

Religious reconstruction in wake of the European enlightenment:

Post-colonial developments in Christendom and Dar ul-Islam

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Abstract

Religious traditions are never either homogeneous or static, if only because they are constantly being reinvented by those involved. Whilst processes of reconstruction and reinterpretation of established beliefs and practice are consequently ever present, they become particularly salient in times of socio-political chaos and disruption.

Against that background this paper seeks to explore the dialectics of the ideological responses of Euro-America's new-found Imperial subjects during the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in which premises of the European enlightenment attained a position of global hegemony, and the way in which those processes have in many ways been re-discovered and further re-interpreted in the more recent post-colonial period, during which diasporic migrants from the Global South, and especially their locally-born offspring, have established thriving ethnic colonies in Europe's former metropolitan heartlands.

In doing so my analysis is primarily focused on developments in Punjab region of Indian sub-continent, and most especially within its Muslim communities, both during its incorporation into the British Raj in the latter part of the nineteenth century, as well as in the aftermath of the process of mass migration to the UK which took off a century later. But although the empirical foundations of this paper are in a sense strongly parochial in character, it is also suggested that the analytical model which I have constructed on this basis is also readily applicable to the contemporary developments throughout of Dar ul-Islam and post-colonial Christendom.

An overview

At the peak of imperial confidence in nineteenth-century Britain, when the project of liberal reform (and its program of remaking the world in its own image) encountered resistance, its universalism gave way to harsh attitudes about the intractable differences among people, the inscrutability of other ways of life, and the ever-present potential for racial and cultural conflict. When empire faced opposition or produced consequences that did not fit neatly into its vision of progress, the error was understood to lie less with the structure of imperial power, and the contradictions ensuing from its attempt to elicit social transformation through force, than in the nature of colonized societies themselves. Resistance, especially political resistance, when refracted through the imperial lens, was re-described as a deep-seated cultural intransigence to universal norms of civilization. (Mantena 2010: 9)

Do we ever learn? Much has changed since the developments which Karuna Mantena has explored in her immensely illuminating analysis of the 'Alibis of Empire' which were hammered out in the Punjab in the immediate aftermath of the Indian 'mutiny' a century and half ago. It is not just that technological developments have served to 'shrink' the global order during the intervening years: all the once-proud European empires have by now been swept into the dustbin of history, leading to substantial changes in the distribution of wealth and power as between the 'Global North' and the 'Global South'. To be sure these developments have not yet led to the

wholesale elimination of the global hegemony which the Imperial powers enjoyed during the previous two centuries: nevertheless their once untrammelled privileges are fading fast. Economic competition 'from below' (and most especially from South and East Asia) has led to a radical shift of the global centre of gravity of manufacturing activity from north-west to south-east; secondly, and just as significantly, the past half century has witnessed an extensive flow of labour migration from South to North, which in the European case has largely been composed from newcomers drawn from what we can conveniently identify Dar ul-Islam, such that a swathe of ethnic colonies, largely composed of Muslim migrants, have emerged in the inner areas of cities throughout the length and breadth of western Europe. In doing so, they have established themselves in the midst of a region whose indigenes have long regarded as being the very heart of Christendom.

Not that its long-standing inhabitants currently identify themselves on that basis. In the aftermath of the enlightenment the whole area, led by developments in north-west Europe, has witnessed a steady movement towards comprehensive secularisation. As a result its contemporary socio-cultural order – which varies considerably on a regional basis – is best described as 'post-Christian' in character. Nevertheless it would be idle to suggest that premises and practices of its much more active Christian past have fallen wholly into abeyance. Quite the contrary. No matter how strong the contemporary of secularisation has recently become, once considered in from the *longue durée*, it becomes increasingly clear that current developments have been powerfully conditioned by the region's historical past, as Max Weber long ago argued in his analysis of The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. So it was that the conceptual revolution let loose in sixteenth century Protestant reformation was further reinforced by rational secularism promulgated by the philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth century European enlightenment – thereby generating the conceptual foundations of contemporary modernity. As this occurred ever greater priority was given to a *Weltanschauung* in which ever greater conceptual priority was given to the premises of rational, secular (and hence steadily more disenchanting) individualism, such that what Max Weber elegantly identified as the metaphysically enchanted universes around which the medieval world orders had been constructed were left bobbing in its wake.

But if this conceptual revolution had – and continues to have – a far-reaching impact on the socio-cultural characteristics of Western Europe, we should never forget that the vision of enlightenment to which these processes gave rise was a specifically *European* phenomenon. Hence even though the 'enchanted' dimensions of the conceptual foundations of Christendom have by now largely dropped below its inhabitants' post-Christian conceptual horizons, it would be idle to suggest that their contemporary conceptual order has by now entirely escaped from the influence of their historically conditioned socio-cultural roots. Hence no matter how rational, enlightened, 'modern' – and hence universally applicable – the indigenous residents of the archipelagos and promontories of western portion of the Asiatic landmass may have considered their current conceptual cultural premises to be, it should be self-evident that they are in fact as much product of their own specific socio-cultural history as those deployed by the inhabitants of any other part of the globe.

I. Part One: How European Christendom came to regard its conceptual premises as universally valid

1. Historical roots

Even if Christendom in this sense has steadily detached itself from the formal premises of Christian theology, it has in no way detached itself from its socio-cultural heritage, or from the conse-

quences of its geographical location. This has led to a double whammy. On the one hand ever since the Byzantine Empire split apart from that of Rome, the western components of the Christian tradition have systematically ignored the existence of its more eastern counterparts, whether they were Greek Orthodox, Syrian, Coptic or Nestorian in character. Secondly, and just as significantly, for the past millennium the European tradition has experienced a more or less fractious relationship with its immediate geographical neighbour: the world of Dar ul-Islam. Not that Christianity was absent from Dar ul-Islam, as the Copts, the Syrians and the Nestorians can readily testify: nevertheless since the rise of Islam in the 6th century AD a major fault line emerged which ran through the middle of both the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, with occasional incursions into Spain, Sicily and the Balkans. To be sure have been many periods when trading links developed across this fault, but not infrequently these were placed by active hostility – as in the course of the crusades, for example. In more recent more recent times these disjunctions have widened one again: as the power of the Ottoman Empire slowly crumbled, France and Britain were able to colonise North Africa, as well as the Levant in the aftermath of the First World War. Their presence as colonists was by no means welcome, and in the aftermath of the Second World War it was time for the French and British Empires to suffer a similar fate.

However this time round the worm turned in an unexpected way. In the aftermath of war the greater part of Western Europe found itself desperately short of unskilled labour, with the result an ever growing inflow of young men from Dar ul-Islam began to migrate across the Mediterranean to take advantage of the opportunities which had begun to open up in what remained of Christendom. In doing so they were engaging in what can best be described as ‘reverse colonisation’ – in the sense that they entered the jurisdictions in which they and their families went on to established themselves ‘from below’, in sharp contrast to the way in which European migrants had implemented much the same operation ‘from above’ during the previous two centuries. The structural consequences of these developments have proved to be far-reaching: the current Muslim presence in western Europe is the order of twelve million strong, and is still expanding rapidly; as a result ethnic colonies made up of settlers drawn from virtually all parts of Dar ul-Islam have become an ever more salient of feature of almost every European city, precipitating ever greater feelings of alarm amongst the indigenes. Hence it is with the social, political and conceptual consequences of the dialectics of the current, as well as the historical, relationship between these two neighbouring socio-cultural jurisdictions, linked as they are by the inescapable proximity of geography – are the principal theme of this essay.

2. The globalisation of long-distance trade

Long-distance trade and the consequent redistribution of goods, ideas, and personnel on a globalised basis is in no sense a modern phenomenon. Three millennia ago the Mediterranean was a common highway for traders – as was the India Ocean, albeit on a much larger scale. But despite the extent of these networks, whether by land or sea, it was not until the beginning of the sixteenth century that these trading networks became truly global character. This was not so much because Islamic scholars (and hence the traders who looked to them for geographical guidance) were unaware that the arena within which they operated was global rather than flat: rather from their perspective, prospects for profitable trade appeared to fade rather rapidly further south they sailed down the eastern coast of Africa, just as it did when they encountered the Siberian wastes to the north of Japan. Meanwhile west Asian trade with Europe had long since implemented either over land (the so-called Silk road), or by sea up the Red Sea to Egypt, or through the Persian Gulf Basra, and from there onwards to the Mediterranean by camel caravan. Prior to the nineteenth century wealth was a firmly Asiatic phenomenon, and had been for several millennia.

From a European/West Asian perspective the rise of Islam in the seventh century AD was perceived to be extremely alarming. It was not just that Christendom appeared to have been shrunk as a result of the infidels' success in bringing Palestine, North Africa, and subsequently the greater part of Sicily and Spain under their jurisdiction: these developments also led to the Mediterranean ceasing to be a highway for long-distance trade – unless, of course, it was conducted under Islamic terms and conditions throughout its southern and eastern shores. Come the fifteenth century the resultant contradictions has become extremely severe, especially since European traders found themselves having to pay exceptionally high tariffs for goods emanating from the Indian Ocean region and beyond, to which they has no direct access, such that the greater part of the profits so generated remained in the hands of the largely Muslim traders based in Dar ul-Islam. Moreover as trade across the Indian Ocean and into the South China Sea was expanding apace, Christendom found it becoming ever more seriously disengaged – no less intellectually and scientifically than technologically – from its thriving counterparts further to the east. In other words it was becoming ever more disadvantaged in comparison with its eastern rivals. Nevertheless an answer to those problems was readily available. If the earth was global, as Muslim astronomers had demonstrated, it followed that there were at least two back-doors by means of which they could hope to get direct access to fabled wealth of Cathay: either round Cape of Good Hope and from there eastwards across the Indian Ocean, or – much more adventurously – by sailing due west across the Atlantic Ocean. With the latter prospect off in mind Columbus set off into the sunset, only to discover that a hitherto unknown land mass blocked his way to the Indies proper, and it was not until two decades later that Magellan who ultimately opened the door to globalisation when he found a channel just to the north of the storm-wracked Cape Horn which enabled him and his men enter the calmer waters of the Pacific. From there it was a long stretch yet further to the west to Indonesia, and from the further north to an archipelago which Magellan promptly christened as the Philippines. But at this point his luck ran out: he was killed in a confrontation with the indigenes, after which his ships sailed on ever further to the west, round the Cape of Good Hope and back to Lisbon. By then the final section of their route was well established: by then Vasco da Gama had rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and found his way round the Indian Ocean to Calicut in Southern India. The globe had at long last been circumnavigated.

Whilst Magellan's voyage marked the onset of physical globalisation, at this stage Europeans were still only able to fulfil the role of bit players in long-distance trade: their economies – and above all their manufacturing capabilities were for the most part far less sophisticated than those deployed by their Eastern counterparts – with significant exception of sturdy, well-armed ocean-going warships. That was not all, however. Had it had not been for the access to vast deposits of silver, and to a more limited degree of gold, in Mexico and Peru, together with their success in recruiting hundreds of thousands of slaves to extract these riches from the soil at an insignificant cost, the history of globalisation might well have followed a very different track. It was the discovery easily available bullion in the Americas made all the difference.

As those who immediately followed in da Gama's and Magellan's footsteps soon discovered, there was little interest in European products in the markets of South and East Asia. To be sure their ships were able to cause havoc at sea, since few if any of vessels already trading in the Indian Ocean region were equipped with cannon. Nevertheless it was soon apparent that they lacked the purchasing power which would enable them to participate significantly in Asian markets. From this perspective their access to American gold and silver was a godsend: it not only provided European traders, entrepreneurs and missionaries with a ready means of buying their way into Asian markets, but once reinforced by slave driven sugar-production, provided the new-

found Empires with the capital needed to construct vast mechanised factories in which to produce inferior copies of hand-made products from the orient at a substantially lower price. On this basis, Europe's Imperial powers, led by Great Britain, gradually began to surpass all their oriental competitors in terms of wealth and power, reaching a peak of global political and economic hegemony at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Since then, however, their condition of virtually unchallenged hegemony has steadily declined, slowly at first, and then ever more precipitously in the aftermath of the Second World War. Hence the various Imperial structures which once stretched right around the globe have by now collapsed, but for a small number of anomalous islets. Yet although we consequently live in a post-colonial age, none of these metropolitan jurisdictions have yet entirely lost the position of relative privilege which they had come to enjoy during the previous two centuries. The so-called 'Great Powers' still dominate the United Nations' Security Council, whilst the mean standard of living enjoyed by its inhabitants still surpasses those found in virtually all the remaining jurisdictions around the globe – at least so far.

But as we begin to push our way into the twenty-first century, this position of global privilege is unlikely to be sustained for very much longer. Whilst the pendulum of global hegemony began to swing ever more strongly from east to west after Magellan rounded Cape Horn, since the beginning of the twentieth century – when the Japanese navy sank the Russian fleet before it was able to dock safely in Vladivostok – it has begun to swing equally decisively in the reverse direction. As this has occurred, the hubristic assumption that the premises of the European enlightenment could safely be regarded as a universally applicable route towards progress, modernity, and ever greater levels of prosperity has begun to look increasingly threadbare. Indeed for those who have eyes to see, all manner of tell-tale signs of proximity of nemesis are emerging around us. It is not just that Euro-American socio-political orders are becoming increasingly unstable, no less in moral than in financial terms: in a radical turn-around the most prosperous jurisdiction in immediate the post-Imperial period is now owes trillions of dollars to jurisdictions which were amongst the worlds' poorest in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War.

Unfortunately, however, hubris invariably acts as a blindfold which renders nemesis invisible. Hence instead of facing up to the prospect of disaster, it is all too easy to act defensively by hauling up the drawbridge. So it is that Republican supporters of the Tea Party are seriously suggesting that the US can readily dispose of international debt by refusing to repay it; likewise prosperous jurisdictions all around the globe are closing ranks, and hence their borders, the better to keep invasive competitors 'from below' at bay, as well as further marginalising those whom they had allowed to enter in more prosperous times. Considered from a global perspective, their myopia is plain to see: as Canute demonstrated to his courtiers, even the most powerful ruler cannot prevent the tide rising

3. The ideological consequences European colonial expansion

But whilst these tectonic shifts in the political and economic structure of the global order are a constant background to the arguments and analyses which I have sought to develop here, as an anthropologist my ultimate concerns lie elsewhere: namely *ideological* dynamics being precipitated in the current phase of globalisation. As a result my core interest is in the cultural, conceptual, and ultimately the *religious* dynamics which have occurred as the pendulum of power and influence has swung back and forth in recent centuries, no less amongst those pressing way upwards 'from below' than amongst those operating 'from above' who are still valiantly seeking defend the privileges which they have come to enjoy during the course of the past two centuries.

In the course of so doing so I have deliberately limited my agenda by restricting my attention to developments within Dar ul Islam on the one hand, and to the way in which the inhabitants of Dar ul-Islam's ever increasing capacity for agency has precipitated all manner of alarmist reactions in post-Christian Euro-America; further to this, I have also limited my empirical gaze yet further by focussing my attention on developments the Punjab region of British India during the latter part of the nineteenth century, and the parallel developments which have occurred much more recently, as a large number of settlers drawn from what was once the principal jewel in Britain's Imperial Crown have established themselves in the United Kingdom during the course of the past half century.

Whilst my principal concern is to explore developments on a comparative basis, such an exercise cannot be implemented without taking cognisance of wider historical context on both sides of the coin. By the time the British incorporated the Punjab into their Raj following the death of Maharajah Ranjit Singh in 1840, and their disposal of the last Moghul Emperor in the 1857 insurrection, the northern section of the subcontinent had been a component of Dar ul-Islam for the best part of eight centuries. But whilst the impact of Islam on the Indic socio-cultural order had been pervasive – in the same sense that the Norman invasion comprehensively conditioned the Anglo-Saxon base which it over-rode in the aftermath of 1066 – by the time the Raj came into being only around a fifth of the population had converted to Islam. This was not particularly unusual: whilst the population of the subcontinent resisted conversion rather more actively than did the indigenes in other parts of Dar ul-Islam, religious plurality – whether Christian, Jewish, Zoroastrian or Buddhist in character – was a routine feature of all parts of the Islamic world in the pre-colonial period. Hence when the British established their Raj in Punjab, the local socio-cultural order was thoroughly Indo-Islamic in character – as was the greater part of the remainder of the sub-continent.

By contrast western Europe in general and England in particular was a good deal more homogeneous in character, especially in ethno-religious terms: not for nothing did its inhabitants regard themselves as lying at the heart of, and indeed as exemplar of, the premises of Christendom. But that certainly did not mean that they all understood the Christian tradition in the same way. Hence all sorts of sectarian divisions regularly erupted within and around the Roman Catholic tradition, of which by far the most significant was the emergence of the Protestant reformation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But whilst this precipitated a division in Christendom whose influence is still with us to this day. Nevertheless this result was intra- as opposed to an inter-religious manifestation of pluralism, which could readily be bridged in the face of confrontations with those occupying conceptual territory which was deemed to stand right outside the premises of Christendom – as in the case of Jews, Muslims and the Manichean Cathars.

