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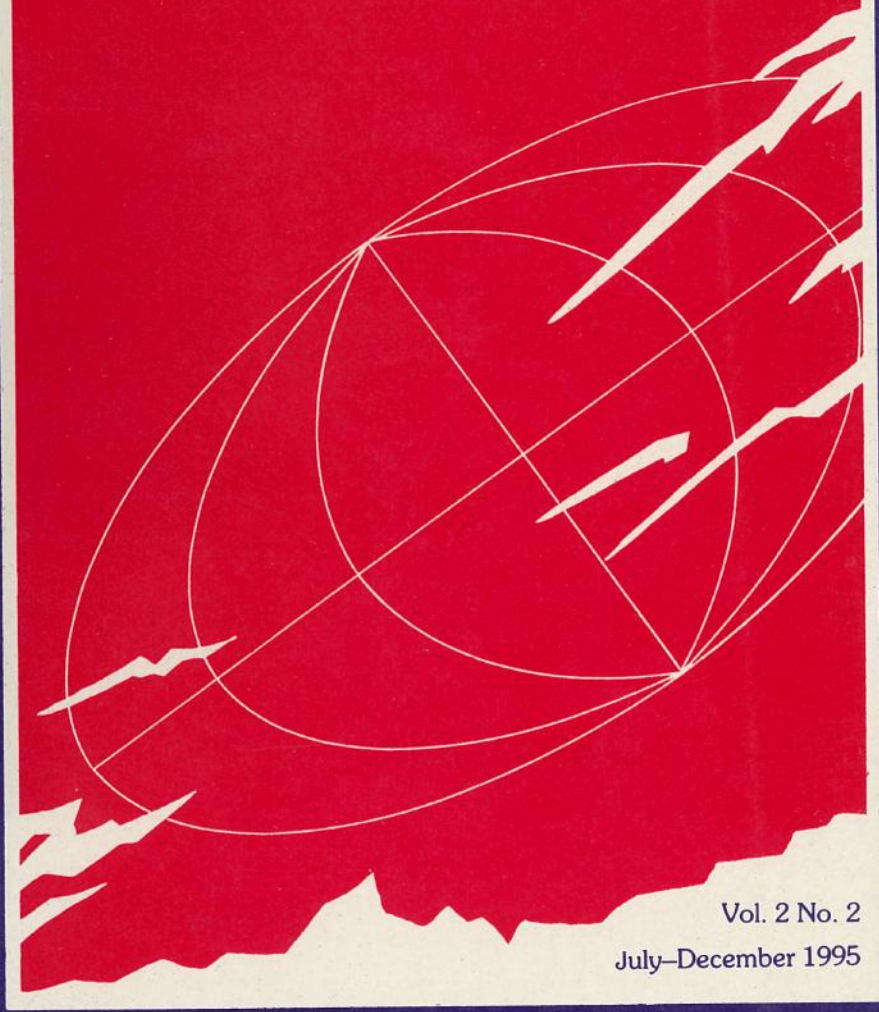

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International Journal of Punjab Studies

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Participation in Rural Non-farm Activity in India: A Case Study of Cultivating Households in Jalandhar District, Punjab

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The purpose of this paper is to examine the degree to which the pattern of employment in the Punjab countryside has changed amongst cultivating households in the period 1971 to 1991 against the background of the Green Revolution. Using data collected in a recent fieldwork investigation undertaken in three villages located in the Rurka Kalan development block of Jalandhar district, we demonstrate the incidence of diversification into RNA (rural non-farm activities). We then proceed to identify the determinants of the decision to broaden the employment base. We argue, using a probit model, that it is the material circumstances of households as given by their holdings of cultivable land, the number of household members and the extent of out-migration which are the key variables in explaining participation in RNA.

The Green Revolution is now almost three decades old and has altered much of the agricultural landscape and agrarian structure of Punjab in a fundamental manner. Technological modernisation brought considerable benefits to many farmers and, beyond them, to the economy of the state—and indeed the Indian Union as a whole. Average per capita real state incomes have increased substantially. By 1988–89 the per capita real income in Punjab was Rs. 6,274—almost 62 per cent higher than the all-India average of Rs. 3,875.[1] This occurred despite the rapid growth of the population which almost doubled from 11.1 million in 1961 to 20.2 million in 1991—a rate in excess of 2 per cent per annum.[2] However, notwithstanding the significant advance in terms of per capita income, economic development and commercialisation have also led to heightened degrees of intra-State spatial and social differentiation: Lenin's famous prediction regarding the growth of rural inequality in large peasant economies made at the turn of the century certainly has resonance for

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Punjab today.[3] Moreover, one does not have to be an economic determinist to see in this process the material basis of the troubled political and security conditions pertaining throughout rural and urban areas since just before 'Operation Blue Star'. Clearly, important segments of the rural community have not profited from the general economic progress. One notable example is the case of the traditional artisans. The numbers recorded in the Census Category (V)a, i.e., 'Manufacturing, Services and Repairs/Household Industry', fell from 264,133 in 1961 to 102,890 in 1971, and then to just 80,748 in 1981.[4] This displacement of traditional pursuits is consistent with the 'Z-goods' hypothesis which suggests that such activities experience decline as economic development proceeds.[5]

As far as the peasant cultivators are concerned, not all have enjoyed the successes of the 'middle' *Jat* households and have reacted in a variety of ways to cope with a relative change in their situation.[6] Some have emigrated, mainly to the UK, the US, Canada and the Gulf States; others have relocated to the rest of the country as and where opportunities have beckoned; whilst a number have moved into the burgeoning towns and cities of the state. Of course, for a great variety of reasons, the majority have elected to remain in the rural areas. For them a strategy of shifting out of agriculture—or at least not engaging in it on a full-time basis—is an option. This is obviously a preferable alternative to a drop in status consequent upon the prospect of joining the ranks of agricultural wage labourers.

The data of the Census of India (CoI) and National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) show a shift in the Indian rural labour force from agriculture into rural non-farm activities (hereafter RNA). This movement has recently been elaborated in a number of studies conducted at the macro-level, and largely using official statistics.[7] The bulk of this literature has focused upon the variations in the regional incidence of RNA and, less commonly, on inter-district variations.[8] To date, however, little work has been conducted at the more micro-level unit of analysis, and this is the point of departure for our paper. In order to identify the factors which account for the decision to move into non-agricultural employment we decided to undertake a study based upon villages. The advantages of operating at the grassroots are now widely appreciated by both economists and historians alike.[9]

Recognising that there is considerable diversity across space and between social groups—which may not be easily captured using aggregated data—we set out to examine the degree to which the pattern of employment has changed among cultivating households. Using data collected in 1991–92 from a dedicated field study in Rurka Kalan block of

Jalandhar district (a noted Green Revolution area), we first show the extent to which such households have diversified into RNA. We then go on to consider the determinants in the decision to broaden their employment horizons. We argue that it is the circumstances of households as given by their holdings of cultivable land, their size and emigration which are central to explaining participation in RNA.

This paper is organised in the following way. We first examine the spatial incidence of RNA over the period 1971 to 1991. Some key terms regarding our analysis of cultivating Sikh households and the ensuing patterns of employment are then elaborated upon. Then the importance of the cultivating household as a decision-making institution is highlighted. After this, the occurrence of RNA at the individual level is examined, followed by an explanation of the procedure adopted in the selection of our sample villages. We identify those factors which help explain the decision of a household to engage in RNA and develop a probit model which seeks to isolate the variables that are associated with their take-up. Finally, some general conclusions are presented.

THE SHIFTING SPATIAL PATTERN OF RURAL EMPLOYMENT

The two principal statistical sources on occupations provide time-series data on the structure of the labour force.[10] At their most aggregative level the working population is subdivided into nine occupational categories. This sectoral division is available for urban and rural areas separately, and for males and females. Both sources indicate an increase in the all-India share of non-agricultural employment in rural areas over the period 1971 to 1991. The Census data shows that the incidence of RNA among the total rural labour force increased from 17.7 per cent in 1971, to a little little over 19 per cent in 1981. Provisional figures for 1991 point to further diversification with the proportion rising to 19.8 per cent. These rather marginal increases should be put into the context of the growth of the population: in absolute terms the rise was substantial—from 26.3 million persons in 1971 to 43.8 million just 20 years later. NSSO estimates confirm this movement but suggest 'a sharper and more consistent increase' in such employment than CoI figures.[11] However, while rural employment has clearly shifted in favour of RNA, its incidence differs between states. The variations range from 64.4 per cent for Goa and 53.9 for Kerala, to 11.8 in Madhya Pradesh.[12] This diversity is substantiated by NSSO figures.[13]

For the Punjab, data of both CoI and NSSO points to similar changes in the pattern of rural employment, though the extent has been more

pronounced than the increase at the all-India level. The CoI reveals that in 1971 21.6 per cent of rural 'main' workers in Punjab were engaged in RNA.[14] This increased to 23.8 per cent in 1981, and provisional figures for 1991 show a further rise to 24.4 per cent.[15] In absolute terms, employment in RNA climbed from 648,328 in 1971 to just over a million (1,028,707) in 1991. NSSO data also conveys a shift in employment in favour of RNA. Whereas the proportion of rural males in RNA in 1972–73 was 19.9 per cent, by 1977–78 this had risen rather dramatically to 25.2 per cent.[16] The latest NSSO figures for 1987–88 indicate that almost a third (31.9 per cent) of rural male workers reported their principal status as RNA.[17]

Jalandhar, one of the leading Green Revolution districts, has witnessed a similar sectoral shift in rural employment over this period. In 1971, 31 per cent of rural main workers were engaged in RNA. By 1981, this percentage had fallen back to 26.7 per cent. This may be explained partly by the logic of comparative cost advantage in that the district specialised in agriculture. However, over the following decade the direction had changed in favour of RNA again, and by 1991 exactly 33 per cent of rural workers were engaged in such activities. In absolute terms the increase was from 86,050 in 1971 to 123,950 in 1991. The incidence of RNA in Jalandhar was therefore higher than the average for the State with the district ranking third in 1991—a reflection of the increasing use of purchased inputs for agriculture and the presence of the urban agglomeration of the city of Jalandhar.[18]

The study area of Rurka Kalan block is situated in this district. It lies close to the geographical heart of Punjab. Agriculture has undergone considerable growth and transformation, and the block may now be fairly regarded as an archetypal Green Revolution area. Rurka Kalan is one of 12 development blocks (the smallest planning unit in India) in the district and falls in Phillaur *tehsil*. A study by Singh ranked the blocks in the district in terms of a number of development indices encompassing a range of agricultural, industrial and socio-economic variables.[19] Using these criteria we decided to target this block. Recognising that there were variations between the villages of the block with respect to the incidence of RNA, the first step in selecting a sample was to list the villages in terms of the proportion of main workers engaged in RNA. For this purpose we used the District Census Handbook for Jalandhar.[20] The village clusters were then subdivided into three broad categories: those with an average, those with a higher-than-average, and those with a lower-than-average participation rate of rural main workers in RNA. The second step involved the selection of a single village from each of these broad groupings. Our

choice was determined by population size, infrastructure, ease of access to major roads and proximity to urban centres. In this way a representative pick of villages was obtained. Three villages, namely Sarhali, Daduwal and Rurka Kalan, were chosen for detailed fieldwork. Since the spatial spread of the chosen villages was not wide, we found few variations in agro-climatic conditions. This removed the possibility of distortions in the incidence of RNA arising out of differing levels of intra-block agricultural development.

SIKH HOUSEHOLDS AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN RNA

The incidence of RNA has both spatial and social dimensions. We would therefore expect segments of the rural population to exhibit differences with respect to their participation rates. The single-most important social group are the Jat Sikhs who are overwhelmingly engaged in cultivation.[21] The CoI data for 1981 shows Sikhs as being the largest religious group accounting for 61 per cent of the total State population. Hindus were the second largest group after Jats (37 per cent). While Sikhs dominate rural areas, Hindus largely dwell in the towns and cities. In 1981 71 per cent of the rural population of Punjab was Sikh while 26 per cent was Hindu. In Jalandhar district the profile was 43 per cent Sikh and 56 Hindu. This concentrated Hindu presence can be explained by the existence of Jalandhar city. However, although Hindus formed the largest religious group in the district considered as a whole, Sikhs were in the majority in rural areas—comprising 54 per cent of the rural population. While most academic attention has been directed towards their key role as the economic agents of the Green Revolution, there has been comparatively little on the pressures now crowding in upon their traditional occupational pursuit. Given the rapid increase in population there has been a marked tendency for the average size of cultivable holdings to decline. Area per agricultural worker has fallen consistently—from 5.5 acres in 1961 to 2.7 acres by 1989/90.[22]

Systematic investigation of occupational choice is not, however, a very straightforward task. Neither the CoI's nor the NSSO's classification of 'workers' was deemed suitable for the purposes of our survey.[23] On the basis of a pilot sample undertaken in early 1991 in these same villages we decided on an alternative procedure. In order to capture the differences between full-time and part-time labour inputs we decided to adopt a three-way classification (Table 1)—our first category was 'principal' workers who comprised those whose main employment was either wholly

in cultivation, the Agricultural Principal Workers (APWs) or wholly
RNA, these being RNA Principal Workers (RPWs). The second w
'ancillary' workers. While this group was engaged in either cultivation
Agricultural Ancillary Workers (AAWs) or in the RNA sector as RN
Ancillary Workers (RAWs), their participation was only on an occasion
basis. The third grouping consisted of those workers who were active i
multiple occupations, combining their 'principal' activity in one categor

Table 1
The Occupational Distribution of the Sample

Participation Rates	
Population of Working Age (15-75)	405
Total Working Population	203
Participation Rate (%)	50.12
(Total Working/Total Working Population)	
No. Unemployed	13
% Unemployed Rate (Narrow)	6.4
(Unemployed/Population of Working Age)	
% Unemployed Rate (Crude)	3.2
(Unemployed/Total Population)	
Breakdown of Workers	
Exclusively in RNA as:	
1. RPW (RNA as principal work)	56
2. RAW (RNA as ancillary work)	51
Exclusively in Agriculture as:	5
3. APW (Agriculture as principal work)	125
4. AAW (Agriculture as ancillary work)	113
Combining both Activities:	12
5. RPW/AAW (RNA principal and Agric. ancillary work)	22
6. APW/RAW (Agric. principal and RNA ancillary work)	19
Total RNA (in any capacity)	3
(1) + (2) + (5) + (6)	
Total Agriculture (in any capacity)	78
(3) + (4) + (5) + (6)	
Population Size	147
Sample Population	
No. Out-migrants	573
Out-migrants(%)	55
Total Population (minus Out-migrants)	9.6
	518

Source: Fieldwork survey.

with secondary or 'ancillary' work in another. In our sample this group combined agriculture with RNA (APW/RAW) or RNA with agriculture (RPW/AAW). Since work patterns are largely determined by household membership, we need to classify individuals on the basis of the households to which they belong.

The NSSO uses the criterion of income in its classification of households. Households are then defined as farm/cultivating or 'self-employed in agriculture' if 50 per cent or more of their income is derived from agriculture.[24] Since the Census returns address the individual as classification by 'occupational households' could not be entertained. As NSSO data on income was not appropriate, and because no reliable estimates of incomes were forthcoming from our fieldwork survey, this financial criterion could not, unfortunately, form the basis for classifying our sample households. Land-ownership was also not considered to be a particularly appropriate method for defining cultivating households since it is not a prerequisite for agricultural production (because of the widespread practice of leasing-in land). As we set out to determine the reasons for diversification, we could not focus solely on households currently engaged in cultivation. Our sample of 'cultivating households' therefore included those that were 'traditionally' agriculturists but who no longer participated in this occupation. The method we adopted to identify a cultivating household was to examine the historical or 'traditional' occupation. A traditionally cultivating household was then recognised as one in which the occupation of the previous male head and of the grandfather of the current male head was cultivation.

THE INCIDENCE OF RURAL NON-FARM ACTIVITIES

The size of our total sample population was 573 persons (see Table 1). Of these, 55 had out-migrated either on a permanent or a temporary basis. These were therefore excluded from the subsequent analysis, and we arrived at a net figure of 518 persons. Just over three-quarters were of 'working age'. We considered the working age to be between 15 and 75 years. While it is conventional to consider the retiring age to be sixty-five, this limitation is obviously more appropriate to the developed countries. The absence of a universal system of social security means that there is no reason to assume that upon reaching 65, people will necessarily withdraw from the labour force. A minimum age limit of 15 was retained which conforms to the NSSO approach but not to that of the CoI.[25] We found that just about half were actually working, so the 'observed' participation rate was 50.1 per cent.[26] Provisional CoI returns for 1991

report that the crude participation rate for the total population of rural areas of Jalandhar district was 30.1 per cent.[27] This suggests that the former method is a more accurate measure of participation. However, even when we use the crude rate, we find greater activity amongst cultivators than amongst rural workers considered as a whole.

Of our sample population of 518 persons, 13 stated that they were unemployed (see Table 1). Although describing themselves as capable of and looking for work, they were not working in any capacity. All belonged to households where at least one other member was engaged in cultivation; but the unemployed respondents did not pursue this occupation themselves even in an AAW capacity. Of the population of working age, 3.2 per cent were unemployed. However, and perhaps more accurately, if we just consider the labour force then the proportion of the unemployed doubles. In an agrarian economy, it is of course notoriously difficult to derive an estimate of under-employment. What we can say is that while increases in agricultural intensity resulting from the Green Revolution have meant that cultivation is now less seasonal, an element of under-employment remains even amongst those employed in cultivation as APWs.[28] Such an element may also be assumed for those working in RNA. It is likely to be least for those in wage-employment such as government jobs classified as 'in-service'. Under-employment is also likely to be a feature of those who were self-employed in RNA and who operated own account enterprises (OAE) with the incidence varying with the agricultural cycle.[29] The fluctuations of the workload of persons in OAE suggests the possibility of periods of under-employment.

Of the 203 persons in work, 147 (or just over 72 per cent) were engaged in cultivation in some capacity (Table 1).[30] Of these, 125 (61.2 per cent) concentrated entirely on agriculture (APWs). Such a high farm activity rate indicates that a significant number of workers do not, apparently, see the need to combine cultivation with any other activity.[31] This simply reaffirms the continuing importance and profitability of agriculture. Persons citing cultivation as an occupation did so in the capacity as owner–cultivators (farming their own land), as lessee–cultivators (engaged in cultivation by leasing-in land) or as share-croppers (*poli*). The degree of involvement varied within the sample: 113 persons (or 76.9 per cent) were engaged in cultivation as APWs; a further 12 persons participated in cultivation as AAWs (these were cultivators only in a peripheral capacity). Thus, taken together, 125 working persons (85 per cent) were engaged in cultivation either as APWs or AAWs. The balance of 22 cultivators was made up of those combining agriculture with employment in RNA (APWs/RAWs) or RNA with agriculture (RPWs/AAWs). There were just

three persons who were APWs/RAWs. However, the practice of RPW/AAW was more prevalent. The sample showed that there were 19 persons who normally worked in RNA but who were also active in cultivation. They assisted in agricultural chores of the holding on either a part-time or a seasonal basis.

A potential avenue of employment available to cultivating households was RNA. Of the 203 persons working, 78 (38 per cent) were engaged in RNA in some capacity (Table 1). Of these, 51 (65.4 per cent) participated in these activities as RPWs. For those who participated in RNA as government employees, white-collar administrative or other waged/ salaried employment, it was not usually possible to combine their work with cultivation. These persons therefore took the decision to concentrate exclusively on RNA (and therefore left cultivation to other household members). Despite an expressed preference for government and white-collar jobs, the predominant form of employment was manual wage labour in factories. Wage employment was usually secured in the nearby centre of Phagwara, and in the local villages of Goraya and Bundala. The persons employed in these activities in Phagwara, a Class II town with a population of 75,961 in 1981, cannot be interpreted as being strictly in RNA. Such activities may more correctly be classified as 'off-farm'. Since the place of residence of these workers was in rural areas, we have taken these as RNA. The arguments for including activities in small and medium towns as RNA are well recognised. It being argued that confining RNA to those activities undertaken in rural areas only is too restrictive.[32] Where such activities are closely and directly related to agriculture and the needs of the rural population—as in Punjab, it seems sensible to regard them as RNA.

Self-employment in OAE offered an alternative avenue of income-generation. However, we found that the degree of take-up was relatively low. The chief occupations were repair services for bicycles and scooters, household electrical equipment and electric motors, and a miscellaneous group of activities including photography, transportation and retail stores. The problem of obtaining sufficient funding to meet the needs of working capital and of securing credit to invest in business premises, equipment and stock proved to be an important and all too familiar constraint. Moreover, few participants in OAE had the opportunity of attending appropriate training programmes and therefore of acquiring the skills necessary to contemplate a movement up-market. In fact, the units were all of a small or even micro scale, and family labour was clearly the preferred option. Nevertheless, some wage employment was provided. The most common type of jobs for wage workers were driving (taxis,

private buses, and trucks), the installation of electric motors in wells, tailoring and repair of tractors.

Only a small minority of persons worked as APWs/RAWs (Table 1). For them, the size of their landholdings (in excess of 10 acres) was such that while they were not compelled to pursue ancillary work in RNA, they had elected to do so. The form of RNA in which these persons were active was closely allied to their work as cultivators (i.e., fertiliser sales and agricultural marketing inspectors). The incidence of RPW/AAW was more frequent. There were 19 persons falling into this category, forming over 24 per cent of the total number of persons engaged in RNA. For the most part they augmented the labour force during the peak agricultural seasons. The range of RNA which they undertook to supplement their employment as cultivators included wage-employment and operating small enterprises. There were five persons who engaged in RNA as RAWs. Although such activities represented their sole occupation, the extent of their participation was part-time and they could not be classified as RPWs. Four of these five were female.

In terms of the gender division of labour, formal participation in the rural workforce is largely confined to males. While we appreciate that women have historically played a vital role in the agricultural economy which, of course, continues to date, their input has never been properly registered in the official returns.[33] Consequently, in our sample the number of females in the RNA workforce was also negligible. The crude female participation rate for the rural areas of Jalandhar district in 1991 was thus only a mere 5.5 per cent.[34] The handful of female workers who indicated that they were engaged in employment other than housework and routine farm chores represented just 2 per cent of total workers. The low 'reported' contribution by females is well understood. Within cultivating households the work of women is invariably confined to domestic duties. Other functions include assisting in a range of farm operations, especially those activities which can be accomplished within the precincts of the house such as tending livestock, milking, and processing agricultural foodstuffs. These activities were not, however, reported as constituting 'work'. In part, under-enumeration arises from the fact that their contribution, especially their assistance in agricultural operations, is not officially recognised as 'work'. Another explanation for the low 'enumerated' rate of participation may be attributed to cultural factors. The majority of Jat Sikhs maintain that work outside the home is the sole prerogative of males. While females may have engaged in economic activities recognised as work, social stigma prevented this from being reported. Thus the incidence of work amongst women was not fully disclosed. The problem of

underestimation in our own sample was compounded by the fact that the interviews were normally conducted in the company of a male member of a household and the replies of the females were tempered by their presence.

DETERMINANTS OF HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATION IN RNA

While mainstream economic theory takes the individual as the basic unit of analysis, in less-developed countries in general and in rural India in particular, the household may be regarded as the fundamental category of organisation.[35] In Punjab, the ownership of resources rests with the household—which, in turn, is primarily responsible for the allocation of labour time, production, consumption and a variety of other economic decisions. Since the actions of household members are largely dictated by the circumstances of the units as a whole, occupational diversification can most usefully be understood from such a perspective. Therefore, in what follows we seek to identify those factors which determine a household's participation in RNA. The significance of these variables is then tested in a probit model.[36] In our survey there were 50 households which had at least one member active in RNA, and a further 50 solely engaged in cultivation (Table 2).

The Model

As a first step in ascertaining the likely determinants of diversification we turned to the theories of the peasant economy. The foundations were laid down by Chayanov in his classic study of Russia undertaken in the inter-War period.[37] Chayanov's model stressed the importance of the area that a household cultivates (ACULT), and the number of members within a household (HHMEMBS). Taking into account the specific conditions of the Indian peasantry, particularly land scarcity and the greater degree of commercialisation relative to the standard case, our pilot study suggested that a range of other variables was also important. These included the number of males of working age (MALEAGE); the number of males of working age who had out-migrated (MALEAGEO); whether the household leased-in or leased-out land (ALLIN and ALLOUT); the number of persons in higher education; and the number unemployed. Preliminary modelling enabled us to exclude those which proved to be statistically

Table 2
Size Distribution of Holdings by Households

Ownership of Land (Pre-Leasing In/Out)				
Area	*RNA Households*		*Cultivating Households*	
(Acres)	*(No.)*	*%*	*(No.)*	*%*
0	3	6	0	0
0.5–2.5	16	32	8	16
2.5–5.0	20	40	21	42
5.1–7.5	4	8	7	14
7.6–10.0	5	10	9	18
10.1–12.5	1	2	1	2
12.5+	1	2	4	8
Households with <5.0	39	78	29	58
Households with >5.1	11	22	21	42
Total	50		50	
Area Cultivated (Post-Leasing In/Out)				
0	2	4	6	12
0.5–2.5	17	34	4	8
2.5–5.0	21	42	11	22
5.1–7.5	2	4	9	18
7.6–10.0	4	8	12	24
10.1–12.5	2	4	2	4
12.5+	2	4	6	12
Households with <5.0	40	80	21	42
Households with >5.1	10	20	29	58
Total	50		50	

Source: Fieldwork survey.

insignificant and we therefore concentrated upon those specified in the following probit form:

HHRNA = f (ACULT, HHMEMBS, ALLIN, ALLOUT, MALEAGEO)

Chi-Square	34.7				
Significance Level	0.17E-05				
Variable	Coefficient	t-ratio	Probability Level	Mean of X	Std. Dev. of X
Constant	–0.400	–1.153	0.249		
ACULT	–0.119	–3.026	0.003	5.856	5.279
HHMEMBS	0.235	3.790	0.001	5.730	2.616
MALEAGEO	–0.925	–4.035	0.001	0.380	0.693
ALLIN	0.277	–0.057	0.955	2.076	3.867
ALLOUT	0.422	0.998	0.318	0.980	3.447

Frequencies of actual and predicted outcomes.

		In RNA (Predicted)		
		No	Yes	Total
In RNA (Actual)	No	35	15	50
	Yes	10	40	50
	Total	45	55	100

The model predicted that 55 households would be involved in RNA (and 45 would not). Overall, 75 (35 and 40) of the outcomes were predicted correctly. The chi-square test rejected the hypothesis that the pattern of prediction was random at well beyond the 0.005 level of significance. The critical value of chi-square with one degree of freedom is 3.84 at the 0.05 significance level and 7.9 at the 0.005 level. The calculated value of chi-square was nearly 35, implying a probability beyond one in 500 that the predicted pattern was random. It is clear that of the five variables tested, three, viz., ACULT, HHMEMBS and MALEAGEO proved to be significant in explaining the variation in RNA. We now proceed to consider these results in further detail.

Landholding

The total landholding of our sample households was 584.5 acres. The figure reported does not refer to the total land that households owned but only to the amount that was 'cultivable'. It thus excludes land either unavailable for cultivation—because of its close proximity to the settlement (and which was therefore used for keeping livestock)—or land unsuitable for crops. Leased-in land was also included. The cultivated holding per household was 5.8 acres—smaller than the average for the state as a whole (9.4 acres).[38] Given that 113 persons were engaged in cultivation as APWs, the average area falls to just below 5.2 acres. There were wide variations in cultivated holdings ranging from under 1 to 27 acres.

Farm Size and the Incidence of RNA

An inverse relationship was found between the area that a household cultivated and its participation in RNA. This is consistent with findings obtained in other less-developed countries.[39] For this reason, policies promoting RNA have become an important part of a strategy for augmenting the incomes of households with little (or no) landholding. Of the 50

households having one or more members engaged in RNA, 38 cultivated a half to 5 acres; six possessed holdings of between 5.1 and 10 acres; and four had holdings of more than 10.1 acres (Table 2).[40] The occurrence of RNA was biased towards households cultivating 10 acres or under. No less than 88 per cent of the households engaged in these activities farmed under the cut-off point of 10 acres. The analogue of this was that the incidence of RNA fell sharply in circumstances where households cultivated in excess of 10 acres. Thus at both ends of the scale, a clear relationship between the land cultivated and engagement in RNA was revealed. This process is indicative of specialisation and may be seen further in Table 2. Amongst households in RNA we observe that while 18 per cent owned between 5.1 and 10 acres, their proportion had declined to 12 per cent of net leasing-in/out. This suggests that such households have chosen to dispose of their holdings and have taken the decision to concentrate on RNA. In contrast, the key objective of cultivating households was to raise their holdings so that they could remain specialist agriculturists. The proportion of households in the category 5.1 to 10 acres after leasing-in rises from 32 to 42 per cent. Thus, it is within this range of landholding that the mechanisms of specialisation operate. Our model reaffirms that the amount of cultivated land (ACULT) that a household had at its disposal was a crucial factor in explaining whether or not it was likely to participate in RNA.

Leasing

The importance of land as a factor of production and as a variable in the decision of a household to diversify is reflected in the level of demand for additional acreage. Landholding may be augmented either through the purchase of land—realistic only for households with monies remitted by out-migrant members, or by leasing-in.[41] The practice of leasing land for cultivation was found to be frequent. In our sample there were 30 cases of households that had increased their supply of landholding by this means.[42]

We identified two methods by which landholdings may be augmented. The first arose from emigration. As we have shown, there was a relatively high incidence of emigration in the study area. Just under 10 per cent of the total population of the sample had left (Table 1). This enhanced the stock of land available for leasehold either to household members and their relatives, or to neighbours. Second, land was also leased by non-migrants. This occurred through a variety of circumstances. These included situations in which landholdings were fragmented (such as when the plot owned lay within an adjoining village); where the household was engaged

in more remunerative occupations; or in instances where the head of the household was too old to cultivate and the offspring pursued occupations outside agriculture. In such situations land was either sold or leased-out. The practice of leasing therefore represented an important strategy by which households could obtain additional amounts of acreage for cultivation. An examination of the distribution of ownership of land (pre-leasing in/out) revealed that 78 per cent of RNA and 58 per cent of cultivating households owned less than 5 acres (Table 2). Comparing the situation of households net of leasing in/out, we found that while there was little change in the position of RNA, the proportion of cultivating households operating on less than 5 acres fell. The practice of leasing-in permitted households to raise their property threshold beyond the critical 5 acre point, putting them into the ranks of 'middle' farmers.

The model reveals that the incidence of RNA was positively related to ALLIN. Households leasing-in were far more likely to be engaged in RNA than those that were not. While the inclusion of this variable in the model improved its predictive power, it was not shown to be statistically significant. However, this outcome does not necessarily invalidate its relevance for explaining participation. Interviews conducted at the time of the survey revealed that while the need to obtain additional land was greatest among households cultivating relatively small holdings, this group was less likely to secure any land that did become available. This was because households cultivating larger areas (usually in excess of 10 acres) were more likely to own a tractor and other more mechanised farm machinery such as drillers and seeders. As expected, we found the ownership of such agricultural implements to be positively related to farm size. There was evidence of a virtuous circle whereby the possession of this complement of machinery was an important element in the ability of a household to secure land for lease. Households which cultivated using traditional draft power, i.e., bullocks or oxen, expressed the view that they could only realistically lease-in adjacent land or plots relatively close to their own holdings. It was not feasible to acquire more distant land because of the difficulties in moving animals and machinery. However, distance was obviously less important to households cultivating by tractor. They were able to lease-in land even when it was some distance removed from their own holdings. Furthermore, they were in a more advantageous position to secure land when it became available because they were able to provide security of payment to the lessor. The time-bound nature of agriculture, the decisive advantage of owning a tractor and the appropriate agricultural implements meant that risks were lower for these households than for those dependent upon draft animals.

While the model showed that ALLOUT was positively related to the incidence of RNA, it was not found to be statistically significant. However, the inclusion of the variable contributed to the overall predictive power of the model. In all, one-fifth of the sample households were engaged in lease-out arrangements. This practice occurred in those instances where the landholding was deemed to be too small to support the household. In such cases the household naturally opted for RNA. The land leased-out provided an annual rental income. A more frequently cited reason for leasing-out was when a member of a household (normally the male head) was already engaged in RNA, usually in government service. These individuals did not possess sufficient time to combine cultivation with wage employment. Under such circumstances the land was not sold since it represented a valuable insurance policy. A small number of cultivating households leased-out the entire complement of their holdings (Table 2). However they remained cultivators through keeping livestock. From this they received an income (on a weekly or monthly basis) from the sale of milk.

