of the court itself from 17 to 12. A severe reaction in the judicial circles led to a crisis between the two wings of the state

which lasted for 71 days. By the time the prime minister acquiesced, the damage had been done and his government reached the brink of collapse as President Leghari opted to support the Chief Justice. Other issues came up which put the judiciary firmly in the saddle, for example the matter of allotment of plots of land undertaken by Nawaz Sharif when he was chief minister of Punjab (1985-1990) and later the matter of Contempt of Court allegedly committed by him during the current crisis. In a defiant mood of judicial activism, the Chief Justice suspended the 14th Amendment which had effectively barred members of political parties from defecting to the other side. As the crisis deepened, the Supreme Court split into pro- and anti-Nawaz camps. The Quetta bench of the Supreme Court nullified Justice Sajjad Ali Shah's verdict while its Peshawar bench declared the latter's appointment as Chief Justice in 1994 null and void, and even appointed Justice Ajmal Mian as acting Chief Justice of Pakistan. On the final day of confrontation between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on the one hand and President Leghari and Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah on the other, the Supreme Court suspended the 13th Amendment in a hasty verdict and thus restored the presidential powers to dissolve the National Assembly. It was clear that Leghari and Shah had planned to act against Nawaz Sharif. The 'rival' bench of the Supreme Court annulled the verdict within minutes (9–0). It is widely believed that it was the intervention of the COAS at the last minute which was responsible for keeping the president from dissolving the National Assembly. Instead, President Leghari offered his own resignation.

On 1 December 1997, finally, the gravest constitutional crisis in Pakistan's history in which the judiciary itself was a party came to an end.[20] Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah started from a high moral ground of seeking judicial autonomy but then allowed himself to become an instrument in the power struggle between the president and the prime minister. In the end, democracy won but left the state institutions severely bruised.

Conclusion

Our observations point to the fact that democracy in Pakistan is passing through a critical phase of its history. The strength of the state's institutional apparatuses and the constitutional ethos in the society has been responsible for safeguarding the present political set up from collapse. We have argued that civil–military relations have been characterised by the army's constitutional preferences in the direction of unitarian

models of government represented by presidentialism, a strong centre and a strong executive. Typically, the army leadership played a covert role in keeping the 'right' kind of leadership on top or otherwise removed it from office.

During the last decade, the army leadership has taken a back seat as far as the day-to-day administration is concerned. It left the field open for political parties, communities and groups to interact amongst themselves, enter into electoral alliances, form coalition-based governments and establish viable rules of conduct in public life. The dynamics of electoral politics during the decade have moved ahead from endemic malpractices to a somewhat credible competition between the rival parties or party alliances. In the presence of presidential powers to dissolve the National Assembly under the Eighth Amendment, opposition from the mainstream, ethnic or religious parties typically aimed at destroying the credibility of an incumbent government through street demonstrations, court battles or even militant activities directed at creating a law and order problem, and thus tried to make a case for its removal. After these powers were removed in 1997, a situation of relative political stability in future can be visualised, depending on the performance of a government in office.

Indeed, successive elections have brought into focus issues of non-performance of the state in various sectors including education, health, public safety, sectarian strife, inflation, poverty and other problems of public life. Corrupt deals of politicians inside and outside the government relating to financial malpractices such as issuing bank loans without proper collateral, non-payment of loans and utility bills and kickbacks from foreign companies were brought out in public. There has been a growing pressure for accountability of public office holders. Elections and the subsequent ascendancy of ethnonationalist elements to government office has brought down the level of political violence, especially in Karachi. More significantly, the democratic norms of behaviour in the form of exercise of authority and influence by public representatives through the cabinet, government departments and select committees have enormously contributed to strengthening the sources of legitimacy vested in the mass mandate. Indeed, democracy out in the public has moved faster than democracy within the government. The latter often showed intolerance of opposition, undermined the role of parliament by issuing presidential ordinances and kept the channels of dialogue between the state and society relatively closed. This led to a public outcry for accountability. On the other hand, electoral politics took a

long stride forward when the 1997 elections reflected a public mood unwilling to accept the PPP's discredited government back in power. It can be observed that democracy in Pakistan has selectively moved forward during the last decade in terms of both electoral politics and constitutional development.

Notes

1. For a detailed account of transition from military to civilian rule including the 1984 referendum and 1985 elections followed by Zia's retrogressive constitutional engineering and lifting of martial law in December 1985, see Mohammad Waseem, *Pakistan Under Martial Law* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1987), 33–93.

2. Ibid., 50–52.

3. For a dichotomous model of military withdrawal from politics in a comparative framework, see Eduardo Viola and Scott Mainwaring, 'Transitions to Democracy: Brazil and Argentina in the 1980s', *Journal of International Affairs*, 38, 2 (1985), 193–97.

4. For an analytical account of Benazir's dismissal from office in their perspective of the worsening civil–military relations, see Mushahid Hussain and Akmal Hussain, *Pakistan: Problems of Governance* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1993), 94–97.

5. See Alfred Stepan, 'Toward a New Comparative Analysis of Democracy and Federalism', Paper for Conference on Democracy and Federalism, All Souls College, Oxford, 5–8 June 1997, 19.

6. Robert LaPorte described the period 1985–88 as one of a 'prelude to presidential–parliamentary democracy'; see Robert LaPorte, 'The Governance of Pakistan: Fifty Years of Trial and Error', Paper for Conference on Pakistan: Fifty Years as a State, 28–31 August 1997, Wake Forest University, North Carolina, 1.

7. For a discussion of alliance politics, see Mohammad Waseem, *The 1993 Elections in Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1994), 156–57.

8. NDI, *The October 1991 Elections in Pakistan*, Washington DC, 1991, v–vi.

9. For a compendium of electoral malpractices, see the PDA White Paper on the Pakistan Elections 1990, *How an Election was Stolen* (Islamabad: Midasia, 1991), xvii–xxiv.

10. Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, *State of Human Rights in 1996*, Lahore, 1997, 22.

11. *The Muslim*, 21 June 1985.

12. *The Muslim*, 28 September 1988.

13. Paula Newberg, *Judging the State: Courts and Constitutional Politics in Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 2.

14. Ibid., 210–14.

15. Ibid., 221.

16. Charles H. Kennedy, 'Presidential–Prime Ministerial Relations: The Role of the Superior Courts', in Charles H. Kennedy and Rasul Bakhsh Rais (eds), *Pakistan: 1995*

(Boulder: Westview, 1995), 26–28.

17. Begum Nusrat Bhutto publicly raised the question why governments of Junejo and Benazir Bhutto were not restored by the Supreme Court because they were dismissed from office on the same grounds; *Dawn*, 31 May 1993.

18. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 18 April 1996, 27.

19. *The Muslim*, 5 November 1996.

20. *Dawn*, 27 November–2 December 1997.

Allah Bux (1895–1978): A Lahore Painter of Punjabi Culture and Rural Life

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This article examines the career of the Lahore artist Allah Bux. Although he is largely unknown to a western audience, his paintings impressively evoke the essence of the rural Muslim West Punjab. After an introduction to the early influences on his art, the themes and style of his work are examined with respect to four of his paintings which are illustrated here.

Allah Bux and Abdur Rahman Chughtai were the two most respected painters in the Western Punjab during the first-half of the twentieth century. To this day, they are regarded as the greatest old masters of Pakistani painting, though the reputation of each has been through cycles of critical evaluation, waxing and waning with changing socio-political attitudes. Both Allah Bux and A.R. Chughtai were artists of their time—they painted Krishna and other Brahmanical themes for local Hindu patrons and Punjabi subjects for their Muslim brethren. While Chughtai evolved an 'orientalising' style derived from the Bengal School,[1] Allah Bux was committed to western illusionism, a style of painting he learned as a youth in Bombay.

Unlike Chughtai, who hobnobbed with the rarefied intelligentsia, made several trips to Europe and whose work was known and collected by elite and sophisticated patrons in South Asia and abroad, Bux has been described as a more down-to-earth personality with simple tastes. His perceptive and realistic scenes of village life and colourful landscapes appealed to a humbler audience. His paintings evoke the essence of the Punjab, particularly Muslim culture from the 1920s to the 1950s,

the period which forms the focus of this illustrated article.

Allah Bux was born in Wazirabad, a town about 60 miles north of Lahore. He had little formal training and was, in reality, a self-taught painter who learned from a variety of experiences in commercial art. When he was five, he was apprenticed to Master Abdullah, a Mughal miniature painter who resided at Rang Mahal in the old city of Lahore. There, Bux would watch the Master paint, and he committed to memory a variety of techniques. But in keeping with tradition, he did little more than grind pigments and run errands for Abdullah. Nonetheless, this experience would have benefited his future artistic development. Certainly, Allah Bux was not idle in his pre-teen years. According to Abdus Salam Khurshid, the leading expert on his work, by the age of 14 Bux was an accomplished signboard writer and ready to begin a career in commercial art.[2]

Bux had his first assignment at an English automobile firm. After that, he became a scene painter in the theatrical company of Agha Hashr Kashmiri. Before the advent of the cinema, live theatre was the most popular form of entertainment and indispensable to the transmission of local and national literature. Hindu mythology, folk-tales, legend and history were acted, sung and danced. Designing backdrops for the plays would have enabled Bux to focus on characteristics that define each drama—to identify costume and accessories, landscape and architecture appropriate for the time and place. In addition, he would have learned a variety of techniques and media including painting with oil and water-based paints. A number of Punjab painters became famous as theatre-scene painters and a few became teachers at the government art schools established by the British in the mid-nineteenth century.

In 1914, the young artist Bux went to Bombay and took employment in the Bombay Art Studio. He worked as a photographer and retouch artist, as well as a portrait and landscape painter. At that time, Bombay was a bastion of western realism, vigorously supported by the British Principal and faculty at the Sir J.J. School of Art. Scenes of Indian mythology and genre presented in the manner of the Victorian era realism permeated the Bombay art community. At the Bombay Art Studio, Bux honed his skills in rendering perspective, *chiaroscuro* (three-dimensional shading) and illusionism. Five years later he returned to Lahore and began participating in competitive national art exhibitions.

His painting entitled *The Eighth Beauty* won first prize in the category of oil painting in the 1923 Bombay Art Society annual exhibition. More awards and prizes followed at national exhibitions in Poona, Calcutta,

Nagpur, Patiala, Simla, Musoorie, Bangalore and Lahore. The competition was fierce and Allah Bux's success along with that of Chughtai was largely responsible for establishing the Punjab's artistic (painting) reputation. Bux did not align himself with a government art college or institution as most other artists did, rather, he continued to work as a commercial artist for many years. He was employed by *Paisa Akhbar*, and later by Kapur Printing Works. By the 1930s, students began to seek him out, congregating at his studio near Islamia College in Lahore. After the creation of Pakistan, a number of solo exhibitions were arranged for him at Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and in the hill station retreat of Murree. In 1960, Allah Bux received a national recognition for his contribution to the arts with the award of the Tamgha-i-Imtiaz.

Though Allah Bux is known for a diversity of subjects from Hindu mythology to sparkling landscapes, to fantastic panoramas filled with figures, to real life portraits and folk heroes, he is best remembered for his portrayal of Punjabi culture and village life. The four paintings discussed in this article exemplify the ethnic characteristics with which Bux and most of his countrymen most closely identified.