In these circumstances the ideologues of European Christendom gave short shrift to religious difference, whatever form it might take. So it was that when the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, as well as the greater part of Spain fell into the hands of rapidly expanding and ever more confident world of Dar ul-Islam just as the Holy Roman Empire had begun to find its feet in aftermath of the collapse of the Rome, it did not take long before the Franks persuaded themselves that they had a sacred obligation to launch a crusade to recapture Jerusalem from the Muslim 'infidels'. However their success was severely limited: the crusaders only managed to maintain their occupation of Jerusalem for little more than a century, although their presence in *Outremer* lasted rather longer, it was not long before their toe-hold in Asia was overwhelmed by the greater power, wealth and sophistication of their allegedly 'beastly' enemies.

But whilst the Crusaders' temporary (although violent) incursion had few long-term consequences for Dar ul-Islam, other than ensuring that henceforward western Europeans would routinely be referred as *farangi*, their experiences reinforced their sense of righteousness – even though their experiences in *Outremer* brought them into contact with a commercial, scholarly and technological order which was a great deal more sophisticated than anything which was then available in Western Europe. Hence even though they promptly made the most of scholarly and ideological resources into which they were able to tap during their excursion to *Outremer* – which included Arab numerals as well double-entry book-keeping, let alone advanced understandings of medicine, mathematics and astronomy... Yet despite the immense utility of this intellectual property, its beastly source was extremely embarrassing since it served to demonstrate that the Saracens far ahead of them in intellectual sophistications.

In urgent need of ideological sleight of hand by means of which to escape this uncomfortable truth, a solution was soon devised. In the first place it was argued that Islamic scholarship was all derived from Greek sources, such that it could readily be re-labelled as being of European origin; secondly, and just as significantly, the suggestion that the revelations which had been vouchsafed to the Prophet Mohammed might have been constructed on the foundations of laid down by all the Prophets from Abraham to Jesus of Nazareth was dismissed with contumely: instead Islam and its Prophet was dismissed as a devilish manifestation of anti-Christ, whose principal purpose was to undermine and discredit the True Faith. Within that framework followed that Christians had sacred duty counter the on-going evil machinations of the anti-Christ in all its forms, no less within the bounds of Christendom than in the remainder of the globe. Hence, to cut a long story short, the practice of crusade, whether directed a deviance within in the form of inquisitions within, or the launch of world-conquering conquistadores to bring the 'good news' to the benighted residents beyond the bounds of Christendom rapidly became the order of the day – in a trope which has remained remarkably influential ever since.

4. The legitimating role of the premises of the European enlightenment

However a further dimension was added to this trope as north-western Europe became increasingly prosperous as a result of the immense flow of bullion pouring out from silver mines and cane fields of the New World helped to precipitate some far-reaching processes conceptual and behavioural readjustment in the heart of Christendom, giving rise to the Protestant reformation in theological terms, and to capitalist finance at the secular end of the spectrum. Nor was that the end of the matter: during the course of the sixteenth century these developments became ever more individualist, secular and above all a more rationalist in character, and in due course precipitated seventeenth conceptual revolutions which became the very heartbeat of European Enlightenment. Hence despite a major rear-guard action by the Catholic Church in the form a counter-Reformation, the premises of the enlightenment gained ever greater intellectual traction throughout across the length and breadth of Western Europe during the course of the nineteenth century. Yet more significantly still, this 'enlightened' form of thinking – fixated amongst other things on the prospect of facilitating ever greater personal and civic progress on the basis of free trade and more rational forms of government – came to the fore just as the global pendulum began to swing ever more firmly in favour of Euro-America at the beginning of the nineteenth century – in which the premises European Enlightenment provided a ready means of legitimizing further Imperial expansion in the form of what the French identified as a *mission civilatrice*, but which the British identified in more mundane terms as the white man's burden. However articulated, such epithets served a clear purpose: to confirm the view that the premises of European civilization were by definition more rational, more progressive, and hence more sophisticated than all others. As a result the objectives of Imperial expansion, and indeed of more contempo-

rary exercises in the form of ‘humanitarian intervention’ could be justified on secular terms: by liberating ‘the natives’ from the oppressive, unscrupulous, incompetent and exploitative rulers to whose depredations they had hitherto been subjected, and by eradicating ‘harmful traditional practices’ such as superstition, honour killing, slavery and infanticide, their victims would at long last be able to move out of the darkness and into the light of modernity.

II. Part 2: The colonizers and the colonized

Yet however much these arguments may have enabled the colonialists to convince themselves that they were engaged in a progressive moral crusade, it did not take their allegedly benighted subjects long to appreciate the hypocritical foundations of stances of this kind. Firstly the *farangi* were all too obviously enriching themselves at their expense; and on the other the ‘scientific’ claims of nineteenth century neo-Darwinist interpretations of the European enlightenment actively legitimated the premises of racism. Hence despite their allegedly progressive premises, the colonists routinely were able to argue that since the biological intellectual capabilities of ‘the natives’ was so greatly inferior to their own that they could never expect to catch up with the achievements of their new masters, even if they were to abandon the unenlightened and primitive premises in terms of which they had hitherto organised their lives.

Within the context of this conceptual framework the socio-political foundations of Europe’s post-enlightenment Imperial projects differed sharply from those of their predecessors who had been responsible for constructing Dar ul-Islam. Whilst Muslim conquerors invariably claimed a position of socio-political superiority for themselves as Dar ul-Islam rapidly overwhelmed large parts of Byzantine and Sassanid Empires, and in due course began to extend those privileges to converts, they were nevertheless readily prepared to accommodate subjects following all manner of religious traditions other than their own – always provided that their newfound subjects acknowledged the legitimacy of the Sultan’s suzerainty, as well as paying their taxes and tribute on time. India was no exception to this pattern. Hence by the time the Sultanate of Delhi was overwhelmed by the Raj, the jurisdiction over which it took control was even more pluralistic in character than the greater part of the remainder of Dar ul-Islam.

However in keeping with their established conceptual premises, at no stage did India’s new masters show any sign of following in their predecessors’ footsteps: they continued to identify England as ‘home’, and although male traders routinely acquired local *Bibis* in the early days, the more firmly the Raj established itself, the more firmly the *Sahibs* and *Memsahibs* began to carefully distance themselves from their new-found subjects in Cantonments from which ‘the natives’ were systematically excluded – unless, of course, they were servants. It followed that the executives of the Raj were true colonists, in the sense that those resident within the carefully guarded boundaries of each Cantonment went out of their way to replicate the lifestyles of the English upper-class, of which they considered themselves to be an extension, regardless of the wider context into which they had inserted themselves.

1. The Punjabi response to the imposition of Imperial hegemony

As these developments became steadily more salient in the latter half of the nineteenth century the initial response of the Punjab’s newly marginalised subalterns had a wide variety of dimensions. During the early decades of the century the region had become a thriving religiously plural jurisdiction under the leadership of Maharajah Ranjeet Singh, which was so well organised that British avoided moving troops across the River Sutlej so long as he was alive. However the succession crisis which followed Ranjeet Singh’s death in 1840 provided an opportunity for a further vital component to the jigsaw of the nascent Raj – even it took nine years and three major wars to suppress all resistance. Given that the Punjabis offered little if any support to the insurrection of 1857, not least because the Bengal Army had been played a major part in all three Anglo-Sikh wars, the brightest minds in the Empire were called in to establish an enlightened form of administration in the Punjab once order was restored,

not least to ensure that a mutiny of the kind that had been experienced in 1857 would ever happen again. Moreover as Mantena (2010) has shown, the administrative initiatives rolled out in Punjab regarded as so successful that they subsequently became a model for the British Empire at large.

The new administrative program had three main strands including the maintenance of law and order through District Commissioners administering a carefully constructed set of legal codes; a wide series of infrastructural initiatives (financed by loans floated on the London stock market) leading to the construction of roads, railways, irrigation canals across the length and breadth of the Province; and last but not least the construction of an educational system up to degree level to train the indigenous professionals which would in due course be needed to operate all these initiatives. Hence when the new English medium educational establishments fostered by the Raj came into being, members of the established Punjabi elite (who had hitherto prepared all official documents in Persian rather than Punjabi) queued up to send their sons to the new institutions, if only to ensure that they would retain their status as administrators in the 'modern' – and hence English-speaking – forms of administration being reconstructed by their new *farangi* overlords. But in doing so students at all levels promptly found themselves being inducted into an order which was no less distinctive in conceptual than in linguistic terms, whilst also including all manner of novel political, moral, scientific and technical insights.

Their reaction to these insights was complex in character. Whilst the students initially found the 'modern' conceptual order which was being laid out before them a major source of inspiration, it was not long before they began to realise that the coinage laid out before them had two sides, not least because in the course of introducing visions of technical progress to their protégés, their new-found mentors also took every opportunity to mock and disparage the religious and cultural traditions into which their parents had socialised them as being inherently 'backward', 'superstitious' and 'irrational' (Seth 2007). How, then, were they to cope with the resultant contradictions?

A number of options proved to be available: the most obvious option was to follow in their masters' footsteps by doing their best to ape all aspects of their premises and practices (or in current popular parlance to 'coconut' themselves¹) – only to find that no matter how much effort they might put into acting in this way, they were never likely to be accepted as equals by the white *sahibs*. In the face of such humiliating experiences an obvious alternative was available: to engage in what can best be described as a strategy of cross-cultural navigation (Ballard 1994). This simply entailed gaining the capacity to act and react 'as if' they were English in 'official' contexts, hence gaining the approbation of the *sahibs* on the basis of their conformity, whilst switching back – often with great relief – to even more familiar *desi* premises and practices in personal, domestic and hence 'unofficial' contexts. But however sophisticated the navigational skills of those who adopted such strategies might become, the hypocritical foundations inherent in such a stance were hard to avoid. How, then, could they best cope with the resultant contradictions?

2. Glass ceilings

The dilemmas faced by the rising generation in Punjab were far from unique: on the contrary they were subsequently replicated in every colonial jurisdiction. However they were early starters in the game, and hence among the first to realise that having overcome all the conceptual hurdles laid before them, as newly-minted graduates they would still be systematically excluded from the plum jobs in the administration, which remained strictly reserved for the *sahibs*. Hence whilst they could readily participate in the institutional structures which had been created by their hegemon, always provided that they behaved *as if* they were *sahibs*; nevertheless they were still subalterns by birth. It followed that even if they had been awarded their degrees by the University of Punjab – or indeed by the University of Oxford, if by chance they managed to get that far – they would rapidly encounter a glass

¹ Coconuts cannot conceal their brown-ness, no matter how white the flesh within them may be.

ceiling. It also followed that no matter how humiliating this process of marginalisation might be, active rebellion was *ipso facto* beyond the pale if they wished to keep the jobs for which they had worked so hard to gain access.

It followed that further up the ladder they tried to ascend, the more they would find themselves ensnared in the networks of asymmetric symbiosis which lay at the heart of the steel frame of the Raj. Head-on confrontations were question. Even the mildest complaints about institutionalised asymmetry could only be regarded as ingratitude, and hence a certain bar to further promotion; worse still, active challenges to the established order were likely to attract charges of sedition. In other words no matter how progressive the advocates of the colonial order might present the Raj as being, and no matter how much material prosperity it might have brought to the Punjabis themselves (which it undoubtedly did), the whole structure was underpinned by an inescapable disjunction. It was the *sahibs* who set the rules of the game from their military cantonments. It followed that if the indigenes wished to be agents in their own cause without attracting charges of subversion, they had no alternative but preface with their pleas for reform with an assertion that they remained the loyal subjects of the Queen-Empress, and that their only concern was to improve the already progressive the structure of the Raj. But in the face of those constraints, on what sorts of issues could indigenous reformists legitimately focus without being charged with subversion? The answer was obvious: by reinterpreting key aspects of the conceptual agenda by means of which hegemony legitimated their presence to suit their own purposes.

3. The emergence of strategies of resistance

As the students became painfully aware during the course of their studies, their new-found hegemony routinely justified their presence on the grounds that they had a righteous duty to introduce them to civilisation, framed by the premises European enlightenment, to those unfortunate enough to have fallen behind. Hence their teachers had willingly adopted 'the white man's burden' by undertaking Herculean task of sweeping away 'backward' and 'outmoded' socio-cultural institutions of the indigenes, such that they would due course be able to join the civilized world.

Yet however committed these burden-carriers may have been committed to the righteousness of their cause, it did not take long before their audiences began to appreciate the deep-rooted hypocrisy of this agenda. In particular, the expectations of this brand of invaders – of which the Punjabis had a lengthy historical experience – differed sharply from those of all their predecessors, if only because their evangelical agenda far more radical than that of any of their predecessors. Far from accommodating themselves to local religious and socio-cultural traditions, their new-found hegemony deliberately locked themselves away in their clubs and cantonments. Moreover it rapidly became apparent that their objective was not so much reform of their new-found subjects' long-standing premises and practices, but rather to eliminate them. This was just too much, especially to those who were the heirs of series of civilizations much more ancient than those of the new-found hegemony. Viewed from below – and most particularly from the perspective that of eager students who had begun to fill the newly established western-style schools and colleges – this 'progressive' agenda was nothing less than outrageous.

Not that they dismissed the prospect that their civilization might be in trouble: indeed they all agreed that it was indeed in urgent need of reform. After all, if India had managed to retain its former wealth and grandeur, the upstart Europeans would never have been able to topple its structure so swiftly, so easily, or indeed in such a contemptuous fashion. But if reform was consequently a necessity, just what shape should it take?

If there was one aspect of the premises and practices which the invaders had brought with them, and by which the rising generation were immensely significantly impressed, was the newcomers' scientific, organisational, and technological capabilities. It would clearly be madness not to take these aboard. However they were far more sceptical about the social, moral and philosophical aspects of the intruders' ideological agenda. But if change was needed, as it surely was, merely aping the premises of their rulers was not a viable solution. But given the premises to which they had been introduced during the course of their education, they concluded that they did not have to look far to identify just what had gone wrong. Just as their teachers had suggested, no matter however sophisticated the premises of their ancient civilizations may once have been, they now had become so riddled with all manner of irrelevant and superstitious accretions that they collapsed from within, so enabling the Raj to establish hegemony over them with such ease. But if that was indeed the case, it made no sense to follow slavishly in their masters' footsteps. If reform was required in order to enable India (and especially Punjab!) to regain its autonomy, it could not possibly be achieved through copy-cat Anglicisation. Rather it was much more likely to be achieved if it was grounded in a reconsideration, and above all comprehensive *reconstruction* of their ancient traditions, the better to confront the alien hegemons on their own indigenous terms.

III. The emergence of neo-fundamentalism

4. Strategies of Resistance to the Colonial Project

But having suggested that Punjab – and indeed India as a whole – was in urgent need of its own Reformation², the reformers soon ran into serious difficulties, since the socio-cultural order which they were seeking to revive and reform was profoundly plural, especially in religious terms. If the secular premises of Marxism been available in the latter part of the nineteenth century they might well have jumped on them with enthusiasm, as happened in radical circles immediately prior to partition. But given that the only ideological schema of reform to which they had been introduced was the Protestant Reformation India's reformist movements, and especially those which surfaced in Punjab, were strongly sectarian in character (Jones 2006, Kapur 1986, Ballard 1993). The earliest reform movement to raise itself over the parapet in Lahore was the Arya Samaj, whose founder, Swami Dayananda, argued that Bharat's – as opposed to Hindustan's – roots were strictly 'Vedic' in character, whose capabilities had had been eroded over the millennia as a result of a mass of deviations and misinterpretations. But whilst it was consequently fairly easy for the Arya Samajis to recruit all those who identified their roots as lying in the Vedas to their standard, as did most Hindus, they had much greater difficulty in recruiting members of sectarian groups who did not use the Vedas as their touchstone, as in the case of the Sikhs and the Buddhists for example. Hence it should come as no surprise that the Sikhs were outraged by Arya suggestion that since Guru Nanak paid no attention to Bharat's Vedic roots, he and his followers had developed a conceptual order which deviated from, and hence served to undermine the ancient roots of India's national integrity.