Household Size

As predicted a priori, household size (HHMEMBS) proved to be a vital variable in explaining diversification. It was highly significant and positively related to the incidence of RNA. Where household size was large, it was more likely to participate in RNA. The average size of all households was approximately 5.2 persons. Comparing cultivating with RNA households revealed that the former were much larger on average. The average number of persons in cultivating households was 6.1, and just 5.4 for RNA households. This is generally consistent with Chayanov's findings.[43] As the average size of the household rose, there was a rising pressure to find supplementary sources of income in order to meet the increased consumption needs of additional members. In the final version of the model, HHMEMBS was substituted for MALEAGE. It was initially thought that the number of males of working age in a household (MALEAGE) would be a more suitable variable in explaining the decision to diversify, i.e., households with a larger number of males would be more inclined to engage in RNA. While this variable was found to be highly significant, in fact HHMEMBS was a superior predictor. This observation suggests that it was not employment per se that was the crucial element in a household's decision to diversify. Of greater importance was the imperative to support all of the members in the unit. This observation provides an important insight into the motives for undertaking RNA. It suggests

that the imperative to support all of the members is of more significance than employment itself. While increasing units of household labour can always be employed in cultivation, a stage is reached where their contribution does not add very much to total factor productivity. In these 'Ricardian' circumstances, while the household may continue in cultivation, this extra labour can be more productively deployed in RNA.

Out-Migration and RNA

Our model revealed that the probability of involvement in RNA was lower for those households with a male out-migrant.[44] Out-migration was found to be negatively and significantly related to RNA.[45] That is, households with an out-migrant were less inclined to pursue RNA than households without one. Kessinger observed that historically the motive for sending a household member abroad was principally economic.[46] These persons were expected to ensure the stability of the household through the repatriation of remittances. This confirms that such action was the outcome of a household rather an individual decision. This was because emigration required the efforts of the household as a whole since the resources needed were generally beyond the scope of a single individual. Migration therefore served the objectives of the household. Remittances were normally used to increase a household's landholding. Kessinger found that emigration was an important means of reversing any downward trend in family fortunes and raising the position of the property group in the community by helping to add to its ownership of land. Not only did out-migrants supplement and strengthen the position of the household, but their departure reduced the number of persons dependent upon existing resources.

CONCLUSION

This paper has focused on occupational diversification in the Punjab countryside. We have chosen to highlight the position of those Jat households who occupy the lower rungs of the rural economy. Using a 'bottom-up' grassroots approach we have described the extent of their participation in RNA, and analysed the reasons underlying this decision. Using micro-level data gathered during the course of a recent fieldwork investigation, we have provided firm support for the proposition that small and marginal peasant households have been forced to leave family farming. The fact that no less than 88 per cent of the households who engaged in RNA cultivated less than 10 acres (net of leasing) is surely indicative of distress. By way of contrast, we found that of those households

cultivating over 10 acres, only a small minority decided to enter RNA. For them, occupational diversification may be considered as intransitive action inasmuch as it can be interpreted as representing a normal progression out of primary and into manufacturing and tertiary employment. This difference has significant policy implications: those 'pulled' into RNA will not require the same level of support as those who have been 'pushed'.

Clearly substantial numbers of cultivators have failed to enjoy the benefits stemming from the Green Revolution, and have entered the RNA sphere as a result of supply-side factors. Unfortunately, there is no reason to suppose that such pressures are being contained through the existing institutional framework, and this suggests that the problem may well be exacerbated over time. Market forces are likely to produce greater—and not less—differentiation because the technological properties of agricultural growth place greater emphasis upon capital-intensive methods. Furthermore, the relatively slow pace of job creation in organised industry in the state implies that additions to the labour force cannot be readily absorbed within the modern sector. Since the opportunities for emigration and even internal migration have diminished, and given the difficulties of securing employment in a once traditional non-agricultural occupation, i.e., the armed services, it appears that the overriding motivation to enter RNA will continue to be driven by material 'necessity' rather than entrepreneurial 'choice'.

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Notes

1. Economic Advisor to Government, *Statistical Abstract of Punjab 1990* (hereafter SAP) (Chandigarh: Government of Punjab 1991), 106f.
2. *Ibid.*, 44.
3. V.I. Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964, orig. 1899), chapters II and IV.
4. Census of India 1971, *Series-17 Punjab: Part 1-A, General Report*, no date, 433-38; Census of India 1981, *Series-1 India, Part III-(i), General Economic Tables, Tables B.1 to B.5*, no date, 20.
5. S. Hymer and S. Resnick, 'A Model of an Agrarian Economy with Nonagricultural Activities', *The American Economic Review*, 59 (1969), 439–506.
6. G.K. Chadha, 'The Off-Farm Economic Structure of Agriculturally Growing Regions: A Study of the Indian Punjab', in R.T. Shand (ed.), *Off-Farm Employment in the Development of Rural Asia, Vol. 2* (Canberra: National Centre for Development Studies,

Australian National University, 1986); S. Gill, 'Contradictions of Punjab Model of Growth and Search for an Alternative', *Economic and Political Weekly* (hereafter *EPW*), 23, 42 (1988), 2167-73.

7. R. Basant and B. Kumar, 'Rural Non-Agricultural Activities in India: A Review of the Available Evidence', *Social Scientist*, 17, 1–2 (1989), 13-17; J. Unni, 'Regional Variations in Rural Non-Agricultural Employment: An Exploratory Analysis', *EPW*, 26, 3 (1991), 109-22; T.S. Papola, 'Rural Non-Farm Employment: An Assessment of Recent Trends', *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics* (hereafter *IJLE*), 36, 3 (1992), 238-45; A. Kumar, 'Rural Non-Farm Employment: A Static and Dynamic Study of Inter-State Variations', *IJLE*, 36, 3 (1993), 440-54; G.K. Chadha (ed.), Special Issue on the Non-Farm Sector in the Rural Indian Economy, *IJLE*, 36, 3 (1993).

8. For regional variations see V. Shukla and T. Shukla, 'Regional Determinants of Non-Farm Employment' paper presented at a Seminar on Non-Agricultural Employment in India: Trends and Prospects, The Gujarat Institute of Area Planning, Ahmedabad, (1989); S. Mahendara Dev, 'Non-Agricultural Employment in Rural India; Evidence at a Disaggregate Level', *EPW*, 25, 28 (1990), 1626-36. For inter-district variations see V. Shukla, 'Rural Non-Farm Activity: A Regional Model and its Empirical Applicability to Maharashtra', *EPW*, 26, 9 November 1991; S. Singh, 'Non-Farm Employment in Punjab: A Perspective', *IJLE*, 14, 1 (1991), 41-53.

9. C.J. Bliss and H.N. Stern, *Palanpur: The Economy of an Indian Village* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); M.J. Leaf, 'The Green Revolution and Cultural Change in a Punjab Village, 1965-1978', *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (hereafter EDCC), 31 (1983), 227-70; T.G. Kessinger, *Vilyatpur 1848-1969: Social and Economic Change in a North Indian Village* (New Delhi: South Asia Publications 1979).

10. There are, however, considerable problems of consistency between these sources. While the first NSSO survey of employment was undertaken in 1960, there is doubt about the reliability of estimates of the period from 1960 to 1972. This is chiefly due to the definitions adopted for measuring employment and unemployment. Revisions were made in the 27th Round, October 1972-September 1973, so that subsequent Rounds are not directly comparable to earlier estimates. See NSSO, *Selected Tables on Survey of Employment and Unemployment, Punjab*, National Sample Survey, 27th Round, Oct-1972/Sept 1973, No. 222/16 (1975). We also encounter problems with respect to the CoI measurements of employment for 1961 and 1981. See J. Krishnamurty, 'Changes in the Indian Work Force', *EPW*, 19, 50 (1984), 2121-28, and Basant and Kumar, 'Rural Non-Agricultural Activities in India', 13-71.

11. To compare between like-with-like we focus on rural male workers; females are excluded because of inter-censual definitional change. For this category NSSO estimates point to an increase in RNA of under 6 percentage points, i.e., from 16.8 per cent in 1972-73 to 22.5 per cent in 1983. In the Census the increase was from 16.3 per cent in 1961 to 18.2 per cent in 1981. See Basant and Kumar, 'Rural Non-Agricultural Activities in India', 19.

12. Census of India 1991b, *Series-20 Punjab: Paper-1 of 1991, Provisional Population Tables*, no date, 106–16.

13. NSSO (1990) *Sarvekshana, Results of the Fourth Quinquennial Survey on Employment and Unemployment (All India)*, National Sample Survey, 43rd Round, Special Number, September; S. Mahendara Dev, *Some Aspects of Non-Agricultural Employment in Rural India: Evidence at a Disaggregate Level* (Bombay: Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, 1989).

14. The CoI defines 'main' workers as those persons who had worked in any economic activity for a major part of the year, i.e., for at least six months or 183 days. See Census of India 1991a, *Series-1 India, Provisional Population Tables: Workers and their Distribution, Paper-3 of 1991*, 5.
15. CoI, 1971, 433–38; CoI, 1981, 20; CoI, 1991b, 56.
16. A. Vaidyanathan, 'Labour Use in Rural India: A Study of Spatial and Temporal Variations', *EPW*, 21, 52 (1986), A-135.
17. NSSO, 1990, 95.
18. The highest district-wise incidence of RNA was in Rupnagar where just over 40 per cent of rural main workers were engaged in RNA; while the lowest was in Firozpur where the participation rate was only 14.6 per cent. Neither of these two are typically Green Revolution districts.
19. N. Singh, 'An Appraisal of Methodology of District Planning in India: A Case of Study of Jullundur', doctoral dissertation submitted to the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab, 1985.
20. Census of India 1981, Series-17 Punjab, *District Census Handbook*, Jalandhar, no date.
21. Since the CoI does not report the distribution of castes by village, the numerical significance of the Jats has been ascertained from secondary literature. In Leaf's 1978 study of Shahidpur (a pseudonym), a 'typical' village in Punjab, of a total of 153 families, 57 were found to be Jat. See Leaf, 'The Green Revolution and Cultural Change in a Punjab Village', 227-70. This was the single largest caste grouping. The remaining 96 families belonged to a wide range of Hindu castes. The dominance of Jats in rural areas can also be gauged from Kessinger's study of occupations in Vilyatpur village, Jalandhar district. Of the working males from 12 castes 45 percent were Jat; the remainder belonged to Hindu castes. See Kessinger, *Vilyatpur*, 95.
22. SAP, 1990, 180.
23. The classification of workers by both the NSSO and the CoI is made on the basis of the number of days which a person has worked. Since it was not possible for us to ascertain accurately the days which a person had been in work we could not adopt this approach.
24. NSSO, 1990, 20.
25. In its measurement of participation, the CoI does not impose any restrictions in that persons reporting themselves as workers are recorded as such, irrespective of their age.
26. The 'observed' participation rate differs from the 'crude' rate adopted by the Census. The CoI defines the latter as the 'proportion of the total number of workers to the total population'. We define the 'observed' participation rate as the total number of workers to the total persons of working age.
27. CoI, 1991b, 48.
28. In the survey villages the three principal crops sown were wheat and rice (in rotation), and sugarcane which is an annual. Multi-cropping and the spread of irrigation has made a considerable difference. Consequently, the time that farmers spend inactive has fallen such that their workload declines only during watering. However, even in these slacker periods farmers are usually engaged in the repair and maintenance of agricultural machinery.
29. The Economic Census, 1980, *Statewise Report* (New Delhi: Central Statistical Office, 1985) defines an OAE as 'An enterprise engaged in economic activities with the assistance of at least one hired worker on a fairly regular basis'; while an 'enterprise' is

taken to mean 'an undertaking engaged in production and/or distribution of goods and/or services not for the sole purpose of own consumption'.

30. According to the CoI, a person is a cultivator if 'he or she is engaged in cultivation by oneself or by supervision or direction in one's capacity as the owner or lessee of land held from Government or as a tenant of land held from private persons or institutions for payment of money, kind of share' (CoI, 1971, 74).
31. Farm work comprises cultivation and/or activities allied to agriculture, such as livestock, forestry and fishing.
32. D. Anderson and M. Leiserson, 'Rural Nonfarm Employment in Developing Countries', *EDCC*, 28, 1 (1980), 227-48; R. Islam 'Rural Industrialisation and Employment in Asia: Issues and Evidence', in R. Islam, (ed.), *Rural Industrialisation and Employment in Asia*, (New Delhi: International Labour Organisation, Asian Development Programme, 1988), 1-18.
33. M. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932) and H.S. Sidhu, *Agricultural Development and Rural Labour: A Case Study of Punjab and Haryana* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing House, 1991).
34. CoI, 1991b, 48.
35. The importance of viewing economic decision-making from the perspective of the household has recently been recognised even by mainstream neo-classical theorists. See B. Galeski, 'Sociological Problems of the Occupation of Farmers', in Teodor Shanin (ed.), *Peasants and Peasant Societies: Selected Readings* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1979), 180-201; G.S. Becker, *A Treatise on the Family* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981); Bliss and Stern, *Palanpur*; and J. Stiglitz, 'Economic Organization, Information and Development', in H.B. Chenery and T.N. Srinivarsan (eds), *Handbook of Development Economics, Vol.1* (The Netherlands: North Holland, 1988), 93-160.
36. Although we have presented the results from a probit model, a logit version was also developed and tested. Since there was very little variation in the results from these two methods only the findings of the former are presented here.
37. A.V. Chayanov, *The Theory of the Peasant Economy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1925).
38. SAP, 1990, 164.
39. E. Chuta and C. Liedholm, *Rural Non-Farm Employment: A Review of the State of the Art* (Michigan, U.S.A: MSU Rural Development Paper No. 4, Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University, 1979); D. Anderson and M.W. Leiserson, 'Rural Nonfarm Employment in Developing countries', *EDCC*, 28, 1 (1980), 227-48; S. Ho, 'Economic Development and Rural Industry in South Korea and Taiwan', *World Development*, 10, 11 (1982), 973-90.
40. There was one example of a cultivating household which owned an agricultural holding but did not engage in cultivation even on a part-time basis. Rather than farming the land this household chose to lease-out their entire acreage and engage totally in RNA.
41. See S. Thandi, 'Strengthening Capitalist Agriculture: The Impact of Overseas Remittances in Rural Central Punjab', *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 1, 2 (1994), 254. For a fuller discussion of land sales see H.S. Shergill, 'Land Sales and Land Prices in Punjab: 1952-53 to 1978-79', *EPW*, 21, 38/39 (1986), A-125/28.
42. In one case a household owning only 1 acre was nevertheless able to farm a total of 22

acres. In another, a household without any ownership title, was engaged in farming by acquiring 5 acres through a leasing-in contract.

43. Chayanov, *The Theory of the Peasant Economy*.

44. In terms of a general household strategy, the preferred option was undoubtedly to send a member abroad. However, in the circumstances of the 1990s this was no longer considered to be feasible.

45. We recognise that the large influx of migrant workers (chiefly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar) into the Punjab has also had repercussions on the rural economy. For details see S.S. Gill, 'Migratory Labour in Punjab Agriculture', *PSE Economic Analyst*, 3 and 4, 1 and 2 (1986), 110-23.

46. Kessinger, *Vilyatpur*.

Punjabi Lyricism and Sikh Reformism: Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's Poetry in the 1920s[1]

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This paper attempts to show that the poetry of Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh in the 1920s made an important contribution to the creation of a new poetic idiom and a reformed Sikh identity. It highlights the urban, rural and European influences that permeated his writing. Paradoxically, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's poetry largely ignored the real Punjab—its teeming popular culture, its recent history and conflicts.

The colonial rule played a large part in shaping the social and religious consciousness of the people of Punjab. Tribal identity remained dominant in the countryside, finding its political expression in the Unionist Party with the support of the British. But the competitive atmosphere of modernisation, the colonial practice of censuses, the spread of educational institutions, the development of new communication media and the activity of the Christian missions decisively contributed in changing the conditions of city life in the Punjab, and in making religious identity a crucial issue in the main urban centres. Alongside the University of Punjab, its affiliated colleges and the missionary places of education, there soon developed 'communal' colleges linked with local movements of religious reform established in the 1870s. These movements—Arya Samāj, Muslim Anjumans and Sikh Singh Sabhā—were engaged in acrimonious religious polemics and published pamphlets, newspapers and books.[2] Both the activity of these associations and the type of teaching given in their educational institutions in response to the needs of modernisation contributed to the forging of a new kind of communal awareness. The 'reformists' claimed that their aim was to restore the supposed pristine 'purity' of the imagined original community. In reality they were

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manipulating the past, and in so doing often relying in certain ways on the work of European Orientalists.

In the linguistic and literary field, the British, who had imposed English as the official language, had replaced Persian by Urdu as the local language of instruction and administration in the Punjab. In the high schools and colleges, students became familiar with European writings, and certain anthologies of English poetry enjoyed great popularity with the cultivated elite. Besides, the activity of some British officials had its part in renewing the atmosphere of Punjabi literary circles. For instance, Colonel Holroyd, the Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab, organised in the 1870s traditional poetic gatherings (*mušā'iras*) on such themes as 'the rainy season' or 'the pleasures of hope'.[3] Two famous Urdu poets participated in these *mušā'iras:* Āzād and Ḥālī.[4] The latter, at the occasion of these meetings, composed for instance *Munāẓara-i raḥm o inṣāf* (Debate between Mercy and Justice) or *Ḥubb-i Vaṭan* (Love for the Country) which, both in form and content, were of a great novelty in the field of Urdu poetry.[5] Punjabi poets too participated in Colonel Holroyd's *mušā'iras.*[6]

The status of Urdu was further reinforced amongst cultivated Punjabi Muslims as a result of communalism, and this language became for them, during the last decades of the nineteenth century, one of the main symbols of cultural identification. Thus, while from the sixteenth century onwards Muslim poets had made a remarkable contribution to Punjabi literature, Iqbāl (1876–1938), who was Punjabi, never wrote in his mother tongue. As for the Hindu writers, they now employed a highly Sanskritised Hindi. Thus, the first writings in Punjabi showing the influence of European literature were almost exlusively the works of Sikh authors—Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1872–1957) coming first among them in chronology and status.

The present paper attempts to show that the poetry of Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh in the 1920s made an important contribution to the creation of a new poetic idiom and a reformed Sikh identity. It highlights the urban, rural and European influences that permeated his writing.[7]

In the collections from the 1920s, a lyricism discovered by Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh in European poetry is used for expressing religious feelings which draw their inspiration from the contemplation of nature, that of Kashmir in particular. The author knows also how to utilise his acquaintance with Persian classics and Punjabi Sufi poetry. But in all the cases, he insists upon those fundamental values—love particularly—and upon those practices which, in a way typical of the Siṅgh Sabhā, are supposed to recast Sikhism in the continuation of Nānak and Gobind. From this poetry,

steeped in religiosity, the Punjab and its present could however seem at first glance to be absent.

THE MILIEUX AND THE CONTEXT

Rich, pious and cultivated, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's father knew Sanskrit, Braj, Persian and English, and had written over 20 books on religious topics.[8] He was a member of the Siṅgh Sabhā and used to organise poetical meetings in Amritsar.[9] Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh was introduced to the sacred writings of the Sikhs by his maternal grandfather, Bhāī Hazārā Siṅgh, the author of an *Ādi Granth* dictionary which Macauliffe used for writing his voluminous work on the religion of the Sikhs.[10] In the Church Mission High School of Amritsar where he studied, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh discovered Christianity and European culture.[11] He soon played a major role in the Siṅgh Sabhā, heading the Wazir-i Hind Press, in the Punjabi newspaper *Khālasā Samācāra* (Khālsā News) and in the Khalsa Tract Society, as well as in the board of the Khalsa College.

The Siṅgh Sabhā, a Sikh reform movement created in reaction to the Christian missions and the Arya Samāj in the Punjab, had a wide range of activities aimed at promoting a 'purified' religion and a clearly defined Sikh identity. In the literary field, Sabhāite intellectuals, trained in the British educational system, turned mostly to history, commentary of the Scriptures and apologetics.[12] The Siṅgh Sabhā was in fact a breeding ground for writers, amongst whom Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh proved to be, at the turn of the century, the most prolific and innovative. All his writings, from the Gurūs' lives to historical fictions, and from commentary of the *Ādi Granth* to epic and lyrical poetry, contributed to propagate the ideals of the Siṅgh Sabhā.[13]

The first poetical work published by Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh was *Rāṇā Sūrata Siṅgha*, a long mystical epic of 14,385 verses, taking into account about a hundred quotations from the *Ādi Granth* sprinkled all over. The poem was first published in the form of separate booklets in 1905, then, with revisions, as a book in 1919, new changes being introduced for the fourth edition (1937).[14] It narrates the long quest for spiritual salvation undertaken, after her husband's death on the battlefield, by Rāj Kaur, the daughter of a Rājput *rajah* of the hills converted to Sikhism.[15]

Rāṇā Sūrata Siṅgha was written shortly after Bhāī Kāhn Siṅgh's essay entitled *Hama hindū nahī* (We are not Hindus),[16] which played a large part in the affirmation of Sikh identity.[17] Relying on various religious texts, the author meant to show that Sikhism constitutes a religious and social system radically different from that of the Hindus. Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's

poem approaches the same issue, but from another angle, and positively; in the course of the story he presents the mystical, moral, social and martial tradition of Sikhism. Through poetics influenced by European writing, but nourished by a Punjabi literary inheritance, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh brought, with *Rāṇā Sūrata Siṅgha*, an important contribution to the Siṅgh Sabhā's entreprise, by insisting on the originality of Sikhism and on its capacity to transform the human heart through love.

THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE DIVINE

In a way, the same is true of the collections of lyrical poetry published by the author in the 1920s: *Maṭaka hulāre* (Ecstatic Swings) (1922), *Bijalīā de hāra* (Garlands of Lightenings) (1927), *Lahirā de hāra* (Garlands of Waves) (1928) and *Prīta vīṇā* (The *Vīṇā* of Love) (1929).[18] These books achieved real popularity. Their favourable reception was no doubt facilitated by the demand in those days for anthologies of English poetry, and also by the great influence of Rabīndranāth Thākur, who was awarded the Nobel prize in 1913 and who gave a new twist to Indian literature.[19]

In form and style, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's lyrical poems display characteristics obviously related to the writer's acquaintance with European literature. Many of them do not remind one of any of the genres codified in Indian traditional literatures: their structure is a creation of the author. Versification itself often escapes from the established rules, either through an original rhyme structure, through the use of blank verse or of freely assonanced verses, or through resorting to very short verses.[20] As in *Rāṇā Sūrata Siṅgha*, written in blank verse, and unlike what is usual in classical Punjabi poetry, a sentence can now run on more than one verse. At the same time, the author uses a more sophisticated punctuation of the European type. To the Indian *dandā* employed to mark the end of a sentence are now added the comma, the dash, the quotation marks, the exclamation and interrogation marks. Finally, concerning the language itself, as regards orthography, dialectal norm or vocabulary, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's lyrical poems brought a major contribution to the formation of contemporary standard Punjabi.[21]

As for the themes, an ecstatic taste for beauty, the intuition of correspondances between man and nature, between the 'picturesque' and the 'sublime', personal experience and direct expression of intimate feelings, acquire a prominence which they had never received in traditional Punjabi poetry. One can perceive there the influence of the British romantics, Keats and Wordsworth particularly, who were highly appreciated in the schools and colleges attended by the Indian elite. Bhāī

Vīr Siṅgh's poems often appear as a meditation on the mysteries and the beauty of nature, which orients his soul not towards Wordsworthian pagan mysticism, but towards a peaceful feeling of the divine:

kamala patta te piā hā maĩ hā motī trela
jhūmā jīkū nīra te pattā kardā kela,-
sūraja rišama purotaṛā heṭhā utariā āṇa,
sone tāra purotaṛe motī vāgū jāṇa,
ḍalhakā 'godī-kamala' maĩ camakā te thararāū,
jīkū khiṛī savera dī kirana dae lahirāu/
bhāga bhare jisa hattha ne palamāiā maĩ heṭha
sabbha nūrā dā hattha uha kādara, mālaka, seṭha,
uho suhāvā hattha hai šāha mere dā hattha,
sāre hattha usa hattha de rahinde heṭhā hattha,
kamala goḍa ajja kheḍadā rakhiā maĩ usa hattha,
kala para godī osa dī kheḍāgā chaḍḍa vittha:
ghalle sadde pātašāha, ethe othe āpa,-
amara kheḍa maĩ osa dī kheḍa khiḍāve bāpa[22]

(I am a dew pearl in the lap of a lotus.
I swing as a leaf playing on water.
The sun, a silk basket, has vanished below the horizon.
Baskets of stars chime out their gold as pearls.
Reflection 'in the lap of a lotus', I scintillate and tremble,
As while blossoming a morning beam undulates.
Blessed be the hand which dropped me down here.
This hand, all light, is that of God, the omnipotent Lord,
This adorable hand is the hand of my King.
All the hands are submissive to that hand,
It causes me to play in the lap of a lotus today,
But I shall leave this lap to go and play tomorrow:
The Great King himself sends me, calls me, here and there.
My father causes me to play his game of immortality.)

One thinks, while reading such texts, of passages of the *Ādi Granth* where Gurū Nānak already sung God's omnipresence:

ghaṭi ghaṭi ravi rahiā banavārī/
jali thali mahīalā gupato varatai gurasabadī dekhi nihārī jīu//[23]

God resides in any heart.
He is everywhere, hidden in the water, under the ground and on the earth; His existence is revealed by the word of the *guru*.

For Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh, this divine omnipresence is nowhere to be felt as in Kashmir, the pearl of the old kingdom of the Punjab, still nominally under a Sikh *maharajah*, and an asylum of coolness for the inhabitants of the plains. The water of the Lake Dal is a curtain which gets torn in order to unveil the mysteries of a hidden beauty,[24] whereas an old *canār* (*platanus orientalis*) and a spring make one think of eternity.[25] In this region, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh sees the quintessence of the world:

hai dharatī para 'chuha asamānī'
sundaratā vica lišake[26]

On the earth he is 'celestial touch';
It glistens in its beauty.

The beauty of the landscapes is not the only source of meditation for the poet. He also takes interest in the legends of Kashmir and in its past. The subject of the most well known of Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's poems devoted to a Kashmiri story was inspired from *Lalla Rookh*, an 'oriental romance' published by Thomas Moore in 1817 which enjoyed wide popularity in India. In *Farāmuraza dī vilakaṇī* (Feramorz's petition), written in *mātra chanda* verses of 12+10 mores irregularity rhymed, the young poet who later proves to be the king of Bukhara, promised in marriage to Lalla, speaks to Allah. He asks him for the favour of living eternally not in paradise, but in the wonderful Kashmir, in company of the beautiful Lalla Rookh, in whom he sees an incarnation of the divine light.[27]

In another poem, dealing this time with the 'historical' past, the sight of a *brāhmaṇī* is for Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh an occasion to touch upon the prestigious beauty of days long since over:

paṇḍatāṇī kašamīra
satikāra lave-disa āvadī
izzata dāra amīra
pahirāvā usa sohiṇā
varī hayā de nāla
sundaratā usa phaba rahī,
phiradī khullhe hāla-
saṅga nahī, phira lāja hai/
tura phira rahī tasavīra
kise purāṇe samē dī
jada hosī kašamīra
sabbhya, prabīna, sutantarā/ [28]

In the Kashmir a *paṇḍatāṇī* [29]
—To her my regards—happens to appear,
Full of nobleness and distinction;
She wears beautiful clothes.
Her bridal finery[30] and her modesty
Add to the radiance of her beauty.
She walks openly,
Without timidity, but not without modesty.
She goes by like an image
From a distant past,
From the time when the Kashmir was
Civilization, science and independent.

Such a poem calls for a few remarks. On the first reading one might have the feeling of a rather traditional piece. It has a marked rhythm, an element of rhyme is perceptible and the topic seems commonplace. But this first impression fades rapidly. Concerning form, firstly, the text exhibits a subtly modern mixture of constraints and liberty. Its metrics is based neither on the number of syllables (*vṛtta chanda*) nor on the number of mores (*mātra chanda*); the metre is free, each verse numbering from six to eleven syllables. As for the rhyme, it deviates from the traditional Punjabi patterns, being of the type AB, AC, AD, etc.

The content is similarly ambivalent. Under the outlook of a conventional description, the poems combine two features typical of romanticism: the immortalisation of a fugitive beauty and the idealisation of a distant past. Conquered by Raṇjīt Siṅgh in 1819, given by the British in 1846, after the first Anglo-Sikh war, to Gulāb Siṅgh, the *ḍogrā rajah* of Jammu, Kashmir had been under Muslim rule since 1339. The remote period mentioned in Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's poem is hence the imagined distant 'Hindu' past of the valley. Besides this, one could wonder at the valorisation of a brāhmaṇī—though the young lady described in the poem looks quite close to Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's Sikh ideal.[31]

Yet the last word of the poem makes the whole clearer. Singing the ancient Kashmir in a modern poetical idiom is a way of giving a hint about contemporary India and Punjab; referring to its independence is tantamount to deploring the freedom denied to India, represented by a brāhmaṇī—Sikh long before Sikhism existed.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE OTHER

In fact like Nānak in his days Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh displays a great diversity in the expression of poetical modes. *Lahirā de hāra* (1928) brings together various booklets, formerly released separately.[32] The first one, published in 1921 and entitled *Trela tupake* (Dew Drops), consists of *rubā'īs* written in the way of the Sufis.[33] The language too is reminiscent of Sufi poetry with, for example, typical concepts, such as *dīdār* (vision), *hoša-masatī* (intoxication of the consciousness), *be-xudī (selflessness)*—or with south-western dialectal forms, a recurrent feature of Punjabi Sufi poetry.[34] A fundamental component of the poetics of Punjabi Sufi poets such as Šāh Ḥusain (sixteenth century) and Bullhe Šāh (eighteenth century) can also be noted in these texts: the symbolic use of the famous Punjabi legend of Hīr and Rājhā.[35] This feature is all the more remarkable as it is one of those which demarcates Sufi poetry in Punjabi, a deliberately colourful and local manifestation of a universal religion, and Sikh classical religious poetry which, in its quest for universality, usually discards any trace of popular Punjabi culture. Moreover, the latter is generally absent from Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's poetry, as from that of his illustrious predecessors, the Sikh Gurūs. But even when it does appear, as in two of the 40 poems of *Trela tupake*, the religious message is clearly Sikh:

sāḍā Rājhā Takhata Hazāre
takhatō kadī na uṭhadā
Jhaṅga Siālī baiṭhiā sānū
khiccā pā pā kuṭhadā
āve āpa na pāsa bulāve,
sadda vañjhalī dī ghalle:
kuṇḍī pā pāṇī vica rakhadā,-
ruṭhadā hai ki truṭṭhadā[36]

In Taxt Hazāra my Rājhā
From his throne never gets up.
I live in Jhaṅg Siāl,
And he pulls me, pulls me till I nearly die.
He does not come close, but invites me
By playing his flute.
He throws the hook in the water:
Is he displeased or satisfied?

In the Punjabi legend, Rājhā, after having quarrelled with his sisters-in-law about inheritance, leaves Taxt Hazāra for Jhang, near which city he meets Hīr. They fall in love, and Hīr succeeds in getting Rājhā employed as a cowherd by her father. But their relationship is discovered and Hīr is forcibly married to another man, to whom she refuses herself. As for Rājhā, he gets initiated by a Nāth Gurū and, disguised as a *yogi*, goes and rejoins Hīr in the city of Rangpur to where she has been taken. By guile, the lovers manage to escape together.[37] The Sufi poets, sticking to this narrative framework, identify their soul with Hīr who says how much she is tormented by her long wait for the coming of Rājhā (God), and they compose poems in which she sings her happiness of running away with her beloved *yogi*.[38] There is no such thing in Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's poem. As indicated in the title and in the last verse, for this author, God is Nānak's unfathomable absolute, whose initiative is necessary for the mystic to unite with Him. Here is outlined the ticklish question of divine grace, which in Sikhism man cannot obtain through his behaviour and his actions. This is a fundamental theological difference between Sikhism and Sufism, well illustrated in the *Ādi Granth* by the dialogue between Šaix Farīd and the Sikh Gurūs who commented upon his verses.[39] God can choose to cause his voice to be heard in any human heart, and Nānak calls this voice the *guru*.[40] The latter murmurs the 'word' (*sabadu*) which conceals the divine 'order' (*hukamu*).[41] This 'order' seizes the believer and 'pulls' him towards God. Such is, in the text, the meaning of the call of the flute and of the hook. The one upon whom God has bestowed to hear His voice is then free to set out for salvation through meditation on the divine name.