The painting of a Punjabi mystical Sufi poet (Plate 1) was probably done in the late 1920s. The poet holds a pen in one hand and gestures towards apparitions above with the other. The apparition is his muse—a famous Sufi poet from the past—Omar Khayyam, Mirza Ghalib or Amir Khusrau. The poet-muse, portrayed like a Mughal prince, casts his gaze discreetly away from the bevy of females in front of him. Of course the females (or handsome youths) provide the inspiration for the poet and symbolise the lover (the human soul) seeking God (the Resplendent Beloved). Poetry was, and still is, the most revered of all the arts in Muslim South Asia and among neighbouring Islamic countries. Puns, dual meanings, metaphor and subtlety abound in the melodic and emotional exposition of Punjabi verse. The poet is the model of Muslim refinement, intelligence and eloquence, though he inevitably suffers at the hands of his tormenting beloved. He 'who could not embellish his speech or writing with apt quotation from Urdu or Persian (or Punjabi) poets had no right to be regarded a cultured person'.[3]

The literary arts were equally revered by Hindus and Calcutta was the undisputed leading producer/publisher of literature in India. Internationally renowned poets like Rabindranath Tagore contributed to the Bengali literary renaissance, but Lahore held an equivalent position as a centre of Urdu production/publication in the 1920s. The literary wars between Calcutta and Lahore were indicative of a longstanding cultural

Plate 1: Sufi Poet

rivalry. Bux's ageing poet resembles ubiquitous photographs of Rabin-dranath Tagore who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, but any Punjabi would associate the reclining figure with Bullhe Shah, the foremost Punjabi Sufi poet. A follower of the Qadiri mystic sect, Bullhe Shah (d. 1758) roused the imagination and emotions of Punjabi Muslims with verses that encompassed 'the same enthusiastic rapture as that of the great Sufis of Turkey and Iran'.[4]

If the poet is the model of the heroic, educated Punjabi male, the beautiful, demure, doting bride is the ideal for Punjabi women. Allah Bux's *Punjabi Village Bride* (Plate 2) exemplifies that ideal. Dressed in her finery—a white *kurta* with golden *gotra* (trim) and lavender *dupatta* (scarf) also trimmed with golden *gotra*—she wears the newly-given dowry (clothes and jewellery) to deliver the midday meal to her groom. For many months after the wedding, a Punjabi girl will wear her jewellery and fancy clothes to perpetuate the bridal feeling. Her golden necklace combines folk and Mughal design but the *junar tika* on her head—a golden bell with a fringe of white pearls—is purely Mughal. Earrings and the *koka* in her nose are pan-Indian, as are the silver anklets. Glass bangles, though popular with females of any age, are particularly indicative of the new bride. They make a sweet tinkling sound when she walks, delighting her husband as she approaches, and they are a gauge to the vigour of love-making, where friends and relatives tease her about how many have broken during the first nights of marriage.

Punjabi Muslim women are expected to be the epitome of modesty, so she covers her head with a long, graceful *dupatta* and wears loose *shalwar* (pants) or an ankle-length *latcha* (skirt). In a typical pose adopted in works by Allah Bux and his contemporaries, the young beauty looks to the side as she pauses on her trek to the fields. She balances a plate of *sag* and *makkai roti* (spinach and corn tortillas) on her head and a pot of *lassi* and *makkhan* (yoghurt drink with butter for the tortilla floating on top). She will fan her husband as he eats and linger a short while after to enjoy his company before she returns to the village. Local urban patrons were attracted by such portrayals because of their nostalgic village content, while foreign collectors were interested in the ethnic qualities—facial features, hairstyle, costume and jewellery.

Regional pride was a strong motivation for choosing subject matter in twentieth-century Indian art. Calcutta artists painted the idealised Bengali bride and Bombay painters possessed a Maharashtrian version. Each was distinct. While there was an emphasis on the manifestation of Indian culture in art to maintain identity and a link with the past in

Plate 2: Punjabi Village Bride

the face of British rule, Indian culture was not universal but comprised expressions of regionalism. Allah Bux, like other artists, chose themes that were typical of his region. Some were pastoral, commonplace, even banal; but others, like this village celebration (Plate· 3) were lively and unique.

Village life in the West Punjab, as elsewhere in India can be repetitive and humdrum, so the time for an *urs*, celebration of the death anniversary of a sufi saint when he was 'married' to God, is welcomed with great enthusiasm. Entire families put aside their chores for pilgrimage to the shrine of a nearby saint. The procession is led by two *malang*, dedicated sufis who dance and sing inspirational music praising God, the Prophet Muhammad and the sufi saint. Though Islamic scholars considered elements of sufism to be heretical, huge crowds attend the celebrations at the shrines of saints. These shrines, together with the saints' descendents, are believed to possess miraculous powers to heal or bless devotees. Shrines of deceased saints are scattered throughout the Punjab and one of the most famous, that of Datta Ganj Baksh, is located in Lahore. The Thursday night gatherings at such shrines attract crowds of people and the singing and dancing are infectious. Inevitably, one or another of the dancers is drawn into a trance by the compelling rhythm of the drum and the repetitive motion of the *dhammal*.

It is this emotional abandon to the spiritual realm that Allah Bux imparts to the *malang*, who forcefully clicks together the flaps of his metal *chinta* (folk instrument) to establish the beat. A village drummer with the requisite *dhol* drum, makes the music fuller, and, somewhere in the groups, one would find an *ectara*, the one-stringed instrument that is bowed like a violin. Innocent villagers are awestruck by the barefoot *malang*, with legs uncovered, bells on his ankles and his shirt tied at the waist. His hair is long and unruly, quite unlike the turbaned farmers. Another villager carries an *alam* with coloured ribbons tied at the top.

The joy and abandon of pilgrimage to a sufi shrine stands in complete contradiction to the horror and utter decimation of the treacherous march forced on so many individuals at the time of the 1947 partition of the Punjab. Punjabi Hindus and Sikhs took whatever they could carry and escaped to India, with Muslims from the East Punjab making the journey in the opposite direction to Pakistan. The traumas of the migrations have been captured in the famous canvases of Jimmy Engineer and drawings of Krishan Khanna. Allah Bux depicts the throngs of Muslim refugees as they pause en route in a pen-and-ink drawing with an extended horizontal format (Plate. 4). The migrants are young and old, with
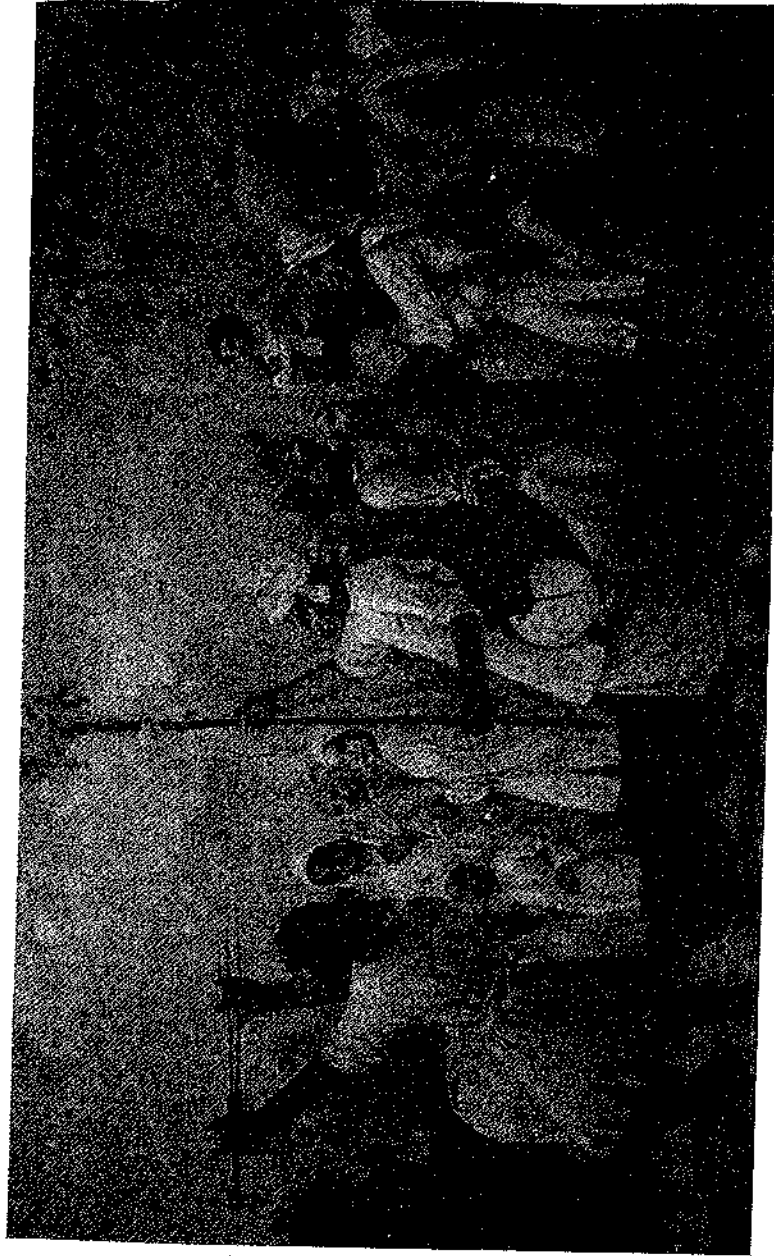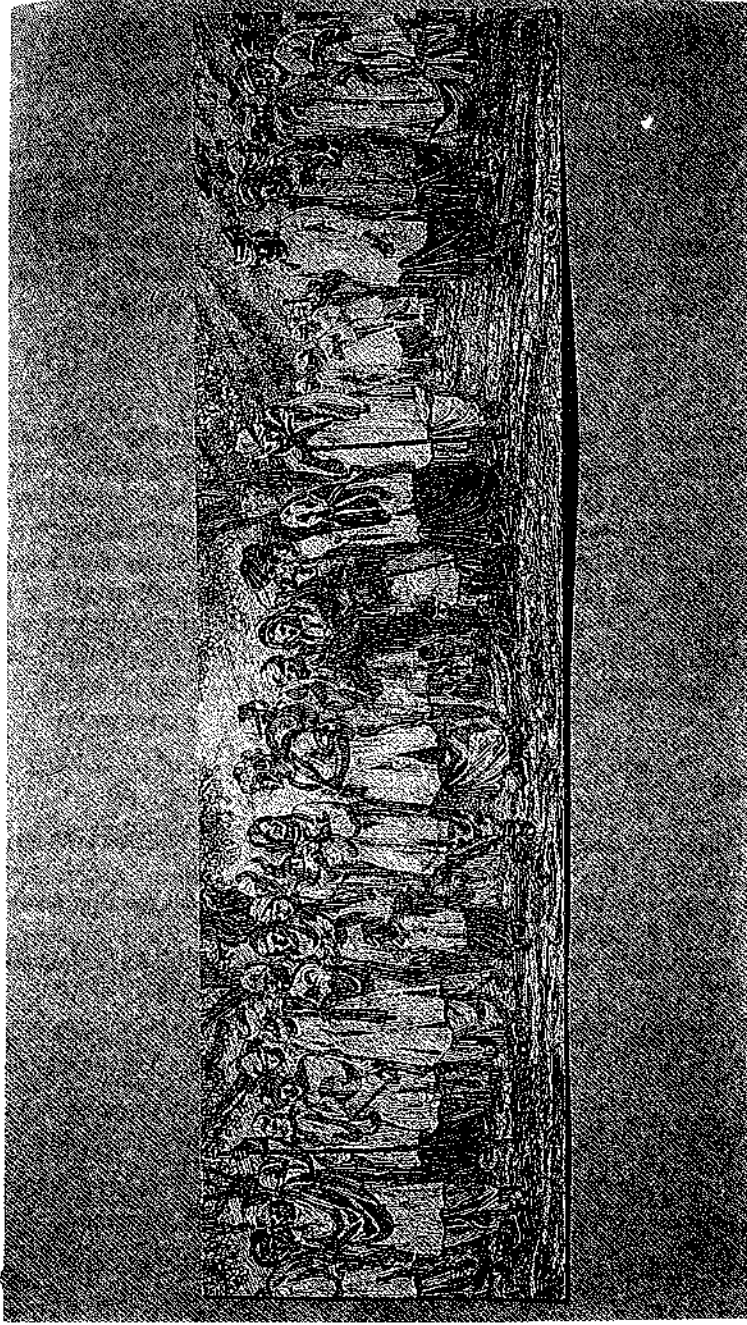
Plate 3: Village Celebration

Plate 4: Refugees

very few belongings. This contrasts with the laden bullock carts which feature prominently in some of Jimmy Engineer's paintings of Partition scenes. A single pony carries a pregnant rider. While Bux conveys the feeling of despair—his men look down dejectedly, or have a blank stare—they nevertheless look handsome and regal. Clothes are not torn and no one is injured or crying. Bux seems to say that the Punjabis are strong and resilient. They have endured an unspeakable experience of physical and emotional hardship, but have arrived at their destination with resolve and determination to begin a productive new life.

