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Mapping the World: Mahābhārata VIII 30 and the Hermeneutics of Place

Daniel Merton Michon

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This article challenges many histories of pre-Purāṇic India (c. 1900 BCE to c. 300 CE) which often conflate the whole of northern India into one unchanging Brāhmaṇic culture whose fountainhead is the Vedas. Even when discussing the challenges of 'heterodox' religions which arose out of the Upāniṣads, Buddhism, and Jainism, the touchstone of 'orthodoxy' is assumed to be a ruling Brāhmaṇical elite that dominated the subcontinent from the Hindu-Kush to the mouth of the Ganges. This notion of a socially, culturally, and religiously monolithic northern India has been challenged in recent years. Thus, I take on the mistaken notion of the existence of a monolithic pre-Purāṇic northern India by demonstrating the Brāhmaṇical disdain for their northwestern neighbors, the Madras. To this end, I will undertake a close reading of a short passage of the Mahābhārata. By deconstructing the thirtieth chapter of the Karṇaparvan, I will offer evidence of a fragmented pre-Purāṇic northern India.

Modern histories of pre-Purāṇic India (c. 1900 BCE to c. 300 CE) often conflate the whole of northern India into one unchanging Brāhmaṇic culture whose fountainhead is the Vedas. Even when discussing the challenges of 'heterodox' religions which arose out of the Upāniṣads, Buddhism, and Jainism, the touchstone of 'orthodoxy' is assumed to be a ruling Brāhmaṇical elite that dominated the subcontinent from the Hindu-Kush to the mouth of the Ganges. This notion of a socially, culturally, and religiously monolithic northern India has been challenged in recent years. Thus, while there may have been some dominant homogeneous orthodoxy, or more appropriately, orthopraxy, which historians have defined as the classical formulation of Brāhmaṇic Hinduism in the Gangetic plain c. 300 CE, the centuries before this development were quite diverse. Furthermore, even in the fourth century CE with the rise of the Gupta Empire, this orthopraxy did not extend to all of northern India. Rather, the north was divided into many groups, and only one of them put forth the classical formulation of Brāhmanism.

Where do historians of ancient India find data to explore challenges to the dominant hegemonic discourse found in normative Brāhmaṇical sources? Indologists have looked to archaeology, numismatics, epigraphy, and other art historical sources for these divergent voices. However, a corpus of work has been

overlooked, the very sources of the classical Brāhmanical system themselves. Patrick Olivelle addresses this issue in the introduction to his translation of the Dharmasūtras:

The Dharmasütras are normative texts. They contain norms of correct behavior and action. They tell people what to do; they do not tell us what people actually did. Normative texts have had a bad press lately among scholars. Some argue that these sources are unreliable and worthless for historical purposes, proposing instead the use of archaeological, inscriptional, and art historical materials for historical reconstruction. Clearly, these are invaluable sources for any study of India's past. But I think the dismissal of normative texts is unwise and unwarranted and betrays a singular ingorance of these documents. Many scholars unfortunately derive their knowledge of these texts through secondary sources, which often flatten the intellectual landscape and describe these documents as presenting a uniform code of conduct. The divergent views and dissenting voices are silenced. The reality, as anyone who undertakes a close reading of these documents can see, is very different.3

Olivelle is challenging the academic community to read the original sources closely, to listen to the heteroprax voices that still can be heard even in strictly orthoprax texts such as the Dharmasūtras.

In this essay, I will challenge the notion of the existence of a monolithic pre-Purāṇic northern India by demonstrating the Brāhmaṇical disdain for their northwestern neighbors, the Madras. To this end, I will undertake a close reading of a short passage of the Mahābhārata. By deconstructing the thirtieth chapter of the Karṇaparvan, I will offer evidence of a fragmented northern India. In this case, the fragment is roughly the area encompassed by pre-partition Punjab.

Geographic Preliminaries

The key to understanding the fragmented nature of pre-Purānic northern India is a careful reconstruction of cultural geographies. Certain texts composed in the years bracketing the common era - the Mahābhārata, various Dharmasūtras, and the Mānava Dharmasūtra (the 'law codes' of Manu) and - all give detailed accounts of geographical divisions. All three make a clear distinction between Madhyadeśa (the middle country) which is the seat of classical Brāhmanism where the normative texts were composed, and a land to the northwest, called Saptasindhu (Land of the Seven Rivers⁵), Madradeśa (Land of the Madras), or Pañcanāda (Land of Five

Rivers). Furthermore, these texts place peoples within these divisions and make it clear that there is a hierarchy: the peoples living within the heart of Madhyadeśa are the most pure and orthoprax, while those living outside are impure and heteroprax. Because no one term is used for the land in which these peoples lived, I will call this area 'the Pañjāb.' My use of 'the Pañjāb' does not refer to 'Punjab,' the modern state in India. Rather, the boundaries will be drawn in the east at Sarasvatī river (now the dry Ghaggar), to the south at the Rajasthan (Thar) desert, to the west at the Sulaiman Range, and to the north at the Kaśmiri Himālayas. While the term 'Pañjāb' is first used by Akbar in the last quarter of the sixteenth century to refer to the land of five (pañca) doabs or five 'āb' (waters), thus 'Pañjāb,' J.S. Grewal identifies an ever-shifting region that is based around these five doabs which is relatively equivalent to pre-partition Punjab.⁶ This designation is quite useful for our purposes as it allows us to focus on the region as a single unit in contradistinction to Madhyadesa as a single unit. This is not to suggest that these regions were not heterogeneous within their borders, but to create a tentative map to explore divergent voices and cultures within pre-Puranic northern India.

The Mahābhārata, the Dharmasūtras, and the Mānava Dharmasāstra (Mdhś) give clear boundaries for Madhyadeśa. It is defined in Mdhś 2.21-23:7

[21] The country between the Himālayas and the Vindhya mountains, to the east of the 'Disappearance' and to the west of Prayāga, is known as the Middle country [Madhyadeśa]. [22] From the eastern sea to the western sea, the area in between the two mountains is what wise men call the Land of the Aryans. [23] Where the black antelope ranges by nature, that should be known as the country fit for sacrifices; and beyond it is the country of the barbarians (mlecchas).

There is a similar description in various Dharmasütras. The Vasistha Dharmasütra 1.8-15 states:

[8] The region east of where the Sarasvatī disappears, west of Kālaka forest¹⁰, north of Pāriyātra mountains¹¹, and south of the Himalayas is the land of the Āryas; [9] or else, north of the Vindhya mountains. [10] The Laws and practices of that region should be recognized as authoritative everywhere, [11] but not others found in regions with Laws contrary to those. [12] According to some, the land of the Āryas is the region between the Ganges and Yamunā. [13] According to others, vedic splendour extends as far as the black antelope roams. [14] The Bhāllavins, moreover, in their *Book of Causes* cite this verse, [15] 'Vedic

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splendour extends only as far as the black antelope roams east of the boundary river and west of where the sun rises.'12

The above passage is almost identical to that of Baudāyana Dharmasūtra 1.2.9-12, and a strikingly similar version is also found twice in Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya. As Pantañjali can be dated to the middle of the second century BCE, and Olivelle puts both the Baudāyana and Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtras between the second century BCE and the beginning of the common era, it is clear that the land of the Āryas, or Madhyadeśa, is an established geographical reality by the middle of the second century BCE. Through a close reading of Mahābhārata (Mbh) VIII 30.1-82, I will further clarify the geographic divisions between Madhyadeśa and the Pañjāb, and, more importantly, I will identify key cultural divisions between the regions.

The Enigma of Mahābhārata VIII 30

In Mahābhārata VIII 30.1-82, there is a description of the Bāhlīkas, the inhabitants of the Pañjāb. The passage tells us that the Bāhlīkas are from Madra, which is located, according to Nando Lal Dey, '... in the Panjab [sic] between the Ravi and Chenab . . . Its capital was Sākala [sic] . . . Madra was the kingdom of Rājā Śalva of the Mahābhārata, and also of Rājā Aśvapati, the father of the celebrated Sāvitrī, the wife of Satyavāna.'14 The Bāhlīkas also hail from Āraṭṭa, a term used for 'the Punjab, watered by the five rivers.'15 Thus, these Bāhlīkas are located in the heart of the Pañjāb among the famous five doabs. It was in this region that the Rg Veda, considered by many the fountainhead of Indian religion, was composed and sung for the first time in the second millennium before the common era. 16 This region has been included within most histories of pre-Puranic northern India without objection, and the peoples of the Panjab have been included in the classical Brahmanical system thus extending Brähmanical rule across north India. So, if there was one dominant culture throughout all of north India, how does one reconcile the above understanding of geography and history with the following snapshot of life amongst these peoples c. 100 BCE to c. 300 CE:

There is a town named Śākala, a river named Āpagā, and the inhabitants of Bāhlīka are known as Jartikas, their way of life is very despicable. Having drunk a rum and barley liquor together with garlicked cow-flesh, fried barley and meat-wheat cakes, they are without good moral character. Outside the walls that enclose the houses and city, intoxicated and naked, they laugh, sing, and dance, with women, whose [bodies] are besmeared with unguents and [draped with] garlands. With a variety of drunken ditties resembling the braying of donkeys and camels, those overly

drunken/oversexed [women] call out four-line stanzas to one another . . . Whoever having wisdom shall dwell, even for a moment, among these wicked Bāhlīkas, a people devoid of religious action . . . you share in one-sixth of both their vice and virtues . . . Bāhlīkas are the dirt of the earth and the women of Madra are the dirt of all women. [Mbh VIII 30.14-17, 26, 27cd, 68cd]

Can these vile people really be the inhabitants of the land of the five doābs, the home of the Rg Veda? When did they cease to be the wise priests and great warriors, the creators of the great Aryan civilization, and become these despicable fools? If the subcontinent was a united, ordered society under the Vedic injunctions of the Brahmins for over two thousand years, who are these wild people? To understand the origin of this passage, one must not flatten historical time and space by assuming a two millenia hegemonic Brāhmaṇical dominance in north India. Rather, one must be attentive to the historical particulars between the time of the formation of the Rg Veda and the rise of the Guptas.

Without the assumption of dominance of the Brahmins throughout the subcontinent, the historical periodisation of early Indian history begins to look quite different. From c. 1900 BCE to 1200 BCE, Rg Vedic culture mixed with others in the northwest of India. While the Rg Veda is the only source from this period, this does not mean that it was the only culture at the time. There is evidence that Vedic culture was influenced by contact with other peoples, and the process of integration with other cultures was more fluid than previously thought. The evidence for such a hypothesis comes from the Rg Veda itself. For example, as much as 4% of the words in the Rg Veda are of foreign origin 19, and according to J. S. Grewal:

[t]he language of the Rg Veda, called 'Vedic' by some scholars to mark its distinction from the classical Sanskrit which developed later, is not homogeneous. Apart from a definite change in the tenth mandala of the Rg Veda, dialectical differences are reflected in the other books. In fact, some elements in the language of the Rg Veda appear to be 'indigenous.' They are found in neither the Indo-Iranian nor the Indo-European family of languages. Recent linguistic analyses have confirmed the presence of proto-Dravidian elements, both in the vocabulary and the phonetics of the Rg Veda.²⁰

Not only were there other peoples creating diversity in Rg Vedic culture, but even within the groups that composed the Vedas, commonly assumed to be the Indo-

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Aryans, there were factions and fissures: 'The Indo-Aryans felt a sense of solidarity against others, but they [also] fought among themselves . . . The hostile parties on both sides in 'the battle of the ten kings' were in fact Arya.' Furthermore, the confluence of cultures which created and influenced the Rg Veda did not cover all of the northern subcontinent, but were limited to the northwest corner, most likely centered around the Panjāb.

The next broad period of Indian history, c. 1200 BCE to c. 600 BCE, is characterized by the movement of this 'Vedic culture' out of the Pañjāb and into the Gangetic plain. During these eight hundred years of migration, the later books of the Vedas (Sāmaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda) were composed. These later Vedic materials are products of the culture clearly centered in the Gangetic plain, '[t]he geographical and political center has moved from the greater Punjab to modern (eastern) Punjab and Haryana, and further on into the Upper Doāb of the Yamunā and Ganga.'²² In the next period, c. 600 BCE to c. 200 CE, the cultures of the Pañjāb and the Gangetic plain (Madhyadeśa) develop separately. There were a number of invasions that affected the Pañjāb but did not reach the Gangetic plain. These are significant when considering the social, religious, and cultural development of the two regions, so a brief historical overview of these eight hundred important years is appropriate.

In the sixth century BCE, the Achaemenian ruler Cyrus annexed the trans-Indus territories. This Persian influence continued as Cyrus' successors, Darius and Xerxes, expanded into the Pañjāb. However, they never crossed the Satlui and their control waned by the third quarter of the fourth century BCE.23 In 330 BCE, the Greeks, under Alexander, also moved towards the Pañjāb. They crossed the Indus in 326 BCE and made it as far as the Beas river. However, like the Persians, the Greeks never crossed the Satluj and thus never directly influenced the culture of Madhyadeśa.24 However, these two and a half centuries of significant cultural disjuncture between the peoples of the Pañjāb and the peoples of Madhyadeśa ended with the accession of Chandragupta Maurya to power in 321 BCE. While the Mauryan Empire ruled from Pāṭaliputra on the Ganges, these two peoples became acquainted with one another. Trade routes from the Pañjāb that used to run to the west began to run to the east, and communication increased as the political administration of outlying territories became more systematized.²⁵ However, by 180 BCE the Mauryan Empire's control in the Pañjāb collapsed due to internal weakness and pressures, and a new period of disjuncture began.

From 180 BCE to 300 CE, the peoples of the Pañjāb and the peoples of Madhyadeśa, more often than not, lived under different political regimes and looked in opposite directions for their cultural development. During these five centuries, the Bactrian Greeks, the Śakas, the Parthians, and the Sassanians all controlled parts of the Pañjāb, but did not exert much influence beyond the Satluj. It is clear that the

Bactrian Greeks, known to Madhyadeśans as Yavanas, had direct rule over parts of the Pañjāb, but made little headway beyond the Satluj, '... Menander ruled as far as the Ravi in the east; there is evidence that he made raids even beyond the Ravi and the Beas into the Jamuna valley, and led an army in league with others to Pāṭaliputra, but there is nothing to prove his conquest of these areas.' It has been suggested, based on numismatic evidence, that the Bactrian Greeks exerted influence in Madhyadeśa. However, this is doubtful, as A. K. Narain points out:

The coins of Menander—or for that matter of any other Indo-Greek king—are not commonly found east of the Ravi... stray specimens of Menander's money are not unknown in some places of northern India, but no hoards of Indo-Greek coins have come to light in these regions. Both Whitehead [Numismatic Chronicle, 1923, p. 342] and Allan [J. Marshall's Taxila, vol. ii, p. 862-3] are strongly of the opinion that such finds of Indo-Greek coins are evidence not of their rule in these districts but of the popularity of their money, and this can easily be paralleled in other series of international currencies.²⁷

Therefore, as the peoples of the Pañjāb mixed with these western invaders, the Madhyadeśans resisted these western invasions.

Similarly, the next invaders from the northwest, the Śakas, certainly entered Madhyadeśa, but their greatest influence was restricted to the Pañjāb: '... [the first Śaka ruler in the Punjāb, Maues'] coins are found ordinarily in the Pañjāb, and chiefly in the western portion of the province of which Taxila was the ancient capital ... [and] numismatics say that Maues was succeeded on the throne of the Pañjāb by Azes.' The Śakas had a brief period of control in Mathurā, but it is not clear how long they were there or how much influence they had. The Parthians supplanted Śaka power in the northwestern region of the Pañjāb in the middle of the first century CE, but made no impact on Madhyadeśa either.

In this period, only the Kushāṇas united the two sub-regions for a brief time in the first and second centuries CE. However, even during these years, the influences on the Pañjāb were more from the west, as '[i]t is . . . probable that the Kushanas lived somewhere near Bactria or to the south of it, and were part of the ancient Śaka stock.' The Kushāṇa empire was short-lived, and it was eclipsed by the Sassanids (Ardashir I, 224-241 CE) in the Pañjāb and the Guptas (Chandra Gupta I, 319-335 CE) in Madhyadeśa. While Madhyadeśa, under the Guptas, was united and solidified around the classical Brahmāṇic culture which had been slowly arising in the last four centuries, the historical trajectory of the Pañjāb continued on its own path as the Sassanids and the Hūṇas struggled for power in the region. Thus, the Gupta empire, traditionally recognized as a major force of Indian unification,

actually only unified Madhyadeśa. These five centuries, c. 180 BCE to c. 300 CE, were a turbulent and confusing time for the Pañjāb. As J. S. Grewal has observed, '[t]he politics of the Punjāb [sic] after the decline and fall of the Mauryas was marked by a succession of foreign invasions resulting in the formation of new states which continued to have more or less close contacts with the countries on the west.'³³ Thus, pre-Purāṇic India, rather than being a unified region stretching from the Hindu-Kush to the mouth of the Ganges, was more diverse and disjointed than commonly thought. Except for the two centuries of Mauryan rule and a century of Kushāṇa rule, the Pañjāb and Madhyadeśa experienced very different development patterns.

Brāmaņical Hermeneutics and the Mahābhārata

The development of pre-Purānic Indian culture within Madhyadeśa itself has also been reimagined in recent years. A rejection of the historical interpretation of a monolithic, unchanging Vedic culture that dominated the region from c. 1900 BCE has given way to a more complex formulation. Most importantly, from the sixth century BCE to the fourth century BCE, while the Pañjāb was undergoing changes due to foreign invasions, Madhyadeśa was also in a period of rapid social and economic change. New agricultural techniques in the upper Ganges Valley led to agricultural surpluses, population increases, and urbanization. These changes were concomitant with ideological shifts as well, as seen by the rise of religious movements such as Buddhism and Jainism:

[t]hese new religious ideologies and the increasingly widespread ascetic life styles stood in sharp contrast to the vedic religious world centered around the householder and his duties of sacrifice and procreation . . . the challenges to the vedic world came not just from those outside the Brāhmaṇical tradition, such as the Buddha, but also from people within the tradition.³⁴

Therefore, this 'new symbolic world'³⁵ that emerged, a system centered around samsāra, karma, and mokṣa, was also espoused by Brahmins within the Vedic tradition. Patrick Olivelle has demonstrated how the Brahmins redefined the āsrama system in order to compete with these emerging ideologies coming from both within and without the Vedic tradition. He argues that an understanding of 'Brāhmaṇical hermeneutics (mīmāmsā), that aspect of Brāhmaṇical theology engaged in interpreting received sacred texts,' is essential to understanding the history of the āśrama system. The delineates two clear phases in the Brāhmaṇical hermeneutics and exegesis of sūtra and śāstra literature in regard to the āśrama system. The first formulation of the system emerges during the last four or five centuries prior to the beginning of the common era and includes four Dharmasūtras,

the Gautama, Baudhāyana, Āpastamba, and Vasiṣṭha. In these texts, the āśramas are permanent modes of life which are open to any young adult male who has finished his Vedic studies. They are equally legitimate and any one of the four can be freely chosen. However, Olivelle finds a theological change, around the beginning of the common era, with the beginning of the classical Brāhmaṇical formulation of the āśrama system. In this system put forth by the Dharmaśastras, the four āśramas are stages of life to be undertaken in sequence. Thus, the ascetic stages are only to be taken up once familial and societal duties have been met. The exact details are not essential for this essay, but the important point is that the Brahmins are actively engaging in textual exegesis of the Vedas in order to reinterpret the texts to fit new social and cultural situations.

Concurrent with these theological changes in Vedic interpretation was the compilation of the Mahābhārata. James Fitzgerald, utilizing the work of the Russian scholar P. A. Grintser, contends that the Sanskrit version of the Mahābhārata was 'extracted from an improvisational oral tradition that functioned in terms of compositional formulas and themes rather than a fixed text.' The creation of this Sanskrit text was not done by chance, but rather for a specific purpose: '[n]either the creation of this text, nor the effort to promulgate it could have been casual, and I suspect both were undertaken by some royal house for symbolic or propagandistic purposes. The likely date for this was somewhere in the long period between 100 B.C. and 350 A.D.' What may have been the purpose for collecting and recording all these oral traditions into a single Sanskritic text? The Mahābhārata itself gives the answer. It was meant to be a fifth Veda, an authoritative text - not an oral tradition, but a Sanskrit text, the language of Vedic revelation - to be consulted in matters of spiritual and mundane importance. It became an instruction manual for 'proper social, political, economic, and ritual action.'

Thus, much like the Dharmaśāstra and Dharmasūtra literature which was an exercise in Brāhmaṇical hermeneutics and Vedic exegesis, parts of the Mahābhārata, too, can be seen as an attempt to reconcile the received Vedic wisdom with new challenges in a changing society. E. Frauwallner, in his *History of Indian Philosophy*, observes that, '[t]he period of epic philosophy shows, therefore, the typical features of a transitional period.'⁴² In fact, much of the Mahābhārata shows a remarkable similarity to the very Dharmaśastric literature that is so important in Olivelle's analysis. As Georg Bühler and J. Kirste point out:

It is evident that those, who quoted the Mahâbhârata as an authority teaching the rewards of pious donors and the punishments for impious despoilers of the donees must have considered it as a Smṛiti or Dharmaśāstra, proceeding from a Rishi . . . from A.D. 300, and that about A.D. 500 it certainly did not differ essentially in size and in character from the present text.⁴³

Finally, the overwhelming concern with dharma in the Mahābhārata leads H. C. Sastri to suggest that it should be 'regarded as a Dharmaśāstra.' 44

Mahābhārata VIII 30: Creating Order out of Chaos

Now, keeping in mind this understanding of the historical division between the Pañjāb and Madhyadeśa and the exegetical nature of the Mahābhārata, the Karṇa/Śalya episode in Mahābhārata VIII 30 begins to make sense. These eightytwo verses are the result of the ongoing work of Brāhmaṇical hermeneutics and Vedic exegesis in Madhyadeśa from the first century BCE to the fourth century CE. Some of the material is gleaned from the Vedas themselves, some is based on dharma literature, and some is new, but all the material is the Brahmins' interpretation and definition of how the world should be ordered and should function.

Like many of the passages in the Mahābhārata, the events in the thirtieth chapter have connections to earlier books, in this case the *Udyoga Parva* (Book 5). In this last book before the 'war books,' the preparations for the battle are made. As Śalya, the brother of Mādrī who is the mother of Nakula and Sahadeva, heads out to join forces with the Pāṇḍavas, he is stopped by Duryodhana and is promised wealth and power if he will fight for the Kauravas. Śalya is easily convinced, but feels obligated to visit Yudhiṣṭhira to explain his change in allegiance. However, it seems that Śalya has another change of heart in seeing the Pāṇḍavas, and switches allegiance again. Now, although he will still be the charioteer for the Kaurava Karṇa, he will try to destroy Karṇa's energy (tejovadhas) to ensure victory for Arjuna in the battle:

Listen, Pāṇḍava, bless you. You ask me that I obscure the splendor of that evil son of a sūta [Karṇa] on the battlefield. I am certain to be his charioteer in the fight, for he has alway thought me Vāsudeva's [Kṛṣṇa's] equal. When he is eager to fight, tiger of the Kurus, I shall talk to him discouragingly and belittle him, so that he will lose pride and splendor, Pāṇḍava, and be easy to kill—this I promise as truth! Mbh 5.8.28-31⁴⁵

Salya is certainly a slippery character and his loyalties do not lie in any deep-seeded convictions or beliefs, but rather in what is most expedient and will be to his best advantage.

Sure enough, as Karna prepares for his second day of battle, he decides to use Salya as his charioteer. In turn, Salya, this time true to his word, begins to insult Karna in an attempt to sap Karna's energy. Karna's immediate response is to reaffirm his resolve to defeat 'the two Kṛṣṇas,' and he then begins to throw back

insults at Śalya. In these initial, cursory insults, Karņa lays the groundwork for his later tirade:

You [Śalya] are evil-natured, foolish, unskilled in great battles . . . you who are born in a bad country [kudeśa] . . . you who are born in a sinful country [pāpadeśa], you mean-minded low defiler of the kṣatriya class [durbuddhe kṣudra kṣatriyapāmsana]. Mbh VIII 27.66-68 46

The speech continues (the bulk of these preliminary insults are contained in Mbh VIII 27.71-91⁴⁷), making vague references to the character of Śalya's subjects. But who exactly are Śalya's subjects? This I will determine in the deconstruction of the passage which contains the second round of insults, the speech which contains the greatest bile, Mahābhārata VIII 30.1-82.

The whole episode has striking similarities to the most famous exposition on dharma in the Mahābhārata, the Bhagavad Gītā. Just as the Gītā begins with Arjuna and his charioteer, Kṛṣṇa, at the battelfield of Kurukṣetra, similarly the Karṇa/Śalya episode begins with Karna and his charioteer, Salya, heading out to battle. However, while Kṛṣṇa encourages Arjuna and gives him sound advice concerning dharma, the opposing pair follow a very different path. Rather than enlightening Karna and helping him prepare mentally for battle, Salya begins by praising the strength and skill of the Pandavas and tells Karna he should fear them. Karna is understandably confused, as his charioteer seems to be against him rather than for him. Karna, after briefly insulting Salya in return, orders him to proceed forward to the battlefield, and in an inauspicious moment, his steeds stumble and fall to the ground. 48 It is here that we realize the passage to follow is meant to be a companion to the $G\bar{u}\bar{a}$, but as its opposite. While the $G\bar{u}\bar{a}$ uses positive examples to instruct its readers concerning dharma, Mahābhārata VIII 30 does the opposite, using negative examples to convey its lessons and prescriptions. Thus, the peoples of Pañjāb are maligned in order to demonstrate the correct mode of living. The verses serve a number of purposes: they locate impure groups to be avoided (and thus create a map of Madhyadeśa), instruct on dharma, give behavioral guidelines (including dietary, sexual, and caste rules), and comment on the role of women: all of which I will discuss below.

However, the primary purpose of Mahābhārata VIII 30 is to order the chaotic world of the centuries bracketing the common era. In times of rapid change, the old rules seem not to apply. What once was an ordered, understandable (and thus safe) society is thrown into chaos; the rules of the game are not clear. In order to combat this chaos, new rules must emerge and new categories must be created; the society must be 'grounded.' The very word 'grounded' evokes two important, interrelated themes. 'To be grounded' means to have a thorough background and understanding

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of an issue at hand, to have a basis or foundation on which to build further; but it also points to the importance of place. Thus, 'to be grounded' means, literally, to have ground or earth beneath you, ground which is knowable, which acts as the basis for understanding your physical place in the world. However, this ground is more than just a particular piece of earth, but the understanding of how that piece of earth fits into the greater whole. As David Harvey argues, '[p]laces, like space and time, are social constructs and have to be read and understood as such.'⁴⁹ The construction of place, the creation of maps, serves a specific purpose, to ground a society. In the process of this construction, '[d]efining the 'other' in an exclusionary and stereotypical way is the first step towards self-definition.'⁵⁰ In Mahābhārata VIII 30, the authors, engaging in the hermeneutics of scriptural exegesis, do just this; they define an 'other,' in this case the people of the Pañjāb, to create a definition of Madhyadeśa with respect to ground, both physical, geographical ground, and the setting of 'ground rules' for behavior and thought.⁵¹

The 'placing' of Madhyadeśa is accomplished through both physical landmarks and ethnic divisions. The physical map constructed is quite clear. The people of the Pañjāb are '[t]hey who are ousted from the Himavat and crossed the Gaṅgā, Sarasvatī, the Yamunā, and also Kurukṣetra. Those who live among the five rivers with the Sindhu as the sixth . . .' [Mbh VIII 30.10-11ab], and within this country, '[t]here is a town named Śākala (Sialkot), a river named Āpagā (the Ayuk river to the west of the Ravi³²). . .' [Mbh VIII 30.14ab] A dweller of this country describes his journey to his native land as '[h]aving crossed the river Śatadru (Satluj) and the beautiful river Irāvatī (Ravi), having arrived in my own land . . .' [Mbh VIII 30.21] The land is later described as '[w]here the five rushing rivers (the Śatadru, Vipāśā (Beas), Īrāvatī, Chandrabhāga (Chenab), Vitasta (Jhelum) and the Sindhu (Indus) as the sixth) come out by the *Pīlu* tree forests.' [Mbh VIII 30.35] This act of physical mapping, of setting out the boundaries between 'us and them,' defines the exact location of the western boundary of Madhyadeśa.

However, more attention is given to mapping the boundaries of Madhyadeśa through ethnic divisions. The authors of Mahābhārata VIII 30 carefully group the tribes of the northern subcontinent according to their character. As J. Z. Smith contends, '[t]he question of the character of the place on which one stands is the fundamental symbolic and social question. Once an individual or culture has expressed its vision of its place, a whole language of symbols and social structures will follow.'53 The vision created in Mahābhārata VIII 30 is of the moral and cultural superiority of those tribes centered in the Ganges basin as a clear map emerges. While the passage places many tribes outside of Madhyadeśa, most of the invective is directed at the peoples of the Pañjāb, referred to as Madrakas, Jartikas, Āraṭṭas, and Bāhlīkas.

The very naming of these people of the Pañjāb is significant. Madraka holds no negative connotation within the name, but this is not true of the other three. Jartikas

may have been used as a general derogatory term,⁵⁴ and they are commonly identified with Jäts, a historically low caste group.⁵⁵ As for the name Āraṭṭas, they were known as 'a band of robbers' and were enlisted by Cāṇakya (the legendary minister of Chandragupta Maurya, later identified with Kauṭilya, the author of the *Arthaśāstra*) to help him overthrow Nanda rule.⁵⁶ Throughout Mahābhārata VIII 30, the inhabitants of the Punjāb are shown to be wandering thieves [Mbh VIII 30.73d]. One 'Bāhlīka, dwelling in Kuru' [VIII 30.20] dreams of getting back to his own land, where,

having crossed the river Sutlej and the beautiful river Irāvatī, having arrived in my own land . . . We, delighted, will go by means of donkeys, camels, and mules with the pleasure of drums, conch shells, military drums and more drums, through the easy paths of the forests of śamī and pīluka trees and the karīra plant, eating cakes of flour and balls of grits together with buttermilk. Having become strong in [these] ways [i.e. by eating all that highenergy food], living badly on the muddy road, we strike again, making an offering of a villain. [Mbh VIII 30.21abc, 23-25]⁵⁷

The language chosen in the last line underlines the lack of dharma among the Āraṭṭas. Their upahāram ⁵⁸ (religious offerings) are not the proper Brāhmaṇical ones, but rather are tied up with this despicable activity. Thus, their dharma is their thieving. Later in the passage, the inability to properly observe religious rites is made explicit:

Where the five rushing rivers - the Śatadru, Vipāśā, Īrāvatī, Chandrabhāgā, Vitastā and the Sindhu as the sixth - come out by the pīlu tree forests, [śruti says] there is the country of the Āraṭṭas, where dharma has been destroyed One should not wander among them, those Dāsamīyas monks who are not fit for religious services and who don't sacrifice . . . [Mbh VIII 30.35-36]

Here is a clear case of Brāhmanical hermeneutics. Śruti is being invoked to support the construction of order, an order which will ground the people of Madhyadeśa.

As for the name Bāhlīkas, there have been a number of suggestions offered concerning its origin. Some suggest it may be from the Sanskrit bāhya, 'not belonging to the family or country, strange, foreign; excluded from caste or community, outcaste.' Some have identified the term with the region of Balkh in the far northwest beyond the Panjāb, somewhere in Persia or Central Asia. While the term Bāhlīka may have been used to describe those living in Balkh or used to designate a foreigner in other texts, for Mahābhārata VIII 30 the desired definition is within the text itself. There are numerous references to Bāhlīkas living in locations

that are undeniably in the Pañjāb. Most importantly, however, they are linked with the people of Madra, a deś located between the Ravi and the Chenab [Mbh VIII 30.9]. Turthermore, the authors of the passage have created their own etymology of the word Bāhlīka: '[t]here are two Piśācakas in the river Vipāśā named Bahi and Hlīka. The Bāhlīkas are the offspring of the two of them, not of Prajāpati.' [Mbh VIII 30.44] The reader does not need to know all the names of foreign tribes nor the possible Sanskritic derivations of the word Bāhlīka. Rather, he/she can rely on the fact that they are from the area around the Vipāśā river (the Beas⁶³), they are the offspring of two Piśācas⁶⁴ (demon-type beings), and they are not born from Prajāpati, the Creator. Thus, they are made to be less than human, born of lowly creatures, not of the same substance as those inhabiting Madhyadeśa. This internal textual etymology (which, in the final analysis, is the most appropriate definition of Bāhlīka as it is the one the authors wanted the reader to use) has taken away their humanness and made them into monsters.

We should pay particular attention to the classification of the Other as less than human, as monstrous. This is a common strategy used by ruling elites to stabilize their shaky position of authority. As David Gordon White contends in his analysis of monsters in three traditions, the Western, Chinese, and Indian:

How each tradition approached and treated its respective monsters, whatever their provenance, betrays its own preoccupations, category formations, and anxieties regarding its own place - that is, the place of 'civilized man' - in the universe . . . Whatever the case, the 'self' that spoke of the monstrous 'others' was a troubled one, much less sure of itself than the more common fare of self-assertive ideology would lead one to believe. 65

Clearly, the authors of Mahābhārata VIII 30 are trying to solidify a place for themselves in a chaotic world. They are trying to claim the status of 'civilized man' for themselves by setting up a monstrous opposition as a measuring stick. The basic preoccupations of the authors are with dharma and its function. The basic categories are also set up around dharma, those who have it and those who lack it. Therefore, within this text, the injunctions of the Dharmasāstra and Dharmasūtra texts, although unspoken, are always at the forefront. No statement is mere description, but each statement has greater import when held against these normative law books.

Thus, much of Mahābhārata VIII 30 is dedicated to cataloguing the unorthodox (read 'non-Dharmaśāstric and non-Dharmasūtric') practices of the Bāhlīkas. Their dietary habits are vile as they will eat almost anything, including meat; drink almost anything, including liquor and the milk from any animal; and have low sanitary standards:

There is a town named Śākala, a river named Āpagā, and inhabitants of Bāhlīka are known as Jartikas, their way of life is very despicable. [14] Having drunk gauda liquor and barely liquor together with garlicked cow-flesh, fried barley and meat-wheat cakes, they are without good moral character. [15] . . . they are satisfied with cow flesh, [and] having drunk gauda liquor and soma [30cd] . . . [t]hey devour many sheep and fill their mouths with onions. [31cd] [The Bāhlīkas say that] they who do not devour the flesh of a boar, cock, cow, ass, camel, or sheep are a useless birth. [32] The Bāhlīkas eat without disgust from bowls of wood and clay which are smeared with fried barley and grits and have been licked by dogs and others. [38] The Bāhlīkas drink milk from a sheep, camel and ass, and eat other products. [39]

In this passage, each item consumed has resonance with Mānava Dharmaśātra. The imbibing of liquor is explicitly forbidden in Mdhś 11.94-95, not because one gets drunk and loses control, but because the ingredients of liquor are impure,

[94] For liquor is the defiling dirt excreted from rice, and dirt is said to be evil; therefore a priest, ruler, or commoner should not drink liquor. [95] Three kinds of liquor should be distinguished: made from sugar (molasses, gauqti), made from ground rice, and made from honey.

Thus, those who drink liquor become impure. Mdhs 5.5-8 also forbids garlic, onions, and various kinds of milk: [5] Garlic, scallions, onions, and mushrooms, and things that grow from what is impure, are not to be eaten by twice-born men . . . [8] . . . nor the milk of a camel or of any animal with a whole, solid hoof, or of a ewe. The authors do not have the Bāhlīkas just eating onions, but they 'fill their mouths' with them, making the act even more abhorrent. Again, the reason for the prohibition on these products is that they grow from what is impure and consumption of such foods compromises the purity of the individual. Finally, an identification with certain eating habits and monsters is made explicit, as Manu 11.96 states: [96] Wine, meat, and liquor, and strong decoctions are the food of genies (yakṣas), ogres (rākṣasas), and ghouls (piśācas). Thus, the internal etymology of Bāhlīkas as descendents from piśācas is confirmed in their daily habits.

Particularly interesting in this section of Mahābhārata VIII 30 is the Bāhlīkas (mis)understanding of a good birth. According to them, eating *meat* ensures a good birth and thus vegetarianism is to be avoided. This emphasis on meat, and food in general, is not surprising. As Brian K. Smith points out:

[i]n later Indic traditions, no less than in the Vedic texts, social ideology was fixated on food. Vegetarianism was far more than an interesting new dietary custom. It was a focal point for what might be called a revaluation of all values in ancient India . . . Vegetarianism and non-violence became the principal signifiers of this 'purity' that jostled power, the new yardsticks for social ranking in the priestly and 'orthodox' reformation of Vedism documented in the dharma texts.68

Clearly, Mahābhārata VIII 30 is mapping the impure and the pure using the 'yardstick' of food. What once was the sign of power in the Vedas, that is, eating meat, was now inverted and seen as an indicator of impurity. 69

There could only be one conclusion, as one Brahmin who lived among the Bählīkas astutely observes, 'everything is opposite/contrary (viparyayah) among the Bāhlīkas.' [Mbh VIII 30.56d] In this respect, they are also prone to undignified

Outside the walls that enclose the houses and city, intoxicated and naked, they laugh, sing, and dance, with women whose [bodies] are besmeared with unguents and [draped with] garlands. [16] With a variety of drunken ditties resembling the braying of donkeys and camels, those overly drunken/oversexed [people] call out four-line stanzas to one another, proclaiming: [17] Alas defiled woman,

Alas defiled woman,

You have been defiled

by your husband/Lord.'

Those unfortunate [people] who are abusing [one another] dance unrestrained on holy days [18]. . . The young and old inhabitants of Śākala sing and dance excitedly, intoxicated with liquor. How can there be any virtuous conduct among them? [33]

Not only do they drunkenly dance and sing (poorly for that matter as they 'bray' like animals), but the women, who have been defiled by their own husbands, are naked except for some perfume and garlands. This occurs outside of the walls of the city, giving the impression of a drunken orgy in the countryside. However, especially egregious is that this behavior does not stop on holy days, and the elders, those who should be responsible for keeping order, partake in the debauchery along with the young. These activities interfere with the proper rituals, as Baudāyana Dharmasūtra 1.21.5 states: '[1.21.5] When there is wind, a foul smell, frost, and at the sound of

dancing, music, weeping or singing of the Sāmans, vedic recitation is suspended for their duration.'

All of these occurrences cited above are tied to impurity. For example, the singing of Sāmans is impure because of the Sāmaveda's relationship to the dead ancestors and thus impurity. Therefore, on holy days when these orgies are held, any Vedic recitation will be nullified by the impurities of the Bāhlīkas. This prompts the author to ask, 'How can there be any virtuous conduct (vrttam) among them?' [Mbh VIII 30.33] There is no possibility of dharmic action as the sacrificial formulas themselves will be rendered useless.

The contrarian nature (viparyayah) of the Bāhlīkas extends to the most important institutions of the Brāhmaṇical tradition in Madhyadeśa. One Brahmin who had visited many lands was impressed that so many peoples knew the importance of Vedic dharma:

One mighty peak of the Himavat was inhabited by me for a long time, and I saw many different lands filled with virtue. These people are not opposed to dharma. Indeed, they all said dharma is that which has been declared by people conversant in the Veda. Wandering through different lands, [they were] always filled with dharma. But arriving among the Bāhlīkas, the great king learnt [this], there a Bāhlīka, having become a Brahmin, he then becomes a Kṣatriya, then a Vaiśya, then a Śudra, and then becomes a barber. Then, having become a barber, he again becomes a Brahmin. Having become a twice-born again, he is born a slave. One [person] in a clan becomes a Brahmin, the remaining [ones] act unrestrainedly . . . [Mbh VIII 30.50-55]

This is an obvious violation of the varna system which was so important to Brahmanic culture. However, not only do they allow one person to switch castes throughout their life, but there is much caste mixing, 'Āraṭṭas, known as Bāhlīkas, are to be avoided by a wise man, all of these despised people have cross-blood (engage in sexual intercourse with others' wives).' [Mbh VIII 30.40] This mixing together could signal caste mixing, but it also could be a reference to D. K. Gupta's observation that, 'their frequent commingling with the foreigners coming from the west . .. [formed] . . . a sort of composite, and to some extent, nonconformist, culture.'

This frequent commingling with other cultures made the people of the Pañjāb impure. The authors of Mahābhārata VIII 30 warn the reader that any contact with these impure people may result in contamination:

The Āraṭṭas, known as the Bāhlīkas, [living] where the five rivers, having come from the mountain, rush forth; no one should dwell among them for even two days. [43] . . . Whoever having wisdom shall dwell, even for a moment, among these wicked Bāhlīkas, a people devoid of religious action, you share in one-sixth of both their vice and virtues. Thus it was said by a brāhmin [of those] Bāhlīkas, who are endowed with such qualities and have abandoned observances. [26-27]

Even their sacrifices are contaminated because they have 'a Kṣatriya rather than a brahmin for a sacrificer.' [Mbh VIII 30.70] In this verse, the Brahmins of Madhyadeśa are ensuring their importance in society. It is only they, the Brahmins of the local king, who can properly perform a sacrifice. It is only they, who are pure, who can bring fortune to a kingdom. As Nicholas Sutton states:

It is tempting to guess at the actual social order that underlay the brahmanical view of an ideally structured society presented in the Mahābhārata. The continual emphasis on the respect that must be offered by kings to brāhmaṇas suggests that the position of the latter was somewhat less secure than the authors of the epic would have liked. Historically, the rise in significance of the heterodox sects, paralleled by a decline in the importance of yajña and the Vedic religion in general, may well have meant that the traditional brāhmaṇa communities were under pressure in the epic period, and that the teachings noted above are part of an attempt by the brāhmaṇas to reassert their authority. The properties of the brahmaṇas to reassert their authority.