In a poem from *Bijalīā de hāra*, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh parodies even a famous Sufi hymn in Punjabi where Bullhe Šāh says, echoing the well-known statement of Ḥallāj:

Rājhā Rājhā kardī nī maĩ āpe Rājhā hoī
saddo nī mainū Dhīdo Rājhā Hīr na ākho koī[42]

(Repeating 'Rājhā! Rājhā!', I have myself become Rājhā.
Call me Dhīdo Rājhā, none should say Hīr anymore!)[43]

In his poem, entitled *Andara dā ṭeka* (The Interior Support), Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh imitates Bullhe Šāh's formulation, but he transfers it from a Punjabi universe to the Arabo-Persian world, by resorting to the legend of Majnūn and Leyla, and by identifying God with the heroine:

'maī Lelī' 'maī Lelī' kūke,
Majanū Lelī hoiā/
āpe prītama baṇa giā premī
ṭeka jā andara pāī/[44]

Crying: I am Leylī, I am Leylī![45]
Majnūn has become Leylī.
The lover himself has become the beloved,
By finding his support in himself.

Meditating on the divine name and repeating it are, for the Sikhs, practices as important as the *zikr* for the Sufis.[46] But as in *Acalla Rājhā*, the religious message, formulated with a sanskritic vocabulary in the last two verses, is Sikh: becoming conscious of being graced with the *guru's* presence in oneself allows one to achieve union with God.

LOVE AND SALVATION

Texts such as these also show the importance of love in Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's attempt to express the fundamental values of his religion. To this theme are devoted many poems. Three of them, characteristic of Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's various styles, will hold our attention here. The first one, *Pušpāvatī-Candrāvata*, appears as a love conversation invented by Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh, and is written in classical verses of 16+14 mores, rhymed AA, BB, CC, etc.[47] Candrāvat is consumed with love for the beautiful Pušpāvatī, from whom he would like to obtain a vow of love. But the lady seems first to reject him, bringing up the brevity of youth, the deceitful intoxication of passion as well as the poverty of her parents, and pointing to the fact that it is impossible for a love bound to circumstances (*muthāja dašā dā*) to be really deep. Candrāvat nevertheless ends up convincing her of the sincerity of his feelings, and their parents, who are friends, agree to their union. *Pušpāvatī-Candrāvat* is a rather early poem, since in a short foreword, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh says that he wrote it in 1907. Its poetics is devoid of any particular quality, and its only message concerns the irrepressible conviction of love.

Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's masterpiece concerning the theme of love is the second and longer poem, entitled *Prīta vīṇā* (The Vīṇā of Love), published as a separate booklet in 1929. This text, sober and of a consummate art, does not include any overlong passage or any sermon. There is a narrative framework, but it is revealed little by little, and just enough to allow the understanding of the situation. The places are not clearly depicted, and

the characters do not have names. The poem starts with the variant of a refrain which comes back at the end of every stanza, singing in turn the sunset and the sunrise on a lake. Then, two lovers meet on boats and spend a night of pure love in the middle of the water. They were previously held prisoners by a tyrant on opposite shores. Soldiers of that oppressor are sent on their tracks, but fail to find them. Later, whenever there is a beautiful moonlight, the boat reappears with fairies dancing aboard. The two young people have left the human universe of suffering for that of eternity, where there is nothing but love. The structure and the versification of the poem are quite elaborate, and its musicality is extremely suggestive. All the art of the writer consists, through evocatory touches, in making one realise the transcendant and salutary nature of true love. The poetical construction underlines the move which constantly pushes the human world, dealt with in the couplets, to melt in the world of love, sung in the refrain. Each one of the 20 stanzas following the overture begins with a narrative rhyming couplet, consisting in four verses of 16, 17 or 18 mores, followed by two verses of 11 mores, like the verses of the refrain. The first one of these two verses ends in a consonantic cluster which echo the last syllable of the last verse but one of the refrain. The second one rhymes with the three other verses of the refrain. In the latter, as in the passages about the lovers, the expression of the serene calm of the immutable cycle of the days and the nights on the lake is made more palatable through a brief but regular rhythm of wavelets, and through a shuffling rhyme in *-āīā* in the three first verses and in the last one, after a suspension, as on a wave crest, on the consonantic ending of the third verse. On the other hand, the hunt of the tyrant's soldiers is described with jerky alliterations which follow on in a staccato rhythm.

The approach of the third poem, entitled *Sāī laī tarapa* (Heartbeats for the Lord), is more prosaically religious, less musical and mystical.[48] Regarding the great love stories of various traditions, Hindu (the Gopīs and Kṛiṣṇa), Punjabi and Sindhi (Hīr and Rājhā, Sassī and Punnū) and Muslim (Layla and Majnūn), Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh writes that they conceal a secret (*e kuī ramaza chipāvaṇa*, verse 4): the heartbeats which are consubstantial with them are those which God, since the beginning of all times, has put in the chest of men and which accompany the desire to unite with Him. By proposing this interpretation of the legends, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh as Nānak in his time claims both the universal acceptability of Sikhism and the saving value of love.

PRACTICES AND RITUALS

If the meditation on divine omnipresence and love occupy a prominent place in Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's lyrical poetry, the practices and rituals of Sikhism are also touched upon by the author. As regards discipline, one finds, on the one hand, such a poem as *Haṭha-rasa* (The Essence of Haṭha-yoga) which, in the manner of Nānak, criticises haṭha-yogic asceticism, but in the form of *rubā'īs*,[49] and on the other hand texts where are sung such practices as interiorisation of religion[50] as well as the meditation on the divine name and its repetition.[51]

The spiritual framework of a Sikhism purified from all its Hindu accretions is not absent either from Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's poems, be it the Golden Temple,[52] the baptismal nectar (*ammrita*)[53] or the congregational gathering of the faithful for the singing of hymns (*kīrtan*). To this practice is devoted a whole volume: *Kambadī kalāī* (Trembling wrist) (1933). Quite different from the collections of lyrical poems, this book consists of hymns to God and to Nānak and Gobind. These hymns are, according to the author's preface, meant to be sung on diverse occasions, notably during the *Gurpurbs*, religious gatherings for the birthday or the death anniversary of a Gurū or of Gurū Gobind's sons, or for commemorating the completion of the *Ādi Granth*. Each hymn is followed by indications concerning its melody (*sura*) and its *rāga*. The title, which is also that of the opening piece, alludes to the wrist trembling under the effect of emotion during prayer:

supane vica tusī mile asānū asā dhā galavakkarī pāī;
nirā nūra tusī hattha na āe, sāḍī kambadī rahī kalāī/'[54]

We meet you in our dreams. Adoring you then is a caress.
Your light comes down to us, not You; our wrist remains trembling.[55]

Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh, in his foreword, expounds the reasons which pushed him to publish his book. The congregational singing of hymns, he says in substance, is an original injunction of Sikhism. Now, Sikhism has two pillars:[56] God and the Gurūs. Because for the latter there existed no hymns but in Hindi, Braj and Persian, it proved necessary to write some in Punjabi. Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh dates back the composition of his first hymns 'to some thirty-five to forty years' before the publication of *Kambadī kalāī*. This work continued after the first edition, since each of the following three (1938, 1950 and 1963) includes new pieces.

Gurū Gobind, symbol of the militant aspect of Sikhism and largely celebrated in *Kambadī kalāī*, is also present in the lyrical collections of

Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh. The poem *Godāvarī dā gīta* (The Song of the Godāvarī), for instance, was inspired by the river in which the Gurū had come to dip his feet.[57] One of the poems devoted to Kashmir in *Maṭaka hulāre* mentions the Devī.[58] This reminds one of the hymns in which Gurū Gobind celebrated the Goddess when the Sikhs had to withdraw in the Shivaliks.[59]

THE PUNJAB LOST

In Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's poetry, one mostly hears, to quote the formula of Pūran Siṅgh in his foreword to the 1925 edition of *Maṭaka hulāre*, 'the formless music of the divine'.[60] For this work, all vibrating of *'l'amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu'*,[61] seems to ignore for a large part the real Punjab, its teeming popular culture, its recent history and conflicts. When Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh sings of nature, the treatment is always abstract or conventional, and when an existing place is used as a scenery or as a symbol, it is never the Punjab, but the mountains of its periphery, such as the ethereal Kashmir of *Maṭaka hulāre*.

Punjabi culture is just as absent as its cradle. In Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's lyrical poems, the love legends of Punjab appear only occasionally, and are used symbolically to express love for God. But in general, the writer's poetry, fruit of a vast religious meditation and of an innovating aesthetical enterprise, is cut off from popular culture, from its earthy language, from its traditional metaphors, and from its intrinsic link with the daily reality of the Punjab.

Between the two World Wars, Punjab went through a rapid and deep social and political evolution. However, despite various and sometimes violent movements,[62] the dominant trend remained that of collaboration with the *Rāj*, which for many years proved to be advantageous for urban intellectuals looking for good opportunities and for the landlords supporting the Unionist Party locally in power until the 1946 elections.[63] In this context, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh, who belonged to this elite, never touched openly upon social and political problems in his writings. Nevertheless, in its ultimate consequences, his commitment to the promotion of Sikh reformism could not be totally accommodated with an imperial power conveying values incompatible with the ideals of Sikhism.[64] More than in *Bhulla cukī sabhayatā* (The Forgotten Civilization) analysed above, this is evident from a long poem entitled *Gaṅgārāma*.[65] This ironical fable, written in verses of 16+16 mores rhyming by two, tells of the torments of a parrot called Gaṅgārām. The door of his cage has been opened, and he is anguished at the thought of a free life. He regrets the security and

comfort of captivity, while the other parrots praise the invaluable price of liberty. The poem closes on a prayer led by the head of the parrots' congregation in which one can read the following verses:

sānū rakkha sutantara dāte!
bandī sāthō dūra ḍhahe,
paratantara na kade karāvī
khulha dā sadā šaūra rahe/
mūha takīe nā kade kaida dā
kade ġulāmī āve nā,
golā kade na karī kise dā
piñjare sānū pāve nā/

Keep us independent, o Giver,
May servitude be far away from us,
Never make us dependant,
May our intelligence remain open,
May we never know of prison,
And never fall in slavery!
Never make us the servant of anyone,
May we never be put into cages!

In a note appended to the title, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh explains that Punjabis are in the habit of calling Gaṅgārām or Mīā Miṭṭhū (sweet lord) domestic parrots, which are well fed and repeat what their masters say. Of course, the poem could be a call to all the Gaṇgārāms of Punjab not to let themselves be chained by self-styled spiritual masters exploiting their credulity. But obviously, the parable can also be read as satirising the acceptance of colonial yoke, and as a prayer for the independence of India. One knows that the British for many years kept under surveillance all those who played a role in the activities of what they called the Neo-Sikh party, and no more so than on Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh, whom they did not consider as a faithful ally.[66]

CONCLUSION

Thus, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's shorter poems have a place of their own in the literary output of the Siṅgh Sabhā. They show Sikhism rooted in its tradition, but also open to a modern kind of sensitivity and to new aesthetics, influenced by European culture. Whereas many Siṅgh Sabhā writings were seeking to define Sikhism by what it was not, trying notably to differentiate it from Hinduism, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's poems contributed to

a purified, distinct and positive image of that religion, stamped with Nānak's serene mysticism. The high literary status of the poems had a lasting influence in the making of the cultural identity of urban educated Sikhs.

However, in the 1920s authors who were Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's emulators, notably Pūran Siṅgh and Dhanī Rām Cātrik (1876–1954), had gone beyond an almost exclusively religious horizon. They dealt with such themes as the landscapes of the Punjab, the 'works and days' and popular culture, and approached such issues as anti-colonial commitment and communal problems.[67] But still, their poetry, like that of Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh, creates the picture of a Punjab dripping with love and mysticism, whereas explosions of communal and political violence occurred throughout the inter-War period, finding a literary expression in burning pamphlets which the British used to proscribe.[68]

Notes

1. In this study, the Indian words are written in the following way. Quoted passages or titles of works are strictly transliterated from Gurumukhī. The system adopted is that of the Indologists, with a few variants: the nasality of a vowel is indicated by the tilde; the voiceless guttural aspirate occlusive with a dot below, through which Gurumukhī renders the voiceless uvular fricative of Arabic and Persian, is transliterated by *x*. The corresponding Arabic and Persian voiced consonant, transcribed in Gurumukhī by the voiced guttural occlusive with a dot below, is transliterated by *ġ*. The voiceless palato-alveolar fricative, attested in Sanskrit loans (where it stands for both *ṣ* and *ś*) or in words of (Arabo-) Persian origin, transcribed in Gurumukhī by the voiceless dental sibilant with a dot below, is transliterated by *š*. As a consequence of the system, all the *a* implied by the Gurumukhī script are transliterated, except in the too usual *Ādi Granth*, which is not transliterated as *Ādi Grantha*. Concerning the Indian or (Arabo-) Persian words used in a sentence in English, they are written, for the Sanskrit words, according to the transliteration system of the Indologists; for the Punjabi words, according to the system just described, but without the unpronounced *a* (present in writing because of the 'syllabic' nature of the Gurumukhī script); for the (Arabo-) Persian words, according to the same system as the Punjabi words, with the difference that the consonants peculiar to Arabic are transliterated according to the system of J. Platts, *Urdū, Classical Hindī and English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1884).
2. The Punjab University College founded in 1870 had become a University in 1882, and it had 10 affiliated colleges at the beginning of the twentieth century. Among the colleges of the Christian missions were the Forman College, Lahore (1864), the Gordon College, Rawalpindi (1886) and the Murray College, Sialkot (1890). The main colleges created at the initiative of Indian movements of religious reform included the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, Lahore (1886), the Islamia College, Lahore (1892) and the Khalsa College, Amritsar (1892). On the religious polemics in the Punjab at the beginning of this century, see K.W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 85-121.

3. On the *mušā'iras*, see the references given in D. Matringe, *Hīr Vāris Šāh, poèm panjabi du XVIII siècle* (Pondichery: Institut Francais d' Indologie, 1988).
4. Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād (1830–1910) had been a disciple of Ẕauq (1790–1854), the *ustād* ('master' in poetry) of the last Mughal emperor, Bahādur Šāh Ẓafar. After his father's death during the revolt of the sepoys (1857), he came to Lahore where he got employed in the Education Department. His work consisted in writing official Urdu manuals for the British serving in the Punjab. Altāf Ḥusain Ḥālī (1837–1914) was the most devoted disciple of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Xān. He had been the tutor of the son of Šefta, a poet at Bahādur Šāh's court and a friend of Ġālib. After Šefta's death, he came just like Ḥālī to Lahore, where he worked in the Government Book Depot, correcting Urdu translations of English books, and becoming then familar with Victorian poetry. On Āzād see A. Schimmel, *Classical Urdu Literature from the Beginning to Iqbal: A History of Indian Literature VIII* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975), 226-28.
5. These two poems were published respectively in 1874 and 1876. The text can be found in Ḥālī, *Šam-ul-Ulamā Xwāja Altāf Husain. Kulliyāt-i nazm-i Hāli* (Lahore: Majlis-i-taraqqui-i adab, 1968), 391-410 and 411-21.
6. See Maula Baxš Kušta, quoted by M.P. Kohli, *The Influence of the West on Punjabi Literature* (Ludhiana: Lahore Book Depot, 1969), 22.
7. This contribution forms a part of a forthcoming book on the beginnings of modern poetry in Punjabi, which itself follows on from an article devoted to the apparition of the short story and the novel in Punjabi, see D. Matringe 'L' apparition de la nouvelle et du roman en panjabi (1930-1947)', *Journal* Asiatique 273, 3 & 4 (1985), 425-54. We shall not come back here in details on what has been said in that paper on the new conditions of the production and the reception of literary works in the early XXth century Punjab.
8. On the family and the life of Bhāī Vir Siṅgh, see, among others, Harbans Singh, *Bhai Vir Singh: Maker of Indian Literature* (New Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 1972).
9. On the Siṅgh Sabhā, see K. Jones, *Socio Religious Reform Movements in British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 109-15.
10. M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion: Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*, 6 vols. (New Delhi: S. Chand & Co. 1909, Reprinted 1978).
11. One of the first concerns of Christian missions in the Punjab had been to open schools at every level of education. These schools were recognised and supported by the Government. They gave a western type education sought-after by the Punjabi elite of the time for its quality and for the prospect it offered of accessing jobs held in high esteem. The Church Missionary Society had established a Mission in the Punjab in 1851, and its headquarters were in Amritsar. It was closer to Lahore bishop's palace and to official milieux than the other missions, and it had a resolutely elitist educative policy, in conformity with the views of the Punjab Government. The Church Mission School was thus the school for the children of privileged families of Amritsar, particularly in the Sikh milieu of the Siṅgh Sabhā, for which 'modern' education was a matter of principle. See Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1983), 233.
12. See W.H. McLeod, *Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 15.
13. See Matringe, 'L'apparition de La novvelle d' du roman en panjabi', 428.
14. Considering the few elements we dispose of to assess the popularity and the diffusion of the works under study, the number of editions, with a usual printing of 500 copies,

can be held as a criterion of estimate. With nine printings in 1980, this arduous and very long book thus scored a sustained success. Of easier approach, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's collections of lyrical poems were even more often reprinted: thus *Bijalīā de hār* (Garlands of Lightenings)1927) had been reprinted 13 times in 1976, whereas many contemporary books had been printed only once.

15. See also C. Shackle, 'A Sikh Spiritual Epic: Vīr Singh's Rānā Surat Singh' (forthcoming).
16. Bhāī Kāhn Siṅgh, *Hama hindu nahi* (Amritsar: Khalsa Press, 1899).
17. See K.W. Jones, 'Ham Hindu Nahin. Arya-Sikh Relations, 1877-1905', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 32, 3 (1973), 457-75.
18. The *viṇā* is a musical instrument with seven plucked strings (four for melody and three for accompaniment) and with two resonance cases, the main one often made of ebony, and the other one, smaller, consisting in a gourd fixed to the neck.
19. See P. Gaeffke, *Hindi Literature in the Twentieth Century*, Vol VIII (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1978), 29–35.
20. *Piāra' te 'faraza' diā devīā dā sambāda* (The Dialog of the Goddesses of Love and Duty) (Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh, *Bijalia de hara* (Amritsar: Khalsa Samacar, 1927), 71-81) is, for example, written in seven syllables blank verses.
21. See C. Shackle, 'Some Observations on the Evolution of Modern Standard Punjabi', in J.T. O'Connell et al. (eds), *Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Toronto University, Centre for South Asian Studies, Paper 3, 1988).
22. Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1927), 16, *Kamala godī vica trela motī*, 'A Dew Pearl in the Lap of a Lotus'.
23. *Soraṭhi* 8.2, *Ādi Granth* (Amritsar: SGPC, 1979), 597-98.
24. *Ḍall*, verses 5-6, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh, *Mataka hulāre* (Amritsar: Khalsa Samacar, 1922), 54.
25. *Bīja bihāṛe de buddhe canāra nū* (To the Old Plane Tree of Bīj-bihāṛā [a locality in Kashmir?]), and *Ananta nga* (The Snake of Eternity), Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1922), 60.
26. *Ṭukarī jagga tō niārī* (A Place aloof from the world), Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1922), 54.
27. Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1922), 90-96.
28. *Bhulla cukī sabhyatā* (The Forgotten Civilization), Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1922), 71.
29. *Paṇḍatāṇī* is the feminine of *paṇḍit*.
30. *Varī* refers to the bride's clothes and ornaments on the day of her wedding.
31. There is evidence in the history of the Sikhs of the social and religious eminence recognised to *brahmans*, despite the orthodox speech. The most famous example is that of Maharajah Raṇjīt Siṅgh distributing the Khālsā treasures to brahmans in order to increase his merits. See W.H. McLeod, *Who is a Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 68.
32. See *Do gallā*, the foreword to the collection, Bhai Vir Singh, *Lahirā de hāra* (Amritsar: Khalsa Samacar, 1928).
33. The date of the first printing is indicated at the bottom of the foreword, p. 8. The *rubā'īs* are quatrains rhyming AABA. Some poems of *Trela tupake* are made of *rubā'īs* put together, thus *Ilama, amala* (Knowledge, Action), Bhai Vir Singh (1928), 23.
34. These forms include, for instance, *maiḍā* 'my' vs. central Panjabi *merā* (*Maidā piārā* (My Beloved), 12), the sigmatic future *guā desana* (they will spoil), vs. central Punjabi *guā-deṇage* (*Haṭha-rasa* (The Essence of Haṭha-yoga), verse 4, p. 17), Bhai Vir Singh

(1928). On these forms and their use, see D. Matringe, 'L'utilisation littéraire des formes dialectales par les poets musulmans du Panjab de la fin du XVI au debut du XX siècle' in C. Cailltat (ed), *Dialectes dans les littératures indo-aryennes* (Paris: College de France, 1989 [a]).

35. See D. Matringe, 'Krishnaite and Nath Elements in the Poetry of the eighteenth Century Punjabi Sufi Bullhe Sah', in R.S. McGregor, ed., *Devotional Literature in South Asia: Current Research 1985-1988* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
36. *Acalla Rājhā* (The Absolute Rājhā), Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1928), 13. The form *truṭhadā* (imperfective participle of *truṭhaṇ* [to be satisfied]) with its dentale group + *r* preserved in the initial, is typical of south-western Punjabi. Its presence in the poem is remindful of the dialectal mixity of the Sufi poems in Punjabi.
37. A summary of the most celebrated version of the legend is to be found in Matringe (1988), 18-20.
38. One thinks particularly of refrains of poems by Bullhe Šāh, so often sung by *qavvāls* (professional musicians of Sufi singing in South Asia) in front of his shrine, such as *Majjhī āīā Rājhā yār na āīā* (the cow-buffaloes have come, my beloved Rājhā has not come), or *Nī maī vaisā jogī de nāl* (I shall go away with the yogi), translated in French and in English in D. Matringe, *Nurat Fateh Ali Khan en concert a Paris. Qavvali traduit de l'ourdou du panjabi et du persan.*, (1989 [b]). See also Matringe (1992), 197.
39. See D. Matringe,"'The Future Has Come Near, The Past Is Far Behind": A Study of Saix Farid's Verses and their Sikh Commentaries in the *Adi Granth*' in A.L. Dallapiccola and S.Z. Lallemant (eds), *Islam and Indian Religions 1000-1750* (Heidelberg: Südasien-Institut, 1993), 432-37.
40. See W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1976), 196-203.
41. See McLeod (1976), 191–94; 199–203.
42. Text of the poem in Bullhe Šāh, *Kulliyat-i Bullhe Sah* (ed.), Faqir Muhammad Faqir (Lahore: Punjabi Adabi Academy, 1963), 123.
43. On Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj's famous exclamation: *'Anā' l-Ḥaqq'* ('I am the Truth', i.e., 'My [self] is God'), see L. Massignon, *La Passion de Hallaj, martyr mystique de l'Islam* (Paris: Gallimard NRF, 1975), 168-76. On the symbolic use of the legend of Hīr and Rājhā by Bullhe Šāh, see Matringe (1992).
44. Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1927), 38.
45. Leylī stands in Persian for Ar. Layla.
46. See respectively McLeod (1976), 214-19, and, for example, A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 167–78.
47. Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh, (1928), 153–69. *Puṣpāvatī-Candrāvata* belongs to a series of longer poems, fully or partly written in the form of dialogues and placed at the end of the collection, of which each forms a part, just before the last piece entitled *Godāvarī dā gīta* (The Song of the Godāvarī).
48. Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1927), 35.
49. Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1928), 17.
50. *Āpe dā uchāla* (Exaltation), Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1928), 33.
51. *Na hoi uhale* (He is not far), Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1927), 17.

52. *Srī Darabāra Sāhiba*, Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1927), 32.
53. *Amara rasa* (The Nectar of Immortality), Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1928), 14.
54. Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh, *Kambadi kalai* (Amritsar: Khalsa Samacar), 1933, 1. This text is already present as the last poem of the first section of *Maṭaka hulāre* entitled *Rasa-raṅga chuha* (Touch of Essential Colour), Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1922), 46.
55. The wrist shivers under the effect of the emotion consubstantial with prayer, during which the hands are stretched towards God.
56. Bhāī Vīr Singh uses the typical Arabic word of Islam to refer to the pillars of religion: *rukn*.
57. Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1928): 197. A note by the author indicates that the poem was published for the first time in 1922, at the occasion of a *gurpurb*, in the *Khālasā samācāra*. It was accompanied by its translation in English by Pūran Siṅgh, reproduced in the book, p. 199.
58. *Ṭukaṛī jagga tō niārī*, 'A Region aloof from the World', Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1922): 52-54.
59. See D. Matringe, 'Les Sikhs dans la societe indienne'. *Actes de la Rescherche en Sciences Sociales* 61 (1986): 66., with the translation of a hymn to Durgā.
60. Pūran Siṅgh (1881-1931), who will be dealt with in our forthcoming book, used to see in the section of the collection entitled *Kashamīra nazāre* 'Sights of the Kashmir', 'a guarland of pearls which the author has put around the neck of the Devi of Nature, after having washed them in innumerable shady waters and springs, and after having threaded them onto rivers', Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1922): 12.
61. 'The love for literature and the desire of God'. I borrow this formula from the title of D.J. Leclercq, *L 'Amour des lettres et le desir de Dieu* (Paris: Cerf, 1956).
62. See K. Mohan, *Militant Nationalism in the Punjab* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1985).
63. See I. Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1988).
64. For a formulation of these ideals in the days of Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh, see Tej Singh, *Sikhism. Its Ideals and Institutions* (Amritsar: Khalsa Brothers, 1938).
65. Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (1927): 88-109.
66. Indeed, one reads, in a secret 'C.I.D. Memorandum on Recent Developments in Sikh Politics', written in 1911 by D. Petrie, Assistant Director of the Criminal Intelligence, reproduced in *The Punjab Past and Present* 4:2 (1970):354:

> Bhai Vir Singh is the son of Charan Singh (...). He was first employed in the office of the Tract Society and afterwards became a partner in the *Wazir-i Hind Press* which he is now said to own. He is Editor and Manager of the *Khalsa Samachar*, a Gurumukhi journal, which is published at Amritsar. Vir Singh is mentioned from many sources as a leading figure in the Sikh revival and as disloyal to the core. The same opinion is entertained of him by local officers (...). He is reported to be making overtures to the Head Granthi of the Golden Temple with a view to bringing that institution under the control of the neo-Sikh party (...). At present, he has complete control of the Khalsa Tract Society. He is a member of the council of the Khalsa College (...). Though Vir Singh was originally a man of no position, he seems to have acquired for himself the position of a Guru (...). He may safely be regarded as a zealous neo-Sikh and thoroughly anti-British.

67. See D. Matringe, 'The Punjab and its Popular Culture in the "Modern" Poetry of the 1920s and the Early 1930s' (forthcoming).
68. See G. Barrier, *Banned. Controversial Literature and Political Control in British India,*

1907-1947 (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1974). During the First World War already, Punjabi revolutionary poems calling to fight for India's independence had been published in the Punjabi version of the *Hindostāna Ghadara* 'The Revolt of Hindustan', a newspaper of the Ghadar Movement, an association of Indians, including many Sikhs, living on the west coast of North America, see Harish Puri, *Ghadar Movement. Ideology, Organisation and Strategy* (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University Press, 1983).

Predicting Punjabi Linguistic Identity: From High to Low In-group Vitality Contexts

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This study explored the relationship between the linguistic, cultural, religious, and national identities of 167 Punjabi-speaking Sikh teenagers living in a range of vitality contexts. Subjects, recruited from Amritsar, Delhi, London and Vancouver, responded to measures asking about their self-categorisations. Analyses revealed that Punjabi Sikhs identities are highly resilient and that Punjabi language and culture were inseparable in all contexts, reinforcing the widely recognised language-culture association. Moreover, it was found that religious and national identities contributed differentially to Punjabi linguistic identity in the different vitality contexts. Findings were discussed in terms of theories of *Vitality* and *Self-Categorisation*.

To any Punjabi out there, whether you are a Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. If you speak Hindi or Urdu instead of Punjabi, you are a serious disgrace to your culture and you shouldn't call yourself a Punjabi![1]

The chief factor in the growth of Punjabi consciousness was the evolution of one common tongue from a babel of languages.[2]

The pre-1947 partition Punjab comprised a vast area which, stretched 'from Delhi in the south to Jammu in the North and from Dehra Dun in the east to Dera Ismail Khan and the North West Frontier Province in the West and North West respectively'.[3] Punjabi cultural identity, emanating from this region, is a complex and distinctive entity comprising a set of specific symbolic systems which includes knowledge, norms, values, beliefs, language, art, music, food and customs, as well as the habits and skills learned by individual Punjabis. The Punjabi language is not only a product of this culture, but also transmits and transforms the culture itself, and is the main medium for internalising the Punjabi culture. The aim of this study is to explore relationships between the linguistic, cultural,

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religious and national identities of Punjabi-speaking Sikhs living in a range of national and regional contexts.

It has been conservatively estimated that there are approximately 70 million speakers of Punjabi and its varieties in the world.[4] The majority of these (approximately 70 per cent) are to be found in the Pakistani state of Punjab where Urdu is the official language.[5] In India, Punjabi speakers, although a very small community forming less than 4 per cent of the current population of India, are in the majority (over 80 per cent) in Punjab. Punjabi speakers in the state of Punjab in India have a rich multi-lingual heritage, and Punjabi, as the official state language of Punjab, enjoys higher vitality than Hindi and English (which also have considerable prestige and official support in Punjab).

Significant numbers of Punjabi speakers (of the pre-1966 larger Punjab) are also to be found in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi, where Hindi speakers are in a majority and where Hindi has official and dominant language status. The history of linguistic conflict between Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu in the Punjab appears to have had little negative impact on the linguistic imperialism of the English language in India.[6]

In Delhi, the national capital of India, Hindi dominates demographically while its political power is shared with an elite English-speaking minority. Punjabi, which has a relatively high demographic base in Delhi (estimates vary from 13 per cent to 25 per cent of population), is mainly restricted to informal non-official domains.[7] This situation has changed little in spite of the recently (1993) elected BJP (local) government's decision to enshrine the Punjabi language as an official 'Second Language' in Delhi. In recent times, Punjabi linguistic identity has begun to occupy a small but significant, albeit 'non-official', space on the linguistic landscapes of several countries outside of India and Pakistan including the United Kingdom, Canada, the USA, Singapore, Malaysia, New Zealand and East Africa.

Identifying with the Punjabi language has historically been a turbulent affair shaped strongly by cultural (regional), religious and political affiliations and events in the Indian sub-continent. Following the first Indian Census (1881), which predicted. '...the extinction of Punjabi and the dialects of Rajputana',[8] there has been intense conflict over linguistic identity in the Punjab and India.[9] Over a century later Punjabi is the only language in north India which has succeeded in establishing its distinctiveness and vitality vis-a-vis Hindi to the extent of recognition at both national and state levels in India.

Historical analyses suggest that linguistic differentiation in the Punjab has coincided most with national and religious differentiation.[10] Before

the Independence of India and Pakistan, and the partition of Punjab, Urdu and English retained official status in the region despite strong community demands to enshrine Punjabi and Hindi.

The pre-Independence conflict between Urdu and Hindi and the post-Independence conflict between Hindi and Punjabi in Indian Punjab resulted in a net loss of the demographic base of Punjabi linguistic identity. Significant numbers of Punjabi-speaking Hindus declared Hindi as their mother-tongue, while Punjabi-speaking Muslims declared Urdu as their mother-tongue.

A number of researchers[11] have cogently shown how the polarisation of religious differences in the Punjab, the bi-national 1947 partition of the region of Punjab and the further 1966 partition of the Indian state of Punjab into three separate entities divided along linguistic lines, left Sikhs as the prime 'owners' and promoters of the Punjabi language. It is noteworthy that the 1966 division, although ostensibly along linguistic lines, was controversial and inadequately reflected the geo-linguistic realities in Punjab.

The *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy compilation of verses and hymns revered by the Sikhs, is written in a variety of Punjabi employing a script which came to be known as the *Gurmukhi* script. Although the invention of the Gurmukhi script is traditionally attributed to the second Guru, Angad (1504–1552), there is some evidence that the script may have preceded him.[12] However, there is little doubt that its current status as *the* script for writing Punjabi has developed as direct consequence of its association with Sikh identity.

The Sikhs, currently comprising a majority in Punjab, are highly visible (though in a minority) in the larger urban centres of north India outside of the Punjab. There is some evidence that religion, language and culture are extremely important to the multi-lingual urban Sikh communities such as those in Delhi, although Punjabi language maintenance in these situations may not extend to full literacy skills.[13]

Studies have also been conducted amongst Sikhs elsewhere in the world. Research in the UK[14] and USA[15] has suggested that Sikhs maintain high levels of religious and cultural identification as well as fairly high levels of oral linguistic proficiency in Punjabi. However, as in Delhi, this does not always result in full Punjabi literacy in the later generations.