Epilogue

In 1976, Allah Bux established the Allah Bux Academy in Muslim Town, Lahore. Here, his style of art and preferred subject matter were perpetuated by his adopted son, Abdul Aziz (d. 1985) and grandson, Abdul Majid. Many of the Academy's students have entered the commercial art world of Pakistan and some have won top awards in national exhibitions. As an ageing artist, Allah Bux began losing his eyesight and many of his late paintings are uneven in craftsmanship. Nevertheless, in Pakistan, to own a painting by Allah Bux is to have an object of great artistic and historical value.

Notes

1. Marcella Sirhandi, *Contemporary Painting in Pakistan* (Lahore: Ferozsons Ltd, 1992), 21–26.
2. Abdus Salam Khurshid, *Exhibition of Paintings by Ustad Allah Bux* (Rawalpindi: Society of Contemporary Art Galleries, 1962), 1.
3. Karrar Husain, 'The Foundations of Culture', *Pakistan* (London: Stacey International, 1977), 226.
4. Annemarie Schimmel, 'The Sufi Tradition', ibid., 231.

Book Reviews

Contents

New from Sage

THE MARGINAL NATION

Transborder Migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal

RANABIR SAMADDAR

Throughout South Asia, questions of 'illegal immigration' combined with those of 'national security' have acquired politically explosive dimensions in recent years. Despite this, migration studies have remained, by and large, confined to the domains of economics and demography. Dealing with transborder migrations from Bangladesh to West Bengal, *The Marginal Nation* analyzes these issues within a richer perspective which accommodates the historical, cultural and geographic dimensions along with the economic and demographic.

Written in an activist interventionist mode, this book challenges the validity of the concept of the nation-state in the context of post-colonial South Asia. Ranabir Samaddar demystifies the constructs of 'borders' and 'national territory' by bringing to the fore the viewpoints of the migrants themselves. He questions the practical value of these terms by showing how the flow of people across the Indo–Bangladesh border is prompted by historical and social affinities, geographical contiguity, and the economic imperative. Pitted against the natural urge for survival, 'nation' and 'border' are easily marginalized in the minds of the people who then find 'illegal' ways to tackle this obstacle in the path of their well-being. The net result is that the very future of transplanted concepts such as 'nation-state', 'national security' and 'national borders' are in doubt in present-day South Asia.

220mm x 140mm/hb/1999/228pp

Asif Farrukhi (ed.), *Fires in an Autumn Garden: Short Stories from Urdu and the Regional Languages of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), xxxi + 407 pp, Pak Rs 1000 (hb), Rs 500 (pb), ISBN 0–19–577818–9 (hb); 0–19–577847–2 (pb).

Muneeza Shamsie (ed.), *A Dragonfly in the Sun: An Anthology of Pakistani Writing in English* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), xxxi + 599 pp, Pak Rs 1400 (hb), Rs 500 (pb), ISBN 0–19–577784–0.

Maya Jamil (ed.), *An Anthology* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), xi + 120 pp, Pak Rs 400 (hb), ISBN 0–19–577814–6.

M. Athar Tahir (ed.), *Taufiq Rafat: A Selection* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), xix + 68 pp, Pak Rs 400 (pb), ISBN 0–19–577811–1.

M.K. Goodwin (ed.), *A Choice of Hashmi's Verse: Alamgir Hashmi* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), xiii + 57 pp, Pak Rs 400 (pb), ISBN 0–19–577813–8.

Tariq Rahman (ed.), *Daud Kamal: A Selection of Verse* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), xv + 51 pp, Pak Rs 400 (pb), ISBN 0–19–577812–X.

Salaman Tarim Kureshi, *Landscapes of the Mind* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), xv + 76 pp, Pak Rs 400 (pb), *ISBN* 0–19–577810–3.

Shuja Nawaz, *Journeys* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), xv + 55 pp, Pak Rs 500 (pb), ISBN 0–19–577839–1.

A hundred years ago H.G. Wells predicted that English would come to be the leading language of southern Asia. It has at least come to have an important and still growing place in the life of the better-off classes of what used to be British India. This can now be said of their creative cultures, not simply of more mundane spheres. In Pakistan, the official national language, Urdu, is nowhere the mother tongue. It is being challenged not only by English, but by a new assertiveness of

regional languages, hitherto with scarcely any literary development. They include Punjabi, the vernacular of the politically dominant province. In Sindh, where social and national feuds are bitterest, the short story has proved 'a powerful vehicle of social protest and political activism' (*Garden*, xxvii). These new entrants, and Urdu itself, are finding translation into English the best way to make themselves known outside their own boundaries.

Since the Big Bang of 1947 out of which the new universe of India and Pakistan was born, few of the hopes cherished by Jinnah's followers seem to have been fulfilled. Progress in this first half-century has been, as Intizar Hussain writes in his preface to *Autumn Garden*, 'marred time and again by martial laws, dissolution of Assemblies, assassination, hangings, wars...'. In the virtual absence of serious political debate, writers have done what they could to fill the vacuum. Often only very indirect approaches, allegorical or symbolic, could be ventured. Spanish writers and film-makers under fascist rule were compelled to have recourse to similar tactics.

Of the 34 stories in *Autumn Garden*, five are by women. Nineteen are translations from Urdu; next comes Sindhi, with six; Punjabi has three, and Pushto, the Frontier language, two. Bengali, Siraiki (the Multani or southerly form of Punjabi), and Baluchi, have one each; one was written in English. All the translations seem adequate, though an occasional phrase may sound out of key.

The impression of Pakistan built up by this large jury is, to say the least, depressing. Many of the stories have titles that by themselves amount to an indictment: Lion's Mouth, Pieces of Flesh, Stormy Wind, Tunnel, Poison, House of the Dead, Severed Arm, Dead Traveller, Open Sewer, Decoy, Dark Wood, Inferno, Requiem. Women are the worst sufferers. There are workers, but no working-class organisation; intellectuals, but no progressive party. Until yesterday, there was no real political life anywhere in the Muslim world; religion has continued to provide the needful substitute, though in these pages we meet with scarcely anyone who appears to have any faith in it. There can be no open resistance to the dead weight of arbitrary power; only plotting, secret and perilous, by individuals underground.

Story no. 6 is by Manto, still remembered as Pakistan's unsurpassed storywriter, especially for his pictures of the Partition horrors. He took to alcohol, and died in 1955. In this tale, a man confined in an asylum on the border is found lying dead at the wire fence separating the two countries. Another casualty was the All India Progressive Writers' Association, formed not many years before the War. Its successor in Pakistan

was led by Ahmed Nadeem Qasimi, a gifted poet as well as writer of fiction, until the movement was suppressed and he, for a while, imprisoned. Story no. 9, about a sturdy though penniless old woman in a bus, shows him faithful to the social realism of pre-1947. So is the next author, Jamal Abro, a Sindhi born in 1924, who has had great influence on his countrymen. He describes a poor tribal family coming down from their mountains in the hope of making a little money; failure leaves them with no choice at the winter's end but to trudge back, after selling their nine-year-old daughter for 60 rupees, to be the wife of a villager's son who will soon want one.

Many authors have been finding in the media, television among them, a replacement for old-time patronage, in a country where very few can hope to live by writing. Of Enver Sajjad, author of no. 14, 'Conspirators', we are told that: 'He is an actor, dancer, painter, and a political activist', more than once in jail. In no. 16, by a woman, Zaheda Hina, a wife learns with horror that her husband, once a liberal, is one of the police torturers denounced lately in an Amnesty Report, and has been rewarded with promotion. In the next story, from Sindh, another woman writer, Noorul Huda Shah, speaks of life there as 'the dark tunnel of silence', and of a whole people as 'well-trained in the philosophy of being grateful' even for the favour of being hanged. Afzal Ahsan Randhawa was the first translator of a foreign novel, one of Chinua Achebe's, into Punjabi. His story, no. 18, is another strongly political one, with a touching element of the romantic.

An example of political protest disguised as fantasy is the second story, by Ahmed Salim (who did some of its planning behind the bars, in 1972, on a treason charge). A young man is sitting in his room reading the *Heer Ranjha* of the old-time Punjabi poet and rebel Waris Shah; he falls into a hallucinatory state, and finds himself soon to be seized and executed, but indomitable. Another illustration of the shift from the social realism of the 1930s to the plane of dream or nightmare is a tale describing a secret trial, that of a radical orator who has been silenced and has taken to writing, with blood from his mutilated fingers (no. 3, by Umrao Tariq—previously a senior police official). Such use of surrealism shows how advanced artistic styles, as well as high technology, may be borrowed by a far less mature society.

Two other stories (1 and 22), both from Sindhi, spice their attack on officialdom with a welcome infusion of satire. The first, by 'Ali Baba', complains of the distortion of history in textbooks, where the past, the editor comments, is 'conveniently rewritten to suit the ruling ideology'. Everything pre-Islamic is neglected and denigrated. 'Thirty-

fourth Gate', by Nasim Kharal, is a grotesquely comic account of the humble keeper in charge of one of the exit gates of the great Sukkur Barrage. One morning he sees a woman's corpse stuck in it. Conscientiously, he sets off on a long, toilsome walk to the nearest police station, and then to the next beyond, only to find them both unwilling to accept any responsibility. Finally, he gives up, opens the gate, and lets the body float away to the sea and oblivion.

Dragonfly is a large collection of both prose and verse composed in English. Writers who feel able to express themselves in English are likely to feel less closely tethered to their native land, and to be ready sometimes to drift away from it, to broaden their horizons, and try their fortunes elsewhere. One such has been Zulfikar Ghose, who moved to England in 1952 and further off—to the USA in 1969, where he now lives and teaches in Texas, and has a Brazilian wife. Inevitably such removals make for a degree of alienation. One editor refers to him as 'a Native Alien who was neither at home in Pakistan nor abroad'. Some interesting stories in *Dragonfly* relate to the countries of settlement, rather than the homeland. Hopes of America as 'some kind of magical Wonderland' may be speedily dashed by experience. Rukhsana Ahmad has written a novel and some plays about the squalid conditions that may await emigrants to Britain.

Verse has confessedly owed much to western models. It is all, of course, 'free verse', apart from very occasional garnishings of rhyme, and more frequently rhythms inherited from English blank verse. A western silliness too often imitated is the resort to very short, stunted lines, as if the authors expected to be paid at penny-a-line rates. A poem may consist largely of fragments of two or three syllables. The one on pp. 87–88 has meaning, but its first 13 lines only add up to 40 syllables. There are bright gleams, all the same. A woman writer who decidedly stands out is Maki Kureishi. She is of Parsee origin, and has become an English teacher. Her poems owe much to a gift of brief, naive phrases, almost like a child's, or reminiscent, at times, of Emily Dickinson. She writes sadly of kittens being drowned; also of fighting and shooting, in May 1990, in Karachi, the Belfast of Pakistan.

Oxford's praiseworthy tribute to the writers who have been struggling to keep their head above water in the choppy seas of this half-century, includes also an anthology of English poems by 16 writers, and five smaller gatherings each from a single pen. All are well-edited and beautifully printed and produced. G.F. Riaz, represented in the anthology as well as in *Dragonfly*, is likely to impress many readers. His group of elegies on the ruins of Mohenjodaro in Sindh are a recognition of a

prehistoric city and its civilisation that have at last begun to stir the minds of a few. Realism, with perhaps a streak of the symbolic, shows in a poetess' version of a decrepit old woman trying to pluck up courage to cross a road full of trucks and blaring horns (Shahbano Bilgrami, p. 86).

Through the smaller volumes, readers will be able to reach a fuller comprehension of five authors and their work. Taufiq Rafat is commended by his editor as the 'foremost poet of English in Pakistan'. He can be called a model, for West as well as East, of how to be modern without being freakish. His choice of themes holds the balance between man and nature, town and country. He practised, and recommended, long and laborious revision. In one memorable poem, no.12, he was watching a survival of paganism, the sacrifice of a goat at the foundation-laying of a new house, watching, until the spectacle comes to seem a murder, and himself the victim. Nature and human doings are combined in phrases like 'our deciduous love' (no. 3), or 'automobiles smelling each others' rears' (no. 8). In no. 36 he meets 'eyes as cold as a sentry's bayonet-tip'.

