

Farina Mir, *The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2010) xiii + 277 pp. ISBN 978 0 520 26269 0 (hb) \$40.

This is an important book which explores some of the many implications of language policy in colonial Punjab, asking in particular why it was that a vibrant Punjabi literary culture was able to survive and develop in spite of lack of any official patronage of the kind which secured the standardization and future regional hegemony of so many other South Asian languages. While it will be of particular interest to Punjab studies specialists, the book's findings should therefore prove a useful challenge to historians of language working in other regions of India. It should also be said that the clear presentation and attractively jargon-free style of this monograph should help it reach the wider public which it certainly deserves to inform.

After a wide-ranging introduction which explains both the general cultural context and the author's proposed lines of approach, the main body of the book is divided into five chapters. The first deals with British language policy following the annexation of 1849, seeking to understand why it was decided not to give official support to the language of the vast majority of the population, for such reasons as the previously uncultivated character of Punjabi, its close association with the Sikhs whose loyalty to the new regime was then thought to be so doubtful, and the convenience of being able to use the Urdu language skills of administrative and clerical personnel from the adjoining provinces to the east. Although from the later perspective which has come to see a pattern of clearly defined and securely established provincial languages as the South Asian norm, Mir is of course right to emphasize the anomalous character of language policy in the Punjab, it might also be argued that the Punjab pattern was truer to the earlier diglossic arrangements generally preferred in India, which saw unlocalized standard languages like Sanskrit or Persian being used for most formal purposes alongside the more restricted literary and cultural role accorded to largely unstandardized local vernaculars. The ability of this historic arrangement to function very well is of course fully exemplified by the hierarchical diglossia of Urdu and Punjabi in a single literary and cultural system in Pakistan Punjab today, over 160 years since the British annexation.

While it would be a counsel of perfection to suggest that the cultural history of the period could only hope to be properly written if equally full attention were given both to Punjabi and to Urdu, it is in practice difficult for scholars not to be drawn to cultural values associated with one or the other. So, while the book generally succeeds in maintaining a proper scholarly objectivity, there are places in which Mir shows a natural sympathy for the inclusiveness of colonial-period Punjabi literary culture as opposed to the communal divisiveness associated with official policies, including the patronage of Urdu.

Internal divisions within the Punjabi literary sphere, most obviously manifested in the distinction between the Persian and Gurmukhi scripts, are described in the second chapter dealing with Punjabi publishing in the later nineteenth century. But less importance is attached to these than to the cross-

communal participation in the creation and consumption of popular Punjabi poetry. Rightly taking the *qissa* as the core genre of this poetry, Mir draws particular attention to the classic theme of the genre, the Hir-Ranjha romance. The relationship between traditional oral performance and the printed texts of the period is well explored in the wide-ranging third chapter on the 'Punjabi literary formation', which draws illuminatingly on the all-too-rare first-hand descriptions by colonial observers of live performances of Punjabi poetry, particularly in association with Sufi shrines, whose well-known appeal across narrow religious boundaries does much to support the author's characterization of Punjabi literary culture.

The fourth chapter then focuses upon the Hir-Ranjha texts produced in such numbers during the colonial era, which are usefully listed in an ample appendix. Mir is able convincingly to show how the definitions of religious identity which were so obsessive a concern of the colonial state and which were to be so increasingly important in the formation of elite opinion, were of much less interest to the *qissa* writers than the *zat* ('caste', 'tribe') affiliations of the chief characters of the story. This is extended in the fifth chapter into an exploration of the association of the higher values expressed by the *qissa* poets with the institution of the saints and their shrines, in particular the Panj Pir who play so large a role in providing a higher sanction for the romance of Hir and Ranjha. While admitting the primacy of Muslim poets in the poetic handling of the story, Mir is also keen to show that non-Muslim writers are also able to participate in what she calls a 'shared ethos of piety shared by Punjabis of different religions'. As the book's brief conclusion records, however, it was of course only the Akali Dal, with its narrowly Sikh agenda, which was finally able to secure the official status of Punjabi in one small part of the former imperial province. But, as an aside tantalizingly suggests, history might have turned out quite differently if the Unionist leadership had had the imagination to draw effectively upon the values of the Hir-Ranjha story for the creation of a genuinely popular pan-Punjabi ideology.

This then is a book for all Punjab studies enthusiasts to enjoy and learn more both about what was and what might have been.

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Ishtiaq Ahmed, *The Punjab Bloodied, Partitioned and Cleansed: Unravelling the 1947 Tragedy through Secret British Reports and First-Person Accounts*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2012) xlviii + 592 pp. ISBN: 9780199064700 (hb) Rs. 2100..

The Punjab was at the epicentre of the violence which accompanied the Partition of the Indian subcontinent in August 1947. Nationalist histories have tended either to stress the achievement of independence over its human costs, or have

