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The Translocation of Culture: Migration, Community, and the Force of Multiculturalism in History

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MULTICULTURALISM IN HISTORY[1]

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ABSTRACT

In his work on a Welsh border village, Ronald Frankenberg showed how cultural performances, from football to carnival, conferred agency on local actors and framed local conflicts. The present article extends these themes. It responds to invocations by politicians and policy makers of 'community cohesion' and the failure of communal leadership, following riots by young South Asians in northern British towns. Against the critique of self-segregating isolationism, the article traces the historical process of Pakistani migration and settlement in Britain, to argue that the dislocations and relocations of transnational migration generate two paradoxes of culture. The first is that in order to sink roots in a new country, transnational migrants in the modern world begin by setting themselves culturally and socially apart. They form encapsulated 'communities'. Second, that within such communities culture can be conceived of as conflictual, open, hybridising and fluid, while nevertheless having a sentimental and morally compelling force. This stems from the fact, I propose, that culture is embodied in ritual and social exchange and performance, conferring agency and empowering different social actors: religious and secular, men, women and youth. Hence, against both defenders and critics of multiculturalism as a political and philosophical theory of social justice, the final part of the article argues for the need to theorise multiculturalism in history. In this view, rather than being fixed by liberal or socialist universal philosophical principles, multicultural citizenship must be grasped as changing and dialogical, inventive and responsive, a negotiated political order. The British Muslim diasporic struggle for recognition in the context of local racism and world international crises exemplifies this process.

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[1] This article was initially presented as an inaugural lecture at Keele University in October 2002. It seems an appropriate tribute to Ronnie Frankenberg, who was the founder Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Keele. An earlier version of the article was presented at Curzon University, Perth, Western Australia in July 2003. I am grateful to the participants in the seminar for their very helpful

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Translocating Culture

Moving from country to country is a dislocating experience. The present article is concerned with such dislocations and relocations in an age of transnational migration. These translocations generate, I intend to argue here, two paradoxes of culture. The first and perhaps obvious paradox is that in order to sink roots in a new country, transnational migrants in the modern world begin by setting themselves culturally and socially apart. This has implications for social policy. The second, more theoretical, paradox is that in such encapsulated communities culture is both open, changing and fluid and yet experienced as a powerful imperative. But against both defenders and critics of multiculturalism as a political and philosophical theory of social justice, I shall argue in the third part of the article for the need to theorise multiculturalism in history. Ultimately, I propose, citizenship in the 21ˢᵗ twenty first century, and even before that, is not permanently fixed by universalist philosophical principles, whether liberal or socialist, but is changing and dialogical, inventive and responsive to world events, a negotiated political order.[2]

An intractable occupational hazard anthropologists who study ethnicity and migration have had to contend with in the past two decades relates to the concept of culture. Although historically the discipline claims expertise in the study culture(s), at the present deconstructive moment such claims provoke accusations of neocolonial

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comments, and especially to Nonja Peters and Bob Pokrant.

[2] For an extended discussion of this approach to citizenship, see the contributions to Yuval-Davis and Werbner (1999).

discursive dominance. Culture has come increasingly to be seen as essentialising, reifying, stereotyping, orientalising, racialising, othering, exoticising and distorting the subjects of anthropological research. Such critiques against culture have been levelled by postmodernist anthropologists, deconstructivist literary critics and postcolonial cultural studies scholars, all of whom accuse anthropology of reifying culture and community.[3] On the other hand, politicians continue to invoke these concepts in order to explain and seek to solve the problem with immigrants and immigration.

This was exemplified in comments by Mr. David Blunkett, then the British Home Secretary, following the publication of reports on the rioting by young South Asian Muslims in Oldham, Bradford and other northern towns in the summer of 2001. Mr. Blunkett's provocative remarks constitute a fascinating reflection on the dilemmas of multicultural politics in Britain today. The riots, whatever their original cause,[4] caused serious damage to property and numerous police injuries. The attack on the sanctified British values of private property and the police no doubt called for a forceful political response.[5]

Mr. Blunkett's comments reflected this need. They also reflected the fact that some concepts simply refuse to go away, however much sociologists, historians, anthropologists and social policy makers might rail against them. I refer of course to the concept of community, which in England carries profound connotations for both ordinary

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[3] The critique was originally formulated by Said (1978) and developed within anthropology by Clifford and Marcus (1986) and Clifford (1988). In the case of anthropological studies of ethnic minorities in Britain, it was levelled by the Contemporary Centre for Cultural Studies (1982) against the contributions to *Between Two Cultures* (Watson 1977). It became implicated in the debate about Black versus Asian subjects of British racism. See my riposte (Werbner 1997a) and a further discussion of identity by Kahani-Hopkins and Hopkins (2002).

[4] It is not my aim here to analyse the causes of the riots. For an excellent preliminary account, which compares these riots with earlier ones in the 1980s and reviews some of the literature on this topic, see Bagguley and Hussein (2003) and Allen (2003).

[5] The damage was extensive, estimated at over 7.5 to 10 million pounds in Bradford, 1.4 in Oldham and 0.5 in Burnley, with fire attacks on pubs and clubs, and 326 policemen said to be injured in Bradford alone, 2 in Oldham and 83 in Burnley (Denham 2002: 1.2; see also Allen 2003: 7 and Bagguley and Hussein 2003 for somewhat disparate figures).

people and politicians. Hence, while sociologists may cast doubt on the notion of community as *gemeinschaft*, the face-to-face traditional, homogeneous and closed territorially-based group, it seems that the ideal of community cannot be banished from the popular imagination.[6] Community remains a place of amity, mutual support, and homeliness, as Zygmunt Bauman has commented recently with delightful irony (Bauman 2000).[7] Sivanandan evokes the 'values and traditions' that have come down to us from the working class movement:

> Loyalty, comradeship, generosity, a sense of community and a feel for internationalism, an understanding that unity has to be forged and reforged again and again and, above all, a capacity for making other people's fights one's own – all the great and simple things that make us human. (Sivanandan 1990: 51)

According to Ruth Levitas, New Labour 'policy statements, speeches and interviews are saturated with a communitarian rhetoric about obligations and responsibilities' of community (1998: 121). By contrast to these moralistic invocations, in Ronald Frankenberg's early study of a Welsh border village, community is defined by intimate gossip ('Pentre people are those whom other Pentre people gossip with and about. ... they take little interest in the personal affairs of "outsiders"') (Frankenberg 1957: 20-21); by impenetrable local conflicts; by cross-cutting divisions along gender, religion, language and class lines; by kinship and affinal networks; and by a continuous tendency to define and redefine insiders and outsiders (Frankenberg 1957 and 1966). By 1953, most Pentre men worked outside the community, yet the community continued to exist, mobilised around recreational activities, many of which were run by the women, who remained in the village while the men travelled beyond its boundaries.

