Linguistic Encounters: Language and Experience in Sikh Devotional Practice

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Anthropology)
in the University of Michigan
2024

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Dedication

To the memory of my father S. Surinder Singh, 1941-2023

Acknowledgements

A doctoral dissertation, although generally attributed to a sole author, always represents a confluence of ideas, sources, framings, conversations, and interpretations. This dissertation is very much a product of my synthesis of the influences that I have been privileged to coalesce together during my career as a graduate student. First and foremost I want to extend my gracious thanks to my committee, whose inspiring example and unwavering support over the years enabled me to venture out intellectually, and also to bring this particular project to its completion.

The idea of graduate school still seemed like a distant dream when, sitting in my room in post-Katrina New Orleans, I received a phone call from Dr. Arvind-Pal Singh Mandair that I had been admitted to the MA program in South Asian Studies at the University of Michigan. We had a chance to meet in person soon after that at a conference in Boston, and his support, enthusiasm, and what seemed to me like an intellectual adventurousness convinced me to give it a try, though I had little idea about what I was getting into at the time. Dr. Mandair's profound work ethic and model of intellectual courage have been an inspiration ever since.

I took my first course ever in anthropology with Dr. Matthew Hull as a second year MA student at Michigan, a course titled, fatefully, "Languages and Cultures of South Asia". That course in many ways fired my nascent, but still nebulous, interest in a topic that would eventually become the foundation of my trajectory as a graduate student. As a result of that class, I ended up applying for a program in Linguistic Anthropology at Michigan, a discipline that I

knew very little about, but that seemed to be suited to my interests. Dr. Hull has provided a model for intellectual curiosity and theoretical precision. Early in my coursework in Linguistic Anthropology I took a course with Dr. Webb Keane on Semiotic Anthropology, which first piqued my interest in the relationships between the realms of ideas and of materiality. The depth and breadth of his standard-setting work on religious language have made me think deeply, and continue to think, about what religious language exactly is and what it does. And especially his innovative and yet highly rigorous analyses have provided models that continue to inspire and challenge me in my own work.

Finally, I want to give a special thanks to Dr. Judith T. Irvine. It was Dr. Irvine's class in Language Ideologies that first opened up to me a realm of ideas that would come to be a prime focus of my graduate career and intellectual trajectory more broadly. But, even more importantly for me, it has been her boundless patience, sage advice, abiding enthusiasm, steadfast support, and insistence on maintaining the highest intellectual standards at all times, that enabled me to see this project to its end, even through some difficult times. Her wide-ranging body of work in the field of linguistic anthropology has been a continuous source of inspiration for me, and one that I hope I will be able to live up to, even in some small way, in my own work.

In India I want to thank all of the members of the Naad Pargaas organization in Amritsar for their enthusiastic welcome and support throughout my entire stay there. Their humble office and library became a home away from home for me, where I would always find warm friendship, thoughtful conversation, and, of course, a bottomless cup of *chai*! I want to thank especially Professor Jagdish Singh for his enthusiastic support over the years, and for patiently introducing me to the wondrous world of Sikh Persian poetry. I also want to thank Dr. Jaswinder Singh of

Patiala University for his support, friendship, and conversation over the years. May the conversations continue.

I want to thank the many, many friends and colleagues that have been a part of this graduate school journey. In classes, seminars, conferences, libraries, and coffee shops, the discussions, agreements, and even sometimes disagreements, have all contributed to my own intellectual development, and for that I'm grateful. You're all in here, in one way or another.

Finally, I want to thank my family, whose unstinting support and belief made this project possible. The good (and sometimes, uproarious) humor of my brother Jasdeep and sister Sharanjit guaranteed that a smile was never far away, even in the most difficult of times. My mother, S. Surjeet Kaur, instilled in me a love for reading and exploring at a young age that in many ways has led to the intellectual journeys that I have taken as an adult. Her model of creative energy and enthusiasm are resources that I continue to draw upon frequently in my own work.

My father, S. Surinder Singh, passed away in February, 2023, after a prolonged illness, during the final stages of the writing of this dissertation. Those who knew him know that he was a man of (very) few words, the embodiment of the Panjabi phrase, *kar ke dikhā* ("show by doing (not by speaking)"). As I came to realize in later years, it was in many ways his quiet example that inspired me to understand more deeply the mysteries of this tradition, the Sikh tradition, that had produced such a person as he was. It was my profound wish that he would get to see the completion of this project, for which he provided so much of the inspiration. That was not to be, but I live with the consolation that I have made an attempt to convey in this work a Sikh way of being in the world, a way of being that he exemplified for so many. I think he would have been proud of that. It is to him and his memory that this work is dedicated.

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Abstract

This dissertation critically examines the development of language ideologies that emerged as products of the colonial encounter on the Indian subcontinent, and some of the afterlives of these ideologies in ways that Sikh communities have come to terms with them in the contemporary period in their forms of devotional practice. The shift during the nineteenth century, primarily in Europe, towards a "scientific" linguistics focused on grammatical analysis has often been construed as a movement towards a more "objective" rendering of language, one that abstracts fundamental structures of language from their social surround, and is not subject to ideological concerns. In the historical chapters of this dissertation (chapters 2-4), however, I show that, in fact, in the context of the colonial encounter on the subcontinent, this shift in the field of linguistics was not merely the product of Western/objective "science"; it was rather predicated on a set of ideological assumptions about the functions of languages and hierarchical relations between them that were hybrids of European and Indic ideas. It was this set of ideological assumptions, which over time became implicit in the methods of the colonial linguistic regime, that Sikhs came into contact with in the context of colonial encounter beginning in the late nineteenth century. In chapter 4 I show how a section of influential Sikh elites, a group that held sway over the production of print materials from the end of the nineteenth century through the middle of the twentieth century, attempted to accommodate this complex inheritance of ideas about language, that included colonial ideas about grammatical analysis, Sanskritic ideas about language hierarchies, and orthodox and reformist tendencies within the Sikh community itself.

The result was the production of a series of hybrid forms; grammars, dictionaries, and encyclopedias, that have in turn both influenced and challenged many of the Sikh community's ideas about language, particularly ideas that have shaped their relationship to their sacred language, *Gurbāṇī*. In the ethnographic section of this dissertation (chapters 5-7), I make the argument that despite this complex, hybrid colonial inheritance and the dominance of print culture through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, other Sikh ideas about language, and relationships to language, continue to persist in various forms of praxis that are not delineated in, or captured by, what have become the standard works of reference in the Sikh tradition. Though these are not necessarily named genres, I show in my analysis that they are effective ways that Sikh devotees continue to re-create their tradition in changing ideological contexts, framing historical memory and making and re-making moral worlds in the process.

Chapter 1 Introduction

During the run up to the 2004 Indian Lok Sabha[1] assembly elections, Sukhbir Singh Badal, the scion of the Badal family political dynasty and candidate for the Shiromani Akali Dal party, famously declared that he would "turn Panjab into California"[2]. While he did succeed in his election bid that year, Panjab did not become California. In the 2022 Panjab state assembly elections, however, the entire Badal family clan, including the late ninety-four-year-old family patriarch Prakash Singh Badal, four-time previous Chief Minister of the state, his son Sukhbir, daughter-in-law Harsimrat, as well as her brother Bikram Singh Majithia, were all unceremoniously ousted from their home constituencies, an event nearly unprecedented in the subcontinent's long history of family dynastic politics.

Their successful challenger came in a rather unlikely form, the former popular professional comedian-turned-politician Bhagwant Singh Mann, the candidate for the new political party, the Aam Aadmi Party ("The Common Man's Party"; the AAP). The AAP had had some moderate success in the region since its founding in 2012, but was suddenly swept into majority power in the Panjab state assembly on a "tsunami"[3] of votes in the 2022 election, garnering just short of 80% of the seats. The result was extraordinary for an upstart new party in Indian politics. In his interviews and stump speeches, Mann offered a rebuttal to Sukhbir Singh Badal's still well remembered earlier pronouncement stating, for example, that "we want to

[1] The Lok Sabha is the "people's assembly" or lower house of the Indian Parliament, the Rajya Sabha being the upper house.
[2]https://www.hindustantimes.com/punjab/samrala-residents-take-a-dig-at-badals-california-dream/story-8Liwuu81D4qSIfwpsDwsLI.html
[3]*The New Indian Express*, March 14, 2022

make Panjab into Panjab again. There is no need to make it into California, London, or Paris".[4] After the victorious election campaign, he was sworn in as Panjab's new Chief Minister in March 2022.



Fig. 1.1 Left, Sukhbir Singh Badal, (now former) President of Panjab's Shiromani Akali Dal Party (SAD), and right, current (as of March 2022) Chief Minister of Panjab Bhagwant Singh Mann of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

What did Badal mean when he said that he would "turn Panjab into California"? And what did Mann mean when he said that he wanted to "make Panjab into Panjab again"? As is often the case with politicians, their actual plans were as vague as their pronouncements were florid. Their speech however clearly indexed several things to their voters. Badal's "California" seemed to point towards a kind of cosmopolitan, Western, liberal, utopian vision, a life of ease, prosperity, and "development". Mann's "Panjab" on the other hand seemed to suggest something more local and familiar, vernacular, perhaps even indigenous; in essence all that "California" was not and could never be. That Badal was able to project himself as a representative of the set

[4]"ਅਸੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਜਿਤੀਏ। ਅਸੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਕਿ ਸਾੱਡੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਦੁਬਾਰੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਬਣਾ ਲੀਏ, ਕੈਲੀਫੋਰਨੀਆ, ਲੰਡਣ, ਪੈਰਿਸ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ।" The full quotation reads: "We want Panjab to be victorious. We want to make Panjab into Panjab again. There is no need to make it into California, London, or Paris" (my translation). From an interview with the (ironically) California-based internet radio station Panjabi Radio USA on December 8, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ly6GWoGgvpo&ab_channel=PunjabiRadioUSA.8:51-9:01. Accessed August 8, 2022.

of values, goals, and aspirations indexed by the term “California” and parlay that image into (sometimes) successful electoral bids tells us something also about his electorate and their aspirations. And the fact that Mann was able to take up the role of the resistance to the tidal wave of shopping malls, credit cards, and pizza parlors that seemed to be threatening to upend the Panjabi way of life also tells us something about his supporters and their values.

In fact, this recent feud is but one of the latest instantiations of an ongoing dialogue/debate that has taken place since the advent of the colonial period in the subcontinent about the relative place and value of two broad civilizational approaches, an autochthonous one belonging to the Indian subcontinent, and that of its erstwhile English colonizers. The debate commenced with the arrival of the English in the subcontinent a quarter of a millennium ago, and has continued more or less unabated ever since. If the exchange between Badal and Mann described above tells us anything, it is that the debate is still far from reaching any resolution.

We should take note that this debate is taking place not on a civilization-wide scale, but between two factions within contemporary Panjabi society itself. It is a “fractally recursive” (Irvine & Gal 2000) version of the “clash of civilizations” debate that may or may not be taking place in other quarters. It represents two perspectives that were brought into being through the colonial encounter, but have persisted long after the colonial moment officially ended. In the pages ahead I want to take a closer look at yet another fractal splinter of this wider debate, one pertaining more specifically to ideas about language and how they have developed in the Sikh community through linguistic ideological encounters over the longue durée.

Encounters

The very terms of the debate between Badal and Mann presuppose forms of encounter that have been long in the making. The very availability of the concept of "California" to imaginations of aspirants to a kind of global ecumene is dependent on forms of circulation (Appadurai 1996), and also vehicles and channels through which that circulation takes place. The arrival of the English to the subcontinent also created routes whereby natives of India would make their way outward, towards what was from the colonial perspective the metropole, but was from their perspective a frontier to be explored. Panjabi Sikhs began a pattern of outmigration, particularly to Anglophone countries along imperial routes, to East Asia, East Africa, Australia, Canada, and the UK, and some to the West coast of the United States, as early as the late nineteenth century. After a period of severe restrictions on immigration, particularly of Asian migrants, to the U.S. during the middle part of the twentieth century, from about the 1920s to the 1960s, new laws began to re-open immigration policies in an effort to attract a skilled labor force that could help support the burgeoning postwar U.S. economy. My father, a recent graduate with a Master's degree in Structural Engineering from Roorkee University in India, was among those who decided to try their hand at establishing a career abroad. That decision played a large role in the development of this dissertation.

Like many children of Panjabi Sikhs of my generation growing up outside of India in the diaspora, I grew up on the products of cultural encounter; we watched *Mississippi Masala*, read the novels of Hanif Kureishi, and listened to the ever-present cassettes imported from the UK of Bhangra music, which we would find in piles in open cartons at local Indian grocery shops, the lyrics in rural Panjabi dialects, accompanied by the relentless beat of the Panjabi folk drum, the *ḍhol*, overlaid upon reggae bass lines and electronic drum beats. Having grown up at the intersection of linguistic worlds, Panjabi and English, I developed an abiding interest in

Language, in language(s), and in the interactions between them. I knew from an early age, at least viscerally, even if I could not quite articulate it yet, that "language" was not a transparent medium. It was an order of phenomenon all its own, one that shaped the ways that we thought (even if not determinedly), and established the contexts through which we interacted with the world at large and with each other. I also knew that encounters between languages produced frameworks that lived in the interstices between official languages, cultures, even nations. That was the place where I lived. This dissertation is in many ways an attempt to try to account for some of those different forms of linguistic interaction and the different kinds of frameworks that they produce that allow for new ways of being in the world.

I was also of the generation that came of age in the aftermath of the events of 1984, first the Indian army attack on Harmandir Sahib, considered among the most sacred of Sikh shrines, in June of that year, the assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in retaliation in October, and the massacre of thousands of Sikhs in the capital of New Delhi in the days that followed. I still remember watching the images of tanks approaching Harmandir Sahib on television and then seeing the images of the virtually demolished Akal Takht, an important shrine within the complex and a symbol of Sikh temporal sovereignty, in the days after the attack. Even now, forty years after the events, they remain indelible in the memories of those who witnessed them. In the decades since, as we have had time to reflect on those events, it seems more clear than ever that they were the product of two competing visions; one of a state that regarded itself as a national, secular formation, and that was willing to go violent lengths to preserve, and a competing form of sovereignty, based on the idea that Sikhs were a nation that had the right to its own territory, with its own unique language and religion.

In the weeks, months, even years after the events of 1984 I and my Sikh peers, colleagues, elders, and community members often found ourselves in heated discussions about those events, trying to make sense of them, to reconcile them in some way. What had happened to precipitate this unimaginable tragedy? Central to many, if not most, of the discussions was the nature of the Sikh tradition itself. Were Sikhs a "nation", with its own language, religion, and territory, a land that aspirants to that vision called "Khalistan", the "land of the pure"? This vision did not square with the idea I had grown up with of Sikhs: as an egalitarian community with a universal vision, one that rejected discrimination against women, against people due to their caste affiliation, social status, even religion. Persons of all religious persuasions were invited to Sikh *gurdwara*s, or temples. As I wrestled with these questions over the years, I came to understand that one of the problems involved was of categorization, including both categories that the Indian state had come to place on Sikhs, and the categories that Sikhs had come to place upon themselves.

The word *Sikh*, means "disciple, student, learner". That is, one who is in the state of acquiring knowledge, intuition, wisdom. The word *Sikhī* is an indigenous term that most Sikhs use to refer to the tradition. Mandair glosses *Sikhī* as "the process of learning necessary to become a Sikh" (2009, 26). The English term "Sikhism" then, (akin to the parallel terms Hinduism, Buddhism, Capitalism, Communism), is a nominalization of the process referred to by *Sikhī*. As we know, language shapes our concepts, and is in turned shaped by them. To think of Sikhs in a nominalized form, with a fixed set of beliefs, with their own language, and belonging to a particular territory, is a very different vision than thinking of Sikhs as processual beings, involved in an ongoing process of learning, of semiosis, mediated by the teachings of the Sikh Gurus. They have very different implications in terms of questions of the nature of the Sikh

community, and in terms of sovereignty. The nature and the process of the development of Sikh subjectivity is one of the topics that I hope that this dissertation will shed some light upon, even if in some preliminary ways. I detail the process by which I posit that the term *Sikh* was transformed from its meaning "disciple" into an *ethnonym* designating an ethnic group that was associated with a particular territory, language, and (nominalized form of) religion in chapter 3. I detail some of the processes by which Sikh subjectivity is invoked and shaped through processes of semiosis in chapters 5, 6 and 7. Before we turn to the more theoretical section of this introduction, I want to take a few moments in the next to describe the heteroglossic nature of the Sikh world that has been in the past, the one that was brought into contact with a new set of ideologies of language in the colonial encounter.

A Heteroglossic World

My father used to tell me of how in his school days, growing up in the Phagwara district of rural Panjab during the 1940s, he used to trace out Urdu characters in the sand outside at the school. The "school" was a dedicated place in the village, but there was no schoolhouse, no slates, no chalk. It may seem odd to us now that the child of a Sikh family in Panjab would first learn to write in Urdu, now considered largely a Muslim language, used mostly in Pakistan and in some select areas in India with substantial Muslim populations, instead of learning the Gurmukhi script, which is largely used for writing Panjabi in Indian Panjab today and usually closely associated with the Sikh community. At the time however, just before Partition, probably in 1946 or 1947, the Urdu language and the Persio-Arabic script were simply the instruments of literacy; if one wanted to learn to read and to write, regardless of one's background, one learned Urdu. One could learn to read and write in other scripts, Devanagri or Gurmukhi, but one would

have to pursue those later, in other institutions This was the case whether one was a Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh in Panjab.

At a conference I attended in Srinagar, Kashmir in 2017, I had the opportunity to converse with a distinguished career government official who had served as governor of several states, both in north and south India (in India state governors are not popularly elected, but appointed by the central government). He was probably in his early 90s when we met, but was still very mobile, voluble, and full of vivid memories, some of which he shared with me. As is almost inevitably the case in any conversation in an Indian context, within a few turns at talk, the topic of conversation quickly leapt towards the question of who "our people" are and where they are from. I shared with him my own family background and my interest in matters linguistic, and he told me of his boyhood in Panjab in the 1930s. The eldest son of an upper-class orthodox Panjabi Brahmin family, he began learning Sanskrit at a *Gurukul*, in the Hindu tradition a teacher's residence, from the age of seven, as would be expected of a male orthodox Brahmin of his class. Coming into adolescence, he then took it upon himself to learn to read the *Qur'an* in Arabic at a *madrasa*, and to read *gurbāṇī*, the language of the Sikh scripture, in the Gurmukhi script from a Sikh *gurdwara*, or a Sikh temple.

The image of an orthodox Brahmin in India learning to read the *Qur'an* in Arabic at a *madrasa* seems almost astonishing to us today. In today's political and cultural climate, conditioned now by several decades of a decided shift towards authoritarianism, and a regime that over the last decade in particular has given increasingly free rein to anti-minority rhetoric in the Indian public sphere, be that against Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Dalits, *adivasi*s, or others, it seems almost unthinkable. Yet, he assured me, this was in no way unusual in Panjab in the pre-Partition period. To me he sounded very exceptional; clearly he was from a family of means, and

I think he was being a little bit self-deprecatory in his own assessment of his ambition and his perseverance in pursuing a broad, deep education in multiple linguistic and religious traditions. But the fact that there at least seemed to be no ostensible barrier towards or stigma attached to this free traversal of linguistic and religious worlds tells us something about the Panjab of the pre-Partition period, and the relations between persons of different religious and linguistic backgrounds, even as linguistic/religious/nationalistic furor was beginning to build in the years leading up to Partition. Those linguistic/religious/national identities were on their way towards becoming more congealed, but that had not happened quite yet. The fact that this scenario seems so unusual to us now tells us something about how formidable those barriers have become.

Both my paternal and maternal grandfathers were well versed in both Urdu and Persian. Neither one was an especially literary person. My paternal grandfather was in the building and contracting business, and brought his family from rural Panjab to a burgeoning New Delhi in the 1950s, where hundreds of thousands of Hindu and Sikh refugees from Partition had come to settle, and where thousands more were arriving every day to try their hand at a new, urban life in the capital of the young nation. My maternal grandfather served in the Indian Air Force during World War II and later became a lawyer at the Supreme Court of India. My paternal grandfather had grown up in a rural background and never had the opportunity for English medium schooling, and did not have much exposure to English after that, and so did not really pick up the language, other than a few odd phrases here and there. My maternal grandfather, on the other hand, having spent much of his young adult life traveling between military bases across the subcontinent, had been exposed to more cosmopolitan environments, and thereby did pick up a rudimentary knowledge of written and spoken English.

Both my grandfathers were born in the 1910s, and so would have gone through their early childhood educations in the 1920s. At the time, it was simply part of the regular education of the Sikh "gentleman" (and perhaps we could say of the Panjabi "gentleman" more generally) to have at least some reading knowledge of Urdu and Persian. Granted, this was limited to those who had the opportunity to get an education and achieve literacy; literacy rates for males in Panjab in 1931 hovered around 10% (Brass 1974, 302). But as Brass also tells us, 65% of the periodicals published in Panjab in 1931 were in Urdu, a number that far surpassed the number of periodicals in all other languages (Panjabi, Hindi, English, and "mixed") combined (ibid., 307).

Another part of the reason for Sikhs to learn Persian in particular was that it forms a significant part of the Sikh religious canon. Guru Gobind Singh's[5] *Zafarnama*, an epistle written to Emperor Aurangzeb in literary Persian in 1705 CE, while not part of the Sikh scripture, is a well-known and beloved text among the Sikh community, and Guru Gobind Singh's court poet Bhai Nand Lal Goya's mystical works in Persian form an important part of the Sikh canon. While the latter's works are also not part of the Sikh scripture, they are authorized by the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) to be sung in the gurdwara space as *kirtan*, or devotional music. There was an expectation, at least in the pre-Partition period, that literate Sikhs should be able to access these works, along with the Sikh scripture, in their original forms in the Persian language and the Persian script.

Having arrived in Amritsar, Panjab in 2015, with one year of elementary Persian at the University of Michigan under my belt, I thought it might be a good idea to find someone with whom I could study these Persian works from the Sikh literary canon. Along with a general interest in languages and literatures of the subcontinent, that had been at least one of my

[5] Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708 CE) was the tenth and last of the human Sikh Gurus. Before his death he declared that henceforth the Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib* would serve as the Guru of the Sikh Panth.

additional motivations for studying Persian in the first place. To my initial dismay, I was not able to locate a teacher in the city who could help in this endeavor for quite some time. It was more than a year later, as my networks of contacts started to slowly grow, that I was able to get in touch with a teacher who happened to live within walking distance of the neighborhood where I was staying, in the vicinity of Guru Nanak Dev University, where I had an affiliation.

As it turned out, he was one of exceedingly few experts in these texts who could help me with reading their "esoteric", or mystical meanings. He was very pleased to hear of a student who wanted to read these texts, and took me on as a student immediately. I met with him almost daily for a few months and we read through Bhai Nand Lal's *Zindaginama*, a text about Sikh mystical experience in the style of the Persian poet Hafez. Later, as I came realize more and more how rare this opportunity had been that I had just chanced into, it also struck me how drastically and how thoroughly the sociolinguistic situation in Panjab had changed since Partition. Whereas in my grandparents' generation, and even into my father's generation, access to Urdu and Persian education had been readily available, and even quotidian to an extent, almost seemingly overnight (in historic terms), that access had vanished almost completely, and with it the ability of Sikhs to access this important part of their heritage.

Living in Amritsar, the city of Harmandir Sahib, popularly known in English as "The Golden Temple", I visited the gurdwara frequently. It was a moderate distance by motorcycle, or a long walk. I most often chose the latter, starting from home well before dawn so I could reach there just before the sun would rise over the temple complex, and I would listen to the morning prayers seated on the *parikrama*, or the marble walkway that surrounds the pool in which the temple itself is situated. In those frequent visits I got to know the temple complex, and the

smaller gurdwaras and historical sites around it quite well, being able to explore much more than the average tourist who only comes to visit for a day or two.



Fig. 1.2 The Harmandir Sahib complex. Photo by author.

On one such visit I came to notice some blocks of marble around the parikrama that seemed to be inscribed in the Persio-Arabic script, something that I had not noticed before. Marble blocks around the edge of the walkway, both in supporting columns and underfoot, are often inscribed with the names of donors to Harmandir Sahib, frequently in the name of deceased loved ones. Usually included are the name of the person or persons being memorialized, sometimes the name of the donor, the amount donated, and occasionally other affiliations, such as the name of a village, or the name of a military unit that the remembered person may have been a part of. The vast majority of these are inscribed either in the Panjabi language and

Gurmukhi script or in English and Roman script. They were so common that I generally would take them for granted and usually did not spend that much time paying attention to them. The blocks I saw inscribed in Persio-Arabic script in a shadowy part of the complex under a covered section of the walkway, an area I had not spent that much time in, caught my attention because I could not recall ever having seen anything else written in that script anywhere around the complex.

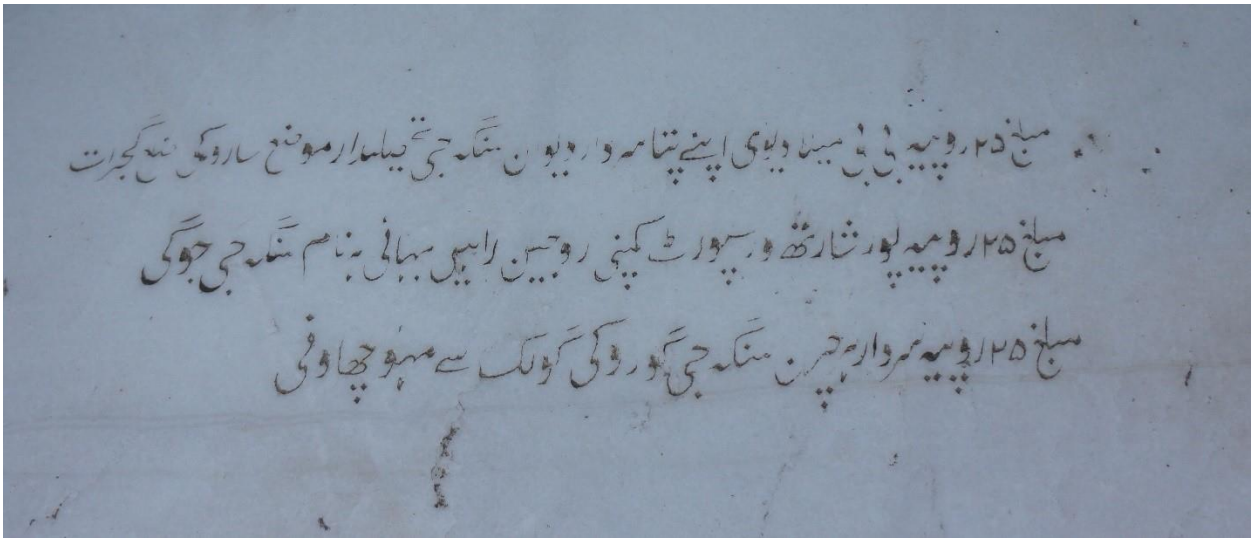


Fig. 1.3 Persio-Arabic inscriptions at Harmandir Sahib complex. The inscriptions describe the names of donors, the amounts of donation, and the persons in whose name the donations have been made. Photo by author.

The names of the donors and the persons memorialized all seem to be Sikh (as they all incorporate the name "Singh"), but the dates of the inscriptions are not given. However, they are almost certainly of the pre-Partition period, or the immediate post-Partition period, a time when the language of literacy, of writing, of either the donors involved, or perhaps the person actually making the inscription, would have been Urdu, and it would have been a natural thing to commission an inscription in that language and script. It is hard to tell how many of these inscriptions were in Urdu in the past, but there clearly are only a few left. It seems that the marble blocks are replaced periodically, perhaps at some fixed interval, or when they get worn

beyond recognition. Many of the blocks form part of the walkway, and though shoes are not allowed within the complex, the soft marble continues to wear over time. There will be a day hence when the inscription on this block and the few others like it that remain will in fact be worn away, and there will no longer be any (material) trace in the temple complex of this particular heteroglossic world that existed there prior to the Partition. All that will be left will be in Gurmukhi and Roman script, as if the Persio-Arabic script inscriptions had never existed.

Plurilingualism in *Guru Granth Sahib*

Thus far we have examined some aspects of the heteroglossic world that Sikhs participated in, particularly in the pre-Partition period, and particularly in relation to the Urdu and Persian languages and scripts. In this section I want to briefly outline the plurilinguistic nature of the Sikh scripture, *Guru Granth Sahib* (GGS), itself, as well as some of its other attendant genres. In a context of diminishing heteroglossia, GGS stands out, in its form as a text, as a durable example of the heteroglossic world of the subcontinent. As we have noted above, Persian has played an especially important role in the Sikh tradition. As Persian was the imperial language under the Mughal empire during the first few centuries since the founding of the Sikh tradition in about 1500 CE, it is not surprising that, in a heteroglossic world, it would play a role in the Sikh tradition as well. The language of the scripture, however, Gurbāṇī, is of a different order from the imperial language of Persian. First, it is in a very different register from the functional language of empire; the language of administration, of accounts, of letters, of histories, and so on. Gurbāṇī is not a language used as a vernacular; it is only the language that the Sikh Gurus (and others whose works have been included in GGS) use to communicate with Sikh practitioners. It is not used otherwise in spoken or written discourse. In addition, its

attendant properties are invested with soteriological significance, which is illuminated through forms of talk and practices around the text, a topic that we will return in more detail in chapters 5 and 6.

GGS is one of the few scriptural texts that are composed in multiple languages and dialects. The authors included in the text range from across the subcontinent, as well as through a time span of more than four centuries. The verse compositions of the scripture, some 5,894 in number, are arranged within its 1430 pages into 31 distinct *rāg*s, or musical modes. These languages and dialects are products of the compilation of the scripture, which brought together the works of not only the Sikh *Guru*s, but also verse compositions of neighboring traditions, most prominently Hindu and Sufi traditions, that were deemed to be in accord with the thought of the Sikh Gurus. Some of the other works included were, for example, the works of Sheikh Farid, a twelfth-century Sufi master from the Panjab region, Bhagat Namdev, a thirteenth-century saint from the Maharashtra region in the southwest of the subcontinent, and Kabir, a fifteenth-century saint from the city of Varanasi in the northeast.

Each of these figures was separated considerably by time and context, and wrote in different languages, but their works were considered to be mutually intelligible within the linguistic and conceptual domain of north India. This intelligibility was made possible by the common pool of devotional concepts, images, allusions, and vocabulary that they shared in, even while writing in their own linguistic styles. GGS, in bringing together these compositions from different traditions, time periods, and languages under the rubric of a single script specially designed for the volume (and now used for contemporary Panjabi), known as *Gurmukhi* ("from the mouth of the Guru"), engendered a new linguistic environment that preserved in a durable form the heteroglossic milieu of its time. This fact of heteroglossia stands as a counterweight, or

even a counterfactual, to Sanskrit texts which are prescriptively and normatively monoglossic, and stand in a hierarchical relationship to non-Sanskritic languages. GGS rather places languages in a horizontal, non-hierarchical format. GGS is universal through its plurilingualism, rather than cosmopolitan through its monolingualism, e.g., in the case of the Sanskrit cosmopolis (Pollock 2006), the Persian cosmopolis (Eaton 2019), or what I call below the Anglophone cosmopolis.

