Title: Lost in Translation: National Imaginings in Early Twentieth Century Punjabi literature

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Fatima Afzal

The Oxford School of Global and Area Studies
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[NB Do not insert acknowledgments for help given in the preparation of this essay in the Examiners' copies. The thesis must remain anonymous. Personal copies may contain acknowledgments]

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Transliteration Guide

For all transliterations from Urdu and Punjabi, I have followed the *Annual of Urdu Studies* revised guide (2007) with some variations that are listed below.

Vowels

a, ā, e, ē, i, ī, o, ō, u, ū, ai, au

Consonants

bē b	*zē* z	*lām* l
pē p	*žē* ž	*mīm* m
tē t	*sīn* s	*nūn* n/ñ
*`tē* `t	*shīn* sh	*vā`ō* v
ṡē ṡ	*ṣuād* ṣ	*hē* h
jīm j	*ẓuād* ẓ	*dō čāshmīh̲ē* h̲
čē č	*Tō`ē T*	*yē* y
ḥē ḥ	*Zō`ē Z*	*hamza* ʾ
khē kh	*ʻain* ʿ	
dāl d	*ghain* gh	
ḍāl ḍ	*fē* f	
zāl z̲	*qāf* q	
rē r	*kāf* k	
ṛē ṛ	*gāf* g	

Introduction

The British colonial empire's epistemic control of the colonized peoples was ingrained through the creation and dissemination of modes of knowledge which would not determine the way that the colonized view their own positionality and participated in the fast-evolving colonial society. These frames of reference were perpetuated using the colonizer's laws and policies, epistemological tools such as the census, technology (printing press) and their educational institutions such as the Fort William College in Calcutta. The notion that a people could be understood, represented, explained, and guided through a set of texts underpinned the project of Orientalism which "expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles (Said 2)". Under study here is an expansion of the link between "*material* civilization and culture" (2) that Said had established in explaining how cultural products cement imperial control. To expand upon this relationship, the paper will focus on translation projects undertaken at the Fort William College and the kind of technology and registers they enabled which led to similar modes of literary thought being reproduced in areas relatively free from its influence, particularly Punjabi literature.

Punjabi literature's participation in colonial modernity is an understudied subject in postcolonial scholarship, mostly due to the perceived distance of the colonial state from the Punjabi vernacular. This paper will reevaluate this claim based on the understanding that the discursive alterations instituted by the colonial state on indigenous practices were effective even outside of their direct spheres of influence. This was because "colonial cultural policy altered institutional structures, which meant that these changes endured" (Naregal, 2001; 102) even in the absence of the state. The pertinent question of this study is how distant colonial practices remained influential on, and even determined the choice and content of, translated

works outside their sphere of influence and how those works then reproduced the discursive interventions of colonial modernity by working within its definition of what qualifies as 'good literature'. I will complement this by putting these translated works into the context of rising communal politics in Punjab. I will argue that Punjabi literature underwent a moment of 'rupture' from precolonial, indigenous literary practices in the early twentieth century by translating works that were produced at the Fort William College into Punjabi. The communalized language of Shahmukhi[1] translations and the inclusion of a Persio-Arabic lexicon shows that Punjabi writers of the Shahmukhi script were responding to a crisis of exclusion from state patronage and Muslim nationalism and attempting to speak to both, through these translations.

Even though unsuccessful in gaining the favour of either, this is an important moment to study because it reveals the complex engagement of Punjabi culture and literary production with the tools of modernity which has often been overlooked. As the paper will explain later, studying Punjabi translations has the potential to overturn the established assumptions about Punjabi literary development in the twentieth century as a space of continuity with precolonial literary traditions, uncontaminated by colonial intervention and communal tensions. Studying translations as a moment of 'rupture' from the precolonial past has the potential to open up investigations into a more nuanced and complicated understanding of Punjabi linguistic politics under the colonial regime.

To analyse this literature and the debates surrounding it, I will be using newspaper articles from the *Times of India* (published in English) and *Paisa Akhbar* (in Urdu). My aim is to perform a discourse analysis of this archive to identify the "key articulating group" who

[1] Shahmukhi refers to the Punjabi script which uses Persio-Arabic alphabets. Its counterpart is known as 'Gurmukhi' which draws on the Nagari alphabet but the formation of most of its alphabets is different. Gurmukhi is the script of the Adi Granth and typically using in Indian Punjab while Shahmukhi is used in Pakistani Punjab.

had the power to create “linguistic and literary boundaries” which led to the “formulation of a linguistic elite with greater access to the power structure than other speech or dialect communities” (Ghosh, 2006; 13). Taking cue from Foucault, I will be focusing on “how power operated within what he called an institutional apparatus and its technologies (techniques)” (qtd in Hall, 2001; 75). My study uses the Paisa Akhbar because it was the most vocal in its opposition to the use of Punjabi and thus provides an apt representation of the exclusion of Punjabi Muslim writers from consideration. I will then do a literary analysis of three translations of the *qiṣā* titled *Bagh o Bahar* published in Shahmukhi Punjabi in 1904, 1912 and 1928. This section will look at how the discourse produced on language, literature and Muslim linguistic nationalism informs the literary sensibilities of these works.

However, this method is not without its limitations. For one, looking at these archives will distance my analysis from engaging with public reception. That is to say, I will be looking at the representation of ideas, not how they are received. In this endeavour, I am also limited by lack of evidence documenting the readership of these translations. As a literary or historical archive, translations in Punjabi have not received any attention which is why it is nearly impossible to determine their popularity or reception. Even in the translations, I will only be able to analyze one section of the four that constitute the entire story. This is due to the constraints of the word limit which do not allow for a comprehensive engagement with the entire text. One section was chosen to allow for consistency in engagement across all translations.

The second chapter of this dissertation will provide a detailed discussion of the position of Punjabi under colonial rule to understand its invisibility to the state. Without explicating this, one cannot fully understand the force of the colonial project which managed to impact it still. This context is also important to understand the alienation of Punjabi prompted by the dominant and representative Muslim voices in Punjab; a context pertinent

for Chapter four as well. This chapter will also provide context regarding the benefits of state patronage for other languages in Punjab, mostly Urdu, which would then provide an aspirational model for Punjabi.

Chapter three will then evaluate the existing scholarship on Punjabi literature of this historical period. Using the context from the previous chapter, this one will outline how other scholars have understood the impact of these political developments on Punjabi literature. I will position myself within these debates.

Chapter four will outline the politics of the Punjabi-Urdu debate that took place in 1909 using newspaper articles to reconstruct the chain of events and the viewpoints of different stakeholders. This chapter is important because the Punjabi debate is typically viewed from the Sikh/Gurmukhi lens which has meant that the impact of these language politics on the Punjabi Muslim community has not yet been studied. The central consideration for this chapter is how the Punjabi-Urdu debate created an environment of hostility for Muslims who would continue to articulate their religious identity in Punjabi, since Muslimness was identified *exclusively* with Urdu.

Chapter five will explain why translations were necessary to the colonial epistemic project and how their entrance into Punjabi literature demarcates a shift in the relationship with print politics and state patronage and showcases the impact of the colonial project on Punjabi. Chapter six will thus analyse the communalized language of those translations. Together these chapters highlight that when Punjabi writers would have felt the need to acquire state patronage and Muslim support, translations with communalized lexicon seemed to be the answer. Even though the practices of different translators were not the result of any deliberate effort or concentrated planning, it shows that they were responding to all these debates what was ‘good literature’ and what was ‘Muslim literature’ through these works. It

suggests that parallel to the growing alienation of Punjabi Shahmukhi writers, there seems to be a trend towards an assertion of their Muslimness. The conclusion will then highlight the importance of this moment to the position of Punjabi in postcolonial Pakistan and further avenues for research.