Alamgir Hashmi's editor calls him a 'cosmopolitan' writer, at home in both Europe and America, though also familiar with the classic Urdu idiom; 'not overtly a political poet', but awake to social and political facts. One of the best pieces is on much-troubled Karachi: the sight of a man swinging his arm, as if striking, is enough to conjure up thoughts of brutality; he sees 'air bleed', hears the 'crack of the bone'. In the posthumous selection from Daud Kamal there is a prevailing atmosphere of gloom, of life grown purposeless, ebbing away. He was a student, later a teacher, at Peshawar, certainly a good place to feel glum in. He shows much feeling for the neighbouring scenery of bare mountains, foaming streams, hidden valleys, and these are the things that strike most of his sparks. But his poems often have the air of random strings of impressions or images. They are evocative, but of what? His poems could not grow and expand, it seems. One on p. 23 consists of 29 words, divided, as if to make it look longer, into 11 lines.

Salman Tarik Kureshi had an Australian mother, and felt the influence of western writers as varied as Byron, Browning and Eliot. He too drew inspiration from the wild highland landscapes of the North-West. How much of this novel feeling for nature has been a legacy of the British is a question worth asking. In Kureshi's poems, there may be some morbid introversion, but the sensory impressions are sharp and clear; barren rocks ravaged by blazing sun and frost, 'the machine-shriek of wind', and most successful pieces are those like 'Passage', a train

journey through the mountains, and 'Winter Sunset', a village huddled like sheep without a fold. A different note is struck in a group of satirical addresses to Kipling, that stranger with a 'woad-daubed, hide-clad shaman' lurking under his skin.

Shuja Nawaz's well-named 'Journeys' show a poor boy leaving Jhelum for England, and returning to 'an angered land...seething in self-destroying dissent' (p. xiii). He too is often at his best with imagery, less good at directing or focusing it. An ancient well stares up at him 'with an unlinking Cyclopean eye' (no. 1). A mullah kneads our minds as a barber massages our skin (no. 19). As a boy growing up, his questionings unanswered, he felt as solitary 'As the heliograph posts in the Khyber Pass' (no. 24). We are back to the grim Frontier again, as though there were nothing else beyond. But the poet's imagination roves beyond all boundaries of time and space. He sees Alexander's horse leaping the Indus, and the grave of Hannibal, and the Moorish pirate Barbarossa not far away. The last two pieces are about a Virginian landscape, and the home that he and his wife have built there.

Victor Kiernan
The reviewer has retired and lives in Galashiels, UK.

M. Gazdar, *Pakistan Cinema 1947–1997* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 230 pp, 80 b/w plates, Pak Rs 1500, ISBN 0–19–577817–0.

Pakistan cinema has, since its inception, been overshadowed and dwarfed by the sheer size, success and power of India's prolific film industry. The tortured relationship of these neighbouring film industries since Partition has resulted in the continued formal restriction on any kind of exchange in film production and trade. And yet, the relationship between Lahore and Bombay, as centres of film production, has not always been adversarial. Rather, as Gazdar shows, pre-Partition cinema drew on the shared cultural traditions of folk song, dance and performance in the 'Northern Territories'. In particular, the advent of sound in the mid-1930s, the cultural pre-eminence of Lahore, and the technological advancement of Bombay combined to give a new lease of life to cinema in the north. Bombay film-makers, catering for the needs of a majority of Hindi- and Urdu-speaking film audiences, looked especially to the 'Northern Territories' with their rich heritage of folk culture for inspiration. The film-makers of that era championed a secular, cosmopolitan

film culture that transcended caste and creed. They believed that Partition would not disrupt this common cultural heritage. Certainly, they would be appalled to see the kind of cultural production emerging from Bal Thackeray's Mumbai of today, and the lack of support given to present-day film production in Lahore.

At the heart of this book, which is a labour of love by a committed, socially conscious film-maker and benign nationalist, is a deep concern with the need to protect the survival not only of a conception of national cinema (one which is defined by a resistance to the cultural and media dominance of India), but also to give expression to its five major languages (Punjabi, Sindhi, Pushto, Balochi and Siraiki) and their distinctive aesthetic traditions. Given that neither the official language (Urdu) nor the national language (English) is the mother tongue of the vast majority of the inhabitants of Pakistan, the difficulties of nurturing both a national cinema and regional variants under the inauspicious eye of a cinematic colossus, not to mention the volatility of the political scene in the Indian subcontinent, become clear. And yet, this book, which is a heartfelt plea for government recognition of and financial support for an ailing and neglected industry, remains optimistic, exhaustively summoning up the evidence (virtually every single film made in Pakistan since 1947 is documented with details of producer, director, musical composer and key cast), and using this evidence as ammunition to argue its case in the final pages.

Early on in the book we learn that there is no cinematic archive or library in Pakistan. There is not one educational or training establishment for film professionals. There is no film academy. There are heavy entertainment taxes, excessive duties on raw film stock, and income tax at four different tiers at production, distribution, publicity and exhibition—all collected from a single source at the box office. Also, there have long been strict censorship codes which have stunted the growth of avant garde cinema. There are no controls on the illegal imports of Indian films. Copyright laws are not enforced. There is no long-term strategy or policy on film. There is, in sum, a blithe disregard for film culture. Gagdev blames this neglect on the narrow-minded, philistine pursuit of self-interest of successive ruling elites (with the exception of Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party), who have all but stifled the creative energies of the intellectual and artistic avant garde. Thus, film culture in Pakistan has been sustained against all odds by a handful of committed artists and producers whose love of cinema has carried them through, and who have learned their trade the hard way.

This passion for cinema is whole-heartedly shared by the author,

although the book itself is more of an encyclopaedic than an analytical documentation of Pakistan's cinematic history. It is beautifully illustrated with over 100 photograph prints of varying quality, some in colour. Although it certainly provides an invaluable reference book for anyone interested in Pakistan cinema, it could have been organised better. For example, there are over 100 pages of film titles, each page with details of some 30 films, grouped according to the year of release which makes it very difficult to find a reference for a particular film quickly unless you know the exact date. But, irritatingly, in the main text the dates are not always given, and if you look up the director's name in the index, no reference is given in the filmography. However, this wealth of detail about films and film-makers is intertwined in very interesting ways with Pakistan's political history, which is when Gazdar writes at his best. It is a pity there is not more because some of the detail is very laborious to read unless you are a Pakistan film buff. But, given the general ignorance about Pakistan cinema, this chronicle of its film industry is most welcome (did you know, for example, that Pakistan is one of the top 10 film-producing countries in the world, with an average of 90 full-length feature films a year?).

The book covers: details of notable movies, stars, musicians and singers and others who have contributed to Pakistan film culture behind the scenes, including several prominent female directors and producers; summaries of plots; *filmi* gossip; anecdotes and reminiscences; details of the critical reception of selected films; and, interviews with film-makers. As such, it fills an important gap in our cinematic knowledge and is likely to delight the film buff while providing an important starting-point for the film researcher. It is divided up, rather too neatly one suspects, into five decades: of endurance (1947–56); of reformation (1957–66); of change (1967–76); of decadence (1977–86); and, of revivalism (1987–96).

Gazdar documents how Pakistan cinema slowly emerged from the debris of social, political and economic catastrophe in the decade following Partition, only to be subjected to the propagandist efforts (modelled on those of Goebbels) of Ayub Khan, who seized power after the 1958 coup and dominated Pakistan politics for over a decade. His first major project *Nai Kiran* (Ray of Light), which presented Ayub and his junta as saviours of the people, was penned by the renowned Urdu writer Qudratullah Shahab, and was made in the five major languages, each film shot separately, mostly with different actors, except for the Urdu and Punjabi versions which had a common cast. Some 50 propaganda films were made between 1958–62. Here it would have

been helpful to have more details about the (enforced?) all consumption, reception and political consequences of these films. Ironically, Ayub, who became President in 1962, later helped develop the film industry, relaxing censorship and promoting a secular, modernist outlook and economic reforms. These enabled a flourishing of highly commended films, not least the Punjabi classic by Saif, *Kartar Singh*. This was set in a peaceful Punjabi post-Partition village where Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs live in harmony and is a testament to the achievement of freedom without communalist violence. Yusuf's *Saheli* (in which a polygamous solution to the dilemma of the love-triangle scenario works out to the satisfaction of all), and Shahid's *Zarqua* (the name of a young woman freedom fighter who gets involved in the struggle of Palestinians for a homeland) are further examples (I gave up trying to find dates for the above films).

When, in 1971, Bangladesh came into being, as Bhutto's People's Party gained power, the Urdu films of Lahore and Karachi as a consequence lost an important market. East Pakistan had contributed 33 per cent of the total investment in film production. But while the drying up of this major source of funding was a blow, it provided the impetus for the development of regional cinemas as the producers looked into the financial viability of making more films in Punjabi, Pushto and Sindhi especially. Gazdar recounts how, in 1973, in the face of an ailing film industry, Bhutto's government set up the National Film Development Corporation (NAFDEC) on the pattern of a similar body founded in India. However, instead of building low-budget art films, bureaucracy and corruption crept in and served only the careerism of its functionaries. Within the span of a few years NAFDEC consumed 40 million rupees without making any tangible contribution to film culture.

The arrival of video technology (like television previously and satellite TV more recently), presented Pakistan cinema with even more problems, especially the loss of middle-class audiences to pirated videos of Indian cinema. Nevertheless, for rural audiences, between 30 and 60 Punjabi films were produced per year between 1968 and 1989, the peak period being the mid-1970s after which there has been a steady, sharp decline (p. 239). Punjabi cinema had its own heroes and heroines, the most important of which is probably Sultan Rahi, who met a sudden and suspicious death in 1996 and was mourned by millions. During the 1970s, film-makers began experimenting with new ideas and cinematic practices, the relaxation of censorship meant that films with a much higher content of sex and violence were released, and some film-makers started producing double versions of films, in Punjabi and Sindhi particularly.

Film production increased, the high point being in 1974 when 114 films were produced in Lahore and Karachi.

However, that flourishing of film production was not to last long. In 1977, Zia ul-Huq seized power, Bhutto was hanged and Pakistan became involved in the Afghan war which, according to Gazdar, transformed Pakistan society, gave rise to a new culture of guns and violence, drugs and dollars, corruption and nepotism, ethnic conflict and sectarianism. Cinema culture reflected these changes, according to Gazdar, and a new genre of cinema arose which 'glamorized violence and advocated brutality as a normal form of vengeance'(p. 154). Furthermore, video rendered censorship laws ludicrous as pirate videos flooded into Pakistan. Gazdar's own film *They are Killing the Horse* (1979) was alone in breaking this vicious cycle with a social realist documentary short film which was internationally acclaimed, and won many awards. But the overall trend since the mid-1970s has been a steady decline in film production, and according to Gazdar, in the standard of films. The cinema halls have been closed down and middle-class audiences have left local film consumption largely to rural and working class, male, urban audiences. Thus, throughout the 1980s, the film world has redefined its target audience, resulting in the high output of regional movies for those who cannot afford TV sets or VCRs.

During the 1990s, with the advent of dozens of satellite TV stations (which subscribe heavily to Bombay movies) there has been a massive decline in the number of viewers of state TV. Fears of cultural invasion and of the hegemony of foreign media became rife. As a result, Pakistan TV producers are beginning to work more closely with film-makers to increase local production, and in an attempt to lure the middle-class audience back. Some directors, like Rizvi, have moved into science fiction with state-of-the-art special effects, and the thriller genre in an attempt to attract teenagers and recapture the family audience.

The absence of any film-acting schools has also meant that television has increasingly become a breeding ground for performers, many of whom now prefer working in television because it is more lucrative, and the international possibilities for exposure are greater. But one of the most significant recent developments has arisen as a result of the rising cost of film production. This has encouraged Pakistan film-makers to mobilise transnational networks, and to seek joint ventures with South Asian (apart from India), and Far-Eastern countries. According to Gazdar, many projects have been launched in collaboration with Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Film-makers have gone as far as the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong and Indonesia to seek new

partners. Such co-production is apparently bringing a new freshness and creative dynamic to cinema as a result of using new locations (several recent films have been shot in Turkey) and new faces, especially stars from Bangladesh (Mustafa), Nepal (Shiva) and Sri Lanka (Sabita) who have become very popular among Pakistan audiences. Gazdar sees this as a positive trend towards a more cosmopolitan cinema.

