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TRANSNATIONALISM, DIASPORA,
TRANSLATION

Comparing Punjabis and Hyderabadis
abroad

Themes and theories

Comparing the Punjabi diaspora to the US and the Hyderabad diaspora worldwide is more than an intellectual exercise investigating issues of transnationalism, cosmopolitanism and translation studies. An ethnographic comparison illuminates the ways in which migrants define and represent themselves and their experiences over time and in different contexts. Both diasporas represent the decline, at different points in time, of lingering Mughlai or Indo-Muslim societies in South Asia, I argue. The words and phrases used by immigrants show the disintegration of Punjabi and Hyderabad plural societies, and they also show slippages, or possible slippages, into communities narrowly based on religion. In both cases, the words used to identify and locate self and other in the shifting landscapes testify to significant translations.

The comparison is more than a two-way one, since both diasporas have internal contrasts as well. The Punjabi diaspora took place in two distinct historical periods. A few hundred speakers of the Punjabi language in India's northwestern region migrated to the United States in the early twentieth century, to be followed after the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act by many thousands of Punjabis. Followers of the Sikh religion were prominent in both movements, although the first diaspora consisted primarily of farmers, rural men who settled in the farming valleys of California and adjacent western states, while the second diaspora featured well-educated professional people moving in family units to cities all over the United States. The Hyderabadis too were internally differentiated. Hyderabadis is a name given chiefly to those from Hyderabad city who had been *mulkis* (countrymen) or citizens of the princely state ruled by the Nizam of Hyderabad, a state incorporated into independent India in 1948. Again there was an earlier diaspora, of Muslims to Pakistan in 1947–48, followed by another, beginning in the 1960s, of emigrants to the United States and elsewhere. These later Hyderabad migrants came from many religious backgrounds (Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Parsi and Christian), although, like the

post-1965 Punjabis, those moving to the western nations were primarily middle- and upper-class professional families.

To capture the meanings of these diasporas and compare them to each other, certain theoretical insights have been crucial. To translate well, Gayatri Spivak believes, the translator must try to grasp the writer's presuppositions. Following her teacher Jacques Derrida, she calls for 'entering the protocols of a text – not the general laws of the language, but the laws specific to this text' (Spivak 2005, 94). Spivak writes of the difficulties of translating a Bengali language prevalent before her time, a language replete with Arabic and Persian words and resonances. Arabic and Persian were the languages of the courts and of law in the late Mughal empire and the corresponding Nawabate in Bengal, and traces of them lingered in the Bangla of the Bangladeshi activist-poet Farhad Mazhar's *Ashmoyer Noteboi* (*Untimely Notebook*), a text Spivak is translating into English. She reflects on societal and linguistic changes under British rule in the eighteenth century, as 'the fashioners of the new Bengali prose purged the language of the Arabic-Persian content until . . . a Sanskritized Bengali emerged' (98). She notes that a corresponding movement to purge Arabic-Persian elements from India's national language, Hindi, followed India's independence in 1947 and that there is a move under way to restore those components to Bangla, the national language of Bangladesh. She reviews the name changes of the Bangla/Bengali language and its homelands under British and Pakistani rule and under the modern Indian and Bangladeshi nation-states.¹ Spivak ends her essay by writing briefly of being the 'original' of a translation and the importance of entering the author's presuppositions as she approaches his text.²

Like Spivak, other authors emphasize translation as a process, one that looks to societies evolving over time or, more disruptively, located not only in different times but in different places. To write well about people migrating, James Clifford believes, one needs to know the markings of their places of origin, the 'peculiar allegiances and alienations' associated with their homelands (1989, 185). These markings would be remembered, rejected or reinvented to suit the destinations of the migrants; they would be, in other words, translated, and the receiving society would help determine the translations. Rey Chow called translation 'the traffic between two languages', a process that calls for the re-examination of the notion of the original and its derivations (1995, 183–84). Such a process would honor the receiving language and its meanings at least equally. Sandra Bermann writes that 'translation is a temporal art, one that can contribute to the action of history itself, and to the ongoing 'conversation' that gives it a meaning and a future' (2005, 272).

The reflections of Ulf Hannerz (1992), Jonathan Friedmann (1997) and Pnina Werbner (1999) on migration and citizenship offer transitions from literary issues to issues of migration and immigration. Hannerz, Friedmann and Werbner provide useful definitions of cosmopolitanism and transnationalism. Cosmopolitans are people who familiarize themselves with other cultures and know how to move easily between cultures, while transnationals are people who, while moving, build encapsulated cultural worlds around themselves, most typically worlds circumscribed by religious or family ties.³ One might liken these to more and less successful processes of translation, or, alternatively, processes of translation that do not or do narrowly emphasize religion, one's own religion, as a core element of identity in the diaspora.

I turn again to Gayatri Spivak to explain the two ways in which I am using religion in this article. Spivak, speaking about the Bengali saint Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, states: 'Islam took its place among his imaginings and his iterations of the self . . . these moves acknowledged the imperative to translate rather than its denial for the sake of identity' (2005, 103). I see an openness to other religions, a willingness to 'translate' in the sense Spivak indicates, as an indicator of cosmopolitanism, while the denial of such translation emphasizes one's own religion, circumscribes one's identity as in the definition of transnationalism above.