II. Striving to be Seen: Punjabi Under Colonial Rule

To understand the real force of the colonial project in influencing Punjabi literature, it is necessary to situate Punjabi in its distance from the colonial eye foregrounded by the colonizer's deliberate disregard for it as a literary or administrative language. In British-administered areas, local languages were incorporated into official policy to ensure communication with the population at large. This had been the policy since 1837 when "Act 29 of 1837 replaced Persian with Indian vernacular languages. While administration at the highest levels would continue to be conducted in English, the act called for administration at provincial and local levels to be in a local Indian language" (Mir 2010, 40). To ascertain which languages would be used in their regions, administrators had to determine the languages spoken most commonly in their jurisdictions. However, because of the dialect variations of different languages and the fluidity of any linguistic boundaries that could coincide with administrative jurisdictions, the decisions came down to the discretions and preferences of local officials, as we shall see in the case of Punjabi.

When the East India Company annexed Punjab in 1849, Persian had been the official language. The Sikh empire had chosen to continue Persian as the language of court as it had been under Mughal rule (Grewal 1990, 112). Once the East India Company annexed Punjab and established the Punjab Board of Administration for its governance, the implementation of Act 29 took a different turn. The Board, responsible for deciding which language to use for administration, "should have chosen Punjabi" since "Colonial sources identified Punjabi (or dialects of Punjabi) as the language spoken by a majority of the province's inhabitants" (Mir 2006, 406). Instead, the Board opted for a two-language policy which instituted Persian as the language of the court for the West of the Punjab and Urdu for the East. However, in 1854 the policy was changed, and Urdu became the single language of Punjab's administration. The sources that document the limited use of Urdu in a province where it was now going to

dominate include a note penned by John Lawrence, the Board's president in 1849 which stated that "It should be considered that the Urdu is not the language of these Districts [and] neither is Persian" (qtd. in Mir 2010, 41). However, Lawrence went on to note that Urdu was well-suited to be the language of administration because it was "well understood by the majority of officers" (qtd in Diamond 2012, 310). Jeffrey Diamond (2012) has noted that Urdu was not chosen as the administrative language of Punjab by "the highest levels of government" but rather by the local officials who commanded significant influence. Most of these officials who had been sent to Punjab post-annexation had been taught and trained at Haileybury College in the North-Western Provinces, where Urdu was the official vernacular (308). In the debates regarding the choice of vernacular for administrative purposes at the Punjab School of Administration, these officials had considerable influence in persuading the policy (309). In fact, "Urdu was used by the elite of all religious communities [in Punjab] who worked with the British at the time" (Diamond 2009, 173) which explains its influence on the government's language policy.

The relegation of Punjabi did not end in the administrative sphere. For many Englishmen, Punjabi was no more than a "barbaric" dialect or perversion of Urdu. It was claimed by Judge A. W. Stogdon, a Judge in a Divisional Court of Jullundur, in a letter dated 3 August 1895 that "I am of the opinion that [Punjabi] is an uncouth dialect not fit to be a permanent language" (qtd. in Chaudhry 208). Prior to this, in May 1877, the Punjabi University College Senate created a committee to consider whether Punjabi was at all a literary language. Some of the senators in attendance had argued that Punjabi was "a dialect of limited use in the Punjab…without [a] written literary tradition" (Mir, 2010: 62). The emphasis on a written tradition for constituting 'languages' was one of the primary reasons that Punjabi was relegated to the classification of a dialect. It was seen as "predominantly oral" and spoken by "illiterate" people (Diamond, 2012: 293). These beliefs were confirmed

through colonial epistemological tools such as the Census of 1868 which recorded that only 2% of the Punjabi population was literate (ibid). Punjabi was even viewed as an uncouth perversion of other languages and scripts as stated by Captain A. R. Fuller, the Director of Public Instruction in Punjab in 1862 that "Punjabee is merely a dialect of Urdoo, and as a written language it makes its appearance only in the Goormookhee Character, a bastard form of the Nagree" (ibid; 303). This statement can be read for the way it strips Punjabi of any independent status as a language, relegating it to the paradigm of 'perversions', and also for the all-out dismissal of Punjabi in the Shahmukhi character which had a rich literary tradition of its own. This dismissal of Shahmukhi was informed by the Western colonial perspective of relationship between languages and script, which the paper shall now explore.

The colonial attitude towards Punjabi was predominantly informed by notions of what constitutes a "language" – a category that was exclusively Western. Jeffrey Diamond has noted that the official perspective on Punjabi was influenced by "conceptions of languages [which] rested upon a notion of a unique literate-textual canon or tradition and distinct forms of grammar" (2012; 302). For this reason, textual productions in Gurmukhi, mostly from the Sikh tradition, are seen as works of Punjabi even though they are linguistically heterogeneous. Anne Murphy has argued that "teleological accounts of modern languages" use scripts to create literary histories and "a genealogy for Hindi was constructed out of the use of the Devanagari script, the same was done for texts in Gurmukhi" which overlooked the significant fact that in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Punjabi was "being developed as a literary medium for the creation of superb verse by Muslim poets" (Murphy, 2018; 70). Moreover, in colonial linguistic classification, "commonly spoken languages were understood as fallen, broken, or corrupt versions of some pure, authentic, coherent, logically formed prior language" (Cohn, 1996; 33). In this vein, "colonial knowledge about languages institutionalised the so-called distinction between 'classical' and 'vulgar' tongues", which

placed “vernaculars like Punjabi at the lowest rung of this linguistic scheme” (Kazmi, 2018; 118). Due to the perceived absence of a textual canon, coupled with studies documenting the ‘oral’ nature of the language, Punjabi was not accorded the status of a “language”.

Once Punjabi language had been dismissed by the colonial state and Urdu taken up as the vernacular of Punjab, “it became logical to use it as the language of an incipient public sphere” (Mir, 2010; 59). Urdu became the language of instruction in schools as well, with great support from William D. Arnold, the first Director of Public Instruction of Punjab (Kamran, 2008; 16). These developments led to greater interest in Urdu, for instance through the establishment of the Anjuman-e Punjab by Dr. Leitner in 1865. The Anjuman, a society for the promotion vernacular literatures, became the breeding ground for reform in Urdu poetry through the work of individuals like Muhammad Husain Azad. Efforts such as these were a direct result of the colonial policy and not independent of its patronage either. As Frances Pritchett notes the Anjuman “was actively supported by leading British officials, including the commissioner, the deputy commissioner, officers of the Department of Public Instruction, and even the lieutenant governor himself” (32). At the time of the Anjuman’s conception, Dr. Leitner was the Principal of the Government College Lahore which shows the entangled networks of state administrative policy, educational policy and the culture that thrives in the public spheres. Because of such interventions, “by 1883, eleven of the thirteen vernacular language newspapers published in Lahore were in Urdu” (Talbot and Kamran, 2016; 35). Urdu’s trajectory reveals the importance of state recognition and support to the development of languages at this time. State patronage also furthered the cause of Urdu literary production directly through “rewards for commendable works, the creation of textbook committees to oversee the production of Urdu schoolbooks, hiring translators, publishing and translating works suited for use in schools, and publishing and subscribing to Urdu newspapers of various descriptions” (Mir, 2010; 56).