It is important to note that these comparatively high levels of identity and language maintenance amongst the Sikhs in the USA and UK have been obtained in national contexts where government policies encouraging cultural and linguistic diversity are few and far between—English is the official language in the UK and the USA. In Canada, where government policy encourages multi-culturalism *but only* in a framework of

official English/French bilingualism, high levels of religious, cultural and linguistic identifications amongst young Punjabi Sikhs born in Canada have also been obtained.[16]

It has been argued that in the absence of appropriate comparative data, the remarkable resilience of Punjabi Sikh identities (outside of the Punjab) has generally been attributed to 'pre-immigration Sikh values, beliefs and practices'.[17] Clearly, a non-comparative perspective neglects an analysis of the impact of the social and structural contexts in which Sikhs actually live and may lead to explanatory 'errors of attribution'.[18]

A comparative study was thus designed to explore the relationship between linguistic, cultural/regional, and religious and national identities amongst young Sikh teenagers resident in Punjab—in Amritsar; outside Punjab in India—in Delhi; and also in the two largest populations of Sikhs outside of India—in Britain, in London, and in Canada, in Vancouver. Cross-national studies of this type have inherent difficulties associated with obtaining matched-samples in such economically, socially and culturally diverse circumstances. Thus, while attempting to recruit broadly comparable samples (in terms of age, sex and general educational background), statistical analyses exploring differences between contexts were complemented with multiple regression analyses conducted *within* each national and regional sample. The convergence of the results of these differing analyses was expected to reveal important facets of identity construction amongst Punjabi-speaking Sikhs.

The multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi-cultural environments in which Punjabi-speaking Sikhs live today are characterised by social stratification based on demographic, power and status inequalities that exist between groups.[19] The relationship between language and identity amongst Punjabi Sikhs is expected to vary as a function of their relative socio-structural strengths and weaknesses as a group in the different national settings.

The notion of *ethno-linguistic vitality* was introduced to place social psychological processes mediating ethno-linguistic behaviour in their appropriate socio-structural contexts.[20] It was defined as 'that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations'. Group vitality was conceptualised under three sets of factors: demography, status and institutional support and control.

Demographic factors relate to the sheer numbers of group members and their distribution throughout a particular urban, regional or national territory. Institutional support and control factors refer to the extent to which a group enjoys representation in, and control over, religious, educational, political, media and cultural institutions. Status factors, less readily quan-

tifiable than demographic and institutional support factors, are those pertaining to a group's social prestige, its economic and socio-historical status as well as the status of its language locally and internationally.

The original formulations focused on an 'objective' analysis of group vitality. Data was collected from a variety of sociological, economic, demographic and historical sources. Vitality analyses of the 'objective' type were useful in describing and allowing some analytic comparison and contrasting of ethno-linguistic groups. Thus, an abbreviated analysis of the 'objective' vitality of Punjabi-speaking Sikhs is presented below for the contexts under investigation in this study.

VITALITY OF THE PUNJABI-SPEAKING SIKHS IN THE STUDY

From the moment of its conception the development of Sikh identity is characterised by the immense struggle for positive distinctiveness against dominant national, religious and linguistic out-groups. Over the last 100 years or so, migration has been a major feature of Punjabi and Sikh life. Although no precise statistics are available, Table 1 provides rough estimates of Sikhs worldwide. At the very least it shows that Sikhs are to be found in all corners of the world with over a million residing outside India, and approximately a third of all Sikhs in India residing outside Punjab.

Table 1
Sikh Communities Around the World

Country	*Total Pop (Millions)*	*Sikh Pop (Thousands)*	*Per cent of Total*
Punjab, India	21	11,500	54.76
Rest of India	875	4,000	0.46
UK	57	400	0.70
Canada	27	240	0.89
USA	274	175	0.06
Malaysia	17	50	0.29
Kenya	25	50	0.20
Singapore	3	15	0.50
Rest of World	3,700	70	0.001
Total	4,999	16,500	0.33

Source: M.S. Minhas. *The Sikh Canadians* (Edmonton, Canada: Reidmore Books Inc., 1994).

The Census of India (1981) revealed that in Punjab, Punjabi is the dominant language (over 80 per cent of population speaks Punjabi)—it is the official state language and medium of education in the formative years. As in other parts of India, education in the English language is introduced gradually and dominates in post-secondary education. Demographically, Sikhs comprise the majority (60 per cent) religious group in Punjab and although the sheer intensity of their conflict with the central government in Delhi may have abated, the political conflict remains to be resolved.

In Delhi, Hindi speakers dominate, with the elite also speaking English. Statistics reported by the 1981 Indian Census show that approximately 14 per cent of Delhi's population is Punjabi-speaking. It is likely that this is a significant underestimate given the reported tendencies of mother-tongue Punjabi-Hindus and Punjabi-Muslims *not* to identify with the Punjabi language. The Sikhs, comprising approximately 7 per cent of the Delhi population in 1981,[21] were affected significantly by the unlawful killings (and flight) of many Sikhs in Delhi following the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984.[22]

Punjabi is taught as a subject in some Delhi mainstream schools, although the boost to English due to the current economic liberalisation programmes in India, coupled with the political and demographic dominance of Hindi appears to augur poorly for the status of the Punjabi language in Delhi. The mass media (newspapers, television, etc.) in Delhi is dominated by Hindi and English though other components of Punjabi culture including food, music, etc., are widely available.

Although the Punjabi language is dominated in terms of status in Delhi, it is important to remember that the linguistic situation in northern India comprises a vast polyglossic continuum where languages (Hindi–Urdu–Punjabi) and dialects complement or merge with each other according to functions and domains, and multi-lingualism is the norm.[23] Indian identity permits, and even expects, individuals to be multi-lingual, and 'people in large metropolitan centres or districts maintain their language identify for generations despite "minority" status'.[24]

Punjabi Sikh culture also flourishes in a small but prominent manner in several overseas communities. Sikh settlements have been accompanied by the establishment of *gurdwaras* which serve as important foci for supporting the cultural, political, social (including welfare support) and religious lives of local Sikh communities. Moreover, almost all gurdwaras have some form of arrangements for the teaching of Punjabi (using the Gurmukhi script) to Sikh children and adults.

In Canada, a policy of Federal Multi-culturalism but within a framework of English and French as official languages, has only recently,

with the help of some provincial governments, begun to provide support for 'non-official' languages like Punjabi, though not without opposition from significant sections of the dominant group.[25] In Vancouver, where Punjabi speakers are the third largest linguistic group[26] and where the largest population of Punjabi speakers is to be found in Canada, Punjabi will be available as a subject on the government school curricula from 1996 'where numbers warrant'. The vast majority of Punjabi speakers in Vancouver are Sikhs who constitute just over 3.1 per cent of the Vancouver population.[27] Since the number of Sikhs (3.1 per cent) is greater than the number of Punjabi speakers (2.5 per cent) in Vancouver, a small but significant amount of linguistic assimilation must be taking place amongst Punjabi Sikhs in Vancouver.

Like other visible minorities in Vancouver, the societal status of Punjabi Sikhs is relatively low, and is most clearly evinced in studies revealing racial discrimination and stereotyping.[28] In Vancouver, levels of institutional support and control have been dominated by the English-Canadians, though of late other groups such as the Chinese have made some inroads. Punjabi Sikh institutional support and control (as for other 'non-official' minority groups) has traditionally been low in Vancouver, though there has recently been a significant increase on several dimensions, inspired largely by the efforts of members of the Punjabi Sikh community. For instance, in addition to several gurdwaras, there are at least three weekly newspapers, a number of monthly magazines,[29] a multi-cultural television channel (with Punjabi broadcasts) and a radio station, as well as proliferation of small businesses and non-governmental organisations.

In the UK, where neither mother-tongue nor religion statistics are collected in the Census, numbers of Punjabi Sikhs are difficult to estimate. The Policy Studies Institute[30] estimates that Punjabi Sikhs comprise roughly half of the population reporting Indian origins in the UK. According to the 1991 Census, London has the largest population of people of Indian origin amounting to 5.2 per cent of the population.[31] Thus Punjabi Sikhs are likely to constitute approximately 2 to 3 per cent of the population of London.

Punjabi language teaching in the UK has largely been in the hands of the family and the community. Government support for community languages, in a country where English is the only official language, has generally been sparse and unsystematic in spite of repeated community demands.[32] There has been some success in that a handful of schools in London and other parts of the UK now offer Punjabi as a subject on the curriculum. However, given the low status ascribed to community

languages as a result of the National Curriculum and the shrinking budgets of schools, Punjabi language teaching has an uncertain future.

English dominates all areas of institutional support and control in the UK. As in Vancouver, there has been a recent increase, mainly due to the efforts of the Punjabi Sikh community, in Punjabi institutional representation (e.g., at least three Punjabi newspapers, a handful of magazines, a radio station, TV, etc.). The societal status of Punjabi Sikhs in London closely mirrors that of Vancouver with high levels of discrimination against Sikhs, although it has been suggested that the polarisation (and discrimination) in the UK may be greater than in Canada.[33] Unlike Canada, UK has no national policy supporting cultural pluralism in spite of the fact that all major urban centres are multi-lingual and multi-cultural.

Based on the above and summarised in Table 2, a rough classification of the 'objective' Punjabi-Sikh vitality in the different national contexts under investigation in this study would show that, overall, it is relatively 'high' in Amritsar, 'medium' in Delhi, and comparatively 'low' in Vancouver and London.

Table 2
Estimated 'Objective' Vitality of Punjabi Sikhs in Study Contexts

Contexts	Vitality Factors			*Overall*
	Demographic	*Status*	*Institutional Support & Control*	
Amritsar	High	High	High	High
Delhi	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Vancouver	Low	Low	Low	Low
London	Low	Low	Low	Low

The impact of these differing in-group vitalities on the linguistic, cultural, religious and national identifications was explored amongst Punjabi Sikh teenagers attending mainstream schools (in their respective settings).

SUBJECTS AND PROCEDURE

A sample of 167 Punjabi Sikh students (male and female), aged between 13 and 17, was randomly selected for the study from mainstream schools in Amritsar (37 subjects), Delhi (40 subjects), Vancouver (50 subjects) and London (40 subjects). In all contexts, Punjabi Sikh subjects were chosen from schools in areas where Punjabi Sikhs were concentrated in

their greatest numbers. Subjects completed the study questionnaire in the medium of the school they were attending. All subjects were either born in their respective national contexts or had lived there most of their lives.

Subjects in all contexts were asked to complete a questionnaire that included measures of identity. Measures were developed to assess the cognitive and evaluative/affective components of linguistic, cultural, religious and national identities in the different contexts.[34] For example, for religious identities, subjects were asked 'How often do you think of yourself as a Sikh?' and 'How proud are you to be a Sikh?'. Subjects recorded their responses on a five-point Likert scale.

For items relating to cultural/regional identity, subjects in all settings were asked how they felt about being 'Punjabi'. For items related to identification with languages, subjects in all settings were asked how they felt about being 'Punjabi speakers' as well as how they felt about being speakers of the relevant national languages (Hindi and English in India, English and French in Canada, and English in the UK). To achieve some balance in the design caused by the lack of a second official language in the UK, and to enable comparison with the Indian context, subjects in the UK were also asked how they identified with the Hindi language. The choice of Hindi as the third language for study in the UK was reinforced in a pilot study where subjects indicated that they were exposed to Hindi most often after Punjabi and English, primarily through the ubiquitous Hindustani film industry ('Bollywood'). For national identities, subjects in their respective settings were asked how they felt about being 'Indian/British/Canadian'.

Responses to the cognitive and evaluative/affective aspects of identity questions were combined to obtain overall measures of linguistic, cultural, national and religious identities. Additionally, subjects in all settings were asked how easily *other people* could identify them as Sikhs. This measure was included in the study as an important dimension of Sikh identity given the religiously and historically sanctioned high external visibility of Sikhs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To explore differences on the identity measures according to the vitality context, responses on linguistic, cultural, national and religious self-categorisations were analysed statistically, using one-way analysis of variance procedures. Table 3 presents the mean identity responses by vitality context and the results of the statistical analyses. As results in Table 3 show, there were statistically significant differences between

vitality contexts on all measures *except* on the cultural/regional 'Punjabi' measure.

Table 3
Punjabi Sikhs' Self-Categorisations in Different Vitality Contexts: Means and Anova Results

	Context				*Anova*
Identity	*Amritsar*	*Delhi*	*London*	*Vancouver*	*F (3,163)*
Punjabi Linguistic	4.4	3.9	4.4	3.9	2.76, $p < .05$
English Linguistic	2.9	3.1	3.9	4.4	20.75, $p < .001$
Hindi (French in Canada) Linguistic	3.4	3.7	1.5	1.6	63.17, $p < .001$
National	4.9	4.8	3.3	4.2	25.41, $p < .001$
Punjabi regional/ cultural	4.7	4.4	4.7	4.4	1.84, not significant
Religious	4.8	4.4	4.6	3.9	7.20, $p < .001$

Note: All means are on 5-point Likert scales with higher numbers indicating higher identification.

Linguistic identifications shown in Table 3 in the different contexts suggest that subjects in India have tri-lingual identities while those outside India have bi-lingual identities. In all settings except Vancouver, subjects reported Punjabi dominant identities. In Vancouver, identification with the English language was slightly greater and identification with the French language (also an official language of Canada) was very low. The highest identification with the Punjabi language was reported in Amritsar and London; Punjabi linguistic identifications in Delhi and Vancouver were significantly lower. Delhi appeared to be the setting where Hindi identity was the strongest and also where the differences between the linguistic identities appeared to be the smallest. These linguistic identifications may be best understood in the context of their relations with cultural, religious and national identifications (see below).

There were no significant differences between the different contexts on levels of Punjabi cultural/regional identification—all subjects reported high levels of Punjabi identity. Correlational analyses between cultural

and religious identity also revealed significant and positive coefficients ($p<.05$) in all settings: $r = .42$ in Amritsar ($df = 35$); $r = .35$ in Delhi ($df = 38$); $r = .76$ in London ($df = 38$) and $r = .76$ in Vancouver ($df = 48$). Clearly, there is strong association between Punjabi and Sikh identities.

Subjects in all contexts also showed high levels of religious identification, i.e., identification with Sikhism. This finding is consistent with those obtained by other researchers working with Sikhs in the USA, Canada, the UK and East Africa.[35] Interestingly, although levels of identification with Sikhism were generally high there also appeared to be some differences across the vitality contexts. Perhaps not surprisingly, the highest levels of identification with Sikhism were obtained in Punjab—in Amritsar. However, levels of identification in London were comparable to those in Punjab, while identification levels in Delhi and Vancouver were significantly lower.

The high levels of identification in London may be due to a variety of factors including the heightened polarisation of racial categorisations in the UK and the 'twice immigrant' backgrounds of many Sikhs in the UK.[36] The relatively attenuated levels of identification as Sikhs in Delhi and Vancouver may be explained as the inevitable impact of dominant group pressures for assimilation in these contexts. It is noteworthy that the results obtained in Vancouver, showing the lowest levels of identification on religious dimensions (see Table 3) were somewhat surprising given that previous analyses[37] have suggested that the strongest (overseas) support for an independent Sikh homeland in the 1980s may have been in Vancouver.

A comparison of the degree of identification with national categories showed a clear difference between subjects inside and outside of India (see Table 3). In both Amritsar and Delhi, subjects reported extremely high levels of identification as 'Indian', presumably reflecting pan-Indian historical, cultural and national origins and attachments. Identification as 'Canadian' by subjects in Canada was significantly lower, though it was at fairly high levels compared to subjects in the UK who showed the lowest patterns of national identification as 'British'.

In both Canada and the UK, a history of racial discrimination and rejection by significant sections of the dominant majorities is likely to reduce subjects' identification with their respective national categories.[38] Relative to the UK, the more favourable economic opportunities in Canada (compared to the UK) and Canada's official multi-culturalism policy, may account for the higher levels of identification with 'Canadian' obtained amongst the Vancouver subjects in this study.

The ease with which *other people* could identify our subjects as Sikhs

was felt to be the highest in Amritsar and lowest in Vancouver. About 86 per cent of our subjects in Amritsar, 74 per cent of subjects in Delhi, 50 per cent of subjects in London and 30 per cent of subjects in Vancouver, felt that it was 'extremely easy' for other people in their environments to identify them as Sikhs. In all likelihood, the higher salience of religious categorisations in India and the higher salience of racial categorisations outside India account for this pattern of results.

The historically developed and acknowledged differentiation of Sikhs in north India was perceived as not receiving the same recognition by people outside India. According to previous studies, this is reflected in an immense lack of awareness and prejudice about Sikhs and Sikhism in several overseas contexts including Canada, the UK and the USA.[39]

There is also some evidence that discrimination and the intense pressures for assimilation in these contexts may have led some Sikhs to adopt measures to reduce their external visibility.[40] Interestingly, the slightly reduced perceived 'ease of the Sikh identification' in Delhi relative to Amritsar may be indicative of a similar (albeit small) tendency to reduce external visibility by Sikhs in Delhi, particularly following the 1984 killings of many Sikhs in Delhi.

The validity of the findings of the above *between-group* statistical analyses rests on the assumption that subjects in the different contexts were comparable. To the degree that it could be argued that subjects were not comparable across contexts, it was felt that *within-group* analyses should also be conducted to assess the relationship between linguistic, cultural, religious and national identities. Therefore, standard multiple regression analyses were conducted, separately in each context, to see how well cultural, religious, national and other linguistic identities (English/Hindi/French) predicted subjects' Punjabi linguistic identities. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 4.

An examination of the results of the regression analyses shows that Punjabi cultural identity was a significant and important predictor in all contexts. Clearly the link between language and culture is strong.[41] Other results, however, revealed differences between the settings. Whereas Sikh identity predicted linguistic identity in the Indian settings, it unexpectedly failed to predict Punjabi linguistic identity in settings outside India.

The statistically significant association between Sikh and Punjabi linguistic self-categorisations obtained in India may be understood as a part of the historical differentiation processes that took place in north India (see above). In Pattanayak's words '...once religion was made a factor of a separate identity, the language of religion naturally assumed a separate sanctity for its practitioners'.[42]

In today's officially secular and multi-lingual India, where Punjabi is an official language in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, Sikh identities are associated closely with the official geo-linguistic boundaries of Punjab where they constitute a majority. The lack of a significant association between religious and linguistic identities outside India may be related to the higher salience of racial categorisations (relative to religious categorisations) outside India, coupled with lower in-group vitality (which includes a lack of official support for the Punjabi language) in these contexts. A similar explanation probably applies to the findings of other studies conducted amongst Sikhs outside India showing that the high levels of religious and cultural maintenance amongst Sikhs are not always matched by high linguistic proficiency in Punjabi. In Amritsar, identification with the national category—Indian—positively predicted Punjabi linguistic identity, but not in the other contexts. Whereas national identity (as Indian) was not significantly related to Punjabi linguistic identity in Delhi, national identities as British and Canadian significantly but *negatively* predicted the Punjabi linguistic identities of Sikhs living in London and Vancouver. These results may be understood in terms of the official linguistic support (or lack of) provided to Punjabi in these national contexts as well as in considering how culturally acceptable multi-lingualism is in the different contexts.

In Punjab where the official status of the Punjabi language is sanctioned by the state and federal governments, and where multi-lingualism is a societal norm (as in the rest of India), identification with India contributes *additively* to Punjabi linguistic identity.[43] In Delhi, where Hindi and English enjoy official status and Punjabi has a second language status since 1993, national identity as Indian does not threaten Punjabi linguistic identity as the status of Punjabi is protected by Delhi's proximity to Punjab, Punjabi is an official language on the Eighth Schedule of Indian Languages and Punjabi speakers enjoy 'medium' vitality in Delhi. Moreover, 'in order to settle down among other language speakers, an Indian does not have to give up his language...speaking a different language does not make him an alien'.[44] Clearly, linguistic diversity is an inherent aspect of Indian identity.

In the UK and most of Canada (outside Quebec and Nunavut), English language mono-lingualism is normative, and non-official languages in Canada and the UK have a history of being societally devalued. This devalorisation is reflected in our findings, showing that British and Canadian identities *subtract* from Punjabi linguistic identities in London and Vancouver.

Interestingly, in Vancouver, results showed that identification with the

Table 4

Significant Predictors of Punjabi Linguistic Identity in Standard Multiple Regression Analysis

Context	*Statistic*	*Independent (Predictor) Variables*					*Multiple Regression Statistics*		
		Cultural	*Religious*	*National*	*Ling. English*	*Ling. Other*[1]	R^2	*R Adj*	*R*
Amritsar	B	.34	.32	2.24	–	–			
	Beta	.33	.29	.43	–	–			
	SEB	.15	.16	.68	–	–			
	t	2.24*	2.06*	3.30**	–	–	.56**	.48	.75**
Delhi	B	.47	.44	–	–	–			
	Beta	.42	.49	–	–	–			
	SB	.15	.11	–	–	–			
	t	3.08**	3.99**	–	–	–	.62**	.56	.79**
London	B	1.02	–	–.17	–	–			
	Beta	.57	–	–.26	–	–			
	SB	.32	–	.08	–	–			
	t	3.21**	–	–2.05*	–	–	.57**	.51	.76**
Vancouver	B	.83	–	–.43	.47	–			
	Beta	.64	–	–.34	.29	–			
	SB	.20	–	.15	.21	–			
	t	4.09**	–	–2.74**	2.25*	–	.59**	.54	.77**

Note: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

[1] In all contexts *except* Canada the other language is Hindi; in Vancouver it is French.

English language positively predicted linguistic identity, i.e., English linguistic identity appeared to be additively related to Punjabi linguistic identity. This finding is supportive of Canada's official multi-culturalism policy which stipulates that full participation and cultural exchange in Canadian society may only be achieved through the learning of Canada's official languages—English and French. However, it is noteworthy that our results do not support this contention for French linguistic identity which was low and not related to Punjabi linguistic identity.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The main findings of this study are clear-cut. First, in accordance with previous studies it was found that Punjabi Sikh identities are remarkably resilient and are able, in large measure, to withstand the crossing of regional and national boundaries. Second, in all the contexts investigated, cultural/regional identities rooted in Punjab were consistently predictive of linguistic identities, reinforcing the widely recognised view that language and culture are intricately interwined. Third, identification with Sikhism contributed positively to Punjabi linguistic identity in northern India but not outside of India. Finally, national identities substracted from linguistic identity outside of India but not in India.

Religious and national identities of Punjabi Sikhs contributed differentially to linguistic identities depending on the vitality contexts in which they live. It appears that the higher the vitality of Punjabi Sikhs, the more religious and national identities (positively) predicted their Punjabi linguistic identities. In low in-group vitality contexts, religious identities were unrelated, while national identities were subtractively related to Punjabi linguistic identity, with perhaps the greatest polarisation being observed in the UK context.

The current study focused largely on an 'objective' analysis of Punjabi Sikh vitality gathered from available sociological and demographic information. It has been that *perceptions* of vitality are crucial in affecting the salience of group identity and can play a mediating role in accounting for group members' language, attitudes and behaviours.[45] Future studies amongst Punjabi Sikhs should combine both 'subjective' and 'objective' vitality information as a more sensitive method of predicting the linguistic identities and behaviour of group members.

Clearly the salience of dimensions of identification varies in the different vitality contexts. The most promising conceptual approach in social psychology for explaining the salience of identity dimensions appears to be the *self-categorisation theory*.[46] This theory proposes that within any

given frame of reference, self-categorisations become salient when they are readily accessible to individuals' cognitive apparatus, and when they provide the best 'fit' to subjectively meaningful comparisons in a manner that maximises the contrast between intra-category similarities and inter-category differences (referred to as the 'Principle of Metacontrast').

The application of this principle to the contexts inside and outside India may help account for the observed pattern of results in this study. In outside India contexts investigated in this study (i.e., London and Vancouver), the weight of the evidence suggests that racial (rather than religious and linguistic) self-categorisations maximise the contrast between Punjabi Sikhs and the dominant groups. Consequently, self-categorisation as Sikh is unlikely to be related to Punjabi linguistic identity.

The emergence of linguistic self-categorisations in Punjab may best be understood by broadening the self-categorisation theory to include inter-group contexts where more than two categories or groups exist. The enormous socio-political and religious differentiation that has taken place in Punjab has extended to linguistic differentiation primarily because linguistic self-categorisations maximise intragroup similarities and inter-group differences (national and religious) in the north Indian context. Consequently, Sikh identity would be expected to significantly predict Punjabi linguistic identity in north Indian contexts.

Regardless of the explanatory value of self-categorisation theory, the general social science rationale for controlled comparison is crucial in comparative research of this kind. To the degree that researchers are successful at this, the salience of different self-categorisations in different contexts may be established. Assuming that the procedures of this study were successful in conforming to the general rationale for comparison in the social sciences, the findings of this study suggest that a small and significant attenuation of Punjabi Sikh identities does take place in contexts outside of the majority setting.

The evidence for attenuation in in-group identification levels may be found not only in the direction and significance of predictors of Punjabi linguistic identity in the regression equations, but also in the slight but significant reduction in levels of identifications with the in-group on religious and linguistic dimensions, and a concurrent increase, at the very least, on linguistic identification with the out-group in Delhi, London and Vancouver. Amongst our subjects in London, who reported levels of in-group identification comparable to the majority context, religious identification failed (statistically) to predict linguistic identity. Clearly, these

findings require further empirical validation in the future comparative research.

In the UK and Canada, where Punjabi vitality is low and where the collective linguistic rights of minorities are not enshrined in their respective constitutions, Punjabi linguistic identities are severely threatened. Laudable policy efforts like Canada's multi-culturalism fall crucially short in this respect. In this context, it is worth reiterating that the BC Provincial and Vancouver City Education authorities have recently announced that Punjabi will become available as a subject on government school curricula from 1996 'where numbers warrant'.

Punjabi linguistic identities outside Punjab in India, though reduced, have a better chance of survival given that the Punjabi language is enshrined in the Indian Constitution, and importantly, because multi-lingualism is normative in India. However, pressures for linguistic assimilation are likely to be great when Punjabi is not the medium of education.

Future studies amongst Punjabi Sikhs should focus on an expanded range of relevant identities, tailored to the specific vitality contexts. For instance, identities such as Black-British, Asian-British and others may be explored in the UK and may be compared at a *process* level to identities such as Indo-Canadian, Punjabi-Canadian and others in Canada and elsewhere. This may involve incorporating a comparative race-relations perspective[47] which would be beneficial in separating the general intergroup processes that are part and parcel of majority–minority relations from those that are specific to the Punjabi Sikhs and their special relations with others.

The focus of this study has been on self-categorisations that were linguistic, cultural, religious and national. However, it is people not categories that speak, and they speak to one another.[48] Future empirical studies may thus relate identity, vitality and other factors to patterns of *actual* language use and language proficiency in order to better understand the dynamics of language-identity associations.

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that the association between language and identity is an important facet of Punjabi Sikhs living in high and low in-group vitality contexts. The Punjabi language continues to be symbolic and instrumental, an important aspect of their self-concepts needing to be nurtured at both individual and societal levels. National and regional policies that valorise the Punjabi language are crucial in the maintenance of the linguistic identities of Punjabi Sikhs.[49]

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Notes

1. Internet graffiti from USA on Punjab Usenet group—*soc. cult. punjab* (World Wide Web), March, 1995.
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7. See Rangila, *Maintenance of Panjabi*.
8. Ibbetson, 1881 (p. 160), cited in Rangila, *Maintenance of Panjabi*.
9. A number of researchers provide cogent historical analyses about this including J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and P.R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and Khushwant Singh, *A History of*.
10. For instance see Grewal, *The Sikhs;* Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics*; and Khushwant Singh, *A History of*.
11. See Grewal, *The Sikhs*; Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics*; and Khushwant Singh, *A History of*.
12. See Khushwant Singh, *A History of*.
13. See Rangila, *Maintenance of Panjabi*.
14. See P. Bhachu, *Twice Immigrants—East African Sikh Settlers in Britain* (London: Tavistock, 1985); A.W. Helweg, *Sikhs in England : The Development of a Migrant Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); R.K. Agnihotri, *Crisis of Identity: The Sikhs in England* (Delhi: Bahri Publications, 1987); R. Ballard, 'Differentiation and Disjunction Amongst the Sikhs in Britain', in N.G. Barrier and V.A. Dusenbery (eds.), *The Sikh Diaspora: Migration and the Experience Beyond Punjab* (Delhi: South Asia Publications, 1989).
15. See B. La Brack, *The Sikhs of Northern California: 1904-1986* (New York: American Migration Series Press, 1988); M. Gibson, *Accommodation without Assimilation: Sikh*

Immigrants in an American High School (London: Cornell University Press, 1988); K. Leonard, 'Pioneer Voices from California', in Barrier and Dusenbery (eds.), *The Sikh Diaspora.*

16. Recent data presented by I. Sachdev and P. Dhaliwal in a paper entitled 'Ethnolinguistic Vitality in Multicultural Canada' at First International Conference on Punjab Studies (Coventry University, 1994). Other studies painting a similar picture include N. Buchignani and D.M. Indra, 'Key Issues in Canadian-Sikh Ethnic and Race Relations'; J.G. Chadney, 'The Formation of Ethnic Communities', (both) in Barrier and Dusenbery (eds.), *The Sikh Diaspora*; and H. Johnston, 'The Development of the Panjabi Community in Vancouver since 1961', *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 20, 2 (1988), 1–19.
17. Buchignani and Indra, 'Key Issues', 172.
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19. For an experimental study of these factors see I. Sachdev and R.Y. Bourhis, 'Power and Status Differentials in Minority and Majority Group Relations', *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 21 (1991), 1–24.
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26. 2.5 per cent, according to the *Census of Canada 1991*, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, 1992.
27. For more details see *Census of Canada 1991* and Johnston, 'The Development of'.
28. For more details see Buchignani and Indra, 'Key Issues'. Also compare with I. Rajagopal, 'The Glass Ceiling in the Vertical Mosaic: Indian Immigrants in Canada', *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 22 (1990), 96–105.
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30. See C. Brown, *Black and White Britain—The Third PSI Survey* (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1984).
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35. See Barrier and Dusenbery, *The Sikh Diaspora.*
36. Buchignani and Indra, 'Key Issues'; Bachu, *Twice Immigrants.*
37. For details see Barrier and Dusenbery, *The Sikh Diaspora.*
38. For further details see Chadney, 'The Formation'; Ballard, 'Differentiation and Disjunction'. For more comprehensive treatments of minority identities in the UK see N. Hutnik, *Ethnic Minority Identity: A Social Psychological Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); and T. Modood, S. Beishon and S. Virdee, *Changing Ethnic Identities* (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1994).
39. For instance see Buchignani and Indra, 'Key Issues'; Ballard, 'Differentiation and Disjunction'; Gibson, *Accommodation without Assimilation.*
40. For instance see Agnihotri, *Crisis of Identity.*
41. See J. Fishman, *Language and Ethnicty in Minority Sociolinguistic Perspective* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1989); also see I. Sachdev and R.Y. Bourhis, 'Language and Social Identification', in D. Abrams and M. Hogg (eds), *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990); J. Das Gupta, 'Ethnicity, Language and National Development in India', in N. Glazer and D.P. Moynihan (eds), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975).
42. Pattanayak in Rangila, *Maintenance of Panjabi*, i.
43. For more details see W. Lambert, 'Culture and Language as Factors in Learning and Education', in F.E. Aboud and R.D. Meade (eds), *Cultural Factors in Learning* (Bellingham: Western Washington State College, 1974); J. Hamers and M. Blanc, *Bilinguality and Bilingualism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
44. Pandit, *India*, 43.
45. For more details see R.Y. Bourhis, H. Giles, and D. Rosenthal, 'Notes on the Construction of a "Subjective Vitality Questionnaire" for Ethnolinguistic groups', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 2 (1981), 145–54.
46. For more details see J.C. Turner, M. Hogg, P. Oakes, S. Reicher, M. Wetherell, *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).
47. See Buchignani and Indra, 'Key Issues'.
48. M. Hogg, and D. Abrams, *Social Identifications* (London: Routledge, 1988), 201.
49. Hamers and Blanc, *Bilinguality and Bilingualism.*

The Punjab Crisis and Bristol Indians

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Nationalist movements strive to establish independent nation-states in order to protect and promote their ethnic and cultural distinctiveness in economic, political and ideological circumstances everywhere. They have a powerful impact both on people who live in their own homeland as well as those who sustain the ideology of their homeland in their settlement away from home. It is the relationship between the nationalist politics of the homeland and its effect on the supporters of this politics in distant land that is the main focus of this paper. In particular, this paper examines the Punjab crisis and its effect on Bristol Indians in general with a special reference to the structure and organisation of the Bristol Indian Association.