How would one analyze early and post-1965 Punjabi immigrants to the United States, and Hyderabad immigrants to Pakistan, the United States and elsewhere, with respect to cosmopolitanism or transnationalism? What is the role of religion in these analyses, principally from the perspectives of the Punjabis and Hyderabadis themselves? In the cases of the early-twentieth-century emigrants from the Punjab and the late-twentieth-century emigrants from Hyderabad State, people were leaving regional cultural syntheses or composite cultures that were breaking down. These cultural syntheses were based on the Punjabi and Urdu languages, languages that, like Spivak's Bengali text, still strongly reflected traces of Indo-Muslim or Mughlai culture. Religious differences were less important than linguistic commonalities in India's late-nineteenth-century Punjab and in mid-twentieth-century Hyderabad, a princely state and the last outpost of Mughlai culture in India.⁴

Religion and society are related rather differently in the new social formations of these Punjabi and Hyderabad diasporas. I argue that the earlier Punjabi Sikhs were part of a cosmopolitan Punjabi diaspora, but that today the tendency to emphasize the Sikh religion narrows the migrants' identity and provokes intra-Sikh conflict that continues to orient migrants strongly to the homeland. The Hyderabadis were and are cosmopolitan, largely due to the persisting Indo-Muslim culture of the princely state and, in the diaspora, the necessary interaction with coreligionists of very diverse origins and the plural nature of Islam's legal traditions. Further, the Hyderabadis from India have been more cosmopolitan than those who have moved via Pakistan, due to the latter's having become citizens of a more overtly religious state than either India or the United States.⁵

The importance of religion to these four sets of immigrants (Punjabi, Sikh, Pakistani Hyderabad and Indian Hyderabad) differed and differs. In both the Punjabi and Hyderabad cultures and their reformulations in the diaspora, religion has become more central to at least some of the more organized or vocal groups among the post-1965 immigrants abroad than it had been in the homelands. Since religion in the diaspora is a very broad topic, this discussion will focus on law, on efforts to relate religious law and authorities in the homelands to religious law and authorities in the diaspora communities. Religious law and the exercise of religious authority are important domains for both the post-1965 Punjabi Sikh and Hyderabad Muslim immigrants. In fact, the more conspicuously religious orientation among Pakistani Hyderabadis, combined with the dominance of Hyderabad Associations formed in North America by Muslims from Hyderabad's former ruling class, presents the Hyderabad diaspora, like the Punjabi one, with the possibility of being pushed in a narrower religious direction; it is in danger of being misperceived as a Muslim diaspora.

Punjabi diasporas

The so-called Punjabi or Sikh diaspora, as the alternative names indicate, are really two. A Punjabi diaspora flourished in the early twentieth century in California but was interrupted and then renewed in a very different way after 1965. The two diasporas featured radically different understandings of the migrating group and its identity abroad. The first Punjabi diaspora reflected the Punjab's late-nineteenth-century plural society, where occupation and language were more important than religion.⁶ In India's Punjab, the homeland culture was breaking down primarily because of political pressures stemming from colonial rule and missionary activities in the late nineteenth century. The Singh Sabha movement, its groups competing with each other, tried to dominate Sikh discourse at the end of the nineteenth century, but before that, 'Sanatan Sikhs' were known for their pluralistic approach and often allied with Hindus and Aryas. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the centralizing Chief Khalsa Diwan dominated Sikh politics. Its leaders, drawn from business, the professions and the intellectual elite, used Punjabi and English to reach new audiences. It promoted a Sikh identity based on *amritdhari* (initiated, observing the 5 Ks) leadership but tried to compromise with narrower Tat Khalsa (Lahore's Singh Sabha) attempts to purify Sikhism of western and Hindu influences.⁷ Hindus, Christians and Ahmadiyya and other Muslims conducted fierce religious and social reform debates in the Punjab, and the Indian nationalist movement gathered momentum in the early twentieth century.

The Punjabis who emigrated while these struggles were going on, however, were relatively uneducated farmers, and the traces they carried were those of the disintegrating plural society. Common languages, spoken Punjabi and written Urdu, linked them; Urdu was the language (written in Arabic/Persian script) on the gravestones of Punjabi Muslims buried in California's farm towns, in what were termed 'Hindu' plots in the cemeteries (below). These men gave up the use of external religious markers, notably the beard and turban worn by some Sikhs, since those markers were negatively received in the American West.

Most significantly, the early Punjabi immigrants were called Hindus, a term now used primarily in a religious sense but then used to mean someone from Hindustan or India. Since the name was not understood as a divisive or religious one by either the American public or the Punjabis themselves, and since a shared language and peasant status were more important in both Indian and American contexts at that time, the early pioneers also called themselves Hindus. This was somewhat surprising since almost 90% of the Punjabi pioneers were Sikhs, a religion self-consciously differentiating itself from Hinduism since late medieval times in India. Yet in interview after interview in my research in the 1980s and 1990s on the Punjabi men married to Mexican and Mexican-American women in California's Imperial Valley, speakers used Hindu simply to mean someone from India.⁸ (That was the meaning to English-speakers in Australia and New Zealand as well in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and it is still the primary meaning for Spanish-speakers.) The early pioneers were called Hindus and their families, their wives and children, were called Mexican Hindus. These usages characterized all the Punjabis and their descendants until the 1947 partition of India, when the term Spanish Pakistani was invented for Muslim pioneers from what had become Pakistan and their families.