The state patronage received by Urdu was also a necessity of the times. Prior to 1857, Urdu writers had depended on patronage from royal courts to sustain themselves and their craft. After the decline of courtly culture, writers struggled to find alternative forms of recognition and payment for their work, and state patronage provided that opportunity. Appealing to the state's sensibility opened economic opportunities for struggling writers. Muhammad Hussain Azad and Altaf Hussain Hali, two of Urdu's most important writers at this time flourished due to this patronage. Azad's association with Leitner had brought him the opportunity of working on the Anjuman's Education Committee and later, becoming a paid lecturer in 1867 (Diamond, 2009; 164). Hali arrived in Lahore after the death of his patron, the Nawab of Jahangirabad, in 1869 and found employment as a Translator at the Punjab Government Book Depot, and was also acquainted with Dr. Leitner and partook in his *mushairas* which promoted modern Urdu poetry (Kamran, 2016; 3). Both of these individuals, trained in classical poetic traditions found employment opportunities because of their affiliation with Urdu at a time when the British were investing in it. While these new forms of patronage operated under an entirely different discursive framework to what was present in the court culture, they nonetheless facilitated writers and literati by assimilating them into the modern literary landscape which was intertwined with government policies, educational institutes and print markets. Indeed, Azad's "support of the British was very practical; he was an employee of the government and received government patronage" (Diamond, 2009; 164). This patronage helped him publish *Sinin-e Islam*, which was used to teach religious scholars. His book's publication and dissemination both profited from his proximity to state apparatus.

However, these opportunities in Punjab were limited to Urdu writers and did not extend to Punjabi. Arguably, this created an aspirational model for Punjabi literature – in becoming like Urdu, Punjabi writers perhaps believed that they could make Punjabi apparent,

even useful to the state. If considered this way, the observation made by nearly all Punjabi literary historians that "the proliferation of the Urdu language greatly affected Punjabi literature. Punjabi poetry and prose began to be written like that in Urdu. Urdu diction and metaphors increasingly entered the Punjabi language" (Hashmi, 2009; 223). While scholars have suggested that Punjabi was following in the trend of modernity by using the prototype of Urdu, I would suggest that Punjabi writers had a financial aspiration to reap the kind of benefits that Urdu writers were getting. I suggest that Punjabi needs to be placed within the broader trajectory of Orientalist literary influence and colonial knowledge production policies in the Indian subcontinent to better understand the development of its expressive modes and ideas. Even when placed deliberately outside the colonial legal and linguistic institutions, it was still very much within its sphere of influence because of the all-pervasive impact that colonial modernity had on literary production.

Punjabi did not suffer at the hands of the British alone. Even Punjabis, particularly urban Muslims, actively dismissed the cause of Punjabi language and literary development. The prose works produced by the Fort William College had institutionalized Gilchrist's view that Hindi/Hindavi were "the exclusive property of the Hindu alone", presuming that "Moosulmans will be more partial to Arabic and Persian," while the "Hindoos will naturally lean most to the Hinduwee" (qtd in Khan, 2021; 64). Gilchrist had identified "Hindustani" as the middle register which utilized "Persian, Turkish and Arabic sources" (ibid), formulating what would become known as Urdu. When Urdu was recognized as the vernacular for Punjab, the Hindus, influenced by the Arya Samaj, began to oppose the decision. In response, the Muslims advocated for Urdu as their national language, leading to a decline in interest in Punjabi (Hashmi, 2009; 223). In fact, communal opposition strengthened Muslim support for Urdu to the extent that it identified "Urdu as *the* Muslim language" (Shackle 383). The exclusivity emphasized here shows how Punjabi Muslims writing and expressing themselves

in Punjabi suddenly found themselves outside of the religio-nationalist collective and the community associated with it. This exclusion was intensified through the Punjabi-Urdu debate of 1909, in which elite and influential Muslims rallied for the support of Urdu against Punjabi. The paper will look at this conflict in more detail, and its effects of Muslim Punjabi writers in the following chapters.

At the same time, it was the Sikhs who had taken up the cause of Punjabi under the banner of the Singh Sabha Movement (Hashmi, 2009; 223). Because of this, any kind of support for Punjabi came to be seen as an Anti-Muslim activity (Rahman, 2007; 76). In fact, the Muslim League, representative of the Muslims of India, was front and center in opposing Punjabi as a possible administrative language for Punjab, as outlined in "Resolution 8 adopted in the fourth session of the League at Nagpur in December 1910 [which] declared: The AIML deplores the persistent attempts that are being made in various forms to set up what are called Hindi and Punjabi as the vernaculars of the United Provinces and the Punjab respectively" (qtd. in Rahman, 2006; 76). At the same session, Sheikh Zahur Ahmed had claimed about the language that it was "Babylonish jargon, by courtesy called Punjabi" (ibid). Added to this, the British had associated Punjabi exclusively with the Gurmukhi script to the extent that colonial records "often used the terms Punjabi and Gurmukhi interchangeably" (Diamond 2012, 304). It was assumed that Gurmukhi was "the standard script for Punjabi" (ibid). This assumption reinforced to Muslim nationalists that Punjabi was associated with the Sikh tradition.

While this scenario implies that Punjabi literary practices were largely free of the control of the state or demands of burgeoning Muslim nationalism, it also shows how this independence kept Punjabi writers far from the benefits that Urdu writers reaped and the opportunities available to them. This explains the changes that began to take place in Shahmukhi Punjabi literature; an increase in the number of prose works, translations of Urdu

and Persian texts, and the rise of political and moral poetry (Qureshi, 1989; 144 and Hashmi, 2009; 224). These changes point to the crisis of Punjabi literature, particularly in the Shahmukhi script, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century – Punjabi writers were troubled with a perceived sense of inadequacy of their own literature (in the views of the British who considered it a non-literary dialect and the Muslims who considered it anti-Muslim) which ushered the need for reform; a reform which would follow the model of success that was Urdu. It was due to their influence on Urdu that Oriental literary practices, rooted in colonial technology and patronage, compellingly affected the print culture of Punjabi – a language that they had not even acknowledged, let alone aimed to influence.

However, this could not have been possible without creating a sense of 'lack' in Punjabi literature itself. The perceived sense of a 'lack' stemmed from its inability to fit the parameters of a successful language set by the state. This 'lack' is also what inspired the move towards the inclusion of translated works in the Punjabi corpus. Translation allowed Punjabi writers to incorporate successful works into their own corpus and thus associate with, or at least speak to, the literary culture they were excluded from. Translation of a state-sponsored and widely popular text such as *Bāgh-o-Bahār* can be seen as an aspiration to a cultural capital, a point that this essay will elaborate on in the later section. André Lefevere argues that translation of cultural capital is a "means by which one attains to a socially credentialed and therefore valued speech" (Lefevere 43). This impulse to borrow cultural capital is more compelling in a literary tradition that is made to feel an insufficiency in its own canon and the cultural capital serves a point of entry into the dominant textual tradition (translations) for Punjabi. It has also been observed that "a culture actively seeking to renew itself would translate more texts than a culture which saw itself as culturally self-sufficient" (Bielsa and Bassnett 9). Thus, I situate the formal practice of translating literature in Punjabi as a by-product of Orientalist episteme and the colonial institutions that enabled it, which

inscribed a ‘lack’ onto the existing Punjabi literature and ushered the need for formal, state-recognized texts to be inserted into the Punjabi textual tradition in the form of translations.

III. Literature Review

Anindita Ghosh has aptly pointed out the inadequacy of scholarly attention given to print culture in colonial India as a site for "significant struggles for power tak[ing] place among different social groups" (2006; 12). In the case of Punjabi, the most dominant voice in attempting to fill this gap has been that of Farina Mir. In her rigorous study of Punjabi print culture, Mir has mapped out the development of Punjabi print culture and its effects on the *qiṣā* tradition in the period of colonial rule (1849-1947). Mir relates the marginalization of Punjabi, which has been discussed at length in the previous section, to "Punjabi's survival and continuous vitality through the colonial period [which] signals a discernible limit to colonial dominance in British India" (2006; 4). She argues that "Punjabi literary culture operated at considerable remove from colonial institutions and venues" which gave it "relative independence from the colonial state" resulting in "continuity with precolonial practices" (ibid). According to Mir's study of the *qiṣe* produced in this period, because the literature was "not directed at the state, it had amazing traction in Punjabi society, incorporated a diverse range of people around the practices of literature, and represented shared social and cultural values" (2006; 99).