used partisan accounts with the aim of 'blame displacement' to reinforce notions of community 'sacrifice' and 'honour'. With the fiftieth anniversary of independence in 1997, the turn to the 'human dimension' of Partition, termed the New History, has transferred the focus from 'high politics' studies on the genesis of Partition to its human aftermath for ordinary people. *The Punjab Bloodied, Partitioned and Cleansed* belongs to this growing body of scholarship which has given a regional and local perspective to the factors of Partition violence and its attendant mass dislocation. The book is organized into three broad 'stages'. It begins with a comprehensive overview of the concepts of identity, ethnic cleansing, genocide and forced migration that provide the theoretic framework of the argument. It then goes on to delve into the diverse and complex sets of community relations by concluding that, despite societal divisions and politicisation of religious identities, a social order had survived until the later stages of colonial rule. The large-scale violence and the mass migration which accompanied it was, by no means, inevitable at the end of British rule, but was contingent on political circumstances. Having established that, the author then leads us into the first stage of the book that provides the historical background to the events leading up to the decision for Partition, explaining national and regional high politics, as well as the start of unfolding violence in the Punjab. Here, of course, Ishtiaq Ahmed is returning to his early work, especially as it pertains to the politics of violence leading up to 1947. Ahmed argues the growing tension that had accompanied the previous year's provincial elections, 1945–6, and the collapse of negotiations that ensued, created insecurity and fears about political and social stability and that this was a precipitating point for ensuing violence in the urban centers of the Punjab. Second only to this was the resignation of the Unionist Government of Khizr Hayat Tiwana and the unsheathing of a *kirpan* by the Sikh leader Master Tara Singh outside the Punjab assembly in March 1947: 'no other moment has been described as more dramatic than Master Tara Singh's bravado outside the Punjab assembly' (p. 131).

The source material is clearly very important and certainly has the makings of something very interesting. Particularly poignant are the accounts of the March violence in the cities of Punjab. Standard accounts of Partition violence commonly concentrate on the disorders of mid-August, when the machinery of the colonial state was in the process of transition or being dismantled and the boundary demarcation was uncertain. Ahmed reveals violence in the Punjab's major towns and cities, in contrast, started as early as March when the first tide of violence and actual movement of people began as a result of the Rawalpindi district killing of Hindus and Sikhs. Violence followed shortly afterwards both in Lahore, Amritsar and their surrounding areas and was endemic until the British departure ushered in the final round of blood-letting and migration.

In stages two and three of the book, the evidence of interviewees discloses the truth that official documents hide. The oral histories that the author presents here focus on the diverse aspects of the Partition: the patterns and motives of violence; the sense of displacement; the memories of refugee convoys/camps, and the nostalgia for pre-1947 bonds between the 'Punjabis'— Muslims, Sikhs

and Hindus. Ahmed's accounts not only attempt to connect the experience of individuals with the history of nations and their 'high politics', but also provide the link between private and collective memory. The interviews also show that the first tide of violence expedited the anticipatory migration of wealthy and politically astute non-Muslims. For example, the accounts confirm the members of Premchand Khanna family left Multan for Jullundur as early as in April 1947 as did the family of Girdhari Lal Lapur who left Multan for Saharanpur (pp161–2). Similarly, Harkishan Singh Mehta's family left Rawalpindi for New Delhi in June when the tensions increased with the actual announcement of the division of Punjab, alongside the Partition of the subcontinent (p.171). In addition, the interviews suggest the preparations for violence were made to pre-empt the Punjab boundary award, ranging from the stocking of ammunitions to the recruitment of militias in the ranks of the parties and bands. The decay of colonial administration was a precondition for violence in the major cities of the Punjab. There is mounting evidence of the involvement of members of political parties, police and paramilitary groups in violence. What were the motives behind attacks on unwanted minorities? 'The motivations for taking part in the attacks may have been ideological, religious and indeed the survival instinct must also have been a factor', Ahmed notes. 'However, the driving force that animated the attackers was the urge to loot and plunder and capture of females of the enemy group' (p. 542). While attacks on rival minorities 'bore all the characteristics of retributive genocide...', Ahmed concludes, 'at no point, did the pogroms and massacres degenerate into a war of communities' (pp. 542–3).

The real strength of this book is in the source material. The author is to be congratulated on the exhaustive oral histories gathered on both sides of the divided Punjab. It is certainly the last opportunity to capture voices and memories of the people, now very aged, who lived through the 1947 tragic events. Ahmed supplements the oral histories with previously published collections of archival documents, mainly the *Fortnightly Reports* (FRs) and newspaper clippings (especially the *Pakistan Times* and *Tribune*). Despite the richness of the source material, regrettably, it is more easily fixed; thick descriptions prevail over analysis. Narrative piles on narrative, with little or no critical reflection on the sources, and we are not told where the experiences detailed here fit in a wider historiography. The author trusts his hunch that respondents 'spoke with great honesty': 'I believe an experienced researcher cannot be easily deceived in an interview' (p. xlv). Furthermore, it is not clear, why Ahmed relied on previously published FRs, what he termed the *Secret British Reports*, but not the hitherto little-used First Information Reports (FIRs) and Intelligence Branch records (Secret Police Abstracts). In places, there is quite a lot of insider language: place names (e.g. Akalgarh, Ram Nagar, pp. 353–4) are put in without any gloss on where they are.

While the book is very dense and the details are wholly convincing, in some way, it is not as informative as it might have been. Ahmed's accounts of violence routinely attributed this to 'Muslims', 'Hindus' and 'Sikhs' without identifying the actual perpetrators and their chains of command. In a recent project, Steven Wilkinson (2010) has linked war-time military experiences with

the high levels of violence in Punjab. Veterans were active in Partition violence, but there were other dynamics and individuals behind the massacres. Crime reports and FIRs registered by the victims of violence often identify the local constituencies and categories for violence and looting, as well as typologies and occupational basis of perpetrators – for example in some localities the killers were local butchers (*qasaai*) and iron-workers (*lohars*). Did such instances have any interaction with wider episodes of violence? Did engagement in previous criminal activity or involvement with state sanctioned violence predispose individuals to become perpetrators? There are no final answers. In addition, it would have been helpful to have a more sustained analysis of links between local episodes of violence and the interaction between supra-local organisations and local perpetrators of violence.