It is clear that in Mahābhārata VIII 30, the authors are attempting to assert their authority.⁷³ Further behavioral injunctions are suggested for both Kşyatriyas and Brahmins:

Living on alms is the Kşatriya's dirt, falsehood is the Brahman's dirt. Bāhlīkas are the dirt of the earth and the women of Madra are the dirt of all women. [Mbh VIII 30.68]⁷⁴

It is clear that Kşatriyas should stick to defending the kingdom and not mix their duties with that of the Brahmins. Likewise, Brahmins are known to be honest, and any falsehood is against their nature.⁷⁵

More significant, however, is the identification of the Bāhlīkas as 'dirt' and the specific attack on women. As Mary Douglas contends, '... dirt is matter out of place... Dirt then, is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt, there is a system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter,

in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements.' The classification of dirt is entirely subjective, there is no objective category of 'dirty.' What is dirt depends on the situation, '... the farmer in Iowa washes the manure from his hands, the Brahmin in Mysore washes with it.' The importance of drawing lines between clean and dirty becomes imperative in times of social upheaval. As chaos (matter with no order) impinges upon society, those who reorder the elements get to set the ground rules. The part of the process in the compilation of the Mahābhārata is an exercise in determining what is clean and what is dirty, i.e. in ordering chaos. On the view of those in Madhyadeśa, the Bāhlīkas are the inappropriate element, they are the by-products of a system, the leftovers that don't make any sense.

Particularly harsh is the classification of the women of the Pañjāb. While the Mahābhārata contains numerous depictions of women's roles in society, on the whole, the proper behavior for a woman is prescribed within a conservative patriarchal society. Her primary function was to produce sons⁷⁸, take care of the home⁷⁹, and devote herself to her husband⁸⁰. As Sāvitrī declares, 'without my husband, I do not wish for happiness, nor for Swarga (heaven) nor prosperity. I cannot live without my husband.'⁸¹ As one contemporary author says:

[t]he family in ancient India was undivided Patriarchal in which all the members of the joint family respected the authority of the Head of the family. Women were happy in this arrangement... Women did not consider their lack of freedom as an injustice or insult to them. On the other hand they claimed it as their right to demand not only protection from father, husband, sons, and even brothers but also punishment to the persons who might dishonor or insult them. 82

This makes the depiction of women in Mahābhārata VIII 30 all the more shocking. The women of the Pañjāb do not stay in the house, but are out at drunken orgies, singing and dancing [Mbh VIII 30.16-17 op. cit.]. The very men who are supposed to protect and honour them are the ones who defile them [Mbh VIII 30.18 op. cit.]. Furthermore, the Pañjāb is a dangerous place for a virtuous woman:

In a previous time, a virtuous woman was seized by some dasyus (barbarians), reportedly Āratṭas. She was unjustly raped by them, upon which she cursed them, 'I am a young lady with kin, and you approach me without any sense of dharma. Because of that [rape] all of the women in your families will become harlots, and you, O Scoundrels, will not be released from that heinous sin.' [Mbh VIII 30.58-59]

Women are the child-bearers and child-rearers, it is their character that will have the initial influence on the children. Furthermore, women are the vessel in which all men are born. In this regard, Mānava Dharmaśāstra 9.9-10 gives explicit instructions to men regarding women:

[8] Men should zealously guard their women because, "The husband enters the wife, becomes an embryo, and is born here on earth. That is why his wife is called a wife $(j\bar{a}y\bar{a})$, because he is born $(j\bar{a}yate)$ again in her. [9] The wife brings forth a son who is just like the man she makes love with; that is why he should guard his wife zealously, in order to keep progeny clean.

Again, the emphasis is on cleanliness, and since the woman is the vessel for men, her impurity condemns all men born of her to impurity. Thus, when the rākṣasa Kalmāṣapāda⁸³ ('Speckled Foot') declares, '... the women of Madra are the dirt of all women,' [68d] he has condemned these people to a permanent unclean/impure status.

These 'morally crooked' [Mbh VIII 30.62] Bāhlīkas have no redeeming qualities. Near the end of the passage, Karņa sums up his attack: 'Those who are ungrateful, steal another's wealth, who have the dharma of drinking liquor and making sexual contact with their teacher's wife, their dharma is adharma; Shame shall be on the Āraṭṭakas from the land of the five rivers . . .' [Mbh VIII 30.74] All of these sins are heinous, but the touching of a guru's wife is particulary abhorrent. Mdhś 11.104-105 makes this abundantly clear:

[104] A man who has violated his guru's marriage-bed should declare his error and sleep on a heated iron bed or embrace a red hot metal cylinder, and by his death he is cleaned. [105] Or he himself may cut off his penis and testicles, hold them in his two cupped hands, and set out toward the southwest region of Ruin, walking straight ahead until he dies...

However, in the final analysis, after listing many of their sins and impurities throughout the passage, the damning evidence is that their dharma, their purpose for living, is adharma, wickedness or unrighteousness. Furthermore, this is not a new development, but this has always been the case:

In the past, when the eternal dharma was reverenced in all lands, the *Pitāmaha* (great ancestor), having seen the *Pāñcanada* dharma, said, 'Shame on the impure actions of the fallen *Vrātya* slaves.' Even in the Kṛta age, it is said, the *Pitāmaha* disapproved of

Pāñcanada dharma. Therefore, he should not honor this [conduct of the people of Pāñcanada] even in *varṇas* which are abiding in the proper dharma. [Mbh VIII 30.65-66]

Even in the most pure of all ages, the *Kṛta* age, the peoples of the Pañjab were impure. Thus, one should not be fooled by the Bāhlīkas, 'those who live among the five rivers with the Sindhu as the sixth; one should avoid these Bāhlikas who are outside dharma and impure.' [Mbh VIII 30.11]

After detailing the sins and impurities of the Bāhlīkas, Karņa sums up this objection to these people by telling Śalya:

Having known this, stick to silence, do not behave contrary (pratīpath). Having killed you first, I will kill Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. [Mbh VIII 30.82]

The last line of his insults brings us back to our opening image, the stumbling of the steeds as they head out to battle. Everything about this charioteer and warrior is pratīpam or viparyayah, opposite, of what is right and ordered. As the Bhagavād Gītā, the Song of the Lord, instructs with positive examples, this passage could be considered its pratīpam, the Bāhlīkād Gītā, the Song of the Bāhlīkas, which instructs with negative examples. As Kenneth Burke points out, a myth is a 'strategy for dealing with a situation,'84 and the authors of Mahābhārata VIII 30 found themselves in a difficult situation. Socially, it was a time of rapid change due to urbanisation, and within the religious sphere, new ideologies and theologies (from both outside and inside) challenged the traditional Brāhmanic injunctions. Invoking Vedic authority, the authors engaged in a creative hermeneutic, using the new language of Dharmasūtra and Dharmaśāstra, to make sense of the world around them. Mahābhārata VIII 30.1-82 is an example of J. Z. Smith's contention that, 'there is no pristine myth, only application.' 85

Notes

^{1.} See, J. S. Grewal, Prehistoric, Ancient, and Early Medieval Punjab: A Social and Cultural History (In Press, 2002), and Patrick Olivelle, The Āśrama System: The History and Hermeneutics of a Religious Institution (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 244-246.

^{2.} As we shall see throughout the paper, the Brāhmaņic injunctions, laws, and prescriptions are more concerned with right action rather than right belief. This is not to say that the notion of right belief is absent, but it is clear that right belief is secondary.

- 3. Patrick Olivelle, *Dharmasūtras, The Law Codes of Ancient India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. xlii.
- 4. There are other texts composed in this time period, such as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and other Dharmaśāstras, but I will keep the focus on these texts as my main project is to deconstruct a particular passage of the Mahābhārata.
- 5. The word sindhu comes from sidh, 'to go.' It can either refer to a river, ie. that which goes forth, or it could be a reference to the area around the river Indus. In either case, the term is pointing us to the same area. MW, p. 1217.
- 6. For a detailed analysis of the changing geographical boundaries of the region of the Punjāb, see J. S. Grewal, 'Inaugural Address at the Punjāb History Conference, XXVII Session' (paper presented at the Proceedings of the Punjāb History Conference, Patiala, 1995), p. 3-10.
- 7. All translations of MDh are taken from Wendy Doniger and Brian K. Smith, *The Laws of Manu* (London: Penguin, 1991).
- 8. Vinasana refers to where the Sarasvatī dissapears. Ibid., p. 19, note 21.
- 9. Prayaga is identified as modern Allahabad. Ibid., p. 19, note 21.
- 10. The land of Kālakavana in the Rajmahal hills in the modern province of Bihar. Nando Lal Dey, *The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India*. 2d ed. (New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1979. First published, London, 1927), p. 84.
- 11. The western part of the Vindhya range. Ibid., p. 149.
- 12. All translations of the Dharmasūtras are taken from P. Olivelle, Dharmasūtras.
- 13. P. Olivelle, Dharmasūtras, p. xxxiii.
- 14. N. L. Dey, Geographical Dictionary, p. 116.
- 15. Ibid., p. 10.
- 16. Debates rage over the true historical identity of the Aryans, and it would take many pages to fully cover it. However, the debate concerning whether or not the Aryans were invaders or indigenous does not concern us here. The essential point is that there was a group of people who created the Rg Veda in the Pañjāb. Those interested in the Aryan debate can look at Romila Thapar, 'Some Appropriations of the Theory of Aryan Race Relating to the Beginnings of Indian History.' In Invoking the Past: The Uses of History in South Asia, edited by Daud Ali. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999); Michael Witzel, 'Autochthonous Aryans? The Evidence from Old Indian and Iranian Texts.' Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies 7, no. 3 (2001); Edwin Bryant, The Quest for the Origins of Vedic Culture: The Indo-Aryan Debate, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- 17. I think it is appropriate here to reflect upon Patrick Olivelle's comments about the dangers of periodisation in his book, *The Āśrama System*, p. 129, 'The division of history into neat periods is always artificial and often misleading. Such periodisations are categories created by historians as tools for organizing their data for specific scholarly purposes.' Therefore, it is with trepidation that I try to fit pre-

Puranic Indian history into 'neat periods,' but also recognize the importance of organizing data in order to make sense of it.

organizates of the very serious serious of early 'Vedic India' from Michael Witzel, 'The Development of the Vedic Canon and its Schools: The Social and Political Milieu,' in Inside the Texts, Beyond the Texts: New Approaches to the Study of the Vedas, ed. Michael Witzel (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1997), p. 301, 'The Kuru area of c. 1200 B.C. was the ritual and political center of early, post-Rg Vedic Indo-Aryan India.' For a comprehensive analysis of the debate surrounding the date of the Rg Veda, see Edwin Bryant, The Quest for the Origins, p. 238-264.

19. F. B. J. Kuiper, 'Foreign Words in the Rg Veda,' Indo-Iranian Journal 38, no. 3 (1995), p. 261. For a more comprehensive discussion of this topic see F. B. J. Kuiper, Aryans in the Rigveda (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1991), and the subsequent discussion in the Indo-Iranian Journal, R. P. Das, 'The Hunt For Foreign Words in the Rgveda,' Indo-Iranian Journal 38, no. 3 (1995), 207-238 and F. B. J. Kuiper, 'On a Hunt For Possible Objections,' Indo-Iranian Journal 38, no. 3 (1995), p. 239-247. Again, one can also turn to Edwin Bryant, The Quest for the Origins, p. 76-107.

- 20. Grewal, Punjab, p. 45.
- 21. Ibid., p. 52-53.
- 22. M. Witzel, 'Vedic Canon and its Schools,' p. 266.
- 23. J. S. Grewal, Punjab, p. 87.
- 24. The differences between the cultures were so clear to the Greeks that four centuries later the geographer and historian Ptolemy made a clear distinction between India 'within the Ganges' and India 'beyond the Ganges.' J. W. McCrindle, Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy (New Delhi: Today and Tomorrow's Printers and Publishers, 1974. First published, London, 1885), p. xiv, 33, p. 189.
- 25. Romila Thapar, A History of India, vol. 1 (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 78.
- 26. A. K. Narain, The Indo-Greeks, p. 81.
- 27. Ibid., p. 88-89. The parallel 'with other series of international currencies' include, 'the finds of Roman coins in India and the gold coins of the Mamluks of Egypt found at Broach.' [ff. 1, p. 89]
- 28. Hemchandra Raychaudhuri, Political History of Ancient India, from the Accession of Parikshit to the Extinction of the Gupta Dynasty (Calcutta: The University of Calcutta, 1923), p. 234-235.
- 29. Ibid., p. 239.
- 30. Ibid., p. 242-244.
- 31. B. N. Puri, *India Under the Kushāṇas* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965), p. 7.

- 32. Buddha Prakash, Glimpses of Ancient Panjab (Patiala: Punjabi University Dept. of Punjab Historical Studies, 1966), p. 56.
- 33. Grewal, Punjab, p. 134.
- 34. P. Olivelle, The Aśrama System, p. 59.
- 35. Ibid., p. 62.
- 36. Ibid., p. 7.
- 37. This is a very brief summary of some of Olivelle's findings and do not do justice to his detailed work. However, in this paper, it is not the developments within āśrama system that are so important, but rather the time frame (the centuries bracketing the common era) and the emphasis on Brāhmaṇical hermeneutics that move my argument forward.
- 38. James L. Fitzgerald, 'India's Fifth Veda: The Māhābharata's Presentation of Itself,' in *Essays on the Māhābharata*, ed. Arvind Sharma (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), p. 154.
- 39. Ibid., p. 154.
- 40. Ibid., p. 152-170, for a detailed explanation of the Mahābhārata as the fifth Veda.
- 41. Ibid., p. 166.
- 42. E. Frauwallner, *History of Indian Philosophy*, trans. V. M. Bedekar, vol. 1 (Delhi: Motilal Barnarsidass 1973), p. 116.
- 43. Georg Bühler and J. Kirste, 'Indian Studies No. II: Contributions to the History of the Mahâbhârata.' Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historichen Classe der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien 127, no. 12 (1892), p. 26.
- 44. H. C. Sastri, 'The Mahābhārata: A Dharmaśāstra in the Real Sense of the Term,' in *Studies in the Mahābhārata*, ed. K. C. Mishra (Bhubaneswar: Institute of Orissan Culture, 1989), p. 31. In fact, scholars estimate that as much as one half of Manāva Dharmaśāstra is in the Mahābhārata.
- 45. J. A. B. van Buitenen, *The Mahābhārata*. Vol. 3, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 200.
- 46. Alf Hiltebeitel, The Ritual of Battle: Krishna in the Māhābharata. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), p. 256.
- 47. See Ibid., p. 272-273 for more details on the first set of insults. I will keep my focus on the longer, more detailed, second tirade.
- 48. This comparison, the warrior Karna and his charioteer Salya as the counterparts to the warrior Arjuna and his charioteer Kṛṣṇa, was first pointed out by Walter Ruben, 'Krishna: Konkordanz und Kommentar der Motive seines Heldenlebens.' Istanbuler Schriften 17 (1944), p. 221, n. 11.
- 49. David Harvey, Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1996), p. 324.
- 50. Ibid., p. 325.

51. For a clear, concise, and theoretically sophisticated treatment of otherness, marginality, and the creation of monsters, see David Gordon White, Myths of the Dog-Man (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 1-21.

52. Alexander Cunningham, *The Ancient Geography of India* (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1963. First published, 1871), p. 156; N. L. Dey, *Geographical Dictionary*, p. 9

53. Jonathan Z. Smith, Map is not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions (Leiden: Brill, 1978), p. 141.

54. In a conversation with O. P. Bhardwaj in Chandigarh, India, July 2000, I learned that Jartika is a general term used contemptuously for the people living in the land of the five rivers. However, I have not been able to confirm this in any books.

55, D. G. White, Myths of the Dog-Man, p. 120.

56. H. Raychaudhuri, Political History of Ancient India, p. 121.

57. Interestingly, this reputation seems to have withstood the test of time as A. Cunningham, *The Ancient Geography of India*, p. 155 gives anecdotal evidence to support such a claim,

In these 'pleasant paths' of the *Pilu* forest, the traveler was unfortunately liable to be despoiled of his cloths by robbers. This description by the author of the Mahābhārata was fully verified by Hwen Thsang [sic] in A.D. 630, and again by myself in 1863. On leaving Sākala, the Chinese pilgrim traveled eastward into the forest of *Po-lo-she* trees, where his part encountered fifty brigands, who robbed them of their clothes [Hiouen Tsang, i.97]. In November, 1863, I approached Sākala from the east through a continuous wood of *Pilu* trees, and pitched my tent at the foot of the hill. During the night the tent was three times approached by parties of robbers who were detected by the vigilance of my watch dog.

While this evidence is by no means meant to prove that the people of the Pañjāb are wandering bands of robbers, it does demonstrate the influence the Mahābhārata has had for our understanding of India.

58. M. Monier-Williams, An English-Sanskrit Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), p. 212, gives a number of definitions, including, 'a present (to a king or superior),' and 'to offer an oblation to a god [acc.].' I have chosen the latter definition, but the authors may well have been making a play on words by suggesting both definitions.

59. Ibid., p. 730-31.

60. Bimala Churn Law, *Tribes in Ancient India*, 2d ed. (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1973. First Published, Poona, 1943), p. 70-72.

61. See Mbh VIII 30.9-11, 14, 21, 43, and 44.

- 62. A. Cunningham, The Ancient Geography of India, p. 156; N. L. Dey, Geographical Dictionary, p. 116; Bimla Churn Law, Historical Geography of Ancient India (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1954), p. 105.
- 63. B. C. Law, Historical Geography, p. 134.
- 64. The author of the Critical Notes for book eight of the Critical Edition comments that the naming of the two Piśacas, Bāhi and Hlīka in verses 30.43-44 is 'a very fanciful etymology,' (P. L. Vaidya, *Critical Notes to Karnaparvan*, p. 687). This determination misses the point of the whole passage. The myth recounted in this passage is not an attempt to find the *origins* of the peoples surrounding Madhyadeśa, it is not an ontological statement on the biological make-up of a people, but it is a construct which serves to reorder a chaotic world.
- 65. D. G. White, Myths of the Dog-Man, p. 190.
- 66. There may be symbolic value to the mention of barley in this passage, as H.S. Bhatti, Folk Religion: Change and Continuity, (Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2000), p. 51 states, 'Barley corn is a symbol of fertility . . . and is commonly considered the initiator of sexual desire . . . [B]arley and ashes represent two different realms which are in mutual opposition . . . barley corns belong to manipulation/earth and matter while ashes belong to devotion/heaven and spirit.' As nothing in this passage is included by chance, this may have had resonant value for the reader.
- 67. Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo (New York: Frederick A Praeger, Inc., 1966), p. 126, suggests that 'food is not likely to be polluting at all unless the external boundaries of the social system are under pressure.' Clearly, the boundaries of Madhyadesa are in question and the ruling elite are struggling to define them. Douglas' analysis of purity and impurity will be discussed in a later section in detail.
- 68. W. Doniger and B. K. Smith, The Laws of Manu, p. xxxiii and p. xxxvi.
- 69. For a detailed discussion of meat eating and vegetariansim, see Ibid., p. xxx-xl.
- 70. P. Olivelle, Dharmasūtras, p. 378, note.
- 71. D.K. Gupta, 'Punjab as Reflected in the Epics,' in *History of the Punjab: Volume First*, ed. L. M. Joshi (Patiala: Punjabi University Press, 1997), p. 173.
- 72. Nicholas Sutton, Religious Doctrines in the Mahābhārata (Delhi: Motilal Barnarsidass Publishers, 2000), p. 55.
- 73. I am uncomfortable with stating the brahmins wanted to 'reassert' their authority as this implies that they dominated South Asian society prior to this period. While is possible they had pockets of control, I don't want to give the impression that the Mahābhārata and the Dharmaśāstras are the documents of a Brahmin resurgence, a harking back to a past Vedic golden age where there was a monolithic brahmanical society in place.
- 74. It should be noted that this is not the only reference to the Madras as dirt. For example:

- 1. One reading of Mbh VIII 27.30 is sadā malaḥ, 'always dirt.'
- 397* reads, pṛthvivyām sarvadeśānām madrako malaucyate, 'It is said that Madrakas are the dirt of all the countries of the earth.'
- 398* reads, tathā strīnām ca sarvāsām madrikā mala ucyate, 'It is said that Madrīkā's [women from Madra] are the dirt of all women.'
- 75. For a detailed disussion on the importance of friendship in the war books, see A. Hiltebeitel, *The Ritual Battle*, p. 259-266.
- 76. Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger, p. 35.
- 77. Lewis Hyde, Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), p. 176.
- 78. Mbh XII 258.25-29.
- 79. Mbh III 222.25, 197.8
- 80. Mbh I 77.21-22, 'Save me from breaking dharma, king, and teach me dharma. If I have a child by you, I shall practice in this world the purest dharma! 'There are three who own no property, O king a wife, a slave, and a son: what they acquire belongs to him who owns them.' Translation from J. A. B. van Buitenen, *The Mahābhārata*, vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 189. I have replaced van Buitenen's 'the Law' with 'dharma' to keep consistency throughout the paper.
- 81. Mbh III.281.52. Translation in Vanamala Bhawalkar, Woman in the Mahābhārata (Delhi: Sharada Publishing House, 1999), p. 82.
- 82. Ibid., p. 77.
- 83. Even the situation of this rākṣasa Kalmāṣapāda is significant. Apparently, he has 'plunged himself into the water to purify himself of Madraka defilement and has warned some unnamed king to unhand him lest he be polluted too.' A. Hiltebeitel, *The Ritual of Battle*, p. 277, note 66.
- 84. Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), p. 256, quoted in J. Z. Smith, Map is not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions, p. 299.
- 85. J. Z. Smith, Map is not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions, p. 299.

Shiv Kumar Batalvi (1936-1973) – Life and Poetry

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The life and poetry of Shiv Kumar Batalvi - the most popular modern Punjabi poet and the youngest recipient of Shahitya Academy Award in 1967 - has been the subject of a large number of books and magazine articles, mostly written in Punjabi. Yet, a reliable and coherent study of his life has not come to light. The authors have attempted to put together a broad outline of Shiv's life through detailed review of relevant published material, by interviewing a number of his contemporaries and family members and by conducting background research on people and places and the social and literary environment that shaped Shiv's life and poetry. The authors also present an overview of Shiv's poetry, highlighting its versatility and deep roots in Punjabi literary traditions. The authors have identified the main reason behind the extraordinary popularity of Shiv as his exceptional capability to embody the collective psyche of Punjabis and their traditional cultural identity in his poetry.

Introduction

On the eve of the turbulent decade of the 1960s, a dynamic, exciting and controversial time for the youth around the world, who rose to challenge and redefine the established boundaries of politics, culture, literature and art of their societies, Shiv Kumar Batalvi, a young man of barely 20 years of age, appeared on the scene of Punjabi poetry in East Punjab. By living a brief and intense life that was devoted to writing deeply profound, passionate and enchantingly lyrical poetic expressions of the pathos of his time, and dying young at the age of 36, a fate that he had predicted and romanticized throughout his poetry, he attained the charisma of a modern day saint and a fallen-hero in the eyes of many of his admirers. The sixties was primarily a phenomenon of western societies but its resonance had also touched the literature and art in the third world and had produced new trends in all forms of creative expressions. It was perhaps not a coincidence that Shiv Kumar Batalvi came to age and quickly gained prominence at this crucial juncture when the emerging era of modernity was decisively and permanently replacing the traditional

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way of writing Punjabi poetry. It was the most opportune time for talented poets to get attention and fame at a young age as the authentic voices of the new times. The real wonder of Shiv Kumar Batalvi's poetry is not that he mastered the new and innovative ways to express modern poetical sensibilities better than most of his contemporaries, but that he did it by masterfully and artistically combining and fusing them with the spirit of Punjab's culture and with the age-old charm of classical Punjabi poetry and folk songs. He evoked, and still continues to do so, strong emotions among the listeners and readers of his poetry. For a vast majority, he is quintessence of the absolute best that great poetry is supposed to be, while for some his poetry is an unwelcome distraction from the true goal of poetry as a tool to identify and expose the fault lines in the society and people's reaction to them.

Shiv Kumar Batalvi's Life

The Village

Shiv was born on July 23, 1936, in a village, Bara Pind Lohtian, located in the northern part of pre-partition Punjab close to the border with the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Bara Pind Lohtian is about thirty miles east of Sialkot and 15 miles west of the India-Pakistan border on Zafarwal-Shakargarh road, in district Narowal. Before partition, this area was in Gurdaspur district. Due to the proximity of Jammu and Kahsmir mountains, the weather here is relatively temperate compared to the extreme summer heat of the plains of the Punjab. A number of nalas (small streams), Aik, Daigh, Basantar, Tavi and others pass through the area. The village is located on the bank of Basantar nala. At the time of the partition, the village had approximately 400 houses of Hindu and 100 houses of Muslim families. There was only one Sikh household in the village. Muslims were mostly poor while Hindus were generally affluent. They were landlords, merchants and moneylenders. Their houses were solidly built with small bricks and wood. Doors and windows were elaborately designed. The main doors had engravings of their religious figures. Hindus were the dominant faction in the village. They did not allow the slaughter of cows, but other than that people in the village lived together with remarkable religious tolerance and communal harmony. They drank water from the same wells, and Hindu and Muslim children used to play together. The religious and seasonal festivals were the big events of their lives and were celebrated with a lot of funfair. The village life was by and large very peaceful. Disputes were settled by the panchayat (council) of village elders and police never came to the village. No murders or other major crimes are reported in that area during those days.

The square of the village was an open space of about half an acre in area with a number of shops around it. Large mango orchards surrounded the village. On a clear day one could see the mountains of Kashmir and at night time lights of the city of

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In the middle of the gruesome carnage that swept the Punjab in the wake of partition, Shiv left the village with other close relatives. They travelled through the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and after many days arrived at Dera Baba Nanak where Shiv's parents were anxiously waiting for their sons. Shiv's family soon migrated to Batala, across from Bara Pind Lohtian on the other side of the newly carved border. The bloody partition of Punjab shattered Shiv's idyllic childhood and brought the happiest period of his life to an abrupt end. ⁴

The impressions of this early period provided Shiv's poetry a nostalgic wealth of haunting imagery and metaphors, most of which can be traced back to the scenery and traditional village life of rural Punjab in the area where he grew up. The memories of his childhood stayed fresh in his mind [Gargi 2000, 'Kaudian Wala Sapp']. The traumatic disruption of Shiv's childhood caused by the events of partition was perhaps one of the sources of his deep sorrow and melancholy, although Shiv never expressed it directly in his early poetry. Only at the end of his poetic career, he addressed it in his poem Dudh Da Qatal (Murder of Mother's Milk), as part of a surgical and painful analysis of his inner sufferings, calling the pre-partition combined Punjab as his mother:

I still remember it today, and you must remember it too When, together, we murdered our mother.

My childhood was killed with the murder of my mother And its cold corpse was left behind in your place.

Even now, I become quiet when I remember that And lose myself in the thoughts of that half-a-body that was your share.

[Translation by Suman Kashyap]. 6

The Years of Aimless Wanderings

Shiv's family settled down in Batala in Darussalam muhalla (section of a city), now re-named as Prem Nagar. Shiv attended the Salvation Army High School and passed his matriculation examination in first division in 1953. That is about how far he would go as far as formal education was concerned. To the utter disappointment of his father, who wanted him to get a good education and start a successful career, he spent the next few years getting in and out of three colleges without getting a degree. He spent two years in the Baring Union Christian College, Batala, in the F.Sc. program, but dropped out without sitting in the Board examination. He next joined R. D. College, Nabha, but left it after a few months. He then got admission in S.N. College, Qadian, a small town near Batala, in arts subjects, but dropped out again after a couple of years [Pal 1998]. Finally, his father forced him to join the Revenue Department as a patwari. After joining the service, Shiv took little interest in the work and for a while made an arrangement with a retired patwari to take care of his

official responsibilities in exchange of one-third of his pay. Even that didn't last for long and Shiv resigned from his job in 1961 [Kahlon. Int. 2002].

It was during the final year of his unsuccessful college career at Qadian in 1957 that Shiv started writing poetry in Punjabi. Among his student friends in the colleges he had attended, he was already very popular as a talented singer and he had developed a large following of fans [Pal 1998]. Now, instead of singing folk and film songs, he started singing his own poems. He soon got introduced in the literary circles of Batala. Some senior writers of Batala, including Jaswant Singh Rahi, Kartar Singh Balgan and Barkat Ram Yumman, as the saying goes, took him under their wings. Among them, Barkat Ram Yumman played an important role in introducing him to the kavi darbars (poetry recital functions, also called mushairas) outside Batala [Sharma 1979].

The Decade of Shiv's Poetic Miracle

The next decade, after Shiv left S.N College, was the most prolific period of his poetry writing. It was during this time that he composed most of his masterpiece poetry that he was destined to write during his brief lifetime. Once he discovered his poetic genius, the writing of poetry became his primary passion and overshadowed all other considerations. He practically dedicated his life to writing poetry as the only objective of his life. He extensively studied Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu and English literature. Shiv also developed friendships with a large number of well-known Punjabi writers and started moving in their circle. Between 1960 and 1965, he published his first five collections of poetry. One of the only two other collections that he published later contained poems that were mostly written during this period. He was awarded the coveted Sahitya Academy Award for his verse-drama, Loonan, published in 1965, becoming its youngest ever recipient.

By the end of this period, Shiv had become a living legend and most sought after Punjabi poet. The organizers of kavi darbars all over the Punjab had found out that inviting Shiv would guarantee a large audience and success of their functions. They also began to break the longstanding tradition of seniority by inviting Shiv to recite his poetry after some well-established and senior poets, knowing well that the audience will not stay around to listen to other poets after him [Singh 1994]. He was the star attraction of kavi darbars and was famous for his unique and passionate style of singing of his poetry that could spellbind his audience into pin-drop silence. Many who had listened to Shiv's recitations of his poetry found it as one of the most memorable experiences of their lives ¹² [Duggal and Sekhon 1992].

Shiv's extraordinary hold on his audience has been noted by all of his biographers. A typical example is Balwant Gargi's description of a kavi darbar that he attended with Shiv:

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The Trip to England

In May of 1972, Shiv visited England on the invitation of Dr. Gupal Puri and Mrs. Kailash Puri He had been looking forward to his first trip abroad as a welcome relief from the drudgery of his life in Chandigarh. When he arrived in England, his popularity and fame had already reached a high point among the Punjabi community. His arrival was announced in the local Indian papers with headlines and pictures [Takhar, Int. 2002]. He spent a busy time in England. A number of public functions and private parties were arranged in his honour, where he recited his poetry. Dr. Gupal Puri arranged the first large function in Coventry, a Midlands town, to welcome Shiv. A large number of his fans and Punjabi poets, including Santokh Singh Santokh, Kuldip Takhar and Tarsem Purewal (founder of Des Pardes) and many others attended this function. Another large gathering was organized at Rochester (Kent) in his honour. The famous artist S. Sobha Singh was also present who had travelled on his own expense to see Shiv. His engagements in England were regularly reported in the local Indian media and the BBC Television once interviewed him. While the Punjabi community got their opportunity to listen to Shiv on various occasions, his stay in London proved to be the last straw for his failing health. He would stay late and continue to drink until 2:00 or 2:30 in the morning at parties or at home, engaged in discussions with his hosts and other people who would come to visit him. He would wake up after a short sleep around 4:00am, and begin his day by again taking a couple of sips of Scotch¹⁶ [Kaur 1998].

The Final Days

When Shiv returned from England in September 1972, his health had deteriorated visibly. He was now bitterly complaining about the undue criticism of his poetry by the progressive and leftist writers. He openly started talking about his disappointment at the unjustified condemnation of his poetry¹⁷ [Gargi 2000 'Surme Walee Akhah']. Within a couple of months after his return from England, his health started deteriorating, never to recover again. He was in a dire financial predicament during those days and felt that most of his friends had deserted him in his time of need. His wife, Aruna, somehow managed to get him admitted in a hospital in Sector 16 of Chandigarh where he received treatment for a few days. A couple of months later, he was admitted to hospital in Amritsar, but left it on his own against the advice of his doctors. He didn't want to die in hospital and simply walked out of the hospital and went to his family home in Batala. He was later shifted to the village of his in-laws, Kiri Mangial, a small village near the border with Pakistan. Shiv Kumar Batalvi died in Kiri Mangial during the early morning hours of May 6, 197318 [Kahlon. Int. 2002].

Shiv Kumar Batalvi's Poetry

Punjabi Poetry Scene Before Shiv

Poetry has been a part of Punjab's culture as an important feature of Punjabis' living experience since at least, and probably long before, the time of the first major puniabi poet, Baba Farid (1173-1265). During the following centuries, it took many different and distinct forms, and besides producing a long line of distinguished poets in the Sufi and Qissa (epic love story) tradition, its oral tradition encompasses a wide variety of popular poetry in its folk songs and verse-dramas on the themes of religious mythology. The classical period of Sufi and Qissa Punjabi poetry came to an end at the turn of the 20th century with Maulvi Ghulam Rasul (1849-1892). Khwaja Ghulam Farid (1841-1901) and Mian Muhamamd Baksh (1830-1904). By then, Punjabi poets had already started adopting modern verse forms. Bhai Vir Singh (1872-1952) was the first Punjabi poet who introduced free verse in Punjabi poetry. During the first half of the 20th century, Punjabi poetry went through the process of a complete transformation from traditional to modern with the political, economic and cultural changes that were taking place in India and the rest of the world. The world wars on international fronts, Marxist/Leninist revolution in Russia and India's own independence struggle on the national level brought about several changes in the life and outlook of people that were also reflected in Punjabi literature. By the time Shiv Kumar Batalvi started writing poetry in the late 1950s, the classical Punjabi poetry period was already long over and post-partition poetry was represented by many emerging progressive and modern trends, dominated by Prof. Mohan Singh (1905-1978), Amrita Pritam (b. 1919) and other stalwarts of modern Punjabi poetry [Singh 1994].

A Brief Survey of Shiv's Poetry

Shiv was not just a poet of a few dozen popular poems nor was his poetry limited to a couple of topics. He was a very versatile poet of many different styles and a wide range of subjects. Throughout his brief poetic career, his poetry shows a continuous progression from the early pangs of birha (separation from loved ones) to increasingly complex emotions and different reactions to his inner sufferings and towards society at large. His sense of his own identity also went through many changes. He travelled a great distance from his first collection of poems Peeran Da Paraga (A Handful of Pains), published in 1960, to his last major work Mein Te Mein (Me and Myself), published in 1970. Following is a brief survey of his published poetry:

1. Peeran Da Paraga (A Handful of Pains, 1960): It is Shiv's first published collection of poetry, consisting of 25 poems. It includes poems that he had written

O noble father. Bring back that song for me. O noble father.

One day my song and I,
In that enchanted season,
Ploughed the earth of my heart,
Sowed it with seeds of undefiled dreams.
No matter how many tears I poured on it,
No flower bloomed.
O noble father.
Bring back one flower for me,
O noble father.

What use your fertile lands
If daughters wilt?
What use your lakes
If the swans are parched?
What use your ample wealth
Your granary of pearls,
O noble father,
If you cannot bring back the season,
When the cotton flower blooms.
O noble father.
[Translation: Suman Kashyap]

5. Loonan (1965): It is an epic-like verse play and is considered by many of Shiv's critics as his masterpiece and most significant literary achievement. Shiv reworked the theme of Puran Bhagat, a mythical folklore of Punjab about the implications of marrying a young girl with an old man. In the traditional story the young wife is depicted as an evil villain in her relationship with the grown-up son of her husband from his first marriage. Shiv wrote his poem from the perspective of injustice to the young wife. He altogether changed the traditional character of Loonan that is portrayed in the legend as a wicked, lustful and cruel woman. He made Loonan a sympathetic character and challenged the male-dominated society to reconsider their norms and moral values. Shiv was awarded Sahitiya Academy award for this book in 1967.

Loonan stands out among Shiv's poetic works for a number of reasons. It not only adds a new dimension to the versatility of Shiv's poetry, it also recasts, to some degree, Shiv's entire poetry in a new light. In particular, the profound and perceptive empathy of women's emotions and feelings as victims of social inequity and

injustice that Shiv portrayed in *Loonan*, allows a deeper understanding of Shiv's concept of love and gender-relations in his poetry than the stereotype of women as the poet's self-centred object of desire. Similarly, the masterful use of imagery that sets the tone and atmosphere of each of the eight acts of the verse play helps to highlight Shiv's superb poetic techniques of equally expert use of imagery in his other poems.

In Loonan, Shiv presents a remarkably incisive and insightful appreciation of women's sufferings in a patriarchy and exposes its moral values as the tools that force women to sacrifice their individuality to fit in various roles assigned to them. Reading the deliberate politics of the monarchical discourse in the legend, Shiv presents it from the women's point of view. More importantly, Shiv rejects the glorification of patriarchal assignment of women's role and instead forcefully brings out the individuality of Loonan:

Shiv Kumar ... views her sexual subjugation and deprivation as a basic injustice to her and cause of her suffering. He vindicates the veracity of her Being by asserting her right to choose and by condemning her deprivation in marriage - through her own voice. In Luna body is not merely a site of sexual desire but her humanity asserted through valuing and articulating the needs of her body and condemning their deprivation in marriage. The play is a strong assertion of woman's sexuality which has been ignored, abused, repressed or mythologized (as passive) in patriarchy [Singh 2000, 133-134].

Shiv used strong sensual imagery to highlight Loonan's individual feelings. She repeatedly refers herself as 'fire', 'fire maiden' or 'women-fire':

Why should not fire speak out friends?

...
I wish every hearth's fire to leap
And break all bounds
With its scorching and burning
Tear up the pages of oppression
Why should anybody weigh our fire's warmth
Against a handful of rice?

... One day this fire Shall speak out Its eyes shall deliver Instead of a tear Amarjit Chandan, expressed similar thoughts in a recent interview:

There is neither any scientific social understanding nor any spirituality in Shiv's poetry. He represents adolescence emotions. Very few people have bothered to read all of his poetry. He has become famous on the basis of just a few of his poems. He has copied the lyricism and diction of Harbhajan Singh [Chandan, Int. 2002].²⁰

Similar harsh criticism was also levied against his poetry, during and after his lifetime, by many other Punjabi writers who either belonged to the Naxalite and other leftist movements or experimentalism and social realism schools of thoughts in Punjabi poetry. Some of the criticism was perhaps a reaction to the extraordinary phenomena, never witnessed in Punjab during modern times, of Shiv's unparalleled popularity as a poet that outshined most of his contemporaries.

Shiv's Popularity

One of the most prominent aspects of Shiv's poetry is its ever-increasing popularity that has continued to grow since his death and has surpassed all other modern Punjabi poets. Six years after Shiv's death, O.P. Sharma noted the phenomenon of Shiv's growing popularity:

We are in the midst of a Shiv wave which is projecting him in proper focus as a man and a poet. We are reviving, reliving and rediscovering him ... Shiv Batalvi's 'nites' (sic), operas, symposia and stage performances in India and abroad, organized by enthusiastic admirers of the poet, are the emotional and effervescent expressions of our tribute to this lyrical genius ... we are experiencing a vital process of gestation and reincarnation of the poet through publications, radio, television, recorded discs and cellulides [Sharma 1979, iii – iv].

Since then, a number of indicators point to the fact that his poetry has grown immensely in popularity among all segments of Punjabis. Besides more than 20 books and numerous articles that have so far been published on his life and poetry, his poetry has also been the research topic of many doctoral theses at various Indian universities. Perhaps the most important market-based indicator of the popularity of Shiv's poetry is the large number of recordings of his poems made for commercial audio albums by Indian and Pakistani Punjabi singers, including: Surrinder Kaur,

Jagjit Zirvi, Pushpa Hans, Assa Singh Mastana, Mohinder Kapoor, Jagjeet Singh, Chitra Singh, Kuldip Deepak, Jagmohan Kaur, K. Deep, Dolly Guleria, Bhupinder Singh, Mitali Singh, Kavita Karishnamurthi, Deedar Pardesi, Jasbir Jassi, Neelam Sahani, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Shazia Manzoor, Ghulam Ali, Tufail Niazi, Shaukat Ali and others. The latest album of Hans Raj Hans, released in October 2002, is solely based on Shiv's poems.²¹

Other than Punjabi Sufi and Qissa poets of the classical period, no Punjabi poet except Shiv Kumar Batalvi has ever gained mass popularity on such a large scale. Shiv's popularity has now reached a point where ignoring it as a yardstick to measure the significance of his poetry will amount to a contempt of the collective mind of Punjabis.

Shiv and Punjabi Poetry Tradition

Shiv Kumar Batalvi has hit a chord with the psyche of Punjabis of all backgrounds. A closer look at his poetry reveals that the success and popularity of Shiv's poetry, to a large extent, have their genesis in following the centuries-old traditions of classical Punjabi poetry, not in its purpose, content or message, especially of Sufi and religious poetry, but in skilfully adopting the diction, vocabulary, symbolism and many of its other important aspects. By imbibing the essential elements of classical Punjabi poetry, Shiv articulated an acute historical sense and combined it in the most aesthetically pleasing way in his otherwise contemporary poetry. He appeared to have intuitively followed the prescription of T.S. Elliot, who had recognized the importance of proper reflection of historical sense in modern poetry in the following words:

Yet if the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes, 'tradition' should positively be discouraged. We have seen many such simple currents soon lost in the sand; and novelty is better than repetition. Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable ... the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of ... his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional.

The stars are emitting A sweet heat.

O roast my store of sorrows in your pan, Tender of the fire.

[Translation by Suman Kashyap]

This poem can be understood at different levels. It was written during a time when Shiv was suffering from the loss of his first love. It can be taken as poet's wish to speed up the process of dying in the agony of his broken heart. He wishes that if he could get some help in raising the level of his pain to a maximum point, he may get freedom from the unbearable agony of his life. The dominant mood of the poem is very similar to the spiritual journey of a Sufi travelled in stages, where each stage of spiritual purification demands new sacrifices. It is the setting of the poem in a Punjab village and the use of imagery from a typical village scene, i.e., symbols of day's ending through the images of cattle coming back from their grazing grounds and birds making their noisy clamour of early evening gatherings on the trees, that kindles memories of familiar scenes in the readers' mind and adds to the overall charm and haunting quality of the poem. Shiv's descriptions of the village scenes are authentic in all of their details. It was a common practice in the villages to accept payment for services in kind (bhara), which the poet offers in the form of his tears. With the nightfall, a complete silence falls on Punjab's villages and in the still air; a cloud of smoke engulfs them. Shiv has used this image to develop the symbol of winds that have gone to sleep as if tired of the daylong wailings and the illusion of the warmth of a light fever emitting from the stars. The death is not presented as something to be afraid of, but rather a welcome and necessary next stage of the poet's journey through his sufferings. The pain, the agony and the hurry to reach the next stage, death, none of them are depicted as the usual and mindless grief of a broken heart. They are described as part of a deliberate and determined process, the purpose of which is fully understood, accepted and desired by the poet.