Even though Farina Mir's work has arguably been one of the most influential in informing the debates regarding colonial Punjabi print culture in the past two decades, it is not without its limitations. Earlier works, such as that of Harjot Oberoi, have already evidenced how colonial laws in Punjab had communalized identities for instance the "older, pluralist paradigm of Sikh faith was displaced forever by a highly uniform Sikh identity" (Oberoi 1994, 25). Other have noted how the retelling of the Punjabi past "was reconfigured to meet the challenges arising out of the modernizing impulse of the colonial state, thereby undercutting earlier social and religious practices that were shared by different communities" (Minocha, 2020; 15). Engaging directly with the impact of these changes on literary output,

Anne Murphy has highlighted that while the *qiṣā* tradition did enable "the continuance of cultural forms," it was also "engaged towards the production of modern literary works as a part of a global conversation in the latter part of the period" (2018;71). She highlights that "Punjabi literary formation" is "as strongly associated with modernist and progressive literary developments as it is with continuing story-telling traditions" (ibid). Murphy supplements her argument by presenting the case of "communally charged literature" produced during the same period as Farina Mir's study and often even by the same persons who authored the *qiṣē* that Mir studies (2018; 72). Taking cue from Murphy's postulation, one can see that while Mir's argument holds true for the particular set of *qiṣē* that she chooses to look at, it lacks a holistic survey of "Punjabi literary culture" required to make the general claim that it "operated at considerable remove from colonial institutions" (2006; 4). My intervention in this debate will thus position itself in opposition to her statement that "Punjabi literary culture offers a particular instance of stability through a period usually marked for its ruptures, as people and institutions traversed the divide between precolonial and colonial rule" (ibid). This paper will focus on one such moment of rupture, that too within the *qiṣā* tradition, which represents how the tools and apparatus of the colonial state influenced Punjabi literary culture.

One of the most significant contributions to the scholarship examining the influence of colonial linguistic policy in Punjab has come from Tahir Kamran who has emphasized the inescapability of colonial epistemic tools in Punjab due to which "the identity of the local people was re-inscribed and with the introduction of census and ethnographical surveys etc, divergent social groups became conscious of themselves being different as exclusive identities" (2008; 16). He makes a case against Partha Chatterjee's framework of an "inner domain" in the colonial society which bears "'essential' marks of cultural identity" while the "outer domain" is influenced by Western modernity (2008; 13). Using K. N. Panikkar's

argument that "there was no sphere of culture, inner or outer, which remained beyond colonial reach", Kamran notes that Punjabi culture was radically transformed by colonial annexation, including linguistic domains (ibid). He recognizes that "colonial masters not only assumed power over the physical self of the colonized but also made them to internalize the cognitive structures rooted specifically in the Western knowledge system" (ibid). While his analysis explains the communalization of identities during this period, especially the use of "language as an identity marker", it focuses only on Punjabi insofar as it was revoked by the Muslims in their advocacy for Urdu. The impact of the "cognitive structures rooted specifically in the Western knowledge system" (ibid) on Punjabi literature remains unstudied; a gap I attempt to fill.

My paper will look at the communalization of language in the Punjabi-Urdu debate in which Muslim elite vehemently opposed the cause of Punjabi. I will then study the impact of such communalization on literary production by studying the language of the *qiṣē* that were translated into Punjabi in the early twentieth century to show how the colonial epistemological project affected the production of Punjabi literature and also to prove that it was the not the space of shared cultural values that it is generalized to be. Even if the works of translations do not depict the general pattern or dominant trend of Punjabi literary production at the time, they do surely represent a moment in which "colonialism introduced fundamental discursive and institutional rupture within indigenous structures" (Naregal, 2001; 153). By studying the attempt of Punjabi writers to speak to the state and politically influential Muslims, we can understand these translated works as the site for "significant struggles for power tak[ing] place among different social groups" (2006; 12).

IV. Muslim Nationalism in the Punjabi-Urdu Debate

The Punjabi-Urdu debate of 1909 was a formative moment in aligning the Muslims behind the cause of Urdu and rallying against Punjabi. While the Hindi-Urdu conflict has gotten significant scholarly attention, the Punjabi-Urdu conflict has remained understudied. As I will show in the proceeding discussion, this was an important moment for the way it formulated an exclusivity around participation in the Muslim community, one in which linguistic loyalty was intertwined with religious identity, particularly in the Punjabi context. The section will use news reports on this debate from two newspapers. *The Times of India* was an English language newspaper with a wide circulation in both India and Britain. In 1909, its editor was Sir Stanley Reed. *Paisa Akhbar*, was an Urdu language newspaper owned and edited by Maulvi Mehboob Alam and first began publication in 1887. The newspaper was known to "exercise a good influence on the public" and it had "by far the largest circulation in the Punjab on account of its cheapness" (Barrier and Wallace, 1970; 102).

The debate itself was ignited by a convocation speech given by P.C. Chatterjee, the Vice Chancellor of Punjab University, in which he suggested that Punjabi should replace Urdu as the medium of instruction in educational institutes (The Times of India[2], 31 March 1909; 5). This proposition was met with vehement opposition from the Muslims who gathered in protests and held conferences to voice their fury. It was reported that the "Amritsar session of the Mahomedan Educational Conference vehemently opposed this idea" (ibid). The *Paisa Akhbar* claimed that this speech caused such a fear amongst Muslims that they were going from town to town holding protests (12 April 1909; 6)[3]. On April 8 1909, a

[2] Referred to as TOI from here on.

[3] Quotations from the *Paisa Akhbar* are all my translations. Where placed in quotation marks, they are literally translated, as true to the original as possible. The absence of quotation marks would indicate that I have paraphrased the original.

demonstration held by the Anjuman Jamaat-e Islam in Lahore, which was reportedly attended by thousands, passed a resolution demanding the continuation of Urdu as the language of instruction (Paisa Akhbar, 10 April 1909; 7). This demonstration and its resolution were endorsed by the All-India Muslim League session held at Aligarh (TOI, 14 April 1909; 7). On the other hand, the cause of Punjabi was taken up at the Sikh Educational Conference (TOI, 13 April 1909; 8) which was held at Punjab University, the same place where P.C. Chatterjee had given the contentious speech. Punjabi was supported predominantly, though not exclusively, by Sikh groups such as the Chief Khalsa Diwan (TOI, 3 May 1909; 7). This debate was also taken up at the "General Education Conference [which] met in Lahore under the presidency of the Director of Public Instruction", where supporters of Punjabi and Urdu debated at length but failed to reach a conclusion (TOI, 16 April 1909; 9).

The Punjabi-Urdu debate did not amount to any policy changes and Urdu continued to be the language of administration and instruction in Punjab, with the provision that Urdu should be simplified so that it is closer to the "spoken language of the people" (TOI, 3 May 1909; 7), which can be seen as a success for Urdu and its proponents. The response of the colonial officials to these debates is heavily laced with a pragmatism and logistical concerns. Just as scholars have shown that the initial choice of Urdu as the official language of Punjab was to facilitate administrators, here too the concern was similar. Louis Dane, Lieutenant Governor of Punjab at the time, claimed that while his sympathies were with the Sikhs who wanted to improve "their" language, he could not overlook the "difficulties of standardising Punjabi for educational purposes" (ibid). In his annual report for 1909, John Cornwallis Godley, the Director of Public Instruction in Punjab noted that the desire to institute Punjabi as medium of instruction was "localized", and he too suggested that the Urdu diction of textbooks be simplified instead (Paisa Akhbar, 15 April 1910; 5).

While the debate may have been inconclusive in affecting any real policy changes, it was quite telling for the way that it revealed the motivations of different stakeholders and directed the discourse around language politics in India. Because this paper is concerned with the position of Muslim Punjabi writers at the time, I will focus on the Muslim perspective in this debate to show how the exclusivity of participation in Muslim brotherhood was formulated through language politics. What Anandita Ghosh has argued for linguistic formation that "normative linguistic and literary boundaries bear the imprint of the key articulating groups" (2002; 13), I would extend to the application of these boundaries to linguistic communities. The "linguistic elite with greater access to the power structure than other speech or dialect communities" (ibid) also had the power to determine who could be included or excluded from that speech community.