Although political events since 1947 have pushed Punjabis from both India and Pakistan to emphasize religious differences in the diaspora and many newer immigrants have adopted external religious markers, 'Hindu' continues to designate people from South Asia in California's farming valleys. Non-Indian residents and descendants of the pioneers alike distinguish between 'old Hindus' and 'new Hindus', the old Punjabis and the post-1965 newcomers from both India and Pakistan. People have recently become aware of the term's religious meaning, but they use 'Hindu' in both senses. I remember sitting in the bar of a steakhouse in El Centro with the owner, Omar Deen, son of a Punjabi Muslim and a woman from Mexico. Omar spoke Spanish and English and was a Catholic; he had named the steakhouse Chavella's (the nickname for Isabella) for his Mexican American wife. He told me proudly, 'My dad was a Hindu; he came from the Poonjab. His name was Mohammed Deen, and I'm a Hindu too.' Others of the second generation told me they were 'Catholic and Sikh' or 'Catholic and Muslim', contending, as their fathers had done, that all religions ultimately addressed a single divine force or figure.

The third generation was at an even greater diasporic distance from the Punjab. When I spoke at the Holtville Rotary Club about Punjabi history and the immigrants to the Imperial Valley (the son of a Punjabi Sikh father and a Mexican American mother had asked me to talk about 'how the Sikhs beat the British', itself a mistranslation), another speaker at the meeting was the granddaughter of an early Punjabi-Mexican couple. I'll call her Jennifer Singh, and after my talk she excitedly accosted me. 'I know I'm a Hindu, and I'm proud of that,' she said, 'but I didn't know about those three religions. Tell me, was my grandfather a Sikh, Muslim or Hindu?' She bore a name that clearly identified her as the descendant of a Sikh in India's religious landscape, but she did not know its meaning.⁹

I remember vividly the strong reaction to my paper about the Mexican-Hindus at the 1986 Sikh Diaspora Conference at Ann Arbor, Michigan; that first reaction was denial. This was a surprising and shocking usage to new western-educated immigrants from the Punjab and to Punjabi Sikhs in India. By the last decades of the twentieth century, Punjabi Sikhs everywhere knew that the majority of the Punjabi pioneers in the American West had been Sikhs (some 85–90%), and they had recast the diaspora as a Sikh diaspora (as the conference title attests). They viewed it through late-twentieth-century lenses heavily tinted by the Khalistan and tensions among Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus in South Asia. When I spoke about the Mexican Hindus or Punjabi Mexicans in Amritsar at Guru Nanak Dev University in 1991, a young man with beard and turban rebuked me fiercely: 'Madam, they could not have let themselves be called Hindus, and they could not have called their *gurdwara* in Stockton a temple, temples are for Hindus.' But I had a 1947 photograph with me showing the Stockton building with its sign reading 'Sikh Temple'. (Also, we were sitting in a classroom near Amritsar's Golden Temple, but no one thought of that.)

The Punjabi pioneers, most among them Sikhs, were cosmopolitans. People speak of their fathers, themselves, and others as Hindus quite naturally in Jayasri Hart Majumdar's film, *Roots in the Sand*, made in 1995. Although the pioneer Sikhs had discarded the external markers so meaningful in India, they had not discarded their religion. Rather, they maintained that external markers were unimportant, that religion was in the heart, and they honored each other's religions as well as the Christian faiths followed by their wives and children. Arguably, the religious

pluralism still lingering at the time of the early Punjabi immigrations abroad has given way to a narrow transnationalism in the late twentieth century, an emphasis on the Sikh religion at home and in the diaspora for the sake of identity.

The American legal system plays a role in the post-1965 reframing of the Punjabi diaspora as a Sikh diaspora by western-educated, professional immigrants. It also offers a mode of recognition, and while the early Punjabis used it for farming and domestic disputes, the post-1965 Sikhs have used the American legal system to establish independence from religious authorities in the homeland and to adjudicate disputes over control of *gurdwaras* in America. These recent legal assertions of identity fit the transnational rather than the cosmopolitan model and are discussed further below, along with the role of religious law in the Hyderabad diasporas.

Hyderabad diasporas

The Hyderabad diasporas are closer in time than the two Punjabi ones, but they too reflect distinctly different understandings of the group and its identity.¹⁰ The Nizam's state continued to represent and practice Mughlai culture in significant ways into the mid-twentieth century. The ruling class was multi-religious but predominantly Muslim; it was also explicitly cosmopolitan, viewing Hyderabad as a cultural or Deccani synthesis (Hyderabad is on the Deccan plateau), with Persian as the state language until 1883 and Urdu thereafter.¹¹ Some Hyderabad Muslims migrated to Pakistan in 1947, when India and Pakistan became independent, or in 1948, when the Indian Army incorporated Hyderabad State into India. However, most Hyderabadis emigrated beginning in the 1960s. Then the linguistic states reorganization of 1956 trifurcated the old state into three new linguistic states. Hyderabad city became the capital of the newly drawn Telugu-speaking state of Andhra Pradesh and Telugu-speaking politicians from the formerly British colonial districts seized political power. These ruptures, along with pulls from the global economy, have stimulated Hyderabadis of all religious, linguistic and class backgrounds to study, work and eventually settle abroad.