I have argued – and this is illustrated by the complexity of the village community

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[6] For a brilliant analysis of New Labour discourses of social inclusion, social cohesion and community see Levitas (1998).

[7] For superb discussions of the expansion and internal contradictions of the notion of 'community' in and local electoral politics, and in local political and state rhetoric, race relations legislation and resource allocation, see Eade (1991) and Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992:162-198).

studied by Frankenberg – that rather than denying the existence of community, one should theorise its heterogeneity: its ideological, political, cultural and social divisions, on the one hand, and its situationally changing boundaries, on the other (Werbner 2002). This tendency of community towards fission and fusion was highlighted in the aftermath of the September 11 attack, when a coalition of Muslims and non-Muslims emerged in profound agreement, for joint action: the UK Stop the War cross-ethnic alliance incorporated Muslims as equal partners into the anti-war peace movement.

Alliance and segregation

Given that the limits of community are not fixed but are changing, situational and permeable, and given also that communities interpenetrate and cross-cut one another, how are we to regard a British Home Office Report, *Community Cohesion*, that investigated the summer riots in Northern towns and cities (Cantle 2001)? The report pointed to very high levels of segregation between Asians and whites in schools and neighbourhoods. Adults interviewed claimed to have little interaction across the ethnic divide. Not economic deprivation or racism, or the sense of threat to community provoked by the presence of racist organisations in the towns where the riots took place, but a lack of community cohesiveness and leadership were thus blamed in the report for the riots. In response, Mr. Blunkett advised the Asian community in Britain to 'integrate', adopt British 'norms of acceptability', swear allegiance to the crown in public ceremonies, learn English, speak it at home, and look for spouses for their children from within the 'settled' Asian community in Britain, not overseas (Guardian, *The Editor,* Dec.15: 5).

It is significant that the Bradford or Oldham communities that were said to lack leadership and cohesiveness were not conceived of as exclusively Asian or white – they included both, obliterating difference. What was thus racialised, pathologised and indeed criminalized, was the *internal* social cohesiveness and cultural distinctiveness of the ethnic community, and secondarily, of the white working class communities living in the inner city adjacent to it. This was signalled by the report's first recommendation that communities needed to be (re)educated so that the rights and responsibilities of

citizenship 'be more clearly established' (Cantle 2001: 46)[8]. In this spirit, Mr. Blunkett criticised South Asian inter-continental arranged marriages: 'We need to be able to encourage people to respond particularly to young women who do actually want to be able to marry someone who speaks their language – namely English – who has been educated in the same way as they have, and has similar social attitudes' (Neiyyar 2002: 4). In stressing the need for communication in English, Mr. Blunkett's primary concern was clearly not the individual's right to choose, against culture, but the collective good of the 'community'. His paternalistic advice to Asian parents was to make paternalistic decisions on behalf of their children in accord with the interests of the wider *national* community, for the sake of social integration. Objecting to the straitjacket of political correctness, Mr. Blunkett argued for the need to open up a frank public dialogue with and within the Asian community (Blackstock 2002: front page). But at the same time he went out of his way to claim that he recognised and respected the cultural diversity of British society.

In making his somewhat paradoxical pronouncements, Mr. Blunkett appeared to think that the situation in Bradford and Oldham was symptomatic of a broader malaise. The reality in Oldham, as elsewhere in Britain, is, of course, a good deal more complex and varied than depicted by the report, a complexity highlighted by Lyon's research on community theatre in Oldham (Lyon 1997). The play at the centre of her study, 'Chips and Chapati', was performed by a multi-ethnic and multi-racial local amateur group in Oldham, and it invoked the cultural hybridity of the immigrant experience in the city. At the start of rehearsals the Bangladeshi actors objected to the title. Chapati, they argued, was the Punjabi national staple diet, not theirs. *Their* culture was being effaced. The play should be called, they thought, Chips and Rice, but, fortunately or unfortunately, it was too late – the title of the play had been fixed in the drama festival's programme long in advance of the start of rehearsals.

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[8] Despite the language adopted and the dubious quality of the 'research' on which the report was based, many of its 67 policy recommendations for building bridges and mutual understanding and dialogue across the different communities were positive, practical, and implied the need to inject some new resources into the concerned areas. Some of the report's recommendations were later included in the Home Office White

It mattered to some of the actors that it should be rice, not chapati. Little details of culture matter to cultural actors. As transnational migrants sink roots in a new country they transplant and naturalise cultural categories, not simply because this is their tradition and culture, but because as active agents they have a stake in particular *aspects* of their culture. Culture as a medium of social interaction confers agency within a field of power relations.

Culture as a field of relatedness, agency and power

This was exemplified by the migration of Pakistanis to Britain, which was marked by the development of increasingly complex fields of relatedness as the process of community formation gathered pace (Werbner 1990/2002). Initially, during the 1950s and 1960s, it was young men who arrived from Pakistan to Britain. They instituted a system of dyadic, interest-free loans among themselves to help buy property, marry or bring their families over. Loans constituted a medium of friendship between male factory workers. Loaning followed culturally prescribed Punjabi normative rules and expectations, dictating both the legitimate purposes for which loans could be requested, and the etiquette surrounding the striking of verbal agreements and the extension or claiming back of debts. As Dahya too found (Dahya 1974), loans to one person often entailed the creditor borrowing from a network of others. Such culturally sanctioned loans thus created a field of indebtedness spread widely across the community, composed of single male migrants.