The formation of a Muslim religio-nationalist identity around the Urdu language, bears the imprint of the *ashraf* [elite] class which benefitted from its prevalence in colonial administration and bureaucracy. One evidence of this is that at the demonstration held in Lahore on 8th April 1909, the opening speech was made by Munshi Mehboob Alam, the editor of *Paisa Akhbar,* and the resolutions were passed in the presence of Maulvi Mumtaz Ali, owner of the Rafah-e Aam Press and the Principal of the Islamia College. Other speakers included a District judge and a law barrister (10 April 1909; 7). The presence of these individuals together represents great power of discursive formation and access to tools of disseminating that discourse. While this may seem like it is stating the obvious, the Punjabi-Urdu debate presents a unique moment of self-consciousness on part of this elite class which recognizes and vocalizes its positionality as the elite and simultaneously recognizes its power to speak for "all" (Muslims). The recognition of this power is also an instant in which the silence of the subaltern is realised, unchallenged and deliberately occupied.

Weighing in on the Punjabi-Urdu debate, the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* wrote that the "Mahomedans" feared the displacement of Urdu (TOI, 31 March 1909; 5). The *Gazette* was published by the Scientific Society of Aligarh which primarily translated Western texts into Urdu and Hindu in order to promote Western ideas and education. Evidently an elitist institution of upper class, educated and urban individuals, this society had the tools of the printing press and thus of discursive formation. Referring to Punjabi as "defective" and "backward" (ibid) shows that the writers of this article are associating themselves with the institutions of modernity and progress through their alignment with the ideas of the colonial state and are thus able to situate Punjabi outside of the discursive sphere of modernity by calling it "backward". In doing so, the writers acknowledge, or at least perceive, the distance of Punjabi writers and enthusiasts from the tools of the state and use that gap to amplify their own voices. It is also important to note here that the article from the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* has been reprinted in the *Times of India*, which had a much larger readership and audience. There have not been any articles reprinted voicing anti-Urdu opinions.

Similarly, an editorial piece in the *Paisa Akhbar* compares Punjabi and Urdu by saying that the latter has reached "the heights of culture and refinement through progress" while the former remains a "boli" [spoken language] (9 April 1909; 6). By relegating Punjabi through its oral status in direct comparison to what is termed as "progress" for Urdu, it becomes clear that progress is intended to mean textual developments within the framework of Western knowledge production. This statement, produced in an Urdu newspaper printed via Western technology (the printing press) is self-referential in a way that it consciously understands its power of inserting itself in a modern discursive space in which it considers Punjabi the outsider. It thus speaks for Punjabi within a space where it assumes Punjabi does not have a voice and thus self-consciously fills in the gap of its silence by reinforcing its inability to enter the discourse.

Moreover, the *Paisa Akhbar* also uses its self-conscious discursive power to speak for the entire Muslim community, just as the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* had done. It claims that "all the Muslims of Punjab do not want their children to be taught in any language but Urdu" (10 April 1909; 8). In an editorial, the newspaper claimed that the Punjabi-Urdu debate at the General Education Conference in Lahore was along "religious and national lines" in which all "Sikh and Hindu members, except a few residents of Delhi, were supporting Punjabi and all Musalmans were against it" (7 May 1909; 2). Here again, the newspaper claims to represent the opinion of "tamām" [all] Muslims. In fact, it even claims that all books on Islamic theology, law and jurisprudence are written in Urdu (25 May 1909, 3), hence demarcating that religion cannot be accessed through any other linguistic route, and by association, neither can religious belonging. In fact, it clearly demarcates that Punjabi is the language of a "small Sikh nation" [*qaum*] (9 April 1909, 2) and even claims that they have made it their "*qaumi dharma*" [national duty] to attack Urdu and replace it with Punjabi (15 April 1910; 5). "*Dharma*" commonly refers to religious duties, obligations or codes such as the Hindu dharma. By using it in this context, it is clear that support for Punjabi is ousted from within the circle of religious belonging.

With Urdu associated exclusively to the religious identity of "all" Muslims, writers of other languages would have found it incredibly difficult to insert themselves into the religious community or its articulation. The exclusivity of participation in Muslim community-formation via Urdu would have created a crisis for Punjabi Shahmukhi writers. The translated works in the next section will show how some of these concerns were reflected in the way that Muslim Punjabi writers tried to mold their work according to all the paradigms that had given Urdu state legitimacy and the mark of Muslim representation.

V. Translations in the Realm of Punjabi

Translation as a 'literary' practice in India was institutionalized at the Fort William College. Set up as an institution to train the employees of the East India Company, particularly with regards to learning vernacular languages for governance, the College reached far beyond its intended influence over the literary-linguistic landscape of India. Its influence was spread through the massive popularity of the works undertook and produced by "a small group of European lexicographers and translators, including John Gilchrist, Edward Warring, and the Baptist missionary William Carey, along with their teams of native assistants, including Mir Amman, Mir Sher Ali Afsos, Lalluji LaI, and Rarnrarn Basu, [who] produced the models for standardized prose in several of the vernacular languages of lndia" (Mufti, 2016; 122). The far-reaching effects of their work were the result of the textbooks they produced for linguistic education. "Thousands of books", of which *Bāgh-o-Bahār* by Mīr Aman was one, "were translated from learned languages such as Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian" (Bhatnagar, 2012; 75) into "prose works in two distinct forms of the North lndian vernacular, to be called 'Hindi' and 'Hindostani'" (Mufti ibid). The College also managed to systemize a "translational technology, in the form of language grammars and dictionaries" which "authorized the entire colonial translational project" (Dodson, 2005; 809). In fact, the College managed to create an entire systematic professional industry around the practice of translation which employed "munshis, pandits, qazis, vakils, schoolmasters" (Cohn 1996; 21) and printers and publishers.

Here, I wish to highlight that the importance of Oriental translations is not just for the way that they inserted translation as a mode of expression into Indian vernacular literature, but how it created a mode of expression that was entirely reliant on colonial technology, patronage, literary conceptions, cultural perceptions, and research. Building off of Mufti's idea that "Jones helped to establish Oriental translation as a distinct mode of action…linked

in direct ways to the exigencies of colonial governance or at the very least reliant upon the conceptual systems and institutional frameworks put in place by the colonial state and the international imperial system (2016; 102), I propose that the force of this translation project lies in the fact that the product carries its process; that when a translation project is undertaken in the Indian colonial context, it takes the systems embedded within it alongside, and that it necessarily reproduces the structures and categories that led to its conception.

Veena Naregal has rightly pointed out that the strength of such colonial projects lay not in the content that was produced but rather "the *institutional* dimensions of these discursive interventions" (2001; 102). Applying this idea to colonial discursive practices, she explains that "the ability of colonial power to reproduce and disseminate the authority of Western norms and notions of culture, communicative exchange, and cognitions impels us to think of translation as absolutely endemic to the construction of colonial discourse" (ibid). Translation had become a form of subjectivity and articulation in which the colonial subject was constantly receiving, translating, and responding to the knowledge structures put in place by the colonizers. Translated works, amongst other "textual subsets" of the modern book, became the "the dominant modes through which literariness and literature came to be understood and denied in the colony" (Khan, 2017; 171). In order to participate in the colonial discursive project which had provided material benefits to writers of languages like Urdu that had state endorsement, Punjabi writers would have to produce literary texts that fell within the new classificatory boundaries of what constituted 'literature'.