Those are some of the qualities of Shiv's popular poems. In most of his poems, the listener and reader encounter the same familiar characteristics of Punjabi classical poetry: simple language and idiom of village folks; celebration of death; lyricism; images and metaphors of rural Punjab and skilful depictions of Punjabi culture.

Shiv stands out among all Punjabi poets in his unique representation of various colours and shades of Punjabi culture:

Out of the lush green fecundity of the soil of Punjab, resonant as it always is with nature's music and colours, and even out of its arid

and bleak landscape, Shiv carved out immortal motifs, images, symbols, legends and myths, which only a few rare Punjabi poets have ever explored before him with such consummate power. As a poet with a profound folk consciousness he captured the fantasy and the mystery of the Punjabi countryside and its people. He invoked their rituals, totems and taboos, folk traditions, folksy memories, racial consciousness, curses and wails, death charades, earthen lamps on the graves and shrines, the wooden parrots on the biers, broken dolls' heads, the cursed womb, the fatal she-snake and the choked blind well. In his unified sensibility he integrated his inner ferment in terms of modern dilemma, deeply embedded and rooted in the locale and the habitat, fauna and flora of the earth that he loved and lived on. Shiv Batalvi fertilized the psyche of the Punjabi language and enriched its poetic tradition as its supremely gifted, solitary and passionate singer [Sharma 1979, 5]

Conclusion

Shiv was a very versatile and supremely gifted poet. His poetry includes poems written on many different subjects and a variety of styles. He could write traditional Punjabi folk songs, as well as poems in post-modern diction and in many other verse forms. The only labels that may properly apply to Shiv's poetry are human-ism and Punjabi-ism. The deep pain and sorrow of some of his poetry can best be understood in the larger context of a Punjabi's reaction to the crisis of human identity in modern times. He articulated the tragedy of breakdown of Punjab's traditional society under the onslaught of modernization. He had lived his childhood in a traditional village social set-up that offered the poise, equilibrium, stability, tranquillity and selfassurance of Punjabi culture. Early in his adolescence, he experienced the sudden death of this centuries-old way of living. For a large part of his versatile poetry, Shiv embraced the identity of a Punjabi folk storyteller, and viewed the massive disruptions around him from the historical perspective of someone deeply immersed in Punjabi folklore. He became the passionate voice of millions of others who were, and still are, going through the same crisis. His poetry became a vast treasure of the fond memories of sights, sounds and symbols of the way of living and the scenery of rural Punjab, never so beautifully recorded in such breathtaking details except by the Great Master of Punjabi poetry, Waris Shah. Ultimately, his permanent place among great Punjabi poets is affirmed by his ever-growing popularity. He seems to have passed the test for determining the status of faqirs, equally applicable to poets, laid down by Sultan Bahu as:

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(Rammah) that Shiv would start drinking in the morning by taking a few sips of Scotch and would continue that, a couple of sips at a time with long intervals, throughout the day. He would almost never get drunk. [Takhar. Int. 2002].

He refused to get admitted in the hospital for medical check up. Kuldip Takhar, at whose place Shiv stayed for a while in London, states that he once insisted to take Shiv to the doctor for check-up, saying that 'Shiv, you will die if you won't get proper medical treatment.' Shiv's reply was 'Tell me something that I don't already know!' [Takhar, Int. 2002].

Most of the harsh criticism of Shiv's poetry came from two main schools of thoughts in the contemporary Punjabi Poetry. From the major poets and writers of Naxalite movement, led by Avatar Singh Pash, Dr. Jagtar and a few others. The other group of poets who condemned Shiv's poetry belonged to the experimental school of poetry led by Jasbir Auhluwalia and Ravinder Ravi. [Gill. Int. 2002].

¹⁸ After Shiv's death, Dr. Harcharan Singh, head of Punjabi Department, offered his wife Aruna a job in Punjabi University Patiala as library assistant. Aruna still works there and lives in a house on the University campus. Meharban completed his M. Phil in Punjabi from Punjabi University, Patiala. He is married and lives with his mother. Puja completed M.A. and M. Phil in Economics from Punjabi University, Patiala. She is now working on her doctorate thesis. She is married and settled in Cincinnati, USA, with her husband Jay Dev Sharma. They have a daughter, Shivana. [Mahal. Int. 2002].

On Shiv took poetry writing as a very serious work. He would normally wake up during early morning hours to compose poetry in a totally peaceful environment. He would sit crossed-legged on the floor in a corner of his room. He would finalize a poem only when he was completely satisfied with it in all respects, editing it many times and sometimes discarding some otherwise exceptionally beautiful lines. Sometimes the idea of a poem would stay with him for a long period of time and Shiv would compose it by jotting down a couple of lines at a time. He had a great command of the proper techniques and conventions of writing poetry in many different forms and could readily pinpoint the errors and weaknesses in other poets' compositions. [Kahlon. Int. 2002].

Dr. Darshan Gill, a famous Punjabi poet and critic, who had personally known Shiv Kumar Batalvi and Harbhajan Singh (1920-2002) and have followed their poetic careers, disagrees with the statement that Shiv Kumar Batalvi copied Harbhajan Singh's style. On the contrary, according to Dr. Gill, in the early sixties Harbhajan Singh got impressed with Shiv's lyricism and started writing poetry in his style and diction. Harbhajan Singh, who mostly wrote his poetry in free verse, published his first book of lyrical poetry, *Adh Vainy* (Midnight), after Shiv was already established as a popular poet. [Gill. Int. 2002].

²¹ Punjabi singers, on a much smaller scale as compared to Shiv's poetry, have also made commercial recordings of the poetry of a number of other established Modern Punjabi poets. Among them, Prof. Mohan Singh, Nand Lal Nurpuri and Manzur Jhalla have so far been the other favourites of Punjabi singers. Nand Lal Nurpuri and Manzur Jhalla mostly wrote popular folk songs. Ahmad Rahi was the most popular Punjabi film songwriter.

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Cultural Production in the British Bhangra Music Industry: Music-Making, Locality, and Gender

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This article draws on five extended interviews with British bhangra artists, musicians and producers, as well as other sources, to offer a commentary about cultural production in the workings of the British bhangra music industry. This industry, located in key metropolitan centres of Britain, namely in Birmingham and in London, has been crucial to the growth and development of a Punjabi folk-based music into a distinct genre of urban British music. The article considers the British bhangra music and cultural industry as one that operates independently from the mainstream of British bhangra industry. It offers an account of the interaction of British bhangra music with the mainstream music industry, and considers the importance and role of Birmingham as a site of production for British bhangra music. The role and experiences of women artists in the industry are also introduced and discussed.

British bhangra is a genre of British popular music fusing Punjabi lyrics and the beats of the Indian drum, the *dhol*, with other Black music and British pop sounds, producing an urban anthem and commentary about the lives of its British South Asian audiences. Existing academic studies of British bhangra have offered an account of the music's interplay with urban British South Asian lives, and analysed the music as a diasporic text (see Banerji 1988; Banerji and Baumann 1990; Baumann 1990; Gopinath 1995; Huq 1996; Kaur and Kalra 1996; Sharma, Hutnyk, and Sharma eds. 1996; Dudrah 1998, Kalra 2000; Dudrah, 2002).

Unfortunately, the role of British bhangra artists and producers themselves has not been a central feature of these aforementioned studies. Their contributions to the development and sustenance of the British bhangra music and cultural industry has not yet been charted and analysed as a culture of production and distribution, albeit on the margins of mainstream British popular music. This essay attempts to fill in that gap, and contributes to the growing number of academic studies about the social roles of cultural practitioners² within popular music (for example on the social roles of musicians see Becker 1963; Finnegan 1989; Frith 1988; Bennett 1990; Cohen 1991; Negus 1995; Toynbee 2000; and on constructions of gender in popular music-making see for instance Frith and McRobbie 1990; Clawson 1999). This body of growing

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Drawing on Theodor Adorno's original coinage of the term, Nicholas Garnham describes cultural industries in the following way:

...as a descriptive term, 'cultural industries' refers to those institutions in our society which employ the characteristic modes of production and organization of industrial corporations to produce and disseminate symbols in the form of cultural goods and services, generally, though not exclusively as commodities. These include newspapers, periodical and book publishing, record companies, music publishers, commercial sports organizations, etc. In all these cultural processes, we characteristically find at some point the use of capital-intensive, technological means of mass production and/or distribution, highly developed divisions of labour and hierarchical modes of managerial organization, with the goal, if not of profit maximization, at least of efficiency. (Garnham 1987:25-26)

Whilst there are similarities with the mainstream music industry in terms of the technological means of mass production of music, there are notable differences too in terms of how the British bhangra industry is able to operate. For example, the British bhangra industry shares very few benefits of the mainstream British cultural industries, particularly in their affiliation with the dominant private market sector. For instance, the British bhangra industry has not been presented with the opportunity of association with the above mainstream cultural institutions and, therefore, does not enjoy any of the 'privileges' (cultural, material, social or otherwise) that may arise from such an affiliation. For example, when was the last time a bhangra band or artist was invited to 10 Downing Street at one of its leading private sector gatherings to be able to network with leading business people, ministers, and high profile international pop stars?

Furthermore, British bhangra is not as financially rewarding when compared with its mainstream counterparts due to the incomparable economies of scale of production, distribution and retail. In comparison to other British popular cultural industries, rock and pop music perhaps being the most obvious examples, British bhangra receives unequivalent amounts of monetary returns from its album deals and from the sales of its cheaply priced music. For example, until 1997 British bhangra albums on cassette were sold for a constant £2.50 for over a decade. Currently, in the summer of 2002, an eight-track bhangra album on cassette sells for £3 - £5 compared to British pop albums on cassette and CD priced around £13 and above. This difference between the two music industries has to do with the pricing of bhangra music by its retailers and distributors who have found that Asian audiences are unwilling to pay higher prices in line with mainstream music.

Also, unlike its white British rock and pop contemporaries, the production and circulation of British bhangra albums and music have a non-existent relationship with 'the majors' (mainstream multinational record companies) and

their financial and cultural might of representation and successful profiling of popular music. As Simon Frith describes the working relationship between the mainstream major and independent record companies:

In the record industry ... the majors and independents have a symbiotic rather than oppositional relationship, with the small labels acting as the research and development departments of the majors, which, in turn, take on the task of marketing any promising 'discoveries' (and many 'independent' companies are, in fact, part owned or bank-rolled by the majors). (Frith 1991: 145-146)

In contrast, British bhangra music relies on and operates through the alternative and financially smaller British South Asian music companies (like Kamlee Records Ltd, Nachural Records, Oriental Star Agency, and Roma Music Bank operating in Birmingham), which simultaneously function as recording studios, promoters and distributors, and record shops. Consequently, British bhangra has developed itself as a result of the enduring work of South Asian artists, musicians and entrepreneurs together with the support of their fans, friends and families. The articulations of British South Asian cultural identity in the listening to and the uses made of the music genre (see Sharma, Hutnyk, and Sharma 1996; and Dudrah 2001, 2002) become heightened in the context of the music's alternative modes of production and distribution. It is in a related manner that Simon Frith, describing the workings of the popular British cultural industries writes:

Cultural production is thus defined both as an economic activity and as a process of self-realization (Frith 1991: 148).

What follows, then, is an elaboration and exploration of cultural production related to some aspects of the history, workings and concerns of the British bhangra music industry.

The Development of British Bhangra Music Making

The cultural production of bhangra music and the inception of it as a cultural industry in Britain occurred in the late seventies amidst the fusion of South Asian, Black, and Western popular cultures. The early days of the British bhangra industry began most notably in Birmingham and in Southall, West London. As Amarjit Sidhu⁸ explains how the formation of Birmingham's Chirag Pehchaan, one of the first Asian entertainment bands, developed in Britain:

Amarjit: We had the background from India, earlier formative days in terms of music. Having that sort of knowledge behind me and then in this country having Western influences, you know, like in the sixties for example we were heavily influenced by the music of this country as well, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones etc.

were producing. We wanted to cover the Punjabi side, the Hindi film music, the *Qwallis*, so we wanted to be a band that was an all rounder not just for one specific sort of scene, you know, like the wedding scene, not just the university scene or family programs or whatever, we wanted to be a band that could entertain anyone. That's what we wanted to develop and I think we did.

The Heyday of British Bhangra Music Production: Mid-Eighties to the Mid-Nineties

The late seventies, then, witnessed the beginnings of bhangra cultural production in Britain and particularly in Birmingham and in Southall. The mideighties and the early nineties were the heyday of British bhangra bands. Predominantly young men from their mid teens to early 30s were getting together through networks of friendship, locality, and kith and kin, to form different bhangra groups who were responding to the musical demands of a growing British South Asian youth culture. Bands consisted of anything between 5 to 8 members. Often there would be a free movement of musicians between different bands through informal agreements, or members of one band would often perform for, or help in the arrangement of music on, another band's album. Such was, and still is, the informal nature of the bhangra industry. As in the heyday, there remains very little by way of formal contracts tying down individual musicians to a single band, but this also means that virtually no 'job security' exists. Often the lead vocalist would be signed by a record label for a flat fee per album. In the early nineties a new artist would be awarded a payment of around £5,000 and this amount would have to be distributed amongst the band members who also collaboratively worked on the album. During the heyday the average sales of bhangra albums were 5,000 tapes and around 500 CDs for a relatively well-known band. Bigger artists with exceptional albums that 'clicked' with listeners would be able to sell 5-6 times more than the average figures. Investment for future albums, and updating equipment would be financed through fees from live performances at Asian nights and 'the wedding circuit' (summary from personal communication with bhangra artists).

The wedding circuit, in particular, is articulated from performances at Asian weddings and parties held mainly on the weekends, and most notably during the summer months. Depending on the popularity and appeal of a band, prices could vary anything from £500 - £2000 for a three - to four - hour performance. The fee would often be open to a margin of negotiation between the band and the budget of the family hiring them. In the heyday the most popular bands would be booked months in advance and sometimes play everyday, right through a Friday to Sunday weekend, across a 6-8 week consecutive period. At the actual wedding party, relatives of the bride and groom would often bestow anything from £1 - £5 in front of the performing band on stage as a sign of appreciation of the music. In this way anything up to a quarter, if not more, of

the band's fee would be raised leaving the immediate family to pay the remaining sum. Fees for live performances at Asian nights in mainstream discotheques up and down the country would be higher than on the wedding circuit due to the more commercial nature of the venture. However, a handful of only the most popular bands and artists would be deemed as financially beneficial by gig promoters. Considering the humble figures of economic returns, the heyday of British bhangra music production is best considered as composed and performed more out of a 'love for the music' and heralding of one's cultural identity than for monetary profit alone. Within this context, very few artists and musicians were able to perform on a full-time basis as many of those involved held full-time jobs and bills to pay, thus singing and playing music as a part-time activity (see later for contemporary state of the British bhangra industry).

With the limited financial returns from music sales, and the fact that artists wished for greater exposure and recognition, attempts were made to interact with the mainstream of British popular music. For instance, there were various attempts until the early nineties to crossover bhangra music into the mainstream British charts by fusing it with rock and house music. However, these were unsuccessful. The failure to get into the British charts was due to a number of reasons such as the exclusion of bhangra record sales by Gallup polls in its compilation of Britain's top 40 best-selling music. This was of a time when bhangra bands sold records and tapes by the thousands through specialist Asian shops that were not included in the official sale returns of British pop music. An early image and language 'problem' also retarded white British music industry acceptance and promotion of bhangra music. It seemed to them to consist of middle-aged, overweight men wearing lurid coloured shirts and white trousers, singing in the 'foreign language' of Punjabi (from personal conversation with Ninder Johal 11). Bhangra remained, therefore, cut off from mainstream music representation other than in racist and stereotypical terms, thereby distancing further a sense of place for South Asians in mainstream British culture and society. In fact, working with the mainstream music industry to promote British bhangra more widely suggests, at best, a wellintentioned initial response but one which turns out to be anything but beneficial, as the following commentary of Music Live '95 illustrates.

Music Live '95

The 'Music Live 1995' was a national live music festival organised by BBC Radio in May 1995 to showcase 60 hours of a variety of live music and broadcasting over 160 events throughout regions of the country. It was transmitted nationally as part of a series of programmes on BBC Radio 1. A major achievement of the festival was its broadcasting of some live music that hitherto might not have been heard by a national listening audience in Britain. Amarjit Sidhu helped to organise the performance of live British bhangra and Asian pop music in Birmingham at the Dome Nightclub, which was played live

on the BBC radio's Asian Network programme 'Eastern Beat' throughout the East and West Midlands on 24 May 1995. Recordings of live Britsh bhangra music from the Dome were played on BBC Radio 1 on 28 May 1995. A considerable amount of excitement was generated amidst the news on the BBC's Asian Network that the playing of British bhangra might provide an opportunity for artists to make connections with the mainstream British music industry with a view to promoting their talent nationally. As Chris Lissard, Executive Producer of Music Live '95, told Eastern Beat presenter Pam Samby:

Events like this, it's going to go out on Radio 1, it brings it to a national attention, it'll give it a focus and from that I hope that there will be opportunities.

(All transcript excerpts of the Music Live '95 festival in this article are taken from a personal recording of the 'Eastern Beat' programme which covered the event live on the evening of 24 May 1995)

However, excitement turned to disappointment as the role of media-as-gatekeeper became apparent in the promotion and profiling of British popular music. The playing of live British bhangra music on BBC Radio 1 displayed signs of cultural gate-keeping with a double edge to it. First, the use of Radio 1 as the exclusive popular music radio station on the main FM frequency transmitting to all radios across the UK was billed as a special privilege for British bhangra music, i.e. Radio 1 was doing British bhangra a favour. Second, and perhaps most cutting, the benefits bequeathed to British bhangra practitioners and the music industry were non-existent. It was not surprising really, as the recorded live playing of British bhangra was transmitted at midnight on the Friday evening of 28 May, when its listening figures are one of the lowest throughout its transmission. As Jay Patel, another presenter of the BBC's Asian Network, speaking on the night of the festival at the Dome night club, summed it up:

Johnny Beerling [former Chief Controller of Radio 1] was saying that it would be nice to get this kind of music [British bhangra] played on the mainstream, but my question to Radio 1 is, at MIDNIGHT?! Midnight on a Friday night, I don't know.

Unfortunately, the decision taken by Radio 1 to broadcast live British bhangra in the middle of the night decreased the potential mass listening audience for the music.

Many in the British bhangra industry were cautiously optimistic about the presence and role of Radio 1 at the performance of live bhangra, as the interview between Shin, lead singer of the Birmingham based British bhangra band DCS, and Eastern Beat presenter Pam Samby revealed:

Pam: So what do you think about Music Live '95, honestly?

Shin: Honestly? I think it's a great event, right, and it should happen virtually every year, something like this. It's great with

Radio 1 involved as well and Radio West Midlands coming here on to the actual scene where the thing happens. It's nice to see so many bands here as well [10 British bhangra bands performed live on the night]. You know, it's not often that so many of us get to perform on one stage together, and the vibe's great here.

Pam: Do you think this is a great way of opening the door for the bhangra industry?

Shin: I think it is, yes. I think Radio 1 have taken their time of getting here, you know, but they say 'better late than never' I suppose, you know 'dehar se ayan, drusht se ayan', so it's nice to see them here and I hope they do something positive with what they're gonna record today.

Pam: I hope so as well.

The recording of live British bhangra music played at midnight on Radio ! consolidated the caution of the British bhangra industry into disappointment. In fact the words 'disappointment' and 'disappointing' were often used by those interviewed to describe their experiences of attempting to promote British bhangra with and through the mainstream music industry and its affiliated networks of music circulation. The example of the Music Live '95 festival demonstrates its failure of being unable to live up to its hype in that only a small fraction of a national listening audience had a chance to hear British bhangra in comparison to one of its prime-time slots. More importantly, the festival illustrates the workings of mainstream media and cultural institutions, such as BBC Radio 1, serving their role as gate-keepers who insidiously fulfil their obligation to represent a 'minority' sound on mainstream radio, even if it is at midnight. Interestingly, there has not since been any further transmission of live British bhangra music on Radio 1. 13

With attempts at working with the mainstream music industry serving only one or two marketable artists at best (i.e. the relative successes of post-bhangra artists Apache Indian and Bally Sagoo; see Housee and Dar 1996)¹⁴, British bhangra remains a localised form of cultural production operating from select urban centres in Britain. Birmingham is now the most prominent site for the British bhangra industry.

Birmingham: Cultural Capital of British Bhangra Music

Birmingham's large South Asian population¹⁵ has meant that it is a haven not only for the consumption of South Asian popular cultural forms but also an important centre of production and distribution. This is certainly the case of British bhangra music where Birmingham is commonly referred to by commentators in the British South Asian media as the heart of the British bhangra industry. In fact some of the first bands and artists that developed the genre of British bhangra music can be found in the city, including the group Bhujhangy founded by brothers Balbir and Dalbir Khanpur in the seventies.

British bhangra's audible manifestation in the soundscapes of the inner city reveal a number of insights into the fluid social possibilities taking place in Birmingham, and their ability to reach out to different parts of the international web of South Asians both in the diaspora and in the subcontinent:

RKD: How do you see Birmingham as a city in terms of your work and your music?

Ninder: [mimicks a Brummie accent] I was born in Birm-ing-ham, I was educated in Birm-ing-ham, and I live in Birm-ing-ham. [Switches to a normal tone of voice] It also happens that most of the music scene is in Birmingham from a bhangra perspective, so I see no reason to move out.

Certainly in 1991 when I set up in central Birmingham the whole scene had moved here by then. I would argue that the whole infrastructure of bhangra is now here. Not only have we got the bands and most of the artists based here in Birmingham, the infrastructure is here now. The major record companies are here, everything happens from here. The North has been very slow in picking up the talent, I don't know why that is. Down South I think they're more interested in running around and making money than sticking with the product. They don't seem to have time for music. I cannot see now anyway that the bhangra base will move from here. I think bhangra will now remain in Birmingham and in the Midlands more generally.

By mimicking himself as a bonafide Brummie, Ninder outlines the importance of Birmingham as a home to British bhangra music. The transformation of a Punjabi folk-based music from the Indian subcontinent into a distinctive genre of British popular music took place most notably in Britain's second city, and in the West London suburb of Southall during the mid-eighties (Baumann 1990). The setting up of Nachural Records, Ninder's record label and distribution company, in the early nineties was a conscious decision assisted by the establishment and growth of the British bhangra cultural industry in Birmingham during the late eighties.

At the time of writing (2002), Birmingham is by far the cultural capital for the music, having superseded Southall in terms of the largest number of bands in any one locality (Achanak, Apna Group, DCS, Safri Boyz, XLNC...). It has several recording and distribution companies (Oriental Star Agency on Moseley Road, Nachural Records in Smethwick, Roma Music Bank in Handsworth...), the steady production of new albums, and the growing number of live DJs, and dance groups all from the city. The continued efforts of those working in the bhangra industry, together with support from Asian, black and white local government workers, has seen the music being celebrated at annual awards ceremonies held at the National Indoor Arena in the city. Bhangra bands have also performed live in public parks during the summer months and even performed at New Year civic celebrations in Centenary Square in the centre of

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Birmingham. As Ninder goes on to argue, the mainstay of British bhangra in Birmingham is not only to do with the city's large South Asian population but more to do with the nurturing and developing of cultural capital, music skills, consistent passion for the music, and networks of support amongst fellow artists, musicians, and distributors. Ninder brings about an understanding of the popularity of British bhangra in the city through the specificities of cultural production in a given time and place context. As Ninder goes on to say, British bhangra in Birmingham is produced through an 'authentic, like-minded togetherness' (desi-fied)¹⁶ which has fostered a culture of support in terms of production, distribution, and sustained consumption in the city during the late eighties and into the nineties:

RKD: Would you say that the popularity of bhangra in Birmingham was because of a demographic reason in terms of the large number of South Asians settled in the city?

Ninder: But No. I would argue that Southall has got just as many [South Asians], Bradford has got as many, and so has Leicester. Up North you've got Newcastle or at least in comparable terms. To so rather than just demography maybe it's because the West Midlands are a bit more desi-fied, perhaps? I mean I don't really know, this is something I'm throwing at you. But I think certainly a lot of the talent is here now. There is talent in other regions but perhaps the people behind them aren't as organised.

The female artist Sameera¹⁸ lives in Northamptonshire, a county just over an hour's drive south-east of Birmingham. She describes the importance of Birmingham as being central to the formation of the bhangra industry in terms of the close-knit nature of the numerous artists and musicians who were living and working in the city.

RKD: You live in Northamptonshire. How does that place you in terms of being local or not to where the music is happening? Sameera: I think I'm slightly at a disadvantage. No matter how good you are you have to be there where it's happening. Of course people know me and I have had a lot of exposure but I think if I was in Birmingham, or in London, where the industry is booming I think I'd be more in touch and involved really ... There are more studios there, more Asians, more musicians, so people don't have to travel so far. You know you could call anyone for a session, or if you have to re-record, or practice and things like that, it's just quicker if you live locally. Everyone's local.

Suky Sohal, musician from the band Achanak, also describes the social diversity of Birmingham's population as an important contributory factor to the development of British bhangra music.

RKD: Can I ask you to reflect on Birmingham as a city in which you live, and as a place in which you make and play your music?

Suky: I think for bhangra music it's the ultimate place. It's the heart of the bhangra industry Birmingham is. It used to be London in the eighties but that's all changed. Nearly all the bands now just come from Birmingham, there's only a few that come from the South. It's such a thriving place for music, it's very sort of inspirational in that sense to produce music with the mixture of different cultures in the city. I mean I was brought up in a white school, I work in a Black area, and I play for a bhangra band so I've seen a lot of different cultures, and that does help the music a lot. I think that is why Birmingham is thriving musically [for bhangra] because you got a lot of different cultures musically, and in everyday life. It's also what you learn, you learn little bits from different cultures.

The eclectic composition of British bhangra, drawing on a range of lyrics, styles and genres from Punjabi folk, Western pop, and urban Black music takes influence from the lives and cultures of people in Britain's second city. Simon Frith has usefully argued that the experience of music listening and music-making is an articulation of the self-in-process (Frith 1996). Popular music in essence is a sociable domain of activity. Popular music listening and making is a way of telling stories about oneself and others, a way of making sense of oneself and their position in relation to the world at large. Thus, music becomes a metaphor for articulating cultural identities. In this way it is useful to think of British bhangra music-making as drawing on a stock of references from the lived experiences of locality, ethnicities, different cultures, and their interplay in the production of a popular aesthetic. Just as Birmingham is cited as important as part of the identity and development of British bhangra music, equally British bhangra is one important popular expression of the social multiplicity of the city and its connections to international places.

Birmingham has become a prominent site for local production, and national and global distribution of British bhangra music. Interestingly, British bhangra is not only exported to the Punjab from where its folk influences derive, but also across the South Asian diaspora, enjoyed by South Asians and non-South Asians alike. In this way, not only in lyrical content but also on the pathways of the distribution of British bhangra, Birmingham is an important juncture on the routes of the South Asian diaspora and *one* actual site in the struggles for minority cultural creativity. In a personal e-mail correspondence with Balvinder²⁰ from Singapore, an Asian music distributor in the South-east Asia and Australia region, I was surprised to learn of the actual global spread of British bhangra from Birmingham and its enthused reception amongst diverse music revellers:

Balvinder: Very nice 2 hear from someone all the way from B'ham, love that place!!! I make my annual trips there at summer time for business. I run a distribution/retail business here in Singapore called MusicVision International. We do most of the

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distribution for the record companies in Birmingham and London. Mostly Kiss Records, Roma, Nachural, and Multitone. I've been doing the operations here from Singapore for South East Asia and Australia. There is a huge market here for bhangra music. U see, not only the Indians are into bhangra music we also have the Chinese, Malays and other races that are into it. You can walk into any club in Singapore and be rest assured that the DJ has got a bhangra record in his collection ... Presently we have 3 clubs that have bhangra Nites on the weekends [in Singapore]. Although the Asian community is bigger in Malaysia, Singapore is more active and updated when it comes to the new releases for the bhangra music scene. We also have regular gigs happening here. Acts like The Safri Boys, Apna Sangeet, DCS, Achanak, Alaap, Heera, Premi, and Malkit Singh have already toured this region with tremendous success .. (Personal e-mail communication 22 February 1996)

Balvinder describes the popularity of bhangra music in the South-east Asia and Australia region that has successfully transcended a number of ethnic and cultural boundaries. In fact British bhangra is cited as being an integral part of the club scene in Singapore. The fact that bhangra has remained, by and large, a marginalised music for South Asians in Britain and yet has crossed over its appeal elsewhere suggests the need for a further exploration of the music's popularity across different international borders which is unfortunately beyond the remit of this article. One can only outline some tentative lines of thought and questions here. For example, what potential is there for actual global dialogues and alliances in different parts of the world through popular music and musical fusions that a focus on British bhangra across Austral-Asia suggests? How might the global journeys and connections of British bhangra's musical flows and distribution be made more sustainable and interactive? What is being alluded to here is the need for getting at the more exciting and difficult task to think through a notion of cultural production and politics as entwined with everyday cultural practices and creativity as possibly leading to a transformative notion of cultural understanding. Such an understanding can go some way towards arguing that non-white and non-mainstream western music genres are much more than 'smelly Pakis' or 'demonised Blacks' doing their own ghettoised thing! The interaction of ethnically diverse Singaporeans listening to, and coming together in the dancing of, British bhangra suggests exciting possibilities across similar and different music experiences. Balvinder went on to illustrate, the reception of particular bhangra and postbhangra artists in the UK was not necessarily the same in Singapore:

Balvinder: Believe it or not Johnny Zee is the BIGGEST act here in Singapore!!! His album Spirits of Rhythm has outsold Bally Sagoo's Bollywood Flashback here. I know he doesn't go down that well in the UK but over here everyone's into him. Maybe it

was the style of his music in that album, it got a lot of attention from the non-Indians. A bit of Soul and Raggamuffin.

As far as the venues go in Singapore/Malaysia, we usually have our gigs in major discotheques. In some of the bigger clubs in Singapore the bhangra nights are able to attract an average of 1,000 - 1,500 each time! Not bad for a country that's smaller than the size of Birmingham huh? It'll take you only 25 minutes to drive from one end of Singapore to the other. Now how's that for small?! (Personal e-mail communication 22 February 1996)

In a country smaller in size than that of bhangra's capital city notable differences are taking place in the popularity of certain artists over others. This observation points to something more than just different audience taste in different parts of the world as it begs questions about the similar and dissimilar uses of Black music genres around the globe which have been made possible through the conduits of music industries, distribution and exposure, colonial and neo-colonial histories, and social formations. In this respect, soul, bhangra, and raggamuffin have played a part in the formation of urban Britain linked with social uprisings and the formation of Black British identities, but how have these musical genres been introduced and utilised in the making of identities in Singapore in equal and distinct ways? Could this be one actual site in the geographical constellation and cross-cultural connectedness of 'Asian spaces' which needs further empirical research? The possibilities for inter-cultural communication arising from the use of British bhangra across parts of Asia and wider afield seems to suggest so.

The work of distributors like Balvinder and Ninder Johal and their regular movements between Birmingham and beyond in promoting and selling the music has been crucial to the development of British bhangra music across international boundaries and markets. As a result of their continued efforts unforeseen openings have been made for different artists to work together. Suky from Achanak, for instance, was brought into contact with Kiko, a Japanese pop star. Their coming together illustrates the possible dialogues and musical exchanges that can occur across the web of Asian cultural spaces:

Suky: It's like this Japanese album I worked on. It was with an artist called Kiko from Osaka. ... They got in touch with the label [Nachural Records] and said they wanted to do an album with Japanese lyrics but with a bhangra feel to it. I didn't have a clue about Japanese music. They came down spent over a fortnight at the studios with me. We listened to loads of their records and bhangra tracks, got to know each other a little better. Recording the album was really good fun and I learnt a hell of a lot as well in terms of combining the two musics. I mean at first they just didn't mix at all but we managed to do it. It's like two completely different styles of music, it's not as easy as mixing Black music

and bhangra music, or Latino music. Japanese is such a different style of music in terms of the chord arrangements, the vocal arrangements, the beats. It was difficult to do but we managed to pull it off and we were both pleased.

British bhangra music is at home as a cultural industry in the city of Birmingham. Consequently, the city is also opened up to a number of regional, national and international connections and routes through the workings of the British bhangra music industry. This industry continues to operate at the margins of mainstream cultural production through the continued work and efforts of a handful of dedicated cultural practitioners.

The Role and Experiences of Women Artists

The story illustrated so far of British bhangra's musical productions has been told mainly through the narratives and experiences of male artists and workers. To suggest that these were the only voices in the music industry would be to fall foul to an account of cultural production in which women were omitted, Women artists have been present since the inception and development of bhangra music, from its folk derivations in the Punjab to its present status as an urban anthem in Britain. For instance, the female singers and sisters Surinder Kaur and Prakash Kaur from India were immensely popular folk singers during the fifties and sixties, and even toured Britain on a number of occasions for stage shows. With their powerful voice tones and folk sonnets they often questioned the predicament of women in heterosexual love relationships in which men were primarily considered as the source of a woman's heartache. Other female folk artists of the post-war period included Jagmohan Kaur and Narinder Biba. Their songs often criticised family structures and politics in which women had to negotiate a number of positions from housewife, lover, daughter-in-law, to matchmaker, and at the same time create a space for themselves of their own. Their songs remain inspiration even for today's artists and bands and provide material for numerous cover versions. Admittedly, the histories and development of women's involvement in bhangra music remains to be charted comprehensively.

In May 1996 the *Eastern Eye* newspaper ran an overdue feature by its music reporter, Raj Ghai, asking male and female artists 'Why is the bhangra industry dominated by men?' ('Let's Talk About Sexism', *Eastern Eye*, 10 May 1996). Bina Mistry, a female artist based in London, replied:

I think the world is very male-dominated not just the Asian music industry or even the non-Asian industry at that. But it's all changing rapidly.

Good music will always surface whether it's male or female led. This bias has always been there but I myself have never faced it directly, well not enough to make me want to cry - but I'm always whinging about it. (ibid)

The British bhangra industry like any other sphere of cultural production which is led by men is also guilty to charges of gender bias and sexism.²¹ The role of women in the British bhangra industry is one which has been dictated through gender relations in favour of men, but which has also been transformed by the input of its women artists.

On the whole, women tend to work in the bhangra industry primarily as singers or professional dancers, with a few who solely manage and promote music and artists. Bhushra Ahmed, for example, is based in London and is the head of Fruitcake Music, a record company, and manages the female artist Sabina. At the time of writing (2002) there was no record of any South Asian women working in the technical side of music production. Like most of their male colleagues in the bhangra industry women also produce and perform music in their 'part time' or as a 'hobby', but more so in addition to their family commitments and roles which they served at rates far exceeding that to which men were expected to play.

Sameera and Anupreeta²², the two female artists interviewed, both described their entry into the bhangra industry by a way of audience demand. Both were keen to pursue their music interests by singing ballads and slow melodies ranging from popular Bollywood tracks to ghazzals but the demand for British bhangra required them to take up its singing at live performances and in the recording of their albums. Consequently female artists were entering a field of music in which men had a strong foothold:

Anupreeta: I enjoy singing more the 60s and 70s Lata Mangeshkar's [popular Bollywood playback singer] melodies. I had to learn bhangra songs in order to respect the wishes of the audience.

Sameera: I was introduced to bhangra purely because the demand was for bhangra in this country. It was thought I would sell better if I was able to sing in Punjabi and bhangra tracks. If I was in Bombay, on the other hand, there would be more opportunities for me to sing perhaps in the film industry.

From the outset, then, women artists were under musical constraints to perform British bhangra if they were to be given exposure and then able to move into singing other genres. This was particularly the case in the heyday of British bhangra upto the mid-nineties. Sameera recognised the importance of women's limited opportunities in terms of the music genres they could sing in Britain in comparison to India, where she cites there being more opportunities for female artists. Performing in a male-dominated industry and the different social constructions placed upon women by men led to notable differences in experiences based around gender.

First, the top sales figures of best selling bhangra albums are usually always held by men.²³ This is due to the fact that there are numerically more male artists in the industry than women, thereby having more opportunities to

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produce and release albums and singles. Also sales figures are related to audience expectations and listening habits that have been socially cemented around the gendered constructions related to British bhangra music. For instance, Ninder Johal signed Sameera to Nachural Records for the release of her first album *Infinity* in 1995. In terms of monetary returns it did not perform as well as male-led albums which were on the market at the same time. The reason for its limited success is revealing:

Ninder: If there's a female artist on a bhangra tape nobody wants to know. Why? Because it's seen as such a macho thing, women should not be singing those type of songs. Therefore the Asian market is holding female artists back. I invested in Sameera's album Infinity, it was a superb product, she sang really well. At the end of the day nobody wanted to know, they wanted something with a bit of Karakhaa!, which means a bit of aggression, a bit of noise, a bit of a bang, which only men can allegedly do.

Infinity was released at a time when the bhangra market was comprised of albums with loud and energetic tracks. Infinity was a break from the norm as it consisted of tracks sung in Hindi as well as Punjabi, ranging from sweet melodies, ghazzals and bhangra. In this way it was slightly ahead of its time in terms of audience expectation but was also compounded by gendered notions of what was acceptable as an album of British bhangra music.

Secondly, there exists an imbalance in terms of the income generated by male and female artists. At a general level where the figures earned from album signing fees for the bhangra industry on the whole are much less than its mainstream counterparts, women artists, despite being able to sing across a range of different music genres and vocal styles, are not able to command as high a price as their male counterparts. As the artists put it:

Sameera: The demand for bhangra is more, and men predominate. If I was a man I'd make more money.

Anupreeta: In terms of making money women have to struggle maybe three times more to survive in the industry. Not twice, but three times more I would say.

Thirdly, Anupreeta and Sameera both had experienced a tendency by a few male artists and other band members who would treat female artists in a patronising and condescending way. This ranged from passing implicit comments about women artists as being inferior to 'male stars', to assuming that women had very little or no knowledge of the workings and internal networks of British bhangra, to the more menacing perception of women artists as 'performers' who were available to be leered at sexually. The latter experiences of harassment were also encountered in 'small doses' at gigs in which inebriated men were predominant and were making a nuisance at the front of the stage. The stances adopted by female artists to such male aggression towards women varied according to the situation they were confronted with. This would range

from at first, ignoring male perpetrators as 'not knowing any better', to outright confrontation over sexist treatment and assumptions which would shock and belittle even the most rowdiest of men. These discriminatory experiences encountered by women artists in the bhangra industry are similar to those experienced by their mainstream counterparts in the Anglo-American music industries and in the Afro-American rap industry (see for instance Frith and McRobbie 1990; Finnegan 1989; Cohen 1991; Rose 1994; Whiteley 1997).

Finally, all the artists interviewed (male and female) referred to the British bhangra industry as, on the whole, 'informal and friendly' in its workings in that almost everyone knew each other, or knew someone who had could easily put them in touch with another artist or worker. This atmosphere of affability is one which men benefit from the most. Male singers, musicians, and technical staff often meet up after gigs and recordings and socialise together. This includes going out together to public houses, playing pool, and even playing each other in football with teams comprised from the different bands. At such events informal conversations around music will occur and playful ideas can lead to future music projects, or for different artists to work together in collaboration. Unfortunately, the social events after the recording sessions to produce British bhangra are not equally experienced by women artists. Furthermore, they are not faced with as many opportunities to work together due to their personal commitments as working professionals, partners, wives, mothers, daughters and so forth, which take precedence to their music.

RKD: Do women artists in the industry meet or work together to discuss music ideas or projects?

Sameera: I don't think they do. They are bound by other commitments first, I don't think they can fully concentrate on music as a career because the role of women in society more generally is limited. And that's one of the reasons they don't get to meet. At the pop awards there are opportunities to meet up but these are so few between.

Sistas Doing it for Themselves: Diversification of the bhangra Industry and the Female Voice

Taken together, the four experiences of the plight of women artists in the British bhangra industry might easily be read as depicting them as perpetual victims with little autonomy to bring about change. However, notable generic transformations have occurred within the industry since the heyday of bhangra music, and the emergence of young, fresh, and outspoken female talent on the scene has seen women artists carving out their own niches.

The bhangra industry has diversified, taking into account the popularity of Bollywood film music amongst its audiences. This has led to bhangra albums featuring musical influences from Bollywood film tracks encompassing a range of South Asian music genres, as well as the performance of Bollywood songs with a bhangra feel to them at live gigs. The generic shift towards Bollywood

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re-mixes, ghazzals, *qawallis* alongside bhangra music has seen women come into their own and taking charge of the reigns of music production in a number of aspects. Female artists are now finding they have more autonomy to be able to sing on their own terms over a wider range of music genres.

Sameera: I have always been singing Hindi melodies and I think my voice is more suited to ballads. I consider ballads more difficult to sing than faster dance tracks because the slower you sing the more difficult it is to maintain the voice and keep it in tune over a stretch. Now that the Hindi re-mixes have come on the scene, I have gone back to what I really loved doing singing in Hindi, and that's where I feel I'm at my best.