Loans were instrumental in allowing for capital investment. This was a male prerogative. But in the 1960s, as families began arriving in Britain to join their husbands, incoming women struggled to recapture their control over a quite different form of social exchange: the Punjabi gift economy, *lena dena, 'taking and giving'*. Along with *lena dena* women also began to convene neighbourhood communal Koran readings in which the Koran was read in its entirety by the congregation, followed by a food offering. These female-dominated cultural symbolic complexes were transplanted from Pakistan into Britain, often against the explicit wishes of the women's husbands, who regarded ritual

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Paper on immigration (2002), and it clearly anticipated forthcoming legislation.

feasting and gift-giving as wasteful.[9]

Clearly, then, the translocation of cultural practices to Britain was not automatic, a matter of nostalgic clinging to 'tradition', but the product of locally grounded power struggles – in this case, a gendered one between married women and their spouses. For incoming women migrants, their very agency was at stake in the revival of the ceremonial cycle of gift-giving and rituals. They even chose to enter the wider British labour market, often as machinists, in order to be able to initiate and sustain their traditionally powerful role as symbolic transactors. While the men moved from factory work into self-employment in Manchester and became entrepreneurs, often working beyond the community, much like the Welsh village men studied by Frankenberg, women recaptured their pivotal role as transactors of gold, cloth and food between households. They recreated the domestic and interdomestic domains under their control. Through such culturally grounded transactions, they came over time to dominate familial sociality. The men worked, the women networked.

Unemployed men can often play a role similar to that of women within the community. Hence, a recent study of male Pakistanis in Oldham by Virinder Kalra (2000) describes the transition from factory work in the mills to petty entrepreneurship, mainly in takeaways and taxis. Some of the older men ceased to work altogether and devoted their energies to community work. Some of the younger men worked in Manchester for South Asian clothing manufacturers there. None of these jobs, Kalra argued, were as stable or predictable as factory work, but despite their uncertainties, and in the case of taxi drivers the real danger involved, they did confer a measure of autonomy and the capacity to lead a family life. Even when faced by inner city poverty and deprivation in Bradford or Oldham, as statistical indices show (see Denham 2002; Allen 2003: 17-18; Bagguley and Hussein 2003), the embeddedness of immigrants in community networks can provide a buffer for the young, the disabled and the

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[9] For a detailed account of the gift economy and domestic ritual celebrations in Britain, including Khatam Korans, weddings and funerals, see Werbner (1990/2002), Shaw (2000), and for Pakistan Eglar (1960).

unemployed. True deprivation arises, as Wilson has argued, not from poverty *per se*, but with the flight of the middle classes out of the inner city, leaving behind the truly disadvantaged (Wilson 1987: 7). The riots in Bradford and Oldham may have been the outcome of too much, not too little, 'community' (indeed, this may have been the underlying subtext of Mr. Blunkett's exhortations).

But Pakistani communities in Britain are never simply localised, nor are all Pakistanis in Britain underprivileged and deprived. Residence in proximity is not the only basis for community. The South Manchester Pakistani community, the site of my own study, has been marked by growing affluence, rising levels of education, and social and residential mobility. The community has always been a non-localised networked one, marked by class divisions and social relations cutting across class, *biradari* and neighbourhood boundaries[10]. At the same time, social mobility has created a growing polarisation between the haves and have-nots.

Frankenberg analyses the class divisions in Pentre that separate English outsiders from Welsh villagers, Church and Chapel, and the tendency to recruit the local English land-owning, professional and civic elite to man official positions within village voluntary associations, only to be blamed when these associations inevitably fail because of internal conflicts among insiders. Among Pakistani migrant-settlers, by contrast, leadership is invariably drawn from within, though often from the more educated classes. Pakistani migration to Britain – and particularly to its major urban centres such as Manchester – included from the start a sizeable elite of educated students and middle-class professionals (doctors, accountants, solicitors), a growing business community, working-class 'big men', and organic cultural and religious intellectuals, all of whom have competed historically for leadership within and beyond the community.[11]

Growing wealth has created growing class distinctions among South Asians in

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[10] *Biradari* refers to the localised kinship and affinal caste group, often an ego-focused network.

[11] For accounts of such local level leaderships among South Asians in Britain see the contributions to Werbner and Anwar (1991) and Werbner (2002).

Britain, and particularly so among Pakistanis. These emergent class divisions have generated internal competition for status and distinction through conspicuous consumption. Since even working-class South Asian migrants to Britain are able to buy into lifestyles accessible in India and Pakistan only to the upper classes, wealthier immigrants in Britain have responded by inventing new, more extravagant and exclusive ways of setting themselves apart. Hence, the increasing prosperity, and indeed integration, of Mancunian South Asian settlers into the British economy, has been associated, paradoxically, not with cultural assimilation, as might be expected, but with ethnic cultural *intensification,* as the ritual celebrations of the elite have increased in scale, expense, frequency and cultural elaboration. This semiotic power struggle is a familiar one from the works of Thornsten Veblen and Pierre Bourdieu.[12] But while sociologists such as Bourdieu stress the integral relation between two factors – production and consumption – it is evident that among South Asian immigrants the relationship is, in fact, triadic – between production, consumption *and reproduction*. In such triadic systems of consumption, competitive lifestyle strategies often centre on reproductive rituals. These rites of passage, and especially weddings, allow scope for complex exchange relations, and profligate displays of wealth and its destruction. These set the ethnic community apart.

The notion of 'Reproduction' is not a static concept implying simple continuity of culture or class between South Asia and Britain. It has to be grasped as a local class, gendered and intergenerational power struggle, in Britain, waged through symbolic objects, and responsive to British class and life-style choices. Wedding rituals are occasions not only for excessive consumption and exchange, often encompassing huge numbers of community members during the different phases of the wedding, plus a few select outsiders, but for expressive creativity. In British Pakistani wedding rites young women parody British society through ritual gift-giving and masquerade, while they also express their concerns about arranged marriages through sexually explicit joking, singing

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[12] Veblen (1899), Bourdieu (1984). Steven Vertovec (1992) traces a similar process among South Asians in Trinidad following the oil boom.

and ritual clowning[13]. In this sense wedding rituals are hybrid and creative, not simply transposed. Their transformative power is embedded socially in Britain, as well as being an embodied aesthetic experience.