In the Punjabi-Urdu debate, one of the recurring arguments for the indispensability of Urdu was that many texts had been translated into this language. Under the framework of colonial episteme, translations had become a form of social currency to measure the 'usefulness' of the language. Translations became the hallmark of a language being a repository of knowledge and thus a route for access to the knowledge. It is important to bear

in mind that what is "knowledge" was also defined through the same colonial, educational frameworks which instituted how it could be accessed. At this moment in history, translations were a mode of participation in colonial episteme and its related institutions, rather than a mere literary practice.

In support of Urdu, the *Paisa Akhbar* often reiterated that Urdu is unmatched by Punjabi as a repository of knowledge because of the number of works that have been translated into Urdu. One article claims that Urdu is indispensable to the Muslim community because the Quran and works of *Ahadith* have been translated into it (26 April 1909; 3), as well as other Islamic religious texts pertaining to law and theology (26 May 1909; 3). It even claims that Urdu is so "commonly understood" that "the religious texts of almost all religions in Hindustan have been translated into Urdu" including the Granth Sahib which the newspaper claims was originally in "Punjabi" (9 August 1909; 3). The newspaper also boasted of other "educational" and "medical" works having been translated to Urdu (27 May 1909; 3) making it the more "sensible" option as language of educational institutes. At another point, it claims that "a great testament to Urdu's universality is that most educational and literary texts from English, Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit languages have been translated into Urdu" (9 August 1909; 3). When linked to the newspapers' claims that Urdu represented "progress" while Punjabi was "backward" (9 April 1909; 6), it is evident that literary progress is defined within the discursive parameters of Western episteme and translations would seem an effective way of entering that paradigm. With the kind of crisis that Punjabi literature was facing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in which writers all around could see the benefits of colonial patronage that Urdu writers were getting by participating in the colonial knowledge-production economy, it seems only befitting that Punjabi writers would try to insert themselves in the same by using translations.

In Shahmukhi Punjabi's case, translation entered its literary practices with the publication of the Old and New Testaments in Punjabi in 1815 and 1817 respectively (Shafiq, 2016: 53). These texts were published at the Serampore Mission Press which was run by British Baptist missionaries in Bengal. The first text to be translated and published in Punjab was a Muslim religious text printed in 1868. However, the publication of this text was soon banned by British authorities because it contained some verses condemning Christianity (ibid; 57). Between 1868 and 1900, a total of twenty texts were translated into Punjabi using the Shahmukhi script, of which nineteen were Islamic religious texts including religious law, prayer and poetry and one was a collection of Persian poetry (ibid). The emphasis on the translation of religious works shows that the translation tradition had its foundation in a distinct sense of Muslimness and part of a larger Muslim project in India. According to Francis Robinson, this impulse arose out of the need to protect their Muslimness when "in the absence of Muslim power to enforce the holy law, Muslims had to use their individual conscience and will to ensure that the law was observed. To achieve this there was a new emphasis on literacy, on the translation of basic works of scholarship on guidance from Arabic and Persian into Indian languages, and on the making of them widely available through the use of the printing press" (1998; 275).

In this initial stage of publishing translations, a clear pattern emerges which points to translation as an act of accessing religion. In this data, religious translation really just implies Islam with a clear absence of Hindu texts, while the canonical Sikh texts were already in Punjabi, hence would not require translation. This is arguably a limitation of Zaheer Shafiq's research who relies on Dr. Shahbaz Malik's catalogue of Punjabi published texts which does not catalogue the texts published in the Gurmukhi script of Punjabi. However, the evidence suggests with some degree of certainty that Hindu/Sikh texts were not being published in the Shahmukhi script; a clear indication of the communalization of scripts by then.

The twentieth century saw more diversity in terms of the kind of books that were being translated into Shahmukhi Punjabi. In addition to Islamic religious texts, the other popular choices for translation in the first thirty years of the century were the poetry collection of Persian poets Ḥafeẓ-e Shirazi and Rumi, and translations of *Bāgh-o-Bahār* or *Qiṣā čār darvēsh,* penned by Mir Amman but credited to Amir Khusrau (Shafiq, 2016; 62). The *Dīvān* of Ḥafeẓ had been a popular text in the Oriental tradition since its translation by William Jones and its influence on Goethe, the German writer. It was one of the texts that, along with *Sākuntala*, had popularized translations of "Oriental" literature in the West. The tradition of translating Persian poetry was carried on by Fort William College's translation of the work of Saadi Shirazi (1802). Similarly, *Bāgh-o-Bahār,* written by Mir Amman and loosely adapted from Meer Muhammad Hussain's *Nau Tarz-e Muraṣʿā*, was published by the College in 1804 with a second edition in 1813. The pattern that emerges here shows that the books translated in Shamukhi Punjabi (besides religious works) are those that have been patronized by the colonial state or at least reflect its understanding of acceptable 'literature'. While the evidence for this statement may be scanty, when considered in conjunction to the fact that translations in Punjabi only emerge with the use of the printing press technology and not before, and that the Persian scripts is communally identified and reflect the standards established by the Fort William College in which the history of Urdu was traced to Persian and Arabic due to script, it does show that the translation projects in Punjabi are clearly emulating those of the British, in terms of their process, content and sensibility. Thus, despite its distance from the epicenter of colonial knowledge production, translation in Punjabi is a product of, and deeply embedded in, the colonial mission and its machinery.

Bāgh-o-Bahār was one of the prose fictions written by Mir Amman and published by the Fort William in 1804. Mir Amman was a munshi hired by the College to pen "literary" texts that could be used to train young English officers in the vernaculars of India. *Bāgh-o-*

Bahār was used as a textbook for training and testing in Hindustani (modern Urdu) as part of the language syllabus. Its simplicity of language and reformist morality had such an appeal for the British that it was "translated into English several times during the nineteenth century" (Khan, 2013; 31), popularly by Duncan Forbes (1860), Edward Eastwick (1877) and Lewis Ferdinand Smith (1895). The story follows the adventures of four wandering dervishes whose tribulations lead them to the kingdom of king Āzād Bakht in Constantinople, modern day Istanbul.

Bāgh-o-Bahār's afterlife can be accredited to its many translations, and not just in English. The earliest recorded translation in Punjabi is by Harsa Singh, published in 1904 in Lahore in the Gurmukhi script. The next three translations were published in 1904, 1912 and 1928 in Rawalpindi, Amritsar, and Fatehgarh respectively, all of them by Muslim translators in the Shahmukhi script. These three translations claim to be translated from the "Persian original" by Amir Khusrau while only Harsa Singh's Gurmukhi text claims to be a translation of Mir Amman's Hindustani work. It is not uncanny that the Shahmukhi texts should associate with Amir Khusrau, the Sufi poet and disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya, a Muslim saint. This association inscribes a history of Muslimness onto the text and even aspires to an inclusion in the Muslim corpus of Northern India, just as the many translations of Persian poets in Punjabi were seemingly making the effort towards. While the Gurmukhi text was written in the form of prose, the other three were translated into the poetic form of the *qiṣā*. What these poets undertake in their translations has been termed by Popovič as a "generic shift" wherein the "constitutive features of the text as a literary genre may change" (1976; 49). Changing the genre in the translation is not an uncommon choice and is usually undertaken to create "dynamic equivalence" between the source and target[4] texts which does

[4] In translation studies, the source text refers to that which is being translated or the original while target text refers to the translation.

not aim to reproduce the source text as it is but to achieve the same effectivity of the translation in the target culture (Bassnett 34). In this case, it is clear that a prose work would not enjoy the same popularity with the Punjabi audience that it had in Fort William College for Mir Amman. The aesthetic practices of the Punjabi literary community and its readership dictated that if the translated works were going to be successful it had to abide by the literary conventions of the Punjabi *qiṣā* tradition.

The next section will closely read the language of these translations to show that they mark an important moment for Punjabi, where its predominant aspiration is to be like Urdu both in popularity and its ability to perform Muslimness through a diction that can articulate and coalesce Muslim concerns and religious identity.