But clearly, if Pakistan cinema is to survive in this era of rapid media globalisation, it will have to attract investment, expand its audiences, particularly the more lucrative middle-class audiences. It will have to improve the technical standards and aesthetic quality of its productions, market its films internationally and send them to international film festivals. Whether the new Muslim League government (elected in 1997) will provide the kind of government support needed remains to be seen. But if Pakistan cinema is to survive in some form, the government will need to consider relaxing censorship codes, waiving tax on old movies, imposing copyright laws, controlling illegal imports of Indian films, offering tax incentives to film producers and regularising a national system of film awards.

Symptomatic, perhaps, of the challenges facing Pakistan cinema today, are the difficulties faced by successive film-makers in producing a film about Jinnah—a film which could deal adequately with the contradiction between his political vision of a secular, egalitarian nation of citizens and the Islamic state of Pakistan today. In 1997, filming began of a big budget movie on the life and times of Jinnah by Akbar Ahmed, an academic based at Cambridge University (UK), co-written with Jamil Dehlvi. The film has already attracted much controversy but we shall have to wait and see what kind of vision of the nation they chose to project on the global media stage.

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J.S. Dosanjh and P.A.S. Ghuman, *Child-Rearing in Ethnic Minorities* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1996), xii + 228 pp, £43.00 (hb), £14.95 (pb), ISBN 1–85359–366–4 (hb), 1–85359–365–6 (pb).

This book is an ethnographic study of working- and middle-class Punjabi families in Britain. The study compares first- and second-generation Punjabi families. The first-generation sample studied by Dosanjh consisted of 200 families in the Nottingham and Derby area and the second-

generation of 40 families, also from the English Midlands.[1] Punjabi mothers (Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims) from both India and Pakistan were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. In addition, 12 white indigenous mothers were also interviewed to make further comparisons in child-rearing practices. The description of child-rearing in Punjab is based both on the existing literature and upon some empirical data collected by Ghuman (in 1995) through interviews with 10 mothers and six grandmothers in Punjab (India). The verbatim records of the in-depth interviews are used to analyse the different child-rearing issues.

The book begins with a description of the sociocultural background of the Punjabis within a wider context of post-Second World War migration. The next few chapters are devoted to the description of child care practices of the Punjabis in India and of the two generations settled in Britain. Child-rearing practices are studied on a variety of dimensions including myths, superstitions and religious ceremonies surrounding birth, feeding, weaning, toilet-training, sleeping arrangements, participation in household chores, playmates and independence-training. The role of the father and of the extended family is also explored. The last two chapters before the conclusion focus on specific issues related to the development of bilingualism, the importance of religion, experiences of racism, the formation of stereotypes of whites and Punjabis and issues of children's identity, parental involvement in the three R's, children's participation in out-of-school activities and their academic and interpersonal school adjustment.

The findings of this study reveal that in the first-generation there were few changes in child-rearing and mothers maintained the practices, superstitions and rituals of their original culture. Several taboos and rituals (for example, those associated with pregnancy and food) had disappeared in the second-generation but interestingly most religious ceremonies associated with childbirth continued to be observed in the 1990s. Another important change observed in the second-generation was the increased participation of fathers in early child care. Other changes in socialisation practices were reflected in the rise in freedom given to children and the acceptance of their independent decisions. Furthermore, mothers had higher educational and occupational aspirations for the children. Mothers were also more receptive to their children's interests, feelings and aptitudes in responding to the child's future career options—a feature similar to white mothers. The third-generation children were encouraged to interact more with the local culture by participating in activities and attending clubs outside the home. A more child-centred approach to child-rearing was evident. However, along with the liberty

given to children, the threat of 'individualism' was a repeated theme in the mothers' statements. A large proportion of these children was also perceived as rude and aggressive. In general, most mothers admitted that there had been a radical change in child care practices, compared to their mothers', in the direction of Euro-American norms.

With respect to cultural identity, mothers of the second-generation were keen to pass on their language and religious codes to their progeny. This generation had the advantage of transmitting its cultural heritage because the necessary social structures (for example, mosques, temples and gurudwaras) had already been established by the earlier generation. The majority of mothers felt that their children could integrate with the whites. However, this integration appeared to be only economic because few reported interaction with people other than their relatives and friends from their own community. The authors, from their interview data and review of existing literature, conclude that the second-generation Punjabi parents—and perhaps other Asian groups in Britain and else-where—are evolving new cultural patterns which are woven out of the threads of both the home and host cultures. These patterns differ in form and depend upon the individual family and its religious and social orientations.

In comparing the first- and second-generation Punjabi families, the authors argue that since the motivation for migration for the former is primarily economic, families tend to cling to their traditional way of life. The interaction with the host society is functional, requiring min-imum adaptation of their lifestyles. The authors use the term 'accommo-dation' to describe the adaptation of the first-generation to the host society. This term is borrowed from Rose et al. (1969) who, in analysing migrants' predicament, explained it as the slow and minimum degree of adaptation required to get employment and shelter.[2] Such an adaptation was likely to be met with a minimum amount of acceptance.

The second-generation in this study, particularly the Hindus, tended to move towards 'integration' to the mainstream way of life and culture in so far as the sociopolitical factors of the host country allowed. Once again, the term 'integration' is borrowed from Rose et al. (1969) to refer to the 'process whereby a minority group while retaining its own culture and religion, adapts itself to and is accepted as a permanent member of the majority society in all the external aspects of association' (p. 24). In this context, Dosanjh and Ghuman refer to Berry's model to explain the adaptation process of some minority groups.[3] In this model, when an ethnic community chooses to retain its own culture but considers it of little value to maintain relationships with the dominant

group, the adaptation process may be described as separation and not integration. Although the comments of Muslim mothers in Dosanjh and Ghuman's study appeared to express the separation strategy, the authors do not feel that they have conclusive evidence to support this claim.

The manner in which the terms 'accommodation' and 'integration' have been employed seems to imply that the onus was entirely on the minority to adapt to the foreign milieu. It may also have been worthwhile to examine the role that the majority community plays in this process of adaptation. A deeper look at factors such as the role of multicultural education, and the current racial policies of the state might have further added to the understanding of the adaptation process of this minority group. Even though a thorough exploration of these issues was presumably beyond the scope of this book, it would nevertheless have benefited from an analysis of the dynamics of acculturation—the changes that ensue when two or more cultural groups interact in society.[4] This involves a plethora of features, including the specific acculturation strategy used by minority individuals that need to be considered in order to understand the adaptation of acculturating groups.[5]

This book is a valuable contribution to the understanding of child-rearing practices of ethnic Punjabi families in Britain. This understanding may well be extended to many other South Asian minorities living in Britain, Canada, USA, Australia and Europe. The book's use of the ethnographic method is a welcome change from the frequently used (and perhaps easier to handle) quantitative analysis in this domain. The book draws its analysing of child-rearing from mothers' statements on the different child-rearing practices in question. While some mothers' voices make the issues discussed come alive, the continuous and excessive reliance on these records throughout the book unfortunately drowns their uniqueness in what occasionally seems like repetitive thick description. It is at times difficult to understand the structure of the book and one is occasionally lost in trying to remember the comparisons between Punjabi child-rearing practices in Punjab, in Britain (over the two generations), and with indigenous white mothers. It is only at the end of the book, in the concluding chapter, that these elements are more clearly and coherently woven together with optimal reference to mothers' statements.

Another drawback of this book is its limited use of existing theoretical models of minority group issues in child-rearing. The authors confess that they have purposely 'eschewed the use of existing universal models and excessive theorising because the project has an essentially empirical orientation....Our approach to data collection—through semi-structured

interviews and systematic personal observation—was more akin to an ethnographic perspective rather than a quantitative one' (p. 166). Quoting Roopnarine and Carter, they claim that existing theories and frameworks are outmoded and culturally limited.[6] A culture-specific theory to study these child-rearing practices may well be desirable but the rejection of all existing theoretical contributions as outmoded amounts to the dismissal of some valuable theoretical literature in the field. All research contributes toward the evolution of theory. For this, existing theories need to be critically questioned in the light of empirical data before repudiating them completely.

The authors seem to have overlooked the recent contribution of cross-cultural psychology in studying child-rearing. A growing body of this research is pointing toward the use of specific cultural models to study child-rearing. The domain of independence–interdependence (training) in family socialisation has been increasingly gaining ground to understand the cross-cultural variation in parenting and its consequent effect on the development of children.[7] Greenfield and Cocking have been particularly successful in presenting these issues in the context of minority child socialisation.

More specifically, the contribution of Kakar and Roland has been crucial in the development of cultural models to explain Indian (Hindu) child-rearing practices.[8] Similarly, others such as Obeid have emphasised the role of parents and the environment in the development of children in Islamic contexts.[9] Even though three religious groups have been studied in this book, it has paid little attention to specifying religion-based child socialisation. Similarly, the differences in child-rearing that might emerge in two different social classes (working- and middle-class) that have been studied have not been addressed. Kohn's research on class-based socialisation is particularly useful to understand child-rearing practices.[10] The authors acknowledge these drawbacks and claim that 'separate analyses of the data by social class and religion were not carried out because the numbers involved are too small and the ensuing generalisations could have been misleading' (p. 37). This, however, raises the question whether Punjabis (with their different religious, class and 'national' identities) are really a homogeneous group from which generalisations may be made.

To conclude, this book is a valuable contribution to the empirical research on child-rearing in ethnic minorities and would serve as a useful guide for those involved in the study of ethnic issues such as researchers, therapists, counsellors and multicultural educators. Nevertheless, research on culture-specific child-rearing such as this should

attempt to combine the pertinent existing theoretical models with the empirical data of a study to contribute to sound theory.

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Notes

1. J.S. Dosanjh, 'Child-Rearing Practices of Punjabi Parents with Special Reference to Lower Juniors (7–9)', unpublished Ph D thesis, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, 1976.

2. E.J.B. Rose et al., *Colour and Citizenship: A Report on British Race Relations* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

3. J.W. Berry, 'Acculturation and Psychological Adaptation: An Overview', in A.M. Bouvy, F.J.R. van de Vijver, P. Boski and P. Schmitz (eds), *Journeys into Cultural Psychology: Selected Selected Papers for the Eleventh International Conference of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology held in Liege, Belgium in 1994* (Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger, 1994), 129–41.

4. Ibid.; and J.W. Berry and J. Sam, 'Acculturation and Adaptation', in J.W. Berry, M.H. Segall and C. Kagitcibasi (eds), *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (second edition), Vol.3, Social Psychology (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997).

5. See Berry and Sam, 'Acculturation and Adaptation', for recent developments in the area of acceleration and adaptation.

6. J.L. Roopnarine and D.B. Carter (eds), *Parent–Child Socialization in Diverse Cultures* (Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex, 1992).

7. See P.M. Greenfield and R.R. Cocking, *Cross-Cultural Roots of Minority Child Development*, (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1994); C. Kagitcibasi, 'Family and Socialization in Cross-Cultural Perspective: A Model of Change', in J.J. Berman (ed.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation 1989: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 135–200; and C. Kagitcibasi, *Family and Human Development Across Cultures: A View from the Other Side* (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1996).

8. See S. Kakar, *The Inner World: A Psychoanalytic Study of Childhood and Society in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978); idem (1997), Culture and Psyche: Selected Essays (Delhi: Oxford Univesity Press, 1997); and A. Roland, *In Search of Self in India and Japan: Toward a Cross-Cultural Psychology* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

9. See R.A. Obeid, 'An Islamic Theory of Human Development', in T.R. Murray (ed.), *Oriental Theories of Human Development* (New York: Peter Lang and Company, 1988), 155–74.

10. M.L. Kohn, 'Social Class and Parent–Child Relationship: An Interpretation', in *American Journal of Sociology*, 10, 1968, 473–80.

S. Sharma, J. Hutnyk and A. Sharma (eds), *Dis-Orienting Rhythms: The Politics of The New Asian Dance Music* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1996), 248 pp, £45 (hb), £14.95 (pb), ISBN 1-85649469-I (hb), 1-85649470-5 (pb).