Faced with such slights, the Sikhs saw no reason to comply with such hegemonic demands for religious and theological conformity. Instead they began to develop a separate revivalist movements of their own in form of the Singh Sabha, one of whose favourite slogans was '*Hum Hindu*

² In this context it is worth noting that the evangelicals of the Punjab School were bitterly critical of Roman Catholicism, whose practices they regarded as being almost as idolatrous as those of the Hindus. Hence the students were well versed in the achievements of the Protestant Reformation.

nahin hai ('We are not Hindus'), a movement which was rapidly overtaken by the much more militant Akali Dal which took active steps to eliminate the long standing overlap between Punjabi Hindu and Sikh rituals and institutional practices. Hence they began to mobilise themselves as religious tradition which could be identified as being wholly distinct from the Hindu/Aryan tradition, thereby generating their own equally distinctive trajectory of neo-fundamentalist reform. Nevertheless one of the few points on which Hindu and Sikh nationalists found themselves readily able to agree was that India's vulnerability to foreign invasion had been initiated by invaders from Dar ul-Islam, whose hegemonic presence during the course of previous eight centuries had caused so much damage to the socio-cultural integrity of Bharat than the latest wave of *farangis* had no difficulty in barging their into the sub-continent.

In the face of all this it did not take long before leading members of the third (and largest) component of the Punjabi socio-religious order, the Muslims to begin to consolidate themselves in self-defence by creating their own reform movement, led by Ghulam Ahmed Mirza (Ross 2008). As a result by closing decades of the nineteenth century three mutually hostile religious reform movements, all of which were neo-fundamentalist in character the sense that they sought to re-interpret their tradition's ancient premises in such a way as to render them more congruent with Protestant expectations, had sprung into existence in Lahore, the better to challenge the scurrilous assaults on their traditions which were being mounted by evangelically-minded Christian missionaries (Ballard 1993).

It also goes without saying that these developments were initially based in urban centres, and most especially in Lahore, the home base of Punjab's newly 'progressively' educated elite. Moreover the driving force behind their initiatives were in each case as much politically as religiously oriented, if not more so this day. However it is also worth noting that they were not alone in plotting resistance to the Raj. Taking advantage of widespread disaffection amongst the peasantry, in the early 1860s Guru Ram Singh, who had emerged as the leader of the Namdhari sect, began to argue that the proper response to the Raj to rekindle Guru Gobind Singh's militant *khal-sa*. His arguments attracted widespread support in the countryside, so much so that he was able to lead nearly 3,500 followers to Amritsar to celebrate the feast of Dushera in 1867. Coming so soon after the insurrection in 1857, the British authorities were most alarmed by the way in which his followers began to boycott all the institutions of the Raj. As a result the movement was suppressed (at least temporarily³) 1872, in a public spectacle in Malerkotla, where sixty five of the Guru's followers were blown to death having been tied to the mouths of cannons.

In the face of these developments the neo-fundamentalists in Lahore kept their heads down by actively proclaiming their loyalty to the Queen-Empress, whilst simultaneously beginning to promulgate their 'progressive' reforms in the countryside. However as Oberoi (1994) has decisively demonstrated, despite the reformist efforts of the urban modernisers, quotidian the popular moral and religious premises deployed by the peasantry in domestic contexts (which were for the most part strongly 'enchanted' in Weber's sense) remained largely untouched; indeed as I myself have observed in the course of extensive first-hand fieldwork in Punjab, that is indeed still very largely the case to this day. Nevertheless it would be quite wrong to suggest that the reformers' efforts had no impact whatsoever. What did catch on was an increasingly powerful modernistic vision of *political* reform, whose principal effect was to let loose ever more vigorous efforts to sharpen ethno-religious boundaries, which gradually eroded the easy-going patterns of plurality which hitherto been a salient feature of the Punjabi socio-cultural order. Moreover this

³ The Namdhari movement remains active to this day, but its websites make no reference to the threatened insurgency led by Guru Ram Singh.

was by no means solely an outcome of the reformers ideological efforts – although it was most certainly an adjunct of the new more or less democratic social policies introduced by the Raj.

It is easy to see why. As the authorities began to take cautious steps towards the introduction of representative democracy by establishing local bodies such as Municipal Councils – if only to provide an opportunity for activists to let off steam – competition for seats rapidly became intense, not least because such arenas were one of the few areas in which members of the population at large could legitimately articulate their grievances. But whilst this consequently provided range of arenas in which political mobilisation could take place, in the circumstances in which they found themselves were such that the agendas which they chose to address were invariably heavily constrained by their acute awareness that all their debates would be subjected to constant scrutiny ‘from above’. Nevertheless competition for seats on these representative bodies became steadily more vigorous despite these constraints – although in no way did they turn out to be particularly effective training grounds for the construction of a sense of national, let alone regional, solidarity. Rather they became ever more parochial in character, most especially as a result of the markedly plural character of the Punjabi social order – let alone the limitations imposed on them by the steel frame of the Raj in which they had only been given a strictly limited degree of freedom.

5. Plurality begins to evaporate in the face of neo-fundamentalist mobilisation

In these circumstances political mobilisation was overwhelmingly driven by efforts of rival groups to gain and/or to defend a position competitive advantage in gaining access to all the various scarce resources which the Raj had begun to provide and/or to control, and in doing so set about attracting their electorates on caste, class and ultimately on religious and sectarian grounds, all of whom promptly began to mobilise either to defend or to promote their own equally narrowly focused interests. As a result the patterns of plurality which had hitherto been primarily socio-cultural in character began to be transformed into vehicles for ever more active collective mobilisation, which led to the emergence of ever more sharply etched political boundaries. Moreover as the prospect of Independence grew steadily closer, similar processes of polarisation also began to emerge on a national basis: reacting to perceptions that Hindu-dominated Indian National Congress would inevitably marginalise the Subcontinent’s Muslims unless formal institutional steps were taken to prevent such an outcome, Muslims in Hindu-majority areas – and particularly in the Gangetic began to congregate under the flag of Mohammed Ali Jinnah’s Muslim League, who principal aim was precisely to ensure that such minority interests would not be ‘democratically’ swamped by the force of Hindu nationalism in post-colonial India.

In Muslim-majority Punjab, such fears cut very little ice: if anyone was fearful of marginalisation on these grounds it was the Sikhs and Hindus. Nevertheless by now the *jinn*s of politically driven neo-fundamentalism that originally had been let out of the bottle in Lahore more than half a century earlier had begun to penetrate the interstices of the social order – with explosive consequences when the British removed themselves from their Raj on a precipitate basis in 1947. As a result all manner of local contradictions got out of hand. In the Punjab it was the Potohar region that proved to be the tinderbox. During the course of the Second World War a large number of Muslims from this part of West Punjab had signed up in the British Indian Army, and on their demobilisation discovered that their local landlords, the great majority of whom were Khatri Sikhs, had profited hugely during their absence, largely – so the returnees believed – by exploiting their tenants. However that was not all. An Islamic neo-fundamentalist movement known as the Majlis-e-Ahrar-ul-Islam which was particularly hostile on religious grounds to both the Ahmadiyyas and the Sikhs had already attracted a widespread following in the Potohar – and many of the returnees were members of the movement. The result was fatal. Already the well-trained

as well as well-armed, the returnees were rapidly drawn into what amounted to a pogrom directed at their Sikh landlords. However news of their uprising promptly set off a backlash in east Punjab, where the Sikhs turned on their Muslim neighbours in retribution for the killings in the Potohar – which in turn sparked of further retribution against the Sikh and Hindu population in Muslim dominated plains of west Punjab. In the face of this unstoppable process of mutual ethno-religious cleansing, the partition of the Punjab became inevitable. A hastily constructed border between ‘Hindu’ (and Sikh) India to the east, and Muslim Pakistan to the west was rapidly drawn up by an English civil servant. But in no way did it stop the killing: in the next few months hundreds of thousands of people who found themselves on the wrong side of the border were slaughtered by their neighbors, while somewhere in the order of ten million people fled from their homes in the hope of finding safety in the jurisdiction into which they suddenly found they had been reallocated.

Nor did matters stop there. Even when the process of cleansing was complete, in neither of the newly constituted jurisdictions was the socio-cultural order homogeneous in character. Rather it was riddled with all manner of linguistic, ethnic, religious and sectarian distinctions. But by now the *jinn* of neo-fundamentalist ethno-religious mobilisation could in no way be chased back into its bottle. Further processes of mutual ethno-religious polarisation continued on both sides of the border, no less at a regional than a national level, continued to do so in an ever more destructive fashion to this day. They also continue to do so throughout the contemporary world of Dar ul-Islam.

IV. Plus ça change: mais plus c’est la même chose

1. Twice round the Roundabout: two parallel encounters

Much has changed in the subcontinent since the collapse of the British Raj, as well as in the many ‘national’ jurisdictions which came into being in the remainder of Dar ul-Islam as the tide of European Imperialism ebbed away in the course of the past half century. Indeed many of them have run into even more difficulties as that occurred, especially as a result of contradictions precipitated by post-colonially exacerbated processes of ethno-religious polarisation. Nor is that all. In the same period a substantial process of reverse colonisation also began to develop, largely as result of labour shortages in the global North. As a result the scale of the Muslim population in the heart of Christendom has increased by leaps and bounds, so much so that settlers from overseas have by now constructed what can best be described as ethnic colonies in most of western Europe’s towns and cities. A further change in the balance of power has been precipitated by the discovery and exploitation as a result of the vast reserves of oil in many parts of Dar ul-Islam.

But just how much has changed, especially at an ideological level, as a result of these radical changes in global socio-political tectonics? Have the contradictions inherent in European forms of colonialism been swept away in a new squeaky-clean post-colonial? Or is it the case that there is still a strong sense in which the structural and conceptual contradictions to which were generated in the process of European Imperial expansion⁴ still remain as active as the ever were? This is no place to discuss all the consequences of those tectonic shifts. Rather my focus here restrict-

⁴ It is worth emphasizing that I am in no way suggesting that European Imperialism was a unique historical phenomenon in any sense other than that it had specific religio-cultural roots, was truly global in its spread, and was ultimately powered by an industrial revolution. From a historical perspective many other civilisations, including Dar-u-Islam, also had Imperial phases – ordered, in each case, in its own distinctive religio-cultural premises.

ed: hence my central concern in this paper is with the consequences of reverse colonisation, and most especially with the ideological manoeuvres which have been generated colonists with their roots in from Dar ul-Islam have come face to face with the contemporary inhabitants of Christendom. In the course of my ethnographic enquiries in this field I have gradually begun to conclude that these manoeuvres and the trajectories which they have currently generated appear to run remarkably parallel to those emerged in Dar ul-Islam during the colonial period, so much so that I have come to conclusion that the developments in the two contexts serve graphically to illuminate one another. I should also add that in exploring these developments on a comparative basis I have once again restricted my analysis to Punjabi developments, whether in the Punjab itself or in its diaspora, the better to ground my hypotheses in a more or less singular (but interally plural) religio-cultural context.

However before I begin my comparative exercise, it is worth noting that there were some sharp distinctions in the structural character of the confrontations which took place in late nineteenth century Punjab as compared with those which taken place in the course of half a century of colony-construction in Western Europe. In Punjab the most significant ideological encounters between the Punjabi subalterns and their British hegemon were largely confined to elite contexts, most particularly at school, at college and subsequently in the context of government employment. To be sure many District Officers made considerable efforts to familiarise themselves with customs and practices of the peasantry in the rural *mofussil*, especially in the latter part of the nineteenth century; however their ideological their impact on rural concepts and behaviour remained minimal, since the great majority of the peasantry simply got on with their own terms.

The same was true in the early days of the diaspora. Apart from a tiny minority of graduate students, was minimal. Instead the vast majority of the pioneer settlers were adult males drawn directly from the *mofussil*, and their interactions with indigenes was largely confined to the run-down inner city areas in which they settled, those whom they encountered in the mills and foundries in which they initially found employment. Moreover virtually all of the early pioneers lived in crowded and often squalid all-male households until their wives came to join them, whereupon they began to make strenuous efforts to restore full set of premises and practices in terms of which they had ordered their domestic activities back in Punjab. Not that this process of ethnic colony construction was in any way unusual: when the Memsahibs at long last began to arrive in India in the middle of the nineteenth century to join (or to look for) husbands, just the same kind of reconstruction of domestic lifestyles as they were understood 'back home' was rapidly precipitated as a result of their matronly presence. Throughout history emigrants have always been keen to sustain key aspects their ancestral roots, even as they slowly begin accommodate themselves to the curious premises and practices of the world into which they have inserted themselves.

But whilst the vast majority of European hegemon who arrived from above saw little or no reason to do so, such that 'going native' was the ultimate scandal, those arriving from below promptly find themselves on the defensive, since assimilation is expected as a matter of course. Indeed it is precisely as a result of the impact of those unwelcome pressures that defensive colony construction in personal and domestic contexts became such an urgent priority for the settlers, since it provided them with some welcome 'underground' spaces in which they where they could still continue to hold their heads high. However the experiences of those who arrived as children, and even so those who were born in the UK had a very different set of experiences: although sheltered from the wider world within the security of the ethnic colony, the moment they went to school they were required to comprehensively accommodate themselves to indigenes expectations, no less in conceptual than in behavioural terms. In nursery schools the pres-

asures to conform were overwhelmingly behavioural in character, and could readily be coped with by means of code-switching. Hence once they had mastered the use of knives, forks and spoons at schools, they could readily switch back to fingers back home. Likewise with language: young children have the capacity to absorb new codes at a speed which regularly bewilders their elders. However as young British Punjabis moved upwards through the educational system from school to college and beyond, cross-cultural navigation of this sort gradually became increasingly challenging exercise, not so much in behavioural terms, since they were equally fluent in both system, but rather in *conceptual* terms. As this occurred, there are strong indications that members of the second generation of British Punjabis (and indeed the offspring of all the many migrants of rural origin from formerly colonised jurisdictions who have established themselves in Western Europe during the course of the past half century) currently find themselves facing conceptual conundrums whose character runs remarkably parallel to those which their upwardly mobile predecessors encountered during the course of their exposure to the educational facilities to which they gained access in the colonial regimes whose initiatives spread right around the globe during the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

However in doing so my central focus here is not so much on the content of these educational regimes themselves, but rather to explore the dynamics of processes social, cultural and religious adaptation, and above all the many dimensions conceptual *reconstruction* which were precipitated as members of these rising generations have come to terms with an alien, and above all a hegemonic, cultural and conceptual order which disparaged and devalued their ancestral conceptual orders on the grounds that they were inferior to, and above all less progressive than, the premises of the European enlightenment to which the western world owed its prosperity. With such considerations in mind my central concern in the remainder of this essay is to explore the extent to which the developments which are currently taking place in the context of post-colonial Western Europe mirror – and in that sense serve to illuminate – those which occurred in the earlier periods of outright colonial dominance. Against that background I have sought to tease out the key aspects of

- i. The character of conceptual universes within which Punjabi settlers routinely operated as and when they arrived in Britain
- ii. How, and in what directions, they reconstructed – and in consequence reinterpreted – those conceptual resources as they and their children set about reconstructing their lives in their new environment
- iii. How and why indigenous observers have had such difficulty in making sense of, and let alone being able to feel at ease with, the resultant outcomes
- iv. How and why it is that so many members of the second and third generation have been so attracted to the premises of neo-fundamentalist interpretations of their religious traditions, most particularly in the case of those of Muslim origin.

2. The twin-track character of adaptive processes

No matter what one's origins may be, establishing oneself as an immigrant in an alien environment is always a challenging experience, especially if one arrives at one's destination with next to nothing in one's pockets. In those circumstances newly arrived migrants' most urgent need is to find shelter of some sort, and after that a fairly reliable source of income – a solution which is best achieved by teaming up with a predecessor who has already established a foothold at their destination, or – if one is a true pioneer – by looking out for fellow migrants, preferably with similar origins to their own, who are prepared to help them master the local ropes. But once the beginnings of an ethnic colony have been established, a process of chain migration invariably

kicks in, so the vast majority of newcomers come to join friends and kinsfolk who have preceded them.

Such new-comers routinely find themselves embarking on two complementary trajectories of adaptation: firstly the acquisition of a basic (and often a very basic) degree of linguistic and cultural competence, such that they can negotiate deals with the indigenes as an when opportunities for advancement arise; and secondly – and in many senses even more importantly – the construction of networks of mutual reciprocity with their fellow-migrants within the nascent ethnic colonies, the better to devise and implement entrepreneurial strategies on a cooperative basis, such they are able to take advantage of every promising niche in the local employment market on their own terms.

Whilst Punjabi ethnic colonies have grown immensely in scale and complexity during the past half-century, both settlers and their locally-born offspring have continued to deploy this twin-track approach, albeit in an ever more sophisticated fashion. Hence whilst members of the second and third generations have by now become skilled cross-cultural navigators, such that they able act and react appropriately in a wide range of differentially organised socio-cultural arenas – including, of course, the various dimensions on the indigenous social order. But if members of the minority communities have consequently become regular boundary-crossers, the multi-cultural skills which they have acquired still remain an overwhelmingly one-way street: as yet very few members of the indigenous majority have reciprocated by acquiring the skills which would enable them navigate across such ethnic disjunctions in the reverse direction. This has had, and continues to have, far reaching consequences.