As mentioned, the earliest handwritten full recensions of GGS were written in the Gurmukhi script, and this script has played an important role in the tradition. Recensions of the scripture in the pre-Partition period were also however found in other scripts, in particular, the Devanagri and Shahmukhi (Persio-Arabic) scripts. The existence of these transliterated versions of the text indicates that there was a readership for them, that is, persons who did not have access to the Gurmukhi script, but were interested in reading the text. Figs 1.5 and 1.6 below are of two examples of these transliterated versions of GGS from the early twentieth century, one in Devanagri script, and the other in the Shahmukhi script. Although these types of transliterations are only printed very rarely today, they are yet another indication of the more fluid world of language that existed during this period.



Fig. 1.4 Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib* in original Gurmukhi script

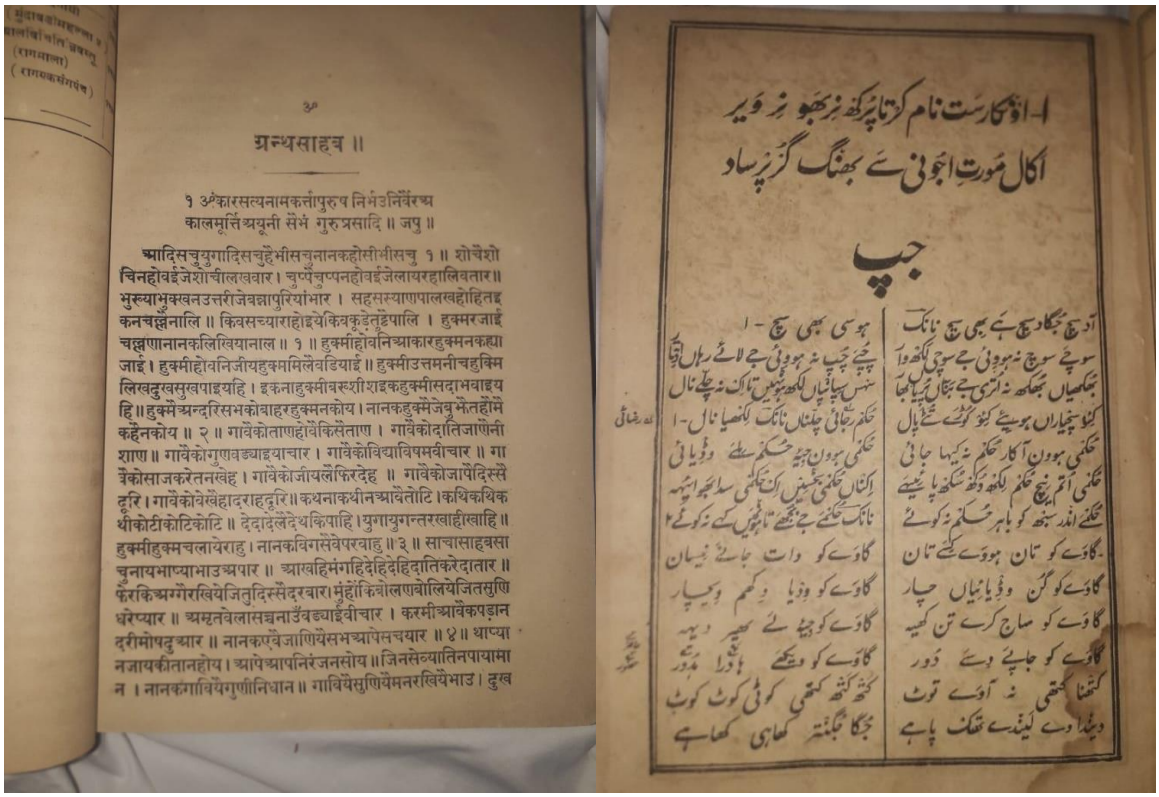


Fig. 1.5 (left) Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib* transliterated into Devanagri script, and fig. 1.6 (right) Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib* transliterated into Shakmukhi (Persio-Arabic) script. Early twentieth century (Figs. 1.5 and 1.6 courtesy of archives at Punjabi University, Patiala, thanks to Professor Jaswinder Singh)

While the language of GGS has been termed the "Sacred Language of the Sikhs" (Shackle 1983), in reality it contains a multiplicity of languages, dialects, and styles. Attempts to render the whole text under the rubric of a single grammar (detailed in chapter 4) have thus proved difficult. The impetus towards that grammaticalization of the text is something we will examine in various ways throughout the chapters that follow. As we have seen, GGS was a product of a heterolingual world in which the ability of individuals to command multiple languages and registers and to put them into practice in their various linguistic encounters was the norm. GGS and the language around it are both plurilinguistic, and neither conforms well to mono-logics or a-temporal structures like grammar. We might consider the question here, are Sikhs a religious community? Or some type of linguistic community? I think a good way to

characterize the Sikh community at large is as a "community of practice", that is, "a grouping that is based on participation in some activity or project" (Irvine 2006, 694). In this case, that participation would be around activities around GGS. I would include as part of that participation linguistic and metapragmatic ideologies that inform that participation, which I will elaborate upon further in chapters 5 and 6. Sikhs as a "community of practice" are in turn made up of a number of "speech communities", which can include a "repertoire" of more than one linguistic code; i.e., can be plurilinguistic (Silverstein 1996, 129). The speech repertoires of Sikh speech communities vary widely; if we were to construct a Venn diagram of those repertoires, we might find that many of them intersect at some level of competence in some variety of Panjabi, but certainly not all of them. Sikhs have been and continue to be part of diverse speech communities, and their practice is centered around a profoundly plurilingual text.

Theoretical Considerations

The study adapts the models of Keane's (2007) method of historical/genealogical contextualization of contemporary ethnographic phenomena, along with Mandair's (2009) analysis of the intellectual products of colonial encounter, as well as Bauman & Briggs' (2003) investigation of the concept of "modernity" as a product of historical shifts in ideologies of language, to examine the field of Sikh linguistic ideologies, and how shifts in that ideological field have in turn come to shape contemporary Sikh devotional practice. One of the central themes of the study is that while the colonial encounter prompted an accession to a regime of language was largely informed by "scientific" approaches that focused on the articulation of fundamental linguistic features that condition referential functions (particularly in the form of the "grammar"), other approaches that place emphasis on different dimension of language, such as

indexical, affective, chronotopic, and voice features, continue to persist, oftentimes finding themselves in newly configured contested fields of language ideologies.

I argue that an important aspect of understanding the complexity of language ideologies and their forms of interaction is to understand them as parts of fields, rather than as singular or essential ideologies that characterize entire groups or collectivities. That is, it is important understand that language ideologies are not internally homogeneous while being externally differentiated, but rather exhibit internal differentiations as well, which can merge, or undergo further distinctions according to semiotic processes (Irvine & Gal 2000). I take the general concept of *field* from Bourdieu (1975, 1985, 1991; see also discussion in Hanks 2005; for discussion of the concept of ideological field in the specific context of linguistic research, see Gal & Irvine 2019, chapter 9). The concept of ideologies as existing in fields is important both for avoiding the idea of monistic ideological essences, but also to add nuance to the question of causation, for instance in the context of the colonial encounter. For example, Dusenbery's essay, "The Word as Guru: Sikh Scripture and the Translation Controversy" (1992), while being important for being the first to apply the concept of language ideology to the Sikh context (the only other work to date that has taken a sustained look at language ideologies in the Sikh context is Mandair 2009), presents an overly simplified view of the conflict of ideologies as between a "Sikh" ideology of language and a "Western" one (Dusenbery 1992; I take up Dusenbery's work in more detail in chapters 3 and 6)). This kind of model cannot take into account the various diverse and sometimes conflictual ideologies that have existed both in the Sikh ideological field, and the Western one, let alone in their complex interactions.

For instance, we can consider the development of the colonial grammatical regime. The colonial encounter in North India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was paralleled by the

development of the "science" of linguistics in Europe. This development of linguistics as a field as inspired in turn by early Orientalist studies of Indian languages (see chapter 2). This development marked a decided shift from earlier forms of linguistic analysis, from an emphasis on the contents of literary texts to the analysis of linguistic forms, especially in the form of the grammar (Irvine 2001), and comparative studies, particularly of what were regarded as distinct grammatical features. In the first part of this study (chapters 2 and 3) I present a genealogy of a particular genre of linguistic analysis: the colonial-era English-language grammar of Indo-Aryan languages from the late eighteenth through the nineteenth century. I argue that, far from being products of "objective western science", the development of this genre was predicated on interactions with native, in particular Brahmin, interlocutors, particularly their ideas about the structure of language and hierarchical relations between Sanskrit and other language varieties that they distinguished, and was thus a hybrid project of interested elites across the colonial divide from its outset. These ideas were embedded into the writing of colonial grammars. What began as explicit metapragmatic expressions about the structures of Indian languages and their places in hierarchies gradually became implicit aspects of the common sense understanding of the colonial linguistic regime. Linguistic ideologies that shaped linguistic methodologies were later taken for granted as self-evident facts (cf. Gal & Irvine 2019, 248). By the middle of the nineteenth century, more or less all of the various participants in the colonial linguistic enterprise, from amateur to professional linguists, administrators, military officers, and missionaries, regardless of their attitudes towards native languages, subscribed to this "scientific model" of language as authoritative. This new regime of language was taken up in turn by Sikh elites, particular members of reformist schools, during the late nineteenth century (chapter 4).

However, as I argue, this additional layer of language ideologies and methodologies did

not alter Sikh language ideologies in a determinate way. Rather, it modified the field and created new relevancy structures. For instance, whereas a formal grammatical approach to language was not part of the field of language ideologies that shaped ideas about the interpretation of GGS in the period prior to the colonial encounter, during and after the colonial encounter it has added another layer of ideological mediation to the field. Grammatical approaches to analysis of the language of GGS became dominant in formal intellectual or academic approaches (which I detail in chapter 4), while other forms of praxis that emphasize different functions of language have continued, sometimes in dialogue with the grammatical approach (chapters 5, 6, and 7).

After the annexation of the Panjab region in 1849 and the shift to direct rule under the Raj, colonial descriptions of Sikh polities, culture, religion, and language became increasingly consequential for the Sikh community as they were drawn into the newly developing colonial public sphere. I argue that this regime of scientific linguistics as a primary lens through which to identify features of language and analyze them in ways that were legible to the colonial regime in turn conditioned their accession to this public sphere. That is, while forms of praxis that were community-centered and not necessarily public-facing continued in one form or another, engagement with the colonial regime, or even the new national government in the post-Partition period, was conditioned by the need to engage with a new shared language of scientific linguistics. This occurred in part because the entrance of Sikhs into the anglophone/colonial public sphere was predicated on a series of attempts to translate the Sikh scriptures into English; the first by German Indologist Ernest Trumpp in 1877, and the second by the Irish-born colonial administrator Max Arthur Macauliffe in 1909. These translation projects generated discussion by the colonial regime on topics ranging from the nature of Sikh religious beliefs, to their place in the civilizational hierarchy, to their military prowess and their potential threat to the empire.

Naturally, Sikhs who had access to this public sphere felt obliged to respond to these discussions, as they had important political consequences for the community. I discuss these two translations and some of their implications in chapter 3.

Within a few short decades, from around 1890-1940, Sikh scholars and intellectuals, in response to these translation projects and their uptake in the public sphere, began to develop their own body of linguistic and other reference works, which followed western models closely, to help explicate their scripture in a way that was both commensurate with previous colonial efforts and understandable to their own communities. Among these works were grammars, dictionaries, and encyclopedias, entirely new genres in the Sikh tradition where none of these had existed previously. I detail the process through which these works of reference have become standardized as the default methods of learning and understanding the Sikh tradition, including its main scripture, at least in printed forms, in chapter 4. While older ways of thinking about and interacting with linguistic forms were submerged to some extent, they did not entirely disappear, and can still be found in some forms of contemporary Sikh praxis, some of which I detail in chapters 5, 6, and 7. I argue that in order to make sense of the complex and multi-layered negotiations that Sikhs make today as they attempt to preserve their understandings of their relationship with their religious language, often while embedded in other linguistic ideological landscapes, it is critical to have a grounding in the genealogical strands that have brought us to this present moment and have re-structured the ways that Sikhs think about their languages and texts.

Grammars are often ideologized as objective renderings of the underlying structures of languages. There has been a longstanding body of work within the linguistic anthropological tradition that posits that linguistic grammars represent patterns that are not generally available to

speakers at the level of conscious awareness (cf. Boas 1911, Sapir 1927, et al.). While this insight holds some validity at the level of patterning itself, in this study I argue that the composition of grammars, their delineation in written forms, is another matter. Constructed grammars are always partial representations of selected linguistic facts (Irvine 1993), that focus primarily on denotational-referential aspects of language (Silverstein 1977), and are shaped by the interests, intellectual milieux, and projects of their writers (Gal & Irvine 2019). I argue that the analysis of the language(s) of the Sikh scripture through the lens of linguistic "science" through the nineteenth century, and then its subsequent uptake and re-deployment in new forms by Sikhs during the early to mid-twentieth century, has had a profound effect on Sikh praxis and self-understanding, one that the Sikh community has had to negotiate.

With this historical-genealogical background in mind, the next part of the study shifts towards an ethnographic examination in chapters 5, 6, and 7 of contemporary Sikh ideas and practices around their sacred language. In these chapters I look at processes of transmission of ideas about, and practices related to, the languages of the Sikh scriptures. Sikh practices also include the creation of chronotopic environments where the linguistic ideologies associated with the scriptures, which are often at odds with the ideologies of the wider societies in which they are embedded, are reproduced. These practices include both ritual practice and teaching and learning to read, recite, and interpret the texts. All of these activities in contemporary settings involve negotiating multiple layers of ideologies of language, including but not limited to those of the wider society in which the instruction is taking place, those of the medium of instruction, and those that are presumed to inhere in the "tradition" and the text itself.

As mentioned above, many of the reference materials developed during the Sikh "reform period" from around 1890-1940 have now come to form the authoritative core of understandings

of the Sikh sacred language, and have for the last century or so been used as default materials in most Sikh communities when teaching about the texts. However, I argue that because the central Sikh practices around their scripture, including *nām simran* ("remembrance of the name") are often focused on dimensions of language other than the referential-denotational dimensions that are captured by these reference materials, they do not always prove to be adequate to the task of transmitting the practices. There is a world of implicit and pragmatic knowledge about language that cannot be accessed through grammar alone. This creates a gap in both the expectations and experiences of the teachers and practitioners alike.

Through an examination of both Sikh praxis as well as metapragmatic talk I argue that there remain embedded in that praxis ideas about other dimensions of language that are not captured in what have come to be the standard, scientific methods of linguistic description. These ideas are neither always in consonance with the language ideologies of the larger societies they are embedded in, nor with those ideas that have become dominant in the Sikh community since the Sikh reform movement. Maintaining and transmitting these ideas that focus on other dimensions of language is not always an easy task within dominant language ideologies that are often at odds with them. I examine the variety of linguistic, ideological, and pragmatic resources that Sikh communities today deploy to manifest the experience of the sacred language in environments that do not necessarily value or even recognize such dimensions of language.

In this study, I also engage with the query posed by Keane (2003) on how subjective and objective forms of knowledge ("intimacy and estrangement", ibid.) interact within the practice of "self-interpretation" and in the concept of "agency". While Keane's essay is focused on these modes of analysis in a specific genealogy within the discipline of anthropology, I extend this concept to examine the practice of self-interpretation of groups such as the Sikh community.

Taking on board Keane's insight that reflexive thought requires the use of objectified forms at some level (Keane 2003, also 2007, 17), I use this case study to examine how some of those forms that are often ideologized as objective, for instance here grammars as well as other forms of linguistic analysis, are themselves conceived of and produced. In examining the mediation of religious experience through different assessments of language I argue that in the interaction between ideology and praxis the division between subjective and objective, between external forces and internal experience, is not always so clear.

Finally, I argue that the colonial encounter between Sikhs and the anglosphere and the newly emergent genre of linguistic science, Sikh reactions to these, and their creative implementation of linguistic and other resources in new settings have been conditioned by their participation in a series of "economies"; the confluence of language and political economy (Irvine 1989), what Mandair terms the "Vedic economy" (Mandair 2009), a hegemonic conceptual sphere infused with Brahminic ideas about the hierarchy of language and concepts such as orality, and finally, a shifting set of "representational economies", sets of related domains that are mediated by underlying semiotic ideologies (Keane 2007). I argue that, following Bauman & Briggs, the construction of "tradition" as the permanently vanishing foil of "modernity" (2003, 205) has a tendency to mask the ideological construction of both of these concepts. I argue that neither "tradition" nor "modernity" are temporal designations, nor states of affairs characterized by particular forms of technological mediation, but rather are more accurately characterized as shifting sets of ideas about relations between language, objects, and self. These ideas are neither doctrinal nor diagnostic, but rather the emergent products of dialogic engagement by actors in an ongoing series of conceptual economies.

Bauman & Briggs' (2003) work has been foundational in describing the development of the concept of "modernity" through tracing the development of language ideologies from the early modern period. Their work, however, is centered on Anglo-European developments, which, while certainly influential the world over, cannot necessarily account for other forms of temporality that have emerged in different language contexts that are predicated on very different ideologies of language. Moreover, it does not account for imperial and colonial encounters, which have been responsible for a great deal of upheaval and change as ideologies have come into contact. While their important insight that "tradition" is a product of the "purifiying and hybridizing forces" involved in the "creation and maintenance of modernity" (11) holds, we should not think of "modernity" as a *fait accompli*. Rather, it is useful rather than to think of tradition/modernity as a binary (though they frequently appear in that form in ideological formations), to think of them as chronotopes (Bakhtin 1981).

If we take chronotopes at their fullest potential, as discursive elucidations of ways of experiencing time, then they are, like other forms of discourse, subject to metapragmatic procedures, such as calibration and regimentation. If we take on Agha's assertion that chronotopes are not just descriptions of time/space coordinates, but also exist as part of participation frameworks (2007, 321), then they become ways of integrating voice and subjectivity into those expressions of time. As voices in participation frameworks are always multiple (Bakhtin 1981, Irvine 1996) we can say that chronotopes are always multiple, and even theoretically as diverse as their forms of elucidation are. As Silverstein notes, Anderson's chronotope of "narrative realism" (his "empty, homogeneous" time) is just that, a particular chronotope (2000, 115). If chronotopes are not just descriptions of previously existing time-space contexts within which discourse takes place, but are instead themselves the products of

discourse, then that allows us to move beyond the familiar bifurcation of "time" into two types, the "empty, homogeneous" and the "messianic".

Keane in *Christian Moderns* notes: "Persistence is an activity" (Keane 2007, 144). I take "persistence" here to mean structures, of any kind, that perdure through time, and "activity" to mean the work of semiosis. That is, for structures to persist, they are dependent on semiosis. When the semiosis stops, the structures also stop. Along what I read as similar lines, Mandair writes, "tradition is never a secure inheritance but a process of ceaseless contestation" (2009, 25). In the final chapters I attempt to show how this ongoing "activity" or "ceaseless contestation" is engaged in through the use of linguistic resources. The structures that are to perdure are structures of feeling, attitudes and orientations towards, and understandings of, language. The work makes use of reflexivity, indexical calibration, regimentation, a dense poetics, and emergent chronotopic worlds, that, while less durable perhaps than some textual forms, may be more substantial in their effects.

Chapter 2 The Development of Colonial Ideologies of Language

Introduction

This chapter examines the development of the field of early colonial ideologies of language from around 1780-1830. This period saw the rise of several important ideological strands that persisted through the remainder of the colonial era, and in various forms, continue to persist into the present day. Among these are ideologies developed during the early Orientalist period from 1780-1800, the development of the regime of missionary linguistics beginning around 1800, and ideas about language that attended the arrival of Anglicist colonial administrators beginning around 1820. The chapter builds upon Cohn's argument that this period saw "the establishment of discursive formation, defined an epistemological space, created a discourse (Orientalism), and had the effect of converting Indian forms of knowledge into European objects" (Cohn 1996, 21). I show further that not only were Indian forms of knowledge turned into European objects, but that also Indian ideologies of language were embedded into the structures (particularly grammatical structures) that otherwise had the appearance of being "objective" forms of European science. I further examine this "epistemological space" as a field of language ideologies in which linguistic approaches to their objects of study are, following Gal & Irvine, "co-constituted in relationship with other viewpoints" (2019, 246).

Examining the development of colonial ideologies of language as a field will enable us to take a more fine-grained approach to understanding how the varying approaches, competing projects, and tensions, along with synergies and forms of collaboration, interacted as a whole. I

show that the various elements that constituted the field never resolved themselves into a singular "Western" or colonial ideology of language, but remained and still remain a complex array of positionalities and interests that continue to inform methodologies and understandings of language. As I will argue in subsequent chapters, the entry of the Sikh community into the framework of colonial discourse in the late nineteenth century was characterized not by an encounter with a single ideology of language, but with this entire complex field. The various dynamics within the field influenced the ways that Sikhs took up and responded to the new challenges to their own received framework of language ideologies.

In this chapter I trace the development of a particular genre; the English colonial grammar of Indo-Aryan languages during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and show that while this genre was (and is still) often perceived as an objective method of linguistic analysis, its methodologies were informed by socially positioned ideologies of language, in particular, Brahminic ideologies of language that colonial linguists absorbed from their native interlocutors. Following Cohn's assertion that Indian forms of knowledge were converted into "European objects", as well as Keane's observation that "A productive understanding of objectification should go beyond the commonplace critiques of scientism or ideological reification" (2003, 223), I wish to use this examination of the social and ideological history of this genre of grammatical analysis to interrogate the notion of "objectification" itself, and in particular, the creation of the linguistic object of analysis.

The grammar is often ideologized as an objective and authoritative instrument of analysis, both within disciplinary forms of linguistics as well as folk ideologies of language. Here, and in the chapters that follow, I will argue that it will be helpful to distinguish between objectification, which I take, following Latour, to be a process of purification (or attempted

purification) (1993), and objectifying practices, which I define as processes, including representation, that can produce forms that can have the appearance of objectivity, and can be construed and taken up as such and used in other projects. With Bauman & Briggs, I am not interested so much in the "ontological status of supposedly 'pure' forms…but rather the epistemological work of purification" (2003, 5). I will argue that while grammars are eminently social products, they can be and often are taken up as seemingly objective, disinterested, and authoritative instruments that can have consequences beyond the field of linguistic analysis itself.

"The Theology of Eternal Sanskrit" [6]

Before we move on to examine the development of language ideologies of the early colonial linguistic regime, we will take a very brief excursus into some of the ideologies of Sanskrit that Orientalists came into contact with through their interactions and study of language with Brahmin interlocutors. There has been a longstanding history within the modern field of Western linguistics of admiration for the grammatical "structure" of Sanskrit (cf. Jones 1786, Humboldt 1836, Bloomfield 1933, Chomsky 1965, et al.). Less examined has been the social history of the development of the Sanskritic grammatical tradition. I posit here and in this chapter that, like all grammatical traditions, the Sanskrit grammatical tradition was and is an ideological project that reflects the interests of particular social actors within an ideological field.

The ideas attendant on this tradition about the structure and organization of relationships between languages have had a profound effect beyond the study of language itself on the development and maintenance of social hierarchies on the Indian subcontinent. The importing of

[6] This section heading follows Deshpande 1993.

some of these ideas into the nascent colonial regime of linguistic description in turn shaped not only colonial methodologies, but also colonial understandings of structures of social hierarchy and the nature of the Indian polity. I argue in this chapter that the colonial linguistics regime that was initiated by the Orientalists of the early period of 1780-1800 was heavily informed by Sanskrit ideologies that were embedded in forms of linguistic codification, like the grammar, and carried forward as implicit understandings into the remainder of the colonial period.

Around 500 BCE, about a thousand years after the composition of the Vedas, there was an acknowledgment that contemporary spoken Sanskrit had undergone a great deal of change, and was no longer recognizable as the Sanskrit of the Vedas. There was a felt need to codify the structure of Sanskrit in order to preserve the understanding of the older (Vedic) forms of the language as the language continued to change and those older forms became less intelligible. It was at this time that Pāṇini composed his canonical grammar of Sanskrit, known as the Aṣṭadhyāyī ("The Eight Chapters"), both to describe the language and rules for generating its forms, and also to account for the variations in the language that were known at the time of its composition. Over time, what began as, according to Pāṇini himself, a descriptive grammar of Sanskrit came to be taken up instead as a prescriptive grammar. Pāṇini's grammar became (and remains) the sole authoritative source for the acquisition of Sanskrit by (young, male) Brahmins, in order for them to be able to master and control the Vedic rituals required of that caste.

In an important essay entitled "Historical Change and the Theology of Eternal (Nitya) Sanskrit" (1993), Deshpande describes what he calls the doctrine of "eternal Sanskrit". He writes that "the theory of [the] eternality of Sanskrit separates the existence of language from its attestations in history" (Deshpande 1993, 66). We might compare this notion to Saussure's

distinction between *langue* and *parole*[7]. Within this paradigm the category of Prakrits developed to describe vernacular languages that have some derivational relationship with Sanskrit, but that, unlike Sanskrit, continue to undergo historical change. The category of the Prakrit depends upon the notion of an eternal Sanskrit, which remains fixed and unchanging. As Deshpande writes, "the only relation that held between the eternal Sanskrit and Prakrits, according to the Indian grammarians, was that of successive degeneration of Sanskrit at the hands of incapable speakers" (ibid., 73). The grammatical representation of Sanskrit, Pāṇinian grammar in particular, that abstracts it from social usage and appears to "fix" it and render it static (even "eternal") is an essential linchpin in this ideological formation. Natural languages, including both Sanskrit and Prakrits, left to their own devices, continue to undergo change apart from their grammatical representations. "Prakrit" is the name given to those natural languages that continue undergo regular change, but within the Sanskrit ideological paradigm are pathologized as "degenerate". This model in which one language formation, Sanskrit as defined by Pāṇinian grammar, and the people who are allowed to learn it, speak it, or have access to it, remains a structural constant and a basis for comparison with other language formations, Prakrits and their speakers, that continue to undergo change has had important implications for the development and maintenance of social

[7] In fact, I proffer that there is evidence that several important concepts that appear in Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (2011 [1916]), including the notions of *langue/parole*, of the arbitrariness of the sign, and of syntagmatic relations in language, among others, have at least precursors and possibly correspondences in the Sanskrit grammatical tradition. As Saussure wrote his doctoral thesis ("*De l'emploi du génitifabsoluenSanscrit*", 1880) on a topic in Sanskrit grammar, and taught Sanskrit at the University of Paris and the University of Geneva for several decades, there can be no doubt that he was broadly familiar with the Sanskritic grammatical tradition. It is not at all implausible then, that the several of the concepts that appear in the *Course* were either borrowed from, or were inspired by, ideas from that tradition. Unfortunately, space does not permit me to delve further into this topic here, and this discussion will have to be saved for another occasion (see P. Singh, forthcoming). If it is indeed the case that several of Saussure's ideas are predicated on ideas from the Sanskritic grammatical tradition, then it would be another example (in addition to the examples I elaborate in this chapter) of the adoption of Brahminical ideas about language into the modern Western linguistics tradition, ideas that have since become part of the common sense understanding of the field of linguistics. Examples such as these help to shed light on the ideological nature of the otherwise seemingly straightforwardly empirical, positivist, "objective" nature of the modern field of linguistics as we continue to interrogate it (cf. Irvine & Gal 2000; 78, Gal & Irvine 2019, ch. 19).

hierarchies on the subcontinent more broadly. That is to say, as Prakrits continue to change over time, they, along with their speakers, continue to deviate further and further from the grammatical norm of Pāṇinian Sanskrit and its (purported) speakers. Prakrits and their speakers are thereby condemned to remain in a permanent state of increasing degeneration, as long as the basis for evaluation is comparison with Sanskrit in its unchanging form as represented by Pāṇinian grammar. There was no theory of "evolution" of language into higher forms, but only devolution. Since the speakers of Prakrits had no ability to acquire a knowledge of Sanskrit (they were prohibited from learning it), much less to use it correctly, within this paradigm they could never be the social equals of their Brahmin superiors, who had access to and maintained the proper grammatical understanding of "eternal" Sanskrit. In the following sections we will examine how these Brahminical ideas about language were adopted and deployed within the newly developing colonial regime of linguistics.

"Their ancient uses and Institutions": Hastings and the Orientalists

The emerging field of colonial Indian linguistics found a ready patron in Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of Bengal during the formative years from 1772-1785. About his theory of governance, Hastings writes, "We have endeavoured to adapt our Regulations to the Manners and Understandings of the People, and the Exigencies of the Country, adhering as closely as we are able to their ancient uses and Institutions". It was Hastings' contention that each Indian (religious) community had their own traditions of law "which continued unchanged, from remotest antiquity" (in Cohn 1996, 26), and were embedded in their "classical" language traditions; Persian and Arabic for Muslims, and Sanskrit for Hindus.

To this end, he established educational institutions for the teaching of Indian law in the classical languages; a madrasa at Calcutta in 1781 and a Sanskrit college at Benares in 1791.

The Orientalist program for providing instruction in the Indian classical languages was predicated on the fact that the "ancient uses and Institutions" that they wished to govern the native population by were not readily discernable in the societies that they encountered in India. The law that had presumably "continued unchanged, from remotest antiquity" seemed to have been forgotten by the contemporary Indians. The colonial government took it up as their responsibility to collect the appropriate texts that would enable them to excavate the forms of law proper to each community and restore them once again. To render the law distilled from ancient texts in a codified form that could be utilized by the courts, Hastings commissioned a series of translations; Nathaniel Halhed compiled A Code of Gentoo Laws, or Ordinations of the Pandits in 1776, and William Jones followed with the Institutes of Hindu Law, Or the Ordinances of Menu in 1794.

The Orientalist approach to language that privileged ancient Indian texts in classical languages as repositories of true wisdom that had been forgotten by contemporary Indians was predicated on a language ideology that utilized the idea of difference between languages, contemporary vernaculars versus classical languages, to also make a temporal distinction, between the present state of affairs and the past (cf. Irvine 2004, 99). The classical languages, as they were not subject to change and corruption as were contemporary languages, also represented the "order" of the past "golden age" of India that had since fallen into decay, as represented by the chaotic mosaic of innumerable and unenumerated languages that characterized the contemporary Indian linguistic landscape, at least from the colonial point of

view. The perceived disorder and degenerated state of contemporary Indian languages represented the disorder and degenerated state of contemporary Indian society as well.

The Orientalist ideology of language also represented a distinction of temporalities across civilizations; while for Anglo-European societies "progress" would come through an entrance into "modernity" based on new knowledge produced in accordance with the rational principles of the Enlightenment, any change in India from its current state of affairs would have to be based on a return to structures of the past that were encoded in ancient texts written in classical languages. This ideological differentiation served both to deny "coevalness" (Fabian 1983) to contemporary Indian society at the same time that it introduced a "lack" (Chakrabarty 2000, Mandair 2009). Indian society could not be commensurate with European society because it was on a different historical trajectory; it could not share that historical trajectory because it lacked principles of rationality. Although Indians possessed ancient texts which contained timeless wisdom that could be used to restructure their society, they themselves did not recognize the value of those texts. They were dependent on Orientalist patronage and scholarship to identify, study, and translate those ancient texts in order that their society could be restored to its true form.