Culture as Embodiment

Culture, then, is a crucial medium of transaction, and hence of relatedness, for incoming migrants. It is also an embodied performance. Part of the move away from functionalist or essentialised notions of culture in social anthropology has been to approach culture as performance.[14] In sociology, Durkheim's analysis of the corrobori in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* has been taken to point the way to a sociology of the body that encompasses the aesthetic aspects of social life (Shilling 1997). Similarly, in the case of Pakistani migrants, ritual performance is an aesthetic experience that is powerfully *embodied*.[15] It is substantiated in objects, food and substances that inscribe and transform the person and constitute his or her felt subjectivity. I want to exemplify this contention by describing four very different but nevertheless iconic and exemplary Pakistani cultural figures, embodied through cultural performance. The figures can be read as tropes or synechdoches for different cultural worlds of embodied aesthetics, in which men and women, young or old, are caught up through performance. All four figures are opposed to the usual stereotypical figure of the bearded Muslim extremist, familiar from the media.

The first figure is that of the Pakistani bride, who forms the symbolic focus of

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[13] see Werbner (1986, 1990/2002); for South Asia see Raheja and Gold (1994).

[14] This has been associated with the Manchester School's extended case study method or 'social drama', and particularly the work of Victor Turner (1958) and Max Gluckman (1940). A parallel move in American cultural anthropology is the work of Clifford Geertz (1973), who defines cultural performance as 'text', an idea similar to the move in Cultural Studies (e.g. Hebdige). This is, however, a difference between a view of cultural performance as text in the work of Geertz or Hebdige, for example, and studies which highlight more specific symbolic interactionist processes within such performances. Such processual approaches, was a feature of the Manchester School's approach exemplified in Frankenberg's study of the rise and fall of the football club in Pentre. Missing, however, from such accounts is the recognition that culture in performance does not simply exemplify communication or social conflict – it represents an experience of embodiment and hence identity.

[15] On this powerfully compelling aesthetic dimension of South Asian rituals see also the thesis by Shenar (2003) on Indian Jews in Israel.

Pakistani weddings in the UK. Like all South Asian brides, she is regarded as a wonderful, marvellous gift, and she must therefore leave her natal home bedecked in precious jewellery, a queen or goddess. Her person, in other words, is glorified by her adornment and beauty. An undecorated bride, without a shimmering red silk outfit and golden ornaments, is a sad sight, a shame to her family. Her decoration has been made possible by both her own family and that of her future affines. Beneath her glorious wedding outfit, the Pakistani bride is also ritually pure and fertile. She has been fed and smeared with substances that move her from a state of sexual innocence to a state of sexuality – initially dangerous but finally legitimate and approved. Among other ritual acts, her hands and feet have been decorated with *mehndi*, that is, henna, a cold, purifying and protective substance that is transformed into something red and hot.

The move of the bride and groom is from maternal nurture to dangerous eroticism, and ultimately to safe sexuality and conjugal nurture in marriage. This transfer of qualities via substances, the 'magical' treatment of the bride and groom, both protects them and joins them together, to ensure the fertility and legitimacy of the union, before it is legalised and consummated.

In many weddings held in the UK the young friends of the bride celebrate the coming wedding with transvestite masquerading, much like their English counterparts in their stag parties and hen nights. Hence, juxtaposed against the figure of the idealised bride is the transvestite figure of the ritual clown, usually an ugly old man, who often appears in the *mehndi* ritual. The appearance of this figure is also the occasion for sexual joking and explicitly vulgar gestures. These enact dramatically an oblique critique of arranged marriages with disgusting older men. So too, explicitly sexy, jokey gifts allow the bride's girlfriends to introduce into the ritual locally produced, British, symbolic objects. These are used to parody the sexual freedom and promiscuity of contemporary British society, contrasted creatively with the specifically Pakistani ideas about *purdah* and ritual modesty.

The ritual clown may be conceived of as a ritual monster, often found in rites of

passage (Handelman 1981). In this case it can be said to personify different kinds of opposition: between male and female, young and old, uncontrolled and controlled sexuality. The girl is moving from youth to adulthood. During the *mehndi* ritual the dangerous yet vital power of sexuality, embodied by the clown, is first incorporated and then made safe by the women surrounding the bride-to-be in the *mehndi* ritual. This is enacted symbolically: the clown is mocked, sometimes beaten and ultimately forcefully banished by the women.

The wedding ritual can be said to harness natural fertility for the sake of human reproduction. But the power of nature and control over nature and demonic spirits are also qualities ascribed by Pakistanis to Muslim saints. Mystical Islam and the veneration of Sufi saints are prevalent in Britain, especially among the migrant generation. Sufi cults, often quite small, extend from Pakistan into Britain and create voluntaristic networks beyond locality, across Britain, underpinned by mutual visiting and celebration (Werbner 2004). One of the largest of these British Pakistani Sufi orders, with a major centre in Birmingham, had been founded by an originary charismatic Sufi saint who had established his lodge in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan (Werbner 2003).

Zindapir, the 'living saint', was the centre of a vast regional cult, extending throughout Pakistan and into Britain and the Gulf; anywhere, indeed, where Pakistanis had migrated. The centre of the cult is a beautiful little lodge nestled in a lovely valley in the Frontier, surrounded by orchards and gardens. In Sufi Islam, the saint as world renouncer is seen as exemplary person, a renewer from the margins, a redeemer whose uniqueness is proven by the miracles he performs and by his extreme ascetic bodily practices. Zindapir was said never to sleep. He eats no meat or luxury goods such as butter, only a dry chapati with some relish. He feeds the multitudes who come to the lodge free of charge, yet takes nothing for himself. Although they carry tribute to the lodge in the form of animals, grain and money, both he and his disciples construct the wealth of the lodge as the miraculous blessing of God.