VI. Communalizing Punjabi: The Making of an Islamic Lexicon

The first of the Shahmukhi translations of *Bāgh-o-Bahār* was authored by Nizamuddin and published in Lahore in 1904. In the introduction to his text, Nizamuddin clearly indicates that he is cognizant of his entrance into a print public in the section explaining why he wrote this text. He writes that when people "read" this tale in Punjabi, they will be quite content and he will gain repute in this world (1904; 7). His relationship to his audience is conceived clearly in terms of a reading public that has the potential to bring him popularity. Scholars have noted that print technology and the subsequent "participation in literary cultures and publishing activities, became part of being a 'public intellectual'" as "careers in publishing gave 'public' recognition and very often, power and influence in the government spheres" (Minocha, 2020; 17).

The aspiration to be included in the discursive spheres which promoted such fame, publicity and influence can be seen for the literary trajectory that Nizamuddin situates himself in. In laying out the journey of this *qiṣā,* he claims that it was first told by Amir Khusrau in Persian, and then John "collector" [John Gilchrist] had it translated, and Mir Amman told the fantastical tale in Urdu. The tradition of harking back to Amir Khusrau had been established by Mir Amman himself who had claimed his own work to be a translation of the Persian when in fact it was loosely adapted from Meer Muhammad Hussain Ata Khan's *Nau Tarz-e Muraṣ ʿā* (Haq, 1931; 3). Abdul Haq is able to trace this due to the similarities between the two texts, and what he claims to be the absence of such a text from Khusrau's corpus. He establishes that "*Bagh-o-bahar* has followed *Nau tarz-e murassa*" because "in some places he has written words and whole sentences identical to those in *Nau tarz-e murassa"*" (ibid; 6). Abdul Haq's interrogation would then call all Punjabi translations into question as well since they too identify Khusrau's work as their source. Haq's methodology

also establishes the equivalence between all the Punjabi translations and Mir Amman's work as most of them translated verbatim.

He further says that Mir Amman made it into Urdu because Gilchrist "sahab" asked him to and "now Nizam will tell it in Punjabi" (1904; 7). By verbalizing it so, Nizamuddin seems to be suggesting that he too was, in a way, obeying the directives of Gilchrist by following that model. This assertion is telling of the way that the colonial state and its literary production at Fort William College had imprinted Punjabi literature despite its deliberate distance from the vernacular. It also goes to show the limitations of Farina Mir's claim that Punjabi literature "operated at relative independence from the colonial state" (2006; 4). Not only is Nizamuddin harkening to state-sanctioned literary production for legitimacy, even the choice of which text to translate reflects a level of self-regulation in keeping with the colonizer's literary sensibility since "'good' literature was inevitably generated within the colonizer-colonized framework" (Ghosh, 2006; 2).

The Shahmukhi text of 1904 is perhaps the least overt in its reformist impulse and Muslim performance. While the text does make some religious references that are not present in the original text, they do not necessarily have to do with religious reformism. At one instance, Nizamuddin translates "morning" from the source text to "the time of Fajr [prayer]" (1904; 11), and "afternoon" to "after the Friday prayer" (ibid). While this does convey that Nizam replaces secular time with religious time to reconfigure the space of the *qiṣā* into a religious chronotope. Such minor references indicate poetic liberty but there aren't enough instances to coalesce into a religiously directed motivation in the text.

Mufti Ajiz's translation of 1912, published in Amritsar, translation takes on the task of Islamic reformism in a much more vocal and sustained fashion. No later than three pages after he has begun to tell the tale, Ajiz pauses the narration at the point where Azad Bakht's

advisor is telling him that it is unfit for him to give up rulership and wander in the forests as an ascetic. Here he inserts an original passage of commentary in which he expounds upon how one should not turn to anyone but God in a moment of despair. He begins the passage by saying "in the Quran, God says" (1904; 9) and then goes on to tell his audience that god does not leave anyone's prayers unanswered. By starting the passage with this phrase, Ajiz seeks legitimacy for his thought from the Quranic textual tradition. He reemphasizes his position as the spokesman of the Quran when he reminds his audience in the same passage that God is "closer than the jugular vein", an almost verbatim translation of Quran 50:16. Ajiz is thus undertaking a project of simultaneous translations in which he brings Quranic teachings to his audience through his translation works.

Ajiz's Islamic reform becomes even more prescriptive after this reference to the Quran. His passage protests any form of religious heterodoxy by vilifying the shrine culture so prevalent in Punjab. He calls the practice "saint-worship" and compares it to idol worship (1904; 9). He denounces the space of the shrine by referring to it as an "idol-temple" and claims that those who go to pray there are "hordes of infidels" (ibid). Finally, he says that these people have "left the religion of the Prophet of God and went the opposite way", denouncing any form of heterodoxy. The reformism espoused in this passage undeniably suggests the influence of the Ahl-e-Hadith and Deobandi movements in the Punjab. The former was the "most active of reformist [schools] in Punjab" while the latter "exerted an increasing influence in Punjab in the late nineteenth century, particularly in the cities and towns" (Gilmartin, 1979; 492). Both decried "the common forms of religious influence centered on the shrines" and while "the Ahl-e-Hadis were the most categorical in their rejection of the forms of Islam based on the Sufi orders", the Deobandis did not approve of the "centrality of the worship at tombs in religious organization" either (ibid).

Though this text predates the formation of the Jamiat-e Ulama-e Hind, a politically active organization of Deobandi scholars, it is still important to note that this organization would have its first meeting in Amritsar in 1919, the same place where this text was written and published. The correlation can indicate a growing hold of these reformist schools in the city at the time of this text's formulation. Ajiz's text follows in the tradition of increasing Muslim reformist literature being published after 1857. These "Muslim writings, social and reform movements, festivals and popular activities, riots, and so forth revolved not around state definitions of Muslim community but around Muslim self-definition" (Gilmartin, 1998; 418). There was an increasing concern that "Muslims should know much more clearly and much more certainly than before how to behave as Muslims" and "the printing press was a crucial means" of spreading this message (Robinson, 1993; 37).

On the other hand, Allah Ditta's text of 1928 espouses a different kind of religiosity. It does not ascribe to the reformist morality of the Deobandis or the Ahle- Hadith. Instead, it preaches quite the opposite when it states that "go to the graves of the elders and recite Fatiha for them/ Make the saints your representatives to have your prayers heard" (1928; 11). Within this schema, the author invites the reader into the sphere of localized religious practices not without ensuring that those practices are brought within the fold of Islam. While he does revere the saints and reinforces their power to affect material change, it is not without reminding the audience that the power to affect material change lies with the Islamic god, since the way to access these blessings is through Quranic verses (Fatiha).

The Quran also features as an important textual source in both translations. In the 1912 version, Ajiz takes cue from Mir Amman's text wherein he says that it is a revocation of religion to lose hope in God (1804; 66). Instead of translating this sentence to Punjabi, Ajiz instead quotes the Quranic verse (39:53) in Arabic which translates to "do not despair from the mercy of God". He does not, however, provide an explanation of the verse, assuming the

audience's knowledge of its context. Similarly, in a deviation from Mir Amman's source text, Allah Ditta quotes the Quranic verse 3:158 which translates to "every soul shall have a taste of death". However, he does so after stating in Punjabi that death will hit everyone like an arrow that does not miss its shot, and in the next verse he quotes the Arabic verse and adds "as has been proven by the Quran" (1928; 19). The use of the Arabic verse after the same thought has been expressed in Punjabi, coupled with the use of the word "sābit" [proved] indicates that Ditta is seeking legitimacy for his expression through the Islamic mode of thought and indicating that his literary contributions are in line with the Islamic canon. Neither of the two translators choose to explain the Arabic verses which harkens to the concept of "publics" in which printed texts choose their audiences through "intergeneric references and circulating intelligible forms" (Warner 75). Ajiz and Ditta are both choosing their audiences as Muslim readers and those too with the cultural capital to read Arabic. They are thus inserting, or at least attempting to insert, themselves into a 'learned' Muslim print public.