‘Already from March 1947 nexuses comprising politicians, criminal gangs, famously known as *badmashes* and *goondas* and partisan officials in the administration collaborated to carry our crimes against humanity’, Ahmed notes (p. 542). He named the Indian politicians (namely Master Tara Singh, Sardar Patel, the maharaja of Patiala and crown prince of Kapurthala, Liaqat Ali Khan) who goaded and sanctioned episodes of the violence (p 539), but again we do not get a sense of the legitimacy of violence as a foundation for statehood, and how pre-existing local networks and communal organisations, such as Muslim and Sikh war-bands, facilitated mobilisation for violence. Moreover, we learn little about why particular social groups were more likely to engage in violence than others and where the regional variations in violence were, although other work suggests that the private and public content might be discerned beneath episodes of political violence involving, for example, the settling of old scores or localised economic motivations. Though Ahmed boasts that his work is ‘the first holistic and comprehensive case study of the partition of Punjab’ (p. xlv), he has not benefited from the other recent studies of Partition. References to Shail Mayaram (1996), Ayesha Jalal (1998), Swarna Aiyar (1995), Ian Talbot (2006), Yasmin Khan (2007), Ravinder Kaur (2007), Pippa Virdee (2007), as well as the more recent work of Talbot and Singh (2009), Anna Bigelow (2009) and Vazira Zamindar (2008) would have strengthened the contextual framing of the wider historical argument. It is for the reader to judge whether the book has proffered a grittier dimension of India’s Partition. The book, as a whole, is written in a lively, journalistic and accessible style, which gives the work appeal to non-specialists. At the same time, there is sufficient and detailed new information that can be seen as a primary source for those interested in India’s Partition.

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Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011) 347 pp. ISBN 978-0-520-27087-9 (pb) \$27.95; £19.95.

Nayan Shah's book is a major achievement. Many years in the making, meticulously researched and closely argued, it makes very significant contributions to our knowledge of early Punjabi and other South Asian immigrants and to our thinking about them. An historian, Shah has mined and mastered almost unbelievably wide-ranging and numerous sources, as the bibliography testifies. Especially revealing are the primary and archival sources, most notably local court and library records from Oregon, California, New Mexico, Washington, and Vancouver, British Columbia. Shah uses these and other records to examine several hundred interracial marriages of South Asian men and Mexican American, white, Puerto Rican, and black women and more than a hundred cases of illicit sexual contact between South Asian men and men from a variety of other backgrounds.

Shah is a fine writer and has organized his material well. In the first section, Shah shows that the South Asian men migrating to the North American West in the early decades of the twentieth century (many of them Sikhs) engaged in multiple forms of sociality and domesticity. Section headings in chapter 3 include, for example, 'Bunkhouse Cohabitation and Troubled Masculinity' and 'Intimate Dependencies, Male Households, and Improper Domesticities.' Shah argues that social regulation and policing by the state increasingly shaped the strategies and options available to transient men and women, to migrant laborers, labor contractors, tenants, and landowners as they created and defended intimate dependencies. In his second section, Shah examines the legal reasoning behind evolving state regulation of sexual practices and social ties, showing how licensing, registration, and civil and criminal prosecution defined human relationships according to racial, ethnic, age, moral, and sexual categories. Detailed case histories involving sodomy and marriage and divorce establish his points. In his third and final section, Shah argues that nation-state promotion of intimate personhood, conjugal marriage, and domestic dependency organized exclusion from and inclusion into the US and Canada. Here he connects the later erasure of racial boundaries to immigration and citizenship to the promotion of heterosexual families and family reunification policies following World War II.

Shah utilizes (with full acknowledgement) some of the material on the Punjabi Mexican rural families in California from my own 1992 book, *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans*, and he pursues some of those stories even further. There is also some overlap with Vivek Bald's 2013 book, *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America*. While I showed that the bi-ethnic families in the American West produced conflict as well as cooperation among family members, Bald argues that, for the Bengali Muslim peddlers and ex-seamen alike, women of color and urban communities of color were crucial to their lives in America. Bald sees women of color and their neighborhoods helping to integrate the South Asian men

through marriages, work, and settlement in America, while Shah argues that the range and variety of immigrants' social relationships and intimacies were increasingly subjected to "normative" expectations and state regulations by the mid-twentieth century. Shah, Bald and I all argue, in different ways, that the early South Asian immigrants were on the whole cosmopolitan, while the numerous middle- and upper-class immigrants taken to represent South Asians in North America today, those coming from the late 1960s on, often reflect more narrowly transnational identities, ones focused more on religious and kinship networks from the homeland.

In sum, Nayan Shah's book is a landmark achievement, probing and analyzing material and issues previously unexplored and unconnected. His ideas are original and often provocative, but his evidence and arguments are strong as he links intimate experiences, "stranger intimacies," to county, state, and national policies and laws in new and compelling ways.

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Jacobsen, Knut A. and Myrvold, Kristina, *Sikhs in Europe: Migration, Identities and Representations*, (London, Ashgate, 2011), xiv+ 346pp. ISBN 9781409424345, (hb) £60.

Sikh migration overseas started well over a century ago and has led to the creation of a vibrant, dynamic and diverse diaspora which spans nearly a hundred countries around the world. This migration process coincided with the expansion of the British Empire and was energised in the post-colonial period, especially in the 1950s (UK) and 1960s (Canada and USA) when immigration controls became more relaxed. The UK, Canada and the USA emerge as the three dominant centers of Sikh settlement. Further, although the culture of overseas migration had become deeply embedded in Sikh pschye, the tightening of immigration controls, from the 1980s onwards, all around the world made legal immigration from Punjab more and more difficult. Moreover, new pressures created by the rapidly deteriorating political situation in Punjab and the new land and sea migration routes which opened up with the ending of the Cold War, made it imperative for young Sikhs to 'escape' Punjab, legally or illegally. From the mid to late 1980s, continental Europe, stretching from the eastern periphery of new, or soon-to-be, member states of the European Union to western and Nordic countries, saw a significant increase in Sikh presence largely as 'new migrants' but also adding to small communities who had settled earlier, mostly in Germany. This then is the backdrop to the context and content of the book under review. Unlike the larger UK Sikh community, which has been well studied since the 1960s, this is the *first* comprehensive account of the growing Sikh presence in continental Europe. On this criterion alone it is a landmark publication. It is a wonderful output from the conveners of the first conference on *Sikhs in Europe* held at the University of Lund in June 2010 with a promise

of a second volume to follow.