The saint is regarded as a repository of infinite knowledge and powerful

authority. His charisma is an embodied magic that permeates his whole persona, his very body, with the contagious power of God's grace, a power that persists even after his death when his grave becomes a shrine, the centre of a pilgrimage cult. As a conduit of God's grace in the world, his presence infects his surroundings, and any object with which he comes into contact, with blessing, a luminous quality that physically embodies a divine force for growth, fertility and multiplication. He projects inner peace – an aura of absolute, unquestionable, infallible authority.

The saint as charismatic fulfils the highest ideals of the society while at the same time appearing unique and beyond society. This effect of power is so compelling for followers that they believe him to reach into their minds, souls and hearts wherever they are, transcending physical obstacles of space and geographical distance. He thus knows the hearts of his disciples in Britain while for these British settlers, he and his lodge remain the centre of their cultural universe.

The crucibles on the path to acquiring this personal, embodied magic were recounted to me by the saint as life history. But for these ordeals of his life to be believable, I argue in my study, they have to be corroborated by live evidence in the form, first, of saintly ascetic practices and saintly generosity; secondly, through spatial conquest, especially the building of the lodge; and thirdly, by constant mobilisation at the cult centre. This occurs once a year when followers converge on the lodge from all over Pakistan and beyond, including dozens of pilgrims from Britain. During this annual festival pilgrims are fed by the lodge and donate goods and voluntary labour to its expansion. Ultimately, then, tales of a saint's miracles are subordinated to his depiction as a supreme ethical subject, supported by moral fables narrating his ordeals, his self-denial, his generosity and his encounters with temporal power.

The Sufi saint is not a fundamentalist. His vision is global and ideally he seeks not confrontation and jihad but peace and the inner jihad of the soul. Many of the older generation of Pakistani migrant settlers in Britain and some younger men and women choose this path, although others follow more austere, populist or militant forms of Islam.

If the saint remains almost immobile at the centre of a vast global pilgrimage cult, which extends into Britain, the final iconic figure in my cultural pantheon is a figure of restless, globe-trotting masculinity. As captain of the Pakistani cricket team (and of Lancashire), Imran Khan was a national hero. The lion of Lahore, as British journalists dubbed him, Khan was a hybrid figure: an upper-class Oxford graduate, a womaniser with a playboy lifestyle, he was the man who led Pakistan to victory over Britain in the World Cup Series in Sydney. It was in relation to cricket that an earlier, pre-Blunkett, politician, Norman Tebbit, devised his cricket test of Asian loyalty and called on Asians to integrate into Britain by showing support for the English cricket team.

Cricket is fanatically loved by all South Asians. A recent Indian film, Lagan, tries to prove that it was actually an Indian game even before the arrival of the British. Cricket is an expression of controlled masculine aggression and competitiveness. The intense enthusiasm for cricket as spectacle in South Asia amounts to a cult glorifying the human body, not as a denied vessel, as in the case of the saint, but as active and physically powerful. Cricket – the game of the 'Other', the former imperial oppressor, has become also a popular cultural expression of modern Pakistani nationalism and of friendly competition in the international arena. It is the sport of the Commonwealth, a medium of communication, along with the English language, between former colonies. It is a sub-culture with its own values of *noblesse oblige*, fair play, upright conduct, sportsmanship, team spirit, and so forth. The national cricket team is an emblem of the modern nation-state, Pakistan, as a 'Western' invention, within the community of nations.

Since cricket has become a part of professionalised mass media entertainment, its stars have become national heroes (Appadurai 1996). The huge financial stakes involved in the international game make it more exciting, competitive and contentious than its imperial predecessor. It provokes bitter public disputes between national teams, or between team captains and umpires, and allegations of corruption and bribery involving hundreds of thousands of pounds. Imran Khan was a cricket star and so his wedding to Jemima Goldsmith became a media event not only for Pakistanis, but worldwide. Four-

column pictures of Khan in colour (sometimes with his bride) repeatedly dominated the front pages of British dailies. The libel case brought against him by Ian Botham and Alan Lamb, which he won, highlighted the way race, gender, class and Empire are explosively conjoined in contemporary cricket (Werbner 1997b). All this is a reflection of the masculine glamour and politicisation of the game.

Mehndi wedding rituals and, to a lesser extent, cricket are transgressive of strict Islamic precepts. Both transcend and hence transgress (from the Islamist viewpoint) the boundaries of the Muslim community or *ummah*. Wedding popular culture encompasses a Pan-Asian Urdu- and Hindi-speaking population, which includes Hindus and Sikhs as well. All three religions in South Asia share common aesthetic traditions, similar wedding songs, dances and music, as well as comic and satirical tropes. These cut across religious and linguistic boundaries in South Asia.

Cricket too transgresses the boundaries of the Muslim *ummah*, creating links between nations having different religious persuasions, while at the same time it poses an alternative to the religious community by glorifying the modern, secular nation-state. Pakistani transnational subjectivities that draw on three intersecting transnational cultural spaces or lived-in worlds – Islamic, South Asian and Inter-national – *none of which coincides with the nation-state*. As performative spaces, each cultural domain also represents a source of personal gendered and generational identity empowerment: Islam – primarily of male elders and increasing of young veiled women; wedding popular culture – of women and youth; and cricket – of men, especially young men. Muslim religiosity attacks virtually all forms of popular culture and hence the relationship between these cultural domains is one of powerful contestation. The status of the 'owners' of the religious domain – clerics, saints and male elder community leaders or spokesmen – is challenged by the mass commercialisation both of South Asian popular culture and of cricket in India and Pakistan.

Such observations echo Frankenberg's study. There too sport (football) and the carnevalesque became major cultural domains of gendered and class contestation.