In research done from 1990 to 2005 on Hyderabadis moving to Pakistan, the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States, Canada, and the Persian Gulf states of Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, I focused on those primarily urban residents of the old Nizam's state or their descendants, those who knew Urdu and once thought of themselves as *mulkis* or countrymen of the old Hyderabad State. (New Hyderabadis or Andhras have a very different concept of themselves and their culture.) These old Hyderabadis are now emigrating from both India and Pakistan, sometimes by way of other places, and the narratives they take with them differ. The assimilative powers of Indian and Pakistani national print cultures and educational projects have pulled the old Hyderabad narrative in at least two different directions. Once in Pakistan, Hyderabadis were subjected to increasingly militant Islamic national projects and practices, reinforcing their inclination to see their pasts and presents quite differently in the diaspora than do those from India.

Yet first-generation Hyderabad emigrants from both Pakistan and India still used the old terms *mulki* and *non-mulki*, countryman and non-countryman, for themselves and others. These had been meaningful because *mulkis* had preferential access to some

resources, notably positions in the administration; as *mulkis* or citizens, people had claims on the state. In the diaspora, these terms preserved a sociopolitical distinction that no longer served any purpose, one without a future. The prevalent greeting in Hyderabad had been *adab*, or respects, a greeting that was used by Muslims, Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs and Christians alike. In the diaspora, identities have become more heavily influenced by religion, and many now say ‘salam aleikum’, or ‘namaste’, indicating Muslim or Hindu religious affiliation. Many other first-generation Hyderabadis abroad insist on saying *adab arz* (respects) and identifying themselves with the cultural synthesis imputed to the former Hyderabad State.

Those Hyderabadis coming to the United States directly from India, or via the Gulf, the United Kingdom, Canada or Australia, include Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs and Christians, and they present variations on the most commonly accepted narrative about the princely state as a cultural synthesis, a successful plural society.¹² That narrative remains central to the family histories given by older immigrants. They might reconstruct the narrative in varying ways, even dispute it, but they still display some degree of loyalty to a state that they viewed as equal to British India and relatively free from communal tensions.¹³ Indian Hyderabadis in the United States continue to use the term *mulki* as a meaningful social category, but they do not use it for those twice-migrants from Pakistan, saying they do not know what to call them. Many proudly proclaim old Hyderabad a model for all of India and point to the innovative Urdu-medium Osmania University’s pioneering role in the development of vernacular education for the masses in the early twentieth century. The first-generation immigrants share a love of Urdu language and literature, a love that links or relinks them to Hyderabadis from Pakistan. Hyderabadis from the former ruling class especially privilege that version of the past based on hierarchies of both caste and class.¹⁴

In the diaspora, the place of Islam and Muslims in the former state proved the most contentious issue, one that dates back to politics in the 1930s and 1940s and continues into the diaspora. Religion had not been emphasized in the traditional narrative; although the synthesis narrative depended upon overcoming religious and linguistic differences, these were seldom made explicit. The upper classes among the Anglo Indian Christians and the Hindus did not view Hyderabad as an Islamic state, yet they sometimes emphasized their attachment to what they termed ‘the Muslim side’ of traditional Hyderabad society. They meant culture, not religion, the Indo-Muslim or Mughlai culture of the ruling class that dominated the schools most important in shaping the lasting friendship networks I observed. Even the Australian principal of St. George’s Grammar School, a leading modern educational institution in Hyderabad, had to know Hyderabad Urdu and Mughlai culture.¹⁵ Unlike high-class Anglo Indians employed in the military or educational institutions who spoke fondly of the Nizam, the Anglo Indians from the lower classes, for example those who worked on the railway, spoke more often of the British Resident, seeing the shadow of the colonial power behind the Nizam’s throne buttressing their position in Hyderabad State. Similarly, perhaps, the shadow of an Islamic state behind the Nizam’s throne seemed empowering to lower class Muslims, a shadow emerging into full view overseas and embodied in Muslim organizations and institutions being built by pan-ethnic Muslim populations in western sites like the United States. Engineers, doctors, computer programmers, and the like tend to lead these pan-ethnic organizations and institutions.

In contrast, those Hyderabadis coming to the United States after years in Pakistan espoused fairly drastic reinterpretations of the 'cultural synthesis' narrative. They were unsettled, having moved to Pakistan as *mulkis* and immediately being relabeled *muhajirs*, meaning refugees or exiles. 'How could we be exiles, coming to our homeland?' one asked plaintively. Those who migrated to Pakistan invoked Islam to challenge the dominant narrative, remembering Hyderabad as either a successful or failed Islamic state.¹⁶

This slippage toward a religious identity, this translation, suits some migrants. The version of Hyderabad as a failed Islamic state paradoxically has inspired some Hyderabadis, primarily from Pakistan but some from India, to take on a stronger Muslim identity in the United States. This has meant external markers, the beard for men and the *hijab* for women, and membership in mosques and Muslim organizations. Even as minorities in predominantly Christian countries, they say, religious freedom permits them to be better Muslims, to free their religion of the taint of Hindu practices. They are often willing to give up Urdu and transmit Islam primarily in English. (I have heard comparable Sikh narratives.) These Hyderabad Muslim stress Islamic ideals and build alliances with other Muslims in the United States, African Americans and Arabs, distancing themselves from other Hyderabadis who organize primarily on the basis of culture or language.