From the settler's perspective, the networks of reciprocity which they have reconstructed around themselves, and which provide the foundations of every ethnic colony, remain a vital asset, most particularly in situations of adversity: by closing ranks in this way the settlers have been able to rebuild build their lives on their own terms, and in doing so have provided themselves with a reliable base from which to resist, and ultimately to challenge, the adversities with which they found themselves confronted. Hence for most members of the first generation acquiring the linguistic and cultural competence which would enable them to navigate freely through the wider social order was a secondary consideration: rather their primary concern was to re-establish networks of mutual reciprocity within their burgeoning ethnic colonies. This is not to suggest that their lifestyles remained wholly unchanged. As a result of their migratory enterprise they had to make all sorts of practical adaptations, not least as a result of having swapped their initial status as self-sufficient peasant farmers cultivating their own land in semi-tropical locations for life as wage-earners in cold, damp and overcrowded cities with hardly a blade of grass in sight. But despite all the practical changes which their new physical environment forced upon them, there was (and still is) a powerful sense in which the conceptual order on which they drew to order their inter-personal behaviour within the shelter of their ethnic colonies owed a great deal more to their overseas roots than to the indigenous socio-cultural order within which they had become embedded.

3. Further developments in the second generation

However the experiences of the second and third generation were very different. They found themselves in the midst of a multi-cultural environment as soon as they went to school: thereafter they shuffled steadily back and for the between two arenas whose underlying conceptual premises were often radically different on a daily basis, usually with a minimal degree of conceptual bridge-building between the two. Nor was this disjunction merely a feature of the educational system. As successful students (of whom there were many) began to move up the social

hierarchy into an ever wider range of professional occupations – whether as doctors, lawyers, psychologists, social workers, teachers and police officers – they regularly found themselves in severe difficulties of kind which ran closely parallel with those experienced by their nineteenth century predecessors.

Having been born, brought up and above all educated in the UK, this wave of young professionals had no problems with cross-cultural navigation, with the result that they were at least in principle as much at home in English as in Punjabi social contexts. After all they had been doing just that since they had started school, and provided that they performed appropriately, they got good marks. But as they rapidly discovered when they crossed over into the world of employment, no less professional than other arenas, they soon discovered that no matter how much effort they might put into acting ‘as if’ they were English, their names, and above all their physical appearance, immediately elicited patronising responses from their ‘helpful’ colleagues. Thanks to the impact of an ‘anti-racist’ agenda which had been firmly promulgated in the 1970s and 80s, and largely adopted as a conceptual norm in liberal circles, professional opinion had adopted the view that however much racial discrimination the members of the minorities might have experienced in the past, thanks to their training in ‘anti-racism’ all those old-fashioned prejudices had been dropped into the dustbin of history. As result liberal minded professional such as themselves had come to regard people of colour as no difference from themselves – so much so that they did not even notice the difference. But was this true, or were they, and are they, merely kidding themselves?

That ‘anti-racist’ initiatives have has verbal consequences plain enough to see: explicitly derogatory epithets aimed at people of colour have become unacceptable in professional contexts. But is it the case that darker skin colour (other than that acquired by means of sun-tan) routinely remains unnoticed, even in determinedly anti-racist professional circles? The answer of professionals who physiognomy is pre-tanned is unanimous: of course not! Moreover in most cases the difference is much more than skin-deep: whilst second-generation professionals are by definition capable of presenting themselves in behavioural terms *as if* they were indigenes, the plain fact is that they also have a back-story which is quite otherwise, but of whose significance no discussion was ever included in the skin-focussed agenda anti-racism. This causes intense confusion, especially because it is quite obvious that their pre-tanned colleagues’ back-stories remain as mysterious, and hence as alarming as ever, most particularly because it is likely to be ethno-religious in character.

To cut a long story short, the bridge-building with members of the minorities in which most liberal-minded professionals would like to engage all too often turns out to be a much more problematic than they had either hoped or expected – so much so that they regularly conclude that their colleagues whose colour they would otherwise not have noticed have all too often grown unhelpful chips on their shoulders. Could it be that skin colour has merely served as a convenient social marker around which the dialectics of an underlying process of ethno-religious polarisation of long-standing historical origins is being re-articulated in the current post-colonial era?

4. The dialectics of ethnic engagement

Contemplating developments of this kind, no less global than local contexts, there appear to be excellent grounds for suggesting that when processes of ethno-religious polarisation spring into existence in the midst of a liberal (and hence intrinsically inequality-denying) social order, those who find themselves institutionally marginalised rapidly find themselves confronted by what can best be described as readily deniable ‘rules of ethnic engagement’ which played out in a process of low-intensity asymmetric warfare, in which the basic rules of the game are set out on a

nominally rational basis by those comfortably ensconced in positions of power. In contexts of this kind

... one of the central aims of the established players is to exclude – or at least marginalise – unwelcome intruders seeking to penetrate arenas which they consider properly their own, and hence seek to control. As rule-setters, they are in a position to identify the intruders as disruptive rule-breakers, whose very presence endangers the stability of the established order of things. In circumstances of this kind not only do the intruders find themselves being required to play according to rules which are not of their own choosing, but also to do so on a playing field which is (at least from their perspective) far from level. (Ballard and Parveen 2008: 81)

If rules of this kind were once thoroughly familiar to up-and-coming young professionals in colonial Punjab, there is now plentiful evidence to suggest that defensive strategies of a similar kind are now being wheeled out once again in post-colonial Europe. It is easy to see why. Provided that one's vision is suitably myopic, one of the most effective ways of rendering a phenomenon invisible is by denying its very existence. This can be readily achieved – especially in liberal and anti-racist contexts – by means of frequently heard assertions to the effect that the “we really don't notice the difference!” If that was really true – and there can be little doubt that those who make such assertions do indeed believe it to be true – it follows that any complaints about racial and ethnic marginalisation which their minority colleagues choose to articulate must by definition be misguided, or more likely the product of an over-sensitive and/or over-active imagination. Once such a scenario has been established, it not only provides a means of dismissing all such complaints as fictitious, but of using them as a means to turn the tables – such that anyone who has the temerity to raise their head above the parapet is likely to find themselves accused of having developed ‘chip on the shoulder’, so much so that they deserve no sympathy.

But if this indeed the case, how can the resultant prospect of systematic marginalisation be most effectively minimised? One way of doing so is already obvious: namely by keeping as low a profile as possible – namely the coconut route, and all that that entails. However the viability of this route is heavily dependent on the character of the professional contexts within which upwardly mobile members of the visible minorities find themselves. All by observations suggest that those professional activities in which bring them into no immediate contact with their clients' domestic affairs – as for example in engineering, finance and other strictly technical activities – these difficulties can largely be overcome by running two parallel lives – such that they symbolically ‘change clothes’ on the way back home from the office. By contrast those who move into professional careers whose delivery engages in any way with the socio-cultural dimensions of their clients' activities – whether as lawyers, teachers, social workers, doctors, psychologists, police officers and many more besides – promptly find themselves facing much greater difficulties.

One option is, of course, to play the same rules of the game in their interactions with their minority clients as those deployed by their indigenous colleagues – as all their training suggests that they should. By playing the established rules of the game, they can pretend ‘not to notice (or at least to comprehend) the difference’, and then sympathetically agree with their colleagues that delivering effective services to ignorant and superstitious peasants drawn from rural backwaters who refuse to accept rational solutions to the problems they face is indeed terribly difficult. But if, however, they begin to draw on their alterity to develop the capacity to ‘think outside the box’, so much so that they begin to provide particularly effective services to their majority clientele, and worse still if they display any sympathy for, and above all an understanding of their minority clients' racially and ethnically grounded problems, woe betide them: their colleagues at

all levels are likely look on their 'extra-professional' approach to the job at hand with ever increasing askance. When jealousy sets in – which appears to occur with exceptional ease, the rules of the game are likely to be deployed against them with exceptional vigour. From here on a downward spiral readily develops, not least when the 'chip on the shoulder' which such miscreants are perceived as having developed are regularly (and in many senses rightly) regarded as a covert assertion that their liberal colleagues are not as vigorously anti-racist as they firmly believe themselves to be. This hardly helps their prospects of career progression.

So long as this game is played, the prospect of established professionals and policy makers gaining the cultural competence which would enable them better to appreciate the distinctive character premises and practices which members of the new minorities still routinely deploy in personal and domestic contexts. On the contrary these rules, played and replayed at many levels, ensure that key aspects of their religious and ethnic distinctiveness are politely obscured from view, no less by academic theorists and active practitioners – especially in the case of those drawn from rural backgrounds in the global South, and whose conceptual order has remained largely untouched by the premises of the enlightenment.

V. The fate of premises of the European enlightenment post-colonial contexts?

5. 'Enchanted' as opposed 'disenchanted' conceptual universes

But if so, just what is the source of the current conceptual log-jam? Is it simply a strategic product of low intensity warfare articulated through the rules of ethnic engagement, or is it simultaneously grounded in a much more deeply rooted set of conceptual contradictions? With such considerations in mind it is worth going back to the final sentence of the quotation with which I opened this essay, in which Mantena observes that

Resistance, especially political resistance, when refracted through the imperial lens, was re-described as a deep-seated cultural intransigence to universal norms of civilization.

But if so, what were, and are, those 'universal norms of civilization', and in just what ways do the premises of the global 'others' stand in contradiction to those norms? With such considerations in mind it is worth turning to some exceptionally prescient observations articulated by Max Weber the best part of a century ago, when he argued that

Our age is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization, and above all, by the disenchantment of the world. Its resulting fate is that precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have withdrawn from public life. They have retreated either into the abstract realm of mystical life or into the fraternal feelings of personal relations between individuals. It is not accidental that the gnostic spirit which in former times swept through the great communities like a firebrand, welding them together, has faded into abeyance.

If we attempt to construct new religious movements without new, authentic prophetic foundations, it only gives rise to something monstrous in terms of inner experience, which can only ever produce fanatical sects, but never a genuine community. (Weber, *Science as a Vocation* 2004 [1919]: 30)

In an recent essay in EJIMEL I drew on Weber's observations as a convenient starting point to explore how far the conceptual foundations of Austinian – and hence post-enlightenment – understandings of Law differed from those which underpinned the Islamic practice *usul al-fiqh*, as well as the way in which classical institutions of Shari'a collapsed in virtually every corner of the globe in the face of European colonial expansion (Ballard 2013). However in this essay I have

sought to strike out from Weber's observations in a rather different direction: namely to explore the fate of the pre-enlightenment – and hence still-enchanted – conceptual universes which Punjabi settlers brought with them as they put down roots in Britain's comprehensively disenchant-ed socio-cultural arena.

Just as Weber predicted, Europe has become ever more secularised since he made these observations, so much so that religion – at least as commonly understood – plays little part in the everyday lives of most members of the indigenous majority. It had not always been so. As Weber emphasised in the greater part of his work, which was dedicated to understanding just how this outcome had occurred, the premises of European civilization, and hence of Christendom, remained comprehensively 'enchanted' prior to the arrival of Protestant Reformation. Given this starting point he went on to argue that it was the Protestant Ethic which has released the Spirit of Capitalism, and hence in due course the ever more individually oriented premises of the Enlightenment. Moreover as we have seen (although Weber did not explicitly explore the matter) those premises were in turn utilised to legitimate what was effectively a new crusade: Empire building on a global scale.

Much has changed since Weber passed away the best part of a century ago. All those Empires have by now collapsed, whilst the onward march of the rationally and individualistically oriented premises of modernity, of parochial nationalism, and ultimately *laïcité*, have become ever more deeply entrenched and in all of Europe's many socio-cultural orders – except, perhaps in the ruins of the Soviet Empire. The result of these developments is now plain see. Processes of 'disenchantment' have developed much further than Weber could ever have imagined. As the moral and conceptual foundations the established socio-cultural order have been left bereft of their metaphysical roots, even in nominally 'religious' contexts (Smith 2002), so binding relationships of mutual reciprocity amongst kinsfolk have fallen steadily out of fashion, as notions of mutuality have been replaced by the ever more extensive pursuit of rights of personal freedom.

Given all this, it should come as no surprise that in such a world eager but nevertheless comprehensively disenchanted cross-cultural navigators regularly find themselves in severe difficulties when they come face to face with communities whose members still order their lives – at least in domestic lives – in terms of conceptual universes which are still largely untouched by the premises of the European enlightenment. It follows that no matter how much the established premises of institutionalised modernism may tempt us to dismiss such 'unenlightened' premises as inherently patriarchal, oppressive, irrational and superstitious, such myopic response is deeply counter-productive – if only because such a stance serves to yet further reinforce a key component of the rules of ethnic engagement. However this is in no way to suggest that cross-cultural navigation 'from above' is impossible. Rather it is to insist that those learning a new language must learn to cast off the grammatical rules which underpin their mother tongue before they acquire the capacity to formulate properly constructed sentences in another language, so cross-cultural navigators must be equally prepared to make a paradigm shift in which they set their established conceptual premises temporarily to one side if they are to have any prospect of making meaningful sense of the everyday premises and practices of the mysterious 'alien' neighbours.

But if so, just what do these 'enchanted' premises and practices imported the immigrants who have emerged 'from below' actually consist of? And why is it that the well-educated but comprehensively disenchanted indigenes of Western Europe routinely find it so difficult to comprehend the logical foundations – or in other words the 'grammar' – of the conceptual orders which underpin those premises and practices?

6. Religious education and the promotion of 'World Religions' in a disenchanted world

Despite the steady rise of disenchanted secularism, and the consequent shrinking socio-cultural potency of the Church, the phenomenon of religion has by no means entirely evaporated either as conceptual category or as an institutional presence in contemporary Europe. Hence whilst congregations have fallen to a fraction of their former size, rituals continue to play a vital role in the socio-cultural order, most especially when it comes to celebrating success and to mourning adversity, no less on very public stages than in more private and familial contexts. Meanwhile the spiritually and metaphysically oriented premises which once loomed so large in 'enchanted' context fallen into almost complete abeyance in public contexts – although they may well survive much more actively in private domains than public discourse suggests, if only because premises of this kind are the only remaining source of personal morality, meaning and purpose in the midst of an otherwise comprehensively disenchanted socio-cultural universe (Smith 2002).

So just what remains of religion in our disenchanted world? In the UK, at least, 'Religious Education' still occupies a formal place, reinforced by law, in the educational agenda. Hence when the children of South Asian settlers began to appear in British schools, they are routinely identified as the followers of one or other of three well-recognised 'World Religions': Hinduism, Sikhism or Islam (the Jains, Parsees and Christians amongst them went largely unnoticed). Moreover the applicability of that form of categorisation was further confirmed when settlers began to organise their own distinctive places of worship – *Mandirs*, *Gurudwaras* or *Masjids* as the case may be. But what was much less clear was how far these institutionalised 'places of worship', the ritual practices performed within them, let alone the conceptual premises which underpinned these congregational activities were congruent with the formalised accounts of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim practice set out in the 'world religions' literature, and hence in a format which could be mapped onto established understandings of the roles which Churches, Priests and their congregations were expected to fulfil.

From this perspective the textbooks all too often turned out to be less than helpful. When policy-makers, service providers and politicians turned to the 'world religions' literature for guidance with respect to the distinctive features of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim patients', pupils' and clients' behaviour, the explanations on offer all too often turned out not to be congruent with the facts on the ground, so much so that they all too often found themselves facing even more conundrums than those with which they began. All manner of queries soon began to erupt. Is keeping one's hair uncut and wearing a turban a *necessary* practice for Sikh men, such that they can no longer be considered to be Sikhs if they fail to do so? Are all Hindus and Sikhs vegetarians? To what extent do Pandits, Gyanis and Maulvis exercise authority over those who assembled before them in *mandirs*, *gurudwaras* or *masjids*? Is the routine exclusion of women from the *masjid* an indication that they consequently play no part in the institutionalised dimensions of Islamic religious practice? Should recourse to the services of spiritual healers, exorcists and the providers of *tawiz* (amulets) be regarded as a legitimate manifestation of religious practice, or should they be dismissed as irrational superstition?

Impressed by the representations of 'orthodoxy' to which the Religious Studies literature all too often gives its explicit *imprimatur*, many teachers and policy makers assumed that an affirmative response should be given to all these questions. In doing so they overlooked the prospect that the great majority of settlers were largely untouched by the purified, essentialised and hence modernised re-interpretations of these traditions which been developed by neo-fundamentalist reformers during the colonial era; hence the newcomers frequently turned out to operate within the midst of series of largely unreformed, enchanted premises which frequently overlapped with one another, in a manner which was implicitly deemed as unthinkable in the accounts of 'ortho-

dox' practice set out in the text books. In the just the same vein, many social policy makers (and local politicians) routinely assumed – and indeed continue to assume – that Imams, Granthis and Pandits fulfil a similar leadership role within, and provide much the same kind of pastoral support for, members of their congregations as those provided as Christian pastors. In doing so they were often mistaken, not so much in the sense that nascent communities lacked leaders, or because support networks of a pastoral kind were absent, but rather because such communities' preferred institutional arrangements were far from congruent with observers' taken-for-granted assumption that these would necessarily mirror the contemporary Judaeo-Christian premises and practices. As a result the spiritual and pastoral roles are routinely fulfilled by Pirs, Sants, Yogis and Babas go virtually unnoticed to this day⁵.