Similarly, chapel and church are sites of conflict over resources. The role of women is critical in both cultural domains. Despite images of the passive, retiring South Asian Muslim woman, Pakistani women in Britain are powerful not only in the inter-domestic domain, but increasingly also in the communal and public sphere. Following severe sentencing of the young men who participated in the Bradford riots, for example, it was women who formed an association to attempt to overturn these sentences and to instigate popular protests and a legal challenge. The Fair Justice for All Campaign, founded by Bradford women, mobilised support from leading human rights lawyers Makbool Javaid (partner at city law firm DLA) and Imran Khan (solicitor for the Lawrence family), from Aki Nawaz (a popular South Asian rap musician and writer) and Maqsood Ahmed (the Muslim adviser to the Prison Service). So far, only two sentences have been commuted, but the campaign continues, representing the families of those whose loved ones languish in jail following the riots (Allen 2003: 34–37; see also the association's website).

Culture as discourse

Each symbolic space – familial popular culture, Islam, and cricket – has its own discourses. If, as I have argued so far, culture is, for migrant men and women, first and foremost a mode of transaction and relatedness, and second, of substantive embodiment, culture is also a discursive imaginary of selfhood, identity, subjectivity and moral virtue. We have seen that in Britain Pakistanis live on the margins of three lived-in worlds: the South Asian, with its aesthetic of fun and laughter, of vivid colours and fragrances, of music and dance; the Islamic, with its utopian vision of a perfect moral order, and the nationalist Pakistani, with its roots in the soil, in family, community and national loyalties, which connect it to the postcolonial international community and Commonwealth, and to ideas about democracy sovereignty and fair play. The creative locus of these imaginaries, I have argued (Werbner 2002), is the diasporic public sphere. The identities evoked in public speeches and performances – of nation, local community, religion and diaspora – are at times fused, at times kept strictly separated. Diaspora from this perspective can be seen as a series of projected imaginaries of identity.

A focus on the diasporic public sphere enables us to shift from an analysis of 'culture' or 'religion' as essentialised, disembodied systems of meanings and *prescribed* practices to cultural *performance* through oratory and political argumentation. In this sense culture is indexical and historically constituted through practical knowledge and purposeful action.[16] Collective identities, in being continuously negotiated in relation to their imagined audiences, are never permanently fixed.

Remarkable in the case of Pakistani settlement in Britain have been the resources of time, wealth, effort and symbolic imagination Pakistanis have been willing to *invest* in their alternative public arenas. Equally marked has been the extent to which they are willing to *mobilise to defend* and protect these domains of public performance when and if they are threatened 'externally'. *Investment* is an act of creation; *defence* is an act of preserving that which has been created.

Migration thus entails more than cultural transplantation or translocation. It entails acts of cultural and material *creativity*. Social spaces and symbolic discourses, as well as their material and organisational embodiments, all need to be created from scratch in Britain. Within the pluralistic context of British society Pakistanis wage their internal and external cultural 'wars of position' in the spaces they have created for themselves.

In Britain, Pakistani settlers have had to create the domain of official Islamic national high culture, and this was entirely controlled in the early years by male elders, whatever their political or religious persuasion. They have been joined recently by activist Muslim women and younger men who are now claiming the moral high ground. It is in this space of pure Islam that virtual discourses of a global millennial Islam, responsive to current affairs, are articulated. At the very same time, the empowerment of subordinate groups – Pakistani women and young men – has led to the reproduction of community not merely as a domain of religious observance but as a site of popular

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[16] I use the notion of ''knowledge practices' to refer to an explicit discourse and its associated institutionalised practices, in the sense discussed by Foucault (e.g. Foucault 1972). This contrasts with the taken-for-granted, common sense assumptions embedded in the quotidian, Bourdieu's 'practical knowledge' (Bourdieu 1977).

culture – of fun, leisure and celebration. Hence, although Islam remains for almost all Pakistanis their most valued identity, the marking of a singular, *Islamic*, identity disguises, in reality, a continuing valorisation of *different* dimensions of a complex *cluster* of personal identities.

It is Islam, nevertheless, that has become the primary grounds for claims to multicultural citizenship. Before the Rushdie affair erupted at the end of 1988, nationalism and religion – being British *and* Muslim – did not seem to clash. Fighting for Muslim rights did not seem to imply dual loyalties. The affair for the first time rendered visible the Pakistani and Muslim presence in Britain as separate and different from that of other post-war immigrant groups. Like the Gulf War and, most recently, September 11 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, it also raised questions of loyalty, questions that lead us back to the Blunkett and Tebbit tests of community integration and to the final theme of this article.

The debate on Multiculturalism

The Rushdie affair was a cataclysmic event, a global crisis, a focus of multicultural debates worldwide. The argument in favour of multiculturalism put by liberal communitarians such as Charles Taylor is, first, that identities are grounded in specific cultures and moralities and to deny these is a form of discrimination (Taylor 1994). Second, that a pragmatic resolution of individual versus collective rights is possible, as Will Kymlicka (1995) also claims. And third, that the public-private distinction is highly ambiguous, as several scholars such Modood (1997a), Rex (1987) and Parekh (1995a, 1995b) have argued. Education, in particular, it has been argued, is ambiguously placed between the private and the public. To deny children of immigrant groups the right to learn about their language, culture or religion is to marginalise them. Fourth, it is widely recognised that many forms of racism, such as anti-Semitism or Islamophobia (Runnymede 1997), essentialise and biologise imputed cultural traits. Hence the distinction between race and culture is untenable in reality, these new liberals, such as Modood, argue (Modood 1997b). Moreover, feminists have argued that universal

individual rights disguise the hegemony of white middle class males and silence the legitimate voices and identities of others, that 'the modern category of the individual' has been constructed in a manner that postulates a universalist, homogeneous 'public' that relegates all particularity and difference to the 'private', and that this has negative consequences for women (Mouffe 1993: 81).

But multiculturalism probably has more critics than defenders. They come from the socialist Left and the liberal Centre and Right. They include postmodern anthropologists, feminists, and human rights activists. They also, of course, include right-wing racists, traditionalists and nationalists.