Unsurprisingly, the nostalgic, plural society interpretations are usually held by those Indian Hyderabadis best placed in both old and new societies, while the interpretations stressing Islam are usually held by those from Pakistan and those from India perhaps less well placed in both old and new societies but with professional or scientific degrees. (The educational backgrounds of the recent Sikh immigrants who are most active in religious activities and institutions seem similar.) These 'Islamic twists' to the Hyderabad narrative have also found places in some Hyderabad Associations, with religiosity being expressed through increased adoption of external markers and public observance of religious occasions.

But members of the second generation hardly identify as Hyderabadis and never as *mulkis*.¹⁷ In Pakistan, the second and third generations call themselves Pakistanis, Lahoris or Karachiites. When I went to one home looking for a Hyderabad man with a certain name, I was received by his son. But the son was puzzled. 'Oh,' he said, 'that is my name, but I'm not a Hyderabad. You must be looking for my father, we have the same name.' Another member of the second generation told me confidently that Hyderabad city had become the capital of Maharashtra, mislocating it in the Marathi-speaking, not Telugu-speaking, state; like Jennifer Singh above, this speaker was completely ignorant of the social landscape of his ancestral homeland. In fact, speaking Hyderabad Urdu in Pakistan was a negative identity marker, and no Hyderabad Association was formed there.

There were Hyderabad Associations in many of the other destination countries, but to some of the immigrants, religious associations have become more meaningful. Hyderabad Associations founded to promote the Deccani cultural synthesis now typically commemorate the Muslim Ids as non-Muslim members fall away. Languages, greetings and external markings change to mark these shifting identities. Religion had been more private than public in the Nizam's Hyderabad, and many people participated in public religious festivals across religious boundaries. But among Muslims in the diaspora, some men have grown beards and some women now wear a *hijab*;

among Hindus, some patronize newly established temples, and so on. Members of the second generation cannot follow Urdu, and identify themselves as Indian or Pakistani, not Hyderabad, and they may argue for wearing clothing quite different from that of their parents. In Australia, a young Hyderabad Muslim thought her parents were silly to restrict their potluck social meetings to others from Hyderabad; she wanted her girlfriend's family from Bombay to be included. She also wanted to wear midriff-baring tops, likening them to sari blouses as she argued with her mother that neither was Islamic but either could legitimately be worn.¹⁸

The State, religion and law

The role of the state has been implicit but central in the discussion of the homelands from which Punjabi and Hyderabad immigrants emigrated. British India in the late nineteenth century, the Nizam's state of Hyderabad in the first half of the twentieth century, and independent India and Pakistan in the late twentieth century were very different contexts. Yet there were similarities. I have argued that late-nineteenth-century Punjab and early-twentieth-century Hyderabad were still plural societies characterized by Mughlai culture and the Urdu language, and emigrants carried reflections of those abroad. In contrast, the modern independent South Asian nations have increasingly highlighted religious identities and conflicts at both national and regional levels.

The roles of the state and of religion in the civic arena in the United States, the receiving nation chiefly considered here, have also changed over the course of the twentieth century. Euro-American Protestantism, male-dominated, prevailed from the founding of the country. During the twentieth century, Catholics and Jews became part of the mainstream religious culture, the national civil religion.¹⁹ The ideological and organizational nature of the American religious landscape has changed significantly in recent decades. First, denominations, so important in the mainline Anglo-Saxon Protestant world, have become less significant as people become more highly educated, intermarry and move to new neighborhoods with different local churches. Christians now change their denominational or church affiliations relatively easily. Second, despite male domination of religious structures and dialogues, arguably it is women who constitute the majority of participants in American Christian religious activities and institutions, and women have increasingly exercised moral authority in religious and civic institutions. Third, even as denominations have declined, special-purpose religious groups organized along conservative and liberal lines have developed, leading to the passionate mobilization of new coalitions on issues in the public arena like homosexuality and abortion. Fourth, the public dimensions of religious culture in America, despite the separation of church and state, have grown in importance, as specialists in religious studies and American history testify.²⁰

The Punjabi pioneers and earlier Hyderabad immigrants (many men who came before 1970 married exogamously, like the early Punjabis) did not identify primarily as Sikhs or Muslims. By the late twentieth century, however, America's religious landscape had encouraged more overtly political understandings of religion and may be helping to push Sikhs and Muslims toward religious identities. Religious beliefs and practices are clearly often central to immigrants' lives, confirming the failure of the secularization paradigm that informed recent decades of social science research and encouraged scholars of migration to overlook religion in

their inquiries.²¹ Sikhs and Muslims alike increasingly use external markers and the legal system to achieve recognition as well as to resolve internal conflicts.