The book contains 13 chapters based on empirical case studies of migration and identity issues faced by Sikh communities in Europe. It is neatly organised into three parts, compartmentalised by geographical considerations. The first part contains studies on Sikhs settled in northern and eastern Europe, the second on those settled in southern and western Europe and finally the third on Sikhs settled in the UK and Ireland. Most chapters are highly illuminating in terms of size of community, settlement pattern, socio-economic and legal status and identifying major cultural and inter-generational issues facing the community. In Part 1, with five chapters, we read about the pioneering phase of community development in Norway and issues surrounding inter-generational transfer of Sikh tradition there (Knut Jacobsen); the precarious position of the Sikhs in Denmark, where internal tensions amongst the Sikhs have dogged further enhancement and greater visibility of the community (Helene Ilkjaer); the relative success of Swedish Sikhs in building community institutions and forging good relations with both local communities and state agencies (Kristina Myrvold); how the small community of Sikhs in Finland have achieved relative success in the restaurant trade despite problems of isolation and marginalisation (Laura Hirvi) and how Poland has emerged both as a staging post for new Sikh migrants who want to travel further west and south and how some have decided to make Poland their home despite severe cultural and economic difficulties.

In Part 2, with four chapters, we have a more critical examination of significantly larger and rapidly expanding Sikh and Punjab communities in southern Europe. In the opening chapter of this section Bertolani, Ferraris and Perocco provide a fairly comprehensive overview of the growth in size of settlement, institution-building, spatial distribution, socio-economic activities and challenges faced by local communities in terms of accommodating Sikhs in Italy. Since many of the new Sikh migrants to Europe came through irregular routes and channels, often having to destroy documents in the process, desperate attempts to regularise their stay in a European country has been a recurring issue. Christine Moliner's chapter on Sikhs in France interrogates this issue and identifies a number of problems faced by Sikhs to both regularise their stay, enabling them to seek employment in the formal sector and also move them away from the margins of French society. Given that 'secular' France outlawed wearing of religious symbols in public schools and other buildings, makes our understanding of the issues around Sikh marginality even more interesting. The next chapter by Kathryn Lum on *Ravidasia* Sikhs in Spain and written with the backdrop of the murder of a popular Ravidasia leader in Vienna by so-called 'higher caste' Sikhs, illuminates the debates and tensions within the Ravidasia community about their religious identity and their difficulties in maintaining a cordial relationship with mainstream Sikh tradition. This chapter is useful in demonstrating how social structures of Punjab, such as caste, become replicated in different diaspora locations. The last chapter in this Part has a focus on Greece and discusses how Sikhs settled there have fared in terms of economic and social integration, despite having a lengthy period of settlement.

In Part 3, three of the four chapters focus on the UK Sikh community,

bringing out the issues of diversity and differentiation and inter-generational transmission of Sikh beliefs and values. The opening chapter in this section by Eleanor Nesbitt provides a comprehensive overview of inherent diversities among British Sikhs, whether they be in terms of location, language, religion, caste, politics or inter-generational. Naturally such diversities have the potential to give rise to multiple identities and blurred boundaries which give in turn give rise to contestations and community tensions over representations. The second chapter by Jasjit Singh zooms in on young Sikhs and the phenomenon of growth in *sikhi* educational camps in the UK and evaluates youth experiences of participating in such camps. The third chapter by Opinderjit Kaur Takhar continues the theme of diversity explored by both Kathryn Lum and Eleanor Nesbitt. Takhar focuses on the three smaller Punjabi religious groups who have varying degrees of organic link with the mainstream Sikh tradition: Valmiki, Ravidasis and Namdharis and the distinct problems these groups face both in terms of representing and transmitting their tradition to younger generations and also in terms of 'marginality' by being minorities within minorities. The final chapter in this last Part by Glenn Jordan and Satwinder Singh has a rare discussion on the emergence of a Sikh community in Ireland, covering both Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland. We get a good sense of the period of settlement, profiles of early migrants and of their religious and cultural life.

As the first comprehensive academic work on Sikhs in Europe, there are inevitable challenges that the scholars, both new and established, must have faced in undertaking their case studies. These challenges are not helped by the fact that apart from the UK, it is very difficult to establish the exact size of the communities at each location, the extent to which problems of legality have been resolved and how each community has fared regarding establishing official links with the Indian government and host governments. The picture that emerges is that there is considerable diversity in terms of period and nature of settlement, degrees of institution building and preparedness for cultural transmission. For example countries such as Italy, Germany and Spain appear to be further ahead compared with France and Denmark where issues of marginality and vulnerability, hostile local laws and relative non-accommodation of non-European populations hinder their progress. The general challenges faced by first generation Sikhs across Europe are not very different from those faced by first generation Sikhs in the UK and potential is there for Sikhs in continental Europe to learn from the experiences of UK Sikhs. The emergence of the satellite channel, Sikh Channel, as a major vehicle for identifying and raising concerns, for sharing experiences and uniting them on community action, should help to alleviate some challenges. By bringing out this refreshing and timely publication on Sikh communities in Europe, which hitherto had been largely invisible, little known and understood despite their unsurpassed contribution during WW1 and WW2, the editors have done a great service to both the fields of Diaspora Studies and Sikh Studies.