7. A view from below

To those whose prior experience has hitherto been confined to the premises of modernity – a category which by now includes a virtually all members of the well-educated elites in almost every post-colonial jurisdiction, let alone the vast majority of the indigenous populations Euro-America – face-to-face encounters with the inhabitants of conceptual universes whose premises have so far remained largely untouched by the premises of the enlightenment invariably comes as a shock, if only because the established conceptual categories on which they have hitherto relied – most especially with respect to matters of religion, law and kinship – cease to make much sense.

As European anthropologists have long been aware – given their professional commitment to cross-cultural navigation – the moment one seeks to make sense of beliefs and practices articulated in an alien socio-cultural arena, one is likely to find oneself in the midst of context in which all one's hitherto taken for granted conceptual assumptions have been drained of meaning. As that happens, one rapidly begins to appreciate that religion, law, family and kinship are in sense not absent from such arenas: rather they are manifestly present in spades. Then the penny begins to click: one's post-enlightenment and thoroughly disenchanting analytical tools, firmly embedded in the colloquial mainstream of contemporary Euro-American thought, turn out to be far too blunt to make sense of the 'exotic' behaviours characteristic of significantly more enchanted socio-cultural arenas. Indeed those categories regularly turn out to be sledgehammers, when effective analysis in these allegedly 'simple' and 'primitive' societies requires the application of a scalpel.

That was certainly so in the case of my own experience in the Punjab, and subsequently in the British component of the Punjabi diaspora. Moreover as I sought to make sense of what was going on around me, I slowly began to realise that conceptual universe which my informants inhabited was thoroughly 'enchanted' in Weber's sense; that condition also turned out to include a complex weave of overlaps and differences as between the premises and practices of what the textbooks insisted were best understood as three separate, self-contained and hence internally homogeneous religious '-isms'. In these circumstances it was immediately apparent that any attempt to comprehend Punjabi religion within the procrustean framework of post-enlightenment, and hence post-Christian, conceptual categories was never going to provide me with a sufficiently powerful analytical framework within which to make sense of what was actually going on.⁶

⁵ Although they lie beyond the range of my specialist areas of knowledge, there is in my view every prospect that same points can also be made with respect to the premises and practices of the number (mostly Pentecostal) Churches which have sprung up within Britain's African and African communities are much more 'enchanted' in character than any of their mainline peers.

⁶ Having lived in a Hindu village in Himachal Pradesh for eighteen months carrying out fieldwork which I wrote up for my doctoral thesis at the University of Delhi in the late 1960s, I turned my attention to developments in the Punjab, and especially to the British dimension of its diaspora. In doing so I went on to conduct extensive ethnographic fieldwork in both Indian and in Pakistani Punjab, as well as within Sikh, Hindu and Muslim ethnic colonies in the UK, a process which continues to this day.

On the contrary the application of such sledgehammers was much more likely to obscure, rather than to illuminate, the dynamics of the very phenomena which I was seeking to investigate.

Expanding on the work of Juergensmeyer (1982) and Oberoi (1994) I set out an alternative perspective in an article entitled “*Panth, Kismet, Dharm te Qaum: four dimensions in Punjabi religion*” (Ballard 2000), which I subsequently extended in two further articles (Ballard 2006, 2011). In doing so I sought to break new ground in two complementary directions. Firstly hand by suggesting that popular religious phenomena could be usefully explored on a *regional* basis, most especially in contexts of long-standing religious plurality; and secondly by suggesting that such an exercise provided an excellent opportunity to step outside the procrustean framework of established post-enlightenment analytical categories, in favour of a more universalistically applicable perspective which would remain equally applicable in all parts of the globe. My objective in doing so was to identify, and to disaggregate, the analytically distinctive dimensions of everyday religious activity which could be observed within – and which were shared between Punjab’s three nominally autonomous religious traditions. In doing so I identified five distinct, and carefully analytically defined, domains of religious activity – *panthic, kismetic, dharmic, sanskaric* and *qaumic* – which could readily be identified in all of Punjab’s religious traditions, and in a manner which might ultimately prove to be of universal applicability (see Table 1.).

Sphere of Activity	Significance	Definition	Arena
<i>Panthic</i>	Spiritual/ Gnostic inspiration	The ideas and practices deployed by those in search of spiritual and mystical inspiration, invariably under the guidance of a Spiritual Master (e.g. <i>Pir, Yogi, Sant, Swami or Guru</i>)	} Spiritual/ Occult
<i>Kismetic</i>	Occult/ Making sense of the world	The ideas used to explain the otherwise inexplicable, and the occult practices deployed to turn such adversity in its tracks; both are usually deployed with the assistance of a Spiritual Master.	
<i>Dharmic</i>	Morality/ Social order	The moral ideology in terms of which all aspects of the established social and behavioural order is conceptualised and legitimated.	} Social
<i>Sanskaric</i>	Rites of passage/ social reconstruction	The set of ritual practices – and most especially those associated with birth, initiation, marriage and death – which celebrate and legitimate each individual’s progress through the social and domestic order.	
<i>Qaumic</i>	Political/ Ethnic mobilisation	The use – and more often than not the reinterpretation – of religious ideology as a vehicle for collective social and political mobilisation. The typical outcome of this process is that an increasingly clearly defined body of people begin to close ranks on a morally sanctioned basis the better to pursue shared social and economic objectives	} Political

Table 1 Five dimensions in Punjabi Religion

So far, at least, the application of this model has proved to be immensely illuminating. On one hand it has provided me with a means of encompassing all the potential manifestations of reli-

gious activity in this nominally multi-religious arena – including as it goes along the metaphysical dimensions which both unsympathetic external observers no less than neo-fundamentalist reformers routinely dismiss as ‘superstition’ – within a coherent analytical framework; and on the other it is also a perspective which is at least in principle valid well beyond the boundaries of the subcontinent and its diasporas. Better still, by separating out these five distinctive spheres of activity, my model also accommodates the prospect that each of these spheres will exhibit different degrees of salience in depending upon the (changing) contexts within which they are articulated, which renders it particularly appropriate to the analysis of diasporic developments, where helps to illuminate the strategic manoeuvres in settlers engage in response to the specific situations in which they find themselves. Last but not least, it provides a particularly illuminating way of highlighting the range of (often contradictory) strategies which long-distance migrants, and subsequently their overseas-born offspring, have deployed as they have set about devising solutions to the multiplicity of political, moral, conceptual and existential challenges with which they found themselves confronted in diasporic contexts.

8. *Padre and Mādri muzhub* in an enchanted universe

As is evident from my model, I take the view that religious phenomena are not only intrinsically diverse, but run way beyond acts of worship performed in temples, mosques and shrines. As a result they include all manner of more intermittent ritual activities, such as celebrations of births, marriages, deaths, solstices, the onset of Spring, Harvest Festivals and so on, which may or may not take place within formal places of worship. Hence even if such structures stand empty for most of the time, whilst Sunday congregations are shrinking away to next to nothing, it most certainly does not follow that religion is *ipso facto* absent from everyday praxis – even in what might normally be regarded as thoroughly disenchanting contexts⁷. However in the context of a more fully fledged conceptual universe virtually all aspects of social life becomes significantly enchanted. Hence, for example, in South Asian contexts everyone’s name is not only of metaphysical significance, but almost always also signify religious and sectarian affiliations, which in turn conditions expressions utilised in greetings and partings – in which one is expected to utilise the greeting appropriate to one’s counterpart, especially if he or she is affiliated to a tradition of one’s own. Likewise everyone avoids tempt fate by expressing certainty with respect to the fulfilment of any future action, given that success and failure, as well as health and misfortune are routinely held to be conditioned by occult forces; hence remembrance of, and hence respect for, metaphysical forces – the enchanted universe, in other words – is constantly on everyone’s lips.

In such circumstances ‘doing religion’ is by no means confined to formally constituted places of worship. Rather poetry, stories and songs – always a mainstay of preliterate societies – can be recited at any time of day or night, no less as a source metaphysical inspiration than as a means relaxing in the aftermath of hard labour; personal and familial shrines can readily be constructed within every household; and all manner of metaphysically grounded steps – from the recitation of prayers (*dua*) to the preparations of amulets (*tawiz*) and on to ritual exercises such as exorcism – can all be implemented as a means of promoting propitious outcomes and keeping malevolence at bay. In such circumstances gender distinctions are often particularly salient. Hence whilst men routinely play a predominant, and often an exclusive, role in the performance of public rituals, especially in Islamic contexts, it is idle to assume that women are consequently excluded from religious praxis. Most do their *namaz* privately at home after the *azan* has sounded,

⁷ One clear example of such an ‘enchanted’ practice is the construction of shrines, usually marked with bunches of flowers, at spots where road accidents have led to death.

whilst they are responsible for all the many rituals which are performed to keep the occupants of the household in good shape.

9. Issues of Gender: public appearances and private practice

This division of labour is in no sense restricted to the various domains of religious practice. Whilst Muslim males strive to sustain an appearance of comprehensive degree of personal hegemony over their wives and daughters in public contexts, it would be idle to assume that this is routinely replicated in the privacy of the domestic domain. However once one steps into the privacy of the domestic domain one frequently finds that it is the women rule the roost, especially when patriarch's wife has risen to the position of mother-in-law. Sons' loyalty to their mother is invariably intense, and once married mothers-in-law acquire a string of daughters-in-law who are primarily responsible to the head of the domestic order, from where the matriarch is consequently able to implement extensive degree of personal hegemony over incoming brides, especially in the early years of their marriages. From this perspective it is women who take primary responsibility for the welfare of the domestic group, and most especially for the children.

Once one begins to take cognisance of the richness of the concerns and propitiatory activities routinely articulated by mothers and grandmothers in an effort to protect children from harm, not least from senior male members of the household, the stereotyped assumption that women in strict *pardah* are rendered helpless by the irresistible forces of patriarchy swiftly evaporate⁸. Moreover once one begins to tap into ritual activities in the hugely enchanted conceptual arena which have found it convenient to identify as *mādrī muzhub*,⁹ it immediately becomes self-evident that it is women who are primarily responsible for insert a powerful sense of metaphysically-grounded meaning and purpose into all aspects of the everyday family life to their children and grandchildren of both sexes, no less in theory than in practice. Hence it is primarily as purveyors of *mādrī* (as opposed to *padre*¹⁰) *muzhub* that mothers and grandmothers socialise their offspring into the social, spiritual, and occult dimensions of popular religion, thereby passing it on from generation to generation.

VI. Processes of religious reconstruction in the UK

1. Pioneer settlers and the construction of all-male households

Migratory flows from South Asia, as well as from the remainder of the Islamic world, were overwhelmingly pioneered by young men who left their wives and children back home in the care of the remainder of their extended families. Hence in the early phase of all-male colony construction the *dharmic* and *sanskritic* dimensions of their traditions fell into temporarily abeyance. Few of them expected to stay for long. Instead their objective was to work like mules in the heavyweight and low-paid occupations which the indigenes chose to avoid, and lower the living expenses to the lowest possible level, in order to maximise their savings against the day when

⁸ See, for example, Grima, Bernadette (1998) *The Misfortunes which have Befallen Me: The performance of Emotion amongst Paxtun Women* Karachi, Karachi University Press and Ahmed, Amina, *Sorrow and Joy amongst Muslim Women: The Pukhtuns of Northern Pakistan* Cambridge University Press 2006.

⁹ I have deployed this term (whose literal translation is mother-religion) quite deliberately, to further encourage readers to 'think outside the box', and also to suggest that the term 'mother-tongue' points to a close parallel to this phenomenon.

¹⁰ A double meaning is also implicit in this term: besides being gendered in contradistinction to *mādrī muzhub*, it also points to the Christian missionaries whose evangelical activities have had, as we shall see, a profound influence on the conceptual foundations of activities in this sphere.

were eventually able to go home with their pockets full of gold. As the accounts set out by Aurora (1967), Shamsheer (1989) and Hussein (2000) confirm, the settlers were far too concerned with matters of sheer survival to be able to pay much attention to moral and behavioural niceties.

Nevertheless it would be quite wrong to conclude that religion played no significant part in the lives of the early pioneers. Rather they looked to that part of their heritage which stood right at the other end of the spectrum: namely in the resources of spiritual, moral and psychological succour which was readily available in the *panthic* and *kismet* domain, and in which the Islamic, Sikh and Hindu dimensions of popular Punjabi religion comprehensively overlapped with one another.

Given the populist nature of the enchanted universe into which they tapped, neither priestly specialists nor formally constituted religious institutions were necessary prerequisite for them to gain access to the succour available in this dimension of their ancestral conceptual resources. Hence the pioneers readily turned the mystical poetry of Nanak and Bulleh Shah, as well as Punjabi and Potohari epics such as Heer Ranjha and Saif ul-Malook – to which they had been introduced at their mothers' breasts – as sources of psychological succour and mystical inspiration. Recited from memory, these stories enabled the early pioneers to equate their experiences *bilayat* with the tragic heroes of a thoroughly enchanted past, and to regenerate a sense of purpose in the midst of the trials and tribulations in the midst of the thoroughly disenchanting world to which they had sacrificially exposed themselves on behalf of their families.

In doing so they were drawing on a deep-seated trope in the *panthic* dimension of Punjabi religion: namely that that properly appreciated, that the hard grind of everyday life can – if properly appreciated – be readily utilised as a source of the most profound levels of mystical inspiration. Hence much of the poetry generated during this period (vividly translated in Shamsheer 1989) revolved around *ishk*, passionate commitment to one's beloved, and *viraha*, the pain of separation of one's Beloved, no less in spiritual than in physical terms. This provided them with a ready means of articulating a reflective commentary on their experience of hard labour in the mills and foundries in the midst of an alien and uncaring land:

*The parrot of my life is trapped in the cage of separation far away
Dying every day, being born every day
If he falls ill he can bear the pain in his body
But how can he banish the pain in the soul?
To what physician can I tell my pain?* (Surjit Hans)

Or again

*My soul is wounded,
My spirit cries aloud
And the boat of my life
Held back by separation
Cannot come to the shore* (Svaran Chandan)

But whilst adversity presses in on all sides

*How hard it is to live the bread of sorrow on the tyrants' streets
Losing individuality, we sell our strength, crying out our wares
Without knowledge of how long we have to live
This is oppression's valley of death, where there is no-one to protect us* (Surjit Hans)

The whole exercise is nevertheless underpinned by a positive sacrificial purpose

To find fuel for the stove of our belly
We endure this life of pain and trouble
To light the path of our children's lives
The oil of our own selves is burnt to feed the lamp (Saqi)

It was not just separation from their homeland that precipitated poetic expressions of this kind. In the early years of colony construction the sojourners were overwhelmingly male, since they took the view would be as inappropriate as it was inapposite to expose their wives and daughters to the alien, uninspiring, and in their view largely immoral, environment in which they found themselves. But as nascent colonies grew in size, so their members gradually became more confident in their capacity to reproduce a moral universe in *Desh Pardesh*, no matter how hostile and morally corrosive the surrounding social order might be. Whilst the speed with which members drawn from differing of regions of and communities within in Punjab took the plunge, and hence switched from being mere sojourners to more or less permanent settlers varied enormously, but in due course virtually everyone eventually called their wives and children to join them.

2. The reconstruction of meaning and purpose in Desh Pardesh

As pioneer sojourners set about constructing fully fledged ethnic colonies, the resumption of family life led to a reconstruction of virtually all the familiar social and cultural institutions of their homelands (see Helweg 1986, Shaw 2000, Ballard 1977, 1994, and 2003). As far as the religious dimensions of their presence was concerned, the arrival of women and children not only provided a major boost to the *kismet* domain through the re-establishment of *mādrī muzhub*, but also established an environment within which the *dharmic* and *sanskritic* domains could at long last be reconstructed in all their complexity. Amongst the older generation at least, all these multifarious activities continue to be practiced to this day. However to the extent that they are invariably performed within the bounds of ethnic colonies, and most usually in private and domestic contexts, they remain largely unnoticed by external observers. Moreover there is also a marked reluctance of 'insiders' to bring the full extent of these practices to the attention of external observers, for fear than they will promptly be condemned as manifestations of irrational superstition.