Religion in the diaspora is a broad topic, so I focus here on religious law and its sources of authority in the homelands and in the diasporas. Writing about the translatability of law, Pierre Legrand (2005, 37) states:

What happens when a legal rule is formulated or reformulated in one legal culture on the basis of a legal rule prevailing in another is, indeed, closely analogous to the act of literary translation. In both instances, texts are intentional and relational. In both instances, the meaning of the original is assumed not to reside wholly within the original itself. In both instances, there are silences to be addressed.

However, the effort to invoke religious law in the diaspora is not just an exercise in textual movement and translation but one involving institutional structures and electoral politics that change its meaning and practice in the new context. Sikhs and Muslims alike have followed American laws concerning tax-exempt, nonprofit religious institutions, setting up *gurdwaras* and mosques with constitutions governing decision-making processes and dues-paying congregations (Barrier 2002, 31–32; Leonard 2003, 107–08). Legal incorporation involves concepts of membership and participation different from those that prevailed in the homelands. Constitutions, by-laws, and, in the case of most *gurdwaras*, financial requirements for leadership roles set frameworks for competition and conflict as often as for harmonious observance of religious rituals by a newly constituted congregation.

Religious law and attempts to use it to control communities in the diaspora both locally and from abroad are important to the post-1965 Punjabi Sikh and Hyderabad Muslim immigrants, the groups possibly slipping into more narrowly religious, transnational identities. Religious law was not important to the pioneer Punjabis, whose religious differences were bridged by farming partnerships and marriage or godparent relationships. Most commonly, this meant Mexican or Mexican American sisters whose husbands included Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, and perhaps Mexican Catholics as well, thereby constituting sets of men related by marriage. Men also served as godfathers in the Catholic Church to each other's children without regard for religious differences among themselves. Legal traditions and customs grounded in Sikhism, Hinduism, Islam and Catholicism were often transgressed or ignored (godfathers should be Catholic). The British Indian legal system had prepared these early immigrants to deal with American laws governing property leasing and ownership and economic relations, however, and the pioneer Punjabis engaged heavily in such litigation. They also used the courts for divorce cases and to obtain guardianship of their children, the latter a strategy to continue farming by evading the Alien Land Law. Rarely did a legal case in America refer back to India, although in a few cases a spouse or relative in the Punjab applied to inherit property in California's farming valleys upon the death of a Punjabi in America.

Among the post-1965 Sikh immigrants, American law is being actively deployed and the focus now is most often control of *gurdwaras*. Increasing struggles since the late 1970s in the Punjab over leadership of the Akal Takht (traditional center of Sikh temporal authority in Amritsar) and the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (the SGPC, the major Sikh religious and political body) find echoes and influences

in the diaspora, not least in North America (Barrier 2002). Whether Sikhs are *amritdhari*, *keshadhari* or *sahajdhari* (those who have been initiated, those who keep the hair long and wear a turban but may not have been initiated, or those who follow the gurus and Granth Sahib but do not maintain the 5 Ks), whether they are Jats, Khatri or Chuhra, whether they are Doaba or Malwa, all these religious, caste and regional distinctions as well as new socioeconomic ones based on status in America influence *gurdwara* governance. Conflicts often center on the appropriate sources of religious authority, such as *hukmnamas* or pronouncements from the Akal Takht *jathedar* or head, the *Rahit Maryada* (a document detailing Sikh rituals and ways of life emerging from the Singh Sabha movement) as promulgated by the SGPC, or the use of *panj piarie* or five outside referees to mediate local disputes.²² American legal decisions usually find that Sikh *gurdwaras* have historically been decentralized and are not subject to authorities based in Amritsar. As Legrand's words above anticipate, Sikh and secular scholars alike must deal with 'silences to be addressed', domains in which the 'original' may not speak or speak easily to issues encountered abroad; the meanings of the *Rahit Maryada*, for instance, are not settled in the Punjab either.²³

Legal conflicts engaging Sikh authorities in India and the diaspora go beyond *gurdwara* governance. In 2004, while NRI or non-Resident Indian Sikhs wanted to be represented on the SGPC, the SGPC decided that Sikh clergy could no longer go on foreign tours without SGPC clearance.²⁴ In 2005, the Akal Takht *jathedar* sent word opposing the Canadian Parliament's legalization of same-sex marriage, but the World Sikh Organization of Canada testified in favor of the Civil Marriage Act, presenting itself as a nonprofit human rights organization taking a pluralistic approach. The WSO, representing over 60 Canadian Sikh societies and organizations, explicitly opposed the *jathedar's sangresh* or admonition, carefully pointing out that it was not a *hukmnama*.²⁵ Perhaps the strongest conflicts have focused on women's roles, with diaspora Sikhs from the United Kingdom and the United States generally supporting proposals of the SGPC in 2005 increasing the participation of *amritdhari* Sikh women in ceremonies and services; the proposals were rejected by all five priests of the Golden Temple and were referred to the Akal Takht *jathedar*.²⁶