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Kamala Nayar, *The Punjabis in British Columbia. Location, Labour, First Nations and Multiculturalism*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012) 384 pp. ISBN 9780773540705 (hb) 100 CAD.

As the title suggests, this is a volume with an ambitious agenda. It is also remarkably successful in achieving its agenda. Kamala Nayar, building on her earlier work, *The Sikh Diaspora in Vancouver*, continues to provide analysis of her carefully constructed ethnographic research in giving information and insight into the historical and contemporary realities of the Punjabi, though largely Sikh, community of British Columbia. She tracks an important element of the migration process of Punjabis, often overlooked in migration studies, namely, the contrasting experiences of migrants within what she labels the 'cultural synergy' of remote towns in northwestern British Columbia with the 'ethnic insularity' of large urban spaces to which many are drawn due to the 'globalization-driven decline' of forestry and fishery industries in Canadian rural areas. Seeking to capture the oral traditions of those Punjabis who are still connected to these rural regions, Nayar provides an important link to largely hitherto unexplored aspects of Punjabi migrant history in Canada. Moreover, she also establishes links to issues of religious, cultural pluralism and citizenship, especially with regard to First Nations in British Columbia, thus shedding light on highly complex intercultural relations in the process of 'becoming' Canadian within the context of multiculturalism.

Chapter one situates the study of Punjabi migrants within theoretical questions of heterogeneity of immigrant communities and the negotiation of identities focusing on the migration experiences of early Punjabi migrants in the Skeena region of northwestern British Columbia. Nayar examines traditional approaches to the study of minority groups, namely, those focusing primarily on notions of ethnicity, race and class, arguing that these are empirically skewed, given that immigrant experiences, particularly for Punjabis, have been gender specific. Moreover, the bulk of studies undertaken by social anthropologists and historians have focused on groups within metropolitan sites, despite much of the immigrant experience having taken place within rural arenas. Nayar proposes that Punjabi immigration patterns must be situated within a broader perspective that highlights both agency and structure, namely, 1) characteristics of Punjabi ethnicity and how those elements facilitated the initial and later adaptation process 2) circumstances surrounding British Columbian labour, with a particular focus on forestry and the fishing industry and labour unions and 3) changing policies and practices of Canadian multiculturalism. Utilizing these variables, she examines the processes of social and cultural adaptation and transformation, while also taking into account geographic location, which form the analytical framework for her study. Methodologically, through qualitative analysis, Nayar's research includes 105 semi-structured interviews, a longitudinal analysis of labour and governmental archival data, as well as participant observation in a number of socio-religious and political centres and programs for the various groups she includes within the larger study of Punjabi immigrants, Punjabi-Hindus and Punjabi-Sikhs in the largely rural Skeena

region and the urban metropolis of the Lower Mainland, namely, the Vancouver area.

Chapters two and three investigate the movement of Punjabi immigrants, arriving initially in areas surrounding the Lower Mainland in the early twentieth century to leave for more remote areas such as the Skeena region in the 1960s as the forestry industry in the Lower Mainland reached its saturation point. In the Skeena region, the bulk of Punjabi immigrants were employed as manual or semi-manual labourers, but increasingly, from the 1970s onward, with policies of multiculturalism and changed immigration laws, educated Punjabis moved into industry, skilled labour and began their own businesses. Nayar then turns her attention to the economic and psychosocial impact of the decline of the forestry industry on Punjabi immigrants from the mid-1990s. Increasingly insecure employment led not only to emotional and economic distress, but also a disorientation of identity, given that Punjabis had been identified with the forestry industry for the past one hundred years. Building on central narratives, the study examines how immigrants adapted and navigated through the social system of Canada, despite limited educational opportunities and skills. According to Nayar, aspects of the Punjabi cultural ethos, including hard work, strong kinship ties and landownership, were important assets in becoming established in Canada.

Chapters four and five are ground-breaking in their investigation of the highly specific immigrant experience of Punjabi women from the 1960s in the Skeena region within the fishing industry, while also contextualizing and reinterpreting traditional Punjabi gender roles such as *izzat* (honour) as they adapted to their new surroundings. Shedding light on the experiences of women in rural Canada, she examines how many experienced tremendous social isolation yet also hard wrought agency as they were separated from their natal homes in Punjab through marriages. Moreover, most lacked any family connections in Canada due to the remoteness of the rural areas to which they were bound. Nayar by and large restricts her study to Punjabi women's agency while offering little insight into negative effects of the religio-cultural gender codes within Punjabi society. A more balanced approach would allow for a more wide-ranging analysis in this regard. These chapters situate women's experiences historically through individual narratives, examining the economic and emotional impact of the decline of the fisheries on women as well as exploring the strategies developed over time in adapting, negotiating and maintaining their economic and social autonomy. Chapter five also explores Punjabis' encounter with First Nations women and men. Punjabi women in the fisheries industry in particular were confronted with hostility as they were perceived as 'stealing' jobs from First Nations people, leading to substantial anti-immigrant hostility and workplace segregation.

Chapter six continues with an overview of occupational segregation practices within the resource industries of the Skeena region, examining the gender and ethnic lines that emerged. Nayar investigates the 'triadic intercultural dynamic' that developed among Anglo-Canadians, First Nations and more recent immigrant groups, including Chinese and Punjabi immigrants, and how,

with the rise of unions, platforms were put in place by which various groups could voice their grievances. Chapters seven and eight move beyond the more commonly studied focus of immigrant groups in relation to the Anglo-mainstream. Nayar instead highlights the multifaceted intercultural interactions of Punjabis and other communities, particularly First Nations. The creation of religious and cultural spaces allowed Punjabis to get established within larger public spheres, thus moving beyond most immigrants' primary initial aims of simply acquiring greater economic security. Perhaps most enlightening are the depictions of intercultural events where traditional Punjabi floats moved beyond only displaying elements of Punjabi culture, and also included coastal emblems, such as the orca, thereby continuing to strengthen relations with First Nations communities.