Modern Asian, African and European history provides many examples of traditional ethnic nationalism and its powerful expression both among the followers at home as well as those who settle away from home. Depending on the kind of stimulus they receive from the politics of their homeland, those who live away from their traditional homeland may sustain a keen sense of nation and a national community in their distant settlements. This preoccupation with nation and community may express itself in a variety of different ways. Unless the settlers lose their national identity through the process of integration and assimilation, they may express the memory of the nation in ceremonial events such as the anniversaries of national leaders and celebrations which may mark independence day and related events. Such formal occasions heighten the consciousness and identity of an existing or an imagined nation and community associated with it.[1] Although national communities and communities which share a distinctive ethnic origin, a long history, language, religion and culture may coincide, ethnic communities do not always constitute national communities, and the two are far from being synonymous. However, in circumstances where ethnicity emerges as a powerful political force, it

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may begin to develop as a nationalist ideology which may fuse both ethnicity and national community in a single framework, thus symbolising both ethnic and nationalist identity of the group concerned. Processes which create and sustain ethnic and national groups may lead to the formation of a state. However, the factors which uphold the creation of the state do not entirely depend on ethnicity and the notion of community, however much these conceptions may contribute to it. Large modern states like India and China contain large multi-ethnic populations. These populations, such as the Tibetans, may form both an ethnic group and a territorially-based national community. The relationship between the state and nationalist communities may take either cooperative or conflictive forms and this may depend on historical background and specific set of material and non-material circumstances which affect a particular population, both at home as well as away from it.

Although this paper addresses itself to the question of a particular nationalism in the context of Indian sub-continent, it is much more concerned with the effects such nationalist striving has on Indian communities outside India, especially on the Indians who now live in large numbers in Europe and America. Historians and scholars identify them as overseas Indians with the expression Indian diaspora gaining increasing currency. Newspapers and magazines from India refer to Indians living away from the sub-continent as non-resident Indians, or often simply as the NRIs.[2] In order to explain the effect of politics of the sub-continent on Indians living in Britain, it is useful to set the issue in a wider framework. The conflict between the Protestants and Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland has had a powerful impact on Irish communities in the United States. During the period of conflict in Northern Ireland, it is well-known that the Irish settlers in the US have lent varying degrees of political and financial support to Irish causes as well as to the Irish Republican Army. Likewise, migrants and settlers from the Indian sub-continent who live in Britain maintain close socio-cultural, economic and political links with their homeland. These links open up the prospect of homeland conflicts coming to Britain in much the same way the Irish conflict is exported to the United States. The consequences of conflict between Serbs and Croats, or Kurds and Turks who now live in Germany could provide similar examples.

The British influence and political dominance created a unified colonial state of India. However, the birth of a modern Indian state was to occur in the process of fission. The movement for Independence[3] not only partitioned the sub-continent between India and Pakistan (West Pakistan and East Pakistan), but also created conflict in Kashmir which was to

generate conditions for long-term hostility and disharmony between India and Pakistan. Contemporary demand for an independent state of Kashmir or for its incorporation as a part of Pakistan stems from this long-standing conflict which does have influence on the politics of Kashmiri and Indian communities resident in Europe and America. The process of fission that the movement for Independence had generated was not going to stop with the Independence of India and Pakistan. As a state with territories separated by more than a thousand miles of corridor between West Pakistan and East Pakistan and the dominance of West Pakistan over the East Pakistan created sufficient structural tensions for the demise of East Pakistan and its transformation as a new state of Bangladesh in 1971. Mother India as envisaged by the early Indian nationalists was no longer a unified and harmonious national community. Uneven colonial development combined with a vast range of diversities was bound to facilitate fission based on a whole range of cultural and structural differences. Both colonial and post-colonial Indian polity has been fraught with internal tensions. These tensions have given rise to a wide range of regional movements all over India. In a recent monograph, Sajal Basu[4] discusses the factors which have influenced the demand for greater autonomy and control by regional movements in the Indian sub-continent. Political mobilisation for an independent state of Kashmir, Nagaland, Mizoram, Jharkhand and Gorkhaland provide examples of movements which strive for different degrees of self-determination and autonomy.

The movement which is crucial for this paper is the Khalistan movement which became a matter of international news in 1984 when the Indian army carried out a military operation against the Sikhs who had put up an armed defence in response to a growing political and security conflict in Punjab and Haryana. This conflict and its persistence through a series of violent events had a powerful effect on the Indian public at home as well as abroad. An outline of this conflict provides a baseline for understanding and explaining its effect on British Indians in general, with a particular focus on Indian population in Bristol. The long and complicated history of this conflict since the eighteenth and nineteenth century rise of Sikh consciousness is an important background for analysing more contemporary and current events. However, the purpose of this paper is not to reproduce this history but simply to use it as a background to analyse the domain of experience and social change for a small Indian community living in Bristol. To be more precise about this methodological undertaking, the aim of this paper is to introduce historical comments on the genesis of crisis in Punjab and to concentrate on its effect on British Indians with

a particular reference to Indians in Bristol as observed and documented by the author.

THE PUNJAB CRISIS

In order to provide a proper explanation of the effect events in the sub-continent have on Indian population in locations outside India, it is useful to distinguish two different phases of Indian migration to Britain. First of all, it is important to note that the word Indian itself goes through changes. It has a pre-partition meaning which tends to persist, creating some ambiguity about what does the term mean exactly. This ambiguity arises in circumstances where pre-partition and post-partition meanings of the designation 'Indian' get fused and confused, leaving the individuals to use both older and new meanings according to the circumstances of the discourse they find themselves in. As for the connection this has for settlement of Indians in Britain, several points need to be made. Before the Second World War, the Indians who had settled in Britain were of professoinal middle-class origin. They were often strongly committed to the goal secularism and freedom of India. As my own investigation in Bristol has shown,[5] there was some tendency on the part of pre-partition middle-class Indians not to distinguish themselves as Indians and Pakistanis as soon as these words became categories of national identification. Although the Indian population resident in Britain in 1947 did not immediately reflect the reality of partition of India, with the passage of time, conflict, hostility and wars between India and Pakistan created a feeling of separateness which was mirrored in increasing separation between Indians and Pakistanis in Britain throughout the 1950s. The pre-partition unity of British India began to give way to distinctive national identities. When the Bengali Muslims of East Pakistan began to oppose the West Pakistani domination of their society, the unity between Muslims coming from two different wings of Pakistan was seriously fractured. Just as the Indians had to contend with the identity of Pakistanis, Pakistanis found that they could no longer contain the opposition of Bengalis to their domination. With the war going on between Western and Eastern wings of Pakistan, the Muslims who had hitherto defined themselves as the citizens of Pakistan began a process of dissociation which ultimately gave full expression to distinctive national identities. The conflict between Western and Eastern wings of Pakistan had already created a hiatus between the two wings and British Pakistani communities were becoming more and more divided between the two wings and eventually between two different nations. Events which led to the creation of Bangladesh saw

a division between Punjabi and Bengali Muslims throughout Britain. The liberation movement concerned with Jammu and Kashmir may similarly affect the relations between Muslims and Hindu Kashmiris as well as Indians and Pakistanis with consequences for the respective communities resident in Britain. More recently, in December 1992, when the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Bhartiya Janata Party had mobilised Hindus to take over and demolish the Babri mosque in Ayodhya, the consequences of this communal conflict were felt not only throughout the sub-continental countries but also in Britain as well. Derek Brown reported in *The Guardian* of 9 December 1992 that after the demolition of the mosque, a Hindu temple in West Bromwich was gutted by fire and temples in Coventry, Birmingham and Bolton were damaged by petrol bombs.[6] The sub-continental communities, irrespective of their geographical location were drawn into a pattern of hostility which showed that the political events in the homeland had most dramatic effects on the communities living thousands of miles away from home. The conflict that rapidly grew between the Sikhs and the Central Government of India and mirrored in hostilities between Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab and locations in India also surfaced in Indian communities living in Britain and America.

After India became independent, the demand for creation of states which were relatively coterminous with linguistic boundaries received impetus. As a result states such as Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu had come into existence to reflect the relative degree of linguistic homogeneity. In the context of concern for local autonomy and control, it was natural that the Sikhs should press for a similar state and for greater control over their political and economic resources.

J.S. Grewal documents the complex history of the movement for an autonomous state of Punjab in his recent historical study.[7] According to his narrative, the Sikhs attempted to advance their cause for a secular and democratic state of Punjab within the Indian Union through their political party, Shiromani Akali Dal, and religious organisation, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. Such a state would have enabled them to exercise greater control over economic and political resources of the local state. The formation of such a state would also empower Sikhs to maintain their language and religion. As Ballard has pointed out in his recent study,[8] the Sikh demand for their homeland in India created tension between the centre and the periphery as well as between competing religious communities (Sikhs and Hindus) with their changing position in the local stratification. Sikhs were more closely associated with land-ownership and peasant production. In contrast, the Hindus tended to dominate urban areas where they had established themselves in trade,

commerce and other professions since the beginning of the colonial period. Throughout 1950s and 1960s, Shiromani Akali Dal leaders like Master Tara Singh, Sant Fateh Singh and Pratap Singh Kairon brought political pressure on the Centre to achieve their objective of a Punjabi state. In 1966, the Punjab Reorganisation Act of the Indian Parliament created the state of Punjab and Haryana but not without 'strikes, arson and murder' as Grewal puts it.[9] The fact that Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sant Fateh Singh had expressed dissatisfaction several months before the new state was inaugurated indicates the persistence of many-sided conflict involving both the centre/periphery relations as well as increasingly hardening boundary between Sikhs and Hindus. All India Akali Conference resolutions in 1978 followed the pattern of Anandpur Sahib resolutions endorsed by Shiromani Akali Dal in 1977. These resolutions concerned political, economic, religious, cultural and social issues which the party regarded as a basic part of its programme. According to these resolutions, the party demanded a real 'federal shape',[10] including greater autonomy and control, incorporation of Chandigarh in Punjab, control over the distribution of river waters, maintenance of current level of Sikh recruitment in the Indian army and the protection of the Sikh settlers in Terai areas of Uttar Pradesh. The Akalis also wanted a dry port at Amritsar, a stock exchange at Ludhiana and the use of Punjabi as a second language with Punjabi-speaking people. There was a demand for radio transmission of *gurbani* from a broadcasting station in Amritsar, exemption of farming land from wealth tax and estate duty and a special ministry for backward classes. The demands combined both economic and political as well as some of the cultural issues affecting the Sikhs.

In 1977 Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale became the head of Damdami Taksal which was concerned with upholding Sikh orthodoxy. In contrast Sant Nirankaris pursued a more 'heterodox' way with diminishing reverence for the *Granth Sahib* coupled with the belief in the living *guru*. The conflict involving violence and deaths between the two sides contributed to the complexity of Punjab politics. Proliferation of new ideas and organisation occurred throughout 1970s. Dr Jagjit Singh Chauhan floated the idea of a new and independent state of Khalistan as a territorial national home for the Sikhs through half-page advertisement in the *New York Times* in 1971 and Bhai Amrik Singh who had close connection with Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale revived All India Sikh Students' Federation. The Sikhs were turning away from the Congress Party to Akali Dal and the former largely depended on the urban Hindus for support and mobilisation. With increasing inability of the centre to bring about any kind of political settlement of Akali demands, the sectarian polarisation

between the two sides was progressively mirrored between Sikhs and Hindus within the state. The Sikh separatism came to the forefront when Balbir Singh Sandhu became the secretary-general and Dr Jagjit Singh Chauhan, the President of the National Council of Khalistan. In his address to Sikh Education Conference in Chandigarh, Ganga Singh Dhillon put forward the idea that the Sikhs are a distinct nation. As the Central Government was unable to reach a political settlement with the Akalis on their demands, the Akalis mounted what Grewal calls 'the righteous war' or *dhram yudh*.[11] Sant Bhindranwale joined the Akali *dhram yudh* which he decided to mount from inside the Golden Temple in Amritsar. As Grewal has noted, 'There were bank robberies, thefts of weapons, cutting of telegraph wires, setting fires to railway stations, attacks on policemen, bomb explosions, murders of Nirankaris, murders of public men and attacks on ministers'.[12] With the violence taking a sectarian and communal character, the Government of India imposed President's rule over the state with a massive deployment of Indian army. The relationship between traditional leaders of the Akali Dal and Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale were strained with the latter leading his followers to put up a resistance to outside threat in the Sikh martial tradition. From December 1983, Indira Gandhi discussed the possibility of army action in Punjab. Earlier part of 1984 saw spiralling violence engulfing the civilian population. In early June 1984, the Indian army used tanks and helicopters against Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his supporters and took over the Golden Temple complex by 6 June 1984. It is estimated that besides 5,000 civilians, up to about 700 officers and men lost their lives in this military operation. The 'Operation Blue Star' as it was code-named, horrified the Sikhs all over the world and the destruction of the Akal Takht, the holiest of Sikh shrines created a deep feeling of resentment against the Government of India. In October 1984, when Indira Gandhi was walking from her residence to her ministerial office, one of her Sikh guards, Beant Singh, drew his revolver and shot her and his companion Satwant Singh used his sten gun which killed her. As Grewal observes, the Prime Minister had returned from an election tour of Orissa and Beant Singh had returned from his home in Punjab. As he adds, 'Physically at one place, they were mentally and emotionally living in two different worlds'—an observation which marks a deep sense of Sikh alienation in the Indian polity at the time. Although the Sikhs instantly celebrated the murder of Indira Gandhi, her assassination was followed by most inhuman and brutal attacks against ordinary Sikhs living in north India. Mobs burned Sikhs alive, killed women and children, looted shops, burnt cars, markets and houses while

the authorities took a passive view of law and order in Delhi and other places.

The activities of the Indian army in Punjab and Operation Woodrose to hunt for young Sikhs suspected of being terrorists were to see further loss of life[13] and persistence of tension and violence in both rural and urban Punjab. The Sikhs who settled in the United Kingdom, North America and other parts of the world have maintained close links with their homes and villages in Punjab. Violence, Operation Blue Star and military operations in Punjab countryside have made a most powerful impact on Sikh communities in the US, Canada and the United Kingdom. The following section examines the impact of the Punjab crisis on the British Sikhs with a particular reference to its effect on the Indian community in Bristol.

THE PUNJAB CRISIS AND THE BRITISH SIKHS

Consolidation of the British imperial rule in India saw the annexation of Punjab to British India in March 1849 and the end of the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Brought up under the imperial protection which saw his conversion to Christianity, his heir Duleep Singh, spent much of his life in Britain. With his annual emolument of £25,000, Duleep Singh was able to acquire Elveden Hall on the border of Norfolk and Suffolk for £105,000. He converted it into an Indian palace and lived there. His extravagant life style forced him into debt and eventual arrest at Aden when he was returning to India. He ended his exile in Paris where he died. His body was brought back to Elveden Hall for a burial.[14] The Sikhs who came to Britain from the beginning of this century were less likely to share Duleep Singh's patrician background. Most of the earlier Sikh migrants to Britain, especially the Bhattra Sikhs, were hawkers by trade both inside and outside India. Hindbalraj Singh's study documents their settlement in Bristol, Derby and Nottingham and records a tradition of migration which occurred from the beginning of this century until Bhattras began to settle in England after losing their homes and property in the partition of India.[15] The formation of India and Pakistan and the division of pre-British Punjab and radical changes in the demography of the Indian state of Punjab created social conditions which brought thousands of Sikh families from different social backgrounds to Britain. Joyce Pettigrew, Roger and Catherine Ballard, Arthur Helweg, Parminder Bhachu, Roger Ballard and Eleanor Nesbitt provide detailed studies of settlement of different Sikh communities and development of their social and cultural institutions in the UK.[16]

According to 1991 Census Britain's total population is 54,055,693.

About 94 per cent of the total population identified themselves as White. Of the remaining 6 per cent, the Indians are the largest group, numbering 834,574, constituting 31 per cent of the British ethnic minority population.[17] Although precise estimates for different social and cultural groups are not recorded by the Census, according to Roger Ballard's estimate, there are 300,000 Sikhs living in all major urban areas of Britain.[18]

Operation Blue Star made a powerful impact on the British Sikh population and, as Pritam Singh has shown, also attracted considerable attention in the British Parliament.[19] In his recent study of ethnicity and nationalism in post-imperial Britain, Harry Goulbourne also provides a clear account of the effect of the politics of Punjab on British Sikhs with a particular reference to the demand for an independent state of Khalistan.[20] However, it is Darshan Singh Tatla's study which provides a narrative that documents the effect of immediate impact of the Punjab crisis on Sikhs in Britain.[21] In his detailed account Tatla informs us how every overseas Sikh household reacted to this tragedy both in anger and deep shock. In his detailed analysis of British Sikh reaction to the invasion of Golden Temple in Amritsar, Tatla notes that on 10 June 1984, 50,000 Sikhs and their supporters marched from Hyde Park to the Indian High Commission to lodge their protest against the desecration of their holiest shrine.[22] Collective chants of *Khalistan jindabad* (long live Khalistan) expressed not only the protest but also support for an independent state for the Sikhs. A strong sense of collective mobilisation swept through Sikh communities in Britain and many were prepared to lay down their lives to protect the Sikh *panth*.

In providing a historical outline of organisations within the Sikh population, Tatla refers to Akali Dal, the Sikh political party and its formation among British Sikhs. He also refers to the Indian Workers' Association. Both the organisations provided channels of communication and mobilisation around the Khalistan issue. However, Sikhs formed a number of new organisations in response to what had occurred in Punjab. These were: Khalistan Council, International Sikh Youth Federation, Babbar Khalsa and Dal Khalsa. Tatla provides a detailed account of the rise of these organisations. Initially they created a sense of unity, but this was under constant pressure due to factionalism and personal rivalries which resulted in violence and loss of life.[23]

In the course of their settlement in Britain, as Roger Ballard and Catherine Ballard explain, the Sikh settlement had developed in a series of steps.[24] According to this diachronic perspective, the settlement encompasses early nineteenth century migrants, large-scale migration in the 1950s, the development of the all-male household, the reunion of families,

and most importantly, the development of community institutions and organisations before the Sikhs had to contend with the problem of the second generation. Ballards use this argument to show the process of encapsulation at work in an ethnic minority group. What is perhaps most important to note in this scheme is the fact that the Sikhs had already developed structures of community organisations based on their place of worship, the *gurdwara*. As Tatla has rightly noted, among population of Indian sub-continental origin places of worship have important social and political functions in addition to religious, ritual and spiritual ones.[25] Very much like a mosque or a temple, the *gurdwara* provides a focus for multiple activities including collective organisation. Gurdwaras and their leaders were to play a vital part in mobilising support for Khalistan throughout the later part of 1980s—a process of mobilisation in which Indian Workers' Associations and International Sikh Youth Federation played a decisive part, generating different degrees of unity and disunity.

THE PUNJAB CRISIS AND BRISTOL INDIANS

In contrast to cities like Birmingham and London where Indians have settled in large numbers, the population of Indian sub-continental origin in Bristol is much smaller. The total population of Bristol is 376,146. About 19,281 persons of ethnic minority origin living in the city constitute 5.1 per cent of the total population. Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents of the city number 6,047 and form 1.6 per cent of the total population.[26] The census data provides no information on the distribution of specific religious communities. On the basis of rough estimates, among Indians, Sikhs constitute the largest group, followed by Gujarati and Punjabi Hindus and others. The largest number of Sikhs come from the Bhattra community and a smaller number from the Ramgarhia and Jat social groups. There are three Sikh gurdwaras: Nanak Prakash Singh Sabha, Sangat Singh Sabha and Ramgarhia Board Sikh Temple. The first two are closely connected with the Bhattra community and two sections within it. Ramgarhia Board Sikh Temple, as the name implies, represents the Ramgarhia community. There is also a Sikh Cultural Centre which is concerned with promoting the interest of all the Sikhs in Bristol. As in other centres of Sikh settlement, a chapter of the International Sikh Youth Federation was formed in 1985 in response to the crisis in Punjab.

In order to explain the effect of the Punjab crisis on Bristol Indians, it is important to refer to the Bristol Indian Association as an organisation representative of all Indians. Dr Sukhsagar Datta who had lived in Bristol from 1914 established it on 15 August 1947 to celebrate the Independence

of India.[27] Initially dominated by middle-class professionals, the Association had changed with the passage of time. Sikhs and Punjabi Hindus, and later Gujarati Hindus, have taken a keen part in the Association, which came to symbolise the unity of all Indians living in Bristol. As the following account explains, the invasion of the Golden Temple in Amritsar undermined this solidarity and divided the Association in the mid- and late 1980s.

The author knew from his personal experience and observations in Bristol that members of the Sikh population were deeply disturbed by the events in Amritsar and Delhi following the action of Indian army and the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Not only were they concerned about injustice but also the potential threat which these shocking events posed to Sikhs in Britain. As a young Ramgarhia Sikh student at the University explained to me, 'I always felt Britain was not my *real* home. I thought my real home was in Punjab. Now the Indian army has invaded the most sacred place of the Sikhs, I can no longer call Punjab my real home where I could feel happy and secure. I am now more homeless than ever before'. As in many cities and towns in Britain, Bristol Sikhs mounted a public protest. On 2 July 1984, Rebecca Gooch reported in *Bristol Evening Post* that 500 Sikhs held a protest march at the end of which an effigy of Indira Gandhi was burned. Compared to cities like London, Birmingham or Manchester, the Indian population in Bristol is small. As a consequence, personal contact between members of different groups is a common feature of social life. As the Bristol Sikhs transferred their feeling of resentment towards the action of the Government of India to Indians generally and to Bristol Indians in particular, the crisis created a temporary but strong feeling of estrangement between the Sikhs and the Hindus. The sense of unity that had existed within the Indian community had been seriously undermined. The Sikhs felt that they had to resist Hindu oppression just as their forefathers had resisted the Islamic rulers in India and the idea of this resistance was bound to find local expression.

Bristol Sikhs felt deeply hurt about the events in India as well as by the behaviour of Hindus in India and Bristol. As it was later explained to me in an interview, none of the Indian organisations, including the Bristol Indian Association, had come forward to criticise the Government of India for their attack on the Golden Temple. Some Sikhs felt that Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale was justified in allowing accumulation of arms in the Golden Temple. Hindus argued that it was wrong for Sikhs to arm themselves in a place of worship and that given the level of violence and murder, the government of Indira Gandhi had no option but to use force. The Sikhs complained that there was little or no expression of sympathy

for individual Sikh families who had lost their dear ones in Delhi and other cities after Indira Gandhi's assassination. The atmosphere was marked by tension, mistrust and rumours. As several Sikhs told me they believed that the Indian High Commission was using its connections with various Indian leaders to collect information about individuals who were sympathetic to those Sikhs who campaigned for Khalistan. A number of leaders of the Bristol Indian Association were suspected of collaborating in this exercise. A particular Hindu Punjabi leader who had enjoyed excellent relationship with all Sikh groups in Bristol came under strong suspicion. It was alleged that the Indian High Commission was distributing video films to Indians in Britain to present the official view of the current situation in Punjab. The Sikhs who suspected that these films were to be screened in Bristol threatened to take 'appropriate action' against the individual concerned. An Indian social psychologist who had come to Bristol to undertake some research among the local Indians found out that her Sikh respondents were most unwilling to communicate any information to her. The author also found that he had to convince some of his respondents that he was in no way connected with the Indian High Commission and that he had known some members of the Sikh community for more than 10 years.

During this period the Government of India was well aware of the Sikh support for Khalistan among diaspora Sikhs in Britain and Canada. In order to monitor the movement of overseas Sikhs to India, the authorities in Delhi introduced a visa system to apply to all visitors to India from 1984 and early 1985. When a visa application for a Bristol Sikh was delayed, it was assumed that the President of Bristol Indian Association had provided a list of Sikhs to the Indian High Commissioner to ensure that they were not allowed to visit India. Some of these unfounded rumours greatly strained the relationship between the two communities. In this tension-ridden situation, as Barbara Webb reported in the *Bristol Evening Post* on 13 July 1984, 'Bristol Sikh Satinder Singh went to set fire to the city's Hindu temple in revenge for [*sic*] the Indian army's attack on the Golden Temple of Amritsar'. Satinder Singh was arrested but released without charge. Though Rebecca Gooch had reported in the *Bristol Evening Post* of 14 June 1984 that both Hindu and Sikh leaders had united to condemn violence in India and to promise to continue their peaceful relationship in Bristol, the crisis in Punjab continued to strain relations between Hindus and Sikhs.

The Bristol Indian Association felt the full force of the Punjab crisis when it held its annual general meeting in the summer of 1985. The Sikhs had always participated in the activities of the Association and, since the

early 1950s, often held positions as office-bearers. Most office-holders in the Association tended to be either Sikhs or articulate Hindu Punjabis who had always seen themselves as a collectivity given that they shared a common language and culture. In days before the Punjab crisis, they would have regarded their religion as being the 'same', emphasising the continuities between Sikhism and Hinduism rather than discontinuities. Operation Blue Star and its aftermath shattered this traditional sense of sharing and togetherness, and created a context for Sikhs to define an identity categorically separated from Indians and the Hindu tradition.

The 1985 annual general meeting of the Bristol Indian Association demonstrated this vividly. Annual general meetings of the Association do not attract a large attendance. The active office-holders and their respective supporters meet and conduct elections to ensure that the Association has a popularly acceptable President and an executive committee. When well-attended, these meetings attract about 25 to 30 people. When members of the Association assembled at St. Werburgh's Community Centre, what was striking for everyone present was that a large number of Sikh men and some women had come to take part. As one of the Sikhs conveyed to me in confidence, it had been decided that the Sikhs should take over the Bristol Indian Association since *they* constituted the majority Indian population.

The meeting which I attended as an observer was marked by unease and tension. The outgoing Hindu Punjabi leaders of the Association found it nearly impossible to conduct the proceedings with any degree of order. After the President and the Secretary had made an effort to review the past year in the middle of loud interjections and interruptions, the Sikhs unanimously demanded that the elections should be conducted by a person they would nominate. Brushing aside the procedural and constitutional objections raised by the existing leadership, they nominated an articulate young Sikh to conduct the elections. The Sikhs also demanded that elections should be conducted in Punjabi and not in any other Indian language. English has been the formal language of the Association since it came into existence in 1947. The question of which language the Association should use provides a measure of changes which the organisation has gone through in past 30 to 35 years. In the earlier history of the Association, there was hardly any difference of opinion about which language the Indians should use in conducting the activities of the Association. The middle-class settlers had accepted English as their *lingua franca* and it had become a formal language of the Association. This linguistic tradition continued throughout 1950s and early 1960s. As the Indian population in Bristol area increased in the late 1960s and early

1970s, the question of language began to acquire greater significance. The meetings in the 1980s brought the language question to the forefront. Both the internal dynamics of the Indian community and external changes affected the language issue. The external factors concerned growing interest in multi-culturalism and multi-lingualism in Britain, especially during 1970s, characterised by the belief that ethnic minorities should be able to preserve their religious, cultural and linguistic heritage. The proponents of this view often pressed the authorities to provide interpreting service for men and women from the sub-continent with limited facility in English. Indian language groups had been already conscious of the significance of their particular vernacular and the need to sustain it in Britain.[28] Having decided to use Punjabi as the language of the meeting, the Sikhs conducted the entire proceeding in Punjabi. They used their own vernacular to indicate that they were in the majority and that they were going to dominate the Association and thus ensure the exclusion of Hindus—especially the Hindus from Punjab who, it was believed, had acted against Sikhs in Bristol.

With a preponderant majority of the Sikhs, it was obvious that none of the traditional Hindu leaders were likely to be elected to any position in the Association. The Sikhs displaced the Hindu Punjabis and others who had always taken an active part in running the Association. They were successful in taking over the Bristol Indian Association, leaving only two non-Sikh office- bearers, both of whom had supported the Sikh cause. This marked a clear divide between the Punjabi Hindus and Sikhs who had hitherto shared the running of the Association. A number of Sikhs had come to the meeting wearing the saffron coloured turban which symbolises martyrdom, and there were collective slogans of victory and jubilation (*Shree wahe guruji ka khalsa shree wahe guruji ki fateh* and *Bole so nihal—sat sri Akal*). Although the Indians in general and Hindus in particular had oppressed the Sikhs and caused them so much injustice at a national level in India, at the local level in Bristol, the Sikhs were able to enjoy a symbolic euphoria of victory, and to counter Indian dominance in Punjab by Sikh dominance of the Bristol Indian Association in Bristol.

Soon afterwards, the Sikhs celebrated the anniversary of death of Sardar Udham Singh. Udham Singh had come to Britain to assassinate Sir Michael O'Dwyer. He was Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab from 1913 to 1919 and had ordered Brigadier-General R.E.H. Dyer to open fire on a crowd of 20,000 people on 13 April 1919 at the Jallianwallah Bagh. Udham Singh shot Sir Michael O'Dwyer at Caxton Hall in London on 13 March 1940 and was later tried and executed at Pentonville in London.[29] However, many Bristol Sikhs believe that Udham Singh was hanged at

Horfield Prison in Bristol.[30] Although this is not true, it has a deep symbolic significance in the local Sikh folk memory. A number of Bhattra Sikhs had met and known Udham Singh. For instance, Giani Shree Ratan Singh Shad who had come to Britain in 1936 had shared lodgings with Udham Singh in Bedford in 1940. The memory of Udham Singh has a very special significance for the family of Sardar Shree Karnail Singh Pardesi, which has preserved Udham's Singh's turban in a glass case as an object of adoration and devotion. Udham Singh had given up his life to fight colonial oppression and injustice. During the celebration, various speakers expressed similar sentiments in relation to the crisis in Punjab, portraying the Indian dominance as more brutal than that of the British. Most of the participants on this occasion were Sikhs with a handful of Hindus. Towards the end of this event, men, women and children came forward and bowed before Udham Singh's turban as if it was endowed with divinity.

The Bristol Indian Association was further weakened by interpersonal and factional rivalry deepened by the Punjab crisis in India. An ambitious young man had felt that the leaders of the Association had restricted his active involvement in the Association. The Hindu leaders of 1984 were unhappy about his participation and regarded him with some unease and suspicion. The young man complained that the Association had done little to celebrate the September anniversary of Rammohan Roy's death in Bristol after the celebration of 150th anniverssary in 1983. With the support of a Gujarati friend with whom he claimed to share Rajput origin, he created Raja Rammohan Roy Trust and headed it. The traditional leaders saw this as an opportunistic attempt to create for himself some status and influence. As self-proclaimed leader of the Trust, he pursued those who had organised the city-wide bi-centenary of the death of Rammohan Roy in Bristol in 1983. He alleged that their financial records were unsatisfactory and that there were certain irregularities in their accounting system. He also claimed that there was about £250 which were not properly accounted for. Those accused rejected these allegations. The feeling of personal animosity between individuals became much deeper with threats of legal action. A number of leading Bristol Indians met informally to settle the dispute and to help the disputants to save face and work out conciliation. A written statement was produced to say that the dispute was resolved and reconciliation achieved. However, the depth of acrimony was such that this reconciliation had limited effectiveness. Finally, the leaders of the 1984 Committee were able to trace the cheques for the disputed amount and held the self-proclaimed leader of Raja Rammohan Roy Trust responsible for £250 which was alleged to have

been misappropriated. This minor saga had absorbed the tension of resentment of some Sikhs whose respect and regard for 1984 Hindu Punjabi leadership of the Association had declined. The growing ineffectiveness of the Association was reflected in the absence of its usual round of annual activities on special occasions. Several past members of the Association thought that their old organisation was on the verge of extinction.

THE BIRTH OF THE AVON INDIAN COUNCIL

Almost immediately after the Sikhs had become the dominant participants in the Bristol Indian Association, the Indians who were displaced from the Association began to hold informal meetings to consider the course of action they might pursue to deal with this new situation. There were two main options open to them. One was to inform the Sikh leaders of Bristol Indian Association that their action at the annual general meeting was unconstitutional as they had disregarded all normal procedures of the Association. Several members expressed strong feelings on this issue and thought the Sikhs had acted in a wrong manner. They argued that Sikhs should voluntarily withdraw from the Association as consequence of their 'illegal action'. However, as the Sikhs were traumatised by events in India and they were angry about the way in which the Indians had conducted themselves in Bristol, it was most unlikely that the Sikhs would relinquish their control over the Association. The question of taking any legal action was rejected both on the grounds that it would prove to be expensive and it would reveal internal divisions within the Indian community. The second option was for the Indians to create a separate organisation of their own. This option was not unproblematic. Some feared that the Sikhs would view this as a measure by Indians to set themselves totally apart from the Sikhs. Some were worried about religious and political issues arising in the new association and argued for a non-religious and non-political association. One suggestion was that the East African Asians should form a separate association as they had little in common with Indians from the sub-continent. What the Indians implied was that they were better than the Bhattras from the rural parts of north-western India. They were self-conscious of their better economic, educational and residential opportunities. Others argued that a new association should be cultural and recreational and should have nothing to do with religion and politics. As Bristol Indian Association lapsed into greater inactivity, the need for a separate organisation for other Indians was felt and expressed from time to time in 1988–89.