Furthermore, the female voice has played an important part in the popularity and success of Bollywood re-mixes. Bollywood re-mix albums that outsell those of traditional bhangra beat albums are those predominantly sung by women artists. In particular, the artists remarked that certain tracks which have gone down well with audiences is possibly due to the fact of their diverse singing talents which contemporary audiences appreciate. When performing live, for instance, Anupreeta is often requested to sing her rendition of the ballad Chalthe Chalthe... [On My Journey I Met A Stranger] from the 1970s movie Pakeezah. This song takes up lyrics from Urdu poetry laced with a haunting melody which expresses the desires of two strangers who are unable to communicate directly but have become enthralled with each other's presence. The crowd at many gigs has been known to become transformed into a sea of swaying ballad devotees each time Anupreeta performs this track:

Anupreeta: The female voice certainly has a place. Some powerful emotions and gestures can only be best expressed through the female voice. The music industry isn't complete without it.

The diversity and power of the female voice is making a noticeable impression upon audiences who have become fans of women artists and keep in regular contact with them. Anupreeta, for example, has received numerous phone calls from men and women complimenting her on her albums and singing prowess. Comments such as the following have helped women artists to deal with some of the sexist attitudes which exist in the industry and in culture more generally, and to get a perspective on what they are doing as important to themselves, their fans, and to other listeners:

Anupreeta: Some fans are really happy with my singing and albums. I have received phone calls saying 'You sound really young. God bless you. We can't wait for your next album. The Asian community needs female singers like you. We really enjoyed your live shows' and so on. You know real positive messages and these help to outweigh some of the negative

criticisms. For one bad message I may get there are at least 50 good ones.

RKD: What kind of bad messages do you get?

Anupreeta: Oh just silly things like 'women shouldn't be singing'. These messages just come in one or two but are enough to show how some people may think women shouldn't have talent and a place in the industry.

Band Management and Young Talent: Sistas Calling the Shots

With Bollywood re-mixes becoming a considerable market segment of the British bhangra industry, the role of women artists is one which cannot be taken lightly. The female singer of the live Hindi bands is often the one who heads the group and she also hires male musicians for performances at her own discretion. As the female artists Shama and Bharti who specialise in singing Hindi film tracks, put it in response to the *Eastern Eye* newspapers call 'Why is the bhangra industry dominated by men?':

Shama: When I was a freelance singer it was a bit more difficult but now that I've got my own band - I call the shots! I employ the male artists and musicians, I've turned the tables.

Bharti: It's like another world in the Hindi market where it's almost vice-versa, I find that males struggle more than women! If you look at bookings for shows, in general, you'll find more females being approached by the organisers. Even though the musicians are male, the scene is controlled by women because 90 per cent of the time they've got their own set-ups and they employ or book the male singers.

The diversification of the bhangra industry to include a wider repertoire of South Asian music genres as production niches in their own right has seen the development of women artists into band management, as well the emergence of new and younger female talent in their late teens to early twenties. Since the mid-nineties artists such as Sasha, Sabina, Shabnam, Hard Kaur and others, based in the Midlands and in London, have entered the industry. They have taken British bhangra and Bollywood re-mixes to advanced levels in terms of lyrical content and musical fusions and added to the emerging genre of Anglo-Asian pop.

Hard Kaur for instance has adopted black rap styles with bhangra influences to make incisive comments on the racist nature of British society from policing in the inner cities to racist attacks. Furthermore, donned in slack urban attire with dark glasses intact she has created a no-nonsense demeanour for herself which she extends to the realm of sexual politics in her lyrics. Hard Kaur often sings about men's sexual impropriety towards women but also allows the women protagonists in her songs agency of their own choosing to accept the

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male advances on offer or to reject them outright in the heart and mind games that can follow.

Sasha leads an energetic dancing ensemble, and sings in Punjabi, Hindi, and English. Her songs cover a range of themes, including upbeat teenage love songs in which heterosexual norms of courtship are affirmed, to critiques hailed at men for being far from perfect lovers in their empty promises made to women. Furthermore, her robust command of the stage through her varied dance steps - drawing on freestyle, disco, and kathakali - together with her vibrant dress sense - a blend of Asian chic and rock styles - defies simple and easy classifications of exotic and passive Asian femininity. However, the emergence and development of young female artists with their timeless social critiques and cultural interventions must also be continually assessed in terms of the changing perceptions of the role of women in the spheres of cultural production more generally, to the opportunities available to women cultural practitioners to sustain themselves as artists and to continually produce themselves anew. Anupreeta and Sameera ended the interviews on a positive yet cautious note, being well aware of the mutant forms of patriarchy and the need to overcome it at every step of the way. This was in addition to the problems faced more generally by all those working in the British bhangra industry who were attempting to make good music for a sense of themselves, and to create wider appeal with the mainstream:

RKD: What do you think needs to be done in order for women to have greater access and control into, and in, the bhangra music industry?

Anupreeta: The industry needs to accept that women can also produce good music. They have completely ignored and bypassed them and they have rejected them by thinking 'women and music, no it can't happen'. I don't know whether the record companies are doing enough for them as well. They need to be launched in the right way, their image needs to be portrayed in the right way. So to some extent the record companies could be doing a bit more in terms of publicity with the radio stations and media. I must admit there are some presenters on the radio who have really supported women artists in a nice way, and there are female presenters who have actually promoted and supported women in the right way. I don't know whether there is a simple answer that could make changes overnight. It needs a lot of commitment, a lot of work and giving away some power which I don't think sections of the bhangra industry are ready to do, because giving away something is considered as a loss. It should be about sharing power and access and what they have.

Sameera: For women to do well in the industry or in any sphere, they should be encouraged by friends, families and their wider social circles ... I hope to break through into the mainstream. I have sung in English and would like a chance to get wider appeal.

I would ultimately like to sing in Bollywood, I hope I find the right contact. If I was a man I think I could just fly over, but as a woman it isn't as easy.

The current role and experiences of women in the British bhangra industry reveal a number of insights straddling the more general ongoing gender inequalities women encounter in most spheres of cultural and social life, to the culturally specific dynamics of the status of women in British bhangra music as changing through the evolution of South Asian music genres in which women are able to command centre stage. As such, women continue to 'make noise' and contribute to the ongoing struggles of and in British bhangra music and cultural production as it enters a new millennium.

The Futures of British bhangra Music Production

At the time of writing (2002), the bhangra industry is undergoing diversification, taking up the call for new South Asian music genres as album production and performance niches. The current popularity of the UK garage sound, with its fast-paced digital beats, synthesised sounds and urban chatting, has also been amalgamated and itself transformed through a union with the bhangra beat, thereby rejuvenating both genres further.

British bhangra has also come to influence different styles of bhangra music the world over, such as Canadian bhangra and, interestingly, traditional folk bhangra in the Punjab too. Folk bhangra, in particular, has become more upbeat since it was introduced to its diasporic cousin and is itself responding to the local and global experiences of rural and urban youth in the subcontinent by way of lyrical and musical content. With the popularity and influence of British bhangra pulsating in India, musical exchanges have taken place between 'legendary' artists of the Punjab and with bands in Britain. For example, male artists such as Gurdaas Maan and Hans Raj Hans, who have been folk artists for the last fifteen years, have been touring Britain bi-annually over the past decade with much success and British bands have been well received in India. Moreover, the racy bhangra beat appeal that struck a chord with folk artists in the Punjab in turn caught the imagination of diverse listeners throughout India via its national distribution outlets. Folk bhangra's meeting with the British bhangra beat soon caught on and in turn became translated into many latenineties Bollywood film soundtracks (see Namrata Joshi 'Musical Mystic' India Today, 1/3/1999:24h). Also, folk bhangra singers as well as Bollywood playback singers have recorded bhangra albums with artists in Britain. One product of such a venture is Amarjit Sidhu's union with Sonu Nigam from Bollywood on the album Pyaar [Love] which was well received across India, North America, and the UK. The coming together of varied music traditions, genres, and artists from across South Asia and its diaspora illustrates the networks of opportunities that South Asian artists and musicians continue to forge for themselves.

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The diversification of the British bhangra industry and the relatively limited resources within which it continues to operate has also led to a number of developments, some more welcomed than others throughout different sections of the industry. For instance, an emerging preference for DJs on the wedding circuit is superseding the hiring of live bands. DJs can be hired from anything between £100 - £1000 for a 4- hour party with the most popular DJs incorporating a dhol player, live mixing, and an indoor firework show. This has brought to the fore an affordable culture of music entertainment and dancing, orchestrated predominantly by young men whose creative flair and technical wizardry has brought them into the limelight with British bhangra enthusiasts. However, this has also meant that the live bands are increasingly having to compete with monetary scales that weigh in favour of the DJs - DJs are cheaper to hire than live bands. The opportunities for live performances of British bhangra remain to be seen.

There is also in motion the 'cheap' and hurried production of British bhangra and Bollywood re-mix albums by a few opportunists. These are being made in several numbers each month by a few young male mixers who are more interested in making a 'fast buck' than developing artists or producing new and innovative sounds. In some extreme cases the quick technological production of bhangra and Bollywood re-mixed tracks is done without permission of the original artists or bands. Such albums often go unchallenged by the Asian record companies due to the large legal bills involved in bringing about redress. By a way of response, the frustration of keen South Asian music producers and lovers was aptly captured in an article by one of Eastern Eye's regular music commentators, Wicked Miah [pseudonym]. As the headline caption read in his humorous and bold report:

We let our pet rat Chakk de Patel free at the record shops to sniff out some of the new releases. He returned with a fistful of monkey's plop and put forward the question: WHAT IS THIS RUBBISH? (Eastern Eye Magazine 6/3/1998:8)

Far from the cry of a gullible audience buying into anything and everything that the machination end of a cultural industry might throw at it, British bhangra music listeners and critics are informing themselves of the 'not-so-good music' which finds it way into music stores vying for consumers' cash. Ninder Johal also concurred with this view. As he put it:

Album sales were higher in the early nineties as a lot of people were into the bhangra scene and buying different tapes seeing what's on the market. Now [late nineties] the figures aren't as high as they were for say an average artist. Well known artists obviously continue to sell in big numbers. The market and audiences have matured, nothing is instantly sellable. They know that there's some real crap being churned out so they only go for what they like.

With bhangra audiences in Britain, on the whole, more critical as to what they are purchasing and listening to, it is hoped that the few unprofessional opportunists will find they have no place, or learn to respect audience taste and produce more pleasurable music. Meanwhile, music producers and distributors like Ninder Johal are busy looking to develop the British bhangra market overseas, partly contributing to the growth of the genre of World Music in recent years. As Ninder revealed in a recent magazine interview contemplating the future of British bhangra after its heyday heights:

We have had all the limelight in the UK over the last ten years. You can only take a market so far until that market becomes stagnant. Bhangra was big business for us in the 80s now it helps to pay the bills. But the big deals are elsewhere to be found. We have since '95 been looking at the market overseas and that does not just mean in India, which would have been the first port of call. There is such a large market for bhangra outside the UK that we have been so busy that we have had to delay releasing records for the UK market. We have just set up deals in France, Italy, Holland, and we already have deals in Japan and the Far East. (Boy Chana 1998:35)

It remains to be documented what opportunities such international ventures will bring for the music in terms of global market appeal and also what kinds of artistic and musical developments might be possible, or not as the case may be. Far from over, then, the futures for British bhangra music keep on drumming. Let us see where the beat of the dhol takes us...

Conclusion

This article drew on four thematic areas from the literature about making popular music as a form of cultural production and applied them to a study of the British bhangra music industry. Broadly conceived, they were organised in the following way: first, the history of cultural production in British bhangra; secondly, articulated with this history, attention was paid to the relationship between the mainstream music industry and British bhangra; thirdly, an examination of Birmingham as a site of local production for the music industry was offered and finally, attention was paid to the role and experiences of women artists in British bhangra music-making.

A focus on the cultural production of British bhangra music illustrates the makings of musical creativity and expression, albeit on the margins of mainstream British popular music. In spite of the limited access to resources and to mainstream circuits of dissemination and exposure, as argued in the case of Music Live 95, British bhangra remains an urban anthem for its artists and its audiences. The role of bhangra cultural practitioners as dedicated workers in the realms of music production, distribution, and performance has been crucial to the sustained buying, listening, and dancing of British bhangra. Their

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ongoing work has allowed bhangra audiences to take pleasure and make meaning from the music as contributing to the ebbs and flows of their cultural identities. The development of the British bhangra industry from 'underground' status to limited visibility in the sounds of urban Britain has occurred in the context of a lack of adequate financial resources and support, cultural racism, and the achievements of its practitioners.

This article has demonstrated that the British bhangra music industry began in the seventies and came into its own in the eighties in Birmingham and in Southall. It came together through the work of 'amateur' singers and musicians who musically began to construct a sense of being both British and Asian for themselves and for their audiences.

Birmingham and, to a lesser extent now, London have been considered as important centres for British bhangra music. In particular, due to the large number of artists and bands and recording and distribution companies, and the steady production of new albums in the city, Birmingham can be thought of as the cultural capital for the music. The workings of the bhangra industry in Birmingham and beyond, in terms of its local cultural production and consumption, and the distribution of its artists and musical texts to regional, national and international places, locate the city as an important juncture on the routes of the South Asian diaspora. The distribution of British bhangra music (recorded and live music) opens up Britain's urban cities to cultural, social, and geographical connections which transcend local and international boundaries in ways which have yet to be fully analysed.

Paying attention to the historical formation of the production of British bhangra music, particularly in its heyday, also illustrates the dominance of male cultural practitioners in its industry. The prevalence of men over women contributed to a loud and energetic masculinised aesthetic of the music genre. This set a precedent which women were expected to follow in order to be nominally accepted as artists. However, with the development of the British bhangra industry responding to the demand for wider South Asian music genres, such as ghazzals and Bollywood film tracks, the role and presence of women within the industry has shifted from simply singing to band management as well. This development has upset some of the traditional gender hierarchies of the British bhangra industry, as well as paving the way for new female cultural practitioners to emerge. Women artists have also been held back due to the limited social roles they have been expected to play, primarily as domesticated social subjects. However, women artists have challenged such fallacies by asserting their different talents and performance abilities, as well as hailing critiques at the very structures that have held them down. Contradictorily, however, women artists have also reproduced some of the ideological positions of South Asian women in heterosexual love relationships through lyrical content.

The British bhangra music and cultural industry has come some way and continues to develop, from its heyday in the mid-eighties to the mid-nineties, to its current status as reaching out to international audiences and markets.

Examining some of the internal workings of this industry is as important and illuminating as analysing the meanings produced in lyrical content and/or musical performance as offering a commentary about the formation of a British Asian and Punjabi popular music.

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Notes

¹ Banerji and Baumann offer the customary accounts of British Bhangra music. These have been challenged by Sharma, Hutnyk, and Sharma (1996). In particular Sanjay Sharma (1996:34-35) argues that Banerji and Baumann simply map out an Asian cultural authenticity and tradition argument. This argument can simply be summed up as reading British bhangra as illustrating a homogenous and unchanging Asian identity in Britain. Unfortunately, such an argument fails to analyse some of the complex negotiations that are occurring in British Asian cultural identity through the use of popular cultural forms such as British bhangra music. For example, British bhangra can be also be used to profess a sense of political Blackness alongside cultural assertions of 'Asianness'.

² The term 'cultural practitioners' is used, and illustrated throughout the article, to describe the role of singers, musicians, producers, and so forth in the British Bhangra music industry as partaking in cultures of music production, as well as contributing to social processes of cultural identity formation for themselves and audiences of the music as 'British Asian'. Put another way, cultural practitioners are people who contribute to the formation of cultural practices as inherent with meaning about themselves and the wider social groups of which they are a part.

³ Extended interviews were conducted as part of larger doctoral thesis research (Dudrah 2001). Methods such as qualitative extended interviews are useful in the uncovering of marginalised voices. Qualitative methods proved especially helpful in the case of the thesis research where the production processes and textured meanings of popular cultures (in this case music) were sought after.

⁴ The decision to interview the five artists and cultural practitioners was a conscious one, as very little is known about the workings of the British bhangra music industry. The practitioners interviewed were interesting for a number of reasons, not least because they were representative of the eclecticism involved in the British bhangra industry. Many practitioners often occupy numerous working sites within the industry, ranging from artist (singer and/or musician), production and management work, to post-production distribution and retail.

The practitioners' numerous years of experience within the industry was also of importance, as many move in and out of the music scene as casual practitioners, compared with a few who remain constantly involved in a sustained manner. As such, the narratives of the development and struggles of the British bhangra industry offered were fruitful and enduring accounts drawing on a wealth of historical insights of affiliation with the industry and its relationship to, and experiences with, the mainstream British music industry. In addition to these insights, speaking to the women practitioners was also interesting in terms of their contributions to the music and experiences of participating in the industry as female artists. These interviews were particularly salient, as the British bhangra industry is male dominated.

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⁵ The use of the terms 'the margins/marginal' and 'mainstream' are used throughout the article and are revealing of the nature of the British bhangra music industry vis à vis the more established popular music industry in Britain. The 'mainstream' is commonly used by artists, musicians, audiences, and sections of the British South Asian media to refer to the white Anglo-American dominated music industry in Britain. This entails a perception of the mainstream record companies as having the capital and cultural might in their global profiling and selling of music and artists who are deemed profitable. 'The mainstream' also entails a notion of 'white society' more generally incorporating the mass media as it views and constructs British bhangra music as 'foreign' and 'unintelligible'. In turn, 'the margin', also used by artists and audiences, literally refers to a social space, actual and imagined, that is constructed as knocking against the doors of the mainstream music industry but through which very few Asian artists have been able to enter and attain wider exposure (the most cited examples to date would be Apache Indian and Bally Sagoo). Thus, the two terms have been adopted throughout this paper, and are illustrated where possible, to develop an understanding of the peripheral role which British bhangra music-making has been consigned in accounts of British popular music and its industry.

It is important to point out here that references to the 'British bhangra industry' in the popular press and on radio can also refer to, or include the related sub-market of the synonymously known, Hindi or Bollywood re-mixes in Britain. Although this genre of re-mixed music does not comprise an industry in itself, it equally sells large number of albums compared with British bhangra music. The practitioners involved in the production and distribution of Hindi re-mixes are almost always those involved with, or connected to, the British bhangra music industry and as such their experiences and struggles are often similar. Furthermore, the two genres can also share similar beats and rhythms in their music. As a case in point, Bally Sagoo has a history of re-mixing numerous British Bhangra tracks long before his Hindi re-mix album Bollywood Flashback was signed with Columbia Records. Further still, the Asian Pop Awards consists of the gathering and awarding of primarily British bhangra practitioners as well as honouring the achievements of practitioners of

Hindi re-mix albums. Those receiving awards for their work in both music genres can often be the same people. Thus, my use of the term 'British bhangra industry' is used in a collaborative sense, acknowledging its relationship to different British South Asian music market segments, but where it's diversity becomes limited by the single use of the term this is clarified in the essay where necessary.

The invitation for prominent business people, ministers, and pop stars to mingle together at 10 Downing Street occurred as a result of the invention of Labour's spin doctors after the party came to power in the general election of 1997. One of the aims of these gatherings was to present the Labour party in a user-friendly and new light that was attempting to establish a 'Cool Britannia' for the private sector, the arts, and the public and media spheres (see the collection of essays in Rutherford 1998).

⁸ Mr. Amarjit Sidhu. Amarjit has long been involved in the British bhangra music scene since the late 1970s. He has been band member of one of the first popular Birmingham bhangra bands, Chirag Pehchaan [Recognise the Light]. During the 1980s he was Manager of various popular British bhangra bands (such as Apna Sangeet [Our Music] from Birmingham) as well as producing a number of solo albums. During the 1989 Asian Pop Awards held at the Tower Ballroom in Birmingham Amarjit was presented with the 'Best Personality Award' in British bhangra music in recognition of his continuous work to promote the British bhangra industry. More lately Amarjit is managing his recently launched Kamlee Records Ltd label, the premises of which is located above his pharmacy shop in West Bromwich, on the outskirts of Birmingham. Kamlee Records has invested in the production and circulation of British bhangra and post-bhangra (namely popular Hindi film re-mixes and Asian Pop) artists and musicians. As well as his involvement in the British bhangra industry, Amarjit is a 'full-time' Pharmacist by profession, and has hosted a music and talk show on BBC Radio West Midlands' Asian Network.

⁹ Mr. Sukhbir Singh Sohal (also known as Suky) has played the keyboards and synthesizers for numerous British bhangra bands since 1985. Prior to this, Suky had been a member of a few rock bands in Bromsgrove, on the outskirts of Birmingham. From 1989 to the present Suky has remained an active member of the band Achanak. Suky has arranged and produced music for folk bhangra artists in India, as well as a successful bhangra infused melody for a Japanese pop star. Suky is planning to move into the area of independent music production and management with a view to a crossover into the mainstream British music industry.

¹⁰ The case of Bally Sagoo's remixing of classic Bollywood film tracks is an interesting case in point.

Mr. Ninder Johal, Managing Director of Nachural Records, as well as Manager, and tabla player of the Birmingham based British Bhangra band Achanak. Nachural Records, formed in 1991, is one of the few remaining record labels in the bhangra industry with a steady and increasing number of

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artists on its roster; from I to 14 since 1991. Ninder has been involved in the playing and production of bhangra music since 1988.

¹²The recording of selected live British bhangra music from the festival as played on Radio 1 can be listened to at the National Sound Archive, South Kensington, London, entitled 'Bhangra: Show of the Century'. Shelf mark/reference number H5257.

¹³ Five years on and as part of BBC radio and television's national Music Live 2000 festival, broadcast during the month of May, the British Bhangra band from Wolverhampton, *The Sahotas*, were featured playing one of their tracks live on television.

14 Whilst artists such as Apache Indian and Bally Sagoo have their musical roots in a number of genres, not least in British bhangra, theirs is a slightly different story that is yet to be told more comprehensively. Authors such as Huq (1996) and Sharma (1996) have termed artists like Apache Indian, Bally Sagoo, alongside bands such as Fun^Da^Mental and Asian Dub Foundation as 'post-bhangra', implying a related but also different sense of 'Asianness' than that which is constructed through British bhangra, i.e. more besides. Also, post-bhangra artists may sometimes operate within the workings of cultural production as being put forward in this essay for British bhangra. However, they are equally, if not more than, working within the cultural production possibilities of a number of other music industries too, with their different working environments and distinct cultural and social problems. As such, the musical career histories and the workings of cultural production for post-bhangra artists can be different to those for bhangra artists.

¹⁵ Birmingham serves a general population in excess of one million people. Nearly a quarter of that population is made up from non-white ethnic groups, originating from over 80 countries around the world but mostly from the Indian sub-continent and the Caribbean (Birmingham City Council 1996:1)

¹⁶ This is a personal and rough translation of the term.

¹⁷ For an account of British bhangra music and identity amongst young British South Asians in Newcastle see Bennett (2000:Chapter5).

¹⁸ Miss Sameera Singh. Sameera came to England when she was 5 years old in the late sixties. She started singing as a hobby during her childhood years and was trained by her mother, 'to sing and be in tune', who had been formally trained with a degree in classical music. Sameera sang in public at weddings and parties and at Asian festivals up and down the country. In 1992 at the Nottingham Asian Arts Festival, Sameera was approached and then signed by Nachural Records. Since 1992 she has sung and worked on 13 albums, either solo or duet with other male artists. She has even recorded with Apache Indian on his album *Wild East* (Sunset Records, Birmingham, 1998) on the track *Lovin*. This track was immensely popular and was released as a single. Sameera works full-time as a primary school teacher.

¹⁹ During the mid-late eighties London bands such as Alaap, Heera, and Premi were prominent on the British bhangra scene in terms of regular album

productions and live performances. However, members from these bands have left the music scene or gone on to produce the work of other younger artists and bands. Or, as is more often the case, they have gone on to produce Bollywood-based songs and music albums.

20 Balvinder is a psuedonym for this respondent.

²¹ For example, I have argued elsewhere how selected British bhangra tracks which contain dubious lyrics in relation to dominant caste and gender groups can be contested by its listeners (see Dudrah 2002).

²² Mrs. Anupreeta Kumar, female vocalist of numerous Hindi Remix albums and British bhangra tracks. Anupreeta has worked solo and as a duet with male singers from the British Bhangra industry. Having been classically trained as a singer in India since her teenage years, Anupreeta became involved in the British bhangra music industry and Hindi Remix scene in 1990 after singing at a friend's party and being overwhelmed by the response she received. From here on she began singing live with a number of Hindi bands in the north-west of England, performing all over the country before moving into the recording studios. During her seven years of performances and production, conducted in her 'spare time', Anupreeta has recorded seven albums and has others awaiting development. In 1995 at the Asian Pop awards held in Birmingham Anupreeta was awarded the 'Favourite Female Newcomer'. Anupreeta is also the female singer of the band *Tarang* (Melody). Tarang consists of four other band members, all male, who together perform a wide range of South Asian popular music in addition to British bhangra.

²³ Male artists will almost always dominate the top ten sales of music albums in the British Asian music press. See for example music chart listings in the British Asian magazine Snoop.

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Film Director Gurinder Chadha: Image Maker of the Diaspora

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This article is about an award-winning British Asian film director, a diaspora cultural producer. who has directed three commercially successful and critically acclaimed films, along with some cutting edge documentaries which launched her film career. A British film director, a second generation Asian raised in a London immigrant community, with the release in 2000 of her Hollywood film, What's Cooking? she acquired international status. The phenomenal success of her recent film Bend It Like Beckham has reinforced her international status. I refer to her socialization in a racialised, multiple migrant community in the Punjabi capital of England, Southall, from which she accesses the source codes of her highly politicised and translatable images. Her interpretations emerge from the grounded cultural aesthetics of this diaspora community, which she uses potently to subvert mainstream image economies and create new image landscapes. Her own eye-catching, 'culturally messy', hybrid style is strongly played out on celluloid, the distinctive, culturally inflected interpretations of an organic and communityorientated film maker. She astutely captures the fractured landscapes of migrants and their second generation progeny, their multiple identities and dynamic popular cultural forms that are products of movement and displacement, and settlement in new contexts. I refer to her path-breaking role as a diasporic subject, an eloquent creator of very 'British' images from the margins in the powerful medium of film, images which not only negotiate dissonances in racially complex settings, but also - despite their powerful local British Asian inflections - translate to global audiences.

Gurinder Chadha is the first Asian woman film director from Britain to direct a full length, commercially successful and critically acclaimed movie, *Bhaji on the Beach*, which was released in 1993. In January 2000, she 'went global' pursuing a mainstream route, through the release of her Hollywood film *What's Cooking?*. This latter film is funded by a Disney company and was chosen as the opening film of the 2000 Sundance Festival, an annual film event in Utah, organized by actor-director Robert Redford. The British *The Guardian* newspaper reported this event as Gurinder's 'night of glory' with a headline of 'Star of Sundance'. *Bhaji* played in all the major film festivals (some 70 of them) in 90 countries. It received rave reviews internationally, not only from audiences who packed both mainstream and art house cinemas, but also from the vast majority of film critics within mainstream and ethnic media. She has also, increasingly, been written about in academic journals, where her films and their influences are being

analyzed (see, for example, Bhachu, 1991, 1996, 1997, Bhattacheryya and Gabriel 1994, Cieko, 1999).

In March 1995, Gurinder Chadha was awarded the London Evening Standard's Best New Director Award for Bhaji. This provocative and humorous film also won the Alexander Korda award for the Best British Film in the British Academy of Film, Television, and the Arts (BAFTA) awards in 1995 (the British equivalent of the Oscars). This followed on the success of her first film, a documentary made in 1989 entitled 'I'm British But...', made as part of the British Film Institute's (BFI) New Director's scheme, which had won Gurinder the BFI Best Film Award. Like all her subsequent work, it has many subversive agendas. Her other films include Acting Our Age, 'What Do You Call An Indian Woman Who's Funny?' and A Nice Arrangement.

In April 2002, her third film Bend It Like Beckham was released in Britain taking two million sterling pounds over its opening weekend (The Guardian, April 16th 2002). This film has been a huge success and was critically acclaimed, putting Gurinder into mainstream markets in a very big way as an internationally renowned star director. This film was released in the US in March 2003. She says in her article in The Guardian, April 11th 2002:

In 1994 my first film Bhaji on the Beach, was released on five prints, on the basis that it was a small, sweet film with no box-office expectations. It sold out for weeks and by public demand went from art houses to multiplexes. But there was still little recognition by the industry of its wider potential.

Eight years later on, my new film, Bend It Like Beckham is being released on more than 450 prints this week. I haven't changed and my sensibilities and reason for making the film have not changed, but the British audience's appetite for films about Britain has.... After my experience of making What's Cooking in LA, I wanted to come back to the UK and make a widely appealing, commercial comedy with a British Asian family at the center of the frame. Five years ago I didn't think that was possible; today I know it is.

Bend it Like Beckham takes Gurinder back to the diasporic terrains she explored in Bhaji, though in an even more complex way than in her previous films. She captures the new landscapes negotiated by a football-mad East African Punjabi teenager whose twice migrant parents have settled in Hounslow, an area next to Southall, the Punjabi capital in West London. This is a geographic and cultural location that Gurinder knows well, having been raised in its vicinity. The role of Jess Bhambra,

played by actress Parminder Nagra, is about a young Sikh woman whose passion for playing football is reflected in her desire to be like the famous British footballer David Beckham, and bend the ball like him. This film is again about negotiating multiple identities within a settled immigrant community. The backdrop of the film is an Indian wedding, foregrounding a sports theme.

This East African Asian diasporic aesthetic is aptly represented in the specificities this film explores, a background that many mainstream viewers who think they 'know' the British Asian community are often unable to decode. For me the film explores the multiple components and migration and settlement histories that form the 'British Asian Community', a complexity with which most viewers will not have been cognizant. Film commentators have made comparisons of this film an earlier mainstream success, the film East is East written by half-Pakistani half-British Ayub Khan Din. However the latter film is about an earlier era of the 1970s set in North England, a very different phase in the settlement process of Asians in Britain and with a strong regional context. Gurinder's film presents a completely different demographic, cultural location and also diasporic aesthetic. It is a film that captures the desires of British Asians in the early part of the 21st century, Asians who are in the mainstream and are transforming it from the margins. It is as much about regionally specific London Asians from a particular multiple migratory trajectory as well as about a changing mainstream population which engages with and whose experiences resonate with British Asians.

Gurinder was born in Kenya and raised in Southall in London by East African-born Punjabi parents. This biographical trajectory of multiple movements is powerfully played out in her very complex, yet accessible, political, funny, and 'very English' films. She captures precisely the moments of rupture and suture that produce complex, new, highly politically charged cultural spaces in global diasporas. Gurinder now has a considerable body of work on celluloid, which addresses the politics of diasporic identities, migrant cultures, the negotiation of gendered ethnicities, in the often racist landscapes of 1990s Europe. The unexpected success of Bhaji opened many mainstream doors for her in global arenas. What's Cooking? established her as a multiple-sited, internationally successful film director whose roots are in the British Asian diasporic community. She describes What's Cooking? as a 'radical film, a glamorous film from America about Los Angeles made from a 'black' British Asian perspective within a mainstream site with key Hollywood actors and actresses'. It is a film about negotiating 'Americanness' from a diasporic British Asian perspective. It is an analysis of American identities though the lens of an outsider, a European Black lens looking at the negotiation of what it means to be American. It is about the claiming of the quintessential American institution, Thanksgiving, by immigrants in Los Angeles, the immigrant city, par excellence, in the Golden State of California. It is about appropriating an American institution that is at the heart of Americanness2. She says that IJPS 9:2 256

it is 'about claiming Americanness and making a new version of it through diasporic interjections of immigrants. It is shot and directed from 'a diasporic British Punjabi point of view'.

Future projects include Mistress of Spices, a film based on the award-winning book of the same name written by a San Francisco-based writer Chitra Banerjee Devarkan, also to be funded by Disney. It will be shot in San Francisco and India during 2000. This is an immigrant story of a spice store run by an Indian immigrant woman from the Indian subcontinent, 'a classic trade immigrant set within the Asian community, a story told by a woman who uses spices and the power of spices to help improve the everyday lives of her customers,' according to Gurinder. Other projects in the pipeline are a film of the novel Funny Boy by Shyam Selvadurai, a Canada based Sri Lankan. It is a coming of age story set in Sri Lanka in the early 1980s with a backdrop of the Tamil and Sinhalese conflict, exploring the theme of homosexuality and a complex negotiation of multiple identities by a young boy whose father 'keeps going around and saying that he is hoping his son is not going to turn out to be one of these funny boys'. This film is to be funded by Channel 4. Both Devarkan and Selvadurai approached Gurinder after watching Bhaji to see if she could adapt their books to film. Bhaji has a strong appeal for immigrants, especially for the second generation progeny who share her diasporic contexts, even when based in different continents. She is very conscious of the power of her diaspora connections. She states:

What is interesting for me is Funny Boy happened because Shyam, the author of the novel, was at the screening of Bhaji in Toronto and came up to me and said 'I've written a book and I didn't ever think that a film could be made of it until I saw your film. You are the perfect person to make the film', and that is how that project happened. It turns out that this novel Mistress of Spices, the author had written to me a year ago and sent me a collection of her short stories and said she doesn't normally inflict her work on people but she was moved and touched by Bhaji, that she felt that she had to write and she was sending me a collection of short stories in the hopes that I would find that appealing enough to turn into a film. And for a year later for this to happen it is quite interesting that there is sort of diasporic network where we are Me in London, Shyam in Toronto, this lady in San Francisco, there are connections and networks. (Interview with Parminder Bhachu, 1995)

Gurinder has also made a Bollywood film based in London and shot in Hindi and English that has yet to be released. She recently completed a script entitled *Bend it like Beckham* which takes her back to the terrains of *Bhaji*. It is about a young Punjabi

woman who has a passion for playing football and wants to bend the ball like David Beckham, the famous British football player. It is set in Hounslow, West London, an area neighbouring Southall, which has a high percentage of British Punjabis, many of whom have moved from Southall. This film is again about negotiating multiple identities within a settled immigrant community. The backdrop of the film is an Indian wedding, foregrounding a sports theme of a young Punjabi woman's passion for football.

Gurinder's Person

Gurinder Chadha is a diasporic subject par excellence, a second generation diasporic daughter of multiply-moved second generation diasporic parents. Her parent's second generationness is to do with the sites they had to negotiate in Kenya, where they represented the locally born progeny of directly migrant Punjabis from Jhellum. Gurinder's grandparents had migrated from pre-partition Punjab and had settled in Kericho in South West Kenya in 1917. Gurinder and her older sister were born in Kenya. Her parents then migrated to Britain as a young couple with their two daughters, aged two and four, to Southall in West London. Gurinder studied Development Studies at the University of East Anglia before training in journalism, from which she progressed into film making. As an adult, Gurinder too has become a multiple migrant in her own right. As an internationally successful film director, she operates out of multiple sites. She lives in London and Los Angeles, changing film locations depending on her film projects. She is a very Punjabi woman without having roots in the Punjab, India for her is a distant land culturally and temporally. She shares this distance with the majority of other diaspories of her community, which has been resident overseas for over a century. She is a diasporic film maker, product of the very Punjabi location of Southall in West London, the Punjabi capital of Britain. The reason she entered film making was through bhangra, British Asian dance music, a powerful defining moment for many young Asians, with which I shall deal with in more detail later. This was the music that connected Gurinder to her diasporic Punjabi cultural roots, the language, the clothes and the salwaar kameez suit which she interpreted through her own frames in a fused hybrid way.

I used to see Gurinder now and then before I actually met her when she anchored a TV program aimed at British Asians. However, I first met her in person after I went to the opening of 'I am British but ...' in 1989. Writing then on the multiple identities and cultural locations of British Asian women (see Bhachu 1991), I was really struck by her distinctiveness. In the publicity that accompanied her film, she was pictured wearing Doc Marten shoes, Union Jack socks and a leather jacket with a chuni thrown sideways over an embroidered Indian skirt. To top it all, she had a bulldog on a leash. Gurinder, to me, epitomized in her images and her hybrid personal style, her interesting code-

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switched language, the fusion clothes and the mixed musics, much of what I was saying and writing in an academic context on the multifaceted identities of British Asian women, to conceptualize them more complexly than the then dominant model of binaries of cultural conflict. Gurinder herself is also very conscious of not presenting images of immigrant communities solely in terms of cultural conflict. She develops this point in an article she wrote about What's Cooking? After she had spent time at the Sundance Institute's screenwriters' lab in 1997, to which she was the first British writer-director to be invited, she says, 'We spent two years trying to get the film made. Most film companies loved the script, but no one knew how they would sell it. There had never been a film made with all these communities together that wasn't about problems between them' (The Guardian, 28 January 2000).

Not only was I attracted to her by the metaphors which abound in her various cultural productions but also through her clothes, the very eye-catching and media savvy combinational forms she puts on her body. In a way, she is as much text for me as the body of her film work. Fashion and clothes are salient, too, in her images, in the content of her texts as images and the clothes as text. The themes of fashion and the details of clothes and the influence of the market and on market commodities in creating crossed-over and Asianising Anglicising commercial domains in Britain are covered in her films. 'I'm British but...' shows the Asian impact on mainstream commodities like food, as in the now ubiquitous chicken tikka massala sandwiches, or on life style accessories, such as Indian durries, as well as, most significantly, the hybridizing impacts on both ethnic and mainstream fashion economies. This documentary has film clips of Twist dance scenes from 'westernized Bollywood films' in which tramp women dancers in tight, short dresses gyrate to rock'n'roll music. The film includes, too, clips from Katherine Hammnett's fashion collection of 1989 showing the Asian ethnic influences, with a second generation British Asian designer's commentary and images of her own stitched fusion clothes, her interpretation of the salwaar kameez in a fusion mould and Gurinder's own hybrid clothes style. These hybridities that are played on in all the images she makes on her person and which are central to her films are also those that animate the influences of Asians generally on the British cultural and commercial spheres. These are the multi-directional influences, like those of the dialogically designing and sketch-making fashion entrepreneurs and domestic sewers. All these image makers are designing images and hybrid landscapes that are negotiated from highly subversive and politically charged migration experiences and racialized locations. Their texts are thus complexly encrypted cultural images. These combinational aesthetics are referred to by an articulate British Asian woman in Tm

We came here twenty, forty years ago, our culture has evolved, it has got to evolve, it's a natural process. There has always been a western

influence in our lives. Look at the Indian films of the 50s and 60s, our mums were beehives with short dresses, tight pyjamas, in a western style. What's happened now is that instead of us adapting our culture to western trends, western forms of music or fashion ... are evolving and there is an input of an Asian music in it. What people had previously considered as these weird dresses that come from a peculiar part of the world, people are now beginning to adopt them in their own dress forms. Society around us is having some its perceptions challenged about Asians.

Gurinder's Community and Politics

Gurinder's mission as a diasporic image maker, which is how she sees herself, is fundamentally connected with her politics and the importance to her of her community the apna - the ours, to whom her images must make sense and who must be able to relate to them (Gargi Bhattacharyya and John Gabriel interview in Third Text 27, 1994:55). She says repeatedly that what was most important to her is that her images must be produced from her visions, visions that emerge from the diasporic community that has produced her, the cultural and political developments of which she captures in her films. These politically inflected sensibilities are as much part of the community she is located in as they are products of her individual experiences and memories:

One of the things that is very important for me is the notion of community that has always stayed very much with me as a film maker. ... I speak very much from my community's viewpoint. (Interview with the author, 1995)

Of her move from journalism into film making she says:

I decided that it was very important to document what was going on among the Asian communities because this was going to be critical to my history and a history that wasn't going to be told by anyone else but people like myself and that when I made my first film 'I'm British but ...' I entered film making as a means to film and record and document what was going on around me and my community - which I use in the loosest sense because it changes from day to day.

She is ambivalent, however, about the power she wields as film maker:

... it always makes me a bit dubious, the whole process of film

making because I don't like the power although I have the power as a director. I don't totally enjoy that power and the sense of reducing and determining other people's perceptions of that community which is why I try to fit as much into the space as I can. (Interview with the author, 1995)

Significantly, the production offices of *Bhaji* were set up in Southall and the first showing of 'I'm British but ...' was also in Southall, in the Dominion cinema, with a theater packed with Punjabi youth and other members of the Southall community. The British Film Institute (BFI) had to bring their projectors and sound systems to play the film in Southall, forcing the BFI funders and personnel to come to the site that constitutes Gurinder's domain of socialisation and commentary. She captures the cultural dynamics of Southall, a 'culturally robust' film located in this diasporic space in Europe which has been appropriated and Punjabified by a disenfranchised population, which has used the politics of location and the strength of numbers, a critical mass, to create a sense of place and vibrant identities, musics, commercial and community infrastructures and much besides.

Gurinder entered film at a particularly opportune time when the debates about identities, around ethnicity and the new Europeannesses, were being appropriated by migrants and the children of British Asians settled in Europe. They had always been vocal in the private domains of the margins but at this stage there was a new confidence, a coming together of many forces which emerged from settled immigrant communities which had now established their infrastructures and cultural confidences through being locally born and raised, of having gone through local schooling systems in mixed peer groups, of having exposure to the popular cultural trends of the time through their lived experience within Britain. Music, in particular bhangra, was particularly important to this process. Gurinder describes her own experience as follows:

In the mid to late 80s in Britain, something very exciting started happening, bhangra music started developing in Southall and in Birmingham which is in the Midlands. This was Punjabi music which was being mixed with western instruments. with American Black music, with English pop music, with North African rhythms, with all kinds of different influences. This music was being created as something that was British and Asian. It was the coming together of all these forces that created something that I completely identified with and I remember the first time walking through Leicester Square in London in the heart of the West End. There are very big discost there, there is the Hippodrome and there is a big ball room called the Empire ball room. I remember walking through there and seeing lots

of Indians hanging around. I made my way into the hall, I was absolutely amazed to see about one thousand young Indians dancing madly to this band on the stage. This is something I had never ever seen in my life ever in my life beyond say Indian weddings where there would be a handful of people and your parents would be forcing you to stand up there and dance. To see young people doing it themselves and enjoying it and smiling and laughing and at the same time taking a pleasure in creating new cultural forms.

Around that time I get very much back into my own clothes. I used to mix [salwaar kameez] with leather jackets or denim and young Sikh boys often used to go to the do's not cutting their hair but putting it back into pony tails or leaving them open and, of course, when they went back home, they would put their turbans back on. We all found that we were getting back into our language which for me is the most significant cultural codifier.