Chapters nine and ten look at what Nayar labels the 'second journey' of Punjabis relocating and reestablishing themselves in urban centres after their sojourn in remote regions. According to Nayar, this relocation involved a departure from an identity based on 'cultural synergy; to an ethnic insularity, tending to stay apart from broader Canadian society within metropolitan areas'. Here Nayar builds on her earlier work on ethnic identification, utilizing narratives that depict processes of 'being a part of' and 'being apart from' mainstream society, including a renegotiation of both their ethnic identity and their identity as Canadians, including an examination of inter-cultural generational differences.

Kamala Nayar's *The Punjabis in British Columbia. Location, Labour, First Nations and Multiculturalism* is an important contribution to migration, diaspora and Canada studies in that she challenges traditional tropes of inquiry of Punjabi migration patterns beyond the Canadian metropolis and Punjabi/immigrant relations with the Anglo-Canadian mainstream. She also offers a solid examination, through extensive historical and ethnographic research, much of it through the first-person narrative voice, into the psycho-social processes of agency, resiliency and adaptability, not only for the largely studied Punjabi-Canadian male populace, but also Punjabi women's work and narrative, a glaring dearth in most studies of the Punjabi-Canadian community.

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Tariq Rahman, *From Hindi to Urdu: A Social and Political History*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011) 476 pp. ISBN 9780199063130 (hb), PKR 1,095.

Urdu is the only national language of Pakistan. It is the official language of five states in India and is one of twenty-two scheduled languages according to the Indian Constitution. The Urdu language is also mutually intelligible to Hindi, at the spoken level. However, the relationship between Urdu and Hindi is not as simple in the history of South Asia as it would appear now (Shackle and Snell 1990). There have been a lot of political, ideological, and historical debates on

the relationship between the two languages. Rahman's well researched book *From Hindi to Urdu* offers such debates from a historical perspective by discussing the origin and development of the Urdu language. Although the name Urdu started to be used for the language in the eighteenth century (pp.18–54), Rahman has traced its roots centuries earlier, intertwined with the development of the Hindustani language, which later split into Hindi and Urdu. Rahman has supported his arguments in the book by using excerpts of classical texts like those of Amir Khusrau (pp.66–78) as well as personal interviews that he carried out with linguists, educationists, and historians over several years.

In the first three chapters, after the introduction, Rahman presents the historiography of Urdu, various names attributed to the language at the various stages of its development as well as the literary, cultural, and political connotations associated with it in the course of history. During the British Raj, the controversy over Urdu and Hindi contributed to the formulation of the two-nation theory, leading to the Pakistan Movement. The two languages came to be regarded as distinct from each other by their respective scholars and speakers. One of the main reasons for this distinction has been that Hindi has been relatively more influenced by Sanskrit whereas Urdu has been more influenced by Arabic and Persian. Rahman analyses various theories about the Sanskrit and non-Sanskrit roots of Urdu within the contexts of religion and politics in the history of the subcontinent. In the subsequent five chapters, Rahman presents the relationship of the British government with Urdu and Hindi as the languages of Muslims and Hindus, respectively. In the princely states, Muslim rulers patronised Urdu because of its close relationship with Islamic culture and its role as an identity marker for Muslims. Similarly, Muslim scholars wrote a lot of religious literature in this language. Consequently, Urdu now has a huge Islamic literature, probably richer than any other South Asian languages. This literature is not just limited to translations and commentaries of the Qur'an, but many other forms of religious poetry such as *hamd*, *naat*, and *marsiya* as well. Therefore, Urdu predominantly became an Islamic language. Its Perso-Arabic script, which distinguishes it from Hindi's Devanagiri script, became another reason for its popularity among Muslim readers. However, Rahman dispels the perception that Urdu has only been used in religious writings by Muslims. He provides various examples, particularly from the *ghazal* form of Urdu poetry, to argue that eroticism and romance have also been an essential part of the Urdu literature.

While Punjabi remains an important language for everyday communication for its speakers in various parts of Punjab, it has been especially important for Sikhs because of their religion. In Pakistani Punjab, although Punjabi and Saraiki are also part of the official curriculum at various educational levels, Urdu is the medium of education, or the language of explanation in English medium education. Rahman has highlighted that Urdu has been considered as a means to attaining better economic opportunities in Pakistan due to its official status and support from the ruling elites. Similarly, a vast majority of the younger generation prefer to speak Urdu rather than their native languages for this reason. Chapters ten and eleven explain the significance and role of Urdu in

contemporary employment and education in Pakistan. In universities, English is the medium of education and examination, and it enjoys prestige and offers better chances of employment and working overseas, which Rahman (1997) has also discussed elsewhere as a strategy by the ruling elites to make themselves distinct from the common people. In schools and colleges, with the exception of some elite institutions, as mentioned above, Urdu still remains a language of education. In the last three chapters, before his conclusion, Rahman discusses the role of Urdu in print and electronic media in Pakistan. The majority of the national daily newspapers are in Urdu, except a few in English which have a limited readership. Similarly, the use of Urdu in the radio, television and cinema, particularly Bollywood movies, has paved its way to being the language of the future. This significance of Urdu also prompts the use of the language in modern technology such as computers and mobile phones. This area is beyond the scope of this book, focusing as it does on history, but it can be an important aspect of studying the contemporary relationship of Urdu and Hindi, given the increasing use of Romanised script for both the languages in social media and mobile text messages, whilst also taking into account the historical perspectives discussed by Rahman.