In 1988–89 a group calling itself 'Friends of the Indian Commmunity' organised a social function which was attended by many Indians, and the

momentum for a new and separate Indian association received further impetus. Leading Indians, most of whom had been previously associated with the Bristol Indian Association, held a number of formal meetings and created a new body called the Avon Indian Council. In March 1989, this body met to discuss and adopt a new draft constitution. With the exception of a few Gujarati and Bengali individuals, most of the participants were Punjabis, mainly Hindu, with a small number of Sikh associates. In outlining its aims for the welfare of Indians, the Council stated clearly that it should be non-party in politics and non-sectarian in religion. In theory, according to the constitution, the founding members should have held elections to create a management committee. The man who chaired the meeting reminded everyone that election should be conducted by secret ballot. This democratic principle was realised in interpersonal consultations followed by announcement of names of individuals who were to head and lead the new organisation. In the later part of 1989, leaders of the Avon Indian Council invited Professor Bhikhu Parekh of Hull University to inaugurate the new organisation in the presence of many Indian men, women and children, all formally and elegantly dressed for the occasion. The leaders stated that the Avon Indian Council would promote the welfare of all Indians in Bristol. Punjabi Hindus and their many supporters had now created a new organisation for themselves. At first sight it may appear as if the Indian population had divided itself between Sikhs and non-Sikhs. While this feeling of divide was not without some social and political basis, it was significant that the boundary between Avon Indian Council and Bristol Indian Association was by no means absolute. Several individuals including Sikhs held office in *both* Avon Indian Council and Bristol Indian Association. Although the divide between the Sikhs and Indians had not totally ended, it was obvious from the distribution of individuals in the two separate organisations that the feeling of animosity and opposition which had marked the Sikh reaction to the Hindus in 1985 had greatly declined.

The creation of the Avon Indian Council did not bring about the demise of the Bristol Indian Association. Although Sikh dominance remained an important feature of the Bristol Indian Association, it was far from being exclusive. The 1989 Committee of Bristol Indian Association consisted of a number of energetic Sikhs and Hindus who attempted to revitalise the flagging Association. They mounted a vigorous membership campaign and collected subscription and funds from local Indians, especially from shopkeepers whose number appears to have increased in Bristol in last 10 years. During this period, an employee of Midland Bank, Amjid Ali, had been asked to do some promotional work amongst South Asians in Bristol.

As a consequence Midland Bank funded a number of activities of the Association. The Bank paid up substantial sums to produce an attractive Diwali brochure bearing 'The Listening Bank Motto', a fireworks display at Summer Hill Junior School and the rent of Colston Hall for one evening for a programme of entertainment.[31] Leaders of the Association conveyed an impression of efficiency and good organisation at Colston Hall. The stage on which an Indian singer Bali and his group were to provide musical entertainment was nicely decorated with a large Midland Bank banner. However, signs of conflict and friction came to the fore when a number of individuals attempted to disrupt the programme. Several protesters walked onto the stage and caused enough disruption to require police presence for some semblance of order. Shouts of 'He is a Khalistani' were a reminder that the events of 1984–85 had not been entirely forgotten.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper has been to examine the effect of the Punjab crisis on Bristol Indians. Although Punjabis, be they Sikhs or Hindus,[32] now inhabit many different parts of the world from Hong Kong to Canada and California, the relationship they have with their religion and the link it defines with their homeland as Sikhs or Hindus is a vital part of their social and cultural, and above all, their religious identity. In Punjab, Shiromani Akali Dal expressed the aspirations of this identity in their demand for a greater control over both material and non-material resources of the Sikhs. What is most significant is that this identity is not defined in isolation. It is defined in response to the tensions between centre and the periphery as well as between Sikhs and Hindus, the latter, although resident in Punjab, having been identified with the central power of the state through the Congress Party as well as through various Hindu political and cultural organisations. There is a sense in which the conflict between the centre and the periphery becomes a struggle for material and non-material resources between Sikhs and Hindus in Punjab. In the absence of political settlement of differences between the two sides, the conflict snowballs and engulfs the communities in violence. As the historical and ethnographic evidence presented in this paper shows, the military action against the Sikhs in Amritsar's Golden Temple, followed by the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the murders of thousands of Sikhs and the destruction of their property had a decisive effect on the relationship between the Sikhs and the Hindus. The movement for an independent and sovereign state of Khalistan received a powerful impetus from these events and fired the imagination of those Sikhs who became committed to a Sikh nation.

The Operation Blue Star had a radical effect on the self-consciousness of the Sikhs. They expressed their opposition both to the central state as well as towards the Hindus who dominate it. Although devotional Hinduism of north India is inseparable from the development of Sikhism, after the military action which saw massive loss of life at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, many Sikhs have sought to maintain a distance from the Hindu context of Punjab society in order to foster an exclusive Sikh identity.

Although it may be possible and even desirable to argue about a greater sense of continuity between Hindus and Sikhs, catastrophic effects of the conflict between the Indian state and supporters of Khalistan cannot be underestimated in diaspora Indian communities. Coupled with the demand for a separate state of Khalistan, a sense of persecution which the Sikhs experienced brought about revitalisation of the Sikh *panth* and a sharper perception of religious difference once the Indians were definable as oppressors.

On the basis of evidence in Bristol and anecdotal evidence from other places where Sikhs and Hindus have settled, it is evident that the Punjab crisis influenced the relationship between the communities at both organisational level as well as at personal and individual level. At an organisational level, it may have, as in Bristol, undermined the traditional solidarity of Indian groups. Undoubtedly the crisis has revived the traditional Sikh *values* and changed the meaning of what it is to be a Sikh in modern India or in Britain. In author's personal experience, for many, to be a Sikh has become an exclusive identity which is conceptualised more than ever before in non-Hindu Sikh terms. The kind of changes which influence the Sikh community and its relationship with Indians and Hindus in India and Britain will depend more and more upon Indian and Sikh politicians and their ability to search for a peaceful political solution to ensure that the Sikhs can fulfil their legitimate aspirations for autonomy and self-determination.

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Notes

1. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised edition (London: Verso, 1983, Reprinted in 1994).
2. The designations which identify Indians outside the sub-continent would vary from state to state. In Gujarat, for instance, the word London is used to identify the west to cover prosperous Gulf states to California and everything in-between. These designations are sociologically important in showing the distinctions between migrant and non-migrant population of a particular local area.
3. From the beginning of this century, Indians began to form both temporary and permanent communities in Britain. Freedom from British rule in India was a matter of great political concern to these Indians. For a narrative that provides such an account, see Rohit Barot, *Bristol and the Indian Independence Movement* (Bristol: University of Bristol Historical Association, 1988).
4. Sajal Basu, *Regional Movements: Politics, Language, Ethnicity-Identity* (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1992).
5. Barot, *Bristol and the*.
6. Derek Brown, 'Death Toll climbs in an Indian Crisis', *The Guardian*, 9 December 1992, p. 1. Also see Christopher Thomas's report from Luknow 'Death Toll Tops 200 in Indian Religious Riots' in *The Times*, 8 December 1992, p. 1. The report also refers to the fire that was set to the Hindu temple in Derby, causing damage worth £60,000.
7. See J.S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India: The Sikhs of the Punjab* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) for a detailed historical analysis. See Chapter 9, 'Towards the 'Punjabi Province', 181–204 and Chapter 10, 'In the New Punjab State (1966–1984)', 205–36.
8. Roger Ballard, 'Politicisation of Religion in Punjab: 1949–1991' in Rohit Barot (ed.), *Religion and Ethnicity: Minorities and Social change in the Metropols* (Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1993).
9. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History*, 204.
10. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History*, 214.
11. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History*, 222.
12. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History*, 223.
13. Khushwant Singh as quoted in Chapter 9, 'Fortress India' in Mark Tully and Zareer Masani, *India Forty Years of Independence* (New York: George Braziller, 1988), 133–48.
14. For a brief sketch of Duleep Singh, see Rozina Visram, *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes: Indians in Britain 1700–1947* (London: Pluto Press, 1986), 72-73. For a detailed historical study of Duleep Singh, see Michael Alexander and Sushila Anand, *Queen Victoria'a Maharajah Duleep Singh 1838–93* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1980).
15. Hindbalraj Singh, 'Bhattra Sikhs in Bristol: The Development of an Ethnic Community' unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Department of Sociology, Bristol.
16. Joyce Chaudhri (now Pettigrew), 'The Emigration of Sikh Jats from the Punjab to England' n.d., unpublished paper. Roger Ballard and Catherine Ballard, 'The Sikhs: The Development of South Asian Settlement in Britain', in James L. Watson (ed.), *Between Two Cultures: Migrant and Minorities in Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), 21–56; Arthur Helweg, *Sikhs in England: The Development of a Migrant Community* (Delhi:

Oxford University Press, 1979); Parminder Bhachu, *Twice Migrants: East African Sikh Settlers in Britain* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1985); Roger Ballard, 'Differentiation and Disjunction among the Sikhs' in his (edited) *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain* (London: Christopher Hurst & Co, 1994), 88–116; and Elenaor Nesbitt, 'Valmikis in Coventry: The Revival and Reconstruction of a Community' in Roger Ballard (ed.), *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain* (London: Christopher Hurst Co., 1995), 117–41.

17. For a detailed analysis of demographic structure of the ethnic minority population in Britain, see Roger Ballard and Virinder Singh Karla, *Ethnic Dimensions of the 1991 Census: A Preliminary Report* (Manchester: The University of Manchester, 1994).
18. Ballard, 'Differentiation and Disjunction', 95.
19. Pritam Singh, 'Economic Interests and Human Rights in Indo-British Relations: House of Commons Debate on Punjab', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 27, 13 (1992), 631–36.
20. Harry Goulbourne, Chapter 6, 'Diasporic politics: Sikhs and the Demand for Khalistan' in his *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Post-Imperial Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 126-69.
21. Darshan Singh Tatla, 'The Punjab Crisis and Sikh Mobilisation in Britain' in Barot, *Religion and Ethnicity*, 96–109.
22. Tatla, 'The Punjab Crisis', 97.
23. Tatla, 'The Punjab Crisis'.
24. Ballard and Ballard, 'The Sikhs', 21–56.
25. Ballard and Ballard, 'The Sikhs', 1–17.
26. Avon County Council Public Relations and Publicity, *1991 Census: Characteristics of the Minority Ethnic Group Population in Bristol* (Bristol: Avon County Council Planning Department, 1994).
27. Barot, *Bristol and the*.
28. Rohit Barot, 'Community Education in Britain among the Gujaratis'. A paper presented at One Europe Group Meeting of the International Sociological Association in Koninki, Poland, 1990.
29. For an account of Jallianwallah Bagh massacre with the details of Udham Singh's life, see Alfred Draper, *Echoes of War: The Amritsar Massacre: Twilight of Raj* (London: Buchan and Enright Publishers Limited, 1985).
30. I consulted the authorities at Horefield Prison in Bristol to verify this assertion. They were categorical that Udham Singh had not been hanged in Horfield Prison.
31. Midland Bank also paid for a Sanatan Deevya Mandal Calendar showing a coloured lithograph of the goddess of wealth Lakshmi.
32. In more popular and folk thinking, actors may associate Punjab with either Sikh or Hindus only or often with both the groups. They may overlook the fact that Punjab has a number of different religious traditions. There are, of course, Punjabis who are Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and Jains. Identification of a particular region with a dominant group is not uncommon. I have found that many Gujarati Hindus assume an invariable connection between their language and being Hindu and easily overlook the fact that the expression Gujarati can encompass a variety of religious traditions.

Review Article

Interpreting the 'Interpretive Process': The Ambivalence of Tradition in the Representation of Sikh Culture

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It would not require great powers of advocacy to successfully argue that the academic representation of Sikh history and culture under the signifier 'religion' has tended to produce a somewhat predictable, if not myopic, framework which has dominated the reception an-d presentation of Sikh cultural heritage, its traditions and literature, to the outside world. What appears to be less obvious is the link between 'religion' as a representative category or framework, and the theoretical notions that underpin the mode of representation itself. That such a link exists, however, is clearly indicated by reference to several interconnected events over the last few years: the increasing divergence between scholarship on Sikhism within Indian as compared with Western academies, the recent storm of protest and counter-protest concerning the Toronto University doctoral thesis by Pashaura Singh, and more recently, the publication of Harjot Oberoi's book, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition.*

A survey of recent reviews on Oberoi's book would leave the reader with few doubts about such a divergence which reflects opinions that either welcome or strongly disapprove of its publication, thus displacing the entire debate over the book's contents into the realm of polemic. Neither of the opposing camps, whether pro- or anti-Oberoi, seems to have succeeded in highlighting the key issue that the author brings to light, namely the question mark over 'religion' as a signfier for representing cultural identity during the late-nineteenth century. As a consequence reviewers have, in my opinion, failed to engage with or respond to Oberoi's book in a way that does justice both to the possibilities rendered by the subject matter at hand, and to the problems associated with the fact

that Oberoi's work is itself situated within a particular academic agenda—one that relates ambivalently to the question of tradition.

In a way that seems to typify the current reception of Oberoi's book, Prof. N.G. Barrier locates the book's central issue in terms of 'tradition' as against the problems of maintaining 'Sikh Identity in the Modern World'.[1] Approximately half of his review article is devoted to showing that there is within the Sikh community no absolute consensus of opinion regarding the book. He shows that while a certain vocal and politically motivated section of the community has attempted to vilify Oberoi's research effort since well before its publication, there are others of a more sober and informed opinion who do not necessarily see the book as a threat to the community's perceived identity in any way. The thrust of this argument is that while some continue to stick to 'tradition', others are more willing to modernise and to progress beyond tradition. Such a thesis however fails to evoke any good reason for taking the implications of Oberoi's work seriously. Moreover, while Barrier notices that the 'degree of pamphleteering and wide circulation of scholarly and quasi-scholarly works mirrors the vitality and sense of urgency surrounding earlier Singh Sabha activities...'[2] and, therefore shows continuities between the situation of Sikhs today and in the late-nineteenth century, he omits to mention the relationship between the western academy today and similar institutions during the colonial eras in their role as the arbiters of cultural representation.

While it is tempting to dismiss the harsh, and often overtly personal onslaught against Oberoi as communal rhetoric or internal partisan politics, a mere dismissal would betray a fundamental failure to acknowledge the existence of a problem concerning the nature of South Asian studies generally, and Sikh studies in particular. Is there, then, a genuinely valid basis for dissent against current research methodology of South Asian traditions, albeit a dissent that fails to be voiced in a coherent or 'scholarly' manner? Or is it the case, as Barrier appears to suggest, that Sikhs committed to tradition cannot reconcile with modern research or with 'what is written in contemporary accounts', so that the 'real test' for traditional Sikhs remains merely to appropriate 'a correct understanding of scripture'.[3]

The last remark, made it seems in passing, gives a good insight into the nature of the dissent against Oberoi's work, since a number of Sikh scholars (and pseudo-scholars) have continually pointed out the failure of western-trained scholars of Sikhism to develop a Sikh 'theology' based on the scriptures. ('Theology' appears to be their privileged domain for representing 'correct understanding' of scripture and doctrine.) Bearing

in mind that theology represents the correct understanding of scripture into a western sphere of representation, its equivalent in the traditional Punjabi sphere is, of course, *gurmat* (literally the teaching of the *gurus*).

It might be objected here that Oberoi's work has nothing to do with 'theology', that he is not trying to 'make judgements about what Sikh doctrine should be. Rather, he is trying to understand how a distinct *khalsa* tradition that emerged from the early 1700s came to be institutionalised and popularised almost two centuries later'.[4] To some extent this is true. But it cannot be denied that Oberoi's sociologically oriented historiography of the colonial period has certain implications for the received understanding of the interpretative process whereby Punjab's native elites reconstructed traditions, and in particular, the community's relationship to its central texts. Unless of course we accept the vocal claim of Sikh 'theologians' that the community's relationship to scripture stems unchanged from the *Guru*-period itself, having been merely revived in its prisitine purity by the Singh Sabha movement. Indeed, with regard to the question of 'theology', W.H. McLeod goes so far as to suggest that '...we are dealing with Sikhism as an evolved tradition...(therefore) the doctrinal evolution which we owe to the Singh Sabha movement renders it eminently suitable to theological treatment'.[5] While the reasons offered by McLeod in support of his argument for a 'systematic 21st century Sikh theology' are debateable, and remain essentially unclarified, the central point of contention is the cultural reception/representation in colonial context of Sikh texts and tradition. Furthermore, the context of McLeod and Oberoi's research is one that leads us to ask the following question: why and how did the process for reception and interpretation of Sikh culture come to be labelled under a theological/doctrinal rubric?

Since these questions require a reconsideration of the cultural and historical processes whereby South Asian cultures came to be represented during the late-nineteenth century (the reconstruction of which constitutes the heart of Oberoi's thesis), the remainder of this article will be devoted to unravelling certain issues that appear to have been given only cursory treatment in Oberoi's restaging of the interpretive process—issues such as the role of textuality in cultural translation, reception psychology, language acquisition, and hence the very nature of cultural translation in colonised societies. From this angle I hope to steer this discussion between the pro- and anti-Oberoi camps by suggesting an alternative space for theorising the representation of Sikh culture—a space that will be specifically devoted to deconstructing forms of power and censorship that underpin the very practice of cultural representation. *The Construction of Religious Boundaries* merits neither the harsh rhetoric of diehard

traditionalists nor the bland sympathy of western academics, but serious engagement. It is not about 'dissolving Sikh identity'. Nor does it merely narrate a more believable account of late-nineteenth century colonialism in Punjab. Rather, its merits and demerits must be judged from its success or failure to answer why and how the signifier 'religion' dominated and continues to frame the representation of Sikh culture and identity. In order to suggest an alternative line of reasoning that may strengthen some of Oberoi's more valuable insights, I shall endeavour to show:

1. Why the question of language acquisition must be taken more seriously than is suggested by Oberoi in order to understand the shift from Sanatana to the new elite sub-cultures epitomised by the Singh Sabha and Arya Samaj?
2. How the existential/psychological situation faced by the new elites was similar to and linked to issues of cultural representation for diaspora communities today?
3. How questions of scriptural texts and textuality of cultural reception are marginalised because of certain premises and methodological presuppositions that ground his reconstruction of the 'interpretive process'?

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Mid-nineteenth century Punjabi culture—while remaining one of the best examples in South Asia of how imperialism shaped and transformed the intellectual and cultural horizons of the indigenous population—eludes a facile interpretation in terms of the well-worn pre-modern/modern, pre-colonial/colonial structural oppositions. Although the region had for many centuries been a battleground for invaders and new settlers due to its proximity to the Middle East and Afghanistan, it was the last major region to succumb to British rule in India, being finally annexed as late as 1849. Pre-colonial Punjabi culture was largely heterogenous in most respects, with ethnic, linguistic and religious disparity being the norm. Boundaries which would normally be considered to define inter-subjective (religious and linguistic) groupings were highly fluid. Far from there being social chaos, this highly heterogenous culture, governed as it was by its own structural grammar that consisted largely of rules applying to households, villages, kinship lineages (*biradaris*), clans (*got*) and castes (*zat*), came to be recognised by the traditional elites in the nineteenth century as a tradition without roots in historical time, i.e., Sanatana. Not surprisingly, the relationship between Sanatana society and the central tradition texts tended to reflect this pluralistic social framework. Scriptural experience

was predominantly located in the oral domain, and encompassed a variety of different forms such as devotional singing (*kirtan*), oral recitation and oral exegesis. In fact it appears that oral mediation of the scriptural texts by *sants, gurus, brahmins, sadhus* (cultural mediators) was a sustaining pillar of Sanatana culture, and it is not difficult to understand why. The intrinsically temporal and finite nature of sound, along with the sense of proximity and personality engendered by voiced mediation had significant cultural implications: greater fluidity across linguistic and religious boundaries and a certain communal face-to-facedness. It is likely, therefore, that a predominantly oral Sanatana culture would have favoured the dissolution of boundaries.

In contrast to this idyllic scene—Oberoi's 'enchanted universe'—the last three decades of the nineteenth century ushered in a period of unprecedented change to Punjabi societies, marked by religious and political confrontation and the construction of social boundaries between different groups of the indigenous populations. This change was part of an inevitable response to the colonial administration's systemisation of indigenous societies according to its own blueprint. In order to aid governance of the enormous diversity of cultures and traditions, the administration helped create a class of western-educated indigenous elites to facilitate effective mediation of the imperial codes to their own cultures and communities.

South Asian scholars generally agree that the rise of the indigenous elites in Punjab foreshadowed the emergence of a modern nationalist identity and the concomitant demise of Sanatana traditions. The use of this somewhat facile model to explain the sudden power shift from a premodern Sanatana culture to the modern homogeneous framework of the Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha elite sub-cultures is almost universally accepted. Yet, when used to explain changes in social structure and organisation, this model has tended to support rival and conflicting interpretations. Thus, in order to explain changes in the reception, transmission and organization of central scriptural texts, or the effects of a new print textuality on the psycho-social dynamics of Punjab, it has been equally possible for interpreters using the above model to show either sympathy or antagonism towards one or the other paradigms of indigenous culture, i.e., Sanatanism or the new elites. For example, as Oberoi's recent work has shown, traditional Sikh historians (trained in the Singh Sabha mould) have tended to idealise the achievement of the Singh Sabha movement, interpreting the changes in text-reception and transmission to be part of a renaissance or revival of a 'pure' or 'orthodox' Sikhism.[6] For these traditional historians textual organisation and codification, as well as the

delimitation of boundaries for text transmission and reception, was justified as part of a systematic purging of 'Brahmanical' influence on the methods of text-reception by the community.

For Oberoi, on the other hand, the matter seems to be equally clear-cut. He sees the shift from Sanatana to modern elite sub-culture (a shift that the author holds to be the main reason for the emergence of a Tat Khalsa identity, and which he presents following Foucault, in terms of *episteme* shifts) in terms of a shift from the more pluralistic Sanatana episteme to the homogenising *episteme* of the Tat Khalsa—a shift that is mediated by the means of an 'interpretive process' by which the Tat Khalsa leaders completely redefined cultural boundaries along western rationalistic lines. However, insofar as the shift into modernism entailed the loss of a pluralistic, open framework, it is one to be regretted. Due to inherent biases, for or against the role of the indigenous elites, neither interpretation helps us to understand properly the *nature* of the interpretive process which led to what I shall henceforth call the 'theologisation' of text-reception by Sikh elites in the late-nineteenth century, and one that appears as normative to established orthodoxy today.

While Oberoi's work is clearly a departure from the traditional Singh Sabha historiography, which remains rooted in paradigms of progress over a morally degraded culture and/or the revival of an authentic tradition, there are, nevertheless, problematic presuppositions with his particular methodology as applied to colonial cultures running through his entire work. A major presupposition that combines with and reinforces his methodological preference for the *episteme* in order to describe cultural norms of praxis, is Oberoi's treatment of the theme of textuality. Early in the first chapter the reader encounters what becomes a prevalent bias against textuality later on in the book:

> The production of the Adi Granth (by the fifth Guru) turned the Sikhs into a "textual community" i.e. a group of people whose social and religious activities are centred around a text, and who seek to order their everyday life in close correspondence with what the text actually prescribes....[7]

In Oberoi's interpretation 'textuality' becomes coterminous with the fixity and delimitation of boundaries since 'those who are beyond the pale of the text begin to be viewed as outsiders'.[8] Clearly, Oberoi seems to be using the words 'text' and 'textuality' in the same way as the Semitic notion of the 'Book' which, as he himself is aware, is a theological concept signifying totality and wholeness. However, there is little or no evidence to suggest that the *Adi Granth* had at this stage taken on such a

totemic/Bookish significance. The implication behind Oberoi's idea of 'textual community' is quite clear; that in this first transitional phase from an oral culture to a written culture, a boundary could be drawn between those who imbibed the teachings of the text, and those who were 'beyond the pale of the text'. My reason for mentioning Oberoi's early registering of dislike for 'textuality' and 'textual community', is that this same notion becomes pivotal in his later distinction between the features of Sanatana and Tat-Khalsa cultures. The two cultures are frequently contrasted using opposing terms with a metaphoric potential. Sanatana culture is described as *fluid, ambiguous, diverse, popular, pluralistic, a melange* of opposing interpretations; as against Tat Khalsa culture which is *elitist, homogeneous, ordered, iconoclastic*, etc. The opposing sets of metaphors are indicators, as Oberoi correctly points out, of the social grammar that structured each culture. Thus, Tat Khalsa social grammar—which was clearly the result of imbibing western forms of writing and thinking, notably print culture—encouraged uniformity in the transmission of a variety of cultural practices such as dissemination of scriptural texts and other religious literature. By contrast, Sanatana social grammar was determined in and through the oral domain, as a result of which the dissemination and exegesis of sacred texts and teachings was dependent on personal dialogical mediation, and therefore subject to the vagaries of *brahmins, sadhus, udasis* and *nirmala* sects. Correspondingly, the prevalence of speech and dialogue in this oral Sanatana culture buttressed the cultural supremacy of these traditional cultural mediators as far as text transmission and reception was concerned.

With the abundant use of metaphorical terms like *popular, natural, open, fluid* and *pluralistic*, the reader is given the impression of Sanatana culture as an injured party that was eventually marginalised or 'usurped by' the Tat Khalsa *episteme* for which terms such as *elitist, iconoclastic,* and *modern* (as opposed to *natural*) are used. There appears to exist a barely suppressed nostalgia for the innocence of the primal condition of Indic culture epitomised by Sanatana tradition upon which is committed the violence of western print culture and rationality. More importantly, however, is the linking of the Tat Khalsa *episteme* with the notion of 'textual community', where the 'textual' element is the point of commonality between both the early Sikh textual community created as a result of the fifth Guru's compilation of an authoritative anthology of texts, and the importation of western print culture with the (Judeo-Christian) notion of the 'Book'.

My point should be clear: Oberoi's distinction between the Sanatana and Tat Khalsa *epistemes* is governed by the opposition between orality and textuality. Orality, as representative of the natural, primal and popular

state of culture is usurped by a written culture both in the early days of the Guru period and again in a more devastating form during the rise of the Tat Khalsa *episteme* with its embracing of advanced western forms of textuality and writing. In other words, orality is *prior* to textuality; orality is *a*historical, whereas textuality is complicit with a linear historicality and/or secular time; texts, text-culture and textuality are therefore associated with supplementarity, foreignness, usurpation, violence, totalisation and the construction of boundaries.[9] Consequently the role of the *Adi Granth* as a written scripture is of secondary importance in Oberoi's work; its very existence in text/manuscript form serves more as a cause of division and boundary formation.

This bias against textuality is reimposed by Oberoi's adoption of the Foucauldian concept of *episteme* as well as by his methodological preference for epistemology as a means of distinguishing between and describing different cultures and cultural change.[10] This preference can be found in an earlier essay on the same topic, in which the difference between Sanatana and Tat Khalsa culture is rooted in radically opposed world views: '...in the last analysis the answer to the Hindu–Sikh question, whether at the turn of the century, today, or in the future, is an epistemological question. It depends on what we make of man and his universe'.[11]

The continued reliance on epistemology raises several issues. First, Oberoi's resort to epistemology in order to explain socio-historical change is dependent on his acceptance of the notion of unified, ready-constituted subjects in a manner that makes it difficult to separate his methodological position of from that of the Singh Sabha (colonialist) school. For example, his distinction between Sanatana and Tat Khalsa elites is based on opposed essentialising descriptions. Both groups possess *essential characteristics* that are ultimately the *causes* for their incompatibility or compatibility with the colonial regime, and which consequently *effects* the praxis and social change associated with the late-nineteenth century Punjab. Such reliance upon epistemological certainty fails to explain a phenomenon that was common to European colonialism per se: namely the *emergence* of subjectivity in and through the imposition of a dominant culture and language.

In view of the fact that Sanatana culture is supposed to be non-subjectifying, contradictory, non-ideological, *a*historical and therefore unrepresentable in the broad sense of the term, is it correct to categorise Sanatana in terms of an *episteme*, bearing in mind that the latter is based on a linear, teleological notion of time and history? Such a categorisation is reminiscent of the power relations that favour the epistemologist's space

of representation, in that it legitimises the epistemologist's narratorial authority to represent what is by definition unrepresentable. By eclipsing the materiality of language in favour of an idealistic space within which the 'other' may be represented, Oberoi's methodology would appear to be the updated successor to the earlier colonialist epistemology.

The main drawback of the continued use of epistemic historiography by post-colonial writers such as Oberoi is that with its inherent bias against the materiality of writing, i.e., textual production, as an enunciatory response to the problem of cultural representation through the language and categories of a dominant culture, it continues to privilege the eye of the epistemologist and therefore, the same metaphorics of light transfer (rationality, enlightenment, etc.) which were hallmarks of the native elites. Further, his mode of narrative, while claiming a 'poetic' indifference with regard to the poles of tradition and modernity, of having been produced in the well-insulated observatory of the modern university, is in fact neither closed nor indifferent. It is historically linked to the domination of cultural production by colonial institutions—a domination that continues in the form of the assymetry between 'First World' and 'Third World' scholars. From this perspective Oberoi's historiography is organically, if not spiritually, linked to the weaker 'Third World' enunciation of Sikh 'theologians'.

I therefore find it difficult to accept his presentation of the shift from Sanatana to Tat Khalsa purely in terms of the Foucauldian *episteme*. It is well known that in his later essays and interviews Foucault himself rejected this particular approach to theorising historical change. One of the most celebrated effects of Foucault's philosophy is the decentring of the subject; that is, his insight (borrowed from Lacan) that we are determined by cultural structures and institutions of power that precede and exceed the individual, and into which the individual is obliged to insert himself in order to be recognised as a social individual. These cultural structures are primarily based on language. The major effect of this theory is to put the credentials of the *knower* (the epistemlogist) in question. And yet this is precisely Oberoi's limitation. While correctly discerning the usurpation of power by the Singh Sabha, he fails to acknowledge the continuity and interconnection of his own position as an academic with the disparity in power relations between educational institutions in the West and those in previously colonized countries. Ironically, the effects of Foucault's work are even more applicable to Oberoi's own discourse as long as it continues to camouflage itself under the liberal humanist motifs of impartial/scientific historiography.

In order to displace the epistemological scene of description that deals

with its object of knowledge, we must relocate the entire problematic to the site of sign production by the colonised natives, a displacement that involves exploring their 'enunciation', i.e., their attempts to generate new responses as the textual production of culture, and so also to the production of texts as an enunciative practice. This shift from the *gaze* of the epistemologist to the *sign* as the site of cultural production allows us to alter the subject of culture from an epistemological function to an enunciative practice.[12] The production of new cultural texts allowed the indigenous elites to focus their efforts to relocate their own political position. Enunciation is therefore a disruptive practice of signification that subverts the totalising, hegemonic and descriptive writing of both coloniser and post-colonial historian by positing alternative hybrid sites of cultural negotiation. As an activity, it opens the possibility of other 'times', and different cultural meanings in 'contradistinction' to the objectification of others in colonialist (and post-colonial anthropological/sociological) history and experience. The notion of an enunciative practice, I would argue, can be extended to coincide with what I consider to be a more apt term: *cultural translation*. In this sense, texts and literature produced by the indigenous elites provide the evidence of their praxis, an indication of the emergence of subjectivity which coincides with the event of cultural translation.

Given the limitations of a purely epistemological approach, it is necessary to move towards this site of textual enunciation, which, in the work of the Singh Sabha, is enunciated in terms of a 'theology'. In order to do this we need to focus attention on the existential situation of the indigenous elites, which in turn involves a rereading of the historical narrative in which they were written by the colonial ethnographic discourses. If, as Homi Bhabha states, 'there is a sense in which world literature may emerge as a prefigurative category concerned with a form of cultural descensus and alterity, where non-consensual terms of affiliation may be established on grounds of historical trauma,'[13] the study of such literature as evidence of the cultural translation enacted by the native elites, may be a way to understand how dominated cultures come to recognise themselves through their projections of otherness. In this sense we need to reconfigure the context in which such enunciation/translation/literature comes about.