It was that getting back into Punjabi I think that opened the doorway in so many ways, It was at that moment for me that a British Asian identity was formed. (*Henry R Luce lecture* presented at Clark University, USA in April 1995)

The innovative sounds of bhangra reflected the grounded aesthetics of second generation British Asians who interpreted these dance rhythms from the work of earlier migrants who initiated the mixed form, borrowing from the lyrics and sounds of Punjabi harvest music. The hybrid bhangra features centrally in 'I'm British But ...'. A band leader of a bhangra group describes it vividly in the film:

It's got the British groove in it, it has got the Asian groove in it, it's got the North African and North American groove in it, it's got four continents there. The older bands, they really feel we are taking away from them what they started and we are changing it. They don't really like what we are doing ... a fusion of something else. In some ways they really resent it, what we have done. Definitely, they are the pioneers, they started it for us, without a doubt, but we have got to take it because we aren't born in India, or we are brought up here, we can't adapt to their cultures and music, we have to take in our way. ('I'm British, But...' Gurinder's Film)

These diasporic expressions have grown organically from within the very core of their

experiences, the musical influences of their time which they combined and which they could relate to. They spoke and performed it and it spoke to them and spoke of them. It was both a potent register and representer of where they were at and what they thought of themselves as British and Asian situated in a range of locations. For many others who consumed it, it was seductive and affirmative of what they were about in the deepest way as second generation British Asians who were at home with themselves. It captured their complex and compounded identities in a vibrant, robust way and not though conflicting binaries of being confused and between two cultures. The music and the dance ruptured many boundaries and borrowed and mixed many music forms to create one that represented young British Asians' own multiple locations and that encoded their own experiences and classification. Bhangra music and dance was a great connector and affirmer of their diasporic identities.

This growth in confidence was not only apparent in music. By the late 1980s, second generation British Asians were vociferous in many public domains about their definitions and classifications of their cultural locations and alliances as Black British and British Asians who had overarching connections that emerged from commonalities of political and racial experience, as well as having superb cognizance of their cultural specificities and of their English, Welsh, Irish and Scottish localized locations. Second generation progeny of migrants were themselves now knowledge-producers in many fields, as journalists in local and mass media, as writers and academics, as public sector workers in local and national government, and as political activitists in many facets of British bureaucracies and political agencies. Gurinder, too, documented these definitive themse of her time, becoming a hyper high-profile diaspora product, and an innovative translator of precisely these issues through her chosen medium of film.

Gurinder's Work

The hallmark of Gurinder's cultural production is the highly politicized frames of her politics, her grounding in her community and the strong political imperatives that animate her film images, as I shall show by looking in some more detail at 'I'm British But...', Acting Our Age, a half hour documentary film about a retired old people's center, Milaap, in Southall, and her first movie, Bhaji on the Beach.

T'm British But...' explores the varied experiences and multiple identities of British-born Asian youth in different localities in metropolitan, rural, and regional Britain. It is set to the fast pace of bhangra music and fundamentally contests notions of what it means to be British. It is about the appropriation of Britishness by second generation, locally produced British Asians, the location that Gurinder occupies herself. 'I'm British but...' starts the exploration of the theme of identity conceptualized in layered complex ways that is about appropriating borders, exploding notions of nationality and also imploding purist notions of ethnicities and cultural locations. She says of her films:

The idea was to throw out all the kinds of definitions and categories that had been presented as far as the Asians were concerned, in particular the women, and really to subvert ... That's what I started doing in 'I'm British but ...' in terms of the very beginning when the four Asians come along with their very different regional accents, that is a mind breaker for a lot of British people because they are not used to seeing Indians talk in Welsh and Scottish and Irish accents.

In every film that she has done, she explores racism and the impacts of this on the communities filmed and their negotiation of these hostile terrains. In 'I'm British but...' she makes links with the struggles for Indian independence using footage of scenes of the massacre of innocent Punjabis gunned down in the walled city park of Jallianwallah bhag in the Sikh holy city of Amritsar in 1919 while protesting against the repressive Rowlatt Act. The massacre was ordered by British army officer, General Dyer, at the height of the British Raj. She also has clips from scenes of the funeral of second generation British Asian Gurdip Chaggar, who was killed in Southall in a racist attack by white youths. He was also a diasporic Sikh born in Kenya and raised in Southall, the same background as that of Gurinder. The impact of racism and the formulation of popular cultural responses and identities against this background is another theme around which Gurinder negotiates her film images, traces of which constitute the terrains of all her films including, as I shall show, Acting Our Age and Bhaji on the Beach.

Gurinder's second documentary film, Acting our Age, is 'a film within a film' and one I like enormously. It is about an old people's center in Southall and documents their lives as they themselves learn to use film cameras and sound- and editing- equipment. These savvy retired people document themselves, their stories, their migration and settlement experiences, key issues that touch their lives around the center. I was very touched when I first saw this documentary film-within-a-film in New York at a film festival organized by the Asia Society in 1993. In fact I cried and laughed, a strong emotional tug at watching people of a generation who have produced us and who are both frail and vibrant. I was also touched because of my understanding of and empathy with the ruptures of their lives as I myself had migrated on my own to the USA. According to Gurinder, Acting Our Age is her favorite film. It encapsulates all the central elements that drive her images and that parallel her experiences as a second generation woman raised in Southall as it marks her coming of age in her development as a film maker with clear political and community orientated imperatives. It is a metaphor both for the lives of these old folk and Gurinder's own development as a Southall-raised woman who has learnt to make her images from her instincts, her experiences and her attempts to command film technology and technical processes. She says:

I have them making a film as a metaphor for their whole lives in Britain, starting off not knowing what they were doing and subsequently learning to be astute about the manipulation of the images they create in order to project the messages they want to communicate.

Acting Our Age, like all of Gurinder's films, is at once a funny and very serious film. It has all the diasporic elements of community, the struggles of the older generations, the racism suffered by them, their negotiations of tough lives in Britain. It captures their frailty, their humour, as well as their quick and savvy understanding of media technologies, their manipulation of images and the consequences of these for the community.

Bhaji broke new ground in giving nine lead roles to Asian women who break the stereotypes previously expected of Asian women. It is a complex and very funny film which disrupts many expected classifications4. Bhaji's messages and images translated to many parts of the world, resonating especially with the experiences of women of different ethnicities and nationalities. It made Gurinder realise that her community, the appray which she had thought was her immediate community of socialization and friendship in Britain, the notion of our community, was more extensive than she had originally anticipated. She had thought that Bhaji would appeal to her immediate family, her friends, British Asians like her, as well as some of the art house movie fans and readers of London-based magazines like Time Out. The international success of the film made her realise that the 'world is a small place' because women from all over have come up to her and have wondered how she has been able to decode their lives, the attitudes of their brothers, and the activities of their daughters. Her ability to create images that are culturally specific and couched in supremely English landscapes, yet which transfer and translate amongst people who do not share these cultural and national specificities, is a facet of her diasporically generated creative talent. She is a locally produced, cross-cultural intermediary par excellence.

The film, co-scripted with Meera Syal, is about the layered and complexly negotiated experiences of the British Asian women in English landscapes. Its strong women characters make a space for themselves within their own domains which are vibrant yet contradictory. These women are assertive actors both within their own communities and within the very British terrain in which they are located. They navigate conventions and expectations that they at the same time both subscribe to and flout, condone and negate, to assert a sense of self and place that is not flat and linear but multi-dimensional and plural.⁵

The film thus negotiates multiple forms of Britishness and Asianness that are

encoded also in the hybridizing musical notes, for example, its theme song (to which I shall return in a moment), in the clothes and languages and in the very sceneries the film captures. Many stereotypes of Asian women are exploded and expectations challenged from many perspectives, Asian and non-Asian. As Gurinder herself puts it:

... in cinema, Asian women were virtually [completely] absent, but in television when they were on, they were generally in dramas running away from arranged marriages or brutal husbands or wanting to marry nice little white guys and their mothers having to commit suicide because of the shame that this was bringing on the family ... Most of these programmes were made by white people and, in particular, men.

Bhaji's action takes place all on one day. The women set off for a day trip from Birmingham to Blackpool, a working class holiday resort in the north of England, with a 'golden mile' of souvenir shops, amusement areas, shops and striptease clubs - all the commercial tourist paraphernalia and landscapes to be found on a beach promenade, in this case a particularly gaudy one, illuminated brightly at night with the well known Blackpool evening lights, a tradition established in the past to extend the holiday season. The trip is organized by Simi, the co-ordinator of a Saheli Women's refuge where one of the characters, a domestically abused but assertive wife, Jinder, lives with her small son. She is sheltering from a violent husband who beats her up and is unable to negotiate the demands of an extended family, within which he and Jinder are expected to live. Simi's character is apparently based on Gurinder. She has her sartorial style of leather jackets she wears over salwaar kameezes. In fact, a woman in California once told me that she thought Simi was played by the film director herself. Simi is the balanced broker amidst this diverse group of women of different ages who referees with dexterity all the generational and intra- and inter- cultural differences that surface throughout the trip. They have to deal with some very overt racist incidents, as in the case of the young white youths who taunt them by showing them their naked bottoms as they are driving past in their van, having teased Simi at a Motorway Rest stop. There is another racist scene at a cafe in Blackpool where the older women are kicked out for spicing their chips and bringing out their own food to eat. Simi is the negotiator who keeps the group together with a great deal of sensitivity. She is the connector who has many connections encoded on her person and in her languages as she can speak to all the women with ease and in the communicative codes they understand.

There are also two boy-crazy, fun-loving, giggly, teenage girls, Ladhu and Madhu, who spend a lot of time flirting with boys, a couple of whom they have a short fling with in Blackpool. Asha, in contrast, is an older heroine of the film, who has a degree and all the frustration of not putting it to good use as she works behind the counter in

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her husband's shop. She is the one who has hallucinations, the controversial scenes in the film, and has a short 'romantic friendship', a frisson with Ambrose, an Englishman from a past era, a locally produced Blackpool 'Raj type' interested in 'exotic women', one of the few white characters, a vestigial persona, a dilapidated man like Blackpool itself, where he is resident. Rekha, a middle aged woman straight from Bombay who is the most 'westernized' in her haute couture fuchsia mini skirt and jacket suit, worn with high heeled shoes. She thinks as a 'modern Bombayite' that the older British Asian women who make remarks about her fripperies are themselves provincial frumps wearing out-of-date-clothes, stuck-in-the-era-they-left-India types. They are the judgmental aunty types who also make remarks about Hashida, who is supposed to go to college to become a doctor, but is in a relationship with a black British boy, Oliver, and is pregnant.

Oliver turns out to be the most caring and 'responsible' by the end and the most endearing of the male characters. The Asian men in the film are mostly weak. One is an aggressive wife-beating husband who has a more sensitive brother, who is good to his wife, who compares living in his extended family as being 'married to the mob'. There is another middle brother who is the archetypal muscular bully who throws his weight around and keeps taunting his violent brother for not being able to keep his wife under control. All these men chase the women day trippers to Blackpool for reasons of their own and there is a considerable amount of action around their pursuits. Gurinder comments frankly on the depiction of the male characters, 'Maybe men feel a little short changed ... when they see *Bhaji*. Hell, that's what we were doing.'

Gurinder's diasporic, combinational background and aesthetics are evident in the appropriation of the famous 1950s British pop song Summer Holiday by Cliff Richard, who is himself an Anglo-Indian. His song is hybridized by Gurinder, who casts the lyrics in Punjabi. It is an illustrative example of the central themes of her work, the appropriating of white British iconography, definitive English popular cultural symbols and also nationalist icons, and recasting and reframing them according to the codes that represent her classifying frames. These include some of the scenes and characters in Bhaji – for example, the setting of the film in the working class English landscape of Blackpool and the browning of Ambrose, whom she clothes in Indian clothes with dripping make up.

Gurinder's Diasporic Journeys

Some critical imperatives drive Gurinder's films and the accessible and translatable images she creates. It is her films' grounding in her politics that makes her images strong, challenging and disruptive of normalized expectations. An important criterion for her, as a community-orientated film maker, is that her images should not only be lucid and accessible, but also sufficiently complex in their content to appeal to and

resonate with a large across-the-board audience. These dynamics are products of her political grounding, sharpened through the racialised experiences of her parents and those of her more assertive second generation contemporaries. She says, 'I have found that what has nurtured me and what has created me is a political imperative to challenge other people's perceptions of myself and my community as I see it.' (Interview with Parminder Bhachu, 1995)

She has always attempted to control her images and has been assertive in exercising this control:

Really it's the role of the media that I see as being extremely powerful in the politics of race. In terms of my own experience directly and in terms of the experience of my community as an Asian community and also a wider black community in Britain and also globally now. It really has been my mission to somehow try to control media representations of myself and other people like myself. That has been my political imperative in all the films I made to date. ... I set up a production company with myself and my mother. My mum has to sign all the checks, the only person I trust.

She set out to challenge expectations both of Asian women and of herself as an Asian woman film director⁶. Her political grounding emanates from the radicalizing experiences that she herself has been through and that of her parents, as marginal settlers in Britain. She says that her father had to cut his hair in the 1960s, a diacritical marker for a Sikh man whose Sikh identity is encoded in the turban that covers his long hair. Wearing a turban, like many other Sikhs in the early days of settlement, he could not get a job in the public spaces of banks and post offices, even though he had worked in a British bank in Kenya for many years before moving to England. This racism had 'got to her father' she says, who had to do factory jobs before he started to run his own business (a common strategy minorities use to negotiate racism and discrimination in the waged labour market). She cites as one of the highpoints in her life as a film director, the time during the making of Bhaji when her father returned to one of the banks in Southall that had refused to employ him some thirty years previously and deposited a million pound cheque there for her production company. 'That has a kind of circular feel that makes me quite emotional,' she comments. The formative events, the ruptures of migration and the diaspora, are absolutely critical to the formulation of the landscapes and databases that determine the cultural products and defiant ethnic identities that are characteristic of second generation British Asians and Blacks.

Gurinder's politicised agenda is also clear from the name she chose to give her film company, Umbi films. Umbi is the paisley, appropriated by British colonial agents from the Indian Kashmiri shawl makers through trade with India. Umbi, the small mango, is a

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common Indian motif and was also the shape of the jewel turban adornment of the tenth Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh, who was responsible for the militarisation of the Sikhs, turning them into Saint soldiers. The name of her company is a representation of one facet of her political agenda in the media and in her diasporic image making role.

Gurinder's understandings of the potencies of the media emanate in part from her training as a journalist, which is absolutely determinant of the images she creates and the processes of film making itself and also its presentation in the market. Her media work as an insider (in BBC local radio and on TV Channel 4) gave her an edge in terms both of telling a story accessibly and concisely but also, crucially, access to mainstream funding. She learnt and honed her skills in the mainstream arena, decoding the strategies, mindsets and methods conducive to attracting mainstream eyes and ears and, most importantly, finances to fund her projects. Her desire to make films that connect up with people emotionally also stems from her journalistic training:

I always marry the personal with the general as much as possible because it is through the personal that you actually express and you connect emotionally more with people.

It is part of her films' accessibility that they appeal primarily at an emotional, not a cerebral, level. She makes the images she does from what has touched her emotionally and what emerges from her strong intuition, a critical feature of her *modus operandi* and *vivendi*. Her films emerge from her gut, her street-smart savvy, rather than formally pedagogised film school training and image discourses. These dynamics are actualized in the lucid vibrant images that she makes. She has also been influenced by the work of British film maker Ken Loach, a social realist, who uses simple camera work focusing on the characters, who are also often working class sassy assertive women trying to resolve various personal dilemmas that are socially uncondoned, like teenage pregnancies, as in the case of the film *A Taste of Honey*, with Rita Tushingham as a pregnant teenager in the north of England who is helped by a young gay man who looks after her and also shares her dwelling with her.

Gurinder chose not to go through some of the Black Film and Media collectives that had state funding because she wanted a route that would not marginalize her. These funds were in fact drying up at that time anyway, as Prime Minister Thatcher ousted the left wing Labour-run GLC (Greater London Council), and various local government agencies which funded arts and media training and film making projects. Gurinder used her mainstream sites and skills to get her message across and to train herself in media technologies she was not familiar with, like the technical filming processes and complex camera work involved in shooting a full-length movie. She has learnt on the job, in a public way, some of the nuances of film making that she might otherwise have learnt in film school. Her lack of film school training has not deterred her, in fact, she has been

free of the classifications film school teaches. She says 'I have not had the luxury of having had that kind of experimentation. So everything I do is in the public eye. I am learning very publicly. It would have been more formalized had I been to film school. On the other hand, film school clouds you in terms of what you want to say ... maybe sometimes what you want to say gets hidden behind those forces. I think one thing about *Bhaji*, whether you like it or not, is that it's very upfront and unpretentious'. Her successes have put her on a populist route in the mainstream, a process that goes even further in her Hollywood directorial debut for her second movie *What's Cooking?*.

Another aspect of Gurinder's interpretative functions is that she has been influenced by academic discourses on identities and Englishness. I referred earlier to the debates on new ethnicities and new Europeans, the appropriation of Englishness by locally produced second generation black and Asians who were also being conceptualized within the academy as second generation diasporics and themselves entering these essentially white arenas of knowledge production as British black and Asian academics. These scholars, like the diasporic performers, were expressing their visions of the locations of Asian and Black communities. Their publications were fresh in academic markets, just as they themselves represented a new group drawn from similar cultural locations as the diasporic music and image makers. They were, on the whole, a few years older.

Academics such as Paul Gilroy contested mainstream notions of national and racial identities, pointing to the plurality of British identities that were not ethnically absolute. These identities are contingent, impure and hybridized, he and others argued, like the diasporic cultural products Gurinder was attracted to and herself creates on film and embodies on her person. Gurinder cites Gilroy as a key influence, as well as Stuart Hall, the guru of Cultural Studies in Britain and founder of the very influential Contemporary Cultural Studies Center, and the writer Hanif Kureishi. His script for the film My Beautiful Laundrette and his essay entitled The Rainbow Sign about his first visit to Pakistan having grown up in South London as a 'a new breed of English man' half Asian, half white, both spoke to Gurinder. The complexity of his relationship with Pakistan and his Pakistaniness as an Englishman was something she could identify with and relate to as a British Asian diasporic reading another diasporic's writings⁷.

Gurinder thus benefits from the theoretical debates initiated by a slightly older set of second generation diaspories, the nuances of whose work she recontexualizes in her films through the cultural mores and the performative and political dynamics that constitute her own landscapes in a transformative moment of the coming together of music and dance and the academic debates on identities, European national pluralities. Many migrants and their children were coming into their own and entering a more culturally confident phase in which they were connecting and reconnecting with many cultural and identity source codes and developing political confidence. This transformative period was one that Gurinder was herself located in and which she

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captured in her films, and which also constituted the global moments of many other movers and settlers all over the world, products of movement and motion, ruptures and sutures, that constitute the very stuff of our globalised times.

This is the background to the many interpretative and hybridizing dynamics in Gurinder's very diasporic and very English images, which have become global images produced from a British Asian sensibility and multiply migrant perspective. Gurinder epitomizes diasporic hybridities in the most profound way in her images, in the clothes she wears, in the languages she speaks, in the music she uses in her films, in the rhythms she has been drawn to and the lyrics and sounds she uses and also innovates in her personal and celluloid images. The critical imperative of her visions is to disrupt, to declassify and reclassify, to mix and fuse and explode all the expected polarities and to move in and through all the scales. All the multiple layers in her films and the characters represent a range of identity *loci* and reflect many new hybridizing situations and forms. The racial stereotypes she subverts represent all the hybridizing appropriations of English registers and material cultures that are rearticulated through her British Asian diasporic classificatory systems to create new frames that are true to and that resonate with her hybrid landscapes. These are the spaces many other people across borders can resonate with.

These dynamics are also performed through her personal sartorial styles which are genuine encoders of her alive and living textures. They are not 'just display for show', they are genuinely deep rooted in the aesthetics of the migrant diasporic economies that have produced her grandparents, her parents, the London community of her childhood and young adulthood socialization. She is a high profile pioneering hybridizer. Her diasporic base was already very hybrid and she is a second generation British Asian who articulates this and hybridizes further in her medium of celluloid.

Gurinder's media products emerge from real living spaces in Britain, the trajectories of which she herself has been a part, which she has herself observed and later captured and understood through the professionalizing channels of her journalistic training and subsequent film making. All the experiences of migration and settlement of the community and communities that have produced her and her parents located as minorities in hostile and familiar and also unfamiliar locations, are all encapsulated in her films and documentaries. She is the totalizing sum of these experiences which she sums up in all her celluloid images, images which are animated by the collectively fused and combined impulses of her multiple-sited and multiple-produced experiences which pulsate in her multiple-layered complex captivating films, that resonate with and entertain audiences across the globe.

[Editorial Note: This paper was written before the UK release of Bend It Like Beckham]

Notes

- 1. 'Star of Sundance: Gurinder Chadha, director of the film that opened Redford's festival, on her night of glory', *The Guardian*, 28 January 2000.
- 2. She states in her *Guardian* article: 'What's Cooking? interweaves four diverse Los Angeles families African-American, Latino, Vietnamese, and Jewish as they come together to celebrate Thanksgiving: Americana through British Asian eyes', *Guardian* Newspaper, 28 January 2000.
- 3. Some quotes from 'I'm British but...' testify to this:

I see myself as a British maybe Welsh I suppose (the Welsh rurally based young man on a farm in the Rhondha Valley) All my colleagues, I have friends from around the area, I have lived in Wales, I am Welsh, I am one of them I suppose.' A Belfast based young man whose family went to Northern Ireland thirty years ago says, 'I am Irish, this is how I would describe myself, I am very happy with that.' A Muslim woman in early twenties, born and raised in Glasgow, states, 'I would like to be described as a Scottish Pakistani, a British Pakistani. It doesn't bother me the fact that I have been born here and I am British as well being Asian, my roots are Asian and that is what I am' and a Bangladeshi woman raised in Birmingham from Bangaldesh living in London who says, 'Me personally, I feel no affiliation to any one system, or any one culture' and so on.

4. Gurinder says about Bhaji:

It operates within so many layers and is truly multi-perspectival. It has been labelled a feminist movie, a cross between this and that, with headlines in newspaper like 'Thelma and Louise go East Indian' (The Toronto Star May 6th, 1994, Feminist-toned flick (Worcester Telegram and Gazette April 22nd 1995, Hello Success Farewell Angst ... a British Asian Director who is winning the race battle (Daily Telegram January 22nd 1994) 'In Bhaji on the Beach,' Feminism Meets the Diaspora, (New York Times, May 22 1994). Gurinder says 'people have had problems trying to talk about it in terminology that they are used to talking about Asian women about. I haven't had one person talking about the film in relation to arranged marriages, which is a massive breakthrough. I have had many people likening the film to Thelma and Louise, or Company of Strangers or Enchanted April or various films or My Beautiful Laundrette or various films. They always says it a cross between this and a cross

between that or it's like the old Italian films of Pasolini. They don't seem to be able to categorize it, which is good because that is what I set out to do, to challenge the kinds of categories we already have. ... I think it's a feminist film because it is certainly coming very much from a female viewpoint, I mean it's unashamedly female-orientated in its understanding of the world and its humour, in its sensibilities and in its nuances. In that sense it's a very female film. I think it's not dogmatic and I don't think it's taking a particular feminist stance because that is a very simplistic position when it comes to matters of race. I think there are many factors that make one's position and I think most people would describe it as a feminist film because it is about women. (Interview with Parminder Bhachu, 1995)

5. Gurinder sums the film up as follows:

The whole film is really about the negotiation of that identity of Britishness and Asianness. One of the ways I like to best talk about Bhaji is to look at it in terms of many different polarities. There is traditionalism on one side and modernity on the other, men on one side and women on the other. There is the older generation and the younger generation. All these different sites of polarity are represented in every form the film takes. It is in every frame, in every musical note, in every character, and what the film does is, it operates on a scale between these polarities at any given time. It could be either side, you never know. ... So you sometimes have to deal with an older generation woman who is very forward looking and you think she should be younger to be looking like that or you move to the other side and see a very westernized form of music that was going with a more traditional character. The idea was to throw out all the kinds of definitions and categories that had been presented as far as the Asians were concerned, in particular the women, and really to subvert. (Henry R. Luce Lecture, April 1995)

6. She says in her Third Text interview:

I think, because I've become a film maker through a political positioning to do with challenging representation, I make films that refuse to be pigeon-holed. Characters refuse to be what you expect them to be. I'm constantly trying to wrong-foot you, whether you are white, Asian, male or female. I'm trying to challenge what you expect in terms of images of Asian women, an 'Asian' story and your

expectation of what an Asian director would/should do (Third Text 1994: 61).

7. She says of the people who have influenced her:

I was reading There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack every time I reached a stumbling point with 'I'm British but...' - now what am I doing? How can I do this? And I would read it and everything would become clear. Brilliant. For me, the first time in my life, I had a book which so closely related to what was going on in my head and what I could use..... It was the writings of people like Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy that I read and which make sense to me. I had not read anything that an Asian person had written apart from Hanif Kureishi...' (Third Text 1994: 58).

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Sant Singh Sekhon's Concept of History

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In this paper an attempt is made to present Sant Singh Sekhon's interpretation of the history of the Punjab with reference to the events directly related with the Grand Narrative of the Sikh historical and metaphysical tribulations. The text for reflection is Sekhon's Baba Bohar, where the author delineates this narrative in terms of a mixture of Marxist and existentialist assertions and contradictions. It is shown how the archetypal progressive writer of Punjabi letters gets caught in his own intellectual cobweb of race, religion and royalty. This (con)fusion is most evident in his depiction of the delusions and dreams of a surrealist sovereignty of Dalip Singh, who, incidentally, also evolves into a harbinger of 'revolution'...All the same, even if Baba Bohar, strictly speaking, is not an historical document, even if it does not follow the ideological rigour of the author himself, it certainly represents the historical consciousness of our people... In fact, these very contradictions make Baba Bohar a human document, a literary text and a cultural classic par excellence.

The very phrase, concept of history, gives rise to a number of surrealistic images, especially when one realizes that Sant Singh Sekhon was not even a historian in the normal, professional sense of the term. But we also know that there are historians who have no concept of history, for conceptualization is an intellectual exercise where the so-called facts of history, of a given specific history, or positivity as Foucault would have it, are subjected to a specific perception and a discursive field where a universe of signification is constituted to create an historical ambience within which every fact, every detail is juxtaposed to present a set of contradictions whose resolution is supposed to lead us to the domain of unrealized ambitions and ambiguities. The conceptual domain is the domain of theoretical propositions, of fundamental basic hypotheses, which serve to comprehend the irregularities and uneven contradictions of empirical reality. Karl Marx had emphasized that to understand and explicate a given state of economy one must have a concept of economy, for without a specific conceptualization one cannot understand the extreme heterogeneity of the visible contours of economy. For any theoretical exercise, this distinction between the empirical reality and its concept is very important. As Althusser points out, before Marx, Spinoza had proposed a similar process of conceptualization by asserting that the concept or the idea of a circle is In the traditional Indian distinct from the circle itself, it is not 'round'. philosophical debates it was often argued that the concept of a cow does not give milk or the concept of fire does not burn and yet without the concept of cow or fire one can never understand the fundamental nature of a cow or a fire.

In the context of history there is another very important disjunction between the chronological, empirical time and the historical or conceptual time. This distinction

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was made by Marx one hundred fifty years ago and has since been applied by various historians with, of course, all kinds of different approaches. Foucault has gone much further in his studies of the birth of clinic, the prisons and the history of sexuality since the Greeks by demonstrating that at any given time a number of discursive fields or positivities are in the process of formation. There is absolutely no unified linearity unless of course if one chooses to describe and emphasize only one positivity, for example, the political intrigues or the philosophical debates or architecture. And even in such cases, there are bound to be cross-references from one positivity to another, and from one state of development to another formation. The different discursive fields are not constituted or do not move, asserts Foucault, at the same speed, or with the same regularity. Criticizing Jean-Paul Sartre's analyses of the different progressive-regressive movements of the French revolution in his Critique de la raison dialectique, Claude Levi-Strauss points out that there is no such thing as history of, there is always a history for, as there are as many histories as there are historians. And, as a social anthropologist, Levi-Strauss demonstrates that a French historian before the French revolution faces the same intellectual predicament as does a native before his cultural myth.

The discursive universe that Sant Singh Sekhon constitutes with the help of disparate historical facts of the Punjab of the last three hundred years can be interpreted as an historico-mythical universe where the real and the surreal, the factual and the conceptual interact in a dialectical reciprocity. It is based on the basic contradiction of the peasants and the princes. There is no doubt that in this historical formation there are several other contradictions, but as Mao has argued, there is always a hierarchy of contradictions. There are those which are primary and others which are secondary or tertiary. Understanding and identifying the primary contradictions or the primary socio-political conflicts depends upon specific socio-economic factors and their conflictual potentials. And, as far as the historical consciousness is concerned, it is also a matter of personal, existential perceptions.

The poetic play, Baba Bohar, the basis of our reflection, was published in 1941, when Sekhon was an intellectually mature young man of 33 years. He was not only an active participant in the progressive movement of his times but by the end of his career he was considered by all counts to be the epitome of progressive thinking in Punjabi letters. And yet, before the myth of the history of the Punjab, of his Punjab, that he is in the process of constituting, he acts as a Levi-Straussean native before his cultural myth. Baba Bohar, the three-hundred-year-old banyan tree, recounts the narrative of the historical progression to a group of young boys who have gathered to play under his shade. The Grand Narrative begins with the last days of the Mughal empire. Guru Gobind Singh raises his sword against the imperial tyranny. He sacrifices his father, Guru Teg Bahadur, and his four sons in his struggle for the freedom of the nation. His message is loud and clear. The young and the brave must fight for their rights and their honour.

dassia Guru Gobind Singh ne kharag uthaake mardaan di hai rit maal dhan bans guaa ke baith nahi jaande kadi oh dheri dhaa ke [Guru Gobind Singh raised his sword and inspired his countrymen not to be disheartened in spite of absolute adversity and loss of all family and fortune. This is the tradition of the great fighters.]

In Sekhon's version of this historical threshold there is absolutely no reference to any religious or metaphysical overtones. In fact when the boys want to know more about the Guru, Baba Bohar resolutely refuses to comply with the words that he will narrate only such events as he has himself witnessed and nothing more. In other words, he will constitute the Grand Narrative of his history as he wants it, as he intellectually conceptualizes it, and for him, this narrative is an endless struggle between the peasants and the princes, between the plebeians and the rulers. Guru Gobind Singh's call to rise to arms got a positive response from the peasants of Majha, Doaba and Malwa. We have also here a flash back to the pre-historical times when the Aryans came to the Punjab, when later on this fertile land became the battlefield of incessant wars and conquests. The stage is set for the final thrust. And immediately thereafter there is a chronological break, and the narrative, Sekhon's narrative that is, continues with the advent of Banda Singh and Baj Singh. Here Baj Singh is the archetypal peasant fighter-hero who was the first peasant, Jat, to have a tryst with royalty, for after the ruthless destruction of Sirhind, he was appointed the first Sikh Subedar.

Sekhon, the foremost progressive writer of Punjab, is taken in too much by the elan of his own domain of the imaginaire, a Freudian slip in Lacanean terms, in the Actually it was a minor phrase, jattaan wichon paihla jis shahi maani. administrative episode in the ruthless and endless destruction of Sirhind, whose Muslim Subedar had had the two sons of Guru Gobind Singh bricked alive. The repeated violence that was let loose on Sirhind, for it was attacked and destroyed several times, and symbolically the ritual continues even today, can be characterized only as absolute, transcendental violence of pure and unmitigated revenge. In fact, this is the most important historical threshold of metaphysical dimensions which certainly did not have any overt political motif. It was pure and simple and transparent violence, of the absolute destruction of the Other even when the Other at times almost did not exist. One of the slogans of the French revolution was, the Other is Hell, the Other must be annihilated. Sirhind was the Other where the innocent young children of the Guru were murdered in cold blood, this Other had to be annihilated, destroyed, erased from the earth. In this historical process, where existential contradictions played the primary role, the Punjabi cultural myth of revenge and violence and endless metaphysical struggle was being created. Guru Gobind Singh laid its foundation. Banda Singh and Bai Singh followed suit with such ruthlessness that it shook the mighty Mughal empire. When the boys remind Baba Bohar, Sekhon, of the large-scale looting and destruction of Saharanpur and Sadhaura by the forces of Banda, the remark is dismissed with utter disdain with the proposition that he is not bothered about such details, and in any case, to counter one poison one has to use another and a tyranny must be annihilated by another terror:

mainu ehna gallan wich na aundi laihar zaihar nu maaran lai wartani paindi zaihar kaihar da badla lain nu ho jaanda kaihar

[Oh young lad I do not know who looted the cities. I am not bothered about these minor details. To counter one poison one has to use another. An oppressive rule invites an equally drastic response.]

It is followed by a long reflection on the political state of the nation and the possibilities of revolution. After the death of Aurangzeb, the internecine warfare between his successors and the political and moral decadence led to the people's movement. The primary contradiction that triggered this political upheaval was obviously between the rulers and the plebeians, or in Sekhon's terms, between the peasants and the princes. Sekhon is very careful in defining his reference to the Jat Sikhs or Jats in general, to all rural masses, the peasants, the artisans, all the sons and daughters of the soil. And the progressive thinker that Sekhon is, he makes it very clear that the consciousness and the acquisition of the people's power is possible only when the masses are able to shed the overwhelming, dark and depressing cover of religious superstition and ignorance:

hai lokan wich baccio shakti wikraal je toran agyaan te bharman de jaal.

[My dear children, the common people are endowed with infinite power if they shed their superstitions and ignorance].

So what is made very clear in this conceptualization of the historical progression is that even if the object-study is a specific positivity of the Sikh peasants' struggle against the Mughal empire, it is not the 'Sikh' spirit, or as in other contexts, it has been described as Rajput or Marahatta spirit, it is primarily and decidedly a revolutionary spirit, and this historical progression is a revolutionary progression due to the specific dialectical interaction of specific socio-political contradictions:

jhagre chhad ke mazhabi je dekho bhai rajean te kirsana di si eh larai.

[If you set aside the sectarian quarrels, dear friends, it was all a fight between the peasants and the princes.]

And strictly in this scheme of socio-political dialectics that Guru Gobind Singh, Sekhon's Guru Gobind Singh, fought and suffered in the struggle for the freedom of the nation:

jo ik lashkar, pita, char put bibe kake azadi di jang wich aia marvaa ke. [Who sacrificed all in the struggle for independence – his comrades, his father, his four innocent sons.]

It is interesting now to follow Sekhon's argument about the invasion of Nadir Shah. When the boys condemn the tyranny and the violence of Nadir Shah, Baba Bohar cautions them against hasty conclusions. According to him, it is the uneven, intolerable political conditions which are responsible for such events. When the princes become tyrants, when there is absolute corruption and despotism, the people rise in revolt, they welcome anyone who can deliver them of absolute cruelty and injustice. Nadir Shah, according to Sekhon, was such a man of destiny, who after the revolutionary transformation of Iran, entered Afghanistan and Hindustan.

lokin howan dukhi raj bansaan ton jad raje ate amir karn jad parja bad khaawan baran khet nu jad jaandian lag raje hi jad apna kho baithan tag chhote bare amir phir nahin rakhde had odon lokin cahunde koi de ulad aise raaj smaaj nu, nek howe bad

[When the populace gets fed up with the kings, when the rulers abuse their power, when the caretakers themselves destroy the fields, when the kings forget their dharma, then it is time for the people to look for someone who can rise and fight for their rights, to establish a new order.]

Sekhon's historical consciousness of class structures leads him to admire Nadir Shah in the same manner as he does his own peasant heroes, for according to Sekhon, Nadir Shah was a Gujjar, a shepherd, a peasant, who was a brave fighter, who responded to the call of socio-political transformation. And he has words of utter disgust for those who did not face his onslaught. Nadir Shah was an invader, yes, but he was a peasant fighter, and if the populace of Delhi suffered due to his sword, they probably deserved it. Obviously, Sekhon shows no pity or mercy, for the humble and the meek. The revolutionary consciousness and the urge and ambition to fight for one's right and honour is not given to everybody, and just blaming the Other would serve no purpose:

khation dar ke pasu jion wic khuh dharam dig pawe eh hal hai lokan da aam wag turde han use hi jo rah haraam nawaa smaj banaan di shakti nahi aam.

[As the cattle fall in their own pits, the ignorant and simple folks follow the common rut, it is not given to all to create a new order, a new society.]

We have here a demonstration of very incisive understanding of the nature of contradictions. It is interesting to note how Sekhon's political critique corresponds

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so closely with the celebrated article of Mao-tse-Tung on contradictions in the characteristic, rural, pastoral, society as opposed to the earlier Marxist understanding of the bourgeois and the proletariat in the dominantly industrial society. Theoretically, all socio-economic, political differences are potential contradictions. However, in the conceptualization of the historical progression, there is always a set of hierarchy in the so-called active and dormant contradictions. The dialectical interaction between the historical consciousness and the historical conditions is never a predetermined phenomenon. The materialistic conception of history is a process of dynamic conceptualization, and this is precisely why in the Marxist theoretical framework, there is rarely a one-to-one correspondence between the chronological time and the historical or conceptual time. Sant Singh Sekhon demonstrates his perfect understanding of this very important conceptual disjunction.

The historical progression continues, and we move on to the times and tribulations of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, whose career and conquests moulded the Punjabi peasants, Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims, into a Punjabi nation. Sekhon emphasizes the phrase, Punjabi nation, as opposed to the phrase Sikh nation, dear to many historians. However, when the boys praise the valour and fighting spirit of the great Ranjit, and aspire for another such great fighter to save the country, Baba Bohar dismisses the suggestion with the remark that the times have changed and the need of the hour is not any king or a prince but a revolutionary hero who can raise his sword for the freedom of the nation:

Baba, sade des te aj samaa duhela us jeha hun chahie koi mard suhela ...

hun nahi, kaka chahie koi raja rana aagu chahie des nu jodha te siana hoe jaanda des lai talwaar uthaana dha ke, es smaaj nu ik nawaa banaana.

[Baba, our country is going through very difficult period. A fighter of that order is the need of the hour...No, my dear children, now we do not need such a fighter-king. Now our country yearns for a revolutionary who can raise his sword for the independence of the nation, who can bring a new order].

All the same, Ranjit Singh's conquest was the culmination of a series of struggles and the declining political power of the Mughals. Just as the German hordes ran across the Roman empire and tore it into pieces, the Sikh peasant fighters with their hit and run tactics nibbled into the overwhelming presence of the Mughals. By the time Ranjit took over, the entire territory between Jamuna and Ravi had already passed into the hands of the various Sikh chieftains. These tribal Sardars had their principalities all over, and, for the first time, the indigenous Punjabi had a taste of royalty. With Ranjit they even crossed the eternal impenetrable terrain of Kabul and Kandahar. Ranjit had sway over this vast territory for over a good fifty years, but

his death and the advent of the British shattered the dream of an emerging nationhood.

This is followed by the tale of sorrows of Ranjit's son, prince Dalip Singh, on whose tragic figure, Sant Singh Sekhon has reflected in great detail. Dalip was taken to England, where he was baptized as a Christian and lived the life of an emigrant prince with a comfortable residence and a piece of land. He became a sort of a gentleman farmer, in fact descended into his ancestors' class of a peasant, with of course all the trappings of the princely British education.

As he grew older, he began to show interest in his motherland, in the lost kingdom of his father and all that it entailed in terms of existential associations and assertions. His British tutor tried to dissuade him from all such alien attitudes. He was now a cultured, civilized prince, a gentleman who had seen the world, who had read most sophisticated writings of great Englishmen and other western masters, he was told, and it was absolutely ridiculous on his part to bother about the uncultured, uncivilized Punjabis, who knew nothing beyond their narrow surroundings. But Dalip's yearning for his 'home' knew no bounds, and he began to nurture hope of an eternal return. An occasional visit from his brethren back home kindled the fire of his imagination, but there was no way out. There was no exit possible. He was existentially blocked forever, as a prisoner, as a prince-prisoner, in the alien land amongst alien people. He accepts his tutor's proposition of his being cultured and civilized, and he is eternally grateful to the British Raj for its munificence, but he is a Punjabi all the same, however uncultured and uncivilized a Punjabi may be, for after all he is not an Englishman, he continues to be a brother of his brethren back home. And he cannot forget that his father, however uneducated and uncivilized he may have been, was after all the sovereign of his land. The Punjab was his land, his country. He had conquered it and was the master of his own destiny. His father never visited places like a tourist as Dalip had been doing. Wherever the mighty Ranjit went, that land became his. He went to Kashmir, it became his Kashmir. He went to Kandahar, it became his Kandahar. And, what is he, a floating prince, with no country, no convention, no sovereignty, no serenity. He is a restless soul, divided between the loyalty to the British Raj, which has done so much for him, and his savage land, for which his heart bleeds against all rationality, a tragic, tortured figure that there ever was.

It is interesting to note that Sekhon dwells so much on the tragic, existential predicament of Dalip Singh. The loss of Ranjit's empire, which was probably considered to be the culmination of the revolutionary struggle that began with Guru Gobind Singh, is presented as a revolution that failed. All that was acquired with one hundred fifty years of a series of heroic fights and extreme sacrifices under most terrible circumstances was lost. For Dalip it was the loss of a home in the most literal sense of the word, but one wonders that even when Sekhon was physically in Punjab, he may have identified himself as an existential alien. He was yearning for a revolution that failed, and like Dalip, with western education and very sophisticated intellectual reflections, he was torn between the East and the West, between his rootedness in the land of the peasantry and the philosophical ideas of revolution acquired from Marx. This is where his perception of revolution gets blurred. Sekhon the Marxist and Sekhon the peasant with feudal temperament are in

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a strange dialectical interaction. His proposition that had Dalip been married in a Sikh Sardar household, his progeny could have retained its claim over the State of Punjab, is anything but revolutionary. He even goes to the extent of saying that he could have been the standard-bearer of revolt against the British when the Ghadar revolutionaries returned from Canada to wage a war of independence. For the archetypal progressive writer of Punjabi letters, this admixture of race, religion and royalty can be explained only in Sartrean terms of Marxist-existentialist cocktail.