Rahman has mentioned how various languages and dialects of Hindustani have shaped modern Urdu, and how, now that Urdu is more rigorously influencing and being influenced by many regional languages of Pakistan, the divide between Urdu and Hindi has become a point of exploration in the current scenario. On the one hand, Urdu has been among the major sources of ethnic conflicts in Pakistan, for example in the case of the separation of Bangladesh, and until recently in the conflict between Sindhi speakers and Urdu speakers in Karachi. On the other hand, Urdu plays an important role for a unified Pakistani identity. For example, Urdu as a medium of communication between Punjabis and other ethnic groups in Pakistan, in more or less the same way as Hindi and English are used in India, is giving new dimensions to Punjabi identity in relation to the broader national identity. Whilst linguists and social historians will find *From Hindi to Urdu* a marvellous treasure, particularly useful in the context of South Asia, it also has a lot to offer to political scientists and policy makers in exploring the role of language in educational policy, religious identity, and ethnic politics.

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Kyotaka Sato, *Memory and Narrative Series 3: Mrs Jasvir Kaur Chohan: Life Story of A Sikh Woman and her Identity*, (Tokyo: Meiji University, 2011) 185pp. ISSN 2185-6079 (pb).

Kyotaka Sato, *Memory and Narrative Series 4: Mr Sarup Singh, MBE and Mrs Gurmit Kaur: Life Stories of A Sikh Artist and his Wife*, (Tokyo: Meiji University, 2012) 179pp. ISSN 2185-6079 (pb).

Kyotaka Sato, *Memory and Narrative Series 5: Life Story of Mr Jaffer Kapasi, OBE: Muslim Businessman in Leicester, and the Ugandan Expulsion in 1972*, (Tokyo: Meiji University, 2012) 192pp. ISSN 2185-6079 (pb).

[The series is available from Tousui Shobou publishers, Tokyo].

The three books form part of the Memory and Narrative Series published by Professor Kyotaka Sato of Meiji University, Tokyo. The purpose of this series is 'to enable the UK's many and various ethnic minority communities and indigenous groups to record and preserve their memories, life experiences and traditions, and to ensure access to this rich inheritance for present and future generations' (p3). The series presents a written version of the oral histories narrated to Professor Sato by interviewees, sometimes during multiple interviews over a period of several years. The people interviewed for each book narrate not only the reasons for their immigration to the UK but also their experiences of various aspects of life in a foreign country. Each book begins with a Foreword which outlines a precis of the life of the narrator. The Introduction gives some historical background; this helps give the reader some context to help them understand significant events in the narrator(s)' lives. For example, there is a short history of Sikhs in the Punjab, of the Sikh diaspora and the UK and in Leicester, and the expulsion of Asians from Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972.

These histories put into context the importance of religion and culture to the narrators of books 3 and 4 which are both about people who are Sikh, and who either emigrated from the Punjab for economic reasons following a Government call for Asians to come to work in Britain, for marriage, or were children of first generation immigrants and had grown up in Britain. In book 5, Jaffer Kapasi's story tells of colonial influences which brought his family from the Gujerat to Uganda and subsequent expulsion due to Governmental policies seeking to empower native Ugandans and redistribute wealth which had been accrued by Asians. Thus, colonial influences continued to affect Indians in India and Africa.

It is interesting that regardless of the reasons why the narrators came to Britain, their experiences are largely similar, often facing hardships due to low incomes, exacerbated or eased depending on their educational achievements and sometimes because racism prevented them from being given the better jobs like managerial posts. Some sought refuge in their culture and by living in proximity to other Asians who understood their ways rather than rejected them. Religion and culture has played an important role in their lives, and the creation of places

of worship became an important element of living in Leicester, regardless of whether they were gurudwaras or mosques. But not everyone wished to retain their Indian identity. Jasvir Chohan tells of cultural conflicts while growing up in Britain, and how she and her husband wanted to be more Westernised in their dress and culture. They returned to what she regarded as Indian culture and Sikhism later in life.

Despite the hardships the narrators faced, all three books show remarkable strength and resilience, a will to survive which helped them and their families through difficult times when jobs were denied them, or when whole populations were expelled from their country of residence or birth because of the colour of their skin, with nothing but what they could carry. The immigrants not only survived but became valuable members of society, receiving honours from the Queen and accolades in their fields of work or in their art, giving back locally, nationally and even internationally through their art or work in the gurudwaras, mosques, museums and other organisations which were created to improve the lives of not just Asians but all communities in Leicester and beyond.

Professor Sato presents the oral histories of the people he interviewed. Reading these books not only provides an insight into the immigrant experience of Indians in Leicester, but also likely experiences in other areas of Britain. The books often break the stereotypes of Asians. The narrators speak of growing up in Britain, of cultural conflicts and wanting Westernised lifestyles and the freedoms like having boyfriends or mixed marriages, of divorce and remarriage, but also of children bringing narrators back to their cultural roots instead of away from them. They speak of leaving their homelands, and those very places subsequently feeling familiar but foreign because Britain has become home. Jaffer Kapasi gives an insight into another immigrant experience, outlining how he and his family coped with being forcibly removed from their adopted homeland of Africa and then having to resettle and rebuild their lives in Britain. All the narrators speak of India or Africa no longer feeling like 'home'.

The issue of what is 'home' becomes relevant when the narrators' and their families' notion of 'home' changes over time and through generations. Over time they recognise that utopian place to be Britain, despite the pull of the Punjab or Uganda, and regardless of their cultural and religious practices or reasons for migration.