One of the ironies of the Orientalist project of the restoration of Indian law and society through a recuperation of the knowledge contained in their ancient texts was that it was in fact the Orientalists who were dependent on native interlocutors to identify, curate copies of, edit, translate, and interpret those texts, work that is rarely acknowledged in the colonial record. The Orientalist ideology that characterized contemporary Indians, their society, and their languages as corrupted and fallen was dependent on the knowledge and expertise of native interlocutors themselves to provide the information that would sustain that ideological distinction. The same

texts and translations that had been jointly produced by Orientalists and their interlocutors were then adduced as evidence that contemporary Indian scholarship and jurisprudence were inadequate when juxtaposed with the ancient knowledge contained in the old texts.

Though Orientalists were dependent on the expertise and assistance of interlocutors to execute their projects, they often expressed ambivalence about those relationships. As Halhed writes about his (unnamed) Brahmin interlocutor(s), "it is well known in what an obstinate and inviolable obscurity the Jentoos conceal as well the Mysteries of their Faith, as the Books in which they are contained: and under what severe prohibitions their most approved Legislators have confined the study of the Shanscrit to their own principal tribes only" (Halhed 1778, x). Jones wrote in 1785 that he was "tempted to learn Sanskrit, that…[he might] check on the pandits in the Court" (Cohn 1996, 28). The following year, armed with less than one year of Sanskrit study, he then writes that from that point on it would be "an impossibility for the Mohammedan or Hindu lawyers to impose on us with erroneous opinions" (in Aarsleff 1983, 121).

The attitudes of suspicion expressed by Halhed and Jones towards their interlocutors were not atypical of the first generation of Orientalists. There is no doubt there was on one hand a genuine fascination for "newly discovered" ancient languages and texts, a phenomenon that Trautmann refers to as "Indomania" (2006). But this fascination was often accompanied by an equal sense of contempt for those who were seen as the guardians of those texts and traditions, in essence, their elite rivals. Much of the colonial linguistics regime can in fact be characterized as an attempt to "master" native languages by entextualizing (Silverstein & Urban 1996) them into "objective" forms (grammars, translations) that would provide unmediated access to the knowledge that was "codified" in those languages and ultimately enable colonial linguists to

bypass the need for engagement with native interlocutors altogether. These distilled forms of Indian knowledge then, purified of their excrescences and recoded in new linguistic genres, grammars, dictionaries, and translations, could then be taught to the natives through educational institutions as authoritative representations of their "own" traditions.

"A Wonderful Structure": Jones on Sanskrit

Jones has been described as a "bourgeois radical" (Heller &McElhinny 2017, 43). While he may have been a radical in his native context in England (he apparently traveled to India in self-exile after persecution for his support of the American side in the Revolutionary War), like most of his fellow Orientalist scholar-administrators comrades, he was decidedly conservative in his approach to Indian languages, texts, and cultural narratives. The Orientalists' primary interlocutors, who they depended on for their knowledge of Indian languages, were most often members of native elite classes, Brahmin pandits and Muslim maulvis, and they often held conservative ideas about language themselves, particularly when it came to the relationship between classical/scriptural languages, Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian, and vernacular languages (Cohn 1996, 33).

Jones is often credited as being the founding figure in the contemporary field of comparative historical linguistics, a distinction that rests primarily on the attribution to him of the observation of a grammatical relationship between Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin, and his further suggestion that these may have been derived from "some common source, which…no longer exists". Some scholars have argued that Jones' close colleague Halhed and others prefigured

Jones' articulation of this relationship in earlier work; I will not pursue that argument here[8], but just underline the fact that Jones, Halhed, and the other Orientalists all broadly shared a field of language ideologies and assumptions about language.

Many of these language ideologies were in fact absorbed through their interactions with their native interlocutors, and some of them, as we will examine in more detail in the following sections, in turn shaped their linguistic methodologies. The passage for which Jones is most remembered, perhaps the most quoted in all of linguistics literature, comes from his annual discourse "On the Hindus" delivered to the Asiatick Society in Bengal on February 2, 1786, and published in the first issue of the journal Asiatick Researches two years later, in 1788:

> "The Sanscrit [sic] language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists" (Jones 1806 [1788], 422-423, emphasis in original, underlining added).

Here I want to highlight some aspects of this passage that are generally not given as much attention. I have underlined the descriptive terms that Jones uses for Sanskrit: "of a wonderful structure", "perfect", "copious", "exquisitely refined". These are of course not objective grammatical analyses, but metalinguistic descriptions of the structure of Sanskrit. These are in

[8] For further discussions on Halhed and others prefiguring Jones's articulation of the relationship between Sanskrit and other Indo-European languages, see Aarsleff 1983, 131 note 63; Cohn 1996, 32; Errington 2008, 56. For a discussion on earlier European assessments of the relationship between Sanskrit and other languages, see Morpurgo Davies 1998, 61.

keeping with the ideology of "eternal Sanskrit" that we noted above, and likely also sentiments that Jones imbibed from his Brahmin interlocutors. This tradition of metalinguistic homage to Sanskrit that begins with Halhed and Jones (at least most famously) continues through the entirety of the Western linguistics tradition; we see it echoed in the work of, among others, figures such as Bloomfield and Chomsky through the twentieth century. The point here is that despite the seeming ubiquity of this sentiment within the Western linguistics tradition, it is in fact a language ideology; a socially positioned evaluation of language.

Of course not everyone during this early Orientalist period of the colonial linguistics regime worked with Brahmin interlocutors or subscribed to Sanskrit language ideologies. John Gilchrist (1759-1841), erstwhile army surgeon, occasional indigo farmer, and linguistic entrepreneur, was one such figure who took the stance that it was not the vernaculars that were derived from Sanskrit, but rather that it was the opposite; Sanskrit had been overlaid upon the grammatical structure of the autochthonous "Hindwi" by deceptive Brahmins who wanted to create their own secret priestly jargon (Cohn 1996, 37-38). Gilchrist denounced the classical "pedantry" of the Orientalists, and felt that only the study of the vernacular languages would lead to "real science and practical wisdom" (ibid., 41).

Gilchrist also claimed that he had discovered a lingua franca that was "the grand, popular, and military language of all India" (Lelyveld 1993, 671) and set out to write a grammar for it, which he then attempted to sell as a language course. He eventually took a position as professor of Hindustani at Fort William College when it was founded in 1800, teaching a language that he had effectively brought into being, at least nominally, by writing a grammar of it. Some of Gilchrist's ideas foreshadowed those of the Anglicists, whose work we will examine below, particularly his emphasis on language as primarily a vehicle for science and practical knowledge.

However, it was the grammatical model developed by the Orientalists and the language ideologies attending it that ended up being taken up more widely in the colonial linguistics regime; a genealogy that continues in many ways to the present day. It is to this grammatical model that we will turn our attention next.

Halhed's A Grammar of the Bengal Language, 1778

While Hastings and Jones focused most of their efforts on translating texts from the Indian classical languages, Halhed saw a need for also understanding the vernacular languages for the purpose of efficient rule; as he writes, "if vigor, impartiality and dispatch be required to the operations of government, to the distribution of justice, to the collections of revenues and to the transactions of commerce, they are only to be secured by a proper attention to that dialect used by the body of the people" (Halhed 1778, xvii). As he spent most of his career in India resident in the province of Bengal, he set about writing a grammar of the local vernacular, Bengali. I differ with Cohn here on one seemingly very small detail about Halhed's grammar; Cohn writes that "The Grammar of the Bengali language that Halhed produced was organized in terms of European grammatical categories…" (1996, 31-32). While the broad chapter headings of the grammar follow what might be a model for European languages ("Of Nouns", "Of Verbs", and so on), I argue that the rest of the grammar is very minutely based on a Sanskrit grammatical model, one that is shaped by a Sanskritic/Brahminic ideology about the hierarchy of languages.

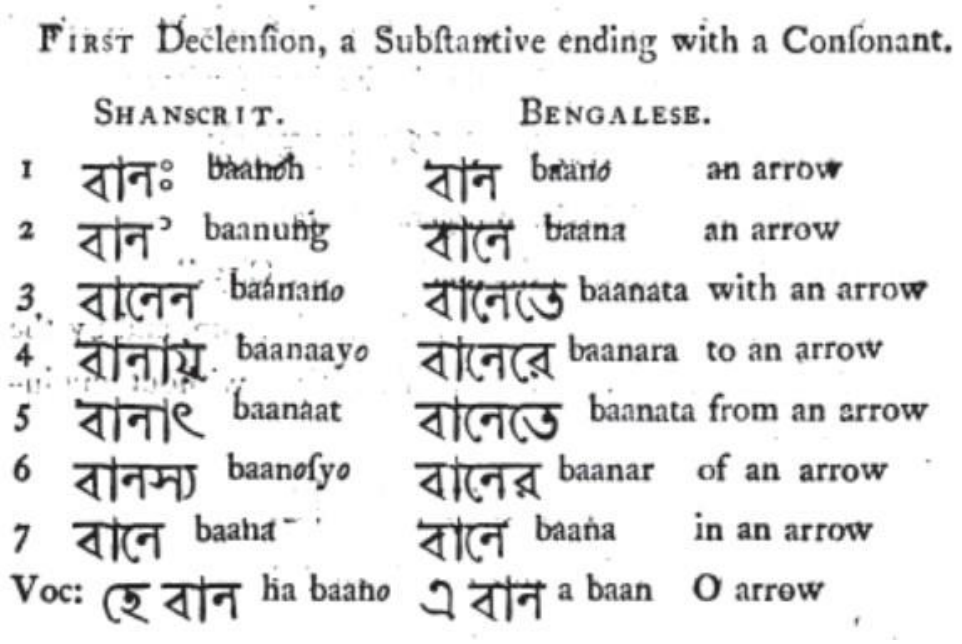
We know from Halhed's own account that he worked with Brahmin pandits on various of his philological and translation projects[9]. Halhed clearly took to heart the Brahminic ideology

[9] In fact, at least one pandit with whom Halhed worked seems to have undergone a degree of public reprimand for working with him; as Halhed writes, "the Pandit who imparted a small portion of his language to me, has by no means escaped the censure of his countrymen: and while he readily displayed the principles of his grammar, he has

about the relationship between Sanskrit and Indian vernacular languages. In the preface to his grammar he writes of "the impossibility of learning the Bengal dialect without a general and comprehensive idea of the Shanscrit; as the union of these two languages is more close and more general; and as they bear an original relation and consanguinity to each other", and further, "the following work presents the Bengal language meerly as derived from its parent Shanscrit" (Halhed 1778, xx-xxi). In his work Halhed makes little, if any, effort to describe Bengali on its own terms. Virtually the entire grammar is in the form of a comparison between Sanskrit and Bengali forms, mostly showing where the latter is deficient in comparison with the former. This of course follows the Sanskrit paradigm, within which Prakrits like Bengali are seen as languages that have degenerated from the original Sanskrit.

In figure 2.1, Halhed presents a comparative table of forms of Sanskrit and Bengali for the "first declension", including the seven Sanskrit cases plus the vocative case, for the singular forms of Bengali substantives (nouns) ending with a consonant. In presenting the Sanskrit and Bengali forms in this format, side by side, Halhed implies that the grammatical structures of Sanskrit and Bengali are the same, or rather that they should be the same; that is, that Bengali grammar can be described using the Sanskrit case system. About this relationship, he writes, "it may be curious to observe at one view the connection and resemblance between a Shanscrit and Bengal [sic] noun, and to trace in a corrupted language the gradual progress of deviation from its original source" (Halhed 1778, 65-66):

invariably refused to develop a single article of his religion" (Halhed 1778, x-xi). Note again, as in the above quote from Halhed about his interlocutors the trope of the secretiveness of the Brahmins.



FIRST Declenſion, a Subſtantive ending with a Conſonant.

	SHANSCRIT.		BENGALESE.		
1	বানঃ	baanoh	বান	baano	an arrow
2	বানং	baanung	বানে	baana	an arrow
3.	বানেন	baanano	বানেতে	baanata	with an arrow
4.	বানায়	baanaayo	বানেরে	baanara	to an arrow
5	বানাৎ	baanaat	বানেতে	baanata	from an arrow
6	বানস্য	baanoſyo	বানের	baanar	of an arrow
7	বানে	baana	বানে	baana	in an arrow
Voc:	হে বান	ha baano	এ বান	a baan	O arrow

Fig. 2.1 Halhed's table of the first declension singular forms for Bengali nouns ending in a consonant(right), following a Sanskrit pattern (left), from A Grammar of the Bengal Language (Halhed 1778, 66).

He writes further that "the specimens of declension here inserted will have shewn, that Bengal nouns fall very short of the powers and of the precision, which a greater variety of inflexion gives to those of the Shanscrit" (ibid.). The juxtaposition of the two sets of forms here, Sanskrit and Bengali, seems to be as much for the purpose of demonstrating the "deficiency" of the structure of Bengali in comparison to Sanskrit as it is for presenting the Bengali grammatical forms. We know that Halhed did not himself have a knowledge of Sanskrit (Cohn 1996, 27-28). That means that he was dependent on his Brahmin interlocutor(s) to provide him with grammatical information about Sanskrit, and likely about Bengali as well. Far from being an objective, scientific instrument of linguistic analysis, Halhed's grammar of Bengali is closer to a transcription of Brahminic ideologies of language, accompanied by examples.

If we were to examine Halhed's role in the composition of this grammar in terms of participant frameworks, he would be the animator to his Brahmin interlocutor's principal

(Goffman 1981). Meaning that the linguistic thought behind the structure of the grammar, and the ideologies that informed that thought, were not "Western", but Indian ideas. Who played the role of author is not entirely clear. Halhed could be the author, or there could be joint authorship, or the role of author could be further subdivided into roles of author and translator and the like (Irvine 1996). We do not have enough information to know for certain. We do know that it was motivated by a desire to write a grammar of Bengali, although within a framework that demonstrates its deficiency and subordinate relationship to Sanskrit. Its composition is an example of what I call an objectifying practice, a process that produces what appears to be objectified form, employing conventions of the genre such as tables and charts, and is taken up as such. The objectifying practice serves to obscure the ideology that was involved in setting up the structure of the practice. In the next sections we will see how Halhed's model for grammars of other north Indo-Aryan languages was taken up by other colonial linguists. Ideologies that explicitly informed the method of Halhed's grammar were transformed into implicit ideologies, and the model of the grammar itself was transformed into a template.

Missionary Paradigms

Hastings and the first generation of Orientalists were generally not in favor of the establishment of Christian missions in Company territories, as they felt that interference with local religious practices would create resentment within the native population and would negatively affect the Company's commercial interests. A Company rule prohibiting missionizing in EIC territories remained in place through 1813. However, the last decade of the eighteenth century still saw the proliferation of missionary societies in anticipation that the rule might soon be changed. The Baptist Missionary Society (1792), London Missionary Society (1795), and

Church Missionary Society (1799), among others, through their missionary activities ushered into the linguistic ideological field very different paradigms of language.

In 1792 two influential missionary treatises were published by figures at very different stages of their careers. Charles Grant had just ended a twenty-five year career in India and had become an Anglican Evangelist, and upon his return to England published Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great-Britain, with respect to Morals; the Means of Improving It (1792). In it, he critiques the Orientalists who had held sway over both administrative and scholarly institutions in the initial period of Company rule. Counter to the Orientalist program and policy of the patronage and study of Indian languages, Grant advocates for more or less an English-only policy for all administrative and educational activities in India. He writes, "To introduce the language of the conquerors, seems to be an obvious mean [sic] of assimilating the conquered people to them" (Grant 1792, 150).He writes further that had English been imposed in India for administrative purposes earlier, "the details of the revenue would, from the beginning, have been open to our inspection; and by facility of examination on our part, and difficulty of fabrication on that of the natives, manifold impositions of gross nature, which have been practiced upon us, would have been precluded" (Grant 1792, 150).

Grant's characterization of native "fabrication" and "manifold impositions" of course echoes Halhed's and Jones' suspicions and mistrust of their native interlocutors cited above. Suspicion of native interlocutors, and of natives in general, was one theme that seemed to unite colonial actors across all fields, Orientalists, missionaries, and Anglicists, as we will see later. They differed however in their solutions to the problem. Halhed's and Jones' answer to the problem of native perfidy was to "master" the indigenous languages of India, both the classical (Jones) and the vernaculars (Halhed), through the production of grammars, dictionaries, and

translations and thereby bypass the need for interlocutors. For Grant the answer just the opposite; it was to compel the natives to learn, and to conduct their affairs in, the language of empire, which was to be English. Grant's ideas were never implemented, but they did prefigure the ideas of the Anglicists, whose work we will examine below.

The same year that Grant wrote his treatise, another missionary was preparing to embark on a career in India. William Carey (1761-1834) established his Particular Baptist mission and printing press at Serampore near Calcutta in 1800, where he remained for the remainder of his stay in India. Though he was not the first to write a grammar or a dictionary of an Indian language, he was the first to attempt a panoptic accounting for all of the languages of the subcontinent. His linguistic methodology and prolific work cast a long shadow over the colonial linguistics regime for over a century, and his body of work served as precursor for later large-scale imperial linguistic projects such as those of Cust and Grierson, which we will examine in the next chapter, as well as projects such as that of the Summer Institute of Linguistics in the twentieth century.

Prior to leaving for India, Carey published An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens (hereafter Enquiry) (1792). In this work he lists five "impediments in the way of carrying the gospel among the heathen", which include "their distance from us, their barbarous and savage manner of living, the danger of being killed by them, the difficulty of procuring the necessaries of life, or *the unintelligibleness of their languages*" (Carey 1792, 67, emphasis added). Carey's ideas about how to surmount the challenge of "the unintelligibleness of their languages" evolved over time. At the time of writing of his Enquiry the method he recommends is what we might call today an immersion program; he writes, "The missionaries must have patience, and mingle with the people, till they have

learned so much of their language as to be able to communicate their ideas to them in it" (Carey 1792, 74). He also strikes a rather optimistic tone towards language learning, writing that "it is well known to require no very extraordinary talents to learn, in the space of a year, or two at the most, the language of any people upon earth, so much of it at least, as to be able to convey any sentiments we wish to their understandings" (Carey 1792, 74-75). There is no indication that two-way communication was what was desired; the purpose of communication was to transmit the contents of the Gospel.

Within a few years of his arrival in India he was training missionaries at Serampore and had also taken up a position teaching Indian languages at Fort William College, the training school in Calcutta for new Company recruits. In India, the approach that he had formulated back home in England altered somewhat. Instead of immersive experience among "the people", his preferred methodology for inculcating his students with vernacular languages, and later for comprehensively enumerating the languages of India, instead took the form of the grammar, the dictionary, and the linguistic map. In the next section we will investigate some of the methods that he employed in producing the first grammar of Panjabi. While Carey did not invent the methods that he employed, he implemented them on a much wider scale than had been done previously, and essentially lit the fuse for what Trautmann has described as "explosion in the grammar factory" (2006). As we shall examine in the next several chapters, the methodological framework that he introduced and popularized was highly influential on subsequent colonial linguistics projects, and has had a long afterlife in the postcolonial period as well.

A Grammar of the Punjabee Language, 1812

In the first edition of his own grammar of Bengali published in 1801, Carey acknowledges Halhed's 1778 Bengali grammar, writing, "Much merit is due to Mr. Halhed, except whose work, no grammar of this language has hitherto appeared" (Carey 1801, iv). In this section we will examine how certain ideologies of language, including both ideologies informing grammatical methodologies and of hierarchical relations among languages, were transmitted between these two figures; Halhed, an Orientalist, and Carey, a missionary, who, while working at different times, in different milieux, and to different purposes, still participated and shared ideas and assumptions in the same colonial linguistic-ideological field. We examine here Carey's grammar of Panjabi in 1812, the first known written grammar of Panjabi in any language[10], which inherits its structure from Halhed.

About the Panjabi language Carey writes in his preface: "The language which this grammar is intended to teach is spoken by the Shikhs [sic], that singular people, who inhabit the Punjab, or the country lying between the Sutledge and the Indus". The running head that appears on the even numbered pages of the work reads: "Shikh grammar" rather than the "Panjabee grammar" of the title, reinforcing the notion that this is the "Sikh language". This is significant because it comes more than half a century before Sikhs themselves begin to assert an exclusive connection with Panjabi, beginning in the late nineteenth century. Unlike in some of his other works, Carey does not provide any notes here about his interlocutor(s) in the writing of this grammar. His Serampore colleague William Ward in his essay "Account of the Shikhs" (1815) does mention that he (Ward) spoke with "a learned shikh employed in the Serampore printing-

[10] Although the arrival of the printing press in Ludhiana, Panjab in 1834 with the American Presbyterian Mission is often cited as the beginning of the print era in Panjab, the publication of Carey's Panjabi grammar in 1812 at the Serampore press in Bengal is likely the first printed material in the Panjabi language and Gurmukhi script, predating the Ludhiana mission by two decades.

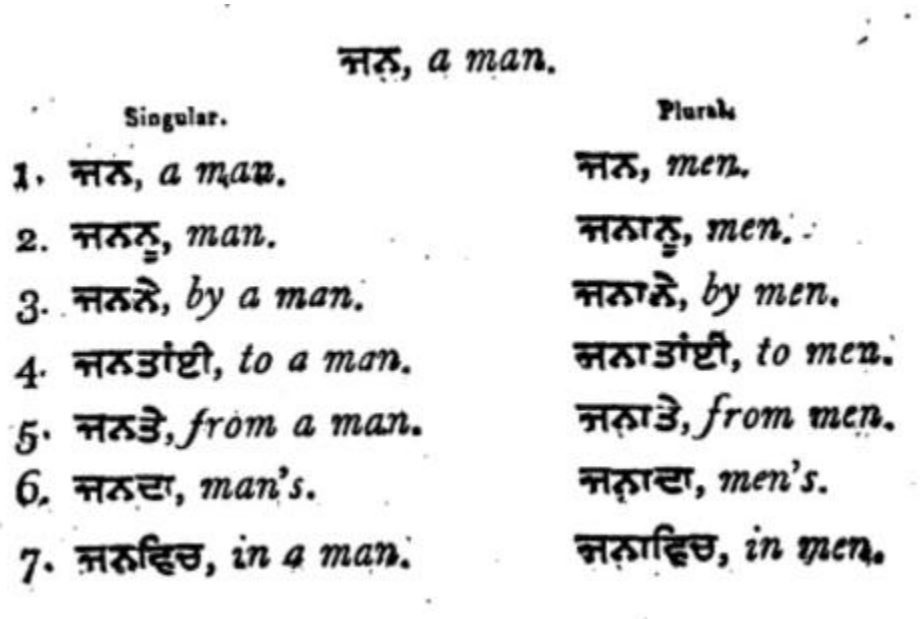
office"[11]. It seems very likely that this Sikh employee of the Serampore printing press also served as Carey's interlocutor in the writing of his grammar. Carey writes further in his preface: "The Punjabee language is confessedly of mixed origin: a great part of it is derived from the Sungskrit, the common parent of all the Indian languages; and a great part also from the Arabic, Persian, Pashto, and other languages spoken in the vicinity of the Punjab" (Carey 1812, iii, emphasis added). His contention that Sanskrit is "the common parent of all the Indian languages" clearly echoes Halhed's assertions that we examined above.

Turning now to the grammar itself, there are several clues that indicate to us its method of construction. In the section "Of the Declension of Nouns" he writes, "In this, as in every Indian language, there are seven cases to nouns…" (Carey 1812, 13, emphasis added). Of course we know from our analysis above that Sanskrit has seven cases. The notion that Panjabi, "as in every Indian language", must also have seven cases stems from the idea that Sanskrit is "the common parent of all the Indian languages", and that all of the Indian languages, in turn, mirror the grammar of Sanskrit, including its case system. We have seen this idea in Halhed's work above (fig. 2.1), but there is a difference here in Carey's presentation. Halhed presents the

[11] This "learned Sikh" is very likely Atma Ram, the Nirmala Sikh who also aided John Malcolm in the writing of his work *Sketch of the Sikhs*, the first full-length monograph published in English on the Sikhs, published the same year as Carey's grammar, in 1812. Given that we know that Atma Ram worked at the Serampore Press in Calcutta, it seems very likely that he was also Carey's informant for his grammar of Panjabi as well. Malcolm does not name Atma Ram, referring to him only as "a Nirmala Sikh" in Calcutta (cf. quote from Ward 1815 above), but Grewal (2017, 144) notes that Colebrooke introduced Malcolm to Atma Ram. It has long been a mystery where Colebrooke obtained his copy of what is today known as the *Purātan Janam-Sākhī* (lit. "the old life story"), also known as the "Colebrooke Janam-Sakhi", a very important manuscript of hagiographical stories of the life of Guru Nanak, likelycomposed in the seventeenth century. Bhai Vir Singh, who edited and published the most popular edition of this text in the early twentieth century, writes in his preface to the work that it had not been known to Sikh scholars prior to that time. I would suggest here that Colebrooke obtained this text from none other than this same Atma Ram, who was resident in Calcutta. That might explain why it was not known to Sikh scholars as far away as Panjab. Given that we have strong evidence that Atma Ram interacted with Malcolm, Ward, Colebrooke, and almost certainly with Carey as well, this seems like the most plausible explanation. If Atma Ram served as interlocutor to both Malcolm and Carey, which seems likely, that makes him a pivotal figure in the early history of interactions between Sikhs and the English, playing an integral role in the writing of both the first monograph on the Sikhs and the first grammar of Panjabi.

Bengali forms in his grammar next to the Sanskrit forms in the form of a table to demonstrate their correspondence (and lack thereof). By the time we get to Carey, as in fig.2.2 below, there is no longer any need to include the Sanskrit forms for purposes of comparison. The idea that the grammars of "all" Indian languages are governed by Sanskrit's nominal case system has, by the time we reach Carey, become a fact that can be taken for granted as implicit knowledge by the grammarian of Indian languages.

The Sanskrit case paradigm that Carey employs sets up a grid that has spaces for fourteen forms[12]. Since only a few cases occur in Panjabi, and those in limited situations, if indeed "as in every language" Panjabi follows the Sanskrit case system, then Carey has to come up with a way to fill in the full paradigm. Carey's solution is to employ Panjabi post-positional phrases in the nominal paradigm to perform functions that might be fulfilled by the Sanskrit cases and to emulate the Sanskrit case endings.



ਜਨ, *a man.*

	Singular.	Plural.
1.	ਜਨ, *a man.*	ਜਨ, *men.*
2.	ਜਨਨੂ, *man.*	ਜਨਾਨੂ, *men.*
3.	ਜਨਨੇ, *by a man.*	ਜਨਾਨੇ, *by men.*
4.	ਜਨਤਾਂਈ, *to a man.*	ਜਨਾਤਾਂਈ, *to men.*
5.	ਜਨਤੇ, *from a man.*	ਜਨਾਤੇ, *from men.*
6.	ਜਨਦਾ, *man's.*	ਜਨਾਦਾ, *men's.*
7.	ਜਨਵਿਚ, *in a man.*	ਜਨਾਵਿਚ, *in men.*

[12] Since Panjabi only has singular and plural numbers, not a dual number as in Sanskrit, the paradigm forms a table of just two by seven forms, instead of three by seven as in the case of Sanskrit.

Fig. 2.2 Panjabi consonant-ending masculine noun declension, from Carey's A Grammar of the Punjabee Language (Carey 1812, 15)

For example, from the second column, sixth line in fig. 1.2 above, to express the sixth case (genitive) plural, he adds a possessive post-positional particle:

Example 1.1:

ਜਨਾਦਾ

janā dā[13]

"persons[14]" (masculine plural noun in oblique form) + "of" (masculine singular possessive particle)

"of the persons"; "the persons'"

Nouns in Panjabi that are followed by post-positions take the oblique case (Gill & Gleason 1962[15]). So in figure 2.2 above, given that all of the forms from the second through the seventh rows are in fact post-positional phrases (noun + post-position), the noun complements all take the oblique case. We can confirm that Carey is employing post-positional phrases with the noun complements in the oblique case by examining the forms in the second column from rows two through seven; in these forms Carey has inserted an /ā/ between the noun complement and the post-position in all the forms (as in Example 1.1 above). This follows the rule that plural masculine nouns with consonant endings take on the ending /ā(n)/ before post-positions. Though Carey has not marked the nasal here, but has only inserted /ā/ without the nasal, this is clearly his attempt to put the noun complements of these post-positional phrases in the oblique case.

[13] There should be a nasal marking on the second /*a*/ in ਜਾਨਾ [*sic*], as in ਜਾਨਾ→ਜਾਨਾਂ,*jana*→*jana(n)* to mark the oblique case. Carey generally does not provide the appropriate Gurmukhi script nasal markings on vowels anywhere in his text.

[14] Carey translates *jan* as "man", but more accurately it should be translated as "person".

[15] Notably Gill and Gleason's *A Reference Grammar of Punjabi* (1962) is not based on the Sanskritic paradigm.

The irony here is that since the oblique case does not occur in Sanskrit, by attempting to fit Panjabi into a Sanskritic paradigm, Carey in fact obscures actual grammatical information about Panjabi. A reader of this noun declension in Carey's grammar would have no way of knowing that the morphological forms of Panjabi noun complements change when followed by post-positions. Carey does not acknowledge or offer an explanation of this phenomenon because, since the oblique case does not occur in the Sanskrit, there is no space for it in his paradigm. A further example of how grammatical information is obscured when Carey applies the Sanskrit grammatical template to describe Panjabi a priori is the case of tone. Unique among the north Indian Indo-Aryan languages, Panjabi exhibits a tonal system, a feature that was most likely acquired as an areal characteristic from the geographically contiguous Tibetan language, which exhibits a similar tonal system[16]. Tone is consequential in Panjabi as it provides phonemic contrast. As Sanskrit is not a tonal language, again there is no place within the Sanskritic grammatical paradigm to account for this feature in Panjabi.

It is clear that Carey does not arrive at his grammar by conducting an empirical investigation of Panjabi spoken forms, inferring general rules from a sampling of language-in-use, an example of an inductive method. Rather, the structure of his grammar is shaped by (ideologically informed) deductive reasoning; Sanskrit is "the common parent of all Indian languages", Panjabi is an Indian language, and therefore Sanskrit grammatical categories should be adequate to describe Panjabi. He begins with a set of pre-ordained categories (derived from Sanskrit) that govern the matrices of theoretically possible forms, and then populates those matrices with forms suggested by his own grammatical template (cf. Silverstein 2006, 2013).

[16] For further discussion of tonogenesis in Panjabi as an areal feature, see P. Singh, forthcoming.

This is possibly one reason why his grammar often ends up with rather overwrought examples, viz., the form for what he calls the “double causal perfect passive tense”:

ਅਸੀ[17] ਕਰਵਏਹਾਂਗੇwe have been obliged to be caused to be made, & c. (Carey 1812, 83)
[asī(n) karvēhā(n)gē]

This form and others like it can be generated through the Sanskrit grammatical paradigm that he has deployed (there is a space for it in the template), but in many cases, such as this example, it is unlikely that they have ever been uttered by a native speaker of Panjabi. Might this be an early nineteenth century version of what today might be called an AI “hallucination”, a ghostly form produced by an algorithm whose input or output is not constrained by the necessity of having to correspond to any empirical reality, in this case a community of speakers?
By utilizing a Sanskrit grammatical paradigm as a template to describe other languages, Carey, I argue, is employing a grammatical form of “technology of location” as described by Trautmann. Trautmann explains how in antiquity the Ptolemaic grid was used to define space, the Eusebian grid to define time, and the Mosaic genealogy to locate nations in relation to one another (2006, 12-13). As he says, the grid is not a measuring device, but rather “like a vessel that is meant to be filled” (ibid., 5). In employing the “empty” grid of the Sanskritic grammatical paradigm, Carey is able, by simply inserting the appropriate linguistic information into the template/algorithm, to produce what appear to be discrete “grammars”, even if those grammars do not accord with empirical observations of the language in use.