Whilst those engaged in this phase of colony construction invariably sought to reproduce all the values and practices with which they were familiar 'back home' as comprehensively as possible, it would be quite wrong to assume that the outcome of the efforts was a straightforward carbon copy of the original model. Over and above their tendency to draw on idealised visions of their childhood experiences, settlers and their offspring were also faced with the task of reconstructing their dreams in a radically different environment from the one in which they were originally deployed. As a result the lifestyles and institutional structures which emerged in the diaspora invariably included all manner of reinterpretations of their 'imagined traditions'. Given this dynamic, the resultant developments can usefully be regarded as being driven along two distinct vectors: whilst the initiatives developed and deployed by the older generation of settlers can best be described as processes of socio-religious *reconstruction*, those adopted by their offspring, and by now the offspring of their offspring, are better understood as processes of *reinvention*, in the sense that they are at least one step further removed from the original model.¹¹

¹¹ It is worth emphasising that so long as one takes the view that 'religion' is best understood as a dynamic rather than as a static phenomenon, such that it is subject to constant processes of reconstruction and reinterpretation by its users, there is

In the first case, those who were born and brought up in the subcontinent have largely relied on the premises into which they were socialised prior to their departure in the process of re-establishing a sense of meaning and purpose in the midst of environment which, despite its relative prosperity, is in their view just as alien, immoral and irreligious as they felt it to be when they first arrived – if not more so. But whilst their offspring are equally heavily involved in processes of meaning construction, the challenges they face are far more complex than those experienced by their parents¹². For those born in the UK, as well as those who have lived here since childhood, Britain is unmistakably ‘home’ – as every visit they make to the subcontinent invariably confirms. However much they may cherish their ancestral roots, visits to the sub-continent invariably reveal that the impact of their diasporic experiences has been so pervasive that feel themselves to be fish out of water, especially if their parents’ roots lay in the countryside.

Nevertheless their experiences of ‘home’ are also riddled with all manner of contradictions. Ever since they can remember, they have found themselves faced with the challenge of negotiating their way between the premises into which they were socialised in domestic contexts, whilst simultaneously being expected to conform to radically different set of premises at school, at university, and during the course of their professional lives. However this is in no way to suggest that members of the younger generation are necessarily wracked by problems of ‘culture conflict’. Rather – as I observed earlier – they have had plentiful opportunities to become skilled cross-cultural navigators, and such they have gained the capacity to engage in far more sophisticated exercises in boundary-crossing than their parents could ever hope to achieve (Ballard 1994). But however sophisticated the navigational skills may have become, they are equally aware that they are not necessarily treated with an equal degree of respect as they navigate their way between differentially structured arenas.

3. Issues of respect

Education does just what it says on the tin: it seeks to induct youngsters into the skills, assumptions, and premises which underpin the wider socio-cultural order of the jurisdiction within which the institution is set. Hence children from minority backgrounds routinely find themselves socialised into two differing socio-cultural arenas. But whilst a process of multi-cultural socialisation is in no way problematic in its own right, problems inevitably arise if the codes associated with the various arenas in which one participates do not attract an equal degree of respect. It follows that whilst cross-cultural navigation does not give rise to serious conceptual difficulties in plural contexts which are broadly egalitarian in character, participation in plural social arenas which are asymmetrically organised throw up much greater series of challenges, all of which require careful analysis. From the hegemon’s perspective, the prospect of cross-cultural navigation is largely unproblematic – if only because they expect the subalterns to conform with their own conceptual expectations, and that if the subalterns fail to do so, that it is manifestly their own fault.

By definition, the experience of those subjected to such treatment is quite different. As young members of the new minorities become acutely aware as they make their way upward from school, to university, and on into the wider social order, members of the indigenous majority display little interest in, let alone respect for, the alternative set of conceptual premises into

nothing ‘inauthentic’ about such developments. Nor is it appropriate to identify such as developments novel: it is simply that the dynamics of change are invariably subject to a significant speed-up in diasporic contexts.

¹² See, for example, Mehmood, Tariq, (1983) *A Hand on the Sun*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Harmondsworth: Penguin, and from a rather different, but equally illuminating perspective, Sanghera, Sathnam (2009) *The Boy with the Top Knot: A memoir of Love, Secrets and Lies in Wolverhampton*.

which they have simultaneously been socialised in domestic contexts. Worse still, members of the majority all too often harbour grossly inaccurate stereotypes of the real character of those premises, such that they routinely commiserate with their minority friends for the difficulties that they must encounter as a result of having to put up with the barbaric premises and practices of their parents, as well as of those of the community into which they were born.

In these circumstances the central issue for members of marginalised minorities is not so much the presence of difference *per se*, but rather the indigenes' reluctance to acknowledge the existence of, let alone offer any kind of *respect for*, the key components of their very being. Not that this comes as any kind of news to members of the older generation; ever since they stepped ashore in the UK they have been aware that the natives of land in which they had taken up residence have a marked tendency to treat beings such as themselves with disdain, just as they did when the British Empire was in place. Hence they are only too happy to return the compliment (usually *sotto voce*) in spades, not least because their hearts are still firmly rooted in the land of their ancestors, regardless of their temporary residence in *bilayat*. However that option has ceased to have any traction as far as their locally-born offspring are concerned: like it or not, Britain is their homeland, no matter how contradictory their experiences of life within it may have been.

4. Double Alienation

The most characteristic response to this dilemma is what can best be described as a condition of double alienation, no less from their parents' preferred premises, which they regularly criticise on the grounds that they are timid as they are over-traditionalistic, than from the nominally liberal-minded premises of the established social order, which they have regularly experienced as an exclusionary sham, despite their articulation of all manner of duplicitous and patronising pleas to the contrary (Mehmood 1962, and Sanghera 2009). If children find this experience perplexing whilst at primary school, it invariably steadily more humiliating as they reach adolescence and then move on into adulthood, when it becomes ever more apparent that it is their very status as *persons* which is at stake. (Ballard and Parveen 2008).

How, then, can these contradictions best be dealt with? One option is to grin and bear it by ignoring the negative judgments to which they are regularly exposed, on the grounds that regardless how distinctive their ancestry may be, one's personal status in the UK is no different from that anyone else. But just who are those alters from whom they consequently consider themselves to be 'no different'? Careful reflection soon generates the obvious answer: from members of the indigenous majority, with whom they are implicitly invited to identify themselves on the grounds that their premises can safely be used as taken-for-granted yardsticks of 'normality'. But what if that vision of normality also includes a negative assessment of those who differ? As all members of Britain's visible minority are acutely aware, when push turns to shove, virtually all members of the indigenous majority – including virtually all of those who identify themselves as 'anti-racist' – ultimately take that view. In these circumstances it follows those who accept the invitation to assimilate regularly find themselves stuck between a rock and a hard place: whilst still systematically marginalised by members of the indigenous majority, they nevertheless regularly find themselves taunted as 'coconuts' by more self-confident peers, on the grounds that they swallowed the conceptual premises the indigenous majority wholesale, regardless of all the inherent contradictions to which the adoption of that strategy necessarily gives rise.

In response to these contradictions an ever-increasing proportion of the younger generation have begun to close ranks in self-defence. However, the basis on which they are currently doing so differs significantly from the caste and *biraderi*-based (and in that sense 'traditional') strategies of

solidarity routinely adopted by their parents. Instead the younger generation of Punjabis have begun routinely to identify themselves collectively as *apne* ('us') as opposed to the *gore* ('whites') – and in doing so to back away from more parochial affiliations of religion, sect, caste and *birade-ri* within which their parents very largely continue to operate.

The outcome of all this is a condition which can best be described as a process of double alienation, generated on both strategic and on conceptual grounds. Whilst reactions to these dilemmas vary from person to person as they manoeuvre their way round the resultant the contradictions' their direction of travel is plain to see. In addition becoming much more prepared to raise their heads above the parapet to protest about the insults to which they have been subjected than their parents ever were, the second generation have also become steadily more critical of premises within which their parents still operate, thanks amongst other things, to their engagements with the premises of the European enlightenment. But if they have consequently found themselves becoming increasingly uneasy about – and hence alienated from – the conceptual universe within which their parents continue to operate, they are similarly uneasy about premises of wider socio-cultural order of which they are nominally an integral component.

In response to these contradictions a significant proportion of the rising generation of British Punjabis – most especially amongst those who have pressed their way upward through the educational system to degree level – have begun to take an ever greater degree of interest in the textual foundations of their respective faiths, and in doing so to latch onto, and to further develop neo-fundamentalist reinterpretations of, their parents' traditions: in other words they have begun to follow in the footsteps (whether they are were aware of it or not) of the trajectories laid down by their nineteenth century predecessors in Punjab.

Nowhere have these developments been more salient than amongst young Muslims. Although they were relatively slow starters in comparison with their Sikh and Hindi peers, in the aftermath of the Salman Rushdie furore, and above all the events of 9/11, a self-reinforcing spiral of hostility has emerged as between an increasingly influential majoritarian view that the UK is in danger of being 'Islamised' from within, which in turn have precipitated the emergence increasingly active defensive responses from members of the Muslim minority. It also goes without saying that these processes have by no means restricted to the UK: rather a fault-line which pits the defenders of the merits of premises of Christendom as against those of Dar ul-Islam, in which both sides insist that the others' socio-cultural premises are wholly incompatible with their own was sprung to the fore across the length and breadth of Europe.

But despite the contemporary salience of this particular disjunction, it would be quite wrong to conclude that the strategic attractions of neo-fundamentalism are a specifically *Muslim* phenomenon. Limits of space make it impossible to engage in the way in which the death of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale in the course of the Indian Army's assault on the Golden Temple in Amritsar set off a wave of neo-fundamentalist support for Khalistan within the global Sikh diaspora, or the way in which Narendra Modi's rise to power in Gujarat in the aftermath of the massacre in Godra fuelled a similar wave of support for the intensely chauvinistic anti-Islamic premises of the VHP amongst many young Hindus. Hence members of both these communities now regularly go out of their way to insist that they may be pre-tanned, but they are most definitely *not* Muslims.

Nevertheless to the extent that the scale Islamic presence western Europe is much larger than that of the Hindus and Sikhs, that an anti-Islamic 'War on Terror' has recently erupted on a global scale, let alone the fact that these development have furthered reinforced a tectonic disjunction

which has more than a thousand years of history behind it, there is every reason to suppose that for the foreseeable future hostility to Islam is likely to remain far more salient than that directed Europe's Sikh and Hindu minorities.

VII. The roots of Britain's Islamist revival

5. The Salafi perspective

However in making sense of these developments is essential to remember that neo-fundamentalist initiatives are by no means unique to the diaspora. Similar politically driven reform movements have also emerged throughout the Islamic world, where they have also proved to be particularly popular amongst upwardly mobile students of rural origin, and most especially amongst those who have gained professional qualifications in engineering, science, medicine and law. Guided by their predecessors in Dar ul-Islam, many have engaged in a determined critique of popular Islamic practice, primarily focused on allegations that large parts of their parents' *panthic* and *kismet* practices are not just irrational, but manifestations of *bida*. As a result they deserve to be abandoned, and if necessary suppressed, on the grounds that they are reprehensible innovations. But although their approach to the issues is in many ways thoroughly modernist in character, it would be quite wrong to suggest that this critique of the more 'enchanted' dimensions of Islamic practice is in any unprecedented. On the contrary most current neo-fundamentalist movements find a great deal of inspiration in the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah, who argued that the Mongols' success in capturing Baghdad in 1258 was the outcome deviant interpretations of the teachings of the Qur'an. Hence he argued that the only way in which to avoid future disasters of this kind was by strict adherence to the behavioural practices laid down in the Shari'a, thereby amongst other things firmly marginalising the mystically oriented premises of Tariqa, if Dar ul-Islam could be restored to its true majesty.

Ibn Taymiyya's strictly textually grounded (and in that sense fundamentalist) arguments were subsequently taken up by the Wahhabis of Arabia, and subsequently further developed – and yet transformed by Jamāl ad-Dīn al-Afghani, Hassan Al-Banna, Abul Ala Maududi, and Sayyid Qutub. But if their arguments have inspired the ideologists responsible for generating the multiplicity of Salafi and Jihadi movements in the contemporary world – of which al-Qaida and the Taleban are classic examples – these initiatives have displayed a steadily decreasing engagement with the premises of classical Islamic scholarship. Rather they have behaved as 'do-it-yourself' neo-fundamentalists, cherry-picking likely looking quotations from the Qur'an with little or no concern for the context within which they were articulated. Drawing their inspiration directly from their own personal interpretations of the text, contemporary neo-fundamentalist *salafis* and *jihadis* have consequently convinced themselves that they are readily capable of *tafsir* on their own account, such that it is wholly legitimate to by-pass the teachings and analyses developed by virtually all the established figures in the history of Dar ul-Islam, with the partial exception of the four *Rashidun Khalifa*, as well as the *tafsir* set out by Ibn Taymiyyah and his followers, on the grounds that all their interpretations of the Prophet's message more or less seriously mistaken. By going back to basics in this way they find themselves in a position from which they can discard all unhelpful forms 'deviance' – *jahiliyya* – which have in their view crept into Dar ul-Islam over the centuries, so enabling them to propose that their *jihad* will enable them to restore Islam to its original pristine essence.

By loosening themselves from Islam's scholarly and metaphysical roots, contemporary neo-fundamentalists have come up with a far more radical interpretations of their tradition than Ibn Tamiyya could ever have dreamt of: by engaging in nominally rationalist speculation grounded in the rationalist premises of the European enlightenment, they have focused all their attention on

a 'purified' vision of political mobilisation located almost exclusively in the *qaumic* domain – a wholly unprecedented step in the history of Dar ul-Islam, as Hallaq rightly insists. However these developments are not unprecedented *per se*: rather they are following the same 'back-to-the future' trajectories characteristic of contemporary neo-fundamentalist movements worldwide, from the Tea Party onwards; and like all such unilaterally oriented movements, they are proving to be much more adept in mobilising 'the masses' than are in the art of governance.

6. The attractions of the Salafi perspective

It is easy to see why so many young Muslims in Britain have found themselves impressed by this agenda. Having successfully pressed their way upwards through a comprehensively disenchant-ed educational system, in which they have been introduced to little or nothing about Islam other than perspectives which date back to the period of the Crusades, it is little wonder that the found the Islamist agenda so attractive. In the first place it was articulated in English, on a textually grounded and an apparently rationalist basis, readily available in print from Wahhabi organisations sponsored by the Saudi Arabian authorities; more recently this has been hugely supplemented by ever expanding self-authored discussions over the internet. Secondly, and even more significantly, it provided them with an attractive basis on which to confront the condition of dual alienation in the midst of which they found themselves. Besides providing them with a ready opportunity to up-end, and hence to discredit, the duplicitous conceptual and socio-cultural agenda into which the established educational system had provided, it enabled them to equally dismissive of their parents' 'primitive' and 'superstitious' beliefs and practices, of which their rationalistically oriented education had taught them to be equally scornful. Hence the whole exercise appeared – at least at first sight – to provide the rising generation with a viable political platform from which to challenge the unsustainable contradictions with which they felt themselves to be confronted, no less at home, at school and in the world at large.

Multiple sources of inspiration for this agenda were also readily available. Given that school, television and the internet had become their principal sources of conceptual as opposed to emotional insights, their mothers' efforts to introduce them to the wonders of a Punjabi-style conceptual universe often cut very little ice;¹³ nor did the lectures given by overseas-trained and largely non-English speaking Maulvis who ran *Qur'an* classes, and subsequently preached Friday sermons, in the Mosque; meanwhile they heard little or nothing positive about Islam in the National Curriculum to which they were exposed school, or indeed when they subsequently moved on to College and University. In these circumstances they lapped up the well-presented English-language commentaries on all aspects of Islam, mostly either produced by Saudi Arabia, or printed in the UK with the assistance of Saudi funding, which began to appear in innumerable Islamic bookshops.

This eminently readable literature promoted a very different vision of Islam from that which was practiced by their parents. Whether prepared by followers of *Jamaat-i-Islami*, the *Ahl-i-Hadith*, or of by those of *Deobandi/Wahhabi* persuasion, this literature has become ever more strongly *Salafi* in outlook. As such it has urged all true Muslims to overlook the past thirteen hundred years of Islamic civilization, and instead to rebuild their lives around the example set by the Prophet himself, as well as by his four 'rightly-guided' successors. Moreover if they were interested in *tafsir*, the interpretation of the meaning of the *Qur'an*, they were invited to explore the work of ibn Taymiyyah, or perhaps better still, to do it themselves in true Protestant style. What we have

¹³ Lest I should be mistaken, I should emphasise on again that *mādiri muzhub* is no less salient a feature of popular practice amongst Sikhs and Hindus than amongst Muslims: indeed they not infrequently overlap and intersect, especially when it comes to the diagnosis of otherwise inexplicable disasters.

consequently witnessed is the emergence of a generation of Muslims who are comprehensively self-educated in religious terms, with the result that they regard the beliefs and practices of their parents with almost as much disdain as members of the surrounding non-Muslim population. It is from members of this thoroughly untraditional generation, busy seeking inspiration from the ancient past in an effort to build a more perfect future, that almost all of Britain's suicide bombers, as well as those who have set off to conduct *jihad* overseas on a personal basis, have been drawn.