Some narrators show that their experiences of life were not only influenced by the host communities but by other communities too. Jasvir Chohan and Gurmit Kaur both talk about how the arrival of East African Asians affected them, and how many Punjabis felt that East African Asians seemed more removed from their Indian roots, particularly the women who were regarded as 'different' because they wore Western clothes and cut their hair. For some, these differences were liberating. Mrs. Kaur talks of how the East African women going out to work had a liberating influence on the Punjabi women who had previously been homemakers. Working women helped the men financially through increased family incomes.

There is some repetition when Professor Sato summarises findings then goes into detail in latter sections, but the appendices and photographs reinforce

the narratives. All three books show the give and take attitudes of the narrators' and other communities; not all experiences of the host community are cited as negative. It would be interesting to see whether the other books in this series show similar experiences, conflicts and attitudes regardless of narrators' countries of origin and religions.

Professor Sato uses primary source material as oral histories of Asians in Leicester. But the books do not present just the histories of the narrators. Much information is provided about other historical contexts to help Asian and non-Asian readers understand the narrators and their experiences better, such as: the political background on the expulsion of Asians from Uganda; a history of the Sikhs within a colonial context in the Punjab and as diaspora; and the Sikh religion and its dress, symbols and language. The informative local, regional and national maps, facts and figures also help readers to put the narratives into context. Without this additional information the full impact of the narratives and the histories contained within would be lost. As a result, the books would aid future critical studies of the Asian diaspora in the UK and beyond, whether of Sikhs from the Punjab or Gujarati Asians coming to Britain via Uganda. Thus, the books are so much more than the simple oral histories they may appear to be.

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Sheba Saeed, *Beggars of Lahore: A Film by Sheba Saeed*. (Asetikbird:ZerkZari Productions, 2010) £74.99 (institutional price); £24.99 (individual price).

This documentary film provides a contemporary examination of the sociology of begging in Pakistan's cultural capital and its second largest city. Whilst the focus is Lahore, the issues raised by the film are of relevance not only to the region of Punjab but also to similar urban locations across Pakistan and the Indian sub-continent in general. A central theme of the documentary centres upon the relationship between the prohibition and condemnation of begging in Islam, on the one hand, and the obligation of giving charity to the needy via alms and *zakat* on the other. The opening scene aptly highlights this tension by relaying an exchange between a beggar and a member of the public; the beggar is reproached by a passer-by for transgressing *shari'ah* and his response is an attempt to neutralise the gravity of his begging by contrasting it with banditry, stealing and looting.

The film prompts the audience through a series of points and questions for reflection, interspersed with snippets from video-interviews with beggars, politicians, activists, members of the public and representatives from non-governmental organisations. What the film lacks in technical polish it gains in informational and contextual depth. The audience is introduced to graphic images of beggars accompanied by an emotive score, many are disfigured, disabled or blind but it is largely left to the viewer to discern any significant differences between the varieties of behaviour which is encompassed by the

umbrella deviant term 'begging'. The beggars include those hawking goods or leading prancing animals; transvestites offering prayers for money or drug addicts begging to feed their addictions.

The views of non-beggars, namely the politicians, scholars and activists, swing from the condemnatory to sympathetic, whilst the specific issue of syndicate or organised begging occupies much of the discourse. Similarly, the film depicts the plight of children including specific interviews with practitioners of child protection. Where state and governmental policies are indicted for their failure, the work of some initiatives, such as by the Child Protection Bureau, indicate some positive inroads being made. Elsewhere, however there is criticism of the true impact of some non-governmental organisations who house their seminars on begging in five star hotels. This important theme, the stark difference between have and have nots, as demonstrated by poorly distributed gross domestic production per capita in Pakistan, is only fleetingly alluded to in the film. Certainly greater visual illustration of the extent of wealth disparities in Lahore would have enriched the arguments being presented here. Nevertheless, the film is important for a number of reasons which may not be obvious to scholars unfamiliar with fieldwork in Pakistan. Researchers and journalists need to contend with the social and religious prohibitions upon the use of photography in Pakistan, particularly of females (Baljon, 1994; Hayat, 2007). There is also the challenge of dealing with the sensitivities of capturing acts deemed as criminal and affording a degree of anonymity to the respondents. This fact may account for the delay between the year of interviews (2005) and year of production (2010). Furthermore, Pakistan has witnessed extensive incidents of domestic terrorism and remains a high crime environment which brings particular personal risks for researchers, journalists and travellers to the country (HRCP, 2012). Also, given that there are assertions implicating that the police and other officials play central roles in organised begging, the execution of a documentary highlighting this corruption comes with the specific risks of confiscation and censorship by the very same corrupt state representatives.

Becker asserts that researchers of deviance consciously or subconsciously adopt positions in terms of whether they are for the subordinates, the incarcerated or deviant or whether their work reflects the perspectives of the incarcerator, the law enforcer, the state (Becker, 1967). It is clear that Saeed's documentary is with the subordinate, highlighting the plight of the destitute albeit against a broader reflection of the macro geo-political factors which exacerbate this pervasive social problem. The documentary also serves to demonstrate the plurality of the phenomenon and the myopia of viewing begging as a homogenous phenomenon. For whom then would this documentary prove useful viewing? It is clear the film is a visual prompt to introduce rather than fully explore the phenomenon of begging in Pakistan. It works to highlight the polarisation and conflation the phenomenon evokes amongst politicians, activists and members of the public. Saeed should be applauded for her execution of a film about a controversial topic in a challenging social environment and most importantly for enabling the articulate and often very

moving voices of many beggars to be documented and heard.

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