[17] [17]Again, ਅਸੀ [*sic*] (*asī(n)* pron. “us”) should have a nasal marking on /ī/ : ਅਸੀਂ; as with the earlier case of the oblique case marking for the consonant-final masculine noun *jan* (“person”) noted above.

The grammar functions as a "technology of location" by fixing languages in historical and hierarchical relationships to Sanskrit, according the Brahminical ideology of the relationship between Sanskrit and its Prakrits. What began as explicit ideas about the relationships between Sanskrit and contemporary north Indian vernaculars, absorbed by Halhed from his Brahmin interlocutors, have been transformed by the time we get to Carey's grammars into an implicit, taken-for-granted grammatical structure. The notion that "every Indian language" follows the Sanskrit case system is now part of common sense of the missionary linguist. Linguistic methodologies that were originally informed by particular language ideologies have now become self-evident facts about language (cf. Gal & Irvine 2019, 248). Taking the form of implicit knowledge that is embedded in methodologies, these ideological structures then become much less available to conscious awareness or critique.

This tension, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between empiricism and anti-empiricism, as we will explore in the chapters that follow, remains a constant throughout the colonial period. In this case the tension is between the desire to produce grammars that accurately describe observed linguistic usage, which can be a painstaking and resource intensive process, and the exigency to produce with as much ease as possible a series of grammars that missionaries can then use to produce Bible translations in those languages. We know from Serampore's prodigious output[18] that they generally opted for the latter method. But their goal may not have been to delve into the subtleties of the languages they wrote grammars for. As Errington notes, missionary linguists often created through their linguistic methodologies the unitary languages that they required for their purposes, primarily proselytization and Bible

[18] See Grierson 1903 for a comprehensive listing of the grammars, dictionaries, and Bible translations produced by the Serampore mission under Carey, which number in the dozens.

translation (2008, 16). This would be another example yet again of what I call an objectifying practice, one that, by rendering the ideologies that informed its production implicit, gives it the appearance of an objective form of analysis.

The Anglicists

Orientalists and missionaries in the early period of the colonial linguistics regime from 1770-1820 had focused most of their energies on the acquisition, description, and enumeration of Indian languages. Around the 1820s-1830s, a new class of administrators, influenced by Liberal and Utilitarian philosophies and a very different orientation towards language began to emerge and take up the reins of the colonial administration. This new group came to be known collectively as the Anglicists for their favoring of English for the purposes of administration and the dissemination of knowledge, particularly knowledge of the "scientific" and "useful" kinds. This group in effect inverted the colonial linguistic ideological field, privileging English knowledge, presumably encoded in English-language literature and scientific texts, over the Indian knowledge system and Indian languages and texts.

As noted above, figures like the evangelist Grant had as early as the 1790s called for a strict English-only policy in all phases of government; administration, education, and religious conversion, a policy that was proposed, but never implemented. Perhaps realizing the impracticality of such a policy, the later group of Anglicists of the 1830s generally took a more moderate stance. They were all in agreement that the Indian knowledge system needed to be replaced by an Anglo-European system of knowledge, but differed on the means of that transformation. One group thought that English "knowledge" could be taught directly at a grassroots level in vernacular languages from primary school onwards, while the second group

favored instead creating an intermediary class of Indians who were conversant with English knowledge and could disseminate that knowledge through Indian society through the translations in vernacular languages. In either case, a "translation" of English knowledge would have to take place at some point; the question was only by what process should that take place. Two figures, James Mill and Thomas Babington Macaulay, typified these two ideological poles.

Mill, the well-known utilitarian philosopher, was not opposed to Indian languages per se as vehicles for the transmission of knowledge. He felt however that the current systems of knowledge that were encoded in those languages were inadequate in comparison to Anglo-European knowledge systems. He writes, "the great end should not…[be] to teach Hindoo learning, or Mahomedan learning, but useful learning" (Mill 1824, in Zastoupil & Moir 2016, 116). Vernacular languages could serve as vehicles for disseminating "useful learning", but that learning would have to come from Anglo-European sources. He felt that the superiority of English scientific knowledge was a settled question, and took a decidedly anti-empiricist stance towards researching India any further, writing that "as soon as every thing [*sic*] of importance is expressed in writing, a man who is duly qualified may obtain more knowledge of India in one year in his closet in England, than he could obtain during the course of the longest life, by the use of his eyes and ears in India" (Mill 1858 [1817], I:xxiii, in Trautman 1997, 119). He may have been writing in reaction to Jones, the Orientalist, who wrote that "no man ever became a historian in his closet" (Jones 1780, in Cannon 1970, 440, quoted in Majeed 1992, 139).

Like Mill, Macaulay felt that Indian languages "are barren of useful knowledge", as he notes in his Minute on Education (1835) (Minute 1835, par. 31). Unlike Mill, however, he felt that instruction in English knowledge in vernacular languages on a mass level would be impractical. Rather, he favored a filter-down approach, training an elite bilingual intermediary

class in English knowledge in English medium, then having that class disseminate the knowledge down through the ranks via translations in local vernacular languages. He writes, "I feel…that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (ibid., par. 34). And one might add, in language. He shared with Mill a decidedly anti-empirical stance, and added to that a complete dismissal of the Indian knowledge system and its and texts. Not only did they not contain "useful learning"; they had no value at all in comparison with European texts: "I have no knowledge of either Sanscrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value…I am quite ready to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia" (ibid., par. 10).

The anti-empirical stance of both Mill and Macaulay here should be seen in contrast to both the Orientalist and missionary attitudes towards engagement with Indian languages and knowledge systems. Even if Orientalists and missionaries may have instrumentalized these forms of knowledge within their own regimes of value and for their own purposes, and, as I have argued above, focused on ideologically-informed deductive forms of classification, there was still a felt need to grapple with native languages and systems of knowledge in some form. This likely has at least something to do with their on-the-ground experience in India, which the Anglicists, especially those theorizing from the metropole, lacked. With the arrival of the Anglicists, however, these forms of on-the-ground experience, discourse with interlocutors, and

engagement with languages, even in the form of texts, were highly marginalized, though they did not disappear altogether.

Regarding the transition from Orientalist to Anglicist regimes of knowledge Heller and McElhinny write that "it is perhaps most helpful to see changing views in light of the shift from mercantile to industrial capitalism" (2017, 56). This serves as a partial explanation, in particular of the shift in leadership at the top levels of colonial administration. From Bentinck in the 1830s onwards, through the remainder of the rule of the East India Company and the Raj, India was presided over by a long line of capitalist-minded Liberals. Never was there another Hastings at the helm, an Orientalist administrator-scholar who generously patronized institutions of native language learning. But Anglicism did not simply displace Orientalism within the colonial regime. Orientalists and missionary linguists, along with their projects and their attendant ideologies of language, persisted through the colonial period, and, we might say, beyond the colonial period. In fact, some of their most ambitious projects were yet to come.

I suggest that it is more useful to think of the advent of the Anglicists not in terms of periodization, but in terms of adding another, highly influential, dimension to the colonial field of language ideologies. The effect that the new emphasis on English in matters of administration, commerce, and education had was to establish what I call a new "Anglophone cosmopolis" in India, a parallel to with the previous Sanskrit cosmopolis (Pollock 2009) and Persian cosmopolis (Eaton 2019). English became, and remains today, an elite lingua franca, not only across India, but of course across the anglophone global ecumene as well. As an international, cosmopolitan register accessible to only a select few, it became and remains a language of prestige (LaDousa & Davis 2022). In the chapters that follow we will examine how the addition of ideas about English as an imperial, elite, lingua franca, and as a language of prestige and authority, to the

colonial field of language ideologies shifted the linguistic landscape and the ways in which native Indians came to relate to and understand their own languages.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have surveyed the development of what I call the colonial field of language ideologies during the early colonial period from 1780-1830. I have tried to show this field was not in any way uniform in its formation or its evolution, but from its outset was the product of various actors and their political, religious, or commercial projects. The ideas that the three main actors that I have focused on in this chapter, Orientalists, missionaries, and Anglicists, held about language and how to approach it sometimes converged, and sometimes diverged as their aims and the social conditions under which they were working changed. In fig. 1.3, in order to help visualize some of the complexity of these fields of ideology, I map out some of the ways that ideas could be differentiated and could intersect along just one dimension; ideas across these groups about the most appropriate linguistic medium for native education. As we see, the ideological range is wide, and there are divergences even within what we might think would be relatively uniform categories.

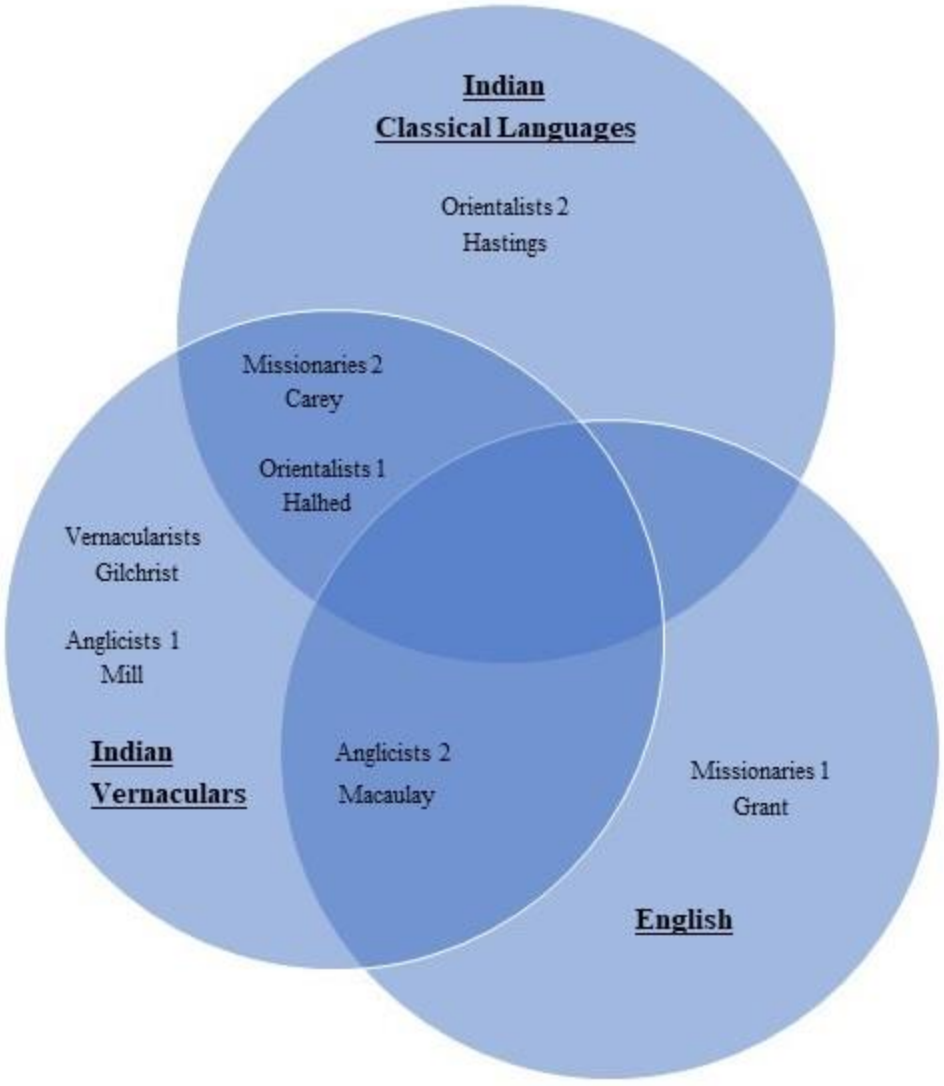


Fig. 2.3 Preferred medium of native education among Orientalists, missionaries, vernacularists, Anglicists, ~1780-1830.

All three of the groups I have surveyed here were involved in the spread and maintenance of empire in either its political, religious, or economic dimensions. All were equally in agreement that India and Indians could not remain in their present state, and that language was one of the means by which a transformation would be effected. However, each had different

ideas about the linguistic object that would be most appropriate to their goals. The Orientalists focused minimally on the form of language; for them, form was only a means to get at the content of (ancient) texts, missionaries focused very little on content, and mostly on linguistic form, for the purpose of developing a mastery of language adequate for missionizing and producing Bible translations, and Anglicists had no use for the content of Indian languages, and only a minimal interest in the form of Indian (vernacular) languages, insofar as it facilitated the dissemination of English knowledge.

In this chapter, in examining the development of the colonial grammar of Indian vernacular languages, I have demonstrated that that colonial approaches to language were highly influenced by the colonists' interactions with their elite native interlocutors, particularly Brahmins, from whom they absorbed ideologies of language about the hierarchical relationship between Sanskrit and vernacular languages. These ideologies in turn shaped their own methodologies and approaches to Indian languages. I have argued that the colonial grammar, which is often ideologized as an objective form of linguistic analysis, is more usefully understood as the product of *objectifying practices*, which produce forms that can be construed as objective, and can be taken up as such, while at the same time concealing the ideologies involved in their construction.

In the next chapter we will examine in more detail how many of these ideologies of language were established in the early part of the colonial period were taken up, combined in various ways, and re-deployed in the service of new projects in the post-1849 period, after the annexation of Panjab, when interactions between Sikhs and the colonial regime became more sustained and consequential for the Sikh community. These projects in many ways conditioned the ways that Sikhs would enter into their engagement with colonial modernity, as ideas emerged

about their relationships to language, identity, their scripture, and their place in the imperial and civilizational hierarchy. It is to an examination of those projects that we will turn our attention next.

Chapter 3 Later Colonial Encounters

Introduction

After the official annexation of Panjab in 1849, interactions with the colonial administration became more sustained and consequential for the Sikh community. In this chapter, we will examine several language related projects of the late nineteenth century that in large measure conditioned the entry of Sikhs into the colonial public sphere. The language ideologies developed in the early colonial period that we examined in the last chapter, those of the Orientalists, missionaries, and Anglicists, were largely brought forward into this later period, and put into the service of new projects, but sometimes in novel ways.

Linguistically oriented scholars in the later nineteenth century were mostly focused on ways to integrate or assimilate Sikhs into the imperial knowledge system. This often involved projects that examined Sikhs in relation to languages, in particular vernacular Panjabi and the Sikh scriptural language. These projects frequently involved methodologies that we have examined in relation to the early colonial period, including translations, grammars, maps, and surveys. These instruments of analysis were informed by ideologies of language that were often at a remove from Sikh linguistic practices and Sikhs' own ideas about them. It was this encounter between different linguistic ideological fields that galvanized discussion among Sikhs about the place of their tradition in the rapidly changing political and linguistic context of the turn of the twentieth century.

Wilkins' "The *Seeks* and their College at Patna"

We will begin this chapter by briefly revisiting the Orientalist period, examining a late eighteenth century account of Sikhs will help to establish a baseline understanding of how Sikhs themselves narrated their own ideas about their identity and relationships to language. Charles Wilkins (1749-1836) was a founding member, along with Hastings and Jones, of the influential Asiatick Society, formed in 1784. In 1781 he paid a short visit to a Sikh *gurdwara* in the town of Patna while on a journey from Calcutta to Benares and wrote a short essay entitled "The *Seeks* [*sic*; Sikhs] and their College at Patna", which was later published in the first issue of the Society's journal *Asiatick Researches* in 1788[19]. Wilkins' account is particularly useful in that, although very brief (it runs to just about four printed pages), it gives a firsthand account of his encounter with Sikhs. Although there are a handful of military reports on Sikhs from this era[20] (Sikhs were concentrated on what was then the frontier of Company territories), Wilkins' is the only ethnographically oriented account from this period that also attends to Sikh religious and linguistic practices.

Wilkins describes the setting of the interior of the gurdwara at Patna: "there stood also near the altar, on a low desk, a great book, of a folio size, from which some portions are daily read in their divine service. It was covered over with a blue mantle, on which were printed, in silver letters, some select passages of their *law*". He writes further, "the book was now opened, and the old man began to chant to the time of the drums and cymbals; and at the conclusion of every verse, most of the congregation joined chorus in a response, with countenances exhibiting

[19] This essay must have been addressed to an early version of the Asiatick Society; although Wilkins's "prefatory letter" is addressed to the Society from "Banaris [*sic*] 1 March 1781", the Society was not officially established until 1784. This first issue of *Asiatick Researches* also contained Jones' address "On the Hindus" which we examined in the last chapter.
[20] See Polier 1780, Browne 1788, Forster 1798.

great marks of joy" (cited in G. Singh 1962, 72). As we saw in the last chapter, Wilkins' references to the Sikh gurdwara as a "College", and to the contents of the Sikh scripture as "passages of their *law*" are very much in keeping with Orientalist conceptions that the "laws" of different communities (particularly religious communities) were inscribed in ancient texts, in languages that were associated with those communities (e.g., Sanskrit for Hindus, Arabic for Muslims), and that studying the law was among their primary religious concerns.

Wilkins provides us with further glimpses of the language of the Sikh scriptures and practices around it; he writes, "the founder of their faith was called *Naneek Sah*…he left behind him a book, composed by himself, in verse and the language of *Punjab* (but a character[21] partly of his own invention) which teaches the doctrine of the faith he established…they offered to admit me into their Society, but I declined the honor; contenting myself with the alphabet, which they told me to guard as the apple of my eye, as it was a sacred character" (cited in G. Singh 1962, 73-74). About the teaching of Sikh doctrine, Wilkins writes, "one of the best instructed repeats to him [a new initiate], *in any language with which he is conversant*, the chief canons of their faith, exacting from him a solemn promise to abide by them the rest of his life…the new convert may then choose a *Gooroo*, or preceptor, to teach him the language of their scripture, who first gives him the alphabet to learn, and so leads him on, by slow degrees, until he wants no further inscription" (cited in G. Singh 1962, 74-75, first emphasis added).

There are several points of sociolinguistic interest that we can infer even from these brief passages from Wilkins' account. The first of these is that as the location of Wilkins' visit is in Patna, a town in the eastern part of the subcontinent, a significant distance from the province of Panjab, we know that Sikh communities at this time were not limited to the Panjab region alone.

[21] By "character" here Wilkins is most likely referring to the Gurmukhi script.

This runs counter to the notion that became a commonplace understanding by the late nineteenth century, as we will see in the sections that follow in this chapter, that Sikhs belonged exclusively to the Panjab region. Further, as Wilkins notes, when teaching Sikh doctrine to a new initiate to the faith, the instructor will teach "in any language in which he [the new initiate] is conversant". From this we can also infer that Sikhs were not necessarily associated with any one language; they could in fact learn the Sikh doctrine in whatever language they were familiar with.

Wilkins continues, "I next enquired why they were called *Seeks*, and they told me it was a word borrowed from one of the commandments of the founder which signifies "Learn thou"[22]; and it was adopted to distinguish the sect soon after he disappeared" (cited in G. Singh 1962, 74). From Wilkins' account we understand that the term "Sikh" at this stage in the late eighteenth century was used to "distinguish the sect" as a group who had committed themselves to a particular spiritual path, followers of the Guru, and perhaps by this time (about two centuries after its founding), an institutionalized form of that tradition. There is no indication at this stage in any part of Wilkins' account that the term Sikh was used as a linguistic or ethnic marker, or that Sikhs are associated with any particular territory.

"Sikhland": "Sikh" from "disciple" to ethnonym

Robert Needham Cust (1821-1909) worked mainly as a judicial administrator in the Panjab province during the decades immediately after the official annexation in 1849, but also maintained a lifelong interest in matters related to language and linguistics and wrote voluminously on these topics. While he is perhaps more well known for his large-scale linguistic surveys, *A Sketch of the Modern Languages of the East Indies* (1878), and *A Sketch of the*

[22] *Sikh* can be translated as "student", "disciple", "one who learns", from the verb *sikhṇa*, "to learn".

Modern Languages of Africa (1883), he also took a special interest in Sikhs and the Panjab region during his long tenure there, and was instrumental in shaping ideas about Sikhs within the imperial knowledge system. As a prominent member of the colonial network of administrators, missionaries, and scholars of the mid-nineteenth century he also played an important role in facilitating the projects of other figures such as Ernest Trumpp and George Grierson, whose work we will examine later in this chapter, who played equally important roles in producing knowledge about Sikh religious and linguistic practices within an imperial framework.

Cust's linguistic work was inspired, at least in part, by the work of the missionary linguists of previous generations; as he writes, "The Missionaries, and their parent Societies, felt from the first, that their only course would be to master the Language spoken by the people, and…to publish the results in the shape of Grammars, Vocabularies, and Dictionaries" (Cust 1878, 16).

We might add the linguistic map to this list. Irvine has argued that the "technology of location" (following Trautmann 2006) of the linguistic map underlined Cust's notion of the "language-field", a purported relationship between land, language, and people, and became a method whereby groups of people, their languages, and their territories could be visually located, fixed, and their relationships studied (Irvine 2011). In an essay entitled "Sikhland, or the Country of Baba-Nának" (1880 [1859]), I argue that Cust expands upon his notion of the "language-field", by adding a fourth element, that of religion, thus linking land, language, people, and religion into one ethnic formation. I argue that the linking of religion to the language-field allows Cust to locate the Sikh community, not only territorially, but also within a comparative civilizational matrix, which within the imperial context was closely associated with notions about the evolution of religious ideas and practices, particularly the development of Protestantism.

Cust begins the essay with a description of the physical setting of his proposed "Sikhland": "Where the rivers at the time of the great primeval cataclysm have forced themselves through in deep channels, we look, as it were, into the bowels of the mountain kingdom[23],…as far as solitary snow-capped peaks, the position of which wearies the intellect to imagine…". Using a rhetorical device that he employs throughout the essay, he immediately recontextualizes his description within a colonial framework: "Still it is something to think, that only thirteen years ago the English Government bought and sold those vast mountains for a sum which appears paltry" (Cust 1880 [1859], 26).

Having thus established the colonial context, Cust then proceeds to situate Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, the language of his *bāṇī*[24], and his disciples and their descendants, within the geography of Panjab: "The life of Nanak is so intimately connected with the provinces which lie betwixt the Chenab and Beas, that we must briefly detail it…there dwell the descendants and his followers, and the very name by which they distinguish their nationality is that of being his 'Sikhs' or disciples. The proper name by which the country ought to be known is 'Sikhland'" (ibid., 36). He writes further, "he [Guru Nanak] is not, like Mahomet, the denizen of a *far country*, whose doctrines have been translated among *strange people in strange languages* (ibid., emphases added).

There are several things to unpack here. First, Cust is here using the term "Sikh" in two different senses simultaneously that we must disambiguate. One sense of the term "Sikh" is as "disciple". The other sense is, as he puts it, "the very name by which they distinguish their

[23] Cust is clearly referring here to the geographic features of the colonial province of Panjab of his time, which included the mountainous areas of present day Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir. The current state of Indian East Panjab consists of mostly flat plains.
[24] *bāṇī*, also known as *gurbāṇī*, refers to the language, voice, or utterances of the Sikh Gurus, and more generally to the collective language of *Guru Granth Sahib*, the Sikh scripture.

nationality". I argue that the former sense, as "disciple/follower of the Sikh Gurus" is the sense in which the term was employed among Sikhs themselves (as we saw in Wilkins' early account above), while the latter sense, as a self-designated name for their "nationality" is in fact Cust's own invention, on the basis of his notion of the "language-field", land-language-people, augmented with the additional element of religion. More specifically, I argue that it is Cust, on the basis of his notion of the modified "language-field", who transforms the term "Sikh" into an *ethnonym*, a term in this case designating a group of people associated with a specific territory, language, and religion. His use of the term "Sikhland" then, is properly a designation for the territory associated with Cust's own modified language-field. It is of note here that the first articulation of this intrinsic connection is made not by Sikhs, but by a colonial observer.

In the above quote, Cust brings together the elements of this modified language-field: first land ("betwixt the Chenab and Beas") and people ("his followers", "his 'Sikhs'"). Next Guru Nanak and the language of his *bāṇī* are established as local to Panjab by contrasting them with Muhammad, who is described as "a denizen of a far country", and the language of the Qur'an, "whose doctrines have been translated among strange people in strange languages". Guru Nanak is "not", Cust writes, "a denizen of a far country", but rather local to Panjab, and his doctrines have not been "translated", but are rather known by the inhabitants of Panjab in the local language familiar to them, Panjabi. Cust's definition of a "Sikh" then, takes the form of a kind of syllogism: Panjab is a bounded territory; Panjabi is the language spoken in that territory; Guru Nanak is from Panjab and his *bāṇī* is in the Panjabi language; therefore Sikhs, the followers of Guru Nanak's *bāṇī* are also associated with the Panjabi language and the land of Panjab. We might visualize Cust's formulation something like Fig. 2.1:

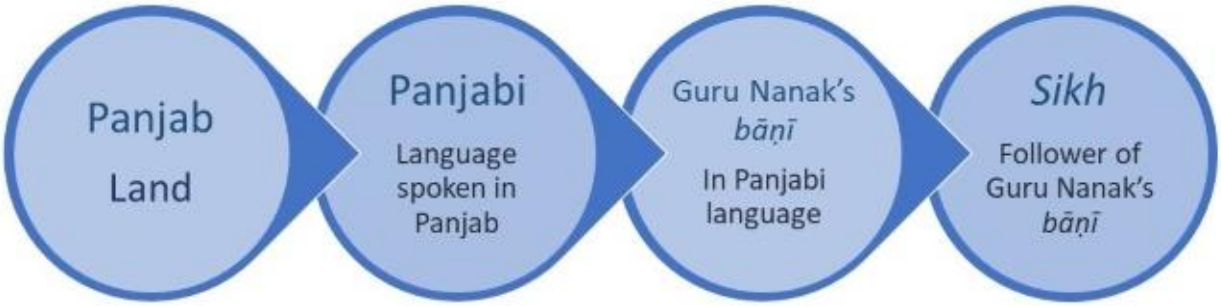


Fig. 3.1 *Sikh* as ethnonym, following Cust's Language-Field, with the additional element of religion.

So goes Cust's argument in any case. It seems almost self-evident in the way that it is presented. Of course, the logical development of the argument depends on several ideologically informed premises that do not necessarily hold when examined more carefully. That Sikhs are the followers of Guru Nanak's *bāṇī* is a premise that most Sikhs would likely agree with. But, as we will note below in the remainder of this chapter in several attestations, the *bāṇī* of Guru Nanak, or of the Sikh Gurus more generally, does not conform to a named language variety known as Panjabi. Further, as we shall see in the section on Grierson below, Panjabi is not the only language spoken in Panjab, nor is Panjab the only place where Panjabi is spoken. And finally, to unravel the last threads of Cust's modified language-field, recalling Wilkins' observations above, we know that one could be a Sikh, a follower of the Sikh Gurus, and not reside in Panjab, or one could be a Sikh and not be a speaker of Panjabi, or one could fulfill both of these conditions simultaneously. A Sikh could anywhere learn the Sikh doctrine "in any language" in which they were conversant.

Cust's designation of the term "Sikh" as an ethnonym is another example of the product of an *objectifying practice* that appears to define a relationship in objective terms, while obscuring the ideologically informed premises upon which that relationship is predicated. Even

if Cust's ethnonymic formulation of Sikhs does not hold empirically, as a product of *objectifying practice*, it is still available to be taken up deployed in other projects. It enables Cust, for instance, to distinguish the Sikhs of Panjab as more authentically local than Panjabi speaking Muslims and Hindus. If Cust were merely employing the model of the language-field, land-language-people, then all three groups, Panjabi Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs, should have equal claim to membership, given that they all reside in Panjab and all speak Panjabi. But since, according to Cust, Guru Nanak was born and raised in Panjab, and uttered his *bāṇī* in the local language, Panjabi, Sikhs, the followers of Guru Nanak and his *bāṇī*, have a more authentic relationship to the land. Panjabi Muslims and Hindus may live in Panjab and may speak Panjabi, but since their religious texts are not in Panjabi, and were not written by someone from Panjab, they cannot claim local authenticity or a local rootedness to the degree that Sikhs can.

The addition of the element of religion to the typical language-field formulation also enables Cust to link the newly semiotically differentiated Sikhism to Protestantism, and bring Sikhs into the colonial civilizational comparative matrix. Cust writes: "as the appearance of Mahomet took place at the time of the deep degradation of the Greek church, and as Luther protested against the errors of the Roman, so stood forth at this time Nanak", and further, "He was a contemporary of our Protestant reformers, he lived and died among his own people, his descendants are still among us; the forms of life have in no way changed since he completed his mission". And finally, he writes, "And one hundred years later, when the second prophet [referring here to the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh] appeared, there arose among the agricultural population of this country a wondrous yearning for political liberty" (ibid., 35). Not only did Guru Nanak start a protestant movement, his followers still remain in the same place to this day, their way of life "in no way changed".

The comparison of Protestants to Sikhs is in many ways a classic case of "fractal recursivity", a process in which an opposition salient at one level is projected onto another level (Irvine & Gal 2000). In this case, however, it involves an atypical inversion. As Irvine & Gal write, in the orientalist discourse of the nineteenth century it was common to see a projection of opposition between Europe and its various "eastern" others; populations, languages, and cultures were differentiated not only geographically, but also ideologically. These projections often also distinguished what were construed to be "higher" forms of civilization (generally urban/cosmopolitan/literate) from their "lower" others (generally rural/agricultural/oral) (Irvine & Gal 2000, 73). These oppositions were also often projected in fractally recursive fashion onto spaces within colonized territories. For instance, in the case at hand, the opposition of Protestant versus Catholic was projected onto the local field of religious differentiation as an opposition between Sikh and Hindu (Brahmin).

In this example of fractal recursivity, the ideologically preferrable terms (from Cust's point of view) Protestant/Sikh are opposed to the dis-preferred terms Catholic/Hindu. The inversion of the usual state of affairs occurs in that the ideologically preferable Sikh population is associated here with "the agricultural population of this country", among whom arose, "a wondrous yearning for political liberty", as opposed to the dis-preferred Hindu/Brahmin population, which is associated with the urban/cosmopolitan/effete. As Irvine notes, Cust, consistent with ideas of Herder, Grimm, and others prevalent in Europe during his time, located "authentic" speech in the agricultural and working classes, as opposed to the speech of "multilingual, cosmopolitan elites" (Irvine 2011, 44; see also Bauman & Briggs 2003). This allows Cust to establish Sikhs as not only a protestant movement, but as a form of authentic, localized protestantism, rooted in the land. It seems that Cust, himself a polyglot, a resident of

London, and an international traveler, did not identify as a member of the cosmopolitan class, but rather with the vigorous, manly, rural Panjabi Sikh peasant class and their "wondrous yearning for political liberty".