A very important feature of the language of these texts which features heavily in the 1912 and 1928 versions but not quite so much in the pre-1909 text of Nizamuddin (1904), is the Persianization of the diction. The Punjabi register is heavily laced with Persian words which do not appear in Mir Amman's original work. Many of such instances indicate the translators' aspiration towards association with the 'high' culture of Persian poetry by presenting Punjabi as capable of 'refined' expression. This explains much of the Persianization of the register. The Persian words are inserted into the grammar and syntax of Punjabi in a way that at first glance would seem almost natural, a quality that is shared by the Urdu language. In a descriptive insertion which is not present in the source text, Ajiz describes the beauty of the princess by comparing her to the moon: "jalvā māh qamar dā" (1912; 19). In this verse, the subject 'badal' and verb 'nikleyā' are both in Punjabi while the

object “jalvā māh qamar” is in Persian but placed seamlessly into Punjabi syntax. This is an oft-repeated technique which appears very frequently in both Ajiz and Allah Ditta’s translations, the frequency of it such that it appears in almost every other verse.

In fact, Allah Ditta uses this technique even more frequently and with Arabic words as well. When describing the despair of the public upon Azad Bakht’s abdication of the throne, he says that no one at “ta’am” that day (1928; 9). “Ta’am” which means food or sustenance is an Arabic word which also appears in the Quran (80:24). At another instance, he tells the audience that one should not be hopeless because the “Furqān” has said so (1928; 55). “Furqān” is a word used in the Quran (25:1) to refer to itself. By choosing to use a Quranic term for the Quran itself, Allah Ditta boasts engagement with the Islamic textual tradition and canon, and by using it within his own literary output, he assimilates Islamic ethos and its canonical articulation into Punjabi literature.

An interesting technique common to both Ajiz and Allah Ditta is the creation of what I call a “hybrid” register. By this, I mean that words of Persian and Arabic are neologised to suit the Punjabi syntax. An instance when Ajiz deploys this technique is when he describes the poor condition of the dervish due to separation from his beloved; “ro ro ke vi dard firāqāñ” (1912; 34). “Firāq” which means separation, is a Persian word and an uncountable noun, which means it does not have a plural form. However, Ajiz adds the Punjabi pluralizing morpheme “āñ” at the end to create a plural word which somehow indicates the longevity of the separation. On the other hand, Allah Ditta creates the hybrid term “lā-umīd” to mean hopeless (1928; 14, 55). “Nā-umīd” is the Urdu term for hopeless which is intelligible to Punjabi speakers as well. However, Allah Ditta replaces the Urdu prefix “nā” with the Arabic prefix “lā” to create a hybrid Arabic-Urdu term in another Punjabi verse.

The oddities of these neologisms speak to the limitations of the project that Punjabi translators seem to be undertaking. These hybrid terms can be seen as microcosms for the way that these writers are forcing the inclusion of Arabic and Persian where the language does not either permit or require it. The desperation for Shahmukhi writers to assimilate Persian and Arabic elements into their texts indicates an attempt at creating equivalence with Urdu. Gilchrist, and his successors at the Fort William College such as Captain Price believed that the fundamental difference between Hindi and Hindustani (Urdu) was that the former due its vocabulary from Sanskrit while the latter from Persian and Arabic (King, 1994; 27). In the linguistic nationalism that followed, Muslims took up this narrative of Urdu's progression from Arabic and Persian and "sanctified Urdu and elevated it as the only language in the Indian Sub-Continent that is capable of articulating Muslim ethos and culture" (Kamran, 2008; 13), an argument that featured incessantly in the Paisa Akhbar as well. In creating a lexicon that is loaded with Arabic and Persian, Shahmukhi writers seem to be asserting that their literary works are also capable of "articulating Muslim ethos and culture".

This is particularly important against the backdrop of the Punjabi-Urdu debate in which the dominant voices of the Muslims associated Punjabi with the Sikh community and proclaimed support for Punjabi as anti-Muslim. Anindita Ghosh has described in the case of Bengali that the "written, Sanskritic character of the new print-language combined with an unabashedly Hindu stance" which combined with "the attempt to get rid of naturalized Perso-Arabic words from its active vocabulary made for a separation between a 'purer' Sanskritized sadhu style and lesser Islamic variant", leading to the creation of the term Muslim-Bengali (2006; 51). In a similar fashion, I would argue that the attempts of Punjabi translators after 1909 are directed towards the creation of a 'Muslim-Punjabi' in the Shahmukhi script which articulates religious reform through a Persian-Arabic dominated lexicon in Punjabi.

Conclusion

These translations of *Bāgh o Bahār* need to be seen as part of a larger movement of linguistic restructuring that underpinned the rise of religious nationalisms in twentieth century India, one that stemmed from the colonial institutions of language regulation, mainly the Fort William College, and spread through the technology of the printing press. The neat classifications of languages-for-religions (Urdu for Muslims, Hindi for Hindus, and Punjabi for Sikhs) left Punjabi Muslims wanting for recognition, inclusion, and patronage. Overlooked by the colonial state and willfully dismissed by the Muslim elite, the existing Punjabi literary tradition was inscribed with a "lack" which assumed its inability to speak to the state or for the Muslims. Punjabi littérateur responded to this moment of crisis by expanding the parameters of the Punjabi literary tradition to include translations of works both endorsed by the state and popular in Muslim imagination, culminating in the history of Punjabi *Bāgh-o-Bahār* translations. These translations reflected a particular moment in the Punjabi literary trajectory wherein Punjabi aspired to emulate the model of success embodied by Urdu. Emulating Urdu with the specific intent to make Punjabi available for Muslim cooptation necessitated a communalization of the language.

Mir's argument for the *qiṣā's* religious inclusivity is predicated on Punjabi's historical distance from the colonial state (2016; 99). However, this argument focuses solely on the pre-existing literary tradition in Punjabi and how those continued to thrive in the face of colonial modernity. Furthermore, it overlooks the expansiveness of the colonial state whose pedagogical control of knowledge-production had resulted in the creation of literary systems that were reproduced in spaces where the state itself was absent. While the colonial state had not been active in influencing Punjabi, it had been so for the development of Urdu literary forms which were closer in proximity to Punjabi and in emulating which, Punjabi had reproduced the influence of the Fort William College. The financial necessity to reform

Punjabi came from the necessity of pleasing the patrons of printing presses which were located in major cities such as Lahore and Amritsar and who consumed and appreciated these modern forms of literature. These translations offer an alternative understanding of the sociality of the *qiṣā* at this time. While traditionally the *qiṣā* had offered an inclusive and plural model of devotion, at this particular turn of history, there is an attempt to recuperate it back into an exclusive Muslim literary domain and like other forms of literature, to put it to the service of a Muslim linguistic nationalism.

The lack of scholarship on Shahmukhi literature has limited our understanding of colonial and postcolonial subjectivities, and the struggles for agency and power in the colonial state that continue to inform politics today. The untapped newspaper archive of the Punjabi-Urdu debate can prove an excellent resource in contextualizing the Punjabi-Urdu controversy that took place in Pakistan in the 1960s. It can help us understand the relationship of Punjabi to the postcolonial Pakistani state and why Punjabi activists are regularly accused "of being anti-Pakistan and anti-Islamic" (Rahman 1996; 202). It can help us situate the education reforms of 1969 which allowed Sindhi and Pashto be taught in primary schools but not Punjabi (ibid). By offering this case of Punjabi literature, this paper has shown how expanding the archive opens up possibilities of reevaluating what we know of Punjabi literature and its relationship to colonial modernity and the postcolonial state.

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