On the Left the argument is that the superficial celebration of multiculturalism – of exotic cuisines, popular music or colourful festivals and rituals – disguises continuing economic and political inequalities. Rather than addressing these, the state funds multicultural festivals and turns its back on real problems of deprivation, prejudice and discrimination (Hutnyk 1997). Hence, multiculturalism and identity politics obscure the common oppression of the underprivileged within capitalist society and divide anti-racist movements (Sivanandan 1990: 51–52 *passim*). This debate, anti-racism versus multiculturalism, shared oppression versus culture, obscures, however, as Anthias and Yuval-Davis have pointed out, the divisive potential of an equal opportunities policy that attempts to implement differential resource allocations to underprivileged and marginalised groups (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992: 180). It co-opts leaders while dividing them through such minor investments. Feminists such as Okin (1999; see also the contributions to Saghal and Yuval-Davis 1992) argue that multiculturalism accords too much power to religious elders, usually men, to rule over women and their bodies, and to deny them their rights as equal citizens to choose how to dress, whom to marry or divorce, if and when to have children, and so forth.

Anthropological critiques of multiculturalism start from its presumed false theorisation of culture. Multiculturalism, anthropologists argue, reifies and essentialises cultures as rigid, homogeneous and unchanging wholes with fixed boundaries. As

Jonathan Friedman puts it (1997), multiculturalism museumises cultures. It assumes, as Ayse Caglar has proposed (1997), a fixed connection between culture and territory. Inger-Lise Lien, a Norwegian anthropologist, echoing Mr. Blunkett, argues that multicultural discourses gloss over the serious internal problems of crime and violence that immigrants in Norway face. Current theories in anthropology are based on the idea that cultures are creative and changing, full of internal contestation, and dependent on social positioning. People in one culture constantly borrow from others. Cultures are therefore inescapably hybrid and permeable. For this reason too, cultures do not have a single, unified leadership and any attempt by the state to impose one is false and oppressive. Critically also, as I show in *Imagined Diasporas* (Werbner 2002), Pakistanis are divided politically between socialists or liberal democrats on the left, and religious nationalists, on the right. Political commitments create alliances and cross-cutting ties with other British citizens, especially on the left.

In a perceptive paper, Tempelman (1999) deploys a typology developed by Eisenstadt and Giesen (1995), to distinguish three forms of multiculturalism: 'primordial', associated with the approach of Charles Taylor, 'civic', associated with Bhikhu Parekh, and 'universalist', with Will Kymlicka. According to this view, while primordial multiculturalism assumes an authentic, unchanging cultural identity, civic multiculturalism recognises that cultures are open, and calls for dialogue between and within communities. It fails, however, to address contexts in which such dialogue is refused or breaks down, as happened in the case of the Rushdie affair. Against that, universalist multiculturalism demands that both majority and minority cultures, whatever their differences, safeguard liberal principles of individual liberty and the right to dissent. The difference between the latter approach and the openly anti-multiculturalist approached advocated by Brian Barry (2000) which I discuss below, would seem to be merely one of degree: the liberalisation of non-liberal cultures, according to Kymlicka, is to be achieved through dialogue, education and financial incentives (1999: 27). But, as Tempelman points out, the ultimate state sanction against illiberal cultural groups that refuse to change, is force, and this may 'provoke a backlash in which interference is

perceived as an existential threat to the authentic identity of the community' (ibid.: 28).

In current human rights discourse, the right of individuals and collectivities to foster, enhance and protect their culture and traditions is enshrined. But at the same time, freedom of speech and from violence denies the absolute right of traditional practices, such as forced marriages, for example. Clearly, then, this implies that multiculturalism is fraught with potential contradictions once it is defined too rigidly. This is, of course, also where the liberal critique on multiculturalism focuses.

On the whole, liberals argue, liberal democracy allows sufficient space for ethnic and religious expression in civil society and the private sphere. Freedom of association, of expression, of the press, of religion, guarantee collective rights and there is nothing to prevent ethnic or religious associations from organising on a voluntary basis. Further, they argue, universal individual rights to equality before the law are at risk if cultural rights take precedence over universal rights. Hence in a recent book, *Culture and Equality*, Brian Barry, a political philosopher, castigates the likes of Bhikhu Parekh, Will Kymlicka, Charles Taylor and Iris Young for being false prophets of liberalism.[17] Arguing against their defence of group rights or of legal exceptionalism on the grounds of culture and identity, Barry presents a trenchantly reasoned critique against any legal recognition of cultural fixity or closure.

Like others, Barry tends to reproduce a wider socialist and liberal suspicion that multiculturalism is, in reality, beneath the rhetoric, a conspiracy of state engineering. Against that, my own argument has been that multiculturalism in Britain, as applied to immigrant minorities rather than territorial ones, is neither legal nor conspiratorial. In reality, it is a rather messy local political and bureaucratic negotiated order, responsive to ethnic grassroots pressure, budgetary constraints and demands for redistributive justice. It is bottom-up rather than top-down. This also means that there is no single 'just' blueprint for multiculturalism, even in a single country and certainly between countries (see also

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[17] For critiques of Barry's book see Miller et al (2002), Horton (2003). For analogous critiques of Okin's arguments see the contributions to Okin (1999).

Samad 1997). In different countries, multiculturalism refers to different struggles, depending on minority demands for recognition and a share of state or local state budgets. Beyond the struggles for local recognition, however, we need to recognise that multiculturalism has also become a global movement (Nimni 2003), and hence that multicultural confrontations need to be located in history.

This has been evident in the case of the Muslims of Britain who have had to contend, since the Rushdie affair, with a series of international global crises tragically not of their own making. Most recently, September 11 and the War Against Terror have highlighted the vulnerability of the Muslim diaspora in the West, as violent images of Islam are projected by a global media into our living rooms. The predicament of diaspora is thus one of being forced to make impossible choices between deeply felt loyalties. The utopian, millennial visions of a global Islam, orated by local Pakistani leaders in the narrow confines of their own diasporic public sphere, were never intended as agendas for terrorist action. They were a form of social critique, against the immorality and sexual promiscuity of the West, and the corruption of Muslim political regimes. Yet in the face of terrorist attacks even utopian visions have taken on an ominous meaning.