In establishing Sikhs as an authentic, autochthonous protestant movement, Cust is essentially creating a fractally recursive version of the English themselves, a mirror image, but on a lesser scale, rooted in the land of Panjab. We must remember however that Cust is still writing and thinking within a colonial framework. However closely Sikhs might mirror their English Protestant patrons in their ideals, they still remain subordinate to them in an overall colonial relationship. Cust writes, "Fortune was against them, for they came into collision with a race [the English, presumably], not more brave, but more perfectly furnished with the appliances of war; but they submitted neither abjectly nor without a struggle" (Cust 1880 [1859], 25). The Sikhs were a nation, but not a sovereign one. Cust's imagery of the Sikhs, who "submitted neither abjectly nor without a struggle" is a variation of the "noble savage" trope that was in vogue in the mid-nineteenth century. From here it is not a far distance to travel conceptually to the trope of the "martial race" by the end of the nineteenth century.

What Cust does not mention in his essay is that it was written just two years after the Rebellion (or Mutiny, depending on one's point of view) of 1857, in which (some groups of) Sikhs played a significant role in coming to the aid of the English in putting down the native uprising. Cust's writing in praise of Sikhs is as much to fix them in a positive light within the colonial hierarchy as to provide an ethnographic account of their land, language, and religion. Sikhs, projected as fractally recursive, authentically localized, spontaneously protestant yet subordinate representatives of the English in India, position them ideally to serve as their proxy in the name of empire. And the role of the martial race serving imperial military agendas is

indeed one that Sikhs, or at least some groups of Sikhs, came to fulfill under the Raj, even in international campaigns through the first and second world wars (Fox 1985, Yong 2018). I argue here that the identification of Sikhs as a "martial race", ideally suited to serve the empire, is predicated on the transformation of the term "Sikh" into an ethnonym, which was based in large measure on Cust's ideas of the connections between land, language, people, and religion.

"The mixed character of the languages": Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India*

George A. Grierson (1851-1941) is best known for supervising the *Linguistic Survey of India* (LSI), which was published serially in eleven volumes and some nineteen parts between 1903-1928. While the LSI was the most ambitious colonial linguistic survey to date in terms of its scope (it still remains among the largest linguistic surveys ever to have been conducted), if we examine it from ideological and methodological perspectives, we see that it in fact follows closely a genealogy that had been in place for more than a century at the time of its publication. Grierson himself cites the work of Carey and the Serampore mission as "the first attempt at a systematic survey of the languages of India" (Grierson 1903, 246). As we saw in the last section, Cust also acknowledges the missionary linguistic formula of the composition of "Grammars, Vocabularies, and Dictionaries" (and Maps, we might add) as central to the project of "mastery" of the languages of colonial subjects. Cust was a close colleague and supporter of Grierson's and wrote that he hoped that Grierson would "complete and publish an enlarged and corrected edition" of his (Cust's) "Sketch", and made clear his wish to have his additional linguistic notes transferred to Grierson at the time of his death (Cust 1898, 35).

Like the work of Carey and Cust, Grierson's project was one of systematization and classification. He grounds his various linguistic and ethnic descriptions (along with speculations)

in the formal linguistic idiom of his day, collecting writing samples, composing grammars, writing historical notes, drawing maps, and putting languages (and the populations that speak those languages) into relation with each other. Grierson's project was not just to enumerate languages individually, to classify them according to grammatical criteria, but also to arrange them within a civilizational whole, establishing the Indian subcontinent as a "linguistic area" (Emeneau 1955). His volumes are arranged by linguistic subgroups that had affinities according to his schema, for instance his volume 9, part I (1916) which contains specimens, grammars, and maps of Western Hindi and Panjabi. Because his study is much more fine-grained than either Carey's or Cust's (collecting a much wider array of linguistic samples), he also encounters a wider range of ambiguities. Nevertheless, he remains committed to his linguistic methodological genealogy, relying on the grammar, lexicon, and linguistic map to make his classifications.

Grierson opens the Panjabi section of v. 9 p. 1 by declaring that "The name 'Pañjabī' explains itself. It means the language of the Punjab. As will be seen immediately the name is not a good one, for Pañjabī is not by any means the only language spoken in that Province" (Grierson 1916, 607). It was perhaps not entirely surprising, even in Grierson's time, that the name of a large administrative district in a linguistically diverse area would not correspond precisely to the named varieties that exist within it. But there are further ambiguities. Grierson writes, "It thus happens that, although in India we continually see two neighbouring languages gradually merging into each other, nowhere is the process so gradual as in the case of Pañjabī and Lahndā" (ibid., 608). The ambiguity is enough that Grierson includes a space on his map of Panjabi and its dialects that is labeled "Pañjabī merging into Lahndā" (fig. 3.2).

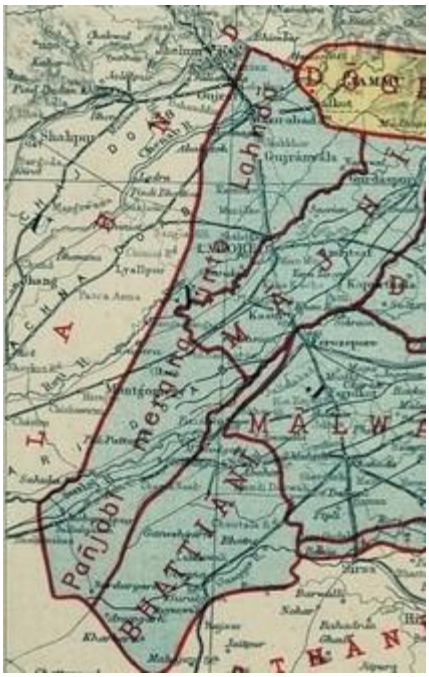


Fig. 3.2 Detail from Grierson's "Map Illustrating the Dialects and Sub-Dialects of the Punjabi Language" showing the area labeled "Pañjabī merging into Lahndā" (Grierson 1916, 606)

Even when Grierson discovers ambiguities that he cannot resolve into his overall schema of classification, it does not deter him from maintaining that schema, nor does he adjust it in any significant way. Observations of linguistic varieties that do not correspond to territorial mappings do not alter his idea (an idea inherited through the genealogy from Carey through Cust) that languages *should* ideally map onto discrete territories. The exceptions are noted, but they only serve to reinforce the general rule. Just as Cust noted that "It would be a mistake to suppose, that a sharp line can be drawn as the boundary of a Language" (Cust 1878, 6), Grierson acknowledges that "in India we continually see two neighbouring languages gradually merging into each other (1916, 2) but still attempts to draw discrete boundaries around what he deems to be linguistic territories.

As in the case with Carey, which we discussed in the previous chapter, in the genealogy of this particular colonial linguistics regime "technologies of location"; for Carey, the grammar,

for Cust, the map, and for Grierson, the grammar and the map, take precedence even when their own empirical data suggest that these technologies may not be facilitating accurate classifications for the phenomena under observation. Allegiance to the notion of discrete, territorially based linguistic boundaries does not allow for even frequently observed phenomena such as multilingualism, diverse speech repertoires, or "gradual merging" as Grierson observes here. These can only be accounted for as deviations from an idealized norm, itself a projection of an ideology of language. Again, Grierson's LSI illustrates the tension that we observe throughout the colonial linguistics regime between deductive forms, pre-conceived schemas which data must be fit into, versus inductive forms, generalizations derived from empirical data. Even within projects like the LSI whose very purpose is ostensibly to "survey" the languages of India empirically, that empirical data ultimately has to be fit into *a priori* systems of classification such as the linguistic map, whether the classificatory system can appropriately account for the data or not.

Following Carey and Cust, Grierson also links the Panjabi language to the Sikh population. He writes that "The boundary between Pañjabī and all these languages is fairly well defined (although of course there is a certain amount of merging from one language into another), for the difference of language to a large extent connotes a difference of nationalities. More especially on the border-line between Pañjabī and Western Hindi we see that Pañjabī is essentially the language of the Sikhs" (Grierson 1916, 607). Grierson's assessment is clearly predicated on the idea that Sikhs are a "nationality", which must then necessarily be accompanied by its "own" language. Again, this assessment has to be made over and against his own empirical data that suggests that, first, the region(s) in which Panjabi and its dialects are spoken are mostly made up of Muslims and Hindus, with Sikhs being a distinct minority, and

second, that Sikh communities are spread throughout the region (and outside the region), and not concentrated in any one area that might (even theoretically) be associated exclusively with "Panjabi" as a named variety. Grierson echoes the assessment of both Carey and Cust that Panjabi is the "Sikh language" even in the face of empirical data that suggests that while many Sikhs probably spoke Panjabi, or some variety of it, Sikhs did not speak Panjabi exclusively, they spoke other languages as well, nor was Panjabi spoken exclusively by Sikhs, it was also spoken by other groups. The normative language-and-nation schema that Grierson inherits however does not provide a space for the actual linguistic complexity that Grierson himself observes, and even takes note of.

Grierson also inherits several other ideologies regarding Panjabi that we have seen before, particularly in Cust's association of Sikhs, Panjabi, and agrarian lifestyle noted above. In his introductory section on Panjabi in the LSI Grierson provides further description of Panjabi as an "earthy" language, inherently connected to the land of Panjab. In this regard he includes a quotation from Beames' *Comparative Grammar* (1872): "There is a flavour of wheaten flour and a reek of cottage smoke about Pañjabī and Sindhī, which is infinitely more natural and captivating than anything which the hide-bound Pandit-ridden languages of the eastern parts of India can show us" (Beames 1872, 51, in Grierson 1916, 617). Panjabi is "natural and captivating" because of its connection with the land and (other) products of the land, such as "wheaten flour". Here again we see the same type of opposition presented by Cust of Panjabi/protestant/rural/authentic versus "Pandit-ridden languages" (referring to heavily Sanskritized vernaculars)/orthodox/urban/corrupted. Grierson writes further that:

> "The mixed character of the languages of the Central and Western Punjab (Pañjabī and Lahndā) is well illustrated by the character given to the inhabitants of those tracts in the Mahābhārata, and by

> incidental references in the grammar of Pāṇini…Not only were there no Brāhmaṇs, but there were no castes. The population had no respect for the Vēda, and offered no sacrifices to the gods. They were rude and uncultured, given to drinking spirituous liquor, and eating all kinds of flesh" (Grierson 1916, 617-618)

Both the Mahābhārata and Pāṇini's grammar, as we examined in the last chapter, were composed sometime in the middle of the first millennium BCE. Nevertheless, according to Grierson, their descriptions of the "character" of the inhabitants of the region some 2500 years ago as being "rude and uncultured", drunken, impious, and wanton apparently still hold today, and explain "the mixed character of the [contemporary] languages of the Central and Western Punjab (Pañjabī and Lahndā)". That is to say, the "character" of the languages of Panjab are directly related to the (moral) "character" of the inhabitants, which presumably is in turn a product of inherent qualities of the land that they inhabit. This same, unchanging land then continues to produce both inhabitants, and languages, of "mixed character", even several millennia later.

Grierson's characterizations of the languages of Panjab are largely consistent with those of Cust that we examined above. Clearly Cust's *Sketch,* a work that Grierson certainly examined closely, served as a model in several ways for the LSI. Instead of providing merely prose "descriptions" of language as Cust did, however, Grierson additionally provides "skeleton grammars", written samples, even supplemental phonograph recordings at one point. While Grierson's work is generally considered an exemplary model of disciplinary linguistics for its time, one that was focused on the "facts of grammar" rather than ethnographic impressions (Majeed 2019a, 79), we see that

Grierson's assessments of the character of languages and their relationships are highly inflected with ideologies about history, evolution, and civilizational (and moral) hierarchy. These ideologies shape to a significant degree the methodologies and models employed in the LSI, including the ways that languages are differentiated (or left undifferentiated) and the ways that they are associated (or not associated) with different groups.

For Sikhs, Grierson's work had the effect of reinforcing ideas that were already in the ether about the relationship between Sikhs and their scripture, to Panjabi, and to the land of Panjab, ideas that were first crystallized in Cust's "Sikhland". Grierson presented these ideas in a format that had the appearance of objectivity, and certainly carried the weight of scientific authority, despite the ambiguities and uncertainties that the LSI itself noted. This weight of authority was highly consequential. It was the LSI that provided the primary model for the Indian States Reorganization Committee, which set into motion the plan to organize Indian states along linguistic lines beginning the 1950s, an organizational plan that remains in place today. About the Sikh scripture Grierson writes:

> "Pañjabī has a very scanty literature. The oldest work which is usually said to be written in the language is the *Ādi Granth*, the sacred Scriptures of the Sikhs; but, although the manuscripts of the book are universally written in the Gurmukhī character, a very small portion of its contents is really in the Pañjabī language. It is a collection of hymns by various poets, most of whom wrote in some form of Western Hindī, while others even wrote in Marāṭhī" (Grierson 1916, 618)

As we shall see in the following sections, Grierson's assessment of the multilingual nature of GGS and the fact that only "a very small portion of its contents is

really in the Pañjabī language" is echoed in the work of both Trumpp and Macauliffe, who authored wrote, respectively, the first two attempted translations of GGS into English. However they had two very different responses to that observed multilingualism.

"The literal grammatical way I desired": Trumpp's translation of GGS

As Cust was instrumental in providing support for Grierson's project, he was also played a key role in arranging the first attempt at a translation of the Sikh scripture, *Guru Granth Sahib* (GGS) into English. While still in India Cust had himself apparently at one point proposed to translate GGS as well as a secondary text, *Dasam Granth*[25], on the condition that he be given leave from his official duties and sufficient funding to complete the work. The Panjab government decided however that the project would best be carried out in London. Cust then recommended that the project be taken up by German Orientalist-missionary-linguist Ernest Trumpp (Cust 1878, 38), who had traveled to India previously to write a grammar of Sindhi on behalf of the Church Missionary Society in the 1850s, among other projects. Trumpp's project was not a success. Still, the attempted translation of the Sikh scripture marked, fatefully, the entrance of the Sikh community into the global public (anglo-)sphere. This section traces some of the reasons why the translation was not successful and some of the implications that arose in the aftermath of the project.

Trumpp arrived in London from Tübingen where he had been teaching to begin the project in 1870. Before long however he writes that he "soon perceived…[that] it was next to impossible to make a trustworthy translation of such a difficult book, as the Sikh Granth proved to be, without native assistance" (Trumpp 2004 [1877], v). Trumpp made a request to return to

[25] The *Dasam Granth* is a secondary text, some portions of which are attributed to the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh.

India to continue the project, this time ostensibly with the help of native interlocutors. Shortly after his arrival in India however, he ran into further difficulties. As he tells it, "after I had succeeded in engaging two Sikh Granthīs[26] at Lahore, I was not a little surprised, when they declared to me, that the Granth could not be translated in the literal grammatical way I desired" (ibid.). Further, he writes that "finally I gave up all hope of finding what I wanted, as I clearly saw, that the Sikhs, in consequence of their former warlike manner of life and the troublous times, had lost all learning" (ibid., vi), and finally that "Sikhism is a waning religion, that will soon belong to history" (ibid., vii-viii).

On the text that he was tasked to translate, he remarks:

> "The Sikh Granth is a very big volume,…incoherent and shallow in the extreme, and couched at the same time in dark and perplexing language, in order to cover these defects. It is for us Occidentals a most painful and almost stupefying task, to read only a single Rāg, after he shall have perused the first. It would therefore be a mere waste of paper to add also the minor Rāgs, which only repeat, in endless variations, what has been already said in the great Rāgs over and over again, without adding the least to our knowledge" (ibid., vii)

Trumpp ended up abandoning the project after about seven years of work on it. The portion that he had managed to translate, about one third of the text, was then published by the Punjab government as *The Ādi Granth or The Holy Scriptures of the Sikhs* (1877), the volume that comes down to us today. Statements like those above (there are more along the same lines) of course did not endear him to the new English-educated Panjabi Sikh elite who were able to

[26] A *Granthī*s "a reader of the Granth", i.e., a professional reader of the Sikh scripture.

read this text, nor others who came to read it later. Based on these statements and other accusations of his conduct, Trumpp's name still lives in infamy among successive generations of the Sikh community today, a century and a half later. It is clear that Trumpp was temperamentally unsuited to complete this project of translation. Whether it was his missionary background or theological commitments that precluded him from taking seriously the scriptural writings of another tradition on their own terms, is not entirely clear. I argue, however, that whatever his theological commitments may have been, the ideologies of language that he inherited from his training as a grammarian in the disciplinary linguistics tradition of the mid-nineteenth century constrained his approach to the study of language in such a way that it effectively precluded other possible understandings of the text, including the Sikh practitioners who served (briefly) as his own interlocutors' own ideas about it.

Irvine has described the shift in the field of colonial linguistics during the nineteenth century from an emphasis on literary and aesthetic aspects of texts to "scientific" descriptions of formal features (Irvine 2001, 65). Trumpp in many ways exemplifies this shift; he does not recognize or has no use for functions of language that are outside of the analysis of grammatical forms recognized within disciplinary linguistics. When he writes that his interlocutors informed him that "the Granth could not be translated in the literal grammatical way I desired" he interprets their response as an indication that they had "lost all learning". This of course could also be interpreted alternatively as a metapragmatic statement about the text from the point of view of the Granthīs: that according to their own textual traditions, a "literal grammatical" translation of the text could not possibly render the meaning of the text in all of its relevant dimensions. As Keane notes, "Language ideology is crucial to the interpretation of discursive forms" (Keane 2004, 443). Without an understanding of the community of practitioners' ideas

about the text, a "literal grammatical" analysis cannot reveal the "meaning" of the text, as meaning is not inherent in grammatical form.

Similarly, when Trumpp writes that "the Rāgs [musical modes]…only repeat, in endless variations…over and over again, without adding the least to our knowledge" he is referring to features of language that, according to his presumptions about language, do not convey what he takes to be denotative meaning, the only form of legitimate "knowledge". Several of those features of language that he claims that "Occidentals" find "painful" and "stupefying" to listen to: repetition, prosody, pitch, parallelism, among others, are the very features of language that serve as markers of "religious language"; language that is not merely denotative, but for the community of practitioners takes a heightened form, distinct from quotidian usage (Keane 1997, 52). The issue at hand is not that "Occidentals" not temperamentally suited to hear, receive, or appreciate language or aspects of language that do not correspond exclusively with denotative meaning, but rather that Trumpp's disciplinary linguistics training does not allow him to comprehend the significance of features beyond the confines of what he views as legitimately meaningful-bearing forms of language.

A figure like Trumpp may be the logical, if unintended, development the branch of language study set into motion by Bishop Lowth, who in the eighteenth century brought "sacred poetry", specifically ancient Hebrew poetry, his particular interest, "under scientific scrutiny" for the first time (Bauman & Briggs 2003, 110). As Bauman & Briggs note, however, Lowth was "ultimately interested in functional considerations—the religious uses and ritual efficacy of sacred poetry—and his close attention to poetic form is in the service of illuminating form-function relationships" (113). That is to say, Lowth was interested not in form for its own sake,

but form as it relates to what we might today call the "poetic function" (Jakobson 1960) or "metaforces"; that is, "power…achieved at a meta-level of language use" (Silverstein 1981).

We might ask with Irvine then, "How did the literary and the aesthetic come to be marginalized from linguistics? They were not always so" (Irvine 2001, 64). If we look back a century before Trumpp, it was a normative practice for Orientalists working in India to combine what we would now call formal linguistics with "literary" interests; Wilkins, Halhed, and Jones all wrote several grammars of languages as well as multiple translations. Jones, today regarded as the founder of comparative historical linguistics, even tried his hand at writing odes to Hindu gods and goddesses at one time[27]. The point here is that these activities were not seen as being at cross purposes, but were rather considered to be parts of the same universe of the newly developing "science" of language. In the intervening century, the idea of what would come to be accepted as authoritatively "scientific" began to shift considerably.

One place we might look to understand this shift is in how "genres of discourse" changed over the course of the long colonial nineteenth century (Irvine 2001, 64). In the previous chapter and in this chapter I have traced the development and implementation of one of those genres: the English colonial grammar of Indo-Aryan languages, which started with the Orientalists in the late eighteenth century, and was then effectively taken over in the nineteenth century by missionary and missionary-adjacent linguists such as Carey, Cust, Trumpp, and Grierson. We get an idea of the shift in comparing the scope of the grammars of Carey and Grierson about a century apart; Carey's 1812 grammar of Panjabi runs some one hundred printed pages, and by the time we get to Grierson's "skeleton grammar" of Panjabi in the LSI in 1916, it has been condensed to merely three pages (Grierson 1916, 630-632).

[27] see Majeed 1992

We can see this shift in genre as a form of semiotic differentiation, following Irvine & Gal 2000: in order to differentiate the genre of the skeleton grammar from "literary" or other forms of linguistic analysis, the disciplinary linguist has to effectively "erase" all forms and functions of language that are considered to be non-essential to the description of language. That is to say, the description must be an absolute reduction to what are ideologized as the most basic fundamental elements of the language. By the late nineteenth century, the study of topics such as how formal features are related to ritual efficacy, that is to say, pragmatic effects in a social world, the effects of language that were of ultimate interest to Lowth, are no longer considered subjects of legitimate interest for a "scientific" linguistics, even if Bishop Lowth considered his own project to be one of placing religious language under "scientific scrutiny". Those very formal elements of language that produce a class of pragmatic effects that are non-denotative are the ones that have become unessential and extraneous, and even "painful" and "stupefying" to the modern disciplinary linguist.

When we understand Trumpp's disciplinary approach through this genealogy then, it is not entirely surprising when we read from him that "Though the Granth, as regards its contents, is perhaps the most shallow and empty book that exists, in proportion to its size, it is, on the other hand, in a linguistic point of view, of the greatest interest to us, as it is a real treasury of the old Hinduī dialects, specimens of which have been preserved therein which are not to be found anywhere else" (Trumpp 2004 [1877], cxxii). By Trumpp's time the text, even the sacred text, has become from "a linguistic point of view" merely a repository (for him, a "treasury") of fossilized "forms" that no longer have any living resonance for a community of practitioners, but that can be salvaged for the use of future linguistics studies. That Cust saw Trumpp, a disciplinary linguist, as the most appropriate or capable person for translating the Sikh sacred

scripture is also an indicator of how the understanding of disciplinary boundaries had shifted by the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

For the inaugural group of Panjabi elites who had recently graduated from Government College University in Lahore and other newly established English-medium schools in the 1860s and 1870s, reading Trumpp's assessment of the Sikh scripture was a jarring experience of clashing ideologies of language. While Sikhism had been attacked doctrinally on occasion, rarely, if ever, had it been attacked on the basis of the formal features of its scriptural language as determined from the point of view of disciplinary linguistics. But the weight of scientific authority of disciplinary linguistics weighed heavily on those who were newly entering the newly developing colonial, and global public sphere. It was not long before these elites and their interlocutors began to respond to this challenge, in the same linguistic idiom.

Macauliffe and *The Sikh Religion*

Max Arthur Macauliffe (1838-1913) was an Irish-born administrator and scholar who spent most of his career in the civil service in India. After retiring from the judiciary in 1893, he dedicated himself to writing a new translation of the Sikh scriptures. At least part of his motivation for writing a new translation was as a "corrective" to Trumpp's earlier translation attempt; as he writes, "a portion of the Granth Sahib was translated some years since by a German missionary at the expense and under the auspices of the India Office but his work was highly inaccurate and unidiomatic, and furthermore gave mortal offence to the Sikhs…One of the main objects of the present work is to endeavour to make some reparations to the Sikhs for the insults which he offered to their Gurus and their religion" (Macauliffe 1909, vii). He likely had an economic incentive as well, as virtually all of his writings on the Sikhs also contain

requests to the Government for financial support for his various projects, funding that it appears he never quite received, at least not in the amounts that he requested (Barrier 1978). Notwithstanding the multiple possible motivations for his project, his work remains over a century later, along with Trumpp's, influential for the ways that it reshaped Sikh ideas about their own relationships to language.

Much like Trumpp, Macauliffe perceived difficulties in engaging in a translation of GGS. As Macauliffe writes, "The Granth Sahib…[is] probably the most difficult work, sacred or profane, that exists, and hence the general ignorance of its contents" (Macauliffe 1909, vi-vii). These difficulties took two primary forms according to Macauliffe; the first was the difficulty posed by the heterogeneous, multilingual nature of the text:

> "The languages in which the holy writings of these religions[28] are enshrined, though all difficult, are for the most part homogeneous, and after preliminary study with tutors can generally be mastered by the aid of grammars and dictionaries; but not so the mediaeval Indian dialects in which the sacred writings of the Sikh Gurus and Saints were composed. Hymns are found in Persian, mediaeval Prakrit, Hindi, Marathi, old Panjabi, Multani, and several local dialects. In several hymns the Sanskrit and Arabic vocabularies are freely drawn upon" (Macauliffe 1909, v)

This account of the plurilingualism of GGS accords with Grierson's account, which we examined above. Macauliffe also includes a note from his colleague, the linguist F. Max Müller, who in an endorsement of Macauliffe's work writes, "The language of the Granth Sahib is full of local dialectic varieties and forgotten idioms, so much so that it has been said to be without any grammar at all" (Müller 1898, in Macauliffe 1909, ix). Macauliffe's and Müller's accounts also

[28]Earlier in the text Macauliffe had referred to the religious texts of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Confucianism.

accord with some of Trumpp's assessments of the language of GGS; that "it was…a difficult book" whose grammatical forms were "not yet firmly fixed (Trumpp 2004 [1877], v-vi).

The next obstacle that Macauliffe identifies in translating GGS is the lack of knowledge among Sikhs themselves about their own texts. Like Trumpp, he saw the necessity of spending time with native interlocutors in order to delve in to the nuances of interpretation. However, also like Trumpp, he mostly found the interlocutors that he encountered unsatisfactory. He writes:

> "[I]t is necessary for the translator of the Sikh sacred writings to reside for long years in India, and work with the assistance of the few gyanis, or professional interpreters of the Sikh canonical writings, who now survive. It would probably be an exaggeration to say that there are ten such men in the world. Of these few or none is capable of giving an English interpretation. They generally construe in tedious paraphrases in their own local dialects. But more than this, there is hardly any one Sikh who is capable of making a correct translation of his sacred writings" (Macauliffe 1909, vi)

A major difference between Trumpp and Macauliffe was that where Trumpp saw Sikhism as a "waning" religion that would soon disappear, and therefore saw his project as one of salvage, hoping to preserve what historical forms he could from the text for the benefit of linguistics research, Macauliffe conversely saw a way out of the dilemma. The solution for Macauliffe involved bringing Sikhism historically and linguistically within the imperial/anglophone framework of interpretation. Macauliffe saw himself in many ways as the new interpreter of, and in fact the savior of, the Sikh tradition, authorized by his collaboration with and the support of Sikh scholars whose assistance he solicited, even if they themselves were inadequate to the task. As long as he was able to complete his project of translating Sikh ideas and tradition into a form that would be understood by the (anglophone) public at large, Sikhism

would live on, even if not in its original form. The photographic collage that he includes in his work indicates something of his idea about his positionality vis-à-vis his interlocutors:

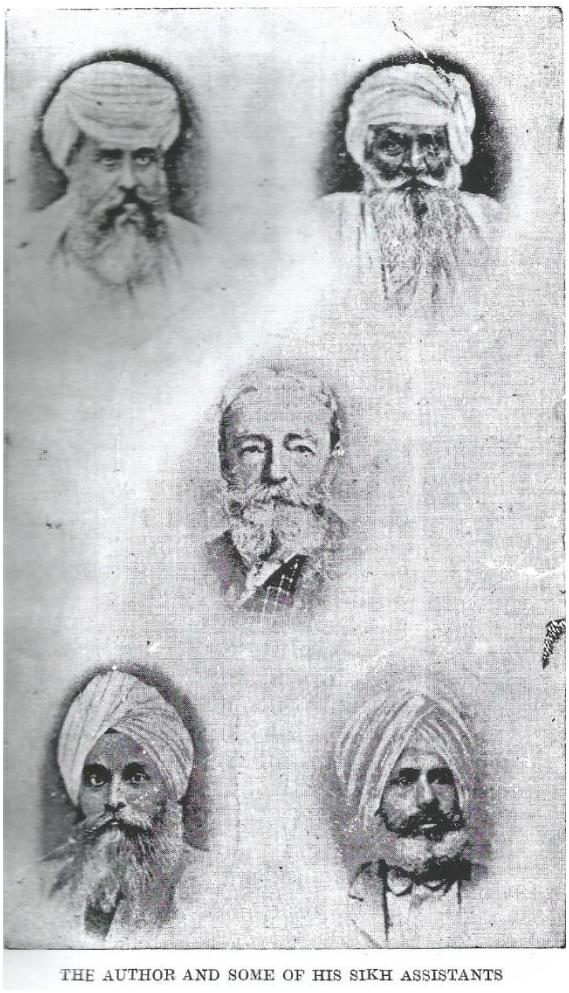


Fig. 3.3 Macauliffe, center, pictured with some of his "Sikh Assistants". At top left is Giani Gajja Singh Sangitkar, at bottom right is mostly likely Giani Ditt Singh, at bottom left is Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha. The figure at top right has been as yet unidentified. Image from the preface to the first volume of Macauliffe's *The Sikh Religion* (1909).

Macauliffe would serve as a "reverse" missionary of sorts; instead of bringing Christianity to the native population, he would bring a knowledge of Sikhism to the outside world, particularly an English-speaking audience, and thereby secure for Sikhism its rightful place in the imperial religious hierarchy. His main task was to create a translation, first for

readers of English, second for Sikhs who could not or could no longer understand GGS on their own, and third for the purpose of preserving the Sikh tradition, because according to Macauliffe soon there would be no one with the requisite language training to understand and interpret GGS, let alone anyone who also possessed the skill to render those explanations into English. Macauliffe felt that he was the only person qualified and motivated enough to save Sikhism, by imbricating it with and ultimately assimilating it into the anglophone imperial knowledge system. In any case, it was clear to him that Sikhism could not remain long in its present form.

Translation or Transduction?

Macauliffe's work was not a "translation" so much as a kind of "transcreation" of the Sikh textual tradition through an editorial assemblage of certain of its canonical texts. Much of the work takes the form of prose renderings of the *janam-sakhi*s, or hagiographical stories of the Sikh Gurus and their travels, interspersed with relevant verses from the scriptural text. According to Macauliffe, "Competent Sikhs have also advised me that when the Guru's instruction on various occasions is on the same subject and of the same tenor, it needs be given only once", and further, "in a printed work, which the reader may peruse and reperuse at pleasure, repetition does not appear so necessary. Moreover, this work is intended for the European as well as for the Sikh student. It is apprehended that repetition would prove tedious, and deter several even conscientious readers from its perusal" (Macauliffe 1909, xvii).

Macauliffe solicited endorsements of his project from various Sikh scholars. In one of those endorsements a group of Sikh scholars (whose names are not given) write that "The greatest care has been taken in making the translation conformable to the religious tenets of the Sikhs. The translation is quite literal, and done according to all grammatical and rhetorical rules"

(Macauliffe 1909, x). Note the reversal from Trumpp's interaction with Sikh scholars that we examined above, about which he (Trumpp) noted that "they declared to me, that the Granth could not be translated in the literal grammatical way I desired" (Trumpp 1877, v). It is likely that Trumpp was interacting with scholars of the *Nirmala* sect, a *Sanatani* group of "orthodox" or "traditional" scholars, known for their polysemous interpretations of GGS (see Mandair 2021), whereas we know Macauliffe was primarily collaborating with members of the Singh Sabha, a reform group that more thoroughly embraced the conventions as well as the assumptions of modern disciplinary linguistics, a phenomenon which we will examine in more detail in the next chapter. It is not surprising then they would also approve an interpretation performed according to "grammatical and rhetorical rules".