Thus, if the textual enunciation representative of the shift from Sanatana to Tat Khalsa culture can be seen as 'theological', it is necessary to account for the influences that brought about this shift.[14] For example, why did the Tat Khalsa community alone become separated as an elite sub-culture? Was it only due to the personal quest for power on behalf of a few individuals? Or the quest of a certain group for power? If, as Oberoi

suggests, the mid-nineteenth century situation was a 'melange', and Tat Khalsa was merely one of many groups who contested the space 'Sikh', was it then some factor within the Khalsa section itself that caused a potential splitting away or was it due to the colonial situation? Oberoi quite correctly cites a number of reasons, such as the impact of western education, print culture and other relevant technological agents of cultural change. But for him, if we are not to believe that the elites were *tabulae rasae* awaiting activation via the imprint of the colonial code, there must have been some *prior* reason for their ready acceptance of western print technology and education in contrast with Sanatanists. That is, there had to have been intrinsic trait that allows us to account for the Khalsa community having become a ready and willing agent of colonial suppression.

This resort to a 'genetic' explanation in terms of certain character traits is reminiscent of an earlier argument proposed by W.H. McLeod—and appropriated uncritically by other western scholars of Sikh and Punjab studies—that attributes certain changes in the evolution of the Sikh community to social or external factors.[15] More importantly, this kind of reasoning is part of a wider discourse of colonial subjectification that gives such discourse its currency. It works by positing a stereotypical trait about a colonial subject which allows the stereotype to be repeated throughout the subject's changing history and at key discursive junctures. In addition to enabling a strategy of individual (i.e., definable) character traits, it produces the illusion of a probabilistic truth and predictability for that stereotype, which, for obvious reasons, must 'always be in excess of what can be empirically proved'.[16] Thus we read of 'warlike Jats' as opposed to peace-loving Khatris (who comprised the bulk of early Sikh community), and of 'the influx of Jats' which caused the shift to martial tradition, and more recently in Oberoi's work, of the 'textual character' of Khalsa Sikhs as opposed to other groups 'beyond the pale of the text'. The point is that for Oberoi, the 'textual character' of the Sikh community since Guru Arjan and especially the Khalsa community, i.e., their relative openness to acceptance of the letter and of print culture, serves as an intrinsic triggering mechanism—an innate genetic characteristic that simply waited for the right environmental circumstances before it was activated.

But this kind of reasoning, apart from its obvious borrowing from behaviourism and its denial of agency, can be dismissed on other grounds. It is well established that the Singh Sabhas were not alone in their opposition to Sanatana culture. As the work of Kenneth Jones clearly shows, the Arya Samajis and related Hindu revivalist groups throughout India were even more strongly opposed to Sanatanists, and for very similar reasons.[17] Not only the direction, but also the outcome of the Arya Samaj

and Singh Sabhas' opposition to Sanatana culture, appears to have run parallel course. Why, then, were both the Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha commonly presented as bitter rivals, contesting the cultural domain against Sanatanists in similar ways? What was it about Sanatana culture that was repugnant to both groups? More to the point, why is the elites' rejection of Sanatana culture a mirror image of the colonial administration's rejection of 'Hindoo' culture on moralistic rational grounds? A methodology that relies primarily on epistemic/sociological phenomena is clearly at its weakest here. For in relegating texts and textual production to a secondary status, Oberoi clearly overlooks a key question: how the activity of colonial ethnographic translation was complicit in the overdetermination of certain ideal constructions, which in turn became instrumental in the Tat Khalsa's battle to contest the domain of cultural production and representation over and against the Sanatanists. In order to answer these questions and to remedy the weakness of epistemic historiography, it is instructive to try and read the problems in the light of textual practices of the early colonial translators who not only inherited religious and other dichotomies from their predecessor regimes, but actively reconstructed these dichotomies in the light of their own experience. Especially relevant here is how a certain notion of the 'Hindoo' reread and reconstructed by the early colonial administration, eventually filtered down into and came to instruct the education system of colonial India.[18]

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By the time that Punjab was annexed by British rule in 1849, a process of cultural translation that formed the basis of the colonial discourse of orientalism had already been in place for more than half a century. Originally instigated to obtain information about the people ruled by the East India Company merchants in Bengal, this discourse was institutionalised by the works of William Jones who, after arriving in Calcutta in 1773, vowed to 'domesticate the Orient and thereby turn it into a province of European language'. Jones' entire translative practice was driven by the need to create reliable translations for Europeans, since the natives were purportedly unreliable translators of their works, to give back to Indians their 'own' laws, and to 'purify' Indian culture and speak on its behalf. While Jones' main concern was to remedy the problem of interpreting Indian law for administrative purposes, the other main group of translators led by the Christian missionaries William Ward and William Carey, directed their efforts towards the translation of important Indian religious texts into European languages.

These early colonial practices of translating cultural texts were based on a conceptual practice that endorsed the 'transparency' of representing the other, a practice relying primarily on visual experience and instructed by empiricist and realist philosophy. Their combined effect was the construction of an epistemic religious category—the 'Hindu'. Since this construction 'Hindoo' was the result of an overdetermination of the category of religion,[19] the vast majority of Indian natives (apart from Muslims who were easily identifiable under the opposing religious category of 'Musulman') were simply mapped under this category. While Jones' 'Hindoo' is predicated with negative metaphors of administration—*submissive, indolent, non-rational, incapable of liberty, happier ruled than free, degenerate and debased*—the works of Carey and Ward were equally obsessed with moral metaphors describing their version of the 'Hindoo': *impure, native sexuality, immorality*. In addition, however, missionary translations, inspired by classical western notions of textual unity and coherence, imposed alien narrative forms on the translation of Indian 'religious' texts, thus enabling the development of comparative theologies between the official colonial religion (Christianity) and the indigenous 'religions'. This kind of translation was justified by missionaries on the grounds that the 'mental and moral improvement of the Hindus was the high destiny of the British'.[20] Within a relatively short space of time the early construction 'Hindoo' had come to inform a multiplicity of different discourses in the west. Among them was Hegel's construction of world history based on his notion of absolute being. Hegel's understanding of 'Hindoo nature' (which he equates with a state of dreaming, implying that the Hindu, as the west's other, had not attained to 'self-consciousness'; this in turn showed that Hindu India had never possessed a narrative of existence, hence the 'Hindoos' were not individuals as Europeans were), is clearly authorized by the colonial translations of Ward and Jones. In addition, these translations exerted a decisive influence in generating discourses and systems of discipline, improvement and education for the natives. Thus it was the administrative needs of empire rather than the tradition of European humanism that motivated Thomas Macaulay to replace indigenous systems of education with English style education: to create as Macaulay put it 'a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect'.[21] The new system of education based on 'the model of our English school' would provide the natives with 'a sense of identity as we know it', as well as freeing the minds of the Hindus from priestly tyranny and allow the development of individual conscience. Informing the

colonial translations disseminated in this new English education was a notion of 'Hindoo' nature which conveniently served as a pole of immoral existence which helped the coloniser to define himself as the contrasting (moralistic) other of the native oriental. But more importantly, the idea of 'Hindoo', with its commensurality with backwardness, pre-rationality and childhood state of consciousness, also becomes a pole against which the newly educated classes of indigenous elites could compare themselves. Although the new English-style education had already been implemented in areas like Bengal by the late 1830s, Punjab's relatively late annexation meant that the new classes of Punjabi elites did not come through this system till the late 1860s; until, that is, the administrative machinery was firmly in place under the governance of John and Henry Lawrence.

But how did these new elites differ from other members of their communities? This question is normally passed off by referring to their bilingual status, or their capacity to acquire a range of technologies brought about by the 'Dalhousian revolution in communications'.[22] These somewhat glib references to their bilingualism and the elite status that this automatically conferred, ignores an entire problematic that must have been of acute existential significance to the elites at the time, namely the psychological effects that the acquisition of, and accession to, a dominant language would have had on their relationship to the dominant colonial culture, and more importantly, towards the communities from which they had sprung. As Pierre Bourdieu put it, the propagation of English education by missionaries and by the administration ultimately resulted in elites being compelled and encouraged 'to collaborate in the destruction of the instruments of (their own) expression',[23] i.e., their indigenous literatures and traditional texts. English education was made possible by an entire practice of orientalist translation that had become well entrenched by the last few decades of the nineteenth century. The translations of indigenous texts, originally meant for a western readership, provided the educated elites with a whole range of orientalist images. The symbolic power and attraction of English translations virtually ensured their preference by indigenous elites over the originals as well as indigenous works of exegeses. Accession to English language familiarised the Indian with ways of seeing, reading, translating between cultures and with modes of representation that were accepted as 'natural'. The demand for English education by native elites, and more importantly for English as a means of expression, thinking, communication and self-representation, was not primarily due to a realisation by the colonised natives of their backwardness, nor to political expediency, but rather to a combination of the need and desire produced and sustained by colonial translation. These transla-

tions, and the images they supplied, were textual mirrors in which the elites could recognise their own selves and the other (the coloniser), and through which the need to narrate their existence arose.

This process of subjection by the coloniser, and indirectly self-subjection by the colonised, presupposes what Bourdieu has aptly termed 'symbolic domination': *domination in and through the order of language*. Symbolic domination reproduces the social order through a combination of recognition and misrecognition—recognition that the dominant language is legitimate, and misrecognition in terms of a failure to recognise that this language is imposed *as* dominant. In other words, the natives are unable to realise their own complicity in the adoption and use of this language, and of the cultural violence that it imposes. In a manner of speaking even post-colonials are continuously recolonised by participation in 'the discursive practices of everyday life.' Between the western sign, and how that sign was actually interpreted by the colonial elites, there emerged a certain in-betweenness, or gap, that opened a space of misunderstanding and misappropriation. The gap arises in the following way.

The discourse of symbolic domination typified by works such as James Mill's *History of British India* and Alexander Duff's *India and India Missions*, normalised its own history of colonial despotism and exploitation by inscribing the history of the natives in a fixed hierarchy of civil progress. The ambivalence at the heart of colonial discourse—its self-avowal as liberal, humanising, civilising, as against its despotic exploitation of the other—is contained by addressing past native rulers as despots. But to the extent that this idea of despotism succeeded in homogenising India's past, the reality of the colonial present required a different strategy of justifying colonial rule and its ambivalent discourse. This requirement was and is satisfied through a vigorous 'demand for narrative', cloaked in a utilitarian humanistic ideology of progress. Such a demand is an '...inquisitorial insistence, an order, a petition, ...to demand the narrative of the other, to extort...something that they call the truth about what has taken place,....Tell us exactly what happened...tell us who you are'.[24]

How could the native elites have replied? What narratives could they have supplied to this demand? More importantly, would there have been a difference in the narratives supplied by Sanatanists and the new elites especially in view of the earlier natives' refusal to satisfy the coloniser's demand for narrative.[25] Refusal represents a subversion of the coloniser's strategy of political containment through a mode of 'confession' which seeks to dominate the rational individual by positing the truth that the subject *possesses* but does not yet *know*. Thus the 'incalculable Hindoo'

raised a problem for civil representation. He refused to 'confess', turned it off with a sly civility or a popular and careless proverb.[26]

In view of the situation presented by symbolic domination, the demand for narrative—*who are you? why are you here?*—and the accession to a language that is culturally and politically dominant, it becomes necessary to question the status of the elites as bilingual.

In the absence of any qualification the term 'bilingual' suggests an unproblematic accession to language, in this instance where the naturalising effect of colonialism elides the historical asymmetry between different languages. In this context, the use of the concept 'bilingual' may imply an easy access to, perhaps even mastery of, two worlds, languages, cultures and symbolisms, and consequently a readymade integral subaltern subject,[27] both as an object of analysis and one that is perfectly at home in two different symbolic universes. But how is bilingualism assessed? Does it mean an equal grasp of two languages? Or, if biographical details of the native elites are taken seriously, is it the case that the indigenous elites' understanding of their native languages would have far outweighed their knowledge of English? The latter would seem more probable since the opportunity to practise speaking and writing (let alone thinking!) in English would have been comparatively small compared with the 'contact time' they spent with their own people. It should also be remembered that most of them would not have acquired English until their early or late teens, in which case their 'conceptual language' would have been their native language. The point here is that the way in which representations of their native culture were transposed into the dominant English framework would have been heavily influenced by the degree to which they could conceptualise and express themselves in English, which in turn was already overdetermined by the imagery and signification present in colonial translations. Hence the situation for the elites was not one of being 'at home' in two different worlds, but rather an existential and psychological dilemma of choosing the 'right sign' in order to represent *between* two cultures. It was, therefore, a question of how the sign of in-betweenness, of hybridity, became a certain type of cultural signifier under the ever-existent pressure to reply to the narratorial demand (*who are you?*) in terms of an identity (*This is who I am*).

In his chapter entitled 'The Interpretive Process' Oberoi devotes a relatively long section to a discussion of how the new elites 'processed' the cultural changes brought about by new technologies, and especially the new Anglo-vernacular mode of education. 'Dialogic Narration', a term borrowed from Mikhail Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination* is central to his explanation. While recognising that the interpretive process was not

simply a matter of 'aping the West' i.e., a process of simple mimicry, Oberoi attempts to show how Bakhtinian dialogism can be used to shed light on this situation. But the problem here is whether the era of cultural transition under colonial dominance, where indigenous discourses competed against imperial narratives leading to a range of translations, tellings and retellings of oral and written texts, can best be understood in terms of anything involving dialogue. Based on the model of fluent verbal exchange, Bakhtinian dialogism too readily presupposes unified subjects and facile inter-subjectivity as if understanding in the constituting of newly retold narratives is unproblematical. While admitting that the elites were not *tabulae rasae*, the dialogic model would merely make them more lively receptors of a variety of polyphonic discourses. 'Dialogue' in the proper sense could only be conceived to have occurred as a result of inter-subjective discourse between the elites themselves, where differences of languages and dialects were horizontal rather than vertical, and did not constitute hierarchical power relations between each other.

This was certainly not the case with the imperial language. Further, the example of dialogue given by Oberoi—that of educated elites discussing works of Enlightenment philosophy—gives a false impression. It leads the reader to believe that amongst themselves the educated elites discussed the writings of Mill, Voltaire, Jones and others *in English*. This hardly seems believable. Such *discussions* were more likely to have occurred in their own languages. While the extent and quality of English acquisition which they had attained would indeed be enough to cause major changes in their thinking and representational functions, it is unlikely to have been enough to enable them to *think* univocally in English. It seems more probable that interpretation and involvement in the symbolic world of English culture and language was a one-way process, heavily censored by the colonial administration. Dialogue as an explanation of the 'interpretive process' is simply too idealistic. It remains within the safety of a hermeneutical enclosure where there is exchange in values and meanings between two cultures without loss. At best, any dialogue could only have occurred at the margins. At any rate, dialogue, and therefore hermeneutical exchange, too easily fails to acknowledge the historical, linguistic and psychological asymmetry that is present in enunciation by native elites—an enunciation that is always marked by interruption, what I have called the gap or in-betweenness of cultural translation.

This brings me back to the problem of mimicry. Oberoi's narrative tends to dismiss mimicry as a mere 'aping of the West', to which he prefers the Bakhtinian 'dialogic narration' which at least tends to give the elites a spark of agency. But as several scholars of post-colonial theory have

argued, the notion of mimicry is rooted in a psychoanalytic application of language and is particularly relevant to theorising the accession to language. The ambivalence of mimicry, unintentionally acknowledged by the administration ('...educated in the same way, interested in the same objects, engaged in the same pursuits as ourselves, *...the summit of their ambition is to resemble us*') became for the elites a mode of partially offsetting or even usurping the dominance of the imperial symbolic order. More than anything else, mimicry, with its associated metaphors—mirroring, hybridity, doubling—is a problematic intimately associated with the accession to a dominant language, and therefore a problem of colonial and post-colonial representation, or, as I prefer to call it, cultural translation as contrasted with dialogue.

Being intimately involved with language, and the use of language for offsetting discriminatory processes of colonial subject formation, mimicry reverses the effects of colonial disavowal so that other 'denied knowledges' i.e., the cultural translations produced by the elites, enter upon the dominant mainstream discourse, and therefore estrange the basis of its authority. Strangely enough mimicry turns out to be a strategy of interpellating colonial subjects—the indigenous elites—who are distinguished from both their fellow natives (Sanatanists) and from the colonial administrators. This distinction is due to their particular mode of enunciation, i.e., the way in which they translate, transform and interpret their own culture to the other, which enables them to inscribe themselves differently from both groups. This articulation of cultural difference, expressed through the creation of a cultural text in a system of meaning, is enunciated at a site that is 'crossed by the difference of writing'. What this means is that mimicry, finding its element in and through textual enunciation, must occur at the site of accession to the dominant language. But since language contains difference, meaning is never mimetic or transparent, so that translation is also never an 'exchange without loss'. Thus the cultural performance by the elites, their adoption of a particular form of language, is informed by linguistic difference and asymmetric power relations intrinsic to this linguistic difference, which in turn displays a semiotic difference between the subject of a proposition (we, the nation, the Sabha, Khalsa, Samaj, etc.) and the subject of the enunciation. This fundamental interruption in the enunciation of culture, the existence of translation or the need to enact translation, implies a temporal split. To put it less radically, elite sub-culture as a translation is juxtaposed between two temporalities: the temporality of the Sanatanists and that of the colonisers—an 'east-west' split in terms of temporal existence.

This, then, puts an entirely different perspective on the so-called epistemic shift from Sanatana to elite culture which Oberoi explains away by a simplistic reference to a will to power/knowledge. If language is the site of inter-subjectivity and interpellation, then the particular mode of language used is also the 'locus in which is constituted the "I" or subject who speaks, with him who hears,' the point being here that in order to be seen and heard as a speaking subject, there needs to be a certain degree of recognition by the party towards whom the representation is being made, i.e., the party to whom belongs the cognitive monopoly over vision and the representation of its object. It now becomes a little clearer why the Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha elites needed to create the kind of identity that they did. To the colonialist administration, Sanatanism was merely synonymous with the 'Hindoo'—the inarticulate, incalculable native, for whom the colonial demand for narrative fell on deaf ears: as Sanatanism purported to have no beginning, the question of supplying a narrative, of confessing, was out of the question. To the Singh Sabha and Arya Samaj elites, Sanatana culture was one they could not identify with. To have done so would have meant risking the possibility of not being recognised by the administration, of being seen not to have an identity. Moreover, the social grammar of Sanatana culture, controlled by strict caste hierarchy and stabilised by means of the oral domain, precluded any possibility of interpellation or representation in English. Far from being its strength, the oral domain of Sanatanism and its concomitant cultural relativism (Oberoi's privileged 'melange') simply excluded the question of identity (as conceived by the new elites) altogether.

If identity is seen as a means of distinguishing individuals as groups from others, then it was only available by means of caste, kinship, and similar hierarchical distinctions. Historiography that projects a nostalgia for a lost Sanatana culture fails to acknowledge the role of cultural translation as a mode of agency, as an *enactment* in the face of an overwhelming threat of eradication which came not from elite sub-cultures but from the colonial administration. As a denial of agency that disavows the site of enunciation of cultural difference, this site always exists in-between cultures, never within one culture. Since this in-between, the *inter*, is the cutting edge of cultural translation manifested in and through a subaltern writing, a study of subaltern literature and its particular mode of translation may give a considerable insight into how dominated cultures recognise and represent themselves in and through their projection of otherness.

***

In this review article I have attempted to present an alternative way of assessing the sharp divergence of opinion centred around Oberoi's *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*. Without doubt Oberoi's book is a landmark contribution to the study of religions in colonial South Asia, and will continue to generate a healthy debate for many years—something that has been lacking in Sikh studies. On the other hand, students and academics working within South Asian studies need to be aware of the methodological and discursive strategies that structure this work. In my view both the Singh Sabha tradition and the academic tradition within which Oberoi writes are historically linked. Both represent culture to, and within, the dominant symbolic order of the western tradition of knowledge as dominated by the concept of *episteme*. While both borrow their conceptual framework from this dominant culture, one passes it off as tradition, while the other portrays itself as the pursuit of disinterested knowledge. The point here is that the 'repressive hypothesis' which characterises the tendency that Oberoi finds at work in the Singh Sabha tradition, is equally operative within his own adopted methodology, which allows academic scholars trained in a 'liberal humanist' tradition to disengage their 'poetic' (nostalgic) anthropology from complicity in the historical continuity of the production of a disciplined global society. In this sense, some aspects of the book are bound to generate a certain degree of anxiety in Sikh communities. Nevertheless it may well be that the kind of debate generated around *The Construction of Religious Boundaries* will force a new agenda in Sikh studies, one that will hopefully begin to ask the interrelated questions: What is 'religion'? How does 'religion' relate to scripture? Moreover, how are subaltern communities, such as the Sikhs, to *articulate* 'religion', 'scripture' and 'tradition' within the language and categories of a dominant culture?

Notes

1. N. Gerald Barrier, 'Tradition and Sikh Identity in the Modern World', *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 2, 1 (1995), 165–78.
2. Barrier, 'Tradition and Sikh Identity in the Modern World', 172.
3. Barrier, 'Tradition and Sikh Identity in the Modern World', 176.
4. Barrier, 'Tradition and Sikh Identity in the Modern World', 176.
5. W.H. McLeod, 'A Sikh Theology For Modern Times', in J.T.O'Connell, M. Israel, J. Oxtoby, W.H. Mcleod and J.S. Grewal (eds.), *Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century* (Delhi: Manohar, 1990).
6. Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition* (Delhi: Oxford, 1994), 1-30.
7. Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*, 49-50.

8. Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*, 49.
9. This theoretical bias against textuality closely follows a similar critique by Claude Levi-Strauss of the violence imposed by western writing upon the 'pure' culture of primitive tribes. While Levi-Strauss's work is a rigorous attempt to try and undo the injustice of western writing on cultures that lack such linear forms of writing, in fact it ends up reimposing the colonial bias in terms of the dichotomy between orality and textuality. Oberoi's tacit reliance on this influential model is in many ways responsible for creating the misleading distinction between the (*oral*) Sanatana and (*textual*) Tat Khalsa cultures in terms of the conceptual polarities: primary/secondary, native/foreign, etc.
10. With regard to my earlier point about the ambivalence of tradition in this work, the key question is this: what is the status of a discourse which borrows from a tradition the resources necessary for the deconstruction of that tradition itself? That is to say, Oberoi's critical discourse on the Tat Khalsa is basically related to the discursive legacy (tradition) of epistemology i.e., to concepts of representation that presume the existence of an originary presence that it befalls and represents. Thus the Tat Khalsa's striving for original meaning and the concept of *episteme* belong to a metaphysics that is in both cases *nostalgic*. In Oberoi's case this nostalgia is for the 'enchanted universe' of Sanatana tradition. For the Tat Khalsa it is the nostalgia felt in retrieving an authentic, i.e., moral, way of life epitomized by the distinct Khalsa Rahit.
11. H.S. Oberoi, 'From Ritual to Counter Ritual: Rethinking the Hindu-Sikh Question, 1884–1915', in W.H. Mcleod, J. Oxtoby, M. Israel, J.T.O' Connell and J.S. Grewal (eds), *Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century* (Delhi: Manohar, 1990).
12. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routeledge, 1993), 177.
13. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 12.
14. This question relating to the 'theologisation' of text and scriptural interpretation will be treated more fully in forthcoming essays.
15. W.H. McLeod, *Evolution of the Sikh Community* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).
16. Homi Bhabha, 'The Other Question', in Cornell West (ed.), *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 71.
17. Kenneth Jones, *Arya Dharam: Hindu Consciousness in the 19th Century* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1982).
18. My use of the word 'Hindoo' is obviously a pointer to the spelling of this term by early colonialist ethnographers. At the same time, however, it is meant to parody the colonial construction of the term as a religious and moralistic category.
19. See Talal Asad's *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1993) for an in-depth discussion of the construction and use of the category 'religion' in the west.
20. Cited in Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: Post-colonialism, History and Post-structuralism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).
21. T.B. Macaulay, 'Minute on Indian Education', in W. Theodore de Bary (ed.), *Sources of Indian Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 49.
22. Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*, 260-69.
23. Pierre Bourdieu, cited by John Thompson in *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1984), 45.
24. Jacques Derrida, 'Living On: Border Lines', in *Deconstruction and Criticism* (London: Routeleledge, 1979), 45.

25. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 99.

26. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 99.

27. As the term 'subaltern' will become more prominent in later discussions, let me briefly clarify what I intend by this term. The term 'subaltern' is now widely used in post-Marxist and post-structuralist cultural studies. Subaltern is in fact a term of logic which indicates the relation between a particular and a universal. In this sense its suitedness to describe the diversity of dominated and exploited groups who do not possess a universal consciousness, was first recognized by Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci uses subaltern interchangeably with 'subordinate' and 'instrumental' in his description of class consciousness to imply a sense of 'inferior rank'. Recently the term has been used by the Subaltern Studies group for a history that seeks to describe the 'contribution made by the people on their own, that is, independently of the elite'—the dominant group whether foreign or indigenous who have hitherto monopolised the historigraphy of Indian nationalism. Within this usage the subaltern becomes identified with the colonial subject as an insurgent and an agent of change. Even more recently, Gayatri Spivak has also appropriated the term subaltern for her own needs. In a manner reminiscent of Derrida's deconstructionist critique, Spivak's deployment of subaltern writing operates within and across different disciplines as a kind of *agent provocateur* with regards to conventional forms of academic discourse.

    While clearly related and indebted to the above, my use of the term 'subaltern' is meant to represent an *emergence* of signification/meaning. This emphasis on the emergence of a subaltern 'meaning' is designed to avoid becoming lumbered with something like an essentialist 'subject-position'. In a forthcoming essay I hope to clarify this use of subaltern by juxtaposing it with the term 'enunciation': subaltern enunciation, which is meant to indicate the mainly textual response generated by subalterns against an imposed discourse. I thereby hope to demonstrate a continuing need to resort to the 'subaltern' in colonial and post-colonial eras. This continuity is linked to the so-called 'bilingual' mode of existence of subalterns within a dominant culture/language, a term that I shall contest by contrasting with the term cultural translation, which I believe to be more appropriate to the contestatory, 'schizo-linguistic' situation of subalterns in the post-colonial, late-capitalist era.

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The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, volume I, A-D, ed., Harbans Singh (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1992). Pages 607. Rs 300. Hardback. No ISBN.

Anniversaries can be extremely significant, especially in a religion such as Sikhism which takes history very seriously, with good cause. The 300th birth celebrations of Guru Gobind Singh resulted in the building of the Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan at Punjabi University, Patiala, and the establishment of the Department of Religion which is housed in it. It also led to the decision to produce an encyclopaedia of Sikhism which was intended to compensate for the perceived lack of literary and historical materials pertaining to that tradition. Now the first of five volumes has appeared and the second is in the hands of the printer.

The publication of this long-awaited encyclopaedia is a remarkable achievement in itself. When I spent a term working on it in 1983 I quickly became aware of some of the obstacles which had to be overcome. Professor Harbans Singh had elicited articles from a considerable range of scholars. It was not unknown for him to ask for a piece one thousand words long only to receive it two years late and five thousands words in length accompanied by a letter which argued that such an important subject could not be covered in less detail! Added to this was the character of the editor-in-chief, a scholar meticulous in his attention to detail. Any revisions which his assistants undertook were carefully scrutinised and re-revised perhaps more than once. It is inconceivable that a single word was accepted without his approval. Added to this was the occasion on which a flash storm flooded the basement of the Bhavan where all the manuscripts were stored and they had to be laid out on the grass in their hundreds to dry! Then, in 1989, the Professor suffered a stroke and in 1992 the death of his lovely wife Kay who had nursed him through this illness and encouraged him to continue work on the project. Fortunately, Sardar Sahib is a man who inspires loyalty and affection as well as respect and a group of helpers who are willingly acknowledged in the Preface have served him faithfully for many years.

The encyclopaedia is remarkably comprehensive. One expects to find entries on 'Akali Dal, Shromani', or 'Amar Das, Guru', but there is also Chitta Baz, Guru Gobind Singh's white falcon, and the history of Bhangian Di Top, the great gun of the Bhangi *misl*. One suspects that few scholars could have been aware of the items which might be included.

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Entries are comprehensive in themselves. Thus 'Anglo-Sikh Treaties' carries the text of the agreements or impositions, depending on point of view. 'Anandpur Sahib Resolution' includes the names of the Sikhs most closely involved in the proposals, the story of the process of formulating it and full details of the resolutions. The words of the Anand Marriage Act are also provided. 'Babarvani' prints the passages which are covered by the name but there is no discussion of the clause 'in ninety-seven shall depart' other than interpreting it as 1597 of the Indian calendar (1540 CE), the year of emperor Humayun's dethronement. As this occurred one year after Guru Nanak's own death, the verse raises a number of interesting issues which might have been examined. 'Anand Karaj' includes the Lavan. The translation seems to be the author's own and is, as usual, in archaic English. However, the entry does distinguish clearly between the religious part of the marriage ceremony and the 'whole labyrinth of spectacular custom and rite'. Every article is supplemented by a brief bibliography.

Presumably cross-referencing will be provided in subsequent volumes. Unless there is to be a separate section for 'Lavan' for example, it will be difficult to trace. There is some evidence of cross-referencing, but as yet not much. The Dispersion is not included but there may well be entries still to come on Sikhs in the USA/Canada/the United Kingdom, for example. Some of the movements which are more prominent overseas than in India are not mentioned but they too could turn up later under such a heading as 'Sant Movements'. It is not easy to review a first volume when the others which will probably provide all the answers are not yet available.

Professor Harbans Singh's warm congratulations to the head of the Publications Bureau of the University, Dr Hazara Singh, deserve to be endorsed in this review. The quality of the publication is as outstanding as the content. Surely, however, there should have been more than 2,100 copies produced in the first printing. In January 1995 the encyclopaedia was almost unobtainable in the university bookshop and two rumours were circulating: one that a reprint was intended and copies would then cost Rs 600. The second that no reprint was envisaged. There should be no need to plead that Volume One should remain in print constantly for many years to come; its value will be appreciated well into the next century. Meanwhile I await impatiently the next four.

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Ethnicity and Nationalism in Post-Imperial Britain, H. Goulbourne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Pages xiv and 271. £37.50. Hardback. ISBN 0-521-40084-8.

Religion and Ethnicity: Minorities and Social Change in the Metropolis, ed., Rohit Barot (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993). Pages vii and 203. $25. Paperback. ISBN 90-390-0061-1.

These two interesting books are in many respects complementary—even though they start from different theoretical perspectives, they both examine diasporic groups adjusting, adapting and re-embedding in their new context and the influence of homeland politics on them. Barot's perspective is to examine religion, ethnicity and social change from the 'actor's frame of reference'. The internal dynamics of diasporas, the social and political context they find themselves in, lead to reformulation of identifications. Goulbourne, on the other hand, locates the developments in diasporic groups within a wider frame of reference, i.e., nationalism. Shifts in the way British nationalism is being reconstructed in a more exclusive form simultaneously complement ethnic assertion.

Barot's approach leads him to examine the rather slippery concepts of race and ethnicity. Covering the literature evanescently he examines different perspectives: primordialist, instrumentalist and interactionist. He points out that in Britain ethnicity is seen as different from race while in the United States this difference is in fact marginal. He rejects arguments that race is about exclusion and ethnicity is about inclusion, as both in popular and analytical traditions the boundaries between the two categories overlap and are blurred. This ambiguity is exemplified by the juridical position of Sikhs in Britain who are treated as more than a religious sect, 'almost a race, almost a nation'.

The blurring of ethnicity and culture and biological race and culture begs the question of what conceptual connections can be made between the two categories if methodological confusion is to be avoided. He employs Wievorka's formulation which brings together race and ethnicity under one theoretical framework. Ethnicity has a combination of referents based on both culture and nature. Collective solidarity is premised on seemingly biological characteristics 'blood, phenotype or ultimately race'. Thus ethnicity articulates a 'twofold principle of inferiorisation and differentiation'. In this manner, inclusion and exclusion processes are both accommodated. The Other is both different and inferior when exclusion takes place and becomes capable of self-esteem and pride in the context of inclusion. Consequently minorities are defined in terms of visible

difference of colour and appearance which implies cultural difference irrespective of whether visible difference does not correspond to any real cultural difference. Besides racial typologies there are also cultural typologies of inferiorisation which discriminate against ethnic minorities by the use of negative stereotypes. In response to the process of marginality and even exclusion from civil society, ethnic minorities solidarise in reaction and mobilise to defend their social and political rights. The differentiation and inferiorisation process leading to their exclusion from mainstream society encourages ethnic minorities to focus on religious beliefs and practices and their reconstruction in a new and hostile environment. The new context in which re-embedment takes place has a significant influence on the social, cultural and religious development taking place in ethnic minorities.