Engaging with theoretical debates of race and identity and drawing on a wide range of South Asian music and dance genres—from Hip–hop, Qawwali, through to Bhangra and Soul, Indie and Jungle—this edited collection of essays makes daring interventions in the realms of white academia and the knowledge it has produced, and failed to produce, about South Asian youth in Britain. (Interestingly though, the positioning of the only white editor and contributor, John Hutnyk, is not at all mentioned anywhere in the book.) As such, *Dis-Orienting Rhythms* comes across as a radical 'project' which the editors have set into play and shaped, giving a voice to a new generation of scholars and researchers concerned with cultural and social formations and their interplay with urban cultural politics.

The editors contend that South Asians have been misrepresented and, on a theoretical level, treated prematurely in existing academic studies. At best, simple celebrations of hybridity through musical fusions have been aired without interrogating the underlying unitary assumptions made about 'culture'. At worst, 'between two cultures', arranged marriages, intergenerational conflicts, passive immigrants, or just blatant exotic consumption of the 'Other' have been frames of reference easily imposed upon South Asians. The fluidity of contemporary South Asian identities, as entangled with the identification of black, is also discussed: 'In the 1990s, it has become protocol to distinguish "black" (that is, African–Caribbean) and "Asian" groupings in Britain' (p. 11). More importantly, the editors rightly argue for a black politics based on solidarity and diversity across cultural experiences, particularly in contemporary times when retreats to ethnic exclusivity are all too easy.

Each of the nine contributions in their individual ways write back the presence of South Asian youth in the urban music scene in Britain. Rupa Huq's extremely enjoyable 'Asian Kool? Bhangra and Beyond' charts the problematic mainstream British media reporting of the Bhangra scene in the mid–late 1980s, which was described as escapist music for rebellious South Asians who were running away from strict parental cultures. Such attitudes, still prevalent, were part of the problems for Bhangra's unsuccessful crossover attempts. Huq also outlines the emergence of bands developing on from British Bhangra like the Asian Dub Foundation, Fun^Da^Mental and Voodoo Queens as constituting what

came to be termed as 'Asian Kool' and illustrates through their music that South Asians have varied tastes and different investments in different music.

Koushik Banerjee and Jatinder Barn's 'Versioning Terror' is a highly innovative reading and a contemporary politicisation of the massacre of hundreds of Indians at the Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, 13 April 1919, upon the order of the infamous colonial General Reginald Dyer. Constantly shifting between historical moments and uncovering the work of South Asian Junglists in their grappling with racist contours of city living, they reveal the fears of white invisibility as a reactionary obstruction to popular movements and meanings.

In the book's final chapter, 'New Paths for South Asian Identity and Musical Creativity', through the examples of British Bhangra Beat and post-Bhangra music in the form of Apache Indian, Raminder Kaur and Virinder Kalra set out to define new vocabularies for the study of South Asian identities as a challenge to easy and vicious stereotypes. Kaur and Kalra offer the concept of 'Transl–Asia/Transl–Asian' (as in 'translation') to begin to account for the complex myriad of social and cultural identities existing across the South Asian diasporas which might resist and counteract the objectification of South Asians. Furthermore, 'Transl–Asia' presents the ambitious possibility of uncovering and promoting South Asian transcultural and transnational alliances the world over. Unfortunately, their analysis lacks a critique of the uneven access to, and production of, cultural and material resources across the globe in its various 'trans–al' predilections.

New publications with fresh material and radical arguments are always in fear of becoming labelled as 'Bibles', or put to one side in order not to face up to harsh realities. The colourful paperback cover of this book is especially divine, a reworking of Fun^Da^Mental's cover sleeve to their track *Seize The Time*, in its eclectic handling of a whole series of urban phrases ('balance of power, chaos, harmony, oppression, respect, religion...') fused with archaic images which appear to shout out 'pick me up and read me'. However, the essays within warn readers not to treat them in awe: as the editors claim in the introduction, 'We clearly distance ourselves from any desire for *Dis-Orienting Rhythms* to become *the* definitive account: on the contrary, it represents new openings and beginnings' (p. 10). If *Dis-Orienting Rhythms* really is a project of interventions, one encourages the authors and others to pursue these with just a small word of caution: in the excitement and urgency of 'writing back', how does one begin to negotiate and inscribe sensitively the multiple forms of oppression directed *at* and *between* South Asians? Is it easier to look away from ourselves and direct attention towards

others as so-called perpetrators? If so, what is the 'difference' we are struggling over?

Dis-Orienting Rhythms is an important first text. One hopes the omissions of the analysis of Bhangra lyrics and the globalisation of Bollywood firms and music, which equally contribute to the urban cultural politics that the authors elaborate, will be taken up next time.

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G. Baumann, *Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xiii + 215 pp, £40 (hb), £14.95 (pb), ISBN 0–521–55482–9 (hb), 0–521–55554–X (pb).

Contesting Culture brings London Punjabi experiences into focus through an anthropological investigation of multi-ethnic Southall (a west London suburb, part of Ealingborough). Baumann's book examines the question of how people in everyday life apply concepts such as culture, community and ethnic identity. He does this by mapping historical trajectories of the various migrations into Southall and attempts to demonstrate how such meetings underpin common ethnic stereotypes.

Baumann's examples come from his extensive fieldwork project that had three distinct phases. The first and second phases concentrated on qualitative fieldwork with youths in their teens and parents respectively. The third phase introduced quantitative approaches using The Southall Youth Survey (an extensive questionnaire administered with Marie Gillespie). Nevertheless, the qualitative research continued during this phase through student research projects. These are particularly noteworthy as they provide Baumann with information beyond his immediate fieldwork, including work on a housing estate, a mult-ethnic drama club and recording the experience of 'Afro–Caribbean', 'English' and 'Irish' Southallians.

He begins the ethnography with a standard description of Southall as a lived space primarily by outlining the history of its various migrations. The remainder of the book is devoted to examining how the various groups interact. His approach is squarely based on examining culture 'as performed' (p. 11). To this end, he emphasises contestations over public space where culture and community are forces of exclusion (see chapter 3, especially pp. 68–70, regarding the Dominion movie theatre),

religion (chapter 4 reviews the neat divisions for South Asians, chapter 5 the divisions amongst Jat and Ramgarhia Sikhs) and contestations over discourse and representation (see chapter 6 for the public letter-writing fury debating whether 'Asian' is 'black'). The book is, thus, rich in ethnographic detail from a variety of sources, private conversations, formal interviews, pub-chatter, newspaper reports, activist organisation documents and government reports not to mention the local political poetry (p. 71). The book is also nicely illustrated with picture-plates whose images capture the lived contestations of culture.

Baumann begins the book by simultaneously acknowledging the complexity of his field and questioning the analytical purchase of the concepts at his disposal. Baumann is distinctly critical of the 'encapsulation' approach that has dominated research on ethnic minorities in Britain (pp. 9–10). Reacting against the traditional accounts of single communities, Baumann concentrates on the 'social field' as his unit of analysis. This allows Baumann to highlight the complexities of concepts such as community, culture, identity and difference as lived practice in a multi-ethnic area. His essential thesis delineates two conceptualisations of the connections between culture and community: dominant (that is, official) discourse that reifies the connection between culture and community and demotic (lit. 'of the people') discourse which is inherently more fluid. This is not to say that the people of Southall have fluid understandings of culture or community, but that they call upon these two different understandings in various ways.

Baumann has attempted what no other researcher has dared: to bring together in one piece the ideas about and by South Asians regarding social groups in Britain. He presents the complexities of Southallian South Asian, mostly Punjabi Hindu and Sikh, utterances with sensitivity and curiosity (for example, by unpacking the oft-repeated phrase 'Sikhs are Hindus' (p. 118). He also brings forth decidedly local 'Asian' concerns such as national election canvassing based on the building of a car park (p. 16); temple infighting (p. 80); or 'arranged marriage' (pp. 149–50).

Despite these endeavours, one issue remains ambiguous. Although Baumann's treatment of being Asian in multi-ethnic Southall is commendable, his treatment of the other groups is less than satisfactory. This may be a difficulty of methodology. Baumann, after all, lived in the centre of Southall, a place he characterises as 'the capital town of South Asians in Britain' (p. 38). He hints at the methodological issues of attempting a complete multi-ethnic survey by justifying the usage of his student's research as valid 'secondary literature' (p. 8). Baumann

does not face this methodological difficulty alone. Any researcher trying to make explicit the experiences of multi-ethnic Britain at the level of everyday experiences and interaction faces methodological difficulties of access and placement, especially when groups are mutually suspicious. Perhaps this is why the book needs to focus on the 'contestation of culture'. It is in contestation when the meanings which people attribute to 'community', 'culture' and 'ethnic difference' become most apparent. However, this criticism may not be an issue for *IJPS* readers as the examples from London Punjabi life are detailed and illuminating.

This is an accessible book, a good introduction to life as a Punjabi in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood and as such thankfully does away with the characterisation of Southall as a stomping ground for researchers in search of the authentic experience. It certainly challenges the recent perceptions of many that research based in Southall is tiresome. Under-graduate and graduate students would find it useful, the former for introducing urban fieldwork and attempting to 'deal' with the complexities this entails, the latter for the theoretical issues it raises.

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S.A.A. Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1995), 3rd edition, 497 pp, Rs 450 (hb), ISBN 81–215–0590–9.

The consolidation of Muslim rule under the Delhi Sultans and Mughals meant both challenges and opportunities for Islamists in India. Divided into two main groups of scripturalists (*ula'ma*) and spiritualists (*sufis, masha'ikh*) with added doctrinal subdivisions, a plural India meant greater opportunities for evangelical enterprise. Simultaneously, the very minoritarian nature of the Muslim community posed serious challenges since any kind of official zeal for conversion would only trigger massive Hindu retaliation. The influx of Turkic and Persian elites seeking official affiliations with the Delhi durbar largely compelled them to moderate a missionary zeal so as to suit the official expediency. However, still there were clerics and *sufis* who refused to seek official patronage and carried on unhindered, on their own. Even from amongst them not everyone aimed at conversion: rather, as Professor Rizvi brings out capably, such individuals sought coexistence with non-Muslim communities. In some cases, they coopted Vedanta philosophy by substantiating

a policy based on *sulah kul* (peace for all) and contributed immensely towards the evolution of Bhakti movement. The doctrinal diversity among the Islamists was not only impacted by the official linkages but also by greater and wider intellectual links with the broader Muslim world. Muslim India was part of a large Islamic world where, during the Abbassid decline and horrid Mongol invasions, greater intellectual efforts centred on synthesising clerical and mystical strands. Whereas Imam Ghazzali sought a compromise between orthodoxy and sufism, Ibn Taimiya would reiterate the primacy of purified scripturalism. The great Spanish Muslim *sufi*, Ibn Arabi, had pioneered the doctrine of *Wahdat-al-Wujud* (Unity in One: God is Everything!) which, in a powerful way, acknowledged the equality and eventual divine merger of various theologies. Such a philosophical approach, contrasted with its rival *Wahdat-al-Shahud* (all witnessing the Unity of Oneness: Everything is from God), became the hallmark of Sufist pursuits in Muslim India. Wujudis, in the spirit of the *Mathnavi* of Maulana Rumi, acknowledged the inherent equality of all the religious traditions and practices, whereas Shahudis articulated the strict practice of Islamic *Shar'ia*.

Parallel to this major intra-Sufist contention, the Mahdawi tendencies justified by various *ula'ma* banking on some obscure prophetic traditions (*Ah'adith*: also a major component of Shia *fiqah*), allowed many Sunni Muslim revivalists to assume a messianic position. The first Muslim millennium, falling in the early seventeenth century (during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan) enthused a scholar, Shaikh Ahmed of Sirhind, to declare himself as the Mujaddid—the Revivalist. Earlier, in the late fifteenth century, Saiyid Muhammad of Jaunpur had declared himself as the promised Mahdi— messiah—and had founded the Mahdawi movement. Such individuals, quoting various traditions to justify their proclamations, aimed at restoring Islam to its pristine glory of the classical era:

> The people who subsequently claimed themselves to be the Mahdi generally started their career purely as religious reformers and mystics, with people often paying little heed to their activities. Subsequently, people not only went on fixing dates after dates for the appearance of the Mahdi but also indicated the time and place of his appearance as also other particulars of that dignitary (p. 73).