Baba Bohar was written in 1941, but in 1955 Sekhon wrote another play, Moiaa Saar Na Kaai, where he developed the thematic problematic of Dalip Singh's existential predicament in great detail. Jean-Paul Sartre had written a play, Flies, during the second world war. In the fifties Sartre was a popular figure in the world of letters and his writings were widely read. It is interesting to note that there are striking similarities between the desire and dream of homecoming of prince Orestes and prince Dalip Singh. The initial stage of absolute rootlessness and the overwhelming desire to be, to be at home, to be the sovereign of one's land and people are the distinctive features of both the plays. Like Dalip Singh, Orestes is also confronted by the culture and the intellectual acquisition of Greek history and philosophy that his tutor reminds him of in comparison with the uncivilized and superstitious behaviour of the land of Orestes. The response of Orestes is existentially decisive. Yes, he knows all the great books of Hellenistic Greece, he knows everything about art, architecture and philosophy, but all this is now like stones in his head. He is a prince, and the princes do not even read and write, but had he lived in his land, he would not have been rootless, weightless, a non-being. This would have been his land, his people. He would have participated in the miseries and marriages of his people, he would have been one of them, he would have shared their destiny, their happiness, their misfortunes. The conceptual oppositions of Culture and Nature, Knowledge and Ignorance that the tutor of Orestes presents are the same as juxtaposed by the tutor of Dalip Singh, and incidentally the response of Dalip is also the same as that of Orestes. occupation of France in the Second World War and the occupation of the Punjab present the same socio-political background to suggest a semiotic significance that goes beyond the historical facts. The surrealistic universe is constituted to juxtapose specific existential predicaments. The semiotic identification of Sekhon with Dalip may also not be that far-fetched, for there was a certain tension within him, within his being of a writer and that of the son of a soil, which led to this existential assertion and this unconscious desire to be master of his own destiny, his own home, his surrealistic universe constituted in the domain of the imaginaire. Moiaa Saar Na Kaai after all is not an historical document. It is like Michelet's history of the French revolution where the French historian often leads the French readers into a transcendental universe of their desires and dreams of the glorious past and the heroic deeds of both the revolutionaries and the ideologues of that great upheaval in the history of mankind.

This tension can also be understood in terms of the modem and the postmodern. On the one side is the modernisation of the world, the industrial revolution, the literacy, the new socialist ideas of socio-economic structures, and on the other, the indigenous culture, the signs and symbols of ethnic behaviourial patterns, the myths

and legends of bygone days. Sekhon wants to have both at the same time with a personal existential assertion. So when Dalip finally decides to return to his native Punjab, he discards the western dress and code, and once again wears long hair and a turban to be one with his Punjabi brethren:

chhote hunde lae san jo kes utaar rakkh lae mur an ke sagar wichkaar Satguru Gobind Singh ad lia bana dhaar paccham wala bhes hun ditta so utaar.

[On the high seas he again wore the long hair he had lost as a child. He put on the uniform of his Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, and bid farewell to the dress and the code of the West.]

It was important for Dalip to adopt the dress code of Guru Gobind Singh, whose revolutionary struggle he now wants to continue. The project, of course, was doomed to failure from the very beginning, for he gets no response from the Sardars in the Punjab who had by now completely switched their loyalties over to the British. The feudal Punjab was in no mood to listen to Dalip's call to arms. The times had changed and he was out of touch with the prevalent socio-political structures in his homeland, and unlike Sartre's Orestes, Dalip dies a forlorn, disgusted and depressed being in an alien land. However, these moments of utter frustration also show a Dalip in the process of acquiring a new Being, on the threshold of a new Becoming. Sekhon's Dalip is a tragic figure, presenting absolute failure of a Grand Narrative, thereby transcending the intolerable empirical, historical reality to arrive at an imaginary, surrealistic universe of desires and dreams.

The Grand Narrative continues with the event of Koma Gata Maru and the return of the Ghadar revolutionaries, Jwala Singh, Bhai Parma Nand, Gurdit Singh, Hardyal etc. By this time, the feudal Sikh Sardars had joined the British ruling order. They vehemently opposed even a symbolic revolt. The British imperialism was well entrenched all over India. The revolutionary flame was however kept alive by the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh, Kartar Singh Sarabha and others who preferred violent overthrow over peaceful non-violent resistance. Sekhon shows great respect for Gandhi and his movement of non-cooperation, but he does not seem to have much faith in its potential of a social revolution, which, according to him, was the need of the hour. He firmly believed that this fraudulent spiritualism and peace were the real causes of the decay and destruction of the Indian socio-political order:

kar rahe tere desh nu kaka barbaad phoka atamwaad te shanti waad dunia utte ho rahe jo ghor apraadh ehna tain tade hi sakoge saadh wadian wali rit nu rakhoge yaad. IJPS 9:2

[My dear child, your country is being ruined by false mysticism and superstition. The injustice that is the order of the day can only be eradicated if you follow the tradition of your elders.]

This tradition of the elders initiated and founded by Guru Gobind Singh and followed by Baj Singh, Banda Singh, Ranjit Singh was obviously, according to Sekhon, continued by Bhagat Singh and his likes. In the mythico-historical progression, in this discursive formation of the conceptual construct of the history of the Punjab, of Sekhon's Punjab, only the fighting valour and courage to annihilate the Other is appreciated, even if it is demonstrated on the other side of the fence:

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Ahmad Shah Abdali aaia mard kraara...
[Ahmad Shah Abdali was a great fighter]...
jithhe Babar maaria Lodhi nakaara ...
[where Babar killed the stupid Lodhi...]
jithhe Akbar waddia Hemu wanjaara...
[ where Akbar massacred the foolish Hemu...]
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At the age of thirty-three in 1941, when Baba Bohar was written, Sant Singh Sekhon had acquired the basic contours of his ideological and existential universe. In this play, all the disparate historical facts had been carefully, meticulously subjected to a specific conceptual structure. The later plays and writings in 1955, Moiaa Saar Na Kaai, or in 1985, Banda Bahadur, explore various dimensions of this Grand Narrative, but do not alter the theoretical framework very clearly articulated earlier in Baba Bohar. The mythico-historical discourse leads to the surreal constitution of his cultural myth but as the surrealist theoretician Andre Breton asserted, the surreal is more real than the empirical real. And the conceptual construct that Sant Singh Sekhon was in search of was obviously in the age-old philosophical and ideological tradition of Spinoza and Marx on the one hand, and of the ancient Indian logicians on the other. Its delineation required a theoretical framework which was inspired by a certain perception of the modern revolutionary praxis, but in the case of Sekhon, as we have seen and known in the case of Jean-Paul Sartre, it was heavily inflected by his personal, specific existential predicaments. As such,, it is at the crossroad of Marxism and Existentialism that this conceptual whole was constituted, where the historical facts were selected, arranged and interpreted to arrive at a discursive formation within which everything found its proper place.

When Sant Singh Sekhon passed away in 1997 at the good ripe age of ninety, he was by all counts, literally and metaphorically, the *Baba Bohar* of Punjabi letters. He left behind a considerable *oeuvre* with several plays, short stories and novels, besides innumerable writings on literary critique. In the last days, he wrote two voluminous tomes on the history of Punjabi literature, where he showed his extreme lucidity and critical acumen for both literary sensibility and historical consciousness. In his long, most irregular, uneven and heterogeneous career, he

even fought three parliamentary elections, and as any honest man should have in our present national polity, he lost all of them.

Sant Singh Sekhon subjected the historical text of our culture to a specific perception followed by a specific articulation. I have done the same with his text. It is a specific close reading of Baba Bohar. I have no doubt that several other readings and interpretations are possible. This would only show the extreme richness and ideological complexity of this great text of our literature. With these words and with this perception I pay tribute to one of the greatest ancestors of our historico-mythical culture.

[This paper is a slightly revised version of the Sant Singh Sekhon Memorial Lecture delivered at the Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla on November 8, 2000]

Review Article

Political Economy of Nationalism: Minority Left and Minority Nationalisms vs. Mainstream Left and Majority Nationalism in India

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Paul Brass and Achin Vanaik (eds.), Competing Nationalisms in South Asia, (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2002), ix and 297pp. (hb) Rs.525 / £29.95 ISBN 81-250-2221X

P. Varavara Rao (ed.), Symphony of Freedom: Papers on Nationality Question (Hyderabad, All India Peoples Resistance Forum, 1996 First Edition), v and 301pp. Rs.150 / \$13 (pb). Rs.300/\$18 (bb). No ISBN.

Punjab as a region in South Asia has been the site of, perhaps, the most bitterly contested perspectives of nationalism. Most regions of India and Pakistan have experienced either two or three contestations of nationalism: religiously-inspired Hindu and Muslim nationalism in addition to a linguistically inspired regional nationalism. Punjab has introduced a fourth contestant: Sikh nationalism which is a contradictory and complex mix of religious and regional nationalisms. One might add another fifth contestant to this spectrum of nationalisms in the case of India: secular Indian nationalism. In this arena of contest between five nationalisms, it is Punjabi nationalism based on the language, shared culture and economic interests of most, if not all, Punjabis which, potentially, can be the most powerful challenger of the other four i.e. Hindu nationalism, Muslim nationalism, Sikh nationalism and secular Indian nationalism. Punjabi nationalism's challenge to nationalisms based on religions is self-evident but its challenge to secular Indian nationalism lies in its potential to critique the assumptions and pretensions of Indian nationalism to be the over-arching nationalism of all regional and linguistic identities in India. However, such a self-conscious Punjabi nationalism remains, in theory, insufficiently articulated in politics, insufficiently projected. Two recent conceptualisation and acknowledgement of Punjabi identity are aimed at critiquing the religious sectarianism that has historically split the Punjabi people (Singh and Thandi, 1999; Singh and Talbot, 1996). The exploration of the potentialities and limitations of Punjabi nationalism in the two nation states of India and Pakistan requires not only the elaboration of commonalities embedded in Punjabi identity but also the examination of the intricate context of Indian and Pakistani nationalisms in its various hues.

Several of the papers in the volume edited by Brass and Vanaik provide a useful external context for thinking about the issues of nationality and nationalism in Punjab. Both the editors are closely related to Punjab – Brass in his scholarly capacity and Vanaik in terms of his Punjabi Sikh family background. It is disappointing, therefore, that their volume does not included any paper dealing directly with the issues of nationality and nationalism in the Punjab. Punjab has been central to the contestations on nationalism in colonial India and in the post-colonial states of India and Pakistan. A paper directly on Punjab would have added to the usefulness of their volume. The volume edited by Rao, in contrast, has two papers dealing directly with Punjab. Section I below looks at the papers in the Brass and Vanaik volume and Section II deals with the papers in the Rao volume. Concluding remarks are offered in Section III.

I

Sikata Banerjee's paper 'Civic and Cultural Nationalism' and Anwar Alam's 'Secularism in India: A Critique of the Current Discourse' focus their effort on exploding the myth perpetuated by some pro-Congress Party social scientists that Congress's 'civic nationalism' (Banerjee) and Nehruvian 'secular nationalism' (Alam) have been qualitatively different from the Sangh Parivar's 'cultural' and communal nationalism. Banerjee and Alam provide impressive evidence to demonstrate how the Congress Party and the Indian State under Congress rule have been implicated in using, accommodating and even encouraging Brahmanical Hinduism in their politico-cultural programmes in different ways and at different stages. Alam's examination of the Hindu Code Bill of 1955 as a move towards Hindu homogenisation and assimilation is particularly striking because it happened during the Nehru era, the era most often advertised as the golden period of secular Indian nationalism.

According to Alam, 'the Hindu Code Bill produced a tendentious legal description of a "Hindu". It included Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs despite their protest' (p 95). It included anyone in the definition of a Hindu who was not a Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew.

The negative description of a Hindu, as one who was not a member of the four excluded religions, produced a Hindu so tightly manacled to his/her birth that even non-belief could not provide an exit. Even though the Constitution provided for the right of non-belief and atheism, the reformed Hindu law took away the freedom of legal self-definition and self-designation from individuals born in Hindu families (p 95).

It was clearly a legal move by the Indian state to construct a consolidated, homogeneous and assimilationist Hindu identity. Alam's examination of the cultural policy of the Indian State demonstrates that 'the Brahmanical features of Hinduism were deliberately selected, promoted and projected at the national level in a manner that, for all practical purposes, blurs the distinction between Hindu nationalism and Nehruvian secular composite nationalism' (p 101).

Taking his story further to the more open 'Hindu card' policy of Indira Gandhi in the 1980s, he notes that after Operation Bluestar, Mrs. Gandhi had publicly stated 'that Hindu dharma [faith] was under attack from the Sikhs' (p 100).

Banerjee's paper extends the argument about the continuity and similarity between civic nationalism (Nehruvian, Congress, secular) and cultural nationalism (Hindutva, Sangh Parivar, communalism) by taking the example of nuclear and foreign policy of the Indian State under Congress and BJP rule: the

fears about perceived Chinese aggression and views of Pakistani ill-will towards India are not BJP creations. Congress leaders have also articulated such ideas. Thus, in the broad outlines of Indian defence attitudes, civic (Nehruvian, Congress) and cultural (Hindutva, BJP/Sena) nationalism meet (p 75).

And further: 'India's nuclear turn and the nationalism it inspired does not seem to have been a unique creation of the BJP's cultural nationalism' (p 76). Banerjee, however, reposes considerable faith in India's judiciary, press, vigilant citizens groups and elections in hoping that they will act as a check on Indian polity moving towards authoritarianism. She does not rule out 'that unforeseen circumstances such as the BJP acquiring a solid majority in the Lok Sabha and/or the incidence of severe economic depression may create a situation wherein the BJP and allies such as the Shiv Sena may choose to ignore the Constitution of India and impose extreme cultural policing on Indian society' but she remains an optimist: 'However, given the diversity of opinion, public dialogue, and free elections, this does not seem very likely.' (p 76). The important message from Banerjee's account is that due to the blurring of difference between civic nationalism and cultural nationalism in India, the answer to BJP's threat is not to return to the Congress Party but to strengthen the institutions of democracy.

David Lelyveld, in his paper 'Words as Deeds: Gandhi and language', highlights another dimension – the linguistic one – from the legacy of the Gandhi/Nehru led national movement which can be added to the argument about the closeness between the Congress tradition and the Hindutva tradition. A passage from Lelyveld would help to demonstrate this point. According to him, Gandhi

supported Hindi or Hindustani as the national language, the language that would take the place of English for communication between Indians of different linguistic backgrounds. In that spirit, Gandhi campaigned most vigorously for Hindi in the South, establishing in 1927 the Hindi Prachar Sabha, a network of teachers and a body of teaching materials aimed at teaching to speakers of Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam, all in the name of patriotism and national service. Ignoring anti-Sanskrit sentiment in Tamil Nadu, Gandhi argued that the common Sanskrit vocabulary would serve to bind the languages of India together. At the same time, Gandhi advocated that all Indian languages be

written in the same script, Devanagari, in order to make them easier to learn (p 181).

These views may well have been propounded by Shyama Prasad Mukherjee the founder of the Hindu nationalist party Jan Sangh which has been subsequently rebranded as Bhartiya Janata Party.

Virginia Van Dyke, in her paper 'Religious Mobilisation and Sadhus in Politics: The Idealised versus Realpolitik', argues that all political parties in India (including Congress) have used religion for their political ends. The role of Sadhus in politics, in her view, is a part of this political culture and practice to use religion for political ends. As an extreme illustration of this point, she mentions that 'In Punjab, even certain "atheist" Marxists are affiliated with Sant Sucha Singh' (p 161). The more prominent role of Sadhus in the recent Hindutva politics, she argues, is not a reflection of the vote catching power of the Sadhus per se but a reflection of the fact that the political environment in India has become communally charged since the 1980s which, in turn, allows the use of the Sadhus by the Hindutva forces as one of the many devices to increase political mobilisation and electoral gains. She gives examples from UP to show that, in a changed political environment, the Sadhus either become ineffective for Hindutva mobilisation or change affiliation to non-Hindutva organisations. She does well to demythologise the role of the Sadhus by showing that they are motivated by far more complex material objectives than straightforward religious and ideological commitments. Paradoxically, however, her paper alerts us to the power of religiosity and religious symbols in Indian political life.

All the four papers mentioned above are more thematically connected with each other than some other papers in this volume. Sudhir Chandra's paper 'Salvaging the Immediate Past: G.M. Tripathi's "The Classical Poets of Gujarat and Their Influence on Society and Morals'" discusses, among many other things, the presence of the notion of a 'Gujarati nation' in Gujarati literature. Chandra also shows that though both Maratha rulers (especially Shivaji) and Muslim rulers were seen in an ambivalent way as intruders into Gujarat, the recent upsurge of Hindutva has led to changed attitudes towards Shivaji. His concluding paragraph sums up his argument:

To me, having witnessed the post-Ayodhya violence against the Muslims in Surat – a city until then remembered for its history of communal amity – and trying to understand the conflagration in terms of inter-community relations in the city over the centuries, these are disconcerting matters. Surat, we will recall, was twice sacked by Shivaji. It now honours him with one of his trademark equestrian statues. The sacks remain part of people's memory. And they seem not to mind the statue. (p 40)

Mubarak Ali, in his paper 'Pakistan's search for identity', dwells on Jinnah's famous speech on August 11, 1947 to the Constituent Assembly where Jinnah outlined his secular vision for the new Pakistani State. Ali points out that Islamic ideologues tried to suppress the message of that speech and, subsequently,

attempts have been made to offer an Islamic reading of that and other speeches of Jinnah. Ali concludes by arguing in favour of reconstructing a territorial identity for Pakistan over a religious identity but does not work out the implications of this interesting idea.

The penultimate paper in the volume is by Jayadeva Uyangoda on 'Sri Lanka's conflict: Complexities in a Negotiated Settlement'. This paper points to the difficulties of arriving at a negotiated settlement because the armed conflict had acquired an autonomy and dynamism of its own due to the employment opportunities for young people in the Sri Lankan army and the LTTE. It remains to be seen whether the Norwegian initiative to persuade the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE to reach a negotiated settlement succeeds in transcending this seemingly vicious trap.

Except for Yoginder Sikan's paper on Jammu and Kashmir, the Brass and Vanaik volume does not have any paper that deals with the question of conflict between the big Indian nationalism and many small/minority nationalisms in the linguistic provinces of India. The editors' main concern in choosing articles for the collection was to bring together contributions that critique Hindu nationalism from a secular and democratic perspective. They have managed to bring together a very valuable collection of papers and this collection would have been richer had they included a few papers articulating the aspirations of smaller nationalisms which question the legitimacy of big Indian nationalism in both its secular and Hindu garb. The Rao edited volume, the second book under review here, takes that question as central and locates that in the Marxist paradigm.

П

The relationship between Marxism and nationalism as ideological positions is not clear-cut and historically has been a contested terrain. In situations of imperialist and colonial rule, socialist movements and national liberation movements have been mutual allies. In situations of conflict between a dominant nationalism and minority nationalisms within an independent nation state, the Marxist paradigm on nationalism is a site of competing and conflicting claims (Blaut 1987, Singh 1990). Seen in this context, the political and ideological polarisation on unitarist Indian nationalism versus multiple nationalisms in India seems to be pretty neat. The mainstream Left parties, that is the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Communist Party of India (CPM-CPI hereafter), are allies of the non-Left all India political formations in the country in advocating a strong and unitarist Indian nationalism. The minority Left parties and groups (that is, the political formations around the Maoist/Naxalite tendency) are supporters of several nationalist movements in the different nationality/linguistic regions in India. However, this neat polarisation raises several awkward and difficult questions for an analysis that might try to relate class to nation. If one were to argue that behind the articulation of nationalist interests lie some class interests, would that imply that the mainstream Left parties (CPM-CPI) represent the same class interests as those represented by the non-Left all India political parties, like the Indian National Congress and the

Bhartiya Janata Party? Similarly, would that mean that various Naxalite/Maoist parties and groups represent the same class interests as those represented by political parties and groups that articulate the demands for autonomy, self-determination and independence/secession of nations and nationalities located in the different linguistic provinces of India? Further, can one say that the mainstream Left tendency and the Maoist/Naxalite tendency represent different class interests because these tendencies are allied with articulation of different nationalist perspectives? An answer which takes into account the complexities inherent in these questions is not likely to be a simple yes or no. Though it will be difficult to refute that in any nationalist movement, some economic and class interests are involved, the relationship between the movement and the economic/class interests is always a nuanced, complex and mediated one. I have attempted an elaboration of the complexity of the relationship between class and ideology in the case of Indian nationalism in another essay (Singh 1999).

The collection of articles brought out by Rao is aimed at exploring the relationship between nation and class, mainly in the context of India. Let me state at the very outset that though some of the articles in the collection provide excellent political analyses, the exploration of the relationship between class and the nation is, on the whole, poorly done. These articles were first prepared for a seminar in Delhi in 1996. The opening lines of this volume in the form of a dedication to Kumari (Andhra Pradesh), Jaleel Andrabi (Kashmir), Parag Das (Assam), Jaswant Singh Kalra (Punjab) and ZV Yavpee (Nagaland) 'who fought in the democratic rights movement of respective nationality struggles and were killed by state and its mercenaries and to thousands of known and unknown martyrs who laid down their lives for democratic revolution and national selfdetermination in this sub-continent' proclaims its highly political approach towards unpacking the bundle of Indian nationalism. The theoretical and political perspective of the organisers of the seminar and this publication is Maoist. The focus is on India though there are several general theoretical pieces and some articles deal with the nationality question in Africa, Philippines, Iraq/Kurdistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The Maoist political tendency in India has a distinctly different political perspective on nation and nationality in India from the mainstream Left (CPM-CPI) in India. Though the CPM's formal adherence to the position that India is a multi-national country differentiates it from the more integrationist stance of the CPI, yet in practice both the parties - by their over-zealous and constantly proclaimed commitment to the 'unity and integrity of the country' - have contributed to the development of a position on nationalism that is hardly any different from the right-wing Hindutva and the centrist Congress positions. This might seem too harsh a judgement on the CPI and the CPM but it is true and this bitter truth needs be recognized by these parties as a first step towards a thorough re-consideration of their positions if they do not want to be bracketed with the Hindutva right and the centrist Congress on this question. Not wanting to be seen to be lagging behind others in their commitment to India's unity and integrity, the CPI and CPM have gone overboard in their uncritical passion for Indian nationalism. This urge for competitive patriotism is especially strong among sections of the

party leadership from the Hindi speaking and northern region. The rise to ascendancy of some leaders from the North into the central decision-making forums of these parties (especially that of H S Surjeet in the CPM) is partly responsible for these parties moving towards an over-nationalistic perspective. In general, the political culture in India has moved since the 1980s towards a unitarist and aggressive Indian nationalism. The rise to power of Hindu nationalism is not a deviation but an offshoot of this aggressive and unitarist nationalism. In adjusting to this change in the political climate, the CPM and CPI have surrendered to, instead of confronting, this discourse of hegemonic Indian nationalism. The net beneficiary of this 'national consensus' is Hindu nationalism.

The Maoist perspective, which informs the Indian Maoists/Naxalites, projects national liberation struggles against imperialism, and smaller minority nations' struggle against majority nationalism within a country, as progressive from the viewpoint of building a democratic and egalitarian world order. Manoranjan Mohanty informs us in the Foreword to this book that, in organising a seminar in 1981, Andhra Pradesh Radical Students Union was perhaps the first organisation to take a serious initiative in India in conducting a Marxist discussion on the nationality question. The seminar papers were published in Nationality Question in India (1982). The second major Maoist effort in this direction was the book Prison House, Rose Garden: Seminar Papers on the Nationality Question in India brought out in 1993 by the All India League for Revolutionary Culture, Bangalore¹. The book under review here seems to be the third major Maoist initiative on this issue. The core of the Maoist position, which differentiates it very clearly from the CPI-CPM position, is its support for the right of self-determination of the nationalities in India (p 122). In the key paper by All India Peoples Resistance Forum (AIPRF), this is further elaborated. The demand for the right to self-determination

may take the form of a demand for secession. It may take the form of a demand for voluntary federation of the various nationalities or a struggle against the growing centralisation and authoritarian control by the centre or it may assume the form of a demand for a separate state or autonomous region and areas (p 122).

The various ongoing nationality movements in India are then categorised into three types. Firstly, the movements of independence of those nationalities which, historically, have never been a part of India and were territorially annexed to the Indian Union against their wishes. This category comprises Kashmir and the North-East. Secondly, the movements of those nationalities that are relatively more developed and have become consolidated into different linguistic-based states. These encompass the biggest chunk of the population of India. The third category comprises the movements of the emerging nationalities and ethnic groups for separate statehood or for some form of regional autonomy (p 122). According to this categorisation, Punjab belongs to the second category.

Two articles, one by Justice Ajit Singh Bains and the other on the 'Nationality Question in the Punjab' by Nardev Singh on behalf of the Jamhoori

[My dear child, your country is being ruined by false mysticism and superstition. The injustice that is the order of the day can only be eradicated if you follow the tradition of your elders.]

This tradition of the elders initiated and founded by Guru Gobind Singh and followed by Baj Singh, Banda Singh, Ranjit Singh was obviously, according to Sekhon, continued by Bhagat Singh and his likes. In the mythico-historical progression, in this discursive formation of the conceptual construct of the history of the Punjab, of Sekhon's Punjab, only the fighting valour and courage to annihilate the Other is appreciated, even if it is demonstrated on the other side of the fence:

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jithhe Babar maaria Lodhi nakaara ...
[where Babar killed the stupid Lodhi...]

jithhe Akbar waddia Hemu wanjaara...
[ where Akbar massacred the foolish Hemu...]
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At the age of thirty-three in 1941, when Baba Bohar was written, Sant Singh Sekhon had acquired the basic contours of his ideological and existential universe. In this play, all the disparate historical facts had been carefully, meticulously subjected to a specific conceptual structure. The later plays and writings in 1955, Moiaa Saar Na Kaai, or in 1985, Banda Bahadur, explore various dimensions of this Grand Narrative, but do not alter the theoretical framework very clearly articulated earlier in Baba Bohar. The mythico-historical discourse leads to the surreal constitution of his cultural myth but as the surrealist theoretician Andre Breton asserted, the surreal is more real than the empirical real. And the conceptual construct that Sant Singh Sekhon was in search of was obviously in the age-old philosophical and ideological tradition of Spinoza and Marx on the one hand, and of the ancient Indian logicians on the other. Its delineation required a theoretical framework which was inspired by a certain perception of the modem revolutionary praxis, but in the case of Sekhon, as we have seen and known in the case of Jean-Paul Sartre, it was heavily inflected by his personal, specific existential predicaments. As such,, it is at the crossroad of Marxism and Existentialism that this conceptual whole was constituted, where the historical facts were selected, arranged and interpreted to arrive at a discursive formation within which everything found its proper place.

When Sant Singh Sekhon passed away in 1997 at the good ripe age of ninety, he was by all counts, literally and metaphorically, the *Baba Bohar* of Punjabi letters. He left behind a considerable *oeuvre* with several plays, short stories and novels, besides innumerable writings on literary critique. In the last days, he wrote two voluminous tomes on the history of Punjabi literature, where he showed his extreme lucidity and critical acumen for both literary sensibility and historical consciousness. In his long, most irregular, uneven and heterogeneous career, he

n fought three parliamentary elections, and as any honest man should have in our sent national polity, he lost all of them.

ant Singh Sekhon subjected the historical text of our culture to a specific reption followed by a specific articulation. I have done the same with his text. It specific close reading of Baba Bohar. I have no doubt that several other lings and interpretations are possible. This would only show the extreme mess and ideological complexity of this great text of our literature. With these rds and with this perception I pay tribute to one of the greatest ancestors of our orico-mythical culture.

is paper is a slightly revised version of the Sant Singh Sekhon Memorial Lecture ivered at the Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla on November 8, 2000]

Review Article

Political Economy of Nationalism: Minority Left and Minority Nationalisms vs. Mainstream Left and Majority Nationalism in India

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Paul Brass and Achin Vanaik (eds.), Competing Nationalisms in South Asia, (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2002), ix and 297pp. (hb) Rs.525 / £29.95 ISBN 81-250-2221X

P. Varavara Rao (ed.), Symphony of Freedom: Papers on Nationality Question (Hyderabad, All India Peoples Resistance Forum, 1996 First Edition), v and 301pp. Rs.150 / \$13 (pb). Rs.300/\$18 (hb). No ISBN.

Punjab as a region in South Asia has been the site of, perhaps, the most bitterly contested perspectives of nationalism. Most regions of India and Pakistan have experienced either two or three contestations of nationalism: religiously-inspired Hindu and Muslim nationalism in addition to a linguistically inspired regional nationalism. Punjab has introduced a fourth contestant: Sikh nationalism which is a contradictory and complex mix of religious and regional nationalisms. One might add another fifth contestant to this spectrum of nationalisms in the case of India: secular Indian nationalism. In this arena of contest between five nationalisms, it is Punjabi nationalism based on the language, shared culture and economic interests of most, if not all, Punjabis which, potentially, can be the most powerful challenger of the other four i.e. Hindu nationalism, Muslim nationalism, Sikh nationalism and secular Indian nationalism. Punjabi nationalism's challenge to nationalisms based on religions is self-evident but its challenge to secular Indian nationalism lies in its potential to critique the assumptions and pretensions of Indian nationalism to be the over-arching nationalism of all regional and linguistic identities in India. However, such a self-conscious Punjabi nationalism remains, in theory, insufficiently articulated in politics, insufficiently projected. Two recent attempts conceptualisation and acknowledgement of Punjabi identity are aimed at critiquing the religious sectarianism that has historically split the Punjabi people (Singh and Thandi, 1999; Singh and Talbot, 1996). The exploration of the potentialities and limitations of Punjabi nationalism in the two nation states of India and Pakistan requires not only the elaboration of commonalities embedded in Punjabi identity but also the examination of the intricate context of Indian and Pakistani nationalisms in its various hues.

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Several of the papers in the volume edited by Brass and Vanaik provide a useful external context for thinking about the issues of nationality and nationalism in Punjab. Both the editors are closely related to Punjab – Brass in his scholarly capacity and Vanaik in terms of his Punjabi Sikh family background. It is disappointing, therefore, that their volume does not included any paper dealing directly with the issues of nationality and nationalism in the Punjab. Punjab has been central to the contestations on nationalism in colonial India and in the post-colonial states of India and Pakistan. A paper directly on Punjab would have added to the usefulness of their volume. The volume edited by Rao, in contrast, has two papers dealing directly with Punjab. Section I below looks at the papers in the Brass and Vanaik volume and Section II deals with the papers in the Rao volume. Concluding remarks are offered in Section III.

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Sikata Banerjee's paper 'Civic and Cultural Nationalism' and Anwar Alam's 'Secularism in India: A Critique of the Current Discourse' focus their effort on exploding the myth perpetuated by some pro-Congress Party social scientists that Congress's 'civic nationalism' (Banerjee) and Nehruvian 'secular nationalism' (Alam) have been qualitatively different from the Sangh Parivar's 'cultural' and communal nationalism. Banerjee and Alam provide impressive evidence to demonstrate how the Congress Party and the Indian State under Congress rule have been implicated in using, accommodating and even encouraging Brahmanical Hinduism in their politico-cultural programmes in different ways and at different stages. Alam's examination of the Hindu Code Bill of 1955 as a move towards Hindu homogenisation and assimilation is particularly striking because it happened during the Nehru era, the era most often advertised as the golden period of secular Indian nationalism.

According to Alam, 'the Hindu Code Bill produced a tendentious legal description of a "Hindu". It included Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs despite their protest' (p 95). It included anyone in the definition of a Hindu who was not a Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew.

The negative description of a Hindu, as one who was not a member of the four excluded religions, produced a Hindu so tightly manacled to his/her birth that even non-belief could not provide an exit. Even though the Constitution provided for the right of non-belief and atheism, the reformed Hindu law took away the freedom of legal self-definition and self-designation from individuals born in Hindu families (p 95).

It was clearly a legal move by the Indian state to construct a consolidated, homogeneous and assimilationist Hindu identity. Alam's examination of the cultural policy of the Indian State demonstrates that 'the Brahmanical features of Hinduism were deliberately selected, promoted and projected at the national level in a manner that, for all practical purposes, blurs the distinction between Hindu nationalism and Nehruvian secular composite nationalism' (p 101).

Taking his story further to the more open 'Hindu card' policy of Indira Gandhi in the 1980s, he notes that after Operation Bluestar, Mrs. Gandhi had publicly stated 'that Hindu dharma [faith] was under attack from the Sikhs' (p 100).

Banerjee's paper extends the argument about the continuity and similarity between civic nationalism (Nehruvian, Congress, secular) and cultural nationalism (Hindutva, Sangh Parivar, communalism) by taking the example of nuclear and foreign policy of the Indian State under Congress and BJP rule; the

fears about perceived Chinese aggression and views of Pakistani ill-will towards India are not BJP creations. Congress leaders have also articulated such ideas. Thus, in the broad outlines of Indian defence attitudes, civic (Nehruvian, Congress) and cultural (Hindutva, BJP/Sena) nationalism meet (p 75).

And further: 'India's nuclear turn and the nationalism it inspired does not seem to have been a unique creation of the BJP's cultural nationalism' (p 76). Banerjee, however, reposes considerable faith in India's judiciary, press, vigilant citizens groups and elections in hoping that they will act as a check on Indian polity moving towards authoritarianism. She does not rule out 'that unforeseen circumstances such as the BJP acquiring a solid majority in the Lok Sabha and/or the incidence of severe economic depression may create a situation wherein the BJP and allies such as the Shiv Sena may choose to ignore the Constitution of India and impose extreme cultural policing on Indian society' but she remains an optimist: 'However, given the diversity of opinion, public dialogue, and free elections, this does not seem very likely.' (p 76). The important message from Banerjee's account is that due to the blurring of difference between civic nationalism and cultural nationalism in India, the answer to BJP's threat is not to return to the Congress Party but to strengthen the institutions of democracy.

David Lelyveld, in his paper 'Words as Deeds: Gandhi and language', highlights another dimension – the linguistic one – from the legacy of the Gandhi/Nehru led national movement which can be added to the argument about the closeness between the Congress tradition and the Hindutva tradition. A passage from Lelyveld would help to demonstrate this point. According to him, Gandhi

supported Hindi or Hindustani as the national language, the language that would take the place of English for communication between Indians of different linguistic backgrounds. In that spirit, Gandhi campaigned most vigorously for Hindi in the South, establishing in 1927 the Hindi Prachar Sabha, a network of teachers and a body of teaching materials aimed at teaching to speakers of Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam, all in the name of patriotism and national service. Ignoring anti-Sanskrit sentiment in Tamil Nadu, Gandhi argued that the common Sanskrit vocabulary would serve to bind the languages of India together. At the same time, Gandhi advocated that all Indian languages be

written in the same script, Devanagari, in order to make them easier to learn (p 181).

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These views may well have been propounded by Shyama Prasad Mukherjee the founder of the Hindu nationalist party Jan Sangh which has been subsequently rebranded as Bhartiya Janata Party.

Virginia Van Dyke, in her paper 'Religious Mobilisation and Sadhus in Politics: The Idealised versus Realpolitik', argues that all political parties in India (including Congress) have used religion for their political ends. The role of Sadhus in politics, in her view, is a part of this political culture and practice to use religion for political ends. As an extreme illustration of this point, she mentions that 'In Punjab, even certain "atheist" Marxists are affiliated with Sant Sucha Singh' (p 161). The more prominent role of Sadhus in the recent Hindutva politics, she argues, is not a reflection of the vote catching power of the Sadhus per se but a reflection of the fact that the political environment in India has become communally charged since the 1980s which, in turn, allows the use of the Sadhus by the Hindutva forces as one of the many devices to increase political mobilisation and electoral gains. She gives examples from UP to show that, in a changed political environment, the Sadhus either become ineffective for Hindutva mobilisation or change affiliation to non-Hindutva organisations. She does well to demythologise the role of the Sadhus by showing that they are motivated by far more complex material objectives than straightforward religious and ideological commitments. Paradoxically, however, her paper alerts us to the power of religiosity and religious symbols in Indian political life.

All the four papers mentioned above are more thematically connected with each other than some other papers in this volume. Sudhir Chandra's paper 'Salvaging the Immediate Past: G.M. Tripathi's "The Classical Poets of Gujarat and Their Influence on Society and Morals'' discusses, among many other things, the presence of the notion of a 'Gujarati nation' in Gujarati literature. Chandra also shows that though both Maratha rulers (especially Shivaji) and Muslim rulers were seen in an ambivalent way as intruders into Gujarat, the recent upsurge of Hindutva has led to changed attitudes towards Shivaji. His concluding paragraph sums up his argument:

To me, having witnessed the post-Ayodhya violence against the Muslims in Surat – a city until then remembered for its history of communal amity – and trying to understand the conflagration in terms of inter-community relations in the city over the centuries, these are disconcerting matters. Surat, we will recall, was twice sacked by Shivaji. It now honours him with one of his trademark equestrian statues. The sacks remain part of people's memory. And they seem not to mind the statue. (p 40)

Mubarak Ali, in his paper 'Pakistan's search for identity', dwells on Jinnah's famous speech on August 11, 1947 to the Constituent Assembly where Jinnah outlined his secular vision for the new Pakistani State. Ali points out that Islamic ideologues tried to suppress the message of that speech and, subsequently,

attempts have been made to offer an Islamic reading of that and other speeches of Jinnah. Ali concludes by arguing in favour of reconstructing a territorial identity for Pakistan over a religious identity but does not work out the implications of this interesting idea.

The penultimate paper in the volume is by Jayadeva Uyangoda on 'Sri Lanka's conflict: Complexities in a Negotiated Settlement'. This paper points to the difficulties of arriving at a negotiated settlement because the armed conflict had acquired an autonomy and dynamism of its own due to the employment opportunities for young people in the Sri Lankan army and the LTTE. It remains to be seen whether the Norwegian initiative to persuade the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE to reach a negotiated settlement succeeds in transcending this seemingly vicious trap.

Except for Yoginder Sikan's paper on Jammu and Kashmir, the Brass and Vanaik volume does not have any paper that deals with the question of conflict between the big Indian nationalism and many small/minority nationalisms in the linguistic provinces of India. The editors' main concern in choosing articles for the collection was to bring together contributions that critique Hindu nationalism from a secular and democratic perspective. They have managed to bring together a very valuable collection of papers and this collection would have been richer had they included a few papers articulating the aspirations of smaller nationalisms which question the legitimacy of big Indian nationalism in both its secular and Hindu garb. The Rao edited volume, the second book under review here, takes that question as central and locates that in the Marxist paradigm.

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The relationship between Marxism and nationalism as ideological positions is not clear-cut and historically has been a contested terrain. In situations of imperialist and colonial rule, socialist movements and national liberation movements have been mutual allies. In situations of conflict between a dominant nationalism and minority nationalisms within an independent nation state, the Marxist paradigm on nationalism is a site of competing and conflicting claims (Blaut 1987, Singh 1990). Seen in this context, the political and ideological polarisation on unitarist Indian nationalism versus multiple nationalisms in India seems to be pretty neat. The mainstream Left parties, that is the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Communist Party of India (CPM-CPI hereafter), are allies of the non-Left all India political formations in the country in advocating a strong and unitarist Indian nationalism. The minority Left parties and groups (that is, the political formations around the Maoist/Naxalite tendency) are supporters of several nationalist movements in the different nationality/linguistic regions in India. However, this neat polarisation raises several awkward and difficult questions for an analysis that might try to relate class to nation. If one were to argue that behind the articulation of nationalist interests lie some class interests, would that imply that the mainstream Left parties (CPM-CPI) represent the same class interests as those represented by the non-Left all India political parties, like the Indian National Congress and the

Bhartiya Janata Party? Similarly, would that mean that various Naxalite/Maoist parties and groups represent the same class interests as those represented by political parties and groups that articulate the demands for autonomy, self-determination and independence/secession of nations and nationalities located in the different linguistic provinces of India? Further, can one say that the mainstream Left tendency and the Maoist/Naxalite tendency represent different class interests because these tendencies are allied with articulation of different nationalist perspectives? An answer which takes into account the complexities inherent in these questions is not likely to be a simple yes or no. Though it will be difficult to refute that in any nationalist movement, some economic and class interests are involved, the relationship between the movement and the economic/class interests is always a nuanced, complex and mediated one. I have attempted an elaboration of the complexity of the relationship between class and ideology in the case of Indian nationalism in another essay (Singh 1999).

The collection of articles brought out by Rao is aimed at exploring the relationship between nation and class, mainly in the context of India. Let me state at the very outset that though some of the articles in the collection provide excellent political analyses, the exploration of the relationship between class and the nation is, on the whole, poorly done. These articles were first prepared for a seminar in Delhi in 1996. The opening lines of this volume in the form of a dedication to Kumari (Andhra Pradesh), Jaleel Andrabi (Kashmir), Parag Das (Assam), Jaswant Singh Kalra (Punjab) and ZV Yavpee (Nagaland) 'who fought in the democratic rights movement of respective nationality struggles and were killed by state and its mercenaries and to thousands of known and unknown martyrs who laid down their lives for democratic revolution and national selfdetermination in this sub-continent' proclaims its highly political approach towards unpacking the bundle of Indian nationalism. The theoretical and political perspective of the organisers of the seminar and this publication is Maoist. The focus is on India though there are several general theoretical pieces and some articles deal with the nationality question in Africa, Philippines, Iraq/Kurdistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The Maoist political tendency in India has a distinctly different political perspective on nation and nationality in India from the mainstream Left (CPM-CPI) in India. Though the CPM's formal adherence to the position that India is a multi-national country differentiates it from the more integrationist stance of the CPI, yet in practice both the parties - by their over-zealous and constantly proclaimed commitment to the 'unity and integrity of the country' - have contributed to the development of a position on nationalism that is hardly any different from the right-wing Hindutva and the centrist Congress positions. This might seem too harsh a judgement on the CPI and the CPM but it is true and this bitter truth needs be recognized by these parties as a first step towards a thorough re-consideration of their positions if they do not want to be bracketed with the Hindutva right and the centrist Congress on this question. Not wanting to be seen to be lagging behind others in their commitment to India's unity and integrity, the CPI and CPM have gone overboard in their uncritical passion for Indian nationalism. This urge for competitive patriotism is especially strong among sections of the

party leadership from the Hindi speaking and northern region. The rise to ascendancy of some leaders from the North into the central decision-making forums of these parties (especially that of H S Surjeet in the CPM) is partly responsible for these parties moving towards an over-nationalistic perspective. In general, the political culture in India has moved since the 1980s towards a unitarist and aggressive Indian nationalism. The rise to power of Hindu nationalism is not a deviation but an offshoot of this aggressive and unitarist nationalism. In adjusting to this change in the political climate, the CPM and CPI have surrendered to, instead of confronting, this discourse of hegemonic Indian nationalism. The net beneficiary of this 'national consensus' is Hindu nationalism.