Among Hyderabad Muslims, similarly, legal questions arise about the interpretation and application of *sharia* or Islamic law in the diaspora countries where Muslims are in a minority. Yet Hyderabad Muslims in the United States (and in Australia, Britain and Canada) always must interact with many other kinds of Muslims, primarily ones from Arabic-speaking countries and from African-American convert communities, along with other South Asian Muslims. In the United States, indigenous African-American Muslims are the biggest single group, followed by South Asians and then Arabs, but religious and political associations trying to build coalitions deal with many other national origin and sectarian groups (Leonard 2003). This is very different from the situation among the Sikhs, where disputes draw on differences among Sikhs from the Punjab and negotiate a transnational arena of religious interpretation and practice; the small white Sikh convert population, small in numbers, does not play much of a role. In addition, there are four major schools of Sunni jurisprudence, one of Shia jurisprudence, and legal traditions transmitted by authoritative *imams* like the Aga Khan or the Ithna Ashari Shia *maraji* (religious and judicial authorities). Issues of religious law are far more complex, more

wide-ranging, for Hyderabad Muslims than for Sikhs, where the more bounded field of legal sources and participants probably makes the contests more bitter.

Like Sikhs, Muslims in America also are concerned with legal conflicts focused on women's roles in the religion. However, Hyderabad Muslims engage with Muslims from many backgrounds in these conflicts and the sources of law are also strikingly cosmopolitan. The so-called gender *jihad* based in North America features leading figures from both immigrant and indigenous Muslim backgrounds.²⁷ The gender *jihad* is an important strand in an emerging cosmopolitan Islam in the United States, one that is being produced by *fiqh* specialists and other scholars and perhaps best exemplified by *Progressive Muslims* (Safi 2003).²⁸ Scholars and activists are trying to distinguish between positively valued hybridity and dangerous or transgressive hybridity, issues discussed for Muslims by Pnina Werbner²⁹ and for Sikhs by N. Gerald Barrier.³⁰ Much of the conflict over the roles of women in both private and public Sikh and Muslim arenas in the United States could be discussed in this framework and that of translation studies, with external markers and legal systems being deployed to achieve recognition in new contexts.

The points made briefly here about religion and religious law in the diaspora for both Sikhs and Muslims reinforce those made about the early and later Sikhs and, to some extent, about the Indian and Pakistani Hyderabadis. Transnationalism is the antithesis of cosmopolitanism and these various strands of Punjabi and Hyderabad diasporas exemplify one or the other in ways that may appear surprising. I have argued that the earlier, rural, and less educated Punjabis were more cosmopolitan than the later, more educated Punjabis, and that Hyderabadis from India are more cosmopolitan than those from Pakistan, although both sets of Hyderabadis shared a cosmopolitan origin. I have stressed religion and religious law as aids to the denial rather than the translation of plural society or cosmopolitan identities from the Punjabi and Hyderabad pasts.

Notes

- 1 See Venuti's discussion of translation strategies affiliated with national discourses, of dialects that have gained acceptance as standard dialects or national languages (2005, 180).
- 2 This Bengali book of poetry by Benoy Majumdar, *Phire Esho Chaka (Come Back Wheel)* is dedicated to Gayatri Chakravorty in its 1961 and 1962 editions and retitled *Gayatrike (To Gayatri)* in a facsimile edition published in 2002. Apparently addressed to her former self, 'a famously beautiful student of English literature at Presidency College' in 1959, Majumdar's work sets Spivak in a particular place and time. Although he may have 'prefigured predicaments' and counseled ways to avert them, the poet lost sight of the Gayatri Chakravorty who moved on, who became and is still becoming a very different person in her own perception and that of others. Spivak 2005, 105–06, quote from n.31, 110.
- 3 Werbner 1999, 19–20. Hannerz defines cosmopolitans as 'willing to engage with the Other' and transnationals as frequent travellers who carry with them meanings embedded in social networks (Hannerz 1992, 252). Friedman shows the encapsulation of cosmopolitans as well (Friedman 1997, 84–85).