Theorising multiculturalism in history enables us to move away from legalistic arguments of the type proposed by Barry and to focus on the creative contingency of politically negotiated social encounters. At present, these seem to set Pakistanis in Britain apart from other South Asian groups. The Rushdie affair, the Gulf war, the Israel–Palestinian conflict, September 11, Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir, Afghanistan, and most recently the war with Iraq, have all led to a process of spiralling progressive alienation of Muslims in Britain and worldwide. What might have been playful differences, like supporting the Pakistani national cricket team, have become serious moral breaches of the national consensus: invocations by George W. Bush of an Islamic axis of evil and the rise of Islamophobia in the West, on the one hand, and calls for the death of an author, riots in Bradford and Oldham, support for Saddam Hussein or the Taliban, on the other. The passion of Islam in Britain at present takes the form of a painful, deeply felt injury, a powerful sense of failure along with a public stance of defiance. But such crises are also

crucibles through which new multicultural arrangements come to be forged. In Britain, September 11 and South Asian rioting strengthened government resolve to introduce changes to the laws on terror, education for citizenship, and immigration law; but they have also led, perhaps in compensation, to plans to introduce a law against incitement to religious hatred, for which British Muslims have long been struggling.

We see here a dialectic process at work. Alienation and division are countered by new alliances. The recent 'Stop the War' coalition between peace groups and the Muslim Association of Britain underlines the growing integration of Muslims into British society. So too is the alliance between the women's Fair Justice for All Campaign in Bradford and multi-faith, anti-racist groups such as FAIR, the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism.

Against allegations of self-segregation, it may be argued that Pakistanis have rooted themselves deeply in Britain and created vibrant communities. These communities are, as we have seen, culturally and materially inscribed, based on mutual gift-giving, credit, help, and voluntary action. Outside a few inner-city pockets of deprivation where migrant settlers suffer from multiple disadvantage, Pakistanis are increasingly integrated, with young, British-educated Pakistanis, like other South Asians, successfully finding a place and a voice in British professions as well in the arts, culture and politics.

Conclusion

In sum, then, the translocation of culture is a process of dislocation, transplantation and relocation, both painful and joyous, as immigrants invent and recreate a local culture and viable community, while they struggle to sustain British local *and* transnational commitments. In this process of translocation, culture cannot be conceived of simply as an instrumental badge of identity; it is, as I have argued here, a compelling moral reality, conferring role and agency, to be struggled over by cultural actors, even when it is hybrid, contested, permeable and open to change. So too, in a world of transnational migrations and blurred borders multiculturalism cannot be a neatly packaged once-and-for-all policy, or a series of loyalty tests devised by politicians in a futile attempt to create

an illusion of order out of ambiguity and flux. It is, rather, a constantly evolving historical process of repeatedly negotiating difference and dialogical citizenship in the context of national and international conflicts, often beyond the control of the actors involved. In this respect multiculturalism is not simply about the squabbles over local authority allocations or the representativeness of self-appointed community leaders (although it is that as well). Nor is it about 'community cohesion' in the sense of local working-class solidarities. Multiculturalism in history must respond to radical, often global, symbolic challenges that often test the capacity of politicians and citizens. Such crises require extreme sensitivity to the vulnerability of minorities even as the state upholds liberal principles that may seem to entail painful communal compromises on the part of these minorities.

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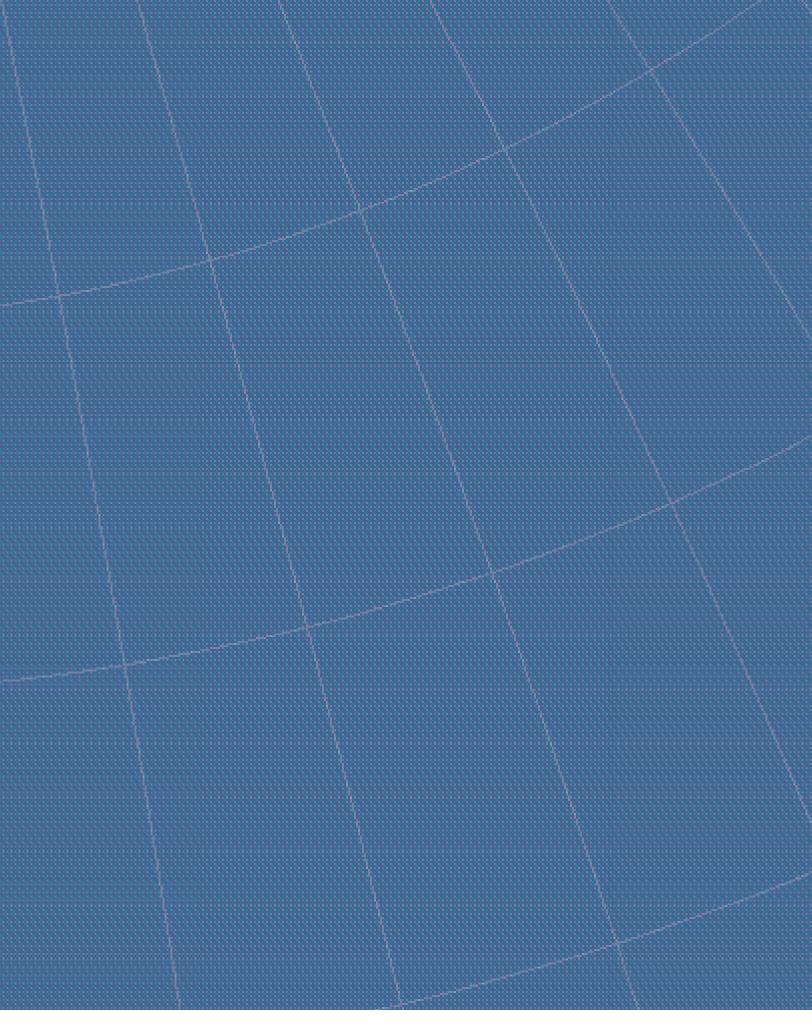
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