This is in no way to suggest that all or even most young British Muslims are proto-suicide bombers. Rather those who go out actively looking for *shaheedi* in this sense are rare and thoroughly exceptional outliers. Nevertheless an ever-growing proportion of young British Muslims share a deep-seated distrust of the premises of the established order, accompanied by a growing determination to pursue their own agendas, and find their way to more meaningful solutions the challenges they so routinely encounter in the course of their everyday lives.

7. More meaningful alternatives

This sense of dogged self-determination is having all sorts of practical consequences. For some it provides the driving force behind a determination to achieve educational and professional success, regardless of the obstacles strewn in their path. In this respect a steadily increasing proportion young Muslims have begun to follow in the footsteps of their Hindu and Sikh counterparts, and have begun to emerge from the educational system with excellent qualifications. However this also routinely turns out to be a route riddled with contradictions. Finding that the rules of the game in the competitive world of employment are even more structured to their disadvantage than in the educational system, they routinely find that they are required to 'coconut' themselves if they are to have any prospect of finding their way out of the undergrowth of professional hierarchies. But no matter how sophisticated their navigational skills become, they still all too often find themselves confronted by glass ceilings. As result a significant component of the young Muslim population have begun to take the view that their uphill struggle for conventional socio-economic success is hardly worth the candle.

Whilst such feelings of disillusionment are far from universal, a significant gender differential has also begun to emerge in this sphere. Despite the disadvantages of gender with which young Muslim women all too often find themselves confronted, no less within the bounds of their families than in the world at large, they have nevertheless begun to achieve a considerably greater degree of educational and professional success than their male counterparts. However it would be a mistake to assume that they are more firmly committed to assimilative coconuthood than their brothers, since a steadily rising proportion now begun actively to assert their underlying distinctiveness adopting a *hijab* – thereby overtly challenging the established rules of engagement. But whilst the vast majority of their male counterparts' preferred dress-codes are much more akin to those of the indigenous majority, there are strong indications that their feelings of disillusionment precipitated by exposure to the consequences of unspoken – but deeply humiliating – rules of ethnic engagement is having a much more serious psychological impact on young men than it does on their sisters. This may well go a long way towards explaining why it is that the educational and professional achievements UK-born young Muslim men, and especially those whose parents are from rural backgrounds, are significantly attenuated as compared with those of their female counterparts. It may also explain why young men who fall by the wayside in this way are disproportionately attracted to *jihadi* activities.

From their parents' perspective these developments appear deeply puzzling. Where they once looked forward to the prospect that their sons would make the most of the educational facilities

in Britain, and in due course find their way into professional occupations of one kind or another, thereby ensuring their families' future prosperity, so enabling them to marry off their daughters to suitable partners once they reached their late teens, it is now their daughters who are now pressing their way eagerly forward into Universities and on into professional occupations¹⁴. Meanwhile an alarming portion of their sons all too often get stuck in one form or another of 'cruise'. Worse still, those who run seriously off the rails display an alarming tendency to slide through casual employment into drug addiction, and then on into criminal activity as a means of supporting their habit – much to the horror of their parents. However it is also worth noting that in the course of so doing, they rarely exploit members of their own community. Rather they are much more likely prey in one way or another on the *gore* inhabitants of the surrounding social order, often enabling them to access to short term wealth, even if it is also a path which almost inevitably leads to incarceration.¹⁵

8. The quest for millenarian solutions

During the course of the past few decades, a growing wave of disaffected (but often well-educated) young Muslim men across the length and breadth of the Islamic world have leapt with enthusiasm onto *salafist* re-interpretations of their faith. In doing so they looked forward to the restoration of *Khilafat*, under whose auspices they expected to be able to begin to organise their lives in ever greater conformity with exemplary behavioural premises laid out in the *Qur'an*; moreover a small proportion went yet further still, such that they were prepared to sacrifice their lives as *shaheed* in an effort to facilitate its restoration. These reactions were manifestly products of severe disillusionment, of a kind which was by no means confined to the diaspora: it has proved to be just as significant, if not more so, throughout the length and breadth of post-colonial Dar ul-Islam; and whilst though all these post-colonial developments have everywhere been conditioned by all manner of locally specific contingencies, it is increasingly apparent that they have all been precipitated by a common theme: deep-seated disappointment with moral and socio-economic character of the regimes in which they found themselves, no less in Dar ul-Islam itself than in its diaspora. If so, what was the *general* source of this condition of disillusionment? In my view the answer is plain to see. The Islamic worlds' post-colonial encounters with the premises of the enlightenment – whether on face to face terms in the diaspora, or by proxy as competing American and Soviet 'advisors' who sought to spread their influence throughout post-colonial world during the course of the past century – the results have everywhere been disastrous, and most especially in Dar ul-Islam itself. Far from generating popular democracies, 'modernity' has seen the emergence of a multiplicity unilateral dictatorships – running right across the spectrum from military regimes with roots which as allegedly socialist and secular to those which identify themselves as manifestations of *vilayat-e-faqih*. As far as the rising generation is concerned, all developments have had much the same effect: far from wheeling out

¹⁴ In my opinion this tendency has relatively little do with the religious dimensions of Islam – although it is undoubtedly reinforced by the much greater levels of hostility which from the surrounding population to which they are exposed in comparison with their Sikh and Hindu counterparts. Instead there are good reasons to suggest that it is differential marriage rules – such that arranged marriage amongst close kin are strongly favoured in Muslim context, whilst Hindu and Sikh marriages are routinely arranged afresh with non-kin. In the latter case educational achievement of sons no less than daughters is a necessary prerequisite for a 'good marriage', young Muslim men can readily expect to be married to one or other of their cousins as and when they choose, regardless of their educational achievements.

¹⁵ Home Office Statistics show that the number of Muslims in British prisons has risen rapidly in recent years, from 3,681 in 1997 to 10,437 in 2010. By 2011 12.5% of the UK prison population were followers of Islam, even though they only made up 4.8% of the population at large. A further report prepared by the Prison Reform Trust indicates that in 2010-11 the proportion of black and minority ethnic children in Youth Offenders Institutions rose to 39% (from 33% in 2009-10), the number of foreign national young men increased to 6% (from 4% in 2009-10) and the number who identified themselves as Muslim rose to 16% (compared with 13% in 2009-10).

progress, they have only had the effect of all of their local jurisdictions even further back into *jahiliyya* from which they suffered during the course of direct colonial rule.

In the face of such comprehensive condition of disillusionment the prospect of Jihad became increasingly attractive, not just as an inward spiritual exercise, put rather as a vehicle from which to articulate moral and social reform. If the greater part of the Islamic world had indeed long since fallen back into the snares of *jahiliyya* as result of its encounter with the evangelistic premise of Christendom, then the time had undoubtedly come to engage in a program for the promotion of virtue and the suppression of vice, were necessary by violent means if legitimated by judgments of *takfir*, with the objective of restoring Islam to its original condition of Qur'anic glory. But just when did this condition actually exist? Or was it merely a construct of neo-fundamentalists' vivid imagination? I take the latter view. To my mind there are good reason to suggest that this millenarian perspective has hitherto been absent from Islam, and that it is therefore better understood as being rooted in premises which lie buried at the heart of European enlightenment, which were in turn rooted in the millenarian significance of the Risen Christ. But whether or not such a suggestion is sound, its empirical consequences are plain to see. With such an iconoclastic set of premises under their belts, the neo-fundamentalists were able to dismiss the significance of virtually all the theological, metaphysical, philosophical, scientific, cultural and social developments since the Prophet passed away, and along with the enchanted metaphysical universe which the greater part of the Qur'an celebrates, and with it the moral and spiritual vision which to which the Sufi tradition had given rise over the centuries, inspired by the spiritually oriented messages. In other words this was a strongly *qaumic* development in the midst of which the *panthic* and *kismet* domains of the Islamic tradition was dismissed with contumely, whilst *usul ul-fiqh* – or in other words Islam's sophisticated vision of how the *dharmic* order whose basic premises are set out in the Shari'a should be interpreted – was systematically replaced by efforts to recast those premises as a form of universalistically applicable black-letter Law, which could consequently be read off as an instruction-sheet on the basis of which overcome current manifestations of *jahiliyya* by means of systematic efforts to promote virtue and suppress vice. But once the scholarly foundations had collapsed, the whole edifice had been left rudderless, so much so that the neo-fundamentalists could move to centre stage, from where they could construct a primarily *qaumic* vision of the implications of Shari'a based on own self-constructed terms (Ballard 2013). But for how long can we expect the violent and largely unreflective millenarian visions which have sprung to the fore continue to hold water in the eyes of its potential supporters?

As the twentieth century progresses we may well have reached a turning point. It is not just that Iran's *vilayat-e-faqih* is proving to be just as hegemonic, exploitative and indeed as morally corrupt was regime over which the Shah once presided; the same can also be said of yet more prosperous Wahhabi-inspired Saudi regime on the far side of the Gulf. Nor is this in any way unique. Throughout what remains of Dar ul-Islam sectarian disputes are becoming unprecedentedly severe, largely as a result of the activities al-Qaida's ever more radicalised local franchises, whose members' antics are more often than beginning to comprehensively alienate local Muslim populations as they turn into well-armed, exploitative, anti-social terrorists, rather than the spiritually oriented *shaheeds* and *ghazis* which they represent themselves as being. However these are in no sense free-standing developments, since by the United States' equally millenarian drone-led Global War on Terror has acted as a recruiting sergeant for the *jihadi* cause. But even if United States was to draw in his horns, the ball it set rolling in the aftermath of 9/11 has by now gathered a great deal of momentum, even though contemporary *jihadi* invariably lose all traces of popular appeal whenever and wherever they get into power, if only because they invariably find

themselves incapable of implementing an orderly system of governance for which Dar ul-Islam was once famous. Nor, as Hallaq observes, is there much prospect of its restoration: the current political mess throughout what was once the relatively well-ordered world Dar ul-Islam seems likely to take decades to clear up.

VIII. Conclusion

1. Where next? Routes to an alternative future?

All this should serve to remind us that the *jihadi* developments precipitated in the contemporary Islamic diaspora are by no means solely conditioned by the specific character of local contingencies and histories. They are simultaneously an integral component of, as well as further conditioned by, global developments within and around Dar ul-Islam. From that perspective there can be little doubt that ethno-religiously grounded forms of political mobilisation, are becoming steadily more salient throughout the contemporary world, even if the consequences of these developments are proving to be particularly severe in the context of Dar ul-Islam and its diaspora. Nor are these developments in any sense unique. In the current post-colonial era similarly structured *qaumically* grounded forms mutually competitive ethno-religious mobilisation have also become steadily more salient both as between Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists throughout South Asia, whilst at global scale there are excellent grounds for suggesting that the 'Global War on Terror' – whether articulated from American, Russian or Chinese hegemon – have similar foundations. If so, it follows – as I have repeatedly suggested in this essay – all these *qaumic* developments in my view are best understood as an essentially *modern* phenomenon, each of which can best be understood as bastard offspring of the nominally progressive premises of the European enlightenment.

With this in mind one of the most significant developments in South Asian diasporic contexts is the resilience of the moral and spiritual – and hence the *dharmic*, *kismet* and *panthic* – aspects of their ancestral traditions in the sheltered space of their ethnic colonies, despite their caustic encounters with the ever more secularly and individualistically oriented socio-cultural order which surrounds them. Moreover in the diaspora as much as their homelands, pre-modern premises are most likely to be preserved amongst those whose *modus vivendi* is furthest removed from the premises of established social order: namely the poor rather than the rich, elders rather than youngsters, women rather than men, the illiterate rather than the literate, and sustained in poetry and song rather than in textbooks. It follows that regardless of the efforts of reformists, pre-modern conceptual order is still readily accessible to open-minded adventurers seeking alternative solutions. Nevertheless ease of accessibility varies significantly from context to context. Hence, for example, whilst second and third generation Sikhs and Hindus can readily access an enchanted environment in their Gurudwaras and Mandirs, in the Islamic world it is the Pirs and their shrines, rather than the Maulvis and their Masjids who maintain the vigour of the much more subterranean Sufi tradition alive. As a result young Sikhs and Hindus are regularly adjudged to be much less 'radical' than their Muslim counterparts.

If so, just what are to make of these differences? Whilst it is quite clear that both the Sikh and the Hindu traditions are no less capable of generating violent neo-fundamentalist movements than are followers of Islam – as, for example, in the case of the Khalistan movement and the RSS and its offshoots – there are good grounds for suggesting that politically driven moral re-armament (*jihad*, in other words) has long been a more salient feature of Dar ul-Islam. This is by no means to suggest that Islam is intrinsically violent in character, especially because it has always includ-

ed a spiritual domain which is no less complex than its Indic counterparts. However in no way does it fall straight into the 'Indic' camp, not moral and behavioural domain (Shari'a, in other words) is of Abrahamic origin, and hence strictly rule-bound in terms of orthopraxy in the same sense of Judaism and Christianity, in sharp contrast to the relativistic, and hence much more strongly pluralistic character of Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist visions of Dharma. But despite its nominally Abrahamic roots, Islam went on to successfully bridged that disjunction, such that it has long displayed a marked (but conceptually immensely profitable) tension between its behavioural underpinnings in the *shari'a* and its more spiritual (and in that sense more Indic) domain of *tariqa*, both of which have active roots in the Qur'an.

With this in mind it is worth observing that there is a growing awareness that there is a strong sense in which Islam itself was in no sense solely a product of the Hejaz: whilst that was the source from where Arab warriors spread out to make rapid conquests both to the east and the west by the Umayyads in the aftermath of the Prophet's death, the theological foundations around which Dar ul-Islam as we now know it was largely thrashed out under their successors, the Abbasids. Moreover as Starr (2013) has recently demonstrated in great detail, a large proportion of the scholars and mystics who established those foundations were drawn from the far-distant province of Khorasan, which the Arab *jihadis* had over-run early on, but had nevertheless found it extremely difficult to bring under formal control. But whilst Central Asia subsequently became something of backwater, thanks amongst other things to the depredations of Chhngis Khan and deforestation, at this point in history Central Asia was anything but backwater. Standing at the middle of trade routes stretching out in all possible directions, it was not only extremely prosperous, but renowned for its religious and scholarly sophistication. As a result Muslim adventurers found themselves in midst of an intensely plural social order, in which Zoroastrians, Manicheans and Nestorian Christians found themselves nested in the midst of vigorous and ancient Buddhist tradition. Hence as Starr observes

Buddhism [had already] elicited from Central Asians a many-sided effort to edit and translate the major texts. In the process they expressed their strong preferences and added their own commentaries and amplifications. The same process took place as they absorbed, analysed, and passed on the main texts of Christianity and Manicheans.

All this suggests that the religious/philosophical history of Central Asia was not divided into neat thematic or temporal compartments of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Hellenism, Christianity, Manichaeism, or Islam; rather its evolution was a single process. Seen in this light, the codification of the Hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad, in which Central Asians were more prominent than all other Muslims combined, is a continuation of the great editorial project of Buddhism and, to a lesser extent, of Manichaeism and Nestorian Christianity.

To the extent that the Central Asians favoured the more practical Vaibhasika school of Buddhism, with its acceptance of sensory perception, the embrace of past and future, together with a stress on authoritative commentaries, it should come as no surprise that they would later gravitate toward the more practical Hanafi school of Muslim law, and toward the writing of commentaries on the translated works of ancient Greek thinkers. Nor is it surprising that the physical design of the classical madrasa, a Muslim institution that was regularized and popularized by Central Asian officials, built directly on the Central Asian tradition of Buddhist monasteries, with their rows of cells and assembly rooms. (Starr 2013: 97)

Moreover on the following page Starr goes on note that

The earliest known Sufi Muslim mystic was Abu Yazd Bistami (c. 804-874) from the town of Bistam in Khorasan. Bistam, today a town of seven thousand that is devoid of Buddhist monuments, must once have supported a thriving Buddhist life. He was clearly from a family of seekers. His father was a Zoroastrian convert to Islam, but Bistami himself sought to enrich his new faith with mystical teachings and the practice of yoga, to which he was been introduced by a local Buddhist master – thereby establishing the mental and spiritual discipline of Central Asian Sufism.

All this serves to suggest that it was in the midst of this maelstrom of pluralistic intellectual activity that the two complementary dimensions of what was to become Dar ul-Islam were crystallised: indeed it is quite possible that just as the Gospels were prepared half a century or more after the Jesus' crucifixion, so the Qur'an was finally assembled in its present shape by the scholars of Khorasan a century or more after the Prophet's demise. If that was indeed the case, it follows that this Central Asian confrontation between the more rational Abrahamic and Greek conceptual orders on the one hand and the more mystical – and indeed enchanted – premises of Buddhism on the other had such momentous consequences. From here onwards Islam would have two complementary dimensions: the Shari'a, which sets a rationally grounded (and in that sense intrinsically disenchanting) set of instructions as to best to order one's behaviour to render it congruent with the exemplary behaviour of the *insaan-e-kamil*, the Prophet, derived from a careful analysis of the *hadith*; and on the other a much more mystical interpretation of the Prophet's experience, which offer a more direct route towards a transcendent experience of the meaning of existence itself. Hence if the Shari'a provided the structure of the Islamic social order, once the initial phase of conquest had faltered, a myriad of Sufi Pirs drew on the enchanted dimensions of the Qur'an to spread a metaphysically inspired vision of the meaning and purpose of Allah's creation. Thereafter it was Tariqa, rather than *jihad*, which promoted the expansion of Dar ul-Islam.