The collection of essays examines the relationship between ethnicity and religion in the context of modernity. Simplistic binary oppositions, such as modern versus traditional, secular versus religious, are avoided and the complexity of these relations was brought out. The chapters on Muslims in Europe show a strikingly similar pattern emerging: as Muslims shift from secular to religious identifications, they encounter resistance to their attempts to create a religious space. The opposition legitimates its intransigence by first differentiating and then inferiorising Islam. In the case of Muslim women, the discrimination they face becomes a factor resulting in their endorsing Islamic values even more explicitly. The same drift towards emphasising religious identification was found when the Hindu diaspora in Britain and Holland were examined. The essays indicate the revival of ancient traditions and the addition and combination of different Hindu rites. These tendencies are not necessarily a function of exigent circumstances. In the case of Surinamese Hindus, socio-economic and cultural change led to a religion by choice which to some extent replaced traditional rituals.

The chapters on the Sikhs focus on the long historical association between the Empire and the Punjab and the emergence of separatism. These were considered to be two important reasons for the assertion of religious notions of belonging. Ballard's chapter points out that Sikh identity was reformulated during the early nineteenth century, when it redefined itself by increasing its distance from Hinduism and establishing a new orthodoxy. Ballard indicates that interaction with colonialism and with the Arya Samaj played an important role in this development. Tatla focuses on Britain and points out that Khalistani activists made little headway in the Sikh diaspora until Qperation Blue Star. It was only in

reaction to military intervention that separatism gained ground among British Sikhs.

Goulbourne's premise begins from a different trajectory of locating diasporas within changing notions of Britishness. He notes that the assertion of difference is the leitmotif of new nationalism, which has become far more common. While old nationalism asserted similarities, new nationalism demands ethnic singularity and the communal option is becoming increasingly popular. After exhaustively examining theories of nationalism, ethnicity and race, and indicating their ephemeral characteristics, he distinguishes between traditional and ethnic nationalism, and this distinction highlights a major turn that is taking place. Ethnic nationalism has taken over the premises and assumptions of traditional nationalism and this majoritarian development is on the offensive and putting diasporic groups on the defensive. Concretely, the concept of British identity has narrowed over time to exclude non-whites, and this development was expressed in the transformation of imperial notions of Britishness to ethnic ones—developments that were explicitly expressed in the nationality and immigration laws and represented by the positions taken by political parties. The Tory party represented an explicit shift towards the redefinition of the nation along ethnic lines while the Labour party, on the whole, represented the traditional notions of Britishness.

The question he is addressing concerns the redefinition of British identity in a way which would include minorities. Three developments: Britain's post-War decline, migration and the European Union provide the historic opportunity to create a new and enriched notion of Britishness. However, it is not simply a question of juxtaposing mono-cultural notions of Britishness with multi-cultural ones. Goulbourne would argue that there is a need to go beyond multi-culturalism which he calls new pluralism. There is a need for this because the way new pluralism is operating in conjunction with homeland politics—as illustrated by his examples of the Guyanese and the Sikhs—is that ethnic minorities are turning in on themselves and adopting the communal option. His interest in the Khalistani issue is primarily to see the influence of developments in India on the Sikh population in the diaspora and how the emergence of ethnic nationalism reinforces the separatists' developments, thus making common platforms against exclusion with other minorities increasingly difficult. The danger that he is pointing out is that when majoritarian nationalism and minority ethnicity are becoming increasingly communal, there is a widening gulf between them, and minorities forgo the ability to participate in the construction of new and broader notions of belonging to a common collectivity. Thus Goulbourne fears that 'if we share nothing

else, we most certainly all share a common responsibility to minimize pain and widespread disaster'.

What is striking in the chapters on the Punjab, in both books, is that irrespective of whether they originated from India or Pakistan, Punjabis are asserting religious identifications. They are referring to themselves, or are being referred to, as Muslims, Sikhs or Christians and not as Punjabis. Of course this is an uneven process as in the case of the Sikhs the religion and language are closely juxtaposed, but among Muslims and Christians from Pakistan, language and notions of Punjabiness are becoming increasingly less significant and greater emphasis is being placed on religious identification. While there are various factors—the impact of homeland politics, the impact of inferiorisation and discrimination and perhaps their particular socio-economic make-up—there is at present a distinct drift towards religion subordinating Punjabi identification. It seems that memories of inclusive notions of Punjab, partially articulated by the politics of the Unionist Party in colonial India are receding into the distant past as if they had never existed.

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Three Asian Associations in Britain, John King (Coventry: Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, Monographs in Ethnic Relations, No. 8, 1994). Pages 90. £8.00. Paperback. ISBN 0 948303 98 0.

John King has written a short monograph which further complements the burgeoning shelves of case study research in ethnic minority organisations in Britain. He grounds his study in the question of whether grassroots organisations and their constituent communities amount to a threat to the nation-state. Of course, in the context of cross-national European comparison this may have been a very interesting question to pose but, sadly, this study cannot really claim to say much about the British scene in relation to, say, the French or German tradition. Instead, it is essentially an account of selected organisations at work in the body of political Britain. Even then, the methodological and conceptual grounds upon which the author opted to study the organisations quoted are not clear. He displays a three-way distinction at the start of the volume which simply says that not all such organisations are in the same game. This is certainly the case, but nonetheless they all impact in one way or

another on the question of evolving identity and mobilising support for various goals.

In the absence of a strong argument to explain the relationship between the range of activities in which these organisations are involved, the risk will always be that examination of overtly non-political groups will be reduced to describing the leisure-time pursuits of different ethnic minorities. The author manages to avoid this risk by opting to concentrate on asking questions about and offering a commentary on the perceived and real tensions between group activity and successful integration into British society. This approach is of course a restatement of the familiar agenda of pluralists and their critics. The author offers some thoughts on this debate but in a very general and piecemeal way. The description of the activities of the Tablighi Jamaat and Deobandi mosques for example does a good job of outlining the background to contrasting types of activities and outward postures. However, this description says little about the terms upon which group identity and cohesion are built, let alone how such terms can frame external social and political relations. Equally, something could be said about the broader British tradition of celebrating or containing cultural diversity, the backdrop after all to the study's focus on the group.

The real disappointment with this study lies in the author's unbalanced preoccupation with historic description. In one sense this can be forgiven, perhaps even lauded, since he often finds himself immersed in rival accounts of historic events. As the present reviewer can imagine, the temptation to set the record straight must be a strong one. However, one would hope that much of this concern could have been re-jigged into an accompanying subtext of footnotes. Additionally, given the author's hunger for historical authenticity, it is a little surprising just how few primary sources are cited.

The chapter dealing with the Indian Workers' Association (IWA) turns out to be particularly thin, made up largely of a small handful of interviews, retelling of tediously narrow stories (usually about the IWA's numerous public bust-ups), and overuse of familiar arguments about its so-called 'political' role. In terms of broadening the study's source material, one obvious suggestion would have been to make use of a local press survey so as to offer another viewpoint on the countless locally centred events in which leading IWA branches have commonly been embroiled. Together with his interview sources, this fuller approach might have yielded some insight into, *inter alia,* controversies over the IWA's apparent failure to anticipate or respond to Asian youth militancy in Southall and elsewhere from 1976 onward. The rise of a revised community-based municipal

socialism in the 1980s made great play of developing a dialogue with grassroots ethnic minority organisations; however, the study overlooks this dimension and thereby misses much about how such organisations can mediate the formal political process.

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Islamic Britain. Religion, Politics and Identity among British Muslims: Bradford in the 1990s, Philip Lewis (London: I.B. Tauris, 1994). Pages 250. £11.95. Paperback. ISBN 1-850453-861-7.

The publisher, in an endeavour to secure a wider audience for this work which originated as a doctoral thesis, has significantly omitted the subtitle 'Bradford in the 1990s' from the front cover. Readers approaching this work in the expectation of a wide-ranging examination of Britain's Muslim communities will thus be disappointed, the opening chapter notwithstanding. For what we are presented with here is a sensitive and masterly case study of one particular Muslim community with its own unique historical trajectory and sociological structure.

The title of the work in fact detracts from its strength, that of its very rootedness in the Bradford milieu. It leaves the reader crying out for comparisons between, for example, the Bradford and Birmingham situations. Philip Lewis would in fact have done a great service to his readers if, after obtaining his doctorate, he had added such a comparative chapter to his thesis for publication. These small strictures notwithstanding, this is an extremely valuable text which successfully demolishes the stereotypical representation of Muslims portrayed by the media at the height of the Rushdie affair.

The strength of this book is firstly its 'micro'-level analysis of the sociological structure and varieties of Islamic expression amongst Bradford Muslims. The text traces the development of the community through the process of 'chain migration' from the villages of the Jhelum, Attock and Rawalpindi districts of the Punjab and from the Mirpur area of Azad Kashmir, itself a Punjabi cultural area.

A monolithic approach to Islam is dispelled by a fascinating examination of the conflicting ethos and understanding of the Jama'at-i Islami, Deobandi and Barelvi traditions. Complex issues of doctrine and interpretation are all produced in an admirably clear summary. The reader is

left in no doubt of the importance of the South Asian historical and religious context for understanding Muslim communities in Britain. The point has not always been properly appreciated either by scholars or policy-makers in the field of race relations/ethnicity.

Indeed, the author could have taken this point further and linked even more explicitly, the Barelvi–Deobandi conflict and controversy concerning the Ahmadiyyas in Britain to the inherited sectarian tradition of Punjabi Islam. Jhang is of course the headquarters of the militant Sipah-e-Sabha Pakistan (SSP) which has clashed frequently in recent times with its Shia rival, Tehrik-e-Jafria-e-Pakistan. Shia, Ahmadiyya and Christian minorities especially in the Faisalabad, Gujranwala and Jhang areas have all been targets for the SSP and other sectarian groups such as the Barelvi networked Sunni Tehrik, the Harkat-ul-Ansar and Tanzeem e-Da'wa. A number of cases have been brought against individuals, most notoriously that of Manzoor Masih, under Section 295-C of the Blasphemy law. Significantly, the Punjab Assembly early in April 1994 passed a unanimous resolution requesting the federal government to make no changes in the existing law.

Whilst delineating the varieties of Islamic expression, the author also reveals the ability of the Bradford Council of Mosques to transcend at least partially sectarianism at both local and national levels. This stemmed from the respect held for Sher Azam, president for much of the 1980s, and Pir Maroof Hussain Shah from those outside their respective Deobandi and Barelvi traditions. Philip Lewis has equally useful things to say, however, about the growing challenges to the Council for leadership in the Bradford community from a new generation of Muslim councillors and businessmen.

It seems to me that the most telling points of all, however, are reserved for the author's sensitive discussion of the problems facing young Muslims as they seek to create a British Muslim identity. Distanced by language and culture from the *ulema*, the traditional custodians of Islamic knowledge, they must navigate between the Scylla of a simplistic and polemical radical Islamism and Charybdis of a 'Bhangra Beat' culture divorced from a serious Islamic perspective. Philip Lewis is cautiously optimistic that a safe course will be steered. This will open the way for the 'critical and constructive exchange' between British Muslims and the majority society which he so earnestly seeks.

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The New Scots: The Story of Asians in Scotland, Bashir Maan (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1992). Pages viii and 216. £9.50. Paperback. ISBN 0-85976-357-9.

Bashir Maan is the Founder Chairman of the Scottish Pakistani Association and Founder President of the Standing Conference of Pakistani Organisations in the UK and Eire. Having been involved in the public life of Glasgow and Strathclyde for nearly 40 years, and being a Punjabi himself, he is in a unique position to write a book on South Asian migration into Scotland.

Chapter One offers a brief history of migration into Scotland by such groups as the Celts, Angles, and more recently the Irish, Jews and Italians, to name but a few, while the second chapter relates the activities of the Scots in India, and the way that this influenced the experiences of both Scots and Indians. One of these influences was that wealth accumulated by Scots in India helped to develop Scottish industry, while another was that the captive Indian market 'sustained and helped to further develop and strengthen the Scottish economy' (p. 60). These two chapters are but an overture from which the author moves into his main theme, the arrival in Scotland of South Asians, most of whom have come from the Punjab.

Although reference is made to the demobilisation of Asian soldiers in Scotland following the First World War, the author appears not to have fully investigated this. Rather, the focus appears to be on the arrival of seamen in cities such as Glasgow, and on the effects that unemployment had on community relations. It is in this section of the book that the fruits of the author's research are to be found, for he provides for the reader an interesting case study of one Nathoo Mohammed who came to Glasgow from Jalandhar around 1919. Nathoo appears to have been a key person in a network of Punjabi peddlers operating in the Glasgow area, a network which was to spread to Edinburgh, Dundee and as far north as Aberdeen. In this part of the book the author provides a wealth of detail and numerous leads for future researchers (pp. 105-18). However, I would have liked to have seen some detailed networks linking Glasgow's Punjabi community with some of the communities in England (see for example Alison Shaw's references to Glasgow in *A Pakistani Community in Britain*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989, p. 24). Beside his research into Nathoo Mohammed, the author also provides character sketches of some of the key Asian personalities of the period.

Maan has utilised a wide selection of material including city valuation rolls and the records of peddlers' licences. We learn, for example, that the expansion of Dundee's south Asian community, which is predominantly

Punjabi in origin, came about due to the demands for labour in the jute mills, an industry which has now unfortunately almost disappeared in the city. Finally, the author provides a brief overview of most of the Asian religious traditions. Here I feel an appendix containing the addresses of the principal religious organisations in Scotland might have been beneficial, as many public sector employees in Scotland may have a need to contact such organisations.

In tracing the history of South Asian migration into Scotland, this work has much to commend it. Anyone with an interest in the growth and development of the South Asian community in Britain, and in particular the Punjabi community, will find it an invaluable source. It is not, however, always as rigorous in its scholarship as it might be, but in fairness to the author it must be pointed out that he is not an historian, but a District Court Judge with a grounding in politics and community relations. It is his interest in this latter area which might account for what I feel is a bias in the way that the history comes across.

For despite its usefulness I was left with the impression that the author's primary interest is to carry out an exercise in good community relations, the message being that the South Asian community in Scotland is well integrated and successful. The author's comments on the expansion of Asian businesses in the country (pp. 176-81), and his citing of the success of certain individuals from within Scotland's South Asian population (p. 168), seem to gloss over many of the problems faced by working class Asians in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee. Indeed his claim that, 'the Asian community and other "black" people have fared comparatively better in Scotland than their kind in England' (p. 203) is challenged by many people working with the grass-roots of the Asian community in Scotland's inner cities. The author's almost idealistic views about community relations in Scotland lead me to the conclusion that where scholastic objectivity clashes with the desire to show such relations in a positive light, scholastic objectivity is of secondary importance. This I feel needs to be taken into consideration when reading what I am sure is a significant addition to the literature, and what will be a standard text on Asian, and in particular Punjabi, migration into Scotland for some time to come.

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Punjabis in Canada: A Study of Formation of an Ethnic Community, Paramjit Singh Judge (Delhi: Chanakya, 1994). Pages 150. Rs 150. Hardback. ISBN 81 7001099 3.

The India-Canada Relationship: Exploring the Political, Economic and Cultural Dimensions, eds, J.S. Grewal and Hugh Johnston (New Delhi: Sage, 1994). Pages 462. Rs 350. Hardback. ISBN 81 7036416 7.

Of all the western countries, Canada is perhaps singular in continuing to accept Indian immigration on a medium to large scale. As a consequence, the population of South Asian migrants in Canada has grown at a fast pace: the present estimate is put at more than half a million people whose origins are in South Asia. Of these, nearly a third are from Punjab, mostly Sikhs. From the 1960s onwards, many Sikhs have emigrated to Canada in increasing numbers. There is also a striking concentration of recent Punjabi arrivals in British Columbia and Ontario provinces, giving them all the hallmarks of a new community. However, it is as well to remember that the Sikh connection with Canada is almost a century old.

Judge's study is devoted to the Punjabi community in Canada; his approach is sociological, or more precisely what the author calls a 'political economy perspective'. He has drawn on 'primary data through interviews and to an extent, quasi-participant observation, both in Canada and Punjab'. Judge conducted some 40 interviews, 26 in Edmonton and 14 in Vancouver, and a survey of a Hoshiarpur village from which a number of Punjabi migrants are in Canada. This is Judge's own village and he knows its economic and social setting intimately.

He starts with a lengthy introduction discussing the meaning of the familiar terms of adaptation, integration and assimilation. The Punjabi pattern of migration is seen in terms of push and pull factors. Some case studies discussed by the author relate to the 1972–74 period, and he sensibly links part of this migration to political disturbances due to the Naxalite movement in the province. He provides a number of examples of how Punjabi migration was facilitated by existing family networks in Canada. This is followed by a study of intra-family conflicts. Here some good examples are spoiled by rather cursory treatment. Then follows a discussion of the formation of a community as the central theme of the book. Judge examines caste and religious distinctions, and some essential components of Punjabi ethnic community. He takes issue with those who treat Sikhs exclusively as an ethnic community. Judge would like to

broaden it and define all 'Indian Punjabis who are largely Hindus and Sikhs as an ethnic community'.

In the final chapter, the focus is on the political processes within the community. However, here he deals almost exclusively with Sikhs. No mention is made of Punjabi Hindus or of their religious institutions and traditions, except noting briefly how the events of 1984 have disrupted Hindu–Sikh unity. He cites evidence of Canadian Sikh involvement in Punjab politics, calling it an 'extremist movement'. Such careless terminology and rather thoughtless borrowing from other writers seem to plague many sections of the book. Here, his main illustration of Canadian Sikhs' involvement comes from Helweg's article and he makes little use of his own data. His own observations are rather un-illuminating; he writes:

> In 1991 when the data were collected in Canada the extremist movement was quite strong in Punjab. The discussions with most of the Sikhs in both Edmonton and Vancouver led to the impression that most of them were sure of the authenticity of the awareness about what was happening in Punjab. They knew about extortions and kidnapping but they were not connecting these with the Sikh extremists.

His examples of turban discrimination cases and of Punjabis who are active in local politics are just a list of names and events.

At the end of the study, Judge leads us in no clear direction. Do Punjabis constitute an ethnic community? What are the sociological processes within the community, and how much do we know about the social structure and changes that are taking place in this community? Neither providing a historical overview nor any sociological insight, Judge is bogged down in a class-based explanation without clear exposition of the issues involved. In sum, this is a disappointing book; it gives a distinct impression of jumbled notes without a coherent structure. No serious attention has been paid to existing studies on Canadian Sikhs or South Asians by, say, Buchignani or Johnston. Much of the book is characterised by an unnecessary review of literature and almost every chapter contains such grandiose generalisations as 'so long as the current migration pattern of Punjabis is there, the intra-family conflicts would continue'. The chapter on community formation concludes, 'the interaction between social formations [both Punjabi and Canadian] and consciousness of different forms and power relations has influenced this community formation'. And again, 'the Indianness of Indians becomes an ideological weapon which kills two birds with one stone'. The author, with his extensive knowledge and connections both in Canada and Punjab, has

missed a fine opportunity for advancing our understanding of an important section of the Punjabi diaspora.

The second book by Grewal and Johnston consists of papers presented at a conference in 1991 on Canada–India relations. The conference was sponsored by the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies and the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute. As the two most prominent members of the Commonwealth, India and Canada share many common features in their political, economic and cultural life. Contributions range widely from comparative studies of political structure and women's place in the two countries to finding common themes in the literary tradition. In the section on 'Canada–India Relations' there are papers on political structure, economic cooperation, immigration and investment policies. The political structure of the two countries, however, differs sharply—Canada's central government has seen progressive decentralisation; in contrast, India has throttled various demands for devolution of power. In the second section on 'Political Process in Canada and India', Punjab scholars may be engaged by Narang who compares ethno-nationalism and national reconciliation in the two countries. However, this is too general. A more focused paper on Quebec and Punjab would have highlighted the stark differences in the two states' responses to provincial autonomy. Similarly, Thakkar analyses the economic impact of Indian immigration on Canada but without any reference to Punjabi migrants—the largest of Indian ethnic groups. Rubinoff compensates for this slightly, when he cites the signing of an Extradition Treaty between Canada and India in 1987 as an example of the political implications of Indian immigration to Canada, reminding us that the treaty was primarily aimed at Canadian Sikhs' involvement in the affairs of Punjab.

In a separate section on women's staus, there are interesting papers including a review of women's studies in the two countries. In the literature section, the issue of feminism, modernism and inevitably post-modernism are discussed from cross-cultural perspectives. A paper on the burgeoning vernacular literature by Canada's South Asian writers would have been useful. Perhaps, the imperatives of nation-states' interactions are such as to rule out provincial matters even when they seem to be relevant. I mention this noting that the volume is edited by two prominent scholars of Punjab. Having said that, for any reader wishing to look beyond this reviewer's narrow vision, there is plenty of material to devour.

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Victorian Colonial Warfare: India from the Conquest of Sind to the Indian Mutiny, Donald Featherstone (London: Cassell, 1992). Pages ix and 155. £16.99. Hardback. ISBN 0-304-34172-X.

Without apologies, this book is written for an ethnically British audience. The first line of its preface states outright its orientation and goal 'to transport its reader back in time—in effect become the eyes and mind of his or her great-great grandfather and see, by means of words and pictures, "How our boys are doing in India".'

One result of such frankness in a work of history could be that this fine book is relegated to a corner of arcana—something which its packaging does little to prevent. Replete with contemporary ink-drawn portraits of leading military officers, eye-bogglingly detailed renderings of battle scenes, and map of battle sites and movements, *Victorian Colonial Warfare* looks like a loving scrap-book, elevated by all the gorgeous detailing and high production values that might gain it a prized place on someone's coffee table. Nevertheless, it is a serious and sensitive history within a certain genre and deserves to be considered as such.

In writing *Victorian Colonial Warfare* Donald Featherstone relied on three types of sources: soldiers and their commanders; war correspondents and military artists; and the newspapers and magazines of the day. A stated goal of the book is to reveal the contemporary view, so that the reader considers the events of that day and era 'without the sanitising distortion of historical awareness and hindsight'. That 'historical awareness and hindsight' necessarily sanitises events is questionable; in many cases it paints them with even darker colours. What Featherstone may be suggesting is that historians' more critical inclinations should be held in check temporarily, and only long enough to examine these original testimonies in context.

Victorian Colonial Warfare owes much to the detailed and well-written contributions of the *Illustrated London News*, which followed all of the five campaigns covered in the book: the Conquest of Sind, the Gwalior War, the First and Second Sikh Wars, and the Indian Mutiny. Despite what the stalwartly British orientation of this book might suggest, accounts of these five major wars show a mix of British megalomania, sentimentality, introspection and self-condemnation, often colliding with each other. Regarding the Sind conquest one contemporary report announced that 'various treaties had been forced already on these free and independent chiefs; and now Britain treats their country as if it were a province taken in war'. Regrettably and unusually the source was not attributed, but the same page included the *Illustrated London News*' s merciless caricature

of Sir Charles Napier, resplendent in battle-gear and the beak-nosed bug-eyed face of a demon. In a mood that would echo long after the British territorial conquests, Napier himself noted that 'we have no right to seize Scinde, yet we shall do so; and a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality it will be!'

Reporters from the First Sikh War noted the infinite superiority of the Sikh armies over the East India Company's native regiments, but placed their bets on British battle savvy: 'Our advantage will, and ever must be Manouevre, and the irresistible rush of British soldiers'. Still, there was room to acknowledge the enemy's virtues. A letter from India's Commander-In-Chief to its Governor-General described the surrender of Sikh combatants after the battle of Gujarat. It noted that:

> There was nothing cringing in the manner of these men laying down their arms. They acknowledged themselves beaten, and they were starving—destitute alike of food and money....The greater number of the old men especially, when laying down their arms, made a deep reverence as they placed their swords upon the heap, with the muttered words, 'Runjeet Singh is dead today'. This was said with deep feeling: they were undoubtedly a fine and brave people (pp. 96-97).

Much of the book's impact comes from the fine writing of Featherstone himself and the scores of journalists, on-the-scene observers, and combatants recalling decisive events. In exceptionally clear and evocative prose Featherstone's selections, as well as his own narrative, suggest what it might have been like to experience war. They describe the mixture of tedium and dread before the battle; despite the particularities of equipment and drill, ethnicity and cause, one can almost imagine what it is to be a soldier in any army. The following is Featherstone's prelude to 'the most terrible battle in British Indian history', of the First Sikh War:

> It began at 2.00 am...when, in perfect silence, Gough's force was called to arms...by 3.00 am the camp had been struck and packed on camels, and by 4.00 am the army was formed up in lines of columns ready to march. Each man carried 60 rounds of ball ammunition and a leather-covered water-bottle over the shoulder. Two days cooked rations were prepared, each man taking as much as he could in his haversack....First in pitch darkness and cold, then under an increasingly hot sun, they made very slow progress on what was a mere track through the jungle...They rested briefly and made a scratch breakfast from the food in their haversacks. The welcome dawn had revealed a broad expanse of level plain, dotted here and there with low jungle, the enemy

occupying a position in the shape of a large horseshoe, entrenched around the village of Ferozeshah. It was the usual mud village, with a high house or two in the centre...All were aware that a general action was imminent. One of the Governor-General's staff predicted gloomily that every member of it would be hit...his forebodings were almost entirely realized (pp. 49-51).

Located solidly at a particular vantage point, this book stands as an ample and affecting collection of contemporary accounts. Valuable as a historiographical tool, it gives voice to the varied attitudes of its targeted audience's antecedents. Within its self-defined parameters *Victorian Colonial Warfare* is a successful work others can appreciate as well: lovely to look at, poetically entertaining and often proffering insights that might enhance a historian's understanding of the events of the day.

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A Conceptual Encyclopedia of Guru Granth Sahib, Surinder Singh Kohli (New Delhi: Manohar, 1992). Pages xxi and 354. Rs. 350.00. Hardback. ISBN 81-7304-006-0.

The *Guru Granth Sahib* is not just a scripture for Sikhs, but it is a living *guru* for them. The *Guru Granth Sahib*, or more precisely the Word contained therein, became the Guru-eternal for the Sikhs when pontifical status was bestowed on it by Guru Gobind Singh in AD 1708. Thus, the *Guru Granth Sahib* occupies a unique place in Sikh tradition, being the spiritual mentor as well as the source of all Sikh thought.

Surinder Singh Kohli's lexicon is a laudable attempt as much for being the first work on the subject as for being a single-handed endeavour. This reviewer has his reservations about the title of the book and the author himself wavers between calling it an 'encyclopaedia' and a 'dictionary' (see p. xx). But this is no way lessens the significance of the work in the world of Sikh letters.

The 'Introduction' of the book sums up the history and significance of the project, besides reflecting on some major concepts of Sikhism. In addition to bringing out the features of the *Guru Granth Sahib vis-a-vis* scriptures of other major religious traditions, the 'Introduction' also provides information on the subject of compilation as well as of different recensions of the Granth extant today.

The entries in the lexicon are in alphabetical order (according to the Roman script), though subject titles are both in English and Punjabi. They include important words, terms and concepts used in the scripture. The author's desire to make his work comprehensive and all-inclusive has resulted in the inclusion of certain titles which are not strictly related to the Sikh scripture, though they might have some relevance to the modern existential situation of humanity. Consequently, the book has come to include certain terms and concepts which were of little concern to the Gurus in their time. For example, abortion as a means of planning one's family was never an issue for the Gurus. There is no direct reference to it in the scripture. The author has tried to stretch the meaning of certain hymns to include this subject title which is of considerable contemporary relevance. The author has in the same vein included entries on abduction, adoption, partition of property, regicide, sneezing-omens, etc.

Apart from important words, terms and mythical allusions, the book, as its title suggests, also includes entries on almost all the major concepts of Sikhism. The Sikh view of God, *Jiva* (individual being), the world and their *inter se* relationship have rightly been discussed under several different headings. For an understanding of the concept of God, the author refers to the *mūl mantra* wherein various attributes of God are referred to. The Sikh perception of God is both transcendent (*nirgun, nirankār*) and immanent (*sagun*): this aspect is studied in 'Brahman'. The entry on 'hari' discusses the meaning of the word in Hindu religious literature and also as an attributive name of God in Sikhism.

The individual soul is a particle of the supreme Soul (*brahman*). It gives life to the body (made of five perishable elements) and rejoins its original source (*brahman*) if the body, during its worldly existence, constantly remembers Him and does not fall victim to the notion of duality. This manifest universe is His creation and His dwelling place. Sikhism accepts its reality, though this reality is only relative ('universe') because the created world is transient. This aspect of the manifest *jagat* is stressed in the entry on 'world'.

The metaphysical concepts of Sikhism such as *mukti, jivan-mukti*, bondage, *māvā, jnana, nām, (nam-simran), sahaj*, etc., are also discussed alongside ethical and social values (such as *seva*, compassion, love, philanthropy, monogamy) as well as important evils (such as *kam, krodha, lobh, moh, ahankār, trisnā*.) There are also entries on other religious traditions (Buddhism, Jainism, Islam), on various sects of different religions, different schools of thought (Nihilism, Advaitism, Vaisnavism, etc.), and concepts more relevant to other religious traditions (*nirvān, haj*, heaven, etc.) as they find direct or indirect references in the Sikh scripture.

There are also entries on some of the compositions included in the scripture. The absence of entries on poetic forms, metres and musical measures used in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* is felt, the more so because the author belongs primarily to the discipline of Punjabi literature, and this should have been his strongest forte. The author is well steeped in the Sikh lore and has supported each of his contentions with appropriate quotations from the scripture.

The concept of *ahimsā* is discussed as non-violence and is supported by quotations from the scripture, advising one against causing injury to anybody. This of course is true, but is not the whole truth. One must not cause injury or hold the other in fear, but what if the other is bent upon frightening *or* causing injury? Guru Tegh Bahadur's advice is not to submit to anybody's fear (*bhai kāhu ko det nahi nahi bhai mānat ān*. GG, 1427). Guru Gobind Singh is more emphatic when he says in his *Zafar-nāmah* that taking up the sword is justified if all other means fail to check the violence perpetrated by the oppressor.

In the Sikh canonical literature, the term 'Akāl' is used for brahman, but Akāl is not a 'timeless' being: he is beyond time, but he is inclusive of time as well. *'Vād-vivād'* could be called polemics, if not dialogue: it certainly cannot be translated as strife. Sikhism encourages inter-faith and intra-faith dialogue to resolve all dissensions.

The use of diacritics in such reference works is of utmost importance, but this seems to have fallen victim to the publishers' apathy. However, the entries in the book, more descriptive than analytical and interpretive, have been written with diligence and an insider's faith. The book should prove to be a useful guide for students of Sikh studies.

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The Bharadvajas in Ancient India, Thaneswar Sarmah (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991). Pages xliii and 382. Rs 250. Hardback. ISBN 81-208-0639-5.

Hinduism embraces a kaleidoscopic mosaic of religious patterns and beliefs. A binding unity for the often widely divergent themes within Hinduism has been provided, to a very large extent, by the Vedic texts, since appeals to the authority of the *Vedas* serve to legitimise social and religious developments and innovations. Such appeals are made easier

because the language of the Vedic texts is obscure and for the last 2,5(years has been unintelligible to all but scholars; their unintelligibili guarantees the prestige of Vedic texts.

In orthodox belief the Vedas were not composed; they have alwa existed and were heard by inspired sages called *Rsis* who memorised an transmitted them to mankind. The hymns of the sixth book of the *Rg Ved* are nearly all ascribed to a *Rsi* named Bharadvāja or to members of hi family. Legends about *Rsis* and *brāhmins* bearing this name also appe in later literature, in the *Mahābhārata* and in the *Purānas*.

Sarmah's stated aims are to present a socio-historical account of th Bharadvāja family and to discuss their contribution to Indian culture Unfortunately, his work is vitiated by a fundamental error: he treats myt as if it was an historical event. Basing his dating upon his erroneous belie that the Mahābhārata war was an historical event which took place in 31(BC, Sarmah provides lengthy genealogies of the various Bharadvājas, hi genealogical discussions filling the major part of the book. However, th real importance of these genealogies lies not in their historicity but in th examples they provide of the way in which claims to social status ar legitimised by the appropriation of a mythical past. The present da Bharadvāja Brahmins of Punjab claim kinship with the *Rsi* Bharadvāja Sarmah does not discuss this process of legitimisation or provide ar adequate account of the development of traditions surrounding the Bharadvājas and the function of those traditions in the wider framework of classical Indian religion; for such an account the reader is advised tc turn to John E Mitchiner, *Traditions of the Seven Rsis* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982).

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