The Maoist perspective, which informs the Indian Maoists/Naxalites, projects national liberation struggles against imperialism, and smaller minority nations' struggle against majority nationalism within a country, as progressive from the viewpoint of building a democratic and egalitarian world order. Manoranjan Mohanty informs us in the Foreword to this book that, in organising a seminar in 1981, Andhra Pradesh Radical Students Union was perhaps the first organisation to take a serious initiative in India in conducting a Marxist discussion on the nationality question. The seminar papers were published in Nationality Question in India (1982). The second major Maoist effort in this direction was the book Prison House, Rose Garden: Seminar Papers on the Nationality Question in India brought out in 1993 by the All India League for Revolutionary Culture, Bangalore¹. The book under review here seems to be the third major Maoist initiative on this issue. The core of the Maoist position, which differentiates it very clearly from the CPI-CPM position, is its support for the right of self-determination of the nationalities in India (p 122). In the key paper by All India Peoples Resistance Forum (AIPRF), this is further elaborated. The demand for the right to self-determination

may take the form of a demand for secession. It may take the form of a demand for voluntary federation of the various nationalities or a struggle against the growing centralisation and authoritarian control by the centre or it may assume the form of a demand for a separate state or autonomous region and areas (p 122).

The various ongoing nationality movements in India are then categorised into three types. Firstly, the movements of independence of those nationalities which, historically, have never been a part of India and were territorially annexed to the Indian Union against their wishes. This category comprises Kashmir and the North-East. Secondly, the movements of those nationalities that are relatively more developed and have become consolidated into different linguistic-based states. These encompass the biggest chunk of the population of India. The third category comprises the movements of the emerging nationalities and ethnic groups for separate statehood or for some form of regional autonomy (p 122). According to this categorisation, Punjab belongs to the second category.

Two articles, one by Justice Ajit Singh Bains and the other on the 'Nationality Question in the Punjab' by Nardev Singh on behalf of the Jamhoori

Morcha, deal directly with Punjab. Three other articles, one each on Kashmir and Pakistan and one a general one on nationalism in India by AIPRF (mentioned earlier), have sections dealing with Punjab, Punjabi language and Punjabi nationalism. The paper on Kashmir by Abdul Gani Lone (assassinated recently) of the All Party Hurriyat Conference has a sharply critical paragraph about the oppressive character of Ranjit Singh's Sikh rule in Kashmir. He is, of course, equally critical of the Moghul, Afghan and Dogra rule in Kashmir for suppressing Kashmiri nationalism.

Justice Bains' paper is a critique of the unitarist character of the Indian Constitution. He points out that the Constituent Assembly did not represent the people of India because the members were elected on limited franchise. Only 11 percent of the people of India had voting rights in 1946 and these rights had been acquired on the basis of Land Revenue, Income Tax or military service (p 177). These voters exercised their right to elect State and Central Assembly members who, in turn, elected the Constituent Assembly which gave us the present Constitution. He also highlights the well-known historical fact that, 'The Sikh representative in the Constituent Assembly did not sign the Constitution of India as it had not given any autonomy to the states' (p 179). The main message coming out of Bains' article is that the troubles in Punjab can be attributed to this unitarist Constitution which empowers the centre vis-à-vis the states.

Nardev Singh's long article is the most comprehensive treatment of Punjabi nationalism from a Maoist perspective I have seen so far. Not written in an academic format, it is nevertheless well-researched. Despite some shortcomings in style and the unnecessary repetitive usage of Maoist terminology, it is an admirable effort at constructing an historical over-view of Punjabi nationalism from the pre-Sikh period to the Sikh Guru, post-Guru, pre-colonial, the colonial and the post-colonial period. I will happily recommend this as a supplementary reading to the two books on Punjabi identity mentioned earlier (Singh and Thandi 1999, Singh and Talbot 1996). It makes some very interesting points needing further development, e.g. the Jogis from Gorakh Nath onwards between 809 AD and 1150 AD were the first poets of the Punjabi language; the Sikh Gurus were 'not just religious leaders, they were also social, political and later military leaders of the people' (p 185); Ranjit Singh's kingdom was 'the first independent Punjabi kingdom' and the 'relatively peaceful period' of his rule provided an economic, social and cultural boost to Punjabi identity (p 186); during the colonial rule 'in Punjab, the Congress was a Hindu body, more than perhaps anywhere else in India' (p 187) and that 'the lack of the independent development of the Punjabi bourgeoisie due to colonial rule hindered the development of [Punjabi] nationality, substituting narrow sectarian interests in the place of those wider interests which a newly emergent bourgeois class would have pursued' (p 189). In the post-colonial period, the movement for a Punjabi speaking State is characterised as progressive and democratic. On the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, the Akali Dal's role is appreciated as 'the first major political party to raise the basic demand of a federal India' (p 196). The growth of the rural bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie which helped the widespread development of the Punjabi mass media is welcomed. Both Bhinderanwale, the

Sikh revivalist leader, and Jagat Narain, an Arya Samajist press baron killed by pro-Bhindranwale men, are criticised for causing splits in Punjabi nationality. The Khalistan movement is seen as failing to win popular support but, in a sharp departure from the mainstream Left orthodoxy, the militant Sikh youth are viewed very sympathetically for having 'displayed qualities of sacrifice and heroism in daring actions in which prominent ruling class reactionaries from Indira Gandhi, Gen Vaidya to several Zulmi police officers were targeted and killed' (p 199). These militant activists, it is claimed, 'won support from the Sikh masses since they were perceived as fighters for revenge against persecution' (p 200). Characterising the blowing up of Punjab CM Beant Singh as a 'well deserved assassination' is another striking example of the departure from the mainstream Left orthodoxy.

There are two aspects of this departure from the mainstream Left which are worth noting. Of the two, the one which is more obvious and less significant is that the Maoist adoration of armed struggles makes the Maoists empathise with any resistance movement which takes to the path of armed resistance. The second and more significant aspect is that the Maoists are, unlike the mainstream Left, not part of the national consensus that the national unity and territorial integrity of India has to be maintained irrespective of the means adopted to maintain this unity and integrity. This consensus has become the herd instinct of the political establishment in India ranging from the Left (CPI-CPM) to the extreme right of Shiv Sena and Bajarang Dal. The Maoists represent a paradigm shift from this bandwagon by defending human rights and aspirations of minorities and smaller nations. The long term intellectual significance of Maoist formulations lies in this paradigm rupture, even if the articulation of this rupture at times appears crude and simplistic, which it surely does at many places in this book. The Maoist obsession with armed struggle as the correct and pure path of struggle also weakens the intellectual importance of this paradigm rupture. Nardev Singh criticises the CPI and CPM for having

stood on the side of the authoritarian centre against the nationality aspirations of the Punjabi people. Their [CPI-CPM's] activities strengthened the anti-Communist bias among the militants and discredited Communist ideology in the eyes of the Sikh people (p 201).

However credit is given to some of their members or sympathisers who 'played a positive role in opposing Hindu communalism and also Sikh fundamentalism' (p 201). According to the Jamhoori Morcha article, the correct 'Marxist-Leninist' position is to criticise the anti-people activities of the Khalistani leadership but to regard the state and the ruling classes as the main enemy of the people and as responsible for the crisis in Punjab.

The article notes some positive signs of the development of Punjabi nationality. It claims that 'the social and cultural integration of the two religious communities within Punjab has not only survived, but may actually have been strengthened' (p 203). It points out that 93% of the population in Punjab

recorded Punjabi as their mother-tongue in the 1991 Census. It also observes that the occupational distribution of the two communities which was earlier responsible for strengthening communal feelings is also changing; though the peasantry is still overwhelmingly Sikh, Hindus and Sikhs are almost equal in government and other service sector roles, and Sikhs are catching up in trade and industry. The increasing shift of the Akali Dal (Badal) towards Punjab, Punjabi and Punjabiyat as its political slogan is seen as a significant and positive development.

The paper concludes that the Sikhs are not a separate nationality, they are a religious community which forms an important section of the Punjabi nationality. It is claimed that the material changes taking place in Punjab economy and society do not warrant any conclusion that Sikhs are emerging as a nationality. It is recognised, however, that the Sikhs are a 'a religious minority in the all India context' and that 'given the basically Hindu communal character of the state, they [the Sikhs] have their own specific demands and grievances which must be resolved in any democratic solution of the question of Punjabi nationality' (p 204).

I have highlighted, rather extensively, the main points of the Jamhoori Morcha article by Nardev Singh because I think that this unusual and not easily available paper deserves it. There are interesting papers in this collection on the nationality movements in Assam, Nagaland, the other North-eastern states, Jharkhand, Uttrakhand, Gorkhaland and Karnataka.

One of the finest papers is by Sadhana Saxena on 'Language and the Nationality Question' in which she critiques the oppressive role of Hindi, her own mother-tongue, as a link language in crushing the growth of several mothertongues in 'the so-called vast Hindi belt'. She points out that the Constitution of India disenfranchised these non-Hindi mother-tongues by excluding them from the Eighth Schedule [ES], which lists only 14 languages (Assamese, Bangla, Gujarati, Hindi, Kashmiri, Kannada, Marathi, Malayalam, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu and Sanskrit). In 1967, Sindhi, and later on in the 1980s, Nepali, Konkani and Manipuri have also been incorporated in the ES, bringing the total to 18. The ideology of the post-colonial Indian state speaks loudly and clearly through the Constitution of India when one notices that Sanskrit which is the claimed mother-tongue of only a few hundred people, is included in the ES while none of the tribal mother-tongues such as Santhali (36 lakhs), Bhilli (12.5 lakhs) and Lammi (12 lakhs) etc are constitutionally recognised (p 292). Saxena points out that the 1981 Census data listed official figures for Hindi speakers at around 26 crores, but that this number was arrived at by grouping several widely spoken tribal languages under Hindi. Hindi has been further privileged over the other ES languages by according it the status of National Official Language, the language of the Union and of Centre-State exchanges. This hierarchisation of languages assumes another dimension when we notice that English, which is not even included in the ES, has become a 'supra ES language', ranking higher than even Hindi in the actual practice of communications in modern India. It seems that the Indian state has successfully implemented the Gandhian agenda on the

language policy except the wholly unrealistic Gandhian project of making Devanagari a common script for all Indian languages.

Her essay demonstrates the theoretical influence of Ngugi wa Thiong's work. The collection includes a short and powerful essay entitled 'Decolonising the means of imagination' by Ngugi wa Thiong'o on language as the mode of dominance. Ngugi's analysis (Ngugi, 1981), which has drawn on Fanon (1967), has been criticised by Robert Young (Young, 2001, 48) for suggesting powerlessness, passivity and helplessness amongst the dominated nations and, thereby, underestimating the power of resistance, creativity and achievements by the independence movements of nations. Young's analysis acknowledges the damaging impact of the dominant nations but focuses more on celebrating the creative resistance and output of the nations struggling for liberation. This collection of essays puts forward an unreflective mix of contradictory modes of thinking: it terrifies, by highlighting the oppressive cultural and military power of the Indian Central State, and it inspires, by articulating the creative resistance of a coalition in practice of nations and nationalities to this 'paper tiger' of the Indian nation state.

The unorthodox content and format of this book makes it both alluring and annoying to read. Apart from many other reasons, hinted at in this review, its unorthodoxy makes it a collection which deserves to be read by scholars and activists interested in post-colonialism, nationality movements, Indian languages, modes of media communications, federalism and Indian nationalism. However, the unorthodoxy of its publication and circulation is likely to make this book difficult to get hold of. Therefore, I conclude in an unconventional way by giving two addresses from a list of nine provided by the publishers from which copies could be available: Peoples Tree, 8 Regal Building, Parliament Street, N. Delhi - 110001 and Disha Pusthaka Kendram, 1-8-540/2, Chikkadpally, Hyderabad - 500020 (AP).

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Both books are a valuable addition to the literature on competing and conflicting nationalisms within the nation state of India in particular and in South Asia in general. The Brass and Vanaik volume is stylistically more academic than the Rao volume, but the latter is politically more forceful and thematically more internally coherent. Because of these differences, the collections complement each other; I enjoyed reading them both and felt that had I not read them together, I would have been less satisfied than I am now. The Brass and Vanaik volume is an excellent read for anyone interested in seeing the continuity of the Brahmanical Hindu influence on Indian bourgeois politics right from the independence movement days down to the Congress and Hindutva era in independent India, while the Rao collection helps in deconstructing the notion of one unified Indian nationalism by celebrating multiple nationalisms in India. Both volumes seem to suggest a third way in Indian politics, beyond BJP and Congress alternatives. I think that the third way has to be a creative coalition of the Left and regional nationalist forces. Whether the mainstream Indian Left

parties are capable of taking that leap of imagination to lead the third path instead of tailing behind Congress in the name of fighting 'the bigger evil of BJP's Hindu communalism' will depend upon how energetic, innovative and decisive the (comparatively) younger leadership is in these parties. The older leadership of these parties is too attuned mentally to fighting for a strong united India. That path eventually leads to authoritarian Indian nationalism whether of the Congress or the Hindutva variety. The democratic third alternative lies in restructuring the currently centralised Indian State. How that restructuring will take place is an open-ended question, subject to further debate and negotiation. A move to decentralisation does not have to result in disintegration – while for some states, such as Kashmir, secession may be the only desirable democratic solution, for others the solution may be greater internal autonomy. What we must abandon, however, is the ideal of a singular, centralised India.

[Acknowledgements: I wish to thank Katherine Adeney, Jairus and Rohini Banaji, Meena Dhanda, Pratima Mitchell, Eleanor Nesbitt, Lloyd Rudolph, Bhupinder Singh, Tanya Singh and Shinder Thandi for comments on an earlier draft of this article. The responsibility for the views expressed and any errors is mine].

Note

¹ This book was reviewed by me as a part of a review article in an earlier issue of *IJPS* (Singh, 1997).

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Anders Bjørn Hansen, Partition and Genocide: Manifestation of Violence in Punjab 1937-1947, (New Delhi: India Research Press, 2002), 216 pp (hb). Rs. 495 ISBN 81-87943-25-4.

One of the greatest human tragedies in the form of massive inter-communal killings committed by, on the one hand, the Hindu-Sikh group and, on the other, the Muslim group, occurred in the Punjab in 1947 when the curtain finally descended upon the British colonial saga in India. The dawns of 14 and 15 August ushered in independent Pakistan and India amid massive parades and other displays of pomp and show in the capitals and major cities of the two states. The Pakistani-Punjabi poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz expressed his misgivings about the celebratory credentials of that special day in one of his most famous poetic laments, Freedom's Dawn. He wrote:

This stain-covered daybreak, this night-bitten dawn,

This is not that dawn about which there were expectations.

Indeed in many parts of the British Indian Empire communal massacres were going on as Hindu-Sikh and Muslim inflicted pain and suffering in all unimaginable manners upon hapless members of the other community. However, nowhere was this macabre drama enacted with such barbarism and on such a massive scale as in the Punjab.

One of the most intriguing riddles of scholarly academic undertakings on South Asia is that neither Indian nor Pakistani nor international researchers have attempted to put together a comprehensive, systematic account of what transpired during those fateful months in Punjab. The reason is indeed the wide imbalance between the enormity of the task and the paucity of the sources at hand to present a reliable account. Much of the administrative and police records at the middle and base level have been destroyed. It is therefore mostly poets, short-story writers and novelists who have tried to capture the agony of the burning and bleeding Punjab of 1947. Urwashi Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin have pioneered research in this field and presented most moving glimpses of the shattered lives of some of the victims of the Partition frenzy. It is encouraging that gradually more attention is beginning to be paid to that gory episode.

Anders Bjørn Hansen's book is an intelligent, competent and skilful attempt to present the story of the Partition of Punjab in relation to the theoretical understandings of communalism and genocide. It seeks to examine (a) the connection between the struggle for political power and the rise of communalism, (b) how the communal violence developed and the changes in its character, (c) whether the communal violence was organised.

Any comprehensive treatment of the themes of this investigation would require a multi-faceted research strategy combining several methods and techniques – official documents, newspaper reports and articles, speeches and statements of important actors, interviews with surviving victims and so on. The

author however settles not to go for such a gigantic undertaking and declares 'It is not aimed at giving a whole explanation of the genocide in Punjab but to point to the genocidal characteristics of the violence' (p. 2). Having done that, he wisely chooses to rely mainly on the government reports, mostly those written every formight by the Punjab governors to the Viceroys between 1937 and 1947.

What follows is a faithful account of what the British top officials were writing about the deteriorating inter-communal relations in the Punjab. The 1937 elections in Punjab brought more people into the political orbit as the basis for suffrage was expanded. The prevailing alliance of the landowning Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs organised in the Punjab Unionist Party began to weaken and instead Muslim Punjabis began to rally around the Muslim League. On the other hand, Hindus and Sikhs were brought together because of their fears and opposition to the idea of a separate Muslim state that would certainly include the Punjab because of its Muslim majority. Sporadic communal attacks upon random targets, mostly men, slowly but surely turned into more organised and vicious assaults upon religious buildings and women. During 1947, attacking women became even more pronounced and seemed to have been deliberately planned with a view to humiliating and stigmatising the rival group.

The official accounts clearly point out that some of the politicians incited their followers to violence. Among them were the Sikh leader Master Tara Singh, although after August 1947 he issued appeals for calm. The Sikh killing squads were receiving financial support from Hindus. Similarly in the Muslimmajority Western Punjab the cadres of the Muslim League were involved in the first major carnage in Punjab, which took place in the Rawalpindi division from the night of 6-7 March. The events in Lahore and Amritsar are also mentioned. The RSS was active all over Punjab and it used crude bombs against Muslims. On the other hand, Muslims in Lahore relied mainly on arson and stabbing to eliminate Hindus and Sikhs. The most interesting aspect of the Punjab genocide is that most of the killings took place after India and Pakistan become independent. Thus between 15 August and the end of December, ethnic cleansing had been effected on both sides of the Punjab. The English governor of the Pakistani West Punjab, Sir Francis Mudie, candidly admitted that it was necessary to push Hindus and Sikhs across the border into India in order to accommodate the Muslims displaced from East Punjab as a result of the terrorism of the Sikh hordes. The British accounts especially mention that Sikh terrorism in East Punjab was much better organised and thus effective.

The findings of the book are interesting and significant for more in-depth investigations of what happened in Punjab. One gets a clear account of the events as recorded by at least one of the main actors involved in the partition of Punjab, the British. The problem is, of course, that the British accounts tell only a partial story because they report only major happenings. One can wonder if the British themselves had some role to play in aggravating the situation. Surely some of them were more sympathetic to the Hindu-Sikh side than the Muslims

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and vice versa. There is a strongly held belief among many Indians and Pakistanis that the British played an important role in deepening the cleavages between the two sides, especially after the Quit India movement of 1942. How it was reflected in their own policies and conduct is something that needs to be probed. These and various other aspects of the Punjab genocide call for more research.

Anders Bjørn Hansen has contributed an important book to the study of the Partition of Punjab syndrome. He covers a fairly long period of time and sheds light on many different aspects of the evolving genocidal characteristics of the communal violence in Punjab. Each stage of the three-pronged theme that he mentions at the beginning of the study as his main concerns is given attention. The limitation of his work is of course that the official accounts are a necessary but not a sufficient basis for telling a more reliable story of the Punjab of 1947. What the various newspapers were writing and what the surviving victims have to tell about those days needs to be included in future research on those times. It would also be helpful if an index were to be included in a future edition of this important book.

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A. Wardak, Social Control and Deviance, A South Asian Community in Scotland, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000) xii and 288pp. (hb), £41.50 ISBN 1 84014 588 9.

There are not many up to date studies of South Asian populations outside the English conurbations. Thus Ali Wardak's Social Control and Deviance comes as a timely addition to this literature. Wardak's book is based on an in depth ethnographic study of a Pakistani community in Edinburgh. Specifically the author sets out to analyse and illustrate the mechanisms by which his subjects regulate issues of social control and its absence - deviance. The book provides useful data for anyone interested in the Pakistani community in Scotland, and Edinburgh particularly, as he notes that Pakistanis form the largest component of ethnicised communities in Scotland making up one third of the total.

This book is organised in two main thematic sections. The first section deals with the institutions of social control and the second section looks at deviance. The book starts with a very conventional narrative of migration and settlement. The author provides an account of migration from South Asia (what he labels in a rather old fashioned way the 'Indian-subcontinent') to Scotland, beginning in the late nineteenth century. Here, using data from the 1991 census for Scotland he maps out the size and distribution of the Pakistani population. This section is a valuable source of information and helps to make visible what he rightly points out is a rather neglected ethnically marked community. He then goes on to examine the response of the wider Scottish/British society to the presence of

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these ethnicised people. He follows this up with a discussion of how the Pakistani community has reacted to the response provided by the Scottish/British population. This section of his work is heavily dependant on his sample from the Pilrig area of Edinburgh. Alongside this empirical narrative Wardak offers an intellectual history of the notion of social control. Subsequent chapters go on to examine what Wardak identifies as the main agents of social control amongst the Pakistani community. Readers will not be surprised that these agents of social control are the usual suspects: the family, the biraderi, the Mosques, the Pakistani Associations of Edinburgh and the East of Scotland

The second main thematic section begins by examining the extent to which these usual suspects are able to foster the necessary social bonds to limit deviance. This line of enquiry follows the tried and tested method provided by old time anthropology. Wardak's sample consists of 60 Pakistani boys (the Pilrig boys) who are all British born and all attend the same Mosque school. Low and behold, after much toing and froing, he produces a four-point typology of deviance: conformists, accomodationalists, part-time conformists and rebels.

There are two interesting findings from this study, first that the Pakistani community in Edinburgh is a closed community and this can be explained as a reaction to forms of racism. As a consequence of racism the author points to the establishment of a Pakistani/Muslim civil society (though he does not use this term) but what he suggests is a Pakistani community that has its own forms of cultural, economic and social arenas. Second, the so-called second generation of Pakistanis are more inclined to identify with their 'Pakistaniness' than their 'Britishness'. This further weakens the claims made by the ideologues of progressive assimilationism that over time the ethnically marked population of Britain will become assimilated into the ethnically unmarked majority.

There are, alas, a number of major problems with this study and the genre of writing about South Asian communities that this book exemplifies. First Wardak's study (and, without being unfair to him, the supervision which he received) continues to be locked in a colonial frame of reference in which an unreconstructed anthropology is the preferred means of generating knowledge about 'ethnics'. One of the main features of this colonial model is its absence of reflexivity and epistemology which remains beholden to 19th century positivism and produces schematic ideal types which cannot be found in reality. The author hardly mentions the critique of such types of knowledge formation like Said's Orientalism, Talal Asad's Genealogies of Religion or Ronald Inden's Imagining India to name just the obvious examples. Thus the author is condemned to operate within a paradigm in which the experience of ethnics is implicitly (or sometimes blatantly) fetishised. For example, because this is a book about Pakistanis, it seems that the genre demands we talk about family, biraderi, Mosques and community organisations, regardless of their actual appropriateness. In the same way the schematic organisation tends to take institutions that are mobile and flexible as being rigid and entrenched. Thus his idea of a closed community is more a consequence of this model of the

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inderstanding of South Asians than of the reality of the situation.

Second, not only does the colonial framework exoticise the other but also, as part of that exoticisation, it produces effects which are inadequate to the complexities of people (both ethnically marked and ethnically unmarked) living a postcolonial contexts. As a consequence, the ethnics are devoid of political igency and are removed from the process of historical transformation (they become - to use Eric Wolfs phrase - 'a people without history'). For example in Wardak's study there is little explicit attention paid to the way in which contemporary Islamicate subjectivities have developed and been asserted. Thus when he concludes that his so called second generation identify with 'akistaniness, is this Pakistaniness a metaphor for a sense of Islamicate consciousness rather than an attachment to a society and a state of which, by his lefinition, the second generation have very little experience?

consequences of following further one of the colonial/anthropological mode is that the relations of power which provide the precondition for that mode of enquiry, are themselves absent from these accounts, so that Wardak is content to talk about social control of the Pakistanis n terms of the regulation of morals by certain institutions, but he is less clear about the way in which the most powerful institutions police the behaviour of ethnics, for example, the agencies of the British state: local authorities, police, central government, welfare organisations, institutions of education or the nfluence of the mainstream media. Surely these organisations have as big a role to play as the Pakistani Association of Edinburgh and the East of Scotland in exercising social control, as they determine who is ethnically marked and the resources and penalties that follow from that. To be fair, Wardak (unlike many of the colonial/anthropological studies) does mention the influence of racism in turning the Pakistanis into a closed community, but this is a strange kind of racism which has no institutional embodiment and that does not seem to exert any social control. The author would have gained much by having a deeper reading of racialisation and its effects.

This is the kind of work that the policy makers would like: it reiterates old worn out clichés about the exotic nature of ethnic communities, it pathologises their way of life (thus denying political relationships that produce that way of life) and it provides neat typologies that can be handed down to the bureaucrat and the police to make the world a better place. In this it reiterates many of the tropes found in such problematic works as the Ousley Report (Community Pride Not Prejudice: Making Diversity Work in Bradford, Bradford City Council, 2001. The sad thing is (as no doubt the policy makers will eventually come to realise) that this kind of research is inadequate to the politically complex condition that we inhabit. This is a tidy book for tidy minds but we live in untidy postcolonial times.

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J. Mirza, Between Chaddor and the Market: Female Office Workers in Lahore (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002) 266 pp. Rs 395 US\$16.00 (hb). ISBN-0-19-579623-3.

F. Saeed, Taboo! The Hidden Culture of a Red Light Area, by Fouzia Saeed, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001) 324 pp. Rs. 595 US\$ 20.00 (hb). ISBN 0-19-579412-5.

A. Weiss, Walls within Walls: Life Histories of Working Women in the Old City of Lahore, (Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2002) 201 pp. Rs. 525 US\$20.00 (hb). ISBN 0-19-579761-2.

These three books are concerned with how the system of purdah (literally 'curtain'), historically more important among the upper classes, now constrains the lives of working class and lower middle class women in urban Pakistan. Each book is based on research on Lahore. Walls within Walls draws on fieldwork conducted inside the old walled city, which contains 'the largest concentration of urban poor in the country'. Purdah keeps working class women within the walls of their homes and confines their social contact to within the old city's walls. Here, despite the prevailing belief that women only do childcare and housework, women make significant financial contributions to their households and to the wider economy, and are increasingly the sole or major earners in households where husbands have died, or left, or are unemployed or unemployable through ill-health or drug addiction. Yet their economic productivity remains 'dismally underreported and miscalculated' and is locally unrecognised. Women do not perform distinctively 'female' work, but manufacture almost exactly the same kinds of small-scale goods as men. What differs is that they work inside their homes, are paid significantly less than men for the same work, and are highly dependent on middlemen to deliver materials and collect products. This makes them fearful of negotiating pay rises and vulnerable to exploitation.

Weiss illustrates the power of social norms in inhibiting change. If a woman leaves home, her morality is questioned; if she earns money, her family will be criticised for 'eating from her labor'. As one informant puts it, ' the point is that whatever kind of work a girl does, if she has to walk outside to do it, it doesn't look good for the family. A girl can work inside her home and no-one knows'. In such conditions, women's informal networks are vital to their socio-economic survival. At the same time, women speak of significant recent changes. Walled city women now wear the *chaddor* rather than the all-enveloping *burqa* when they do go out, and this is widely regarded as a symbol of women's increased freedom. They also consider that although poor women have always done paid work at home, nowadays more women are working, and their own daughters will be better educated, and have more financial independence and greater autonomy in their lives than women of previous

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generations.

Taboo! takes us further inside the walls of the walled city, to the 'hidden culture' of the red light district known as shahi mohalla that is infamous for dancing and prostitution. This is the only neighbourhood of the walled city where Weiss did not conduct field research, because her assistants would not go there. The area is architecturally distinctive, with wide street-facing balconies shuttered during the day and opened at night to display their 'living merchandise' of women in their khotas. Khotas are dancers' performing rooms, which the dancers there also call their affis (office, workplace). Saeed came to know these women, who are of the kanjar caste (traditionally associated with prostitution) and to understand the power structure within a kanjar household. Here, reversing the general preference for boys in Pakistani society, the birth of a girl is celebrated, and women rather than men manage the household and inherit the business. Daughters are trained in singing and dancing and to exhort money from clients. A kanjar woman dissociates herself from a low-class prostitute (gashti, or miti khani, literally 'mud eater'), by considering herself a tawaif (literally, a 'high class courtesan') or a nacne wali (dancing girl). Initiation of a daughter is through the ritual of nath utarwai, in which a girl's virginity is sold at a high price at a 'marriage' with her first customer. Kanjar women tend to look down on formal marriage (nikah), considering it makes women dependent on potentially abusive in-laws and husbands.

Yet, Saeed shows, women have much less autonomy under this system than they are socialised to believe. The kanjar tradition was traditionally seen as integral to patronage of the arts, especially singing and dancing, but today traditional singing and dancing is far less in demand than prostitution for sexual services. Kanjar women are increasingly dependent upon and vulnerable to exploitation by men of the *mirasi* caste (singers) who act as middlemen and agents, as well as by pimps who run brothels and secure deals with the police to protect their livelihood. As extra-marital sex is a penal offence, the prostitution business is very tightly controlled; as prostitution has no formal recognition, prostitutes have almost no awareness of the profession's health risks. Kanjar women are strongly stigmatised, and Saeed presents poignant and tragic stories of girls who wanted to become singers and dancers being forced back to the *mohallah* and into prostitution.

One of the words for a prostitute is *kasbi*, 'a person who earns her living', while another phrase is 'someone who indulges in *pesha*, literally 'profession'. These phrases highlight the stigma attached to women who 'work'. One kanjar girl being trained for prostitution dreams of having a nine-to-five office job, but is told by her brother that women in offices 'have it even worse' than prostitutes, because bosses do not leave any of their female staff alone. Yet, outside the shahi mohalla, and in districts beyond the walls of the old city of Lahore, a small but growing number of women from conservative lower middle class families do now work in offices, in administration and in industry, as secretaries, receptionists, telephone operators, draftswomen and designers.

Between the Chaddor and the Market reveals the dilemmas that face these female office workers. Of diverse backgrounds, many of these women are working out of economic necessity as a result of recent economic changes, and some have consciously obtained a market-oriented rather than a traditional education. At home, their families risk being stigmatized for relying on women's earning, and the women themselves risk censure if they are seen with unrelated male colleagues. Travelling to work without a chaperone invites sexual harassment or worse, and at work women struggle to be recognised as fellow workers rather than as sexual objects. Mirza shows that these women are developing strategies for managing encounters with unrelated men that include new modes of communication, within new public spaces. She suggests in conclusion that the most significant changes with regard to the gendered structure of the labour market are being brought about by these lower middle class female office workers.

Together, these books offer valuable insights into the social processes shaping lower middle class and working class women's working lives, but they are very different books. Anita Weiss is a sociologist and professor of international studies in the United States, and is concerned with women's role in development. With two female Urdu/Panjabi speaking researcher assistants, she surveyed a sample of 100 women in the summer of 1987, and recorded the life histories of twelve women. The book, a second edition with a new preface, is a fine example of the value of 'life-history' taking as a means of accessing otherwise inaccessible information. Three chapters present details of women's lives through their reflections on their roles within their families and households, their paid work, and the extent of their freedom of action concerning access to health care, work, education, and choice of marriage partner. The final chapter considers women's visions of change, and concludes with specific recommendations for development projects. These need to recognise and support home-based work and women's informal networks, and to address the dependence on middlemen and the need for health education, continuing education, small loans to start up businesses, and support groups for separated and divorced women.

Jasmin Mizra's purpose is more narrowly academic. The data are drawn from interviews with forty women working in the office sector, and a second semi-structured interview with twelve women selected for case studies. The data are presented against a background of feminist discussion of purdah and its implications for gender in Pakistan society, and of feminist perspectives in economic sociology that are concerned with analysing the 'social embeddedness of the economy from a gender perspective'. Based on almost a year's fieldwork in Lahore in 1996, the book is a revised version of a Sociology PhD from a German University.

Fauzia Saeed's book, by contrast, is intended to raise awareness of women's position in Pakistani society rather than to be academic. Saeed deliberately presents her findings in narrative style in order to reach the widest possible

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readership. She has a PhD in education from the United States, has worked in the Ministry of Culture in the Pakistan Government, and is an activist in women's issues. She uses anthropological methods of participant observation to establish relationships of trust with informants, enabling her to follow their careers over a period of ten years, and to develop an insider's understanding of the dynamics of the shahi mohalla. Her account vividly illustrates the value and difficulties of sensitive ethnography, and goes beyond what you might expect from a good journalistic account in its reflections on prostitution historically and cross-culturally. In conclusion, Saeed rejects cultural explanations of South Asian prostitution, that see it as part of the patronage of the arts, in favour of a feminist analysis of the position of women in a purdah society that ultimately unites both 'good' and 'bad' women in different strata of Pakistani society.

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Kathleen D. Hall, Lives in Translation: Sikh Youth as British Citizens, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) 259pp. US\$ 55 (hb). ISBN 0-8122-3677-X. US\$22.50 (pb). ISBN 0-8122-1811-6.

The classic tension at the heart of the social sciences, between structure and agency, is impressively illustrated by Kathleen D. Hall's ethnography of Sikh youth in modern Britain. Based upon a decade of research at the height of Thatcherism, much of which was spent at a comprehensive high school which she interestingly names 'Grange Hill High' after the British teen soap, Hall's study meticulously captures, using interviews, fieldwork and archival research, the hopes and frustrations of a generation of second generation 'Sikh' youth in Leeds during a period of profound political, economic, and social change. Their attempts at 'cultural translation' (Homi Bhabha 1994), 'at producing new identities and fashioning novel lifestyles, from the overly cosmopolitan to the decidedly more traditional' (p 203), frequently flounder against the hegemonic structures of race, caste and class both at school and at home. At school British Sikhs confront the contradictions between the promises of the liberal ideology of meritocracy and the limiting boundaries of race and class differences (p 150). whilst at home, the 'ideology of family honor' supports a dominant status hierarchy based upon caste that places constraints and personal costs on acts of cultural translation.

In keeping with the 'conventional wisdom' (for discussion of this concept see Conflict in India: A Case Study of Punjab, p.36) on ethnic and religious conflict in India, of poststructuralist accounts of identity formation, particularly those influenced by the 'Chicago School' of ethnography from which Hall graduated, identity is not seen as grounded in a static state of being but is continually being produced within ongoing processes of becoming. Identity is

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always relational and is performed as individuals negotiate multiple identifications across contexts of situated practice (p 14). For Hall, migrant neonle live their lives through acts of cultural translation within what Homi Bhabha has termed the cultural 'third space' (1994). This third space, according to Bhabha, 'displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom,' thus giving rise to 'something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of meaning and representation' (Bhabha 1990: 211). British Sikhs, although subject to multiple forms of power that position them in relation to national/racial, caste status-group, class and generational differences, are free to fashion new hybrid identities simultaneously British, Asian, Sikh and Black. However, it is the emphasis upon the structural impediments to the performance of acts of cultural translation that sets Hall's work apart from this 'conventional wisdom'. Young Sikhs may be able to create and fashion new hybrid identities but not, to paraphrase Marx, 'in conditions of their own choosing'. For many young Sikhs, the experiences of racism and the recognition of the boundaries of belonging in Britain have reaffirmed the value of their traditions and communal ties (p 7). For others the price of choosing an alternative 'life path' is exclusion from the community and, in Jasbir's case, from her own family.

Hall is certainly correct in identifying the assimilationist narrative as hegemonic in Thatcherite, and Blairite, Britain. For all the talk of 'multiculturalism' in the media, British identity remains, for the most part, ethnically defined. The Parekh Report, which called for a rethinking of British identity, was consigned to dust by the Labour government just as Northern England was about to explode into the race riots of 2001. Race still matters, perhaps more than ever after 9/11. Although assimilation, or 'becoming 'like us", by, for example, removing one's turban, may lead to being accepted as no longer 'strange', Hall is again correct to question whether it will ever lead to 'becoming the same as "us", to the erasure of the racialized boundaries of national belonging?' (p 123). However, by limiting the experiences of young Sikhs to narratives of race, class and caste, Hall does not address the central question of what is specifically 'Sikh' about the youth she interviewed. Throughout Lives in Translation, 'Sikh' identity is ethnicized and treated in relation to a hegemonic, white British identity. However, experiences of racism and social exclusion are hardly unique to the Sikh experience. Hall fails to tell us how Sikh experiences differ from those of other Punjabis, British South Asians, or for that matter, Black Britons. More could have been made of the tension that exists between what Nesbitt describes as normative 'official' pronouncements on Sikhism and the actual beliefs and practices of 'popular' religion (1999: 315), of the religious convictions of the Sikh youth she interviewed. Furthermore, despite her critique of the ideology of British nationalism, by focusing on the voice of Sikh youth in Britain, Hall reproduces the very same narrative she is attempting to critique: that of the nation-state.

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Recent studies of the Sikh diaspora (Axel 2001; Tatla 1999) have highlighted the transnational flows and networks that link overseas Sikh communities not only to the 'homeland' (Tatla 2001) or 'holyland' (Singh 1999), but also to each other. To speak of Sikh youth 'in Britain', and not of Sikh youth or Sikh youth in the diaspora, is to reproduce a nationalist narrative that territorializes identity in a rapidly globalizing world.

In conclusion, Hall's ethnography tells us a lot about existing structures of power and inequality in multiethnic Britain and how this *shapes* British Sikh identity, but not a lot about how the Sikh experience differs from the experiences of other South Asian communities in the UK. Furthermore, her methodology, that of a conventional ethnographer attempting to obtain a 'god's eye' (p 17) view of the experiences of young Sikhs in Leeds, sits rather uncomfortably with the poststructuralist perspective she seeks to adopt. Unlike Axel's *The Nation's Tortured Body* (2001), no overt or conscious attempt is made to rethink or redefine the disciplinary boundaries in which she operates. Nevertheless, *Lives in Translation* eloquently captures the voices of young Sikhs in Northern England in the late twentieth century as they attempt to come to terms with structures of racial, caste and class inequality, and consequently should be of great interest to readers of the *IJPS*.

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Georgio Shani

Japan

Harold Lee, Brothers in the Raj: The Lives of John and Henry Lawrence, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002) xii and 437 pp. Rs. 595 (hb). ISBN 019 579415 X

The custodians of the 'new' British Library in London have chosen a bust of the colonial administrator, John Lawrence (1811-1879) to guard - in characteristically grim pose - the portals of their science collections. Few scholars frequenting those particular collections are likely to have any knowledge of his contributions to the history of the Punjab and the Raj. There is apparently no such tribute to his elder brother, Henry (1806-1857), renowned as the hero of Lucknow, although one of his most active subordinates in the Punjab, and subsequently his first biographer, Sir Herbert Edwardes, shares the guardianship of the Oriental and India Office collections of the British Library with an earlier scholar-administrator, Sir Thomas Colebrooke. Statues of both brothers survive in other central London locations despite the Mayor, Ken Livingstone's best efforts to marginalize any such 'heroes of Empire' by removal to sites where they are unlikely to attract the public gaze. If the 'public' is bemused, what has nevertheless kept the differences in temperament, training and policy of these two Lawrences sufficiently alive among specialists of Indian history to justify a further exploration of the well-known conflicts between the brothers?

According to author Harold Lee's publisher, 'by examining the divergent points of view of the two protagonists, we are better able to understand the evolution of the process that ultimately determined the nature of British rule in the Punjab and beyond'. Thus Lee, in this well crafted monograph, has chosen to foreground phases, locations and specific events which allow differences in approach to imperial administration, particularly in the 'regulated' and 'nonregulated' Company territories of the north, to be examined through the prism of the Lawrences' disagreements over settlement and land revenue issues and the concomitant question of chiefs' and zamindari 'rights' versus those of peasant cultivators. Henry, it has long been known, favoured traditional rulers and landholders, while younger brother John, saw the annexation of their territories as an opportunity for some social engineering which would 'level' this potentially highly productive agrarian province in ways conducive, he believed, to both justice and prosperity. It should at once be said that the Punjab province is certainly deserving of some scholarly treatment of this kind: the nineteenth century Punjab has been neglected compared to the burgeoning of studies on cultural as well as socio-political aspects of Bengal as well as of the neighbouring North Western Provinces. The question of whether a revisitation of the Lawrence conflict is the best way forward is more difficult: this is a very readable and engaging account, which draws on some new sources, particularly from the Punjab and New Delhi archives, but is nevertheless very reliant on the family sources used by the brothers' contemporary biographers, R. Bosworth-Smith, John's first biographer, and Herbert Edwardes, Henry's, each set out to

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foreground their chosen hero's role. Bosworth-Smith, with the advantage of writing after the death of both Lawrences, claimed impartiality, but the reader easily detects the preferences of these and of other late nineteenth century historians.