Further, Macauliffe writes that the Sikh scholars who have endorsed his project "have decided that there is no omission of anything necessary to faith or morals, but that the whole substance of the Sikh sacred writings is here presented, and that if any Sikh shapes his conduct accordingly, he will be in no danger of failing to secure absorption in the Creator or a dwelling in the Creator's heaven" (Macauliffe 1909, xviii). That is, according to Macauliffe his interlocutors have assured him that his "transcreation" of the textual materials of the Sikh tradition, embodying "the whole substance of the Sikh sacred writings", could stand in for the Sikh sacred scripture with the same degree of authority and efficacy as the original. It is a remarkable claim. It is not merely a claim to have written a faithful translation (or transcreation), but rather I argue here that it is a claim to a form of "transduction". Keane writes that "semiotic transduction aims to tap into the power that can be obtained by the very act of transforming something from one semiotic modality to another" (Keane 2013, 2).

The Sikh notion of *muktī*, often translated as "liberation" does not involve either securing, as Macauliffe suggests, "absorption in the Creator or a dwelling in the Creator's heaven"; but we will delve further into Sikh praxis and ideas about achieving *muktī* in later chapters, to put that aside for now. Nevertheless, Macauliffe is claiming some kind of soteriological efficacy for his work. A version of the argument that Macauliffe is making here implicitly is asserted more explicitly several decades later in the latter part of the later twentieth century by Sikh studies scholar W. Owen Cole, who writes:

> "There seems to be no theological reason why English speaking Sikhs should not use an English copy of the scriptures, not only for study but as the focal point of worship and life. There would seem to be something odd, almost amounting to bibliolatry if a book written in a strange language were to be honoured ceremonially while at its side, or a little lower, was the English version from which readings were made and hymns sung during the *diwan*" (Cole 1982, 421, in Dusenbery 1992, 387)

Among the issues involved here are the translatability, or untranslatability, of language. Whether translation is considered to be sanctioned, possible, efficacious, or inefficacious is of course dependent on the ideology of language of the community of practitioners, and, perhaps, observers. As Keane notes, if language is considered to be made up of "arbitrary signs", then translation might be considered possible; "if, conversely, language is a divine emanation, then in itself it is *already* a divine presence, and its form is part of that presence. This is one reason given in the Islamic tradition for the non-translatability of the Qur'an" (Keane 2013, 7).

Dusenbery challenges the premise of Cole's argument that there is "no theological reason why English speaking Sikhs should not use an English copy of the scriptures". The question,

Dusenbery argues, is not "theological", but rather one of contrasting ideologies of language. The first (Sikh) ideology, Dusenbery writes, is "a 'nondualistic' ideology of language, [that] recognizes the material as well as cognitive properties of language (especially articulated speech) and refuses to privilege semantico-referential meaning at the expense of other properties that language is thought to possess" (Dusenbery 1992, 388-389). The second (Western) ideology, Dusenbery writes, is "a 'dualistic' ideology of language, [that] privileges reference, semantic meaning, the arbitrariness of signifier and signified, and the context-free cognitive qualities of the text at the expense of the sound properties of the words themselves" (389).

While I would problematize Dusenbery's bifurcation of ideologies into "Sikh" and "Western" (there are multiple ideologies among Sikhs and among "Westerners" as we will examine throughout this project), I am in broad agreement with his general formulation that there are distinctions that can be made, and they broadly reflect ideas about the materiality, or immateriality, of language and the attendant effects that these properties can afford. However, the Sikh case is one where the concept of "transduction" is useful. While the language of the Sikh scripture (*gurbāṇī*) is certainly central to Sikh devotional life, engagement with it takes place across multiple semiotic modalities. It takes written form, the form of silent recitation, the form of oral performance, and is expressed through musical modes, to name some of these. The prescribed Sikh path to *muktī* involves praxis in the form of engagement with *gurbāṇī* across these modalities. As mentioned we will delve further into the details of these practices and ideas about them in later chapters, but let us return now to Macauliffe's claim to have produced a text that is sufficient for Sikh practitioners who engage with it to achieve liberation.

Macauliffe's claim seems to rest on the fact that his text presents "the whole substance of the Sikh sacred writings". It is not clear of course whether by "substance" he is referring to the

material properties of *gurbāṇī*; it seems more likely given the nature of his project that he is referring to substance in the sense of the denotational content of the Sikh textual tradition that he has synopsized in the form of a transcreation. There is no doctrine of the un-translatability of *gurbāṇī* among Sikhs; although many may feel that translations range somewhere between infelicitous and inefficacious, there is no prohibition against making an attempt. Many such attempts to translate the denotational meaning of the words of *gurbāṇī* exist, in several languages. Among the reasons they are likely seen as inefficacious from the point of view of the practitioner is because of the impossibility in a mere rendition of denotational content of transduction across the semiotic modalities that are required to engage with all of the relevant dimensions of meaning. Given that Macauliffe notes that he "thought it would be useful…to read a translation in the very simple English in which I have endeavoured to write it" (Macauliffe 1909, vii) it seems that his focus is on simple semantic signification and not transduction across semiotic modalities. That would seem to put his claim to soteriological effectiveness in doubt.

Whether or not Macauliffe was able to transcreate a soteriological text in English for the Sikh community going forward, among his reasons for doing so as noted above were to make "reparations" to Sikhs for the damage Trumpp had caused. Mandair notes that "[Macauliffe's] work…helped not so much to overcome Trumpp's thesis, as is often thought, but simply to *invert* it, thus remaining within the very space of cultural translation that Trumpp had opened" (Mandair 2009, 198). While Mandair is making this argument with respect to theological questions, I extend this argument to the colonial linguistic ideological field that Trumpp and Macauliffe both inherited and inhabited. They seemed to be working at cross purposes to an extent, but in fact they shared many basic assumptions about language, history, and evolution, their respective attitudes to the sensibilities of Sikhs notwithstanding.

Both Trumpp and Macauliffe felt that Sikhism was a religious tradition in decay, and that one of the primary reasons for that decay was the combination of the "difficulty" of the language of their scriptural text, in terms of its plurilingual nature, and the increasing loss of knowledge among Sikh scholars and Sikh practitioners about how to understand and interpret that text. Both of their projects were ultimately projects of rescue and salvage. For Trumpp the linguistic difficulties were not possible to surmount, and what was for him "dark and perplexing" language was ultimately not worth the effort of translating. GGS still possessed some value however for the linguistic specimens that had been "preserved" in the text, which could be useful to historical linguists. For Macauliffe the tipping point for the Sikh community had already been passed; there was no way for them to reverse the process of decay. There was one last way to rescue the essence of the Sikh tradition for future generations, however; by translating the "substance" of the scriptures into "simple" English that could then be accessed by both European and Sikh readers.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined the work of several of the major figures whose work and assessments about Sikhs and their relationships to language set the conditions under which Sikhs would accede to the colonial public sphere of the late nineteenth century, and simultaneously, into the modern era. These sets of interactions began to set the stage for the emergence of new self-understandings and ideas about religious ideas, religious language, and practice among Sikhs. All of these projects, even if they ostensibly had other aims, had the effect of positioning Sikhs in one way or another within an imperial knowledge system. This positioning necessarily involved some forms of objectification, or what I call here *objectifying*

practices. In each of these projects we see the power of the durable products of objectifying practices to shape further discourse, methods, and even ideologies about language. In the chapters that follow, we will begin to look at how Sikhs themselves began to engage with their reflection in the imperial gaze.

Chapter 4 The Grammatical Turn

Sikh Interpretive Traditions in the Colonial Period

The colonial encounter, especially the encounter with the English language and its attendant conceptual frameworks, had a profound influence on the Sikh interpretive traditions from the late nineteenth century onwards. Trumpp's first attempt at a full translation of *Ādi Granth* in 1877, as described in the last chapter, was informed by an ideological approach that prevented him, by his own admission, from properly understanding, assessing, or making sense of the content of GGS, and as a result, it was not well received by Sikh groups. Even before this translation was published, however, attempts had been underway to reassert a Sikh identity in the rapidly changing colonial context that in a very short time had upended traditional forms of patronage, scholarship, and education. The appearance of the translation created an impetus to develop a new, "indigenous" framework, one that was, however, imbricated with the colonial matrix and its new sets of priorities, concepts, and methods.

In response to the publication of Trumpp's translation, Raja Bikram Singh of Faridkot commissioned Giani Badan Singh to write a commentary on GGS. The commentary, the first on the full contents of GGS, came to be known as the Faridkot Tika ("Faridkot Commentary"), and was completed in 1883. After its completion, a committee of Sikh scholars led by Mahant Sumer Singh of Patna Sahib was commissioned to review the manuscript, and as a result, it was not published until two decades later, in 1905. That intervening period was a critical one in the rapidly changing new colonial context. Written in the Braj Bhaṣa language, which, by the early

twentieth century, few Sikhs had the skill to read, the commentary interprets GGS from a Vedic perspective, and is thus continuous with Sanatan-inspired works of the earlier nineteenth century, that is, a more "traditional" orthodoxy that formed a kind of foil for the reform movements that sprang up by the 1870s. Still, it marked an important transition from the late nineteenth into the twentieth centuries. In previous eras, when the orally mediated Sikh lifeworld had been immersed in performances and exegesis of GGS, there had perhaps been less need for a full written commentary. In the new colonial context of the late nineteenth century, however, with the institutions that supported the previous traditions of interpretation waning, a complete written commentary that could be printed and distributed, even if it was written in a language and from a perspective that was rapidly being supplanted, was still seen as a necessity.

The Faridkot Tika was of course not the only response to Trumpp's translation of 1877. Macauliffe's *The Sikh Religion: Its Gurus, Sacred Writings, and Authors* (1909), which we also examined in the last chapter, was another response, from a perhaps more sympathetic perspective. Macauliffe's work differed from Trumpp's in that it was not written from a removed perspective that tried to assess the contents of GGS "objectively" through the lens of disciplinary linguistics, but rather one that attempted to integrate the Sikhs into the imperial formation, enjoining the assistance of native interlocutors, while still maintaining a colonial ideological framework. Macauliffe asserted that he undertook his project in part as a form of "reparations" to the Sikh community for the reputational damage that Trumpp had caused with his translation. Further, he felt that "the old gyanis or professional interpreters of the Granth Sahib are dying out, and probably in another generation or two their sacred books will, owing to their enormous difficulty, be practically unintelligible even to otherwise educated Sikhs" (Macauliffe 1909, vii-viii). His exaggerated alarm notwithstanding, Macauliffe was describing a changing social

situation introduced by colonialism in which the Sikh community and its ideas about language and how it should relate to it were in a state of flux. His work helped to usher in models that informed the transformation of Sikh methodologies in the transition period between previous, largely oral modes of transmission to a new era of printed works, particularly referential works, especially in the objectified forms of the grammar, dictionary, and encyclopedia. Among Macauliffe's assistants was Kahan Singh Nabha, who became something of a protégé, and whose work, which we will examine below, formed an important link between the colonial regime and the newly developing native linguistic enterprise.

An ideological field within a colonial context

In the late nineteenth century, in the context of the introduction of colonial systems of knowledge and governance, new economic forms, and aggressive Christian missionizing, all mediated through the English language, various religious groups, including Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims, felt the need to respond to this novel set of challenges through programs of reflection, reorganization, and reform. Traditional Sikh schools of interpretation were diminishing in their influence due to the changing social conditions and patterns of patronage. The Sikh reform movement led by an organization known as the Singh Sabha ("The Assembly of Singhs" [i.e., Khalsa Sikhs]) developed during the 1870s within this complex milieu. The Singh Sabha had a challenge before it; how to distill the essence of Sikh thought and practice (or at least what it construed as being the essence of Sikh thought and practice) from GGS and other traditional materials and to present it in such a way as to be both recognizable and compelling to the Sikh community, while simultaneously attempting to meet the new political and social demands of the colonial context.

The ideological field was complex; in one direction was the colonial administration, but equally preoccupying were intense rivalries with other religious communities, particularly between Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims who were all operating with the same colonial milieu and trying to seek their new place within it. Further, there were also internal divisions among Sikhs themselves, particularly between Sanatan-oriented groups, who often interpreted Sikh texts through a Vedic lens, and seemingly saw boundaries between traditions, particularly the Sikh and Hindu, as more fluid, and reformist groups, represented by the Singh Sabha, who sought to delineate a more clear boundary between the groups. Nominally Sikh and Hindu groups found common ground in the common pool of symbols, allusions, rituals, and practices that they shared under the broad rubric of the Sanatan tradition. The more reform-minded Singh Sabha, however, was interested in creating a clear distinction between themselves and Sanatan Sikhs/Hindus, while simultaneously differentiating themselves from Hindu reform groups such as the Arya Samaj, who were themselves attempting to distinguish themselves from the Sanatan traditions. Figure 4.1 below provides a sketch of this ideological field. Of course we must remember that this field is embedded to a degree within an overall context; that is, all of the groups have to position themselves vis-à-vis the colonial regime, whether that meant actively opposing it, accommodating to it, or trying to ignore it altogether.

The Sanatan-oriented traditions were often labeled as “orthodox”, or “traditional”, but in truth, both sides claimed to represent the “real” Sikh tradition, or orthodoxy, so those categories can be misleading in that they are often based on self-designations and not on any objective criteria. In this chapter I will focus mostly on the work produced by the Singh Sabha reformists, who were more ready to accommodate themselves to the new genres and “scientific” methods promoted and encouraged by the colonial regime. It was the Singh Sabha that, by the 1930s,

established a new paradigm for thinking about language within the Sikh tradition. In chapters 5 and 6 below we will examine some Sikh practices around language that do not necessarily align with this dominant paradigm (nor do they necessarily align with the Sanatan tradition), and continue to persist despite this more generalized opposition, embedded in praxis more than in explicit forms of differentiation. Here my purpose is to outline how mainstream Sikh ideas about language were transformed during the reform period from around 1870-1940.

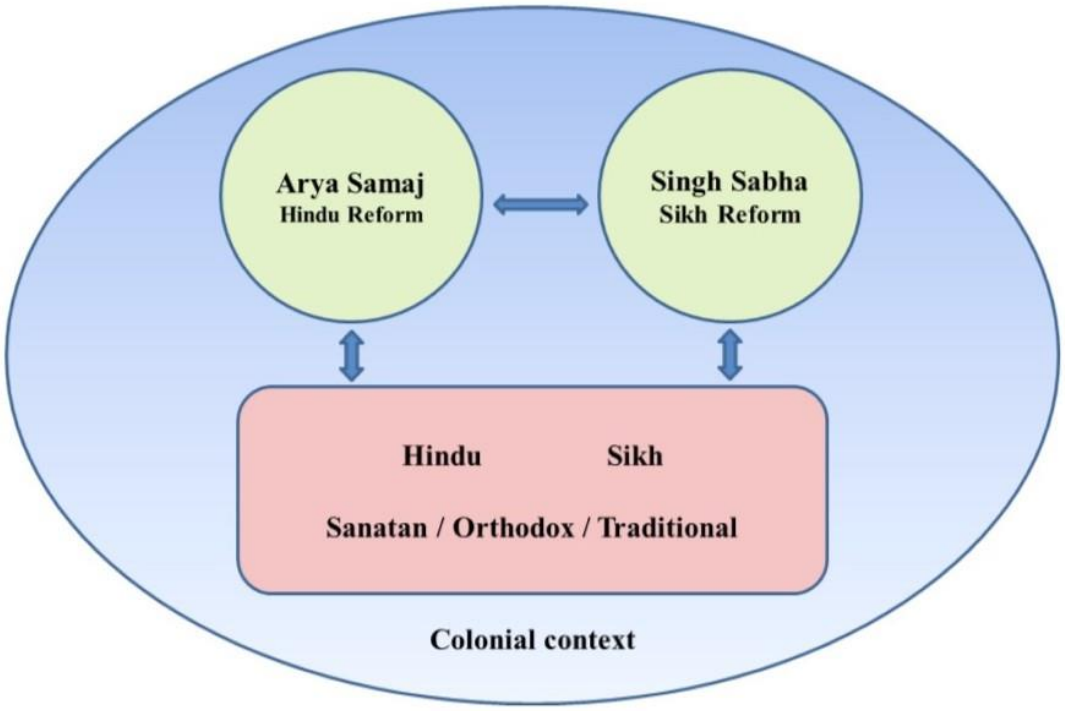


Fig. 4.1 Fields of ideological differentiation between rival groups; Sanatan/Orthodox/Traditional Hindus and Sikhs, Arya Samaj Hindu reformers, and Singh Sabha Sikh reformers, all within an overarching colonial context.

The Singh Sabha Reform Movement

The late nineteenth century in Panjab, as in many other parts of India and the world, was characterized by the introduction of new technologies, particularly print technology, that in a few

short years profoundly altered the conditions and possibilities of knowledge production and transmission. Bhai Vir Singh (1872-1957), one of the most prolific and influential of the Singh Sabha scholars, was exemplary in this process. Born into a devout Sikh family, as a youth he studied closely with his maternal grandfather, Giani Hazara Singh, who traced his scholarly lineage to Bhai Mani Singh, who was in turn associated with Guru Gobind Singh. He thus represents an important transitional type of figure who was closely associated with highly respected traditional lineage, but who also embraced new modalities through which to express that tradition.

While attending the Church Mission High School in Amritsar, an English-medium school, Bhai Vir Singh was a witness to several of his colleagues converting to Christianity. This experience led him to believe that in the changing colonial context, new, particularly Western-facing, English-medium systems of education were leading Sikhs away from their own traditions. He committed himself at a young age to spreading knowledge of Sikhism through writing in the Panjabi language and through mass-mediated print forms. He began his working career at the Wazir Hind Press in Amritsar in 1892 at the age of nineteen. While working at the press, he began experimenting with several genres and styles of writing that were relatively new to Panjabi literature. He founded the Khalsa Tract Society in 1894, through which he was able to comment on current events and public affairs, started the *Khalsa Samachar* newspaper in 1899, and is credited with what is largely considered to be the first Panjabi novel, *Sundrī* in 1898. The novel's eponymous heroine was a significant departure from often patriarchal portrayals of women in Panjabi literature.

He also engaged later in more traditional forms of exegesis, such as the *tīka*, or commentary such as his *Jap Jī Sāhib Saṭīk*, a commentary on the main daily Sikh prayer, that

remains in print and is still widely read. However, it was through the new genres in contemporary Panjabi that he pioneered, particularly the tract, the novel, the newspaper, as well as a new style of poetry that he focused on in the latter half of his life, that he effected a major shift in methods and modes of interpreting the Sikh tradition. Through his publications he disseminated information about Sikhi, Sikh history, interpretations of Gurbāṇī, and commentaries on contemporary issues and thus propelled the Sikh interpretive tradition from a culture of oral transmission and a limited number of handwritten manuscripts into an age of print. Printed materials meant that information could be accessed and read widely without the necessity of an intermediary.

Bhai Kahan Singh "Nabha" (1861-1938) was another important link between both the more traditional oral modes of transmission and new print forms, but also between the colonial regime and the Sikh community. Like many prominent scholars of the Singh Sabha, he was proficient in several languages, a trait that was not uncommon at the time for those who had access to literacy and education. He learned GGS as a youth, later mastering Sanskrit, Persian, and English as well. A meeting with Macauliffe in Rawalpindi in 1885 led to a lifelong collaboration between the two, particularly on the latter's *The Sikh Religion*. Kahan Singh traveled to England with Macauliffe to help him finalize and publish the work. Later Macauliffe assigned the copyright for his work to Kahan Singh. Nabha's scholarly work over the next several decades became one of the cornerstones of the Singh Sabha movement. He was also involved in the intense polemics of the time; he is well known for his tract *Hum Hindū Nahin* ("We are not Hindus") (1899), which was in turn written in response to the tract by Lal Thakar Das and Bawa Narain Singh *Sikh Hindū Hain* ("Sikhs are Hindus") (1899) (cited in Jones 1973,

467). While involved in ideologically separating Sikh and Hindu identities, he also worked on accommodating to the English regime, especially its methodologies.

Nabha made major contributions to new Sikh interpretive traditions that were increasingly based on written and printed works. Among these were the often voluminous reference works that he compiled from the 1890s onwards, including his *Gurmat Prabhākar* (1898), a glossary of Sikh terms, and *Gurmat Sudhākar* (1898) an anthology of important Sikh texts, and culminating in his *Gurśabad Ratnākar Mahān Kōsh* (often shortened to *Mahān Kōsh*, which translates to something like "Great Reference Work"), which he began work on in 1912 and published in 1930. In his introduction to the *Mahān Kōsh*, Kahan Singh mentions that he was inspired in his work by Pandit Tara Singh Narotam's *Granth Gurū Girarth Kōsh*, Giani Hazara Singh's *Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib Kōsh* (two works by Sikh authors with strong ties to traditional lineages), as well as the *Encyclopedia Britanica*. Kahan Singh was likely introduced to the latter work by Macauliffe, perhaps while he accompanied him in England. Macauliffe wrote several entries on Sikhism for its eleventh edition. Kahan Singh's massive reference work remains in print (usually in a set of two large volumes), and is still regarded as an authoritative source. It is one of the works that exemplifies the interaction between traditional and colonial forms of knowledge and the hybrid forms they produced during this period.

Professor Teja Singh (1894-1958) was born and educated in Rawalpindi, where he learned Gurbāṇī, Urdu, Persian, as well as English. He later joined Khalsa College in Amritsar, where he taught English literature, history, and other subjects. Like Nabha, he was well versed in both traditional materials in South Asian languages, but also in English genres and methods, and was able to move fluidly between these worlds, producing important works in both Panjabi and in English. He authored several translations of Gurbāṇī into English; his translation of *Jap Jī*

Sāhib was published in 1919 and his translation of *Sukhmanī Sāhib*, under the title *The Psalm of Peace*, was published in 1938. In 1923, while serving time in jail for his role in agitations related to the Gurdwara Reform Movement, he began work on what would become perhaps his most enduring contribution to the Sikh interpretative tradition, the *Shabdārth Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib Jī*, for which he was the principal author, in collaboration with Bawa Harkrishan Singh and Professor Narayan Singh. The work was published in four volumes from 1936-1941. The *Shabdārth*, as it is known colloquially, is formatted with pages corresponding to the full recension of GGS on the left-hand side, with word meanings and short commentaries on selected words and passages whose meanings might be challenging for contemporary readers on the right side. The work thus combines elements of a dictionary, with those of the *ṭīka*, or commentary, a new, hybrid genre within the Sikh interpretive tradition. In his introduction to the work, Teja Singh writes that the work was written because "difficulties" were occurring in performing and understanding GGS ("*aukhīāī hō rahī hai*").

Sahib Singh and *Gurbāṇī Viākaraṇ* [A Grammar of Gurbāṇī]

Sahib Singh (1892-1977), often referred to by his professional appellation "Professor Sahib Singh" was born into a Hindu family, and, according to his autobiographical account, was inspired by some Sikhs that he encountered while a youth to take up the Sikh path. He studied Sanskrit in his younger years and took up a position as professor at Khalsa College in Amritsar where he taught from 1929 until 1952. In his professional career, which spanned some five decades, he became well known for his numerous short *saṭīk*s, or commentaries, in inexpensive editions in contemporary Panjabi on various aspects of Gurbāṇī. Most of these short commentaries remain in print and are still widely read and referred to today. This commentarial

work culminated in his magnum opus, *Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib Darpaṇ* (1962-1964), ("A Mirror of *Guru Granth Sahib*"), a commentary on the full text of GGS, published in ten volumes. In this commentary, he aimed to provide a single correct meaning to each line, as opposed to the polysemous interpretations of previous traditions, particularly before the Singh Sabha reform period, for example in the Faridkot Tika mentioned above (cf. Shackle 2008, 272).

His approach to writing commentaries reflects in several ways his approach to the language of GGS more generally. In 1932, he published a volume that he called *Gurbāṇī Viākaraṇ* ("A Grammar of Gurbāṇī") [hereafter GV], which was the first attempt at a comprehensive grammar of the language(s) of GGS. Over the last century, this work has become a standard work of reference within the Sikh community, remaining in print and still widely referred to today. As one observer writes, "no exegetical work since the publication of this book [GV]…has been possible without resort to the fundamental principles enunciated in it" (Wazir Singh 1992, 22). In the preface to the work, Sahib Singh writes of the difficulty that he had in finding someone who was competent to guide him towards a grammatical understanding of this work. He writes that he searched in vain for six years from 1921 to 1927 for someone who could help him in this task (Sahib Singh 1932, 20-21). We might recall here from chapter 3 both Trumpp's and Macauliffe's searches a few decades earlier for someone who could assist them with an understanding of the language of Gurbāṇī. As we recall, Trumpp writes that "after I had succeeded in engaging two Sikh Granthīs at Lahore, I was not a little surprised, when they declared to me, that the Granth could not be translated in the literal grammatical way I desired" (Trumpp 2004 [1877], v). In a similar vein, Macauliffe writes that "the old gyanis or professional interpreters of the Granth Sahib are dying out, and probably in another generation or two their

sacred books will, owing to their enormous difficulty, be practically unintelligible even to otherwise educated Sikhs" (Macauliffe 1909, vii-viii).

It seems that by the 1920s there was still no one available who could assist Sahib Singh with a grammatical understanding of GGS. Partly of course this was because a grammar of GGS had yet to be written. It is of note, however, that while Trumpp and Macauliffe were seeking out native interlocutors who had grammatical understandings of the text, reflecting their own presumptions about the proper way to approach the text, by 1920 it is Sahib Singh, a native intellectual with an extensive background in languages, including Sanskrit, Persian, and the language of Gurbāṇī, who is seeking out a grammatical understanding. He continues in his preface to describe the study group that he was eventually able to gather together. He writes that "It was our effort that as far as was possible, in accordance with whatever knowledge of grammatical signs [*lagaan-matran*] that had been gathered so far, we would try to seek out meanings, without the hindrance of any previously held thought [*bina kise pehle bane hoe khial de rukavat de*]"[29]. That is, he and his comrades were seeking to seek out a new methodology that was not based upon traditional forms of understanding. He writes further that he may not have gotten around to writing this grammar, but a prize of 1000 rupees announced by the organizing committee of Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar (ostensibly for the writing of a grammar of GGS) in 1931 convinced him that "the need for this work is being felt in the Sikh panth, that therefore it was a duty to perform this service" (ibid., 22).

Sahib Singh writes that "The writing of a grammar of Old Panjabi [*purātan Panjābī*; he refers to the language of GGS by this term and also as Gurbāṇī] is a new task" (ibid.). Further, he writes that "Preparing a complete grammar of *Guru Granth Sahib* is necessary work…so that

[29] All translations from the original Panjabi of Sahib Singh's *Gurbāṇī Viākaraṇ* here are my own.

knowledge of and love for our SatGuru's *bāṇī* will be able to continue to grow day by day in the hearts of our coming generations" (ibid.). In the introductory chapter of GV entitled "Gurbāṇī and Grammar" however, Sahib Singh goes to great lengths to provide an extensive justification for the writing of the grammar, an appeal that of course does not appear in most grammars, where, at least by this time and in certain cultural milieux, their inherent value is largely self-evident and implicitly assumed. The idea of writing a grammar of GGS was still a very new idea, however, and it seems that not all in the Sikh community were yet in agreement as to its value. He writes that "There has been opposition to the effort to write a grammar of Gurbāṇī, and it is said that Gurbāṇī is unfathomable [*agadh*] and no one can measure it. Writing a grammar of it is like trying to put the ocean in a small earthen pitcher" (ibid., 28).

His own argument in justification of a writing of a grammar of GGS rests on two different premises; first, the use of grammar in the Sanskrit tradition, and second, his division of Gurbāṇī into two categories, explanatory (*varṇātmak*) and affective (*bhavātmak*). About the use of grammar in Sanskrit, he writes:

> "Our Hindu friends know the Vedas as *akāsh bāṇī* [lit. "voice of the sky"; "language of God"], but no scholar has ever objected that a grammar of *akāsh bāṇī* cannot be written, or that it should not be written. Therefore, for the purpose of understanding *akāsh bāṇī* properly for all time [*sadā*], wherever the great sages [*rishī*s] have written down the meanings of the Vedas, they have also composed a grammar. If the ancient sages thought that to write a grammar of *akāsh bāṇī* was disrespectful [*nirādrī*], then today it would be impossible to understand the Vedas" (ibid., 28).

There are several language ideologies at play here. One is that "no scholar has ever objected that a grammar of *akāsh bāṇī* cannot be written, or that it should not be written", that is,

the writing of a grammar of the language of the Vedas (i.e., Vedic Sanskrit) is not a problematic endeavor for the practitioners or reciters of the Vedas. A second is that a grammar serves to provide a proper understanding of the Vedas "for all time". And a third is the assertion that without a grammar "it would be impossible to understand the Vedas". Of course, Sahib Singh is here anticipating objections to the writing of a grammar of GGS, and providing a justification for the writing of such a grammar by making an equivalence between the language of the Vedas and the language of GGS. As I argued in chapter 2, however, the composition of a grammar for Sanskrit was not merely for the purpose of "understanding the meaning" of the Vedas, but also served as a method of "fixing" Sanskrit in such a way as to render it an "eternal" language, exclusive access to which by Brahmins also served to create and maintain a social hierarchy. I will expand on this point below when we look further into the details of Sahib Singh's grammar.

Regarding his characterization of Gurbāṇī into two categories, "explanatory", and "affective", he writes:

> "We find it written in several places that when Guru Nanak Dev Ji was absorbed in the emotion of love, then he used to say to [his traveling companion] Bhai Mardana[30], "Oh Mardana! Pluck the *rabab*[31], *bāṇī* has come [*bāṇī āyīhai*]" Then that *bāṇī* would sometimes wear the costume of Persian letters, sometimes in the garb of *Sahaskriti*[32], and sometimes it would appear in the clothing of pure [*ṭhēṭh*] Panjabi. The outward form could be of any type, but the emotion from that origin [*dhur*], the *bāṇī* from that origin was one…only those could contemplate on this 'hidden *bāṇī*', only those could

[30] According to Sikh tradition Bhai Mardana was Guru Nanak's traveling companion through his journeys and musical accompanist in his performance of *kirtan*, or devotional singing, playing the *rabab*.
[31] A plucked, lute-like instrument, generally with four main strings and a set of dozen or more sympathetic strings, popular in the Afghanistan-northern Indian area and closely associated with the early Sikh *kirtan*, or devotional music tradition.
[32] *Sahaskriti* is a linguistic variety that appears in GGS, not to be confused with Sanskrit.

> experience this, who were absorbed in the Guru, otherwise what could they understand of this feeling and vibration, in whom this emotion had not arisen, in whom this wave had not vibrated? But this depth and unfathomability [*agādhtā*] is only for 'affective' *bāṇī*, it is only for the inner, higher emotions. Grammar is associated with the 'explanatory aspect', however, it is associated with 'language' [*bōlī*]" (ibid., 29).