Until recent times popular practice swung regularly forth along the spectrum between Shari'a and Tariqa, with the one never obliterating the other. However as Hallaq has shown, as Dar ul-Islam was progressively over-run by the rising tide of European hegemony from the latter part of the eighteenth onwards public administration moved ever more firmly in an Abrahamic direction. Some jurisdictions did so in what can best be described as a 'catch-up' exercise, as in the case of Turkey and Iran; however most other jurisdictions in Dar ul-Islam did so perforce, as result of being incorporated into one or other of the major European empires.

2. The 'enlightened' roots of neo-fundamentalism

With this in mind it is worth noting virtually all contemporary forms of contemporary Islamic neo-fundamentalism are best understood as processes of religious reconstruction generated in the wake of colonial encounters with the *qaumic* premises of the European enlightenment. At least at the outset, resistance to these alien forms of governance sparked off a series of old-fashioned *jihadic* rebellions; however they were all promptly crushed as a result of the superior force of arms to which the Europeans had access. An alternative strategy was urgently required, and soon took off in the form of a whole series of modernistically orientated religious reform movements, led by such figures as Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan, Jamal al-Afghani, Mohammed Abdu and Hassan al-Banna, all of whom borrowed key aspects of Euro-America's rational approach to technical and organisational skills, in an effort to beat their hegemon at their own game. But with the benefit of hindsight it is only too clear that they were playing with fire. Whilst all these pioneers remained deeply critical of the severe lack of personal moral foundations in Euro-America's socio-cultural order – a view which pervades the Islamic world to this day – they nevertheless failed to appreciate that that rationally grounded organisational and technological skills

which they took aboard, thereby casting aside the checks and balances to which the tension between Shari'a and Tariqa gave rise, they had imported a conceptual order with a nasty sting in the tail: namely the millenarian promise of progress towards a more perfect future which lay at the heart of the premises of the enlightenment, and indeed of Christendom itself. To be sure the founding fathers of contemporary Islamism remained largely untouched by these futurological fantasies; however all too many of their contemporary successors have drawn on a few carefully selected verses in the Qur'an to legitimate increasingly violent forms of *qaumic* mobilisation, on the grounds that this is a necessary prerequisite if their millenarian visions of perfection are ever to be achieved.

This takes us straight back to Weber, and most especially to his observation that

New religious movements constructed without a new, authentic prophecy, can only give rise to monstrous of inner experiences. Academic prophecies can only ever produce fanatical sects, but never a genuine community.

In setting forward these observations there are no indications that Weber had any specific religious context in mind: rather he was making generalised observation with respect to a major source of instability in an increasingly disenchanting world order, on the grounds that the reform movements which were emerging around the aftermath of the Great War appeared to have grossly inadequate conceptual foundations, above all because they lacked any significant sense of spiritual and metaphysical generosity. The result, he suggested, was that such initiatives would only give rise to fanatical sectarian movements. From this perspective his prescience has proved to be remarkably accurate. Whether focused on Mein Kampf, the Bible, the Qur'an, the Ramayana, the Communist manifesto, or indeed the Constitution of the United States, myopic textualism is a feature of virtually all contemporary millenarian movements, whether waiting on edge for the arrival of judgement day, the Mahdi, comprehensive personal freedom, or the removal of all unwanted aliens, such that – or so their eager promoters insisted – all current forms of distress would be eradicated in a process of revolutionary salvation.

Yet just how should we assess the significance of these doggedly unilateral, and hence necessarily polarising, socio-political movements? Are they a long-standing feature of the human society, invariably driven in one way or another by ancient hatreds, but which have nevertheless somehow continued to raise their irrational heads despite the ever-spreading influence of the premises of the European enlightenment? Or are they, to the contrary, examples of a mode of social action which have always been a latent component of human behaviour – but one to which a serious flaw in the premises of the enlightenment served to give such processes a powerful legitimating boost, such that current manifestations of conceptual unilateralism, and hence ever sharper forms of socio-cultural mobilisation, are best understood as a strictly *modern* phenomenon.

But however powerful the rationalised fervour generated within such *qaumically* grounded movements may become, virtually of their participants found themselves waiting for Godot. In such circumstances it is all too easy for frustrated revolutionaries to take up a life of exploitative banditry, not least because the fanatical interpretations of neo-fundamentalism rarely if ever provide any indication as to how those involved should earn their keep, raise a family, or engage in the quotidian processes of everyday life if the millennium fails to arrive. But so long as the belief that only valid form of meaning and purpose is to be found in the apocalypse, which the *salafists* and above all the *jihadis* routinely insist is 'the only answer', all other concerns are likely to fall by the wayside.

But however alarming these developments may be, crude efforts to suppress them are likely to be counterproductive. Hence it is worth noting that whilst disillusioned young Muslim students frequently find fanatical visions *jihad* and the reconstruction Khilafat an attractive objective, very few maintain their commitment to the cause on a life-long basis: instead they fall back into various forms of domesticity – and in doing so seek out alternative sources of meaning and purpose. So it is that despite having enthusiastically joined the ranks of the intellectually inspired *salafis* and *jihadis* whilst at University, they routinely drop back into much more quotidian conceptual universes once they have completed their studies.

But even if they never get round to equipping themselves with Kalashnikovs, there is still every prospect that they will still find themselves in the midst of the condition of dual alienation which set them off in the first place, albeit located in somewhat different arenas. Hence parents may well begin to scout around for a suitable spouses for their offspring once their studies are complete, whilst they simultaneously find that once left the relatively liberal world of the University behind them, they promptly find themselves confronted by ‘the rules of ethnic engagement’ (Ballard and Parveen 2010) once they enter the ever more competitive world of employment. Given that compliance with these rules is a prerequisite for survival, let alone for promotion, they find themselves required to keep their heads well below the parapet, and to behave as if they really were fully fledged ‘coconuts’. As their dilemmas become more not less intense, many conclude that there is no obvious way out, especially if they have long since come to the conclusion that waging *jihad* against Christendom is unlikely to precipitate a meaningful solution to the contradictions with which they find themselves confronted. It is in precisely these circumstances that an ever-increasing number have begun to explore, and hence to re-assess the resources of their religio-cultural heritage which they had hitherto overlooked – and indeed had been actively ashamed of – during the period in which they were seduced the temptations of neo-fundamentalist alternatives.

The dilemmas we currently face in this sphere are far from novel. Long before Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus began to establish bridgeheads in Western Europe, it was the dreaded ‘Papists’ who were regarded as the principal threat to Britain’s, and most especially to England’s, condition of Protestant integrity. Moreover just after the Test Act was at long last removed from the Statute book, leading to further legislation emancipating Britain’s Catholic population in 1829, Irish migrants began to establish rapidly expanding ethnic colonies in every major British city – leading to a rapid resurgence of the long-standing fantasy the recusant Catholics were secretly planning a seditious take-over on behalf of Rome. As result polarisation as between the Protestant and the Catholic sections of the working class swiftly became a salient feature of urban Britain, precipitating violent confrontations at least as serious as those precipitated as those experienced by more recent post-colonial settlers. To be sure those confrontations have fallen into more or less comprehensive abeyance since then, except in Ulster, only to be reproduced when people of colour began to arrive in ever larger numbers in the aftermath of the Second World War, to fill precisely the same vacant slots in the labour market into which Irish Catholics had been drawn a century earlier. But if hostility towards the Catholic presence was articulated in terms of a pan-European disjunction precipitated by the Reformation, subsequently driven onward by evangelical Protestant attacks on the ethnic colonies which the Irish settlers around themselves in self-defence, it has recently been superseded by another disjunction has even deeper roots, no less in historical than in geographical terms.

But although those roots may reach back for rather more than a millennium, they are in no way primordial in character: rather they are the product of a concatenation of historically specific series of events whose influence has proved to be so powerful that they have large overwhelmed

the Catholic/Protestant divide which became such a salient feature of the European socio-political order in the aftermath of the Reformation. But if the declining force of this disjunction is substantially a product of secularisation, there are strong grounds for suggestion that this has been an intrinsically a-religious development, given that popular hostility towards the Muslim presence is routinely legitimated on the grounds that Islam and all its works threatens the integrity of 'Europe's Christian heritage'. Not that these sentiments receive much in the way of institutional support from the Churches, whether Protestant or Catholic, let alone from their priestly hierarchies. Instead contemporary manifestations of Islamophobia are primarily directed at practice rather than belief, and articulated by a host of secularly minded post-Christian liberals representing the interests of by now thoroughly secularised *qaum*.

As a result of these developments Muslims of all persuasions now routinely find themselves required to defend the evils of stoning, hand-chopping, forced and veiling, and of course of suicide bombing, by their Euro-American interlocutors. And as Mohsin Hamid graphically demonstrates in the dialogue he develops in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, few options are available to those subjected to such onslaughts – other than that of closing down the hatches whilst closing ranks in self-defence. But as Hamid emphasises, this is never a one-way process: such assaults are an open invitation to those against whom such critiques are directed to respond by paying their tormentors back in their own money.

3. The contemporary dynamics of polarization

At best post-Christian liberals are alarmed by responses of this kind: many are simply outraged. The issues which the newcomers are raising simply do not show up on their conceptual radars. What they forget (or rather fail to recognise) is that the dialectical relationship between Christendom and Dar ul-Islam has millennium's worth of history behind it. Indeed as I have argued elsewhere in an article entitled *Islam and the Construction of Europe*, 'Europe' has does not have any clear cut physical boundaries, other than it lies to the north of the Mediterranean (Ballard 1996). Rather socio-cultural boundaries in terms of which Europe identified itself during the past millennium can be traced back to the rise of Islam, to the Crusades, and to the consequent construction of a vision of Europe as the home of righteous civilisation operating as defensive barricade to its antithesis: the forces of what has long been perceived as the anti-Christ. However this trope was by no means restricted to attempts to hold Islam at bay; rather it gave rise to a series of further crusades directed at other forms religious alterity, in the form of Cathars, of Jews, and of Protestants. Moreover where the Protestants gained political ascendancy, Catholic minorities received much the same treatment. Nor did the process stop there: once European Imperialism found its way to a position of global ascendancy, all of Christendom's long standing external alters found themselves scorned rather than feared. But during the past half century the worm has turned once again: as Islam has emerged as one of Euro-America's most active challengers from the global South, it has once again come to be regarded as embodying the antithesis of all those characteristics which the heirs of Christendom would like to believe that they themselves epitomise.

However time's arrow only flies one way. Whilst ethno-cultural plurality was the order of the day in Dar ul-Islam – as indeed in most other pre-modern societies – prior to their encounters with the premises of the European enlightenment, in the post-colonial period processes of ethno-religious polarisation, often with even more violent outcomes than those experienced in Europe, have become steadily of a more salient. As we have seen that was to a significant degree an outcome of the dynamics of *qaumic* resistance which took off during the colonial period. That was not all, however. Up until the creation of Israel in the aftermath of the Second World War Jewish

and Christian communities were and integral part of the social order throughout Dar ul-Islam. However the creation of a deliberately exclusionist *qaumic* state in the midst plural Palestine, initially established European Jews in the aftermath of the Holocaust had disastrous consequences for Jewish communities in the remainder of Dar ul-Islam; more recently still members of Christian communities have experienced similarly structured collateral damage as 9/11 was followed by the even more disastrous consequences of the Global War on Terror. Worse still, the dynamics of polarisation have now become deeply entrenched in the structure of Dar ul-Islam itself: as its pre-modern foundations have steadily collapsed, so chaos has begun to reign in all directions, such Sunnis and Shi'as have become ever more hostile to one another, as have Sufis and Salafis, with the pot being stirred ever more violently as *jihadis* step into failing states in attempts to create strictly neo-fundamentalistic – and hence thoroughly modernistic – Emirates all the way from Afghanistan to Mali.

4. Back to a less neo-fundamentalist future?

In making sense of all this it is worth remembering both that there is nothing new under the sun, and that garden paths can also lead to sticky endings. Ed Hussain (2007) makes exactly these points in his autobiographical account subtitled *Why I joined radical Islam in Britain, and why I left*, in which provides an insightful account of his many adventures during the course of his own personal journey along just such a route, which eventually brings him back to a rediscovery of the enchanted universe which his grandfather had introduced him as a child. Putting the sterility of neo-fundamentalism behind him, the closing paragraphs of his book celebrate his rediscovery of meaning and purpose in the Sufi tradition, the *panthic* domain which has always formed the lifeblood of Islamic spirituality:

In gatherings remembering the Prophet's birthday, or *mawlid*, replete with metaphysical meanings, they lead lovers of the Prophet in song and emulate the Beloved's exemplary conduct. *Mawlid* gatherings are a highlight of the Muslim cultural calendar across the Muslim world, but are of no significance to Islamists.

Love and attachment to the Prophet is at the heart of a *mawlid* gathering, not the scriptural rigidity and mental paralysis of literalism. For me, the underlying scholarly methodology that endorses the celebration of the Prophet's birthday signifies a more tolerant, inclusive, flexible approach both to scripture and to life.

Without doubt, a British Islam is emerging. It remains to be seen whether it will be in harmony with the world in which it finds itself, or if it rejects and repels it. The direction we take at this critical juncture will determine the type of Islam we bequeath to future generations. The future of Islam is being shaped now (Husain 2007: 285-6).

Whilst Hussain writes particularly eloquently about his experiences, he is by no means alone in finding his way back to, and gaining a renewed sense of meaning purpose from, the more enchanted dimensions of his ancestral heritage. Nevertheless as he himself repeatedly emphasises, the making the most of these alternative insights is far from straightforward, since all sorts of pitfalls lurk along the way.

As Weber presciently observed,

our age is indeed characterized by rationalization and intellectualization, and above all, by disenchantment; our ultimate and most sublime values have been withdrawn from public life, and retreated either into the abstract realms of philosophy, or into personal relations between individuals. The gnostic spirit which once swept through great communities like a

firebrand, welding them together, has faded into abeyance. Current attempts to construct new religious movements in our disenchanted world only gives rise fanatical sects – but never to genuine communities.

But does this really mean that everything is now lost to the Talibs and the Tea Parties of this world? I think not. In the light of the analysis I have developed here the underlying issues in this arena are conceptual, ideological and ultimately spiritual in character, albeit further reinforced by (rapidly changing) patterns of inequality in the distribution of wealth and power. Nevertheless wherever one stands along that spectrum, the premises of modernity have seriously eroded what Weber describes as ‘our ultimate and most sublime values’, all too often to the point extinction. These developments are proving to be deeply destructive, no less in Euro-American and Islamic contexts. Though the routes along which they have reached this destination may have been substantially different, both themselves caught up in equally rabid forms of neo-fundamentalist *qaumic* polarisation, reaching all the way from the Tea Party to the Taliban. However much they may seem to stand at opposite ends of a spectrum, they are best understood as mirrors of each other.

How then, can we hope to pull out of this *cul de sac*? To those who still have the good fortune to be ensconced within the midst of a still more or less enchanted universe, the answer is obvious. So long as those who identify themselves as being ‘enlightened’ and hence ‘modern’ in their personal outlook, with the result that routinely prioritise their own personal interests over their obligations of others, value goods (and above all money) over all other considerations, and have no sense personal dignity and honour other than on their own selfish terms, no-one should be surprised if the social order begins to collapse around them. ‘Progress’ on these terms will only lead us lead us all even further into the mire. A change of course is urgently required – perhaps even more so in what remains of Dar ul-Islam than in Euro-America, which badly needs it too. If so it seems unlikely that we will have any prospect of moving forward into a truly a post-modern future until we begin to respect the insights of our more generously minded pre-modern ancestors. Paradoxically enough, Mueddin ibn Arabi built on the experience of his many Sufi predecessors to articulate just such a vision in his concept of *wahdat al-wujud* (the unity of Being) eight centuries ago; moreover his teachings still reverberate powerfully amongst devotees of the Sufi tradition throughout the Islamic world, regardless of the neo-fundamentalists’ efforts to do away with his allegedly polytheistic – and hence inherently blasphemous – notions. Could it be that there is a strong sense in which Islam, as well as many other equally pluralistic conceptual systems which successfully provide a bridge between rationalistic and metaphysical forms of thought, might provide us all with some excellent signposts towards a more peaceful, and above all a more equitable future?

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¹⁶ For ease of access, copies of virtually all of my publications cited below can be found at <http://www.casas.org.uk/papers/index.html>

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