Lee, in contrast, accords Henry and John equal attention, bearing in mind, of course, the considerably earlier death of Henry in the siege of Lucknow in 1857. John outlived him by over twenty years, ending his career as Viceroy of India. With the great advantage of a century and a half's perspective, and drawing in addition on recent research publications, he has achieved a much more balanced analysis. If Michael Edwardes' very readable, The Necessary Hell: John and Henry Lawrence and the Indian Empire (1958) has travelled this comparative ground before, Lee has added a wealth of detail to the comparison. Yet, the same areas of conflict, whether temperamental or acquired through differences in training and experience on the military/political or civilian side of the Company's service, on which most contemporary admirers and critics also remarked, still remain dominant in Lee's analysis. On the other hand, some new perspectives in psychology now render John Lawrence positively 'obsessional' rather than merely overly 'industrious' in chasing up 'arrears' in Lee's account of his workaholic administrative habits and bald criticisms of others', notably his elder brother's perceived shortcomings. A perspective also well nuanced is Lee's examination, in the literary framework of recent studies of 'romantic orientalism', of Henry Lawrence's youthful reading of the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott, to which he very interestingly links a subsequent imaginative reliving of Scottian heroes in some of Henry's own writings, notably the novel. Adventures of an Officer in the Service of Ranjeet Singh, and his critical articles on 'Romance and Reality in Indian Life' to present Henry as 'a romantic imperialist'. What might have been a 'family biography' (for several of the twelve Lawrence siblings followed their father into an Indian career), narrows, understandably, after the first few chapters to the two figures who demonstrated so epically such a strong and influential 'divergence' in policy, with momentous consequences for the Punjab and the wider Raj. Nevertheless more detailed tracking of the other family members, particularly of elder brother, George, whose career was intertwined with those of Henry and John for many years, might elucidate the central fraternal enigma. So too the remarkable Lawrence women, who far from being merely 'companionate', took on secretarial roles for their husbands, and in Honoria's case joint authorship of some of his literary works. What were the relations between Honoria and Harriette, girlbood friends, now yoked so seemingly uncomplainingly to their spouses' imperial vocations? Did they attempt to cast oil on troubled waters or merely aggravate the distance between their warring husbands? If wives and children remain in the wings, so too do the defeated Punjabi chieftains and darbari functionaries to whose interests Henry was so favourable yet who, after their demise, are scarcely called on as commentators on the struggle between their 'Titan' usurpers. Some of course had been killed in battle, some like the young Sikh

heir, were removed from the immediate scene, but others survived. Indeed, a trawling of the darbari records and other accounts of this period from Persian and vernacular sources now seems requisite if the views of both contemporary and latter-day British observers of this conflict within the 'Punjab School' of Indian administrators are to be fully understood.

Harold Lee's book will certainly displace Michael Edwardes biography of the brothers, and will draw renewed attention to the first-hand accounts of such as Herbert Edwardes, but it is to scholars of the vernacular records that the baton should now pass if there is to be a catching up by the Punjab on the new understandings of other provinces under the Raj.

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Richard Jones and Welhengama Gnanapala, Ethnic Minorities in English Law, (Stoke: Trentham Books and School of Oriental and African Studies, 2000) xxii and 280 pp. £18.99 (pb). ISBN 1 85856 138 8.

This well researched and comprehensive book provides a sensitive and, at times, even passionate account of how UK law affects ethnic minority communities. The book has eight chapters, with an introduction by Werner Menski. The book provides a detailed examination of the approach of English law to some of the challenges posed by immigrants and subsequent generations of ethnic minority residents in Britain (p. xiii). The main thesis of the book is that legislators and the judiciary in England have shown a lack of clarity and good will in the application and exposition of multicultural elements in modern English law (p. xxi).

Chapter 1 charts the 'white' protest reactions during the 1950s against the growing evidence of ethnic minority reconstruction 'on their own terms'. It provides a lucid context of the operation of English law in its engagement with members of the ethnic minority communities. Chapter 2 focuses on the concept of 'racial group' under the provisions of the Race Relations Act 1976 and narrates the story of inconsistent judicial approaches to this complex problem and the largely, unsuccessful attempts by the judiciary to develop a coherent theory of 'racial group' (p. 35). Noteworthy for this approach is the landmark case of Mandla v Dowell Lee (1983) All ER 1062, in which the House of Lords declared Sikhs as a racial group. Lord Fraser, on the basis of seven criteria defining who constitutes a racial group, is cited thus:

Sikhs are a group defined by reference to ethnic origins for the purpose of the 1976 Act, although they are not biologically distinguishable from the other peoples living in the Punjab.

The authors consider Lord Fraser's approach as a positive and progressive contribution to race relations law (p. 40) but argue for extending this rationale to other ethnic minority communities in Britain including Muslims and Hindus,

Chapter 3 examines the English judiciary and how judges have been involved in commenting on British immigration and race relation laws. Chapter 4 opens with a theoretical analysis of legal pluralism, arguing that a pluralist approach would serve Britain as well as become an instrument of future legal reconstruction. Using examples of cases relating to ethnic minorities decided by English courts, the authors provide the picture of a haphazard and incomplete legal recognition of non-English legal systems, customs and norms. The tension between legal centralism in English law on the one hand and legal pluralism ushered in by immigrant communities on the other is brought to the fore. Chapters 5 to 7 explore examples from existing legislation and case law supporting the book's thesis that the English legal system is not doing sufficient to accommodate the needs and perceptions of the various ethnic minority communities. The authors advance the view that the judiciary has, by and large, retained a position based on the supposed supremacy of English or British concepts and of the (Anglican) Christian religious tradition (p. 248). The example used by the authors is the failure of the judiciary to extend the scope of blasphemy laws that fail to provide the same level of protection to other religions as Christianity.

The value of this book lies in its contextual analysis of English law with regard to minorities and immigrant communities. It raises a number of highly pertinent and important questions. For example: To what extent should the personal laws of ethnic minorities be accommodated in the domestic legal system? If the Sikhs and Jews can be recognised as a 'racial group' under the Race Relations Act, why not Muslims and Hindus and other smaller ethnic groups?

In the words of Menski, the book raises many more questions than it proposes to answer (p. xv). The authors do however present the view that 'a wider acceptance of alternative perspectives offered by legal pluralism would result in more just and equitable decisions in our so-called modern multicultural society' (p. 96). Although in principle this proposal has a lot of merit, in actual practice it would give rise to a different and more explosive set of problems. Not only has Britain numerous migrant communities, each with their own set of regulatory norms, but also each one of these groups is not a homogeneous entity. The question would then arise: Which customs should be acknowledged and through whose 'eyes' are these to be interpreted? The dominant voices could endanger a more egalitarian reading of custom, particularly in the South Asian context, including inheritance and succession laws, polygamy, inter marriages among close blood relations, child marriages etc.

This study is a valuable contribution to the much-needed narrative analysing the engagement of ethnic minorities with English law. It provides a wake up call for lawyers and legal scholars, as well as those responsible for good JJPS 9:2 316

governance, to the negative effects of persistent alienation that ethnic minorities in contemporary Britain encounter.

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Mukulika Banerjee, The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition and Memory in the North West Frontier, (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2000), xviii and 238 p. £16.95 (hb). ISBN 0933452683.

This book in the World Anthropology Series is a welcome addition to the corpus of literature on social movements in general and of the fontiersmen in particular. The author claims that it is a study with a difference since it combines history's view from below with ethnography, and political anthropology as opposed to colonial anthropology.

Banerjee begins her exercise with the criticism of earlier studies on the Pathans conducted by Jansson (1988), Rittenberg (1992) and Shah (1999) who largely concentrated on 'the high level party manoevring during the years 1930 to 1947' rather than focus on the lower cadre of the Khudai Khidmatgars, henceforth KKs. Akbar Ahmed 1976) too 'discuses at length the 'martial tribal tradition' of the Pathans and their appetite for jihad' besides their role in various wars and struggles, but ignores the 1930-1947 phase of the KKs intense nonviolent struggle.

The present study fills this gap by not only consulting the chiefs, the *khans* and the elite, as done by others, but by interviewing the 'mass members' taking detailed accounts of their perceptions of and support for the KK movement. The author concludes that the peasant intellectuals a la Frierman were no simple people duped and manipulated by the political leaders and other elite, but politically conscious workers of the KK movement who sought to create not only a new society independent of the colonial regime but also a 'new man' in the Pathan.

What is remarkable about the KK movement is the complete transformation of the Pathan which is believed with difficulty even by those who witnessed and experienced this change themselves. How did a feuding, vengeful and violent people adopt nonviolence as a method of political satyagraha against the imperial power and made it a philosophy for their own lives? It is intriguing. How come centuries old structural norms and cultural values internalized by people could be undone for the creation of a 'new Pathan'? And that too in the short span of 17 years which is virtually a moment in the life of a community.

The author, however, makes us believe this by reconstructing the whole corpus of the movement on the basis of the memory of 70 KK soldiers who had participated in it in various capacities, as cadre and in office too, under the charismatic leadership of Abdul Gaffar Khan or Badshah Khan or Frontier Gandhi, as he is popularly known in India. The youngest informant was 70

years old and the oldest one close to 120/130 years. The data from memory was corroborated with records from archives, formal and informal/personal documents, and virtually anything that came the way of the author, who did not follow the routine methodology of mainstream history and anthropology.

The book consists of eight chapters and opens with the usual details of the region and its people as described by the colonial anthropology and history. This is followed by the origins and growth of the KK movement, the method of training and protest etc. Besides discussing the leadership of the movement it is clearly spelled out how the KK ideology was steeped not in the Indian or Gandhian theory of nonviolence but situated in the theory and practice of Islam. The author shows how Badshah Khan himself was conscious of the Hindu roots of its mainland counterpart, which is why he chose to invoke Islam and Pakhtunwali ideals for Frontier satyagrahis. Thus, Badshah Khan not only generated an alternative framework for the KK nonviolence but also a distinct look and a different name for its practitioners. They were called Khudai Khidmatgars, that is those in the service of God, and wore red uniform in its military outfit, hence called the Red Shirts. It may not be inappropriate to call them a nonviolent military.

The author does invoke Ashis Nandy's argument to explain the philosophical differences in the roots of Gandhian and KK nonviolence suggesting thereby that the two were distinct and separate. But still the demarcations are partially blurred. For instance, if effeminacy is a virtue in Hindu philosophy and constitutes the core of Gandhian praxis, it is certainly not true of the Islamic philosophy and never at all of Pakhtunwali, the Pathan cultural framework. But the *charkha* and *khadi* used by the KKs symbolize both femininity and the Gandhian connection with the Indian tradition of nonviolence. It is surely interesting to note how Badshah Khan transported these to the Frontier against all the odds of the communal ideology of the Muslim League and of the masculinity dominating the local culture. So much so that the charkha was made into a cannon for the KKs who carried it on their shoulders while marching or lodging protest.

There is no doubt that Badshah Khan was strongly influenced by Gandhi and his theory and praxis of nonviolence, but for cultural and political expediency he rooted it in the Frontier culture and routed it through Islam and Pakhtunwali. I believe the Akali influence is also visible especially in designing the dress code for the KKs. Badshah Khan had interacted with Akalis and veterans like Baba Kharak Singh numerous times in many jails. Like the Akalis, the KK volunteers too, on arrest, would give their names as Khudai Khidmatgars and would give Sardaryab as their place of their origin.

The book makes interesting and comfortable reading without straining the reader's mind either with form or content. The author provides penetrating details of various aspects of the movement and the KKs. But let me confess that the total transformation of Pathan personality still remains an enigma. It becomes more profound when I look at my own community, the Sikhs, who

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could neither internalize Gandhism nor nonviolence which is of course very much a part of the larger Indian tradition as well as of the theory and praxis of their own religion. On the contrary, they easily take to Naxalism and militancy in spite of the rich heritage of the nonviolent movements like the Namdhari movement of the 19th century and the various Akali agitations in the 20th century.

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Jasjit Mansingh (ed) Time Out, Stories from Punjab, (New Delhi: Srishti Publishers), 268 pp. (pb). Rs.195. No ISBN given.

Indian publishing has recently witnessed an upsurge of English translation of regional literature. India is a mosaic of rich regional cultures, and the South particularly has had an unhampered cultural development since there was not as much cultural infiltration as in the Punjab. Nevertheless, Punjab retains its indigenous literature, though this has often been spawned and impacted by the historical vicissitudes forced upon its people because of a strategic geographic location in the sub continent, as a frontline state.

The translations of a repository of rich literature have given the elite an opportunity to savour the culture and the soul of the State. Among Punjabis the postcolonial syndrome persists of proficiency in English being synonymous with progression. So it is just as well that a variety of short stories are being translated and giving our elite readership, as well as those living abroad, the opportunity to delve and be acquainted with their cultural moorings. Regional literature gives them the perfect insight into the social ethos, the cultural mores and thought processes of a community. Earlier autobiographies of Punjabi litterateurs like Amrita Pritam, Ajeet Caur and K.S. Duggal have been translated, but the short story has always had a unanimous and unique appeal, as the mirror of emotions and culture, in a succinct and complete package in a world where there is a constant combat with time.

This anthology of stories has been well chosen, depicting the Punjabi ethos and the reactions of Punjabis to the major events, which their region has witnessed, and which has stirred the psyche of generations - partition and terrorism mainly. Jasjit Mansingh has selected the stories and translated them with the help of her ninety year old mother Mrs. Devinder Assa Singh. The volume spans the works of a group of authors including Amrita Pritam, K.S. Duggal, Raj Gill, Kulwant Singh Virk, Jasjit Singh Virdi and Ajit Caur, to mention a few.

Jasjit Mansingh has deftly imbued the emotions and cultural flavors: nowhere does it appear to be a translated effort. In fact, the Punjabi locales

and English language have blended well, retaining the original flavor of the literary creation. In order to sustain the originality and the potential of the text, the translator must display a bilingual excellence, which the mother-daughter team certainly evinces. For instance, the Ajeet Caur story displays the psyche of a Punjab farmer:

God? How can this be, Mangal Singh! God who lives in comfort in the skies! The One who walks among the stars! The One who lights up the Sun and the Moon! He who enjoys the seven-coloured swings! This old man is pulling my leg!' All these thoughts rose like bubbles in Mangal Singh's mind, arising and dissolving' (p. 260).

Any rendition of Punjab's cultural scenario is incomplete without the partition, which is irrevocably etched on the minds of people as a watershed, which brutally severed them from their own past. Rape, arson, kidnapping, plunder were common in Punjab then and systematic violence was perpetrated. These became underlying themes for the stories written then and these were juxtaposed by instances of human goodness. There were individuals who rose to the occasion, across caste and religious barriers. Often stereotypes fed into communal violence, wherever the body became the privileged site for subjecting the other to indiscriminate violation and disfigurement. For instance, in Jaswant Singh Virdi's 'A miracle' his depiction of the sight of a naked woman shows the insanity that ensued then:

I looked at her closely and then I found I couldn't look at her again. It was as though her body was full of thorns, thorns that pierced our eyes. How strange! We were thinking: 'How is it possible that people took off her clothes but then attached these thorns to her body?'. I have never heard anywhere that a body can grow thorns. Yes. The thorns were really in the lusting eyes of the onlookers. Was this just some foolishness, or was it something else? I took off my turban, quickly stepped forward and wrapped it around the girl's body. I was thinking: 'This gift of the Lord, Guruji, has today been put to good use... (p. 111-112).

In more recent times, terrorism provides the forging of the rural-urban and the rich-poor chain in reactions against human rights violations and the general suffering inflicted on a happy landscape, in stories such as 'Splintered' by Raj Gill or 'He is not that Jasbir' by Prem Prakash. 'November, 1984', is Ajeet Caur's powerful treatise of a corrupt society and the angst inflicted on a religious community for no fault of theirs. Here amidst the lunatic fringe of one community there emerges a Good Samaritan in the garb of Kishan Lal: 'human

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beings were being slaughtered but humanity still survived' (p. 145). In her selection, Jasjit Mansingh has crossed over to the Pakistani Punjab province: literature knows no boundaries with Tauquir Chugtai's story 'Who did they murder?' which describes the Taliban attack on the Bamyan Buddhas in Afghanistan. 'Gautama existed, he will live on. Then whom did they murder? Wretched, unfortunate people! Look for the answer in your hearts......' (p.193) She ends on this pithy note.

Translations from regional languages have opened up new literary vistas, proving that human emotions and reactions are universal, transcending religion, region and culture. However, in this unanimity there is an exclusiveness in various cultural mores and social patterns for Punjabis. Therefore these stories are a necessary read for them to savour their unique culture.

Cookie Maini

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A. H. Nadeem, *Pakistan: The Political Economy of Lawlessness* (Karachi: Oxford University Press) xiii and 373 pp. Rs. 495.00 (hb). ISBN 0195796217.

Pakistan's unfortunate political and economic history has been explored by many scholars, economists and political scientists. However, there has remained a significant lacuna in developing a linkage between lawlessness on the one hand and economic instability on the other; the efforts of the present author deserve to be commended for his effort in filling this gap. The book represents a well-written and interesting work from a writer with first hand knowledge of events and political developments. It is divided into thirteen substantive chapters followed by nine very useful appendices and a comprehensive bibliography. The first two chapters highlight the impact of lawlessness upon economic instability and underdevelopment.

The author notes 'a high rate of growth of population, rapid urbanization, complexity in productively absorbing the increasing labour force, unemployment, poverty, slums, food shortages, inadequate health coverage, squatter settlements and acute housing shortages. . .' (p. 40) as significant indictors of the pattern of crimes and law and order situation existent in a particular state. The remaining chapters of the book have a more direct focus upon the prevailing situation in Pakistan. In setting the stage, the author in chapter three presents a useful review of the socio-economic situation in Pakistan, whereas chapter five provides a historical survey of the law and order situation within the country. While the value and relevance of chapters three and five are not in doubt, it is puzzling to find the author's reluctance to comment on recent political events. Thus there is little in chapter three, five or indeed in the entire study on the events that led to the military coup of October 1999. Similarly the implications of the post October 1999 events on both the

economic progression and the law and order situation could have been more exhaustively analysed. Some of the debate in chapter five may also be questioned for its rather simplistic assertions. Describing the political events during the rule of the late General Zia-ul-Haq, the author notes:

Over-emphasis on Islam led to the politics of religion. Caste and bigotry without enlightenment exhibited itself [sic] in crime. The result was that scoundrels took refuge in sectarian and ethnic causes. They involved themselves not only in sectarian killings and ethnic violence but also in bank dacoities and extortion of 'jagga tax' (p. 75-76).

While in essence correct, a critic would associate a range of causes that infested the political climate; the primary and most notable one was the absence (or insignificance) of the rule of law, and spirit of constitutionalism. There were also international and regional factors complicating the political and economic paradigm.

Chapters six to eight go on to analyse patterns of lawlessness, and their impact on the national economy. Supplemented by an impressive array of facts and figures, the author convincingly brings to light the unfortunate picture of economic decline resultant from lawlessness and disorder. While such a portrayal may appear disillusioning and disheartening, there are also in the book seeds of enthusiasm and optimism. The induction of a cost-effective indigenous community policing model (see chapter 10) and its successful application in Gujranwala (see chapter 11) provide promising features which need to be pursued for the future. The author also carefully articulates a number of useful suggestions for long-term improvement of the central criminal administration system. These include

encompassing traffic management, training, transport and communications, arms modernization, modernization of equipment and logistic, constitution of a police technical cadre, modernization of investigative aids, detective training schools, modern aid and equipment for scientific investigation, police buildings, manpower and morale, separation of investigation from and watch and ward, strengthening of sub-divisional command, judicial lock-ups at sub-divisional level, induction at sub-inspector level with minimum academic qualification of a graduate, encouragement of private detective and security agencies and police morale boosting' (p. 276).

While all the above recommendations form part of the mechanics of an effective system, the author acknowledges that 'no economic development is possible in the absence of rule of law' (p. 308). The negation of rule has been an aspect which has proven to be most obstructive in Pakistan's path to economic and

political development.

This book written by 'an economist turned police officer' (p. ix) provides a very useful insight into the impact of lawlessness on economic instability in Pakistan. It should be of great interest not only to Pakistan's political elite and policy-makers but at the more practical level to economists, police officers and criminologists.

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S.R. Khan (ed), Trade and Environment: Difficult Policy Choices at the Interface, (London: Zed Books, 2002) xiii and 256 pp. (pb). ISBN 1842770993.

Serious concerns for the global environment emerged on the international agenda at Rio De Janeiro in 1992. During the initial Earth Summit, the participating governments pledged to adopt means of achieving sustainable development – which binds the pursuit of economic growth to protecting the natural environment. Ironically, at the same time, forces of globalisation were also beginning to create awe and excitement amongst the 'big players' of international trade and finance – who were more than eager to adopt and enforce the unification of the planet in their quest for profit. As globalisation flourished through media and information technology sectors, critical environmental issues and problems became apparent to conscious 'organic consumers'. Thus, began the much-hyped and publicised contention between the two paradigms of mass-production and conservation.

In this volume, the authors examine the extent and nature of such environmentalism in developing countries. From the perspective of a poor nation, they discuss the increased forms of international trade regulation designed to safeguard the global environment, as well as the scope for beneficial multilateral cooperation between the North and South. The primary aim of this academic endeavour is to foster a broader comprehension of the inter-linkages among key stakeholders and to develop their consensus and mutual understanding. The writers aim at guiding policy-makers in establishing a balance between trade and environmental policies. The volume advocates the need for poorer nations to recognise the economic, social and political importance of environmental conservation and the onus is on highlighting the immense value of finite resources and the 'net gains and efficiencies' associated with restricting future degradation. A major contribution of the edition is in its in-depth analysis of case studies from Pakistan, which exemplify strategies, proposals and policies that will aid other poorer nations in identifying and pursuing their interests in future trade negotiations.

The structure of this book is well planned and includes four segments. There

is a logical progression from the initial literature review to the in-depth discussion of areas, where scope for agreement and contention exists between the developed and developing nations. The first section examines the link between trade and the environment and reviews the key literature. Aaron Cosbey's details the more technical aspect of the relationship while avoiding the drear economic nitty-gritty. Shahrukh Rafi Khan explores the main hypotheses pertaining to trade liberalisation and environment from the 'South' and 'North' perspectives. Aside from the commonly quoted increasing politico-economic influence of multi-national companies, Khan also mentions the partiality of current Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in favour of the developed countries. Tariq Banuri unravels the Pakistani government's paradox of increasing cotton exports whilst avoiding the soil, water and air degradation associated with cotton production. Already, textile effluents from tanneries are contaminating prime agricultural land in the fertile Punjab; the book cites chemicals, like hydrogen sulphide, as one of the reasons for the decline of crop yields in the Pakistani province. The author uses empirical data to illustrate the alarming extent of pesticide-intensive practices and the lack of action on the part of the Punjab and national government.

The next two chapters extend such examination by computing the costs of pollution mitigation in the manufacturing sector and by reviewing Pakistan's legislative response to pollution. The section on cloth production and leather tanning offers specific limitations and opportunities pertaining to a particular sectoral economy. There is significant statistical calculation as Khan et al correlate future emission rates with prospective export growth. The main finding enables the authors to assert that a cumulative net benefit of 2 percent could be accrued to Gross Domestic Product from mitigating pollution. After surveying this section, some readers may find the case study too specific in terms of geographic location. Indeed, including a Latin American and/or an African perspective would have considerably increased the scope of the study by offering a comparative analysis.

Section three offers a dissection of the contemporary development in climate change negotiations. Such agreements as reducing overall global emission of six greenhouse gasses to below 1990 levels by implementing Clean Development Mechanisms (CDMs) are discussed in detail. Konrad von Molkte's chapter is successful in advocating an international investment regime. Molkte pays particular attention to the role of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in forcing governments to adopt lenient investment rules and regulations. He dismisses the ability of GATT/WTO to fulfil a sustainable development regime and instead presents an alternative framework agreement. Section four includes chapters by Mark Halle and Adil Najam. Halle's is especially interesting as he offers a concrete agenda for developing countries to uphold. Furthermore, Hall and Najam identify the key issues the South must adhere to and advocate for a 'positive and pro-active' approach in future negotiations. Both believe that the North and South must be prepared to follow a 'give and take' psyche.

Nowadays, the onus of development agencies and donors is on the environment influencing production and consumption of goods and services in such a way that sustainable development can be achieved. In section three, the writers comment on a marriage of compromise and sincerity between the environmentalists and the 'trade clan' of the developed countries and the aspiring governments of the South. Thus far, developing countries have experienced a dominant and selfish partner in the form of the developed world. Subsequently, the dissatisfaction has been highlighted in the form of demonstrations at World Trade Organization (WTO) and Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) meetings.

The handbook is aimed mainly at those with some knowledge about trade, environment or development. For the South-Asian policy-makers, section two will be a valuable policy reference tool. Those intending to apply it in undergraduate studies will gain from the extensive bibliographies and an easy-to-read composition. However, for readers with limited background knowledge, the introductory handbook on the same subject published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development would be more appropriate. The handbook can be downloaded and/or ordered from the IISD website at http://iisd.ca/trade/handbook/default.htm.

After finishing the volume, it is evident that the global trade scenario has changed following the Seattle Summit, perhaps, independently of the WTO, as governments and businesses respond to consumer preferences for ecologically friendly production and consumption and set and impose environmental standards. Currently the agricultural and non-agricultural goods being exported from the two Punjabs are increasingly being expected to meet stringent quality, packaging and environmental standards. Indeed, a serious dilemma exists for authorities and Punjabi farmers alike, of balancing efforts between livelihood expansion and maintaining the natural resource base.

The developing world perceives such international standards and guidelines as new trade barriers. Much rectification is required on both sides; richer countries must not restrict or reduce the export base of poorer nations and the developing world must tackle the misperception that cleaning up the environment is a luxury that cannot be afforded. As Khan summarises '...preventing environmental damage imposes an immense economic burden when viewed from a short run perspective but affective action can enable long run benefits to far surpass the initial costs.'

Farooq J. Malik Oxford

Remembering their Contribution

Dr. Haribhajan Singh (1919-2002)

Dr. Haribhajan Singh, who for four decades dominated Punjabi poetry and criticism, is no more. On October 22nd 2002 he breathed his last at the age of 83. Both in the Western and Eastern ethos, it is ripe age for a person to depart from this world. In Gurbani, it is held that without union with the Divine, to live this long is a curse. Most of the people in their eighties drop all activities. Even for their daily chores they begin to rely upon others, their near and dear ones. Dr. Haribhajan Singh had also to do the same, howsoever much he felt disinclined. Without active help from his wife, going to the toilet, having a bath, putting on clothes and feeding himself, were acts arduous if not impossible to perform.

It was a vegetative life following a paralytic stroke a decade back. Before this, he had contracted a throat ailment, which luckily, was not malignant. He recovered from it but the physical verve, so much a signifier of his poetic and critical creativity, got enervated. This enervation was visible only to those who remembered his bodily agility, brilliant addresses, the rhythmic variety and subtlety of his language and style. Even then, he kept on writing poems and articles till the last.

His swan song draws upon motifs, which Kabir had expounded in his shalokas five centuries back. Kabir articulated them so as to evoke their past significance along with their present meaning and future value. Dr. Haribhajan Singh could forward their residual sense only. The critical articles he kept on writing also sounded academic at best. The pedantic stance that he had earlier despised is there to the acute discomfiture of his readers.

Before this he was a honourable exception to all this. In the fifties he had launched his poetic career. His first book Lasan (Lashes) was a collection of songs. One of the earliest songs began with the utterance, 'Eh ik tara hore'. It was meant to draw attention to an uncommon star in the sky. The star, with its rare resplendence, was meant to underline his beginning on the horizon of Punjabi poetry. His was a departure from all this. Dr. Haribhajan Singh was different from all his contemporaries including Mohan Singh and Amrita Pritam. They were wholly taken up with social and political concerns. Questions of polity and society occupied them so much that issues of human identity seemed somewhat marginal. Of body, sex and gender, they wrote in a facile way. Dr. Haribhajan Singh sought to create a rupture in the field of Punjabi poetry. His collections of the fifties only presaged this rupture for he had recourse to romantic diction and melodic syntax. In the writings of the sixties, Sarak de Saphey te (On the Page of the Road) and Na Dhupey na Chhaven (Neither in the Sun nor in the Shade) he registered amazing success. All the paradoxes which urban and urbane male of the middle strata of the Indian society, went through were laid bare with amazing subtlety. The interlocutor

figuring as actor, agent or object, articulates himself with great felicity. His medium is Punjabi but his ethos is not wholly regional. Indian quality becomes a part and parcel of his Punjabi specificity. In the writings of the seventies and eighties, Dr. Haribhajan Singh sought to extend the scope of his poetic engagement. In *Mathe vala Diva* (Lamp with a Forehead) he took up civilisational concerns. No wonder, they seemed to defy the restraint that earlier was his forte. In *Rukh te Rishi* (Tree and the Ascetic) he forged poetic control over them through the *topoi* of the Budha, Puran and Kabir. On the basis of what they have eternally contributed to human dispensation, the interlocutor, Dr. Haribhajan Singh, constructed and deconstructed his own identity.

Dr. Haribhajan Singh's mode of expression covered a long trajectory. Beginning as lyrical expression, it ended on subtle exposure. Likewise was the trajectory of his literary criticism. Almost Crocean to begin with, he finished as an analogue of Barthes of the last phase. In between, he employed formalist and structuralist categories for the analysis of literary texts, ranging from the Shalokas of Sheikh Farid to the writings of his immediate predecessors, contemporaries and successors. His analytical categories kept on shifting and he did not bother to explore their veracity. Of their efficacy he was so very conscious. No wonder, what he wrote as literary criticism, derived entirely from his sympathetic reading. Rather than persuade the readers to delve into its profundity his whole effort was to dazzle and startle them with its brilliance. Underlying all this was his academic involvement that tended to dispense with historical and ideological engagement.

Whether in poetry or criticism, Dr. Haribhajan Singh's reflection got reflexive or rather self-reflexive. At the time of Operation Blue Star, he felt deeply anguished. As he admitted in his autobiography Chola Takian Wala (The Ragged Robe) religion for him became an issue of prime importance. Rather than see how it arises from its institutional sites, impels social practices, gets entangled in the issues of power and authority, and is impelled to employ spiritual categories for mundane purposes, Dr. Haribhajan Singh was led to examine the grid of being, identity and becoming. This extended his readership a lot. He came to be recognised as an Indian poet who employed Punjabi as his medium. Recognition in terms of the prestigious Kabir and Saraswati Awards was showered upon him. Commensurate with prestige was the cost he had to bear. But only he was deserving of the prestige that entailed such immense cost. There is none left in Punjabi of his calibre now. Towards the end he had felt that life was meaningful to the extent to which distance becomes its destination. True to this his life has turned into after life. For us, both are to be reckoned with in his writings. Reckoning with them will not bring him any credit. For us, it is so very crucial.

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Harkishan Lall 1921-2000

We meet here this evening to remember Harkishan Lall, our very dear friend and an eminent painter of this country who passed away on September 6. He had been suffering a long and painful illness. For the last six years, he had been under treatment for acute paralysis of the lower body at the Arya Vaidshala in Kottakkal, Kerala.

Born in Ludhiana on March 8, 1921, Harkishan graduated from Punjab University Lahore in 1940 and pursued further studies in art at the Sir JJ School of Art, Bombay and obtained diploma in 1947. During 1949-1953, he taught at the art department Polytechnic of Delhi. He was a member of the Delhi Shilpi Chakra - artists' circle. In 1953, he visited Russia and Poland in a five-member artists delegation. In 1962, he joined the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as deputy director (design), but resigned soon after. During that period, he participated in many group shows and won numerous awards, including gold medals from the Calcutta Fine Art Society (1960) and the Bombay Art Society (1961). He had solo shows in Paris (1969) and San Jose (USA).

Harkishan and I became close friends right from 1940, when we were in the Sir JJ School of Art. KK Hebbar was our teacher in the first year; he gained our respect and we earned his confidence. We were fortunate to have a mentor like JM Ahivasi and an imaginative school director in Charles Gerrard. Whereas Gerrard aroused our consciousness for appreciating our inherited art traditions, Ahivasi encouraged us to think with a free mind and gave us invaluable insights into the realm of art.

Harkishan and I had mutual regard for each other's work. He would always discuss his work with me to the extent possible. He was fond of the best things in life - he loved music and poetry and was a connoisseur of wine and food. His close friends included poets like Amrita Pritam and Sahir Ludhianvi and film music composer Jaidev.

Harkishan will be remembered as a painter who painted people and landscapes for more than five decades. Influenced not only by impressionists like Pierre Bonnard and post-impressionists like Cezanne and Van Gogh, but also by Ajanta murals and *Pahari* miniatures, he endeavoured to create works in a truly painterly manner. His themes, however, gradually changed from the intense expression of the horrific experience of Partition of the Punjab to romantic landscapes structured in semi-Cazannesque style. His art is an expression of deeply felt urges infused with a freshness of artistic approach. He painted spontaneously in unusual harmonies of colour creating an instant appeal.

He was in love with colour and the paint media. He handled his favourite oil media with great ease and command, He strongly believed that a painting had to be painted well, absolutely well, to possess a painterly quality. He painted in thick impasto and hence his works are enriched with a tactile quality. He used to say - I feel a sudden outburst of creative energy. At that time, my inner self is projected on an imaginary plane craving for expression...I go through the process of improvisation, keep in view the balance, rhythm and proportions, and transfer that order and feeling on the canvas.

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There is certain amount of fantasy in later landscapes of quiet and still forms that he created when roaming the valleys of Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh and the desert towns of Rajsthan; two contrasting regions. But then he, in his later works, always projected a suggestion of rest and repose, of tranquillity, of brooding stillness. Described as a frontliner of the landscape genre, his forms of nature possess a tremendous range. He added a variety of birds in his last series, painted in the late 1980s.

Harkishan was far from being an imitator of nature. He created beautiful patterns featuring birds. He obviously had a statement to make and he made these powerful statements in pure plastic terms. He described sentiments in terms of colour that had the eloquence of a poem. His view of nature was not a commonplace representational scene painting; it was, as it were, a view of nature that was the expression of the man himself.

On his show in Bombay in 1988, he wrote to me - This exhibition is very very important to me. It may even be my last. I want friends from all over to see it. I will exhibit 15 paintings I did during the last two or three years. Earlier, I was trying to grasp an eastern consciousness. But I have been evolving. I feel this is the beginning. Now I want to paint my own. My work should belong to the world.

He enjoyed living a bachelor's life in Bombay and was very fond of the city. He once said: 'A city like Bombay is the only city in this country I can live in. It does not matter whether it appreciates art or not. You can live the way you wish'. He was not a lonely bachelor, but an artist wedded to life. He also said: 'I have few belongings; even my cupboards are filled with paint. An artist's life is terrible, very painful. If I had another life, I'd love to be a poet. Then I could fly.'

Talking about death Harkishan remarked: 'Death. What about it? Look here. It's the donor card stating that my eyes should be taken the moment I die and given to the needful. Death is not important, what's important is life'. And he was one who lived life to the full.

Harkishan Lall Kalsi, painter, born March 8, 1921 Ludhiana, Punjab; died 6 September, 2000, Kottakal, Kerala.

[An abridged version of the memorial speech given by Pran Nath Mago, the painter, in Delhi on 19 September, 2000]

Piara Singh Padam 1921 - 2001

Piara Singh Padam, a Punjabi scholar, editor and linguist, was born on 28 December 1921 at Ghunghrana, Ludhiana. A self-made man, he passed a course in Sikh theology from the Sikh Missionary College, Amritsar, teaching there until 1947. He joined the SGPC, Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, the apex body of the Sikhs to edit the *Gurudwara Gazette*. In 1950 he joined Mehkama Punjabi (State Department of Punjabi language), which was built on

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the ashes of the dismembered Punjab, where he edited the research journal Punjabi Duniya - The Punjabi World.

Though he had no formal academic qualifications, he was known for his knowledge of Sanskrit, Braj, Hindi, Farsi and Urdu languages. He had in depth understanding of all the religions, which had influenced the land of the Punjab. He authored about 80 books on Punjabi literature and language, Sikhism, Sikh history, *Gurbani* and *Sufibani*, *Qissa* poetry etc. His many books were part of the university curriculum in all the universities in east Punjab. In recognition for his dedicated work, Punjabi University had awarded him life fellowship.

In the face of rising religious fundamentalism, he never lost his vision of academic freedom and sense of humour. He was a liberal and secular intellectual in the western sense. Padam died of a heart attack in March at Patiala.

Piara Singh Padam, Punjabi scholar, editor and linguist, born 28 December 1921, Ghunghrana, Ludhiana; died March 2001 Patiala.

Prem Dhawan 1923 - 2001

Prem Dhawan, who passed away on 9 May 2001 aged 78, was one of the finest talents in the Bombay film world. He was born in Ambala on 13 June 1923. His father was a jailer, who was known as Santji (Saint) for his humanism. In 1942 while in his youth Dhawan came into contact with Marxism, music and poetry through a cultured communist detainee Syed Muttalabi in Multan jail, where his father was stationed. After graduating from FC College Lahore, Dhawan joined the Communist Party of India and stayed at the party headquarters till his departure for Bombay at the behest of the CPI leader PC Joshi, who was the brains behind the Ipta (Indian People's Theatre Association). The Ipta had attracted culture stalwarts like Ravi Shankar, Bimal Roy, Balraj Sahni, SD Burman, Salil Chaudhury, KA Abbas and many more.

There Dhawan married Nur, a Muslim Ipta worker. His long association with the cinema resulted in Dhawan writing lyrics for three hundred and more films and documentaries working with music masters like Anil Biswas, OP Nayyar, Madan Mohan, Salil Chaudhury and Ravi. He choreographed song sequences in films like Do Bigha Zameen, Goonj Uthi Shehnaee, Naya Daur, Gumrah etc. Though himself a Punjabi, he could leave just one but a memorable song in his mother tongue Mai koi jhooth bolya?...sung by another Punjabi, Rafi, in Raj Kapoor's film Jagtey Raho. His Hindustani rendering of We shall overcome some day...Hum hongeyn kamyaab eik din...is sung to its original tune wherever Indian toiling people reaffirm their faith in a better future. In 1970 the President of India honoured Dhawan with the Padamshree.

Prem Dhawan, film lyricist and choreographer, born 13 June 1923, Ambala, Punjab; died 9 May, 2001, Bombay.

Salamat Ali Khan 1935 - 2001

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Ustaad Salamat Ali Khan, a classical musical genius of the Shamchurasi gharana (school), died of kidney failure in Lahore on 10th July 2001. He was born in 1935 at Shamchurasi in Hoshiarpur district. His grandfather, Karim Bakhsh, was a known dhrupad singer in the 19th century. Under the guidance of his father, Vilayat Ali, who was a maestro in his own right, Salamat performed at the age of nine with his elder brother Nazakat at the All-India Music Conference in Calcutta, and they came to be known as the Ali brothers in the 1960s and 1970s. After they fell out with each other, they travelled on their own ways. They trained their sons in their best of family tradition, but they lack the magic and vitality of their fathers. Abida Parveen, a sufi singer, acknowledges that Salamat Ali was her ustaad (Guru). He was unique in tayyari (complete mastery) and laykari (rhythm and tempo) and was known as a toofani (gusty) singer.

When Salamat had to migrate to the Pakistani side of the Punjab at the age of 12 in 1947 during the great upheaval, it must have been the conscious decision of elders in his family. The family was from the caste of Muslim mirasis the ballad singers, as was Baba Mardana, the companion and most probably the music teacher of Nanak, the first guru of the Sikhs. The Sikhs always felt a sense of gratitude towards the *mirasis* as they had kept alive the tradition of kirtan - devotional classical music, and the family could have stayed back. In the confessional state of Pakistan, music was looked down upon, because it is considered to be haraam (blasphemous) in Islam. For lack of state patronage, all the classical singers eked out their existence singing ghazals and light music - a demeaning task below their stature. While touring Europe and USA, they sang in private gatherings and resented a lot privately, sobbing sometimes, and saying saanu koi nahin sunda... no body listens to our music [in Pakistan]. In London it is worse. Some of them are seen singing in 'Indian' restaurants, while their patrons eat and drink.

During the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto period, fine artists enjoyed some freedom in Pakistan and under the banner of Lok Virsa (People's Heritage) established by the poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Salamat Ali recorded some Punjabi kafis by iconoclast Sufi poets.

Thanks to technology we have access to Salamat Ali Khan's voice, but all his dear ones will miss him.

Ustaad Salamat Ali Khan, classical vocalist, born 1935, Shamchurasi, Hoshiarpur; died July 10 2001, Lahore

Sohinder Singh Vanjara Bedi 1924-2001

Sohinder Singh Vanjara Bedi, a Punjabi folklorist and teacher, died on 27th August 2001 in Delhi, aged 77, after a prolonged illness. He had to leave his

ancestral place Dhan Pothohar in Sialkot during the great upheaval in 1947 and settle in Delhi, where like thousands of displaced Punjabis, he had to struggle almost all his working life. He took his master's degree in Punjabi literature in 1959 and started teaching in Dyal Singh College. The Panjab University awarded him a doctorate in 1964 for his thesis: A Critical Study of Punjabi Proverbs.

Though he published three collections of poetry in his early literary career, he soon realised that he could contribute better in prose and especially in the field of folklore. And indeed he made what a great contribution in the field single-handed without any private or state patronage. He was a one-man institution and he was the one who coined the term lokdhara for folklore. Research in this field was started in the later part of the 19th century by the British colonialists. Later it was taken up by natives like Devinder Satyarthi. Unlike Satyarthi, Bedi approached the subject in a systematic way. He published many collections of Punjabi folktales, legends and songs and books of prose including his 5-part autobiography. His 8-volume magnum opus Punjabi Lokdhara Vishavkosh - The Encyclopedia of Punjabi Folklore - will always remain a primary source of the subject. He published a quarterly Parampara (The Tradition) devoted entirely to folklore. His project to establish an academy of Punjabi Lokdhara did not get off the ground.

Vanjara Bedi, a gentleman and scholar, was fortunate in the sense that his contribution was recognised in his lifetime and he was honoured by all the Punjabi academic institutions in East Punjab and Delhi.

SS (Sohinder Singh) Vanjara Bedi, Punjabi folklorist and teacher, born 28 November 1924 Sialkot; died 27 August 2001 Delhi.

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