Here Sahib Singh makes what at least he regards as a clear distinction between the experience of *bāṇī* in the forms of inner emotion, intuition, and affective relation, and that which is associated with the outer, or structural, or formal aspect of language (*bōlī*), which he calls "explanatory" (*varṇātmak*). Although Sahib Singh does not use the term "scientific" (or its Panjabi equivalent, *vigiānak*) anywhere in this text, we see here the scientific temper in his division of language into two aspects, that of the inner/affective/subjective, which can be accessed through attunement and experience, and outer/explanatory/objective, which can be accessed through analysis. A grammar in his conception is to describe and explain the formal aspects of language. He does not quite explain how these two aspects of language relate to each other, however, although he sees grammar as being "necessary" for the "coming generations" to understand Gurbāṇī and likens this explanatory power to the grammar of Sanskrit, without which "today it would be impossible to understand the Vedas".

It is of note that Sahib Singh in this passage makes note of the heterolingualism of GGS; he writes that *bāṇī* can appear in the form of "Persian letters", in Sahaskriti, or in "pure" Panjabi. We similarly saw in chapter 3 both Grierson's and Macauliffe's assessments of the plurilinguistic nature of GGS. Yet, Sahib Singh's work is an effort to create a single, unified grammar of GGS as a whole, encompassing its linguistic variety, a challenging task, given the multiple languages and dialects present in GGS. He pushes back on detractors who claim that a

comprehensive grammar of GGS was not possible by stating that he can demonstrate grammatical regularities in the text. The way that he chooses to demonstrate these regularities is through the employment of, as we saw in chapter 2 in the cases of Halhed and Carey more than a century earlier, a Sanskrit grammatical paradigm. Given his own background in Sanskrit, it is not entirely surprising that he makes use of this paradigm to compose his grammar of Gurbāṇī. But the employment of this paradigm is not a neutral endeavor; it is accompanied by its own set of language ideologies, not the least of which is that Sanskrit is a single, unified language that can be defined grammatically. Below we will see what kinds of accommodations he must make to get the languages of GGS to fit within this paradigm.

(ਉ-ਅੰਤ) ਪੁਲਿੰਗ ਨਾਂਵ

ਦੀ

ਕਾਰਕ ਰੂਪ ਸਾਧਨਾ

		ਇਕ-ਵਚਨ	ਬਹੁ-ਵਚਨ
ਕਰਤਾ	ਕਾਰਕ	ਭਉ, ਨਾਮਦੇਇ, ਪ੍ਰਿਅ	ਜੀਅ, ਭੈ, ਸੈਇ
ਕਰਮ	,,	ਹੀਉ, ਹਿਆਉ	ਥਾਵ, ਉਪਾਵ
ਕਰਣ	,,	ਭਇ, ਘਿਇ	ਪਾਵ
ਸੰਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ	,,	ਨਿਰਭਉ, ਪੀਅ	
ਅਪਾਦਾਨ	,,	ਪ੍ਰਿਅ, ਭੈ, ਜੀਅਹੁ	
ਸੰਬੰਧ	,,	ਜੀਅ, ਨਿਆਵ	
ਅਧਿਕਰਣ	,,	ਭੈ, ਜੀਇ	ਪਾਈ
ਸੰਬੋਧਨ	,,	ਪ੍ਰਿਅ, ਜੀਅ	

Fig. 4.2 A table taken from GV entitled “Case declension of /o/-ending masculine nouns” (Sahib Singh 1932, 111)

(*o-ant*) *puling nav* *dī* *karkrūpsādhna* [Case declension of /o/-ending masculine nouns]		
	ik-vachan [singular]	*bahu-vachan* [plural]
kartakark [nominal case]	***bhō***, *nāmdēi*, *pria*	*jīa*, ***Bhai***, *saii*
karm " [accusative case]	*hiō*, *hiāō*	*thāv*, *upāv*
karṇ" [instrumental case]	***bhi***, *ghii*	*pāv*
sampradan " [dative case]	***nirbhō***, *pīa*	
apadan " [ablative case]	*pria*, ***Bhai***, *jiahu*	
sambandh" [genitive case]	*jīa*, *niāv*	
adhikarṇ " [locative case]	***Bhai***, *jīi*	*pāī*
sambhodhan " [vocative case]	*pria*, *jīa*	

Fig. 4.3 My reconstruction of the table in fig. 4.2 above in transliterated form, accompanied by select glosses.

In figs. 4.2 and 4.3 above we have an example of Sahib Singh's employment of a Sanskrit grammatical paradigm to describe the language of Gurbāṇī. Fig. 4.2 is one of Sahib Singh's original noun paradigms, and fig. 4.3 is my reconstruction of that paradigm in transliterated form. The first thing we can point out is that Sahib Singh here employs the Sanskrit case system of seven cases plus the vocative, for a total of eight cases (cf. chapter 2, figs. 2.1 and 2.2). As was the case with Carey in his 1812 grammar of Panjabi, which we examined in chapter 2, Sahib Singh has to make several accommodations in order to fit the language of GGS into this

paradigm. In Carey's case, he employed post-positional phrases as functional substitutes or near-equivalents for the case forms in the Sanskrit paradigm. Here Sahib Singh adopts a rather unusual form of presentation. Instead of presenting the forms a single noun in each of its cases according to the paradigm, Sahib Singh rather presents a number of different nouns in the paradigm, none of which forms a complete declension. I have highlighted the forms of one of these nouns, *bhō* ("fear") in fig. 4.3 in bold red font. As we see, out of the sixteen possible forms of the noun according to the paradigm, *bhō* appears in only six forms, those of the nominal, instrumental, dative, ablative, and locative singular, and the nominal plural (one of these forms, the dative singular, is in a negative form of the word; *nirbhō*, "without fear"). One other word, *jīa* ("person") appears in five forms, and the other words appear in only two or three out of the sixteen possible forms. Several of the case forms in the table (the dative, ablative, genitive, and vocative plurals) are left completely blank.

There are several different possible reasons for the incompleteness of the table. First, the language of GGS is not a productive language in the sense that it not used to produce new discourse, in contrast to, say Sanskrit, which is used to produce new texts, and in non-ritual spoken forms, even if in a limited context. In that sense, Sahib Singh's is an attempt at a descriptive grammar based on attested forms that appear within GGS itself, rather than being a "generative" grammar as in the case of Pāṇini's grammar, which is a set of combinatorial rules which can be used both for "decoding" already existing texts, or for producing new, well-formed grammatical sentences. Apart from the attested forms that Sahib Singh has fit within the paradigm that he presents in the figures above, we cannot be certain of what the "missing" case forms might be, since we neither have a set of rules for producing those forms, nor do we have attestations for them. As far as attestations for the forms that he does present are concerned,

Sahib Singh provides numerous examples in the form of quotations from GGS that illustrate the cited forms in context. For example, just below the table presented above, he quotes a line from GGS as an example of *bhō* used in context:

‘ਭਉ’ ਭਾਗਾ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਮਨਿ ਬਸੈ ॥ (ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ: ੫, ਪੰਨਾ ੮੯੩)
bhō bhāgā nirbhō man basai (*rāg rāmkali, mahala panjva, panna* 893)

Fear has fled, now the fearless one dwells within my mind (Rāg Rāmkalī, Guru Arjan, p. 893)

In some cases he provides one or two quoted examples, and in other cases up to a dozen or more. Indeed nearly half of GV itself (which runs to about 450 printed pages in current printed editions) consists of quoted examples from the text of GGS that illustrate grammatical forms that Sahib Singh is discussing in his text.

Sahib Singh’s methodology for producing his grammar then is a curious mix of inductive and deductive approaches; inductive in the sense of attempting to create generalizations from empirical observations of attested forms, and deductive in the sense of attempting to fit those generalizations into an already existing, *a priori* framework, that of the Sanskrit grammatical paradigm. Unfortunately, apart from the descriptions that he provides in his prefatory remarks, we do not know the specific genealogy of how he derived his method. However, we can infer some of this genealogy from his own presentation. Inductivism as a general “scientific” approach involving empirical observation had become a dominant intellectual paradigm in the Euro-American context by the late nineteenth century. As Silverstein notes, “From the third quarter of the nineteenth century, there was no question among the linguistically sophisticated that ‘inductive’ language teaching was the innovative method, to be preferred to memorization of

grammatical rules" (Silverstein 2006, 1). One of the figures Silverstein cites in this regard is Whitney, who was a champion of inductivism, and also an Orientalist linguist who composed a grammar of Sanskrit. As Whitney writes in the preface to his own grammar, one of his goals was "To make a presentation of the facts of the language primarily as they show themselves in use in the literature, and only secondarily as they are laid down by the native grammarians" (Whitney 1896, v). That is, his aim was to bypass the "native grammarians" (we can infer here that he is referring in particular to Pāṇini) and their systems of combinatorial rules for producing (theoretically) possible Sanskrit forms, and instead to create a new grammar based on empirical observation of attested forms (from written literary texts, of course, not from spoken language). We can compare this statement with Sahib Singh's from his preface quoted above about his aim to create a new structure "without the hindrance of any previously held thought" (Sahib Singh 1932, 22).

It seems very likely that Sahib Singh inherited the inductive aspect of his own grammatical methodology from this inductive turn in the Euro-American sciences in the late nineteenth century. The precise route that this genealogy took will require further investigation, but it seems equally likely that it came through the colonial encounter. The opposition that Sahib Singh encountered even in his effort to create a grammar of GGS testifies to the fact that the idea was at least not yet prevalent within the Sikh community itself. The decision to employ a Sanskrit grammatical paradigm seems to have come at least in part from his own background in Sanskrit. But the fact that the Sanskrit paradigm seems to be the one that is most natural for describing the language of GGS is also necessarily the product of a particular language ideology, one that also was at odds with that of the Sikh community more generally, and thus required justification on Sahib Singh's part. For one, it is dependent on the notion that the language of

GGS, which Sahib Singh describes as *purātan Panjabi*, that is, Old Panjabi, is in a derivational relationship with Sanskrit such that the Sanskrit grammatical paradigm can serve as a model for describing it, and that deviations from that model are thus deviations from a primordial ideal. As I argued in chapter 2, this is clearly a Brahminic ideology of language, that places languages in a hierarchy based on their purported similarity with or difference from Sanskrit, as defined grammatically.

Of course Sahib Singh would never describe Gurbāṇī as an inadequate form of Sanskrit, far from it. The purpose of this work, as well as his other commentaries, as he states often in different ways in those works, is to promote "knowledge of and love for our SatGuru's *bāṇī*" (ibid., 22). We might ask then, why employ a Sanskrit paradigm to describe the language of GGS, when it is clear that the language of GGS does not quite fit into that paradigm? What affordances does that framework provide, and what does it obscure? We have to understand Sahib Singh's project within the context of several different socio-cultural frameworks simultaneously. The first of these is the general turn towards the grammaticalization of languages, a process that begins with the colonial encounter in the late eighteenth century (described here in chapter 2; also cf. Trautmann 2006). The second is the turn towards scientism, exemplified in the inductive turn in linguistics in the second half of the nineteenth century (cf. Silverstein 2006). The third is the context of religious reform and re-alignment that was taking place in the context of the colonial encounter, as described above. In the work of figures such as Kahn Singh Nabha, this involved a mutual re-definition and semiotic differentiation between major religious formations, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh, that was predicated heavily on alignments with particular language formations, e.g., Hindi as the language of Hindus, Urdu as the language of Muslims, and Panjabi as the language of Sikhs.

This linguistic alignment in turn extended to scriptural languages associated with these communities; Sanskrit for Hindus, (classical) Arabic for Muslims, and the language of GGS for Sikhs. However, whereas in the cases of Sanskrit and classical Arabic were well defined both grammatically and pragmatically within those respective communities, the language of GGS was of a different nature. The latter did not have a well-defined grammatical tradition, and due to its profoundly plurilinguistic nature, was not necessarily conducive to grammatical description, at least not in the sense of a single, unified grammar used to distinguish mutually exclusive codes. Sahib Singh's grammar of GGS then served several purposes at once, and that may account for its dual-facing methodology. It satisfied the need (or at least the perceived need) to produce a "scientific" grammar on the one hand, meeting the demands of the colonial public sphere (recall both Trumpp's and Macauliffe's lamentations about the "loss" of knowledge among Sikhs of their own sacred language), and on the other hand to project the language of GGS as a singular, monolinguistic, "eternal" language formation, commensurate in particular with Sanskrit.

Note that it is grammar that is the means to produce both of these commensurabilities simultaneously. I want to re-emphasize here the argument I first put forth in chapter 2, that grammatical analysis as an objectifying practice is by no means, as it is often ideologized in contemporary intellectual formations, the exclusive provenance of the "West". Grammatical analysis had been used as a means within Brahminic ideologies to produce forms and representations that could be construed as objective and used in projects of fixing social hierarchies long before the colonial encounters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As I argued in chapter 2, the colonial grammars of Indo-Aryan languages that were produced during this period were hybrid products of the interaction of colonial and Brahminical ideologies of languages. Sahib Singh's grammar of GGS is very much a product of this encounter, inheriting

from one side a legacy of colonial grammatical analysis inflected by Brahminic ideologies, and on the other, the Brahminic ideology of an eternal, monolingual sacred language, itself inflected by new social conditions and reform movements produced by the colonial encounter. It is a complex legacy indeed.

A new Sikh intelligentsia, the Singh Sabha, began as a loose confederation of local organizations that broadly shared an accommodationist orientation towards the colonial regime from around 1870-1920. After 1920, new agitations began against colonial control of Sikh religious institutions. Between 1920 and 1940 participants in what had been the Singh Sabha movement started to coalesce instead around educational institutions, particularly Khalsa College at Amritsar. What had been a more or less informal group of like-minded individuals who donated their time and efforts started to become professionalized, taking up teaching positions at the college. Figures such as Teja Singh, Sahib Singh, Bhai Jodh Singh, the historian Ganda Singh, the poet Mohan Singh, as well as others were cosmopolitan scholars whose backgrounds included extensive formal education, and the mastery of multiple languages, especially English, which enabled them to access and respond to developments in the colonial public sphere, and to learn the new techniques, methodologies, and genres that were increasingly prevalent in international academic spaces. Access to these works in turn influenced their own works, their interpretation of Sikh ideas, and ideas and practices around the languages of the Sikh tradition.

Whereas previously Sikh interpretive traditions were developed and transmitted through traditional forms of educational that took place in traditional institutions such as gurdwaras, *dharamshala*s, *akhāṛa*s, and *bunga*s, often associated with different schools of thought, by the turn of the twentieth century, the site of the development of new interpretive traditions had shifted almost completely to formal educational institutions based on college and university

models. Colleges and universities were not entirely new in Panjab; they had been introduced in the province as early as the 1860s, but until the twentieth century they had existed alongside traditional institutions. Now the pattern of patronage had shifted almost entirely away from these traditional institutions. While Kahan Singh belonged to an earlier generation, his *Mahān Kōsh* (1930) can be included among the group of works published in the 1930s that also includes Teja Singh's *Shabdārth* (1936-1941) and Sahib Singh's *Gurbāṇī Viākaraṇ* (1932) that have remained in print since their publication, and now, nearly a century later, still serve as standard works of reference within the tradition, displacing traditional forms of exegesis almost entirely, but also, oddly, precluding new forms. In fact, one might say that these printed reference works brought further innovations in Sikh interpretive traditions almost to a standstill, as these relatively objectified forms seem to represent authoritative positions that no longer need to be reconsidered, a perhaps unexpected result.

Forms of Translation

Trumpp's and Macauliffe's translation projects, described in the last chapter, however one might regard their respective efficacies, or lack thereof, initiated a new regime of translation, particularly into English, that persists in various forms through the present day. The increasing out-migration of Sikhs beginning in the 1890s, mostly along imperial routes, to Burma, Malaysia, Shanghai, Singapore, and east Africa, on the one hand, and to Anglophone settler colonial societies such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and U.S., and to the UK itself on the other, has now produced several generations of Sikhs whose engagement with the Sikh scripture is often mediated in one way or another through English, necessitating the production of new translations, commentaries, and other materials. Where Trumpp's and Macauliffe's translations

were aimed at English readers back in the metropoles of Europe (and a select few English-proficient Sikh and Panjabi elites), today's translations are primarily aimed rather at Sikh diasporic audiences whose first language is often English. That is to say, the Sikh audience for English-language texts about Sikhism has expanded. By the mid-twentieth century, attention had turned from innovations in interpretation (which seemed to be no longer needed) to native attempts to translate GGS, particularly into English, a rather different form of meaning-making. Teja Singh (the same Teja Singh mentioned above) was among the first to attempt a complete translation of GGS into English, though the project remained incomplete at his death. His unfinished work was later published as *The Holy Granth (Sri Raag to Raag Majh)* by Punjabi University in 1985. The 1960s onwards has seen a proliferation of complete English translations of GGS, including those of Gopal Singh (1960), Manmohan Singh (1962)[33], G.S. Talib (1984), Pritam Singh Chahil (1993), as well as others.

The shift in the sociolinguistic scene in Panjab during and after the colonial period with the arrival of English language and concepts, the migration of Sikhs outside of Panjab into diaspora communities, and the addition of new media technologies have all had profound effects on the parameters, possibilities, and expectations of the regimes of translation within the Sikh tradition more broadly. The establishment of Sikh communities whose primary language was English has created challenges for those who wish to establish or maintain a connection with the Sikh tradition, especially through reading its scripture. Translation in religious contexts however can require more than transferal of denotational meaning from one language to another. The recontextualization of language and ideas often requires a recalibration of ideas about language

[33] Manmohan Singh's English translation was published by the official Sikh gurdwara management committee, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (S.G.P.C.), and is still often the translation utilized in online translation software such as that which will be discussed in this section.

as much as it does gaining an understanding of new concepts. The problematics of translation notwithstanding, attempts have been made to transmit these lifeworlds and worldviews, historically within Panjab itself and within Sikh diasporic communities, through the embrace of various kinds of translation technologies and media.



Fig. 4.4 Sign at Harmandir Sahib (The Golden Temple) complex, Amritsar, Panjab, India

There are several examples of attempts at translation across linguistic and religious contexts from the Harmandir Sahib temple complex (popularly known in English since the colonial period as 'The Golden Temple') in the city of Amritsar, Panjab, India. Harmandir Sahib, the place of the compilation and revelation of the Sikh sacred scripture in 1604 CE, is among the most important Sikh pilgrimage sites, and is also one of the most popular tourist sites in India, attracting a large number of visitors, Sikh and non-Sikh alike, both resident in India and from abroad. The sign in fig. 4.4 above is placed on the *parikrama*, or walkway that surrounds the

sacred pool within which the temple sanctum is situated. The text on the sign consists of three linguistic layers, Panjabi language in Gurmukhi script on the top line, followed by a Hindi translation in the Devanagari script in the middle line, and finally an English translation on the bottom-most line. The sign marks the place where pilgrims are to come to collect *kaḍā praśād*, a consecrated sweet food made of flour, clarified butter, and sugar, to offer at the main temple. The first line at the top of the sign in Panjabi announces this in a fairly prosaic and straightforward fashion ("To perform *ardās* ("prayer") please collect *kaḍā praśād* ("consecrated food") here"). The second line in Hindi is almost a word-for-word duplication of the first line in Panjabi, save for a few very minor grammatical differences. Important here are the words *ardās* and *kaḍā praśād*, that appear in both the Panjabi and Hindi versions. These words are identical in both languages, both phonetically and in meaning, and so the substitution of a different word or "translation" is not necessary; simple transliteration from one script to another is sufficient: Gurmukhi script to Devanagari script. Both of these words take the same form because they are both part of a shared vocabulary between Panjabi and Hindi, and correspond to the same concept that would be known to speakers of either of the languages. This is an understanding of the languages as related due to their shared vocabulary, rather than as differentiated according to grammar. This relation allows people who are conversant with these terms to participate in the repertoire of a shared speech community, regardless of their competence in either Hindi or Panjabi.

The third line in English brings out some problems of translation in this religious context. Here we have as a translation for *kaḍā praśad* the term "holy communion". Both *kaḍā praśad* and holy communion might be grouped together semantically as forms of "consecrated food", and so the latter might be found acceptable as an approximate translation. Beyond that general

approximation, however, “holy communion” does not give any indication except in the most generic sense of the specific properties of *kaḍā praśad*, either as a material substance, or its significance in the context in which it is embedded. Indeed, “holy communion” may conjure quite a different image in the mind of a reader of English, particularly if they are familiar with the Christian ritual practice. The translation of *kaḍā praśad* as “holy communion” suggests that, for whoever performed this translation, or whoever authorized it, the two terms can be perceived as conceptually commensurate religious practices, and that readers of the signboard would be able to recognize these unproblematically as near-enough equivalents, at least well enough to go and collect their *kaḍā praśad* and go and pay their respects.

This translation is evidently meant for at least three different groups; first, the significant number of foreign pilgrims who come to visit the temple and are not familiar either with Panjabi or Hindi or do not have reading knowledge of them, second, Indians from other regions of India, for example southern and eastern regions, who would also not have access to Panjabi or Hindi, and third, the large number of non-resident Indian (NRI) Sikhs that arrive from abroad, principally from the U.K., Canada, and the U.S.A., with a significant number from other commonwealth countries, who also may or may not have reading knowledge of Panjabi. An assumption underlies the English translation; that the readers of English will know and understand the term “holy communion”, by virtue of it being a phrase in English, regardless of whether they are familiar with the term in a Christian context. There is also an implicit assumption that English serves as the most appropriate *lingua franca*, one that the most people who are not familiar with Panjabi or Hindi will be able to access, regardless of whether English is their own first language (or second or third). This speaks of course to the hierarchical relationship that English has come to assume in the context of Harmandir Sahib (and we might

say Panjab, and India more broadly); it is the preferred, and for the purposes of communication, perhaps an essential, non-local language that must be included in the repertoire.

Another instantiation of the regime of translation at the Harmandir Sahib complex offers some further insights into the (presumed) relationships between linguistic codes. In the early 2000s two massive video screens, encased in white marble to match their surroundings, were installed diagonally at opposite corners of the complex (Fig. 4.5 below). The installation of these screens was perhaps the most prominent and visible technological innovation since the introduction of electricity to the complex in the late nineteenth century. The screens are utilized for a single purpose; to provide in real time the original text of the compositions (*śabad*s) being sung at that moment in the inner sanctum of the temple, and to provide two translations: first, a rendering into contemporary Panjabi (in a smaller font), and below that another rendering into English.



Fig. 4.5 One of the two large video screens installed in recent years in the Harmandir Sahib complex in Amritsar, Panjab, India

This real time translation requires an operator behind the scenes to determine which composition is being sung and then to advance the text in time with the singer as the composition unfolds. The inscription at the bottom of the screen indicates that it was donated by a group of NRI Sikhs from Canada. This means that the screen was commissioned, designed, and paid for by a group whose members would consist in large measure of Sikhs whose first language was English. The installation of the screens clearly caters to the perceived needs of visitors to the temple who again likely fall into one of three categories mentioned above; namely foreign visitors to the temple, and Indians from other regions of India, and also Sikhs and others (both NRI and local) who understand Panjabi but need assistance in order to translate the language of GGS, which is significantly different from contemporary Panjabi.

Harmandir Sahib is one of the most visited pilgrimage sites in India, and as mentioned, attracts a large number of non-Sikh visitors and tourists. Its largest constituency, however, is NRI Sikhs coming from abroad to pay their respects at the temple. The vast majority of these NRIs come from anglophone countries, especially the U.K., Canada, and the United States. The provision of translations in modern Panjabi and English through these video screens installed at the temple is an indicator of the importance of these languages to the adherents who visit the temple, and their relative competence in them (or at least what the providers of the screen assume about their relative competence). The inclusion of the translation into contemporary Panjabi indicates that the lines of the scripture can be challenging to understand even for native or monolingual Panjabi speakers. But the fact of the presence of an English translation is an indicator of not only the prevalence of English among Sikh diaspora populations visiting the temple, but also of the global hegemony of English as a common language of understanding, or rather, as *the* common language of understanding. The displays on the screens thus represent in microcosm a regime of translation: the original scriptural text, accompanied by renderings into two languages for the speech communities most likely to be in attendance at the temple, characterized by decreasing proximity to the conceptual world of the scripture.

The addition of the large video screens at either end of the walkway around the sanctum was debated, as all technological innovations to the temple complex, including the aforementioned addition of electricity, have been. While the screens are prominent, it seems that by now most visitors to the temple have been accustomed to them as accepted parts of the temple complex. It is also not certain how many pilgrims actually stop to contemplate the translations on the signs more than momentarily; there is an abundance of other experiences to be had by visitors to the temple complex, such as paying respects at the inner sanctum, listening to the

kirtan, or devotional singing, participating in voluntary *seva*, or service activities, or partaking in *langar*, the communal meal, to name a few. The fact that the screens have been installed does indicate, however, a regime of the relative values of the various languages of translation involved, particularly in the prominence given to English. The provision of an English language translation is underscored by the fact that the primary audience that it is aimed at are those NRI Sikhs who are visiting from abroad, whose lifeworlds and engagements with Sikhism are mediated primarily through English. Are translations (either in contemporary Panjabi or English) an effective substitute for the experience of Gurbāṇī, the language of the Sikh scripture, in its original form? Most Sikhs, even those who rely on translations, would likely argue no. However, it is clear that modes of translation, either in Panjabi or English (or another language), and the technological means to deliver them have become increasingly important for contemporary Sikhs to understand the Sikh scripture.

In the remaining chapters in this dissertation (chapters 5-7), we will shift towards a more ethnographically-focused study on contemporary Sikh praxis that will examine a variety of linguistic means that Sikh employ to achieve different effects, including their historical framing of the Sikh tradition, remembrance of Sikh martyrs, approaches to the scriptural language, reconciling seeming binaries, such as those of life/death and the ideal/material, and the creation of moral words. In these chapters I make the argument that the functions of language that have been emphasized in the "scientific" regime of language that was inherited through the colonial regime and adopted by Sikh elites in the early twentieth century are not sufficient for understanding the variety of ways that Sikhs continue to understand and relate to language.

Chapter 5 Funeral Day: *antim ardās,* the Final Prayer

Introduction

A great deal of Sikh scripture, philosophy, ideology, mythology, and praxis focuses on life as a preparation for death; the way to live one's life most fully is in the realization of the real nature of death and its relationship to life. In this chapter we will examine the occasion of a Sikh funeral, where the speech that takes place as part of the service does the work of attempting to reconcile two worlds that arise out of a Sikh conception of the nature of reality; the *sargun* ("with qualities"), that is, the material, sensible world, and the *nirgun* ("without qualities"), that is, the immaterial, non-sensible world. It is important to note here that in the Sikh conception, it is not the material world that is profane, and the immaterial that is divine, but rather both the *sargun* and the *nirgun* have their divine aspects. The occasion of a Sikh funeral is especially illustrative in this regard because it brings special attention to the phenomena of life and death, and on ways that Sikhs conceive of the relationship between the two states. This idea is brought to bear through the speeches that take place at the funeral which try to bring into consonance for the assembled audience both the material and immaterial aspects of existence, and also the worlds of the living and of the dead. They do this both chronotopically, introducing signs and markers of each of these aspects, and on a scalar level, back and forth between historical, cultural, and communal understandings, and at the level of the immediately hearers, the biographical individuals present, and their own personal histories and experiences.

The main set of practices around the Sikh scripture, which include reading, singing, memorization, and recitation, are all encompassed under the term *nām simran*, or "remembrance

of the name". Devout Sikhs are enjoined, at least prescriptively, to remain in a state of *nām simran*, throughout the day, from the pre-dawn hours until nighttime, and, indeed, throughout their lives. This attunement with the sacred word, or what might better described as the struggle towards the ideal of attunement, is one of the main preoccupations of Sikh practice, and, in particular, guidelines, advice, explanations, and injunctions, and claims about that practice. It is a rare religiously oriented speech that goes by without some reference, in passing or explicit, to *simran*. Yet despite this central focus, there is relatively little that is laid down in explicit, written, or doctrinal form, and though practicing *nām simran* is widely regarded as an ideal to strive towards, there are a wide range of ideas about how to go about that practice.

In the examples that follow, we see various ways in which the speakers manage to weave together exhortations on the relationship between remembrance (memory) and death, especially so the congregants might learn to live more fully, and not waste the opportunity in this lifetime to attune themselves with *nām* ("the name", or "the word"), and thus achieve liberation from the cycles of birth and death that the *ātma*, or the spirit, is subject to while inhabiting a mortal body. The speakers each in turn, using various elements of their speech, including linguistic devices such as honorifics, specialized vocabulary, scriptural quotation, and the use of particular kinds of imagery and historical allusions, move their audiences across and through various chronotopes (Bakhtin 1981), in particular here, across the experiencing *akaal*, a term that means literally "non-time", i.e., timeless, and *desh kaal*, literally "country time" or "nation time", a notion of time that generally corresponds with the more familiar time-form of everyday experience. The speech does not only try to present these as concepts, but, as we shall see in the examples below, also tries to elicit experiences of these notions of time in the assembled audience.

Funeral Day

It is a hot day in early June on the dry plains in central Panjab. Once the sun has climbed into the sky by mid-morning as it has now, there is no respite from the heat even after the sun sets, not until deep in the night, perhaps for an hour or so before the next sunrise. The summer monsoon rains are expected to burst at some point in the coming weeks from the ominous dark grey clouds that race across the sky, but until that moment the baking sun, warm winds, and swirling dust have their day. Any kind of exertion is difficult in such conditions, and so a languor seems to drape over the land as we wend our way through a landscape characterized for miles and miles by the alternation of agricultural fields punctuated by small villages, on our way to a funeral service on the other side of the state. The funeral is for the father of a friend that I have recently met and I am traveling there in a small car with three other mutual acquaintances from the town of Amritsar, about three hours' drive away.

We begin on the Grand Trunk Road, the major highway that bisects Panjab, following the old Mughal road from Delhi to Lahore. From the highway we then detour off onto a series of increasingly more narrow (and less smooth) local roads that cut right off of the highway and take the traveler off into the endless countryside that makes up most of Panjab. Finally we turn off on a slender dirt track set upon a mound barely as wide as the wheels of the car, which meanders dexterously through the lush, tall green of summer rice paddies for mile upon mile with nary a building or another soul in sight. Thus we complete our sojourn and transition from the urban to the rural, from the city to the country, and into a new soundscape that seems for the moment to be enveloped in a deep silence only occasionally punctuated by the buzzing of an insect.

As we slowly approach the village over the rough dirt track, we begin to make out a distant, tinny sound that seems to be carried by the wind in the air above us. Parking in a grass field amongst rows of other cars the sound grows in volume and as we walk towards the village it becomes more distinct; punctuated verses somehow both sonorous and nasal, alternating in staccato and mellifluous rhythms, somehow both song and speech as one. As we pass by the first houses of the village the sources of the sound become visible; long, thin, conical speakers tied to rooftops and poles. The sound environment quickly becomes all-encompassing as we approach a tall, roomy square tent that has been set up on an empty lot between two mud brick homes in the village.