- 4 Mir's 2005 article on late-nineteenth-century Punjabi society evokes that declining Indo-Muslim culture; see also Leonard 2007, and earlier writings about Hyderabad State unlisted here.
- 5 The cosmopolitanism of India and the United States, particularly with respect to religion, seems questionable, but there is no space to examine the decline of secularism and the rise of Hinduism and Christianity respectively in the civic religious spheres in the two nations.
- 6 David Gilmartin (1988, 30) quotes British officials asserting that 'tribe', by which they often meant caste, rather than religion was at the heart of rural Punjabi identity.
- 7 The 5 Ks are the external markers of initiated Sikhs: carrying a knife or kirpar, a comb, and an iron bracelet, wearing cotton underclothes, and having uncut hair (usually covered by a turban). See Barrier 2003.
- 8 The material in this and following paragraphs comes from Leonard 1992.
- 9 One might say, following Maxine Hong Kingston's final sentence in *Woman Warrior* (1976), it had not translated well (but it had, according to Spivak 2005, 103, below).
- 10 Most of the following material comes from Leonard 2007.
- 11 The Indian nationalist movement finally pushed into the princely state in the 1930s, but the 1947 partition of British India into India and Pakistan left Hyderabad still undecided and isolated, its ruling class presiding over a predominantly Hindu peasantry. The Indian Army incorporated Hyderabad State into the Indian Union in 1948, an abrupt military takeover that changed Urdu to Hindi as the state language immediately. Most of Hyderabad's Muslims stayed in India, but self-selected migrants who wanted to live in a Muslim majority state moved to Pakistan.
- 12 See Leonard 1973; Butt 1990; Sirajuddin 1990.
- 13 The Hyderabadis from India tended to celebrate the Hyderabad culture of the past and they also saw an ongoing Hyderabad cultural synthesis as useful in the public arena, analogous to notions of secular pluralism. This activist stance also played a role in the rhetoric of many Hyderabad Associations. The cultural synthesis model was used, too, by Hyderabadis working to build multicultural alliances, like political coalitions with other South Asians, religious interfaith efforts, or professional coalitions.
- 14 As Andrew Shryock wrote about an aspiring historian of the Beduoin tribes in Jordan, 'Muhammad is a victim of the *real historical power* of the 'Adwan [his own tribe]. His identity is firmly grounded in the shaykhly era, and the memory of local might – now reduced to a kind of haughty nostalgia – makes new identities hard to imagine in any terms other than loss' (Shryock 1996, 39). Shryock discusses, here and in his 1997 book, identities based on received versions of particular tribal histories that conflict with other versions and with new, modern assimilative languages of identity circulating in print culture and at the level of the nation-state. Like Shryock, I collected oral materials often based on genealogical notions of transmission and authenticity.
- 15 The Reverend Bellingham said he had to understand Urdu slang and profanities in order to discipline students, when I interviewed him in retirement in Sydney, Australia.
- 16 One version was that Hyderabad was really an Islamic state all along and the cultural synthesis was a myth (a view also voiced by some non-Muslims). The more popular Pakistani version was that Hyderabad was a failed Islamic state and that the cultural synthesis, while real, evidenced the Nizam's failure to establish a truly Islamic state.

- 17 Members of the first generation discuss *mulkis* and *non-mulkis* to differentiate among themselves in Pakistan and, in the diaspora, to show their knowledge of old Hyderabad society.
- 18 Clothing is easily read as translations and contested in some contexts: for example, saris in Pakistan read as affection for India, midriff-baring tops in Australia read as unIslamic immodesty.
- 19 Some have written about this in terms of race: how the Irish became white, how the Jews became white: Ignatiev 1995, Brodtkin 1998. Others have written about it in terms of economic and social strategies: Catholic immigrants built a separate subculture which became strong enough to earn recognition and political power, while Jewish immigrants empowered themselves through mainstream educational institutions to achieve recognition and respect: Casanova 1994.
- 20 For fuller discussions, see Wuthnow 1988, and Tweed 1997, especially Braude's article in it.
- 21 See Warner and Wittner 1998; Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000; and Leonard et al. 2005.
- 22 See Barrier 2002 for significant court cases, and Barrier 2004b for the burgeoning Internet discussion groups of legal and other identity issues in India and abroad.
- 23 Legal matters in India continue to engage Sikhs: the Akal Takht *jathedar's* interference in the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management committee was rejected in February 2006. More significantly, the Indian Supreme Court in August 2005, as part of a ruling against a Bombay High court order asking that the Union Government notify Jains as a minority community, opined that Sikhs and Jains were part of the wider Hindu community. This renewal of an old conflict has brought strong replies from Sikh institutions and organizations.
- 24 *India Journal*, 23 July 23 2004, A34; *India Journal*, 8 October 2004, A30.
- 25 I thank N. Gerald Barrier for forwarding to me materials from the Internet about this.
- 26 London Sikh women tried to perform service in the Golden Temple in 2003: Vijaya Pushkarna, in *India-West*, 21 March 2003; for 2005, see *India-West*, 9 September 2005, B13; *India Journal*, 23 September 2005, A33; *India Journal*, 30 September 2005, A32.
- 27 African-American women are prominent American Muslim feminists, writing about Islamic law and jurisprudence and notably cosmopolitan. Amina Wadud, an Islamic Studies professor, called in her 1999 book for radical rethinking of the Qur'an and *hadith*, asserting that much now considered divine and immutable *sharia* is the result of a long, male-dominated intellectual process. Another African-American Muslim, Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, writes of the growing number of Muslim women scholars and activists trying to separate the religion from traditions and social mores associated with it. Wadud's book was first published in Malaysia in 1992 and then translated and published in Indonesian (1994) and Turkish (1997), evidencing the global reach of the gender *jihād*. Wadud taught in Kuala Lumpur's International Islamic University for three years and participated in Malaysia's influential 'Sisters in Islam'. For Simmons, a Sufi who champions heterodox traditions within Islam, see Webb 2000.
- 28 The fifteen contributors are almost all teaching in the United States but many are immigrants, with academic degrees from all over the world. Four are American converts, two of them African American. The progressive Muslim movement openly discusses gender and sexuality, most conspicuously on the website Muslimwakeup.com. The fall of 2004 saw the formal establishment of the Progressive Muslim

Union of North America, a group that recognizes as Muslim anyone who so identifies herself or himself regardless of religion, gender, race, ethnicity or sexuality.

29 Werbner 1997, 12.

30 Barrier 1999; 2004a.

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