Such claims would naturally bring forth retaliation, not only from the orthodox *ula'ma* but also from Sultans. In this case, Saiyid Jaunpuri, otherwise a tolerant practitioner of Islamic law, yet claiming a kind of

apostolic stature, would only be met by strict resistance resulting in frequent banishments. Eventually, he took refuge in Sindh and Balochistan. (Some present-day scholars and Baloch nationalists seek the origin of Zikri tribe in south-eastern Balochistan from Jaunpur.)

On the other hand, Shaikh Ahmed, himself a follower of a great *sufi* practitioner, Khwaja Baqi Billah, pursued a synthesis of scripturalist and Shahudi doctrines. In view of his millennial mission, contemporaneous with the closing years of Akbar and Jahangir's reign, he was given the title of Mujaddid Alf-i-Thani (lit. the millennial revivalist). In India, the latter strand of Islamic mysticism had been articulated by Makhdum Jahaniyan, Shaikh Gasu Daraz, Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq and Sultan Sikandar Lodi. Emperor Akbar's policy of coexistence, his experiment of Din-i-Ilahi and generous concessions to non-Muslims deeply annoyed the *ula'ma* and Shahudis like Shaikh Ahmed. Through his letters to the Mughal nobility and especially by influencing Shaikh Farid, a confidant of Akbar, Ahmed tried to arrest such *bidda'a* (un-Islamic innovations) and urged a retreat to puritanical Islam which would disallow Wujudi *maslak* (path) and would impose legal and financial restrictions on the Hindus and other non-Muslim communities. As Rizvi suggests, he was not only a communalist but also a sectarian by virtue of his anti-Shia tirades. Rizvi is critical of Professor Khaliq Nizami, whom the core activities of the Sufist Islam in India were aimed at proselytising, and is also severely critical of Pakistani historians like Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, Shaikh Abdul Rashid and Shaikh Muhammad Ikram, who see in Mujaddid a positive influence on Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb.

Rizvi is a demolition man for various Muslim interpretations of Sufist and scriptural practices of Indian Muslims under study. His favourite ones are those who are not out for conversion while all the others are either pompous communalists, anti-Shia zealots or official apologists— called *ula'ma-i-soo* (scholars of bad ilk). Shaikh Abdul Haq Dehlawi and Mian Mir are the ideal supra-communal Islamists representing two different strands yet sharing greater tolerance for non-Muslims.

Rizvi's elaborate work is rooted in extensive contemporary archival source material. His massive research volume is undoubtedly based on original Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Hindi and English sources in Europe and India. However, any beginner in the field will be confused due to the theoretical, organisational and ideological problems. In fact, this study was Rizvi's well-earned doctoral work, prefaced by Professor Muhammad Habib, which in its present incarnation could have benefited from due revisions. Given his vast experience in research and teaching

over the three decades following his doctorate, one could have expected a complete or at least partial revision. For instance, the work does not provide any theoretical framework before going into empirical data. The last chapter, with some changes, could have been used as an introduction defining the academic terrain, concepts and the ultimate objectives of the study. The following chapters could have been reduced to avoid too many unnecessary and repetitive details. The disjointed details characterised by a profusion of names and personalities do confuse a reader. The author could have either simply concentrated on Saiyid Jaunpuri or the Mujaddid rather than covering the Delhi Sultans and the entire Mughal period in a single volume. The issues of class, ethnicity, gender and urban–tribal diversities could have been theorised to allocate some particular direction to this major research. The most irritating thing is Rizvi's sense of persecution as a Shia scholar. His well-intentioned research on a significant yet little known scholarly subject is marred by his sectarian defensiveness and unnecessary secularist and nationalist avowal. However, one has to be mindful of the fact that several Indo–Pakistani historians of various ideological backgrounds fall willing victims to their respective nationalism and this is quite obvious in the case of some Muslim historians whose justification of India or Pakistan overshadows their otherwise rigorous works. Islam in South Asia will remain a contested area for various ideological and nationalist creeds unless one sees some collaborative, independent works shorn of subjectivity and personal rancour. Having said that, it will be quite fair to accredit Professor Rizvi for the amount of his laborious research in an area which has become so marginal in South Asian historiography and continues to be peripheralised by an obvious bias for narratives of high history. The lack of command of Persian, Arabic and Urdu besides the dwindling of historical interest in this period and the complexity of the communalist+nationalist paradigm, all persist in roadblocking further research in this domain. Professor Rizvi's wide brush and deeper knowledge of these languages and doctrinal discourse makes the study an important contribution in understanding the Muslim past in India. It is a major stride towards unravelling a multilayered relationship between the complex forces of ideology and authority applying diverse strategies varying from cooption to coercion.

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R. Waswo, *From Virgil to Vietnam: The Founding Legend of Western Civilization* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Wesleyan University Press/ University Press of New England, 1997), xvii + 373 pp (hb); $29.95, ISBN 0–8195–52968.

In this ambitious and illuminating study, Richard Waswo traces the cultural, social and political consequences of the western re-enactment of the story of Aeneas' flight from doomed Troy to the founding of Rome. Created in its original form in the *Aeneid* by the Roman poet Virgil to celebrate the imperial glory of Augustus, the story, as Waswo argues, became the founding myth of western civilisation and, although it has undergone significant permutations through the centuries, remains at the core of the western perception of its own culture and mission and continues to define the West's relationship to non-Western cultures. Yoked to imperial ideology from its inception, the story has particular relevance to Western involvement in Africa, South and Southeast Asia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the final two sections of his book, Waswo addresses himself specifically to these areas.

Central to the myth is the compulsion to invent and transmit 'culture', which originates in settled agricultural and urbanised communities, and must be imposed on the savage and his nomadic hunting pursuits, even though the 'civilising' mission may destroy not only the 'savage' society but the 'savage' himself. In the legend, civilisation is defined as something that comes from elsewhere, a mode of perception that impels the culture-bringer to ignore evidence of non-Western indigenous culture, and which provided the rationale that compels the indigene to accept Western civilisation or die, or perhaps both. Waswo's book moves from the formation of the legend in Roman antiquity through the establishment in the Middle Ages of the claim that all European peoples descended from the inhabitants of Troy. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries bring to the legend the Renaissance accretions of mercantilism, world markets and religious proselytising. The eighteenth century brings a legal framework and the economic ideology of the Scottish Enlightenment, setting the stage for what Waswo characterises as 'the legend triumphant' in its emergence in nineteenth century colonial discourse and, in the twentieth century, in the western concept of 'development'. Throughout its long history, the legend continually reshapes and redefines itself, but never loses its essential elements. It also reveals itself throughout the spectrum of Western intellectual disciplines, social and economic theories, literature and film. Waswo's range of examples is breathtaking, and his ability to weave a consistent pattern out of a great range of

guises in which the legend appears gives the book much of its force.

Although India did not become a country for largescale white settlement, much of the modern version of the founding legend is still relevant to the subcontinent. In his chapter entitled 'Expropriating' (ch. 22), Waswo focuses on nineteenth century journals such as *The Colonial Magazine*, in which the expansion of markets becomes a constant theme, and, 'since everything is marketable in our civilisation' (p. 237), the very discourse in the journals themselves becomes a form of possession. As they have been portrayed since the beginning of the legend, those who require civilising are autochthonous, springing out of the landscape as extensions of the land itself. Using this perception as a starting-point for his chapters on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Forster's *A Passage to India*, Waswo explores the emergence of the legend as landscape, seeing both novels as depicting failed attempts at foundation, and blaming the failure on the landscape itself. Waswo further analyses *A Passage to India* as a critique of western rational individualism, focusing on Mrs Moore's mystical experience in the Marabar caves, the transcendent unity expressed in Hinduism, and the manner in which the landscape itself comes to symbolise the failure of the friendship between Fielding and Aziz. Out of this perception of landscape emerge further familiar and closely-related themes associated with western perceptions of Otherness. The colonial landscape is the testing ground for manhood, has a Byronic allure in its siren call to us to return to savagery, and is connected with sexuality. The colonial landscape is ultimately 'our own interiorised space' (p. 264), already known to us before we experience it as a mirror of our own development from the savage state, and requiring that we maintain our Otherness in order to preserve our own fragile world. In this reviewer's experience, such themes abound in the nineteenth century Punjab, where men such as Henry Lawrence, Herbert Edwardes and William Hodson saw themselves proving their manhood and superiority in their confrontation with inferior and barbarous peoples in a threatening landscape. The perception of Ranjit Singh's kingdom as comparable to medieval Europe fits the nineteenth century permutation of the legend, and surely the savagery meted out in the Great Revolt in revenge for the savagery of the rebels reflects both the fear and the attraction of that lingering aspect of our own earlier selves.

Waswo's final chapters focus on contemporary permutations of the legend, among them the attempt during the Vietnam war to destroy the country's landscape, the economic version of culture-bringing embodied in institutions such as the World Bank, and the threatened destruction of the Bhil homeland by the Narmada Dam project. Although Waswo's

themes are sometimes familiar, he has given them new force by linking them to a coherent and alarming process driven by inexorable re-enactment, and rooted in the very core of the West's perception of itself. In this impressive study, the future for Otherness is now considered promising.

Harold Lee
Grinnell College

Saeed Shafqat, *Civil–Military Relations in Pakistan: From Zufikar Ali Bhutto to Benazir Bhutto* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 283 pp (hb), £37, ISBN 0–8133–8809–0.

Pakistan provides fertile ground for the analyst of civil–military relations, not least because of the strikingly different post-independence roles played by its own armed forces and those of neighbouring India. Initially, the officer corps of both countries continued as virtual copies of British military traditions on the subcontinent, including a strict adherence to the ideal of an 'officer and gentleman' physically and socioeconomically apart from mainstream society and above the 'dirty' world of politics. In the past half-century of independence, Indian officers have remained resolutely in their barracks as obedient tools of their democratically-elected civilian masters. In contrast, their former comrades in Pakistan plotted a coup d'état as early as 1951, before ruling the country at the head of military–bureaucratic regimes from 1958-71 and again from 1977–88. The government continues to suffer undue attention from the military, and, as recently as September 1995, over 30 armed forces' officers were arrested on charges of allegedly plotting to eliminate the army's high command and top politicians, declare martial law and impose Islamic law in the country. What factors have contributed to Pakistan's affinity for military rule?

Saeed Shafqat's examination of the volatile nature of civil–military relations in Pakistan begins with an overview of developments from independence to the end of Ayub Khan's regime in 1969, concentrating on the ascendancy of the military–bureaucratic elite and its impact on the politics and economics of Pakistan. When the impressive economic growth of this period ended with the withdrawal of foreign aid following the disastrous 1965 Indo–Pak war, Ayub's administration was doomed. Yet, the 'military hegemonic system' (p. 49) remained in place to preside over the dismemberment of the country and the creation of Bangladesh, until 'mass mobilization, regime confrontation and mass movement'

(p. 74) led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto at the head of the Pakistan People's Party resulted in the installation of a civilian regime. Unfortunately, explains Shafqat, personal, ideological and regional centre–state conflicts combined with the government's failure to 'produce conditions conducive to politics of bargaining, compromise and accommodation' (p. 157) to preclude the consolidation of the democratic process. Indeed, despite following a classic 'carrot-and-stick' course of attempting to control the armed forces by appeasing their corporate demands while constricting their institutional role and responsibilities, Zulfikar's 'strategies and tactics conveyed the impression that, more than just civilian control of the military, he wanted to establish personal hegemony' (p. 185). By 1977, worried officers had replaced his civilian administration with a military regime led by General Zia ul-Haq who carefully and very successfully consolidated his personal and the armed forces' institutional power over the next decade via the skilful manipulation of powerful interests and actors on both sides of the civil–military divide. His death in 1988 left Pakistan with a 'polarized and divided' (p. 219) polity and a seemingly permanent hegemonic role for the military in politics, legacies which the subsequent civilian administrations have been grappling with ever since. For Shafqat, these efforts have not been a success:

> It is instructive to note that in the past decade or so, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif—as leaders of their respective parties and prime ministers—had an opportunity to build the organizational structure of the party and possibly democratize the process of leadership selection: instead both squandered an opportunity to stabilize the procedures and practices of parliamentary democracy and party system. While in power both used party as an instrument for extending patronage and ventured to establish the dominant party model to strengthen personal rule, none facilitated the development of two-party system and in the process both failed. Both contributed little in developing any consensual framework for government–opposition relationship; both allowed and encouraged political confrontation, polarization, intolerance and authoritarian style of governance. Resultantly, military hegemony in Pakistan's politics has continued to persist—presidential intervention has become only its new manifestation (p. 251).