A funeral in a small village (not unlike a wedding) usually means accommodating many more people than live in the village itself. The deceased was a carpenter by trade, a member of the lower-middle-class socio-economically, but lived a long life and had many connections through marriage and other ties. For today's service, relatives, friends, and well-wishers have arrived like ourselves both from nearby villages, and also from across the state of Panjab. The cremation of the body according to Sikh tradition usually takes place within a day or so of a person's death at a nearby s*amshan ghat*, a specially designated location with brick platforms upon which the funeral pyres are lit. These locations are often shared by various faith traditions, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains, though the ceremonies are presided over by officiants of the respective faiths. This is particularly the case for those who are not members of the middle or upper classes, and who do not therefore have access to means of preserving the body for a viewing, these days usually in a refrigerated casket. The body of the deceased in the present case had been cremated in the week before the funeral that we were attending.

After the cremation a ritual reading of the full Sikh scripture (*akhanḍ paath*, "unbroken reading") takes place, in the home of the deceased if a recension of the scripture has been installed there, or if not, at the local temple. A full reading is completed in relays of readers, around the clock, usually in two hour shifts, until the text is completed, which normally takes forty-eight hours. The completion of a full reading of the Sikh sacred scripture is considered to be a very auspicious occasion, one of the most important of the Sikh rituals, and is marked by a ceremony called *bhog*. It is at the *bhog* ceremony where the majority of relatives, friends, and the local community at large will gather in a public and communal way to mark the occasion. The *bhog* is usually timed so that it will take place just before noon on the appointed day. It is for this *bhog* ceremony that we have arrived today in the village.

Inside the tent the assembled congregation is seated upon thick multi-colored sheets in tight winding rows, groups of men and women largely seated together, though not exclusively so. They face a small stage covered with a large ceremonial canopy, the *palkī*, that houses the scripture, and the reader/attendee (*Granthi*) sits behind the canopy, cross-legged, in reading position, facing the audience. Just to the side of the scripture is a small group of *rāgi*s, professional singers of hymns, two melodists playing harmoniums, small wooden-reed keyboard instruments, and a percussionist playing the *tabla* drums. The singing of hymns (*kīrtan*, "praise") commences after the completion of the reading of the scripture and a short prayer. This hymn singing generally lasts for half an hour to an hour after which some members of the congregation may be invited to speak in remembrance of the deceased before a final closing prayer, the ceremonial *sukhāsan* ceremony, retiring the scripture to resting place back in the temple, and finally *langar*, the communal serving of food that accompanies most all Sikh ceremonies.

As we arrive at the tent, the singing of hymns is in its full throes, the climax of the ceremony, the time when most people show up, and the tent is full to near capacity. On such a hot day even the covered, shaded space is saturated with the heat of the sun, and large industrial floor fans that have been set up at strategic posts inside the tent whir furiously to give the congregants a semblance of relief, but today they only seem to succeed in pushing around the heated air with greater force. The sounds are multifarious as we enter the space; we wait in a short line directly in front of the scripture and we pay our obeisance by making a small offering of money before the scripture (considered to be *daan*, an offering to the temple), then kneeling down on both knees and with both palms pressed to the ground, slowly bringing our foreheads also to the ground while facing the scripture (a gesture called *matha ṭek*, literally touching one's forehead). Arising again, we try to locate an empty space on the floor amidst the crowd to settle in; the music can be heard faintly from the stage but much more prominent is the blaring sound of the many tin speakers set up throughout the tent. The mellifluous sounds of the *kīrtan* compete with the relentless drone of the ineffectual fans and the shrieks and laughter of young children who scurrying around the space despite the fruitless alternating pleas and threats from their parents to settle down, stay quiet, and pay attention.

Once the hymn singing has culminated, the congregation rises for a short communal prayer (*ardās*), part of which is standardized, and part of which is customized for the occasion and in whose name the prayers are being sponsored. Just after, some selected members of the congregation are invited to speak in memory of the deceased. These are generally close relatives of the deceased, or close friends, but occasionally, depending on the prominence of the deceased some other dignitary may also offer some words of remembrance. On this occasion, some local

dignitaries, colleagues of the deceased's son and known for their knowledge of the Sikh scripture and their public speaking ability, are invited to share a few words.

The occasion of speaking on behalf of the dead contrasts markedly from the ceremonial occasions around the Sikh scripture. While the occasions around the scripture are all marked by the particular poetic language of the scripture itself, read, recited and sung, accompanied by music, some parts of which are accompanied by communal singing or communal responses to the prayers, the occasion of the speeches is comparatively more prosaic, generally in a respectful register of Panjabi, in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion, but in a colloquial form that everyone assembled can understand. The speech at such occasions is often punctuated with quotations from the scripture, many of which are very familiar to the audience. It is often the case that only a few words of the line of scripture need to be uttered, and the congregation joins in communally to fill in the rest (as we will see in several examples in the chapters that follow as well). For the funeral speeches there is no accompanying music, but since they are performed in the presence (*hazūrī*) of the scripture, they are usually performed with due reverence and acknowledgement of that presence, such that the scripture acts almost as a kind of interlocutor between the speaker and the congregation.

This acknowledgment might take any number of different semiotic and linguistic forms, such as marked shifts in prosody, rhythm, pitch, rate, tone, and an infusion of vocabulary either quoted from or inspired by the scripture. Much of this vocabulary has its prosaic equivalents from everyday speech, but such an occasion as a speech in the presence of the scripture is one of those places where such a heightened register becomes appropriate (see also chapter 6). Such is the case here in the speeches at this occasion. The remembrance of the life of the deceased is always in reference to *śabad*, the divine word manifested in the scripture, and the position of the

congregants in relation to the divine word, as receivers of both sacred words and also of the speech sanctified by the physical presence of the scripture.

The speakers are each introduced in turn by a close friend and colleague of the son of the deceased. The setting for the short speeches within the space also contrasts with the other ceremonial aspects in one other way; the speeches are performed while standing, while most all of the other ceremonies and music, with the exception of the communal prayer which marks the end of most Sikh ceremonies, are performed while seated. This not only sets the speeches apart from the other aspects of the ceremony physically, but perhaps also invokes other settings outside of the temple where the speaker marks themselves by standing; in classrooms, courtrooms, or legislative bodies, for instance, or at other public speaking events. Though there are several speech acts that take place in Sikh temples that do not directly involve the Sikh scripture that are performed while seated, including *kirtan*, hymn-singing, and *kathā*, the exegesis of the scriptures (see chapters 6 and 7), I have never seen anyone speaking in prose in a non-ritual context while seated on the ground.

Many, if not most, funeral settings tend toward solemnity; this setting, in the presence of the scripture, where an attitude of devotional attention is the ideal, is no different. The occasion of the funeral speeches, however, is one place where the ceremonial setting around the scriptures can be linked with events and happenings in the world outside of this space, and these events can be examined, explained, or commented upon in light of the scriptures. It is a setting where the life of the deceased can be recalled to the present, events that do not have any ostensible connection to the scriptural world, at least on the surface. While there is no particular formal genre for the occasion of the funeral speeches, and speakers are generally left to their own devices and judgment in deciding what to say on the occasion, the expectation is that there will

be some kind of connection made between the ideal world of the scriptures and an attempt to shed light on the life of the deceased in context of that world, however that might be variously construed.

The speeches create a new setting within the sanctified space in which commentary about other matters in the outside world can be brought to bear upon the religious life of the congregation, and vice versa, a kind of mixed genre of public commentary on events of import in the light of scriptural teachings, but where scriptural exegesis is not the central focus (as in the genre of *kathā*). Skilled speakers are able to effectively weave in relevant passages from the scriptures which are not necessarily connected to the world of narrative history with insightful commentary on timely matters of the moment, while also meeting the expectations of the congregation of spiritual edification and the honoring of the sanctified space in the presence of the scripture. They establish in their scripturally-inspired prose a chronotope which imbues both the life and spirit of the deceased and that of the congregation in the spiritual light (*jōt*) emanated by the presence of the scripture.

The end of the formulaic portion of the *ardās* is an occasion for the performer of *ardās* to address the specific occasion and congregation at hand. The *Granthi*, or reader, is usually handed a slip of paper at this time by a family member or their representative which lists the particulars of the occasion, for whom the ceremonial reading has been performed, who are the sponsors, the names of members of the family or other well-wishers to be blessed, and so on. Using these brief notes, the *Granthi* then recites prayers and blessings addressed directly to these addressees and thus indexes the occasion, making the ritual reading specific to time, place, persons, and purpose. This is a time also for the *Granthi* to insert their own skill, and sometimes even a degree of virtuosity, into their *ardās*. *Granthi*s generally are not expected to be virtuosos by any means.

Most of them tend to be of very humble background (like the proverbial "country preacher") and often take up the occupation out of financial necessity in cases where their families cannot provide for their formal education. Some, however, do also on occasion take up the occupation out of a sincere devotion and calling to the religious life, despite the financial hardships that such a path with inevitably entail, as they are rarely highly remunerated. The occasion of this funeral being for a person of humble background, the *Granthi* invited was not a famous figure, or "personality", although he was quite talented and musical in his intonation, prosody, poetic use of language, and skillful in his invocation of the sacred world of the scripture, the world of *nām*, and in making reference to the journey of the deceased, through the worlds of the living and of the dead.

Ardās **prayer**

Although *ardās* is generally translated as "prayer", engaging in supplicatory prayer for specific blessings or good fortune (for instance, success in business, or the birth of a son) is not generally an activity given sanction by Sikh doctrine itself. This perhaps stems in part from the fact that the Sikh notion of divinity does not encompass an anthropomorphic god, or a personal deity, who would have the power, capability, or wherewithal of granting such a wish to an individual in response to their prayer. However, in popular practice, as we will see in the examples that follow, it is very common during the prayer part of the ceremony for specific supplications, blessings, or requests to be made on behalf of the sponsor or sponsoring family, and for God to be addressed in a direct fashion as an interlocutor. The Sikh tradition is also of course embedded in the milieu of a very diverse religious landscape, one in which supplicatory prayers to a personal diety are quite common, for instance in varieties of Hinduism and

Christianity, and so it is perhaps not surprising that aspects of supplicatory prayer also find their way into the Sikh *ardās*.

For the *ardās* prayer, everyone in the congregational space rises to their feet, and brings their palms together in front of their chests in the *pranām* gesture. The *Granthi* today begins the prayer in a stentorian voice filled with authority; he is young, probably in his early to mid-thirties. His voice is characterized by a marked rural Panjabi accent, which he seems to lean into without hesitation; it sounds very different from the more urbāṇīzed Panjabi accents that I have become used to among my group of interlocutors in New Delhi and Amritsar. Overall the effect of voice comes across as gruff, but pleasing at the same time, filled with the gravity of the occasion. The prayer begins with a formulaic invocation that lasts about two to three minutes. This section of the *ardās* is not a part of the scripture *per se*, but rather recounts in very concise form the history of the Sikh Gurus and of several of the early Sikh martyrs. The prayer that follows below that addresses the specific occasion at hand, comes at the end of this fixed prayer. Here the *Granthi* opens his *ardās* with a direct address to the deity, and by mentioning the occasion on which the group has been gathered today:

example 5.1

sardar _____ Singh ji, aap ji de bhet de anusar, ih maat lok de yaatra karN vale san paatshah jio
Sardar _____Singh Ji, with the gift of your blessings, was the one who completed the journey to the world of the dead, O lord

It is of note here that, as mentioned earlier, divinity in general, not necessarily a personal or anthropomorphic God, is always addressed in the Sikh scripture with the familiar second

person pronoun *tu(n)*[34]. In example 5.1 here, however, the speaker uses an honorific second person pronoun instead, *aap*. The *jī*, another honorific term (not a pronoun) in term *aap ji*, heightens the respect level still further. So this instance of honorific usage is a marked departure from the default way that divinity is addressed in scriptural terms. It is perhaps in consonance with the marked generic difference of supplicatory prayer. Since the honorific *aap ji* is being used in this instance in the context of supplicatory prayer, it may then be deemed more appropriate then the more direct (and in everyday terms, highly informal) *tu(n)*. This is a significant shift, as *aap* signals a greater (formal/respectful/hierarchical) distance between the speaker and addressee, whereas *tu(n)* signals closeness and intimacy, which could seem more appropriate for a divine force that is immanent.

The speaker also mentions the purpose of the occasion, that is, marking the journey to the "world of the dead" (*māt lok*). This phrase is of interest in that in the Sikh scripture there is no notion of a heaven or hell as a place that one's soul or spirit travels to after death (there are notions of heaven and hell in the scriptures, but these are rather states of mind in the present lifetime, not destinations after death). However, notions of the "three worlds", *lōk*, the present world, *māt lōk*, the world of the dead, and *parlōk*, the world beyond or the celestial world, i.e., heaven, are very common popular notions or conceptions, that are found in and shared across several religious traditions, and especially so in popular practice. They are part of a broadly shared vernacular religious vocabulary and set of concepts that is not limited to any one of the

[34] There is a well-known *janamsākhi* (literally "life story", a biographical/hagiographical/allegorical tale from the lives of the Sikh Gurus) that goes that when Guru Nanak was a young man and was put to work in the accounting office of a granary by his concerned father, who was worried that his spiritually oriented son would not adopt a practical vocation, the Guru would always stop when he reached the thirteenth counting stone. This is because the Panjabi word for the number thirteen, *terā(n)*, is a near-homophone with the Panjabi second person familiar possessive, *tera* (without the nasal ending), meaning "yours". When Guru Nanak reached the number thirteen in his accounting, he would keep repeating "*tera, tera, tera*", meaning "yours, yours, yours", that is to say that he would repeat that everything was "yours", meaning everything belonged to the divinity. The use of the familiar/informal possessive form here is of note.

traditions. For that reason, again, it is then not surprising to see the *Granthi* invoke them here. As mentioned above, it is one of the tasks of the *Granthi* (as well as the speakers whose speech we will examine below) to bring the ideal world of the Sikh scripture in consonance with the understandings of their audiences. Invoking a common pool of ideas and concepts that are shared broadly across denominational groups and social classes, and also those who may not be familiar with Sikhism in its doctrinal form, is one such method of making these kinds of connections.

example 5.2

aap di dhur ki bāṇī (inaudible) *kei dinaan ton vichhre hoe aatma* (inaudible) *teri sahaj paaTH arambh san. so aap di paaTH bakhshish rahim da* (inaudible) *patshah jio. aad madd ant, sampuran gurbāṇī de jaap hoe* (inaudible) *bhog pae hoe han.*
The gift of the original sound (*dhur ki bāṇī*) (inaudible) has been recited in the prayers that began a few days ago for the departed soul. So please bless this prayer with your (inaudible) mercy, O lord. The beginning, the middle, and the end, the recitation of *gurbāṇī* has taken place, and the *bhog* is now taking place.

In this next section of the prayer, in example 5.2, the speaker uses the scriptural phrase *dhur ki bāṇī.* This is an important concept that refers to the "voice (*bāṇī*) that comes from the (original) source (*dhur*)". In the Sikh scripture, this *dhur* refers to the "unstruck sound" that forms the ground for all of being, or all of existence. Here again, the speaker prefaces this phrase with an honorific second person possessive pronominal phrase, *aap di* ("yours", 2nd honorific). Again, the "unstruck sound", which is not personalized in the scripture as belonging to, or emanating from, a personal or anthropomorphic diety, here gets personalized and is attributed to the personal deity being addressed with the honorific form *aap*. In the last sentence in example 5.2, the *Granthi* mentions that the whole of the text, from the beginning, through the middle, and to the end (*aad, madd, ant*) has been recited in an unbroken reading and has been appropriately

brought to its ceremonial close, completing the ritual with all due honor and respect. This unbroken reading, as mentioned above, is an important ritual undertaking involving the sacred scripture, and its completion is an event that is considered auspicious and efficacious, and is to be noted ceremonially. There has been controversy in contemporary Sikh communities as to whether *akhanḍ pāṭh*, or unbroken reading, should really be regarded as a ritual that is efficacious or salutory in attaining one's personal or practical ends, but nevertheless, it remains a popular practice as we see here.

example 5.3

pavittar bhaag gurbāṇī da phal vichhre hoe aatma nun bakhshish karna patshah ji, aapNe pavittar charnan kamlaan vikhe nivaas bakhshish karNa, aavagavan de chakkar ton bacha ke rakhNa.
Please bless the departed soul with a holy part of the fruit of the sacred word of the Guru (*gurbāṇī*), please bestow (to the departed soul) the refuge of your sacred lotus feet, please save (the departed soul) from the cycle (*chakkar*, "wheel") of births and deaths.

In line 6 the speaker outlines the importance in the Sikh tradition of the idea of *gurbāṇī* (literally, the voice of the Guru), which takes form in our world as the language of the scripture. The language of the scripture is not only the uttered sounds or the printed word, but also exists in the form of a substrate, which can accompany even the disembodied spirit on its forward journey. This becomes a very important concept, as death is not equated with, or perhaps we might say not limited to the physical perishing of the body. Neither is the spirit (*aatma*) which persists even when the body is gone an autonomous entity. Rather, the person in life, and the spirit after the body has departed are always accompanied by the sacred word, *gurbāṇī*, which, while it takes form in sound and print, is not limited to those forms. This becomes especially

important in the context of Sikh ideas about death; since language is not subject to time or decay, and accompanies the spirit even when the body is gone, death itself is not what it seems to be in our conventional understanding of it. This idea is reinforced in the following two lines:

In lines 7 and 8, using familiar epithetic formulas, the speaker makes the supplication that the Guru offer permanent refuge to the spirit of the departed, protecting him from returning to the endless cycle of causation, creation and destruction, birth and death, that is represented by the symbol of the "wheel of life". Again, it is the word of the Guru, the sacred sound, *gurbāṇī* or *dhur ki bāṇī*, that provides refuge and eternal life. Attuning oneself to this word allows one to transcend death.

The speaker also makes some more conventional entreaties, for blessings in this world:

example 5.4

har santaan di sahaita karni patshah maharaj jio…jiniaan di sangataan aap de darbar diaan hazriaan bhariaan, sarbat nun uchha uchha jeevan, gursikhi jeevan, nām daan diaan daataan,bakhshish karniaan patshah ji…sukh hovai, nām jitaavai, Guru Nanak nām, charhdi kala, tere bhaNe, sarbat da bhalla.
O lord of lords, give help to all the progeny of the family (of the deceased). To all of the congregation that are here present in your court, bestow upon them the higher spiritual life, the life of the Gursikh (the Sikh of the Guru). Give them the gift of the Name, the gift of the blessings of the daily prayers, O lord. May there be contentment, cause the Name to reign, the name of Nanak, in high spirits, according to your will, for the welfare of all.

Funeral speeches

At the conclusion of the formal prayer, everyone moves from the standing, *pranām* position to perform the gesture of *maṭha ṭek* again, and take their seat on the ground once more. At this point, the *Granthi*, now seated again behind the scripture, takes a reading from the

scripture called *hukam*, by opening the scripture at random and reading the composition that begins on the top of the left-hand page. The reading out of this composition marks the end of the formal part of the *bhog* ceremony. The formal, ritual portion of the ceremony completed, an attendant now sits in silent attention behind the scripture and waves the *chaur*[35] over the scripture. Whenever the scripture is in the state of *prakaash*, that is, installed upon its canopy and opened in a *gurdwara* setting, it is attended by someone, until it is ceremonially closed, wrapped with great care in cloths of silk, and transported to a resting place, usually a designated space in the *gurdwara* or temple space, until it is brought out for reading again in another setting. This attendant does not have to be a professional *Granthi*, but can be anyone from the congregation, and today several people, including children, elderly persons, male or female, come to the front to take a turn.

The formal, ritual portion of the ceremony completed, the proceedings now move on to short speeches by members of the congregation. On this occasion, none of the speakers were immediately related to the family of the deceased. There are occasions when family members may not feel up to the task of speaking at such occasions. In this case, the deceased's son has requested that a few prominent members of the congregation, who are known to be skilled in speaking on such occasions, come and say a few words. Two of the speakers were of the younger generation, about the age of the speaker's eldest son, in his mid-thirties, and the other two speakers were slightly older, perhaps in their mid-fifties.

In my experience, having attended several funeral ceremonies, the speeches are not prepared beforehand, as might be the case perhaps when delivering a formal eulogy for a prominent figure. As we shall see in the following examples, however, there are still some genre

[35] A *chaur* is a ceremonial fly-whisk, often made with a silver handle and yak hair.

expectations and some formulaic elements, involving scriptural quotation, historical allusions, certain conceptual themes, and some specialized vocabulary, that are found commonly among these types of speeches given at funerals and that are generally deemed appropriate for such occasions by the wider congregation. All of the speeches on this day addressed Sikh concepts of life and death, both generically, and in the specific instance of the life of the deceased.

Among the effects of this genre of speech as we will see in the examples below are to create a kind of synchronization of chronotopes between the conceptual world of *akaal* ("non-time") and the world of *desh kaal* (historical time). The directionality is always to bring the world of *akaal* to bear on happenings and events in the world of the present moment. This can allow for commentary on current events, through a lens of interpretation informed by the chronotope that is outlined by scriptural concepts, establishing a connection between the two worlds such that they are not necessarily in opposition, but rather coeval and coexistent in some way. That is to say, that they are not exclusive or separate realms that cannot be traversed. The occasion of the funeral speech allows the speakers to verbally reconcile worlds that might in everyday understandings seem to be oppositional or disparate.

Once the congregation is seated again, there is a solemn silence in the space, at least among the congregants; the furious whir of the fans continues, sounds of preparations for the communal meal are heard off in the distance. The congregation sits in attentive (relative) silence, perhaps thinking of the deceased. After a few moments, a young man rises from his seated position and proceeds to a microphone set upon a stand, which was used moments ago to recite the formal prayer. The microphone stand is now placed a few feet away from the side of the canopy that houses the scripture, positioned so that the speakers will, standing alongside the

scripture, face out towards where most of the congregation is seated, though a small number are also seated alongside him and behind him as well.

I was never able to get a satisfactory answer to my enquiries as to why certain parts of the *gurdwara* services, particularly non-ritual speech, were performed while standing, while most of the rest of the ritual portion (aside from the short *ardās* prayer) is performed while seated. It may be that in the contemporary context, speaking while standing (often at a lectern, though there was no lectern placed here in this temporary space set up for the funeral proceeding) may index something to do with "modernity", or at least the contemporary, secular world outside of the sacred space, the university lecture hall, for instance, or the political speech, court proceedings, in all of which speech is usually performed while standing. In regular services in the *gurdwara*, the lectern is the space from which various items of business or announcements (pertaining to the temple and the congregation) are made briefly after the conclusion of the formal ritual and before people head out for the *langar*, or community luncheon. So that positioning may be one way of gesturing at the connection between the *gurdwara* space and the world outside of it.

The first speaker on this occasion is a man in his early thirties, a friend of the deceased's son, and serves as a master of ceremonies of sorts, providing a short introduction to the proceedings themselves, and also introducing the other speakers. He takes his place alongside the *palkī* housing the scripture, and taking the microphone, begins to address the congregation:

example 5.5

1 *dhan dhan siri Guru Granth Sahib maharaj di paavan pavittar* (inaudible) *juR baiTH ke* 2 *aapan sare, saDe ton sadivi taur te vichar chuke s.* _____ *Singh ji di aatmik shanti lei maharaj di bāṇī dw ruh dasda riha hai*	1 We are gathered here in the exalted presence of illimitable and majestic *Guru Granth Sahib*. 2 We have all heard the testimony of the *bāṇī* of the Guru, for the spiritual peace of the one

3 *uhnaan de charnan de vich ardaas kiti hai ki sache patshah sangat di ardaas parvaan karn te vichri aatma nun aapNe charnan vich nivaas bakhshaN.* 4 *saDa maharaj di hazuri 'ch te dhur ki bāṇī da kirtan sarvan karna, majaraj de paavan pavittar bachnan de naal juRNa* 5 *jithe bāṇī sanun ih kul kainat da gyaan bakhshdi hai* 6 *uhthe saDe duniya 'ch auNa, jithe daivi hukam 'ch hi assin is sansaar ton chale jaNa han* 7 *te sanun* (inaudible) *uhthe daivi hukam di koi ramzia te sanun ehthe tur ke bāṇī de hukam ne, ilahi hukam ne* 8 *uhnan di samajh paindi ai ke banda duniya nun aa ke, jithe aapNe pharz nibhaunda riha* (inaudible) 9 *ih aapNe jeevan da* (inaudible) *uh bhul na jave, te jadon* (inaudible) *te sanun ik ramz jehRi ai, uh ih jaag vich aaunda ai, ki assin duniya de vich, ki karN aae si* 10 *iho jiha gurmat vicharaan de naal, hauli aapaan sanjh pavange.* 11 *main S. _____ Singh nun benti karanga ki uh sangat vich aauN te gurmat vicharaan de naal, aapNe sanjh paauN.*	who has been separated from us forever, S. _____ Singh. 3 Prayers have been conducted at the feet of the Guru that the true king will accept the prayers of the *sangat* and make a place at his lotus feet for the departed soul. 4 In the presence (*hazūrī*) of the Guru, we will serve the kirtan of the original sound (*dhur ki bāṇī*) and will connect with the sacred sayings of the Guru. 5 Where *bāṇī* has blessed us with knowledge of the whole world, 6 there, our arrival in this world, which we will also depart from in accordance with the divine command, 7 and (inaudible) we receive the blessing of the divine command that those who tread this path, the order of *bāṇī*, the sacred order, 8 they realize that we who enter this world, and perform our worldly duties (inaudible) 9 they (inaudible) should not forget (inaudible), and this is a blessing, that it enters into our awareness, the task for which we entered this world. 10 With these thoughts of the Guru, we will slowly become acquainted. 11 I would request S. _____ Singh to come within the *sangat* and share his thoughts on the Guru's words.

The Sikh scripture is generally referred to as *Guru Granth Sahib*. *Granth* is an honorific term for a compendium in the form of a book. In the phrase *Guru Granth Sahib* the term *Granth* is preceded by the term *Guru*, which refers to its exalted status; it is not just any *Granth*, but the living embodiment of the *Guru*, and is followed by the term *Sahib*, which is yet another term of respect. In formal speech, as in the case at hand, references to *Guru Granth Sahib* are often accompanied by several more honorific terms that are generally used exclusively to refer to the

Sikh *Guru*s, their speech and actions, and to the Sikh scripture. We see thus the honorific reference to the presence of the scripture echoed in each of the speeches subsequent to this one, and, indeed, this is a virtually universal feature of any speech that is made within the presence of the scripture in any context.

In the first line of his speech here in example 5.5, the speaker immediately sets up the context of his words to follow and under which auspices he will be speaking. It is the presence (*hazuri*) of the scripture that lends sacredness, solemnity, and authority to the occasion, and this is indicated with the series of epithets preceding and following the phrase *Guru Granth Sahib*, the full phrase used here being *Dhan Dhan Siri Guru Granth Sahib Maharaj*. *Dhan dhan* is a reduplicative term of the common word *dhan* which everyday usage means "wealth". In its reduplicative form as it is used here, however, it is exclusively used to refer to the majesty (literally "wealth wealth"; limitless wealth) of either the Sikh *Guru*s or the Sikh scripture. *Dhan dhan* is then followed by *Siri Guru* (the highest Guru, the Guru without peer); the word *Granth* (book) is then followed by two more honorific epithets; *Sahib* (respected person) and finally *Maharaj* (king of kings).

Equally important to note here in these brief opening lines is the acknowledgment and establishment of the agency of the Sikh scripture. As mentioned earlier, the scripture is regarded by the Sikh community as a living presence, both in literal and figurative senses. In line 3 of the above example, the speaker establishes that "Prayers have been conducted at the feet of the Guru that the true king will accept the prayers of the *sangat* and make a place at his lotus feet for the departed soul". Note that there is a double layer of prayer here; a first set of prayers that the Guru will make a place for the soul of the departed, and a second set of prayers conducted in the presence of the Guru (referring to the *bhog* ceremony that has just been completed) that the first

set of prayers will be accepted by the Guru. As noted earlier, though this is not necessarily a part of Sikh doctrine, this is clearly a set (of nested) supplicatory prayers made towards a divine presence that is regarded as agentive.

The form that this type of supplicatory prayer takes as part of the typical performance of *ardās* brings up a series of questions about presence, animacy, and agency, which, in the case of the Sikh tradition, may be at odds at some points with prevailing doctrinal notions. As the speaker continues here in this example, we get more of a sense of what role these conceptions and the series of assumptions upon which they are predicated play in the ways that Sikhs see and understand the role of the scripture and its agency with regards to their own personal agency and any potentials for development thereof. As we will see, for this speaker, the agency of the scripture (as the *Guru*) is the source from which all other human agencies are derived.

In line 4 here, the speaker mentions that in the presence (*hazuri*) of the scripture (that is, with the scripture as witness), "we have heard the original, unheard sounds". Here he points to the dual nature of the scriptural language in the Sikh conception. It is the language that is codified in the written form of the scripture and also that language which is uttered aloud while reading from the scripture, or performed in musical mode as *kīrtan*. These forms of the scriptural language are also at the same time gesturing towards their original source, the *dhur ki bāṇī* (the "original sound"), also referred to as *anhad śabad*, or the "unheard" or "unstruck" sound that pervades the universe and precedes language, even the language of the scripture in its written and oral forms. Here the speaker is drawing a connection between the immaterial and the material worlds, suggesting that such a connection does in fact exist. The worlds are not exclusive to one another.

The scriptural language is then the human portal to the world of the "unheard sound", and the scripture itself serves as witness to this original, unheard sound. We can think of this as the layering of three different chronotopes; that of the world of the "unheard sound", the world of the scriptural language as embodied in the *saroop,* the physical form and presence of the scripture, and the metapragmatic statement of this relationship in the present moment by the speaker. In the same line, the speaker mentions that through merging with the language of the scripture (here *jurNa*, "to join with"), through reading, recitation, and listening, becoming one with the language of the scripture, the devotee (or here, the congregation) are blessed with "knowledge of the entire universe" (line 5). The scriptural language serves as the portal for devotees between the chronotopic worlds of the immaterial (the unheard sound) and the world of material reality, the manifest language of the scripture, in both its written and oral forms. By embracing, becoming one with, joining with the scriptural language through a variety of different modalities; reading, reciting, listening to the scriptural language, the devotee manifests the "original sound" in the historical time of the present moment.

As the speaker notes here in lines 7-9: "we receive the blessing of the divine command that those who tread this path, the order of *bāṇī*, the sacred order, they realize that we who enter this world, and perform our worldly duties…they…should not forget…and this is a blessing, that it enters into our awareness, the task for which we entered this world". The attunement with *bāṇī*, with the Guru's word, is a way to gain an awareness of ("it enters into our awareness") "the task for which we entered this world". That is, to understand a higher purpose for which we are here on the material plane. Bringing the discussion back to the occasion at hand, the speaker reminds the audience of "our arrival in this world, which we will also depart from in accordance with the divine command" (line 6). The speaker thus suggests an infinite source (that is, a source

not subject to the finitude of individual human existence) that is available to guide us to a higher purpose, if we attune ourselves to it through *gurbāṇī*. In the next section, we examine the speech of one more speaker at this particular funeral service who similarly draws the connection between divine inspiration and worldly struggle.

"Within him the earth and the cosmos come together"

After the introductory speaker whose speech we examine in the previous section, there were two more speakers on this occasion, one more young man in his early thirties, and then an older gentleman in his late fifties. In this section we will look at the speech of the fourth and final speaker of the day, a gentleman in his mid-fifties, a retired teacher, who was a close acquaintance of and a mentor to the son of the deceased. He was someone who