Overall, *Civil–Military Relations in Pakistan* is a straightforward and highly informative account of the country's civil–military machinations over the past 20 years or so. Shafqat's conclusion is damning: despite the repeated (if sporadic) return of elected civilian governments, the

very nature, organisation and methods deployed by Pakistan's political elites and parties repeatedly have thwarted the replacement of authoritarian structures with true democratic alternatives. If, warns Shafqat, democratic norms and practices continue to fail to gain legitimacy, the military–bureaucratic regime will continue to be alternative model of government.

One final note: while this Westview Press edition is handsomely bound and typeset, and offers quality endnotes, it suffers from remarkably poor copy-editing. This includes the repeated lack of definite articles, indeterminate punctuation, the absence of capitalisation at the beginning of some sentences and, incredibly, spelling the name of the prime minister as 'Zufikar' on the cover but as 'Zulfikar' throughout the text! Furthermore, *Civil–Military Relations in Pakistan* contains no index, surely not the normal practice for a book with academic ambitions.

Apurba Kundu
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Gopal Singh, *Politics of Sikh Homeland (1940–1990)* (Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1994), 324 pp, Rs 395 (hb), ISBN 81–202–0419–0.

This book is about the history and politics of the demand for a homeland by the Sikh community. It studies the formation and politicisation of the Sikh community and its demand for a separate homeland both in pre-Partition and post-Partition India. In the pre-Partition phase, the focus is on the six-year period of 1940–1946 (for my study of this, see 'Khalistan—The Origins of the Demand and Its Pursuit Prior to Independence, 1940-45', in Pritam Singh and Shinder Thandi (eds), *Globalisation and the Region: Explorations in Punjabi Identity*, Association for Punjab Studies, Coventry, UK, 1996) and in the post-Partition phase, or the period from 1978 onwards. The author relates the problem of Sikhs' demands for a homeland to the whole gamut of developments right from the first Sikh Guru till today.

In the very first chapter, the author traces the formation and politicisation of a minority community from Guru Nanak to the Akali Movement. The chapter is divided into three parts: the first part deals with the formation of a new religious minority community under the leadership of the 10 Gurus, the transformation of this minority from a pacifist and saintly community under the first Guru to its militarisation under the 10th and last Guru into a band of warriors. The second part deals with

developments from the adventures of Banda Bahadur to the establishment of an empire under Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the last part is devoted to a discussion of various reform movements from the annexation of Punjab by the British till the Akali Movement. The discussion is not so much historical as analytical, focusing on the evolution of new institutions, organisations, symbols, idioms, slogans and script which resulted in the formation of a new and distinct religious community which later on got politicised, acquired power or fought at least for a much bigger share in power as compared to their numerical strength which could increase or/and decrease according to historical developments.

A minority religious community evolved from *bhakti* to *shakti* or, in other words, from the purely pacifist and social reform movement of Guru Nanak to the total militarisation by the 10th and last Guru, Gobind Singh. Many institutions, symbols, slogans, a scripture, a place of pilgrimage and a script (Gurmukhi) evolved during this period.

Chapter 3 deals with the complexities of the question of Sikh nationality. The chapter is divided into three parts. In the first part, the author has taken up arguments with those who claim that Sikhs are not a nationality, both propagandists and chauvinists and the serious minded scholars like K.R. Bombwall. In the second part, the author has engaged himself in a debate with, on one hand, the Shromani Akali Dal, Shromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee and Communist Party and, on the other hand, with scholars like Cunningham and Khushwant Singh who support the 'Sikhs are a nation' thesis. The third part is devoted exclusively to his own understanding of the question of Sikh nationality.

The author's views on the Sikh nationality question are well formulated. He perceives the historical development of Sikhism in different phases right from the first Gurus till today. First was the phase of community formation, which was completed by the time of the martyrdom of the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev. By this time, Sikhs as a community had developed a distinct and separate identity. The trio of the Guru, Granth and Panth and the institutions of *sangat, pangat* and *langar* went a long way in crystallising the identity. However, it was the construction of the Golden Temple with Harimandir Sahib as the spiritual seat and place of worship and Akal Takht as a place for discussion of temporal affairs and the sixth Guru wearing two swords as symbols of '*piri*' and '*miri*' which completed the process of community formation.

The second phase begins with the sixth Guru and, in the opinion of the author, comes to an end in the post-Banda period of mass persecution

of the Sikhs when quite a few other institutions were introduced and the community developed into an ethnic group. The most significant development of this period was the creation of the Khalsa Panth by the 10th Guru in 1699, which not only gave the five physical symbols known as 'five Ks' but also gave a big psychological boost to the suppressed followers, particularly the peasants, and inspired them to prepare militarily to fight against the Mughal rulers. The adventures of Banda Singh after the death of the 10th Guru, in which he inflicted defeat after defeat on the Mughal armies, proved beyond any doubt that the military force created by the 10th Guru was not only capable of fighting against better organised forces but was also able to win. After the persecution of Banda, the massive repression of Sikhs forced them to flee to the jungles where they slowly reorganised themselves and, after some time, started ruling over small areas, and thus began the *misl* period. During this period, three institutions evolved: the *dal khalsa* (different armed bands of the Khalsa), *sarbat khalsa* (biannual general meeting of the Khalsa in the Golden Temple) and the *rakhi* system (protecting everyone who paid taxes and remained loyal to the Khalsa). This is the period when, according to the author, the community became a full-fledged ethnic group.

The amalgamation by Maharaja Ranjit Singh of different *misls* into an empire with Lahore as its capital is generally regarded as the golden period of Sikh rule and some historians believe that it was during this period that Sikhs became a nation. The author disagrees as his perception is that the nationality formation of the Sikhs has taken place during the last 120 years or so, that is, from the beginning of the Namdhari or Kuka Movement to the end of 1980s and through various struggles and the persecution by various powers. In the view of the author, the Sikhs today are a 'nationality', since India is a multinational state.

Chapter 4 discusses the genesis, growth and bases of militancy and then analyses the dynamics of terrorism and state terrorism in terms of the questions of democratic/human rights.

The concluding chapter deals with the real question—whether Khalistan is a 'myth' or a 'reality'—and the author concludes by saying that since Khalistan is a reality and the reality of Khalistan is a myth, then logically it follows that Khalistan is both a myth and a reality.

The book contains 18 important appendices, some of them translated from Punjabi, which are quite relevant to a student studying Punjab politics.

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KIN STATE INTERVENTION IN ETHNIC CONFLICTS

Lessons from South Asia

RAJAT GANGULY

In recent years the world has witnessed a phenomenal increase in secessionist movements based primarily on assertions of ethnic identity. These conflicts have invariably sucked in neighboring countries which have significant populations of co-nationals of the secessionists. Despite the salience of this phenomenon, the role played by kin states in ethnosecessionist conflicts is still an under-developed concept in the literature of international relations. The conventional wisdom is that kin states are the natural 'allies' or 'friends' of secessionist co-nationals in neighboring states.

In his significant study, Rajat Ganguly challenges this widely held belief. He utilizes comparative case studies (both historical and contemporary) of secessionist conflicts in the South Asian region to analyze the different ways in which kin states respond, their motives for doing so, and the consequences for the secessionists. Original and thought-provoking, this lucidly written book will interest a wide range of scholars, especially those involved in international relations, ethnic studies, diplomacy, conflict and peace studies, political science, security issues, sociology, and South Asian studies.

Notes for Contributors

1. Articles submitted to the IJPS should be original contributions and should not be under consideration for any other publication at the same time; if an article is under such consideration, authors should indicate this on submission. Articles should be submitted in triplicate, typewritten on one side only and double-spaced throughout (including footnotes) with 1½" margins. Contributors are required to provide an abstract of approximately 100 words which should be indented and located at the top of the page 1 of the submission but below the title and name of the author of the article. Typewritten copies should preferably be accompanied by IBM-compatible wordprocessor discs on Word Perfect, Microsoft Word, Wordstar or equivalent. Discs should be labelled with the title of the article, the author's name and software (including version) used. All submissions should be sent to: Shinder Thandi, Coventry Business School, Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry, CV15FB, United Kingdom.

2. Notes and references are not to be treated separately and should be consecutively numbered and presented at the end of the article, not at the foot of each page. The system of bracketed references embedded in the text or in the notes such as (Tinker 1967; 147) is to be completely avoided.

3. **Referencing Style**
   A. For Published Sources the following examples illustrate the style to be followed:
      On first reference
      (a) *Books:* Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj, 1847–1947* (Delhi: Manohar, 1989), 130–45.
      (b) *Edited Volumes:* Richard Barret (ed.), *International Dimensions of the Environmentalist Crisis* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1982).
      (c) *Articles in Journals:* Stephen Oren, 'The Sikhs, Congress, and the Unionists in British Punjab, 1937–45', in *Modern Asian Studies* (hereafter MAS), 8, 3 (1974), 397–418.
      (*Note:* As illustrated in this example, the names of journals need to be cited in full only on first occurrence. In all subsequent references to articles from the same journal, only the initials or known short forms of the journals are to be used.)
      (d) *Articles in Edited Volumes:* N. Buchinani and D.M. Indra, 'Key Issues in Canadian-Sikh Ethnic Relations', in N. Gerald Barrier and V.A. Dusenbery (eds), *The Sikh Diaspora: Migration and Experience beyong Punjab* (New Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1990).
      (e) *Dissertations:* Jeffrey Key, 'Nongovernmental Organisations as Strategic Organisations: The Politics of Voluntarism in Pakistan', unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Texas at Austin, August 1990.
      On subsequent reference (unless immediately following the first reference in which case 'ibid'. will be used) the example at (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) will become:
      (a) Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj,* 131.
      (b) Barret, *International Dimensions.*
      (c) Oren, 'The Sikhs, Congress, and the Unionists', 413–14.
      (d) Buchinani and Indra, 'Key Issues'.
      (e) Key, 'Nongovernmental Organisations'.
      (f) References to newspapers: The Tribune (Chandigarh), 7 July 1992.
      (g) References to parliamentary debates: HC Debates, 13 July 1959, 42 (UK).
      (h) References to government documents or Parliamentary papers: Economic Advisor to Punjab Government, Statistical Abstract, Chandigarh: 1989.
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4. **Italics:** Italicise words in Punjabi and other Indian languages (not in common English usage) only on first occurrence, giving the English translation in parentheses. Proper names in a foreign language should always be set in roman.

5. **Book reviews:** Title (underlined), author(s), or editor(s), place of publication, publisher, no. of pages, price.

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Of related interest

FREEDOM, TRAUMA, CONTINUITIES

NORTHERN INDIA AND INDEPENDENCE

Editors

D.A. LOW ◆ HOWARD BRASTED

A considerable and ever-growing body of literature on Indian independence has focused either on the nationalist campaigns and the role of political leaders, or on the protracted negotiations between Indians and the British. However, there was more to the story of Indian independence; it is these neglected aspects that this volume explores.

The independence of India, and the simultaneous partitioning of the Indian subcontinent, was accompanied by a tremendous social and emotional upheaval. Massacres, abduction, rape and mass migrations comprise the memories of those who were forced to abandon their homes and move to either side of the newly-formed national boundaries in the subcontinent; also, the ensuing process of resettlement of refugees, as well as the integration of the princely states into the sovereign Indian union.

The contributors argue that this upheaval was accompanied not by revolution, as in Indonesia and Vietnam, but by a great many continuities. The earlier militarisation of the Punjab provided the basis of Pakistan's civil–military state, while Indian big business saw the opportunity to fulfil its previously determined interests. Focusing as it does on popular perceptions and the human dimension, this volume significantly widens the perspectives on the crucial decade of the 1940s in the history of the subcontinent. It will be of considerable interest to a wide audience including historians and political scientists, and all those interested in the story of Indian independence.

Contributors: Swarna Aiyar / Sarah Ansari / Dipesh Chakrabarty / Ian Copland / Vinita Damodaran / Gyanesh Kudaisya / Medha Malik Kudaisya / D.A. Low / Andrew J. Major / Ian Talbot / Tan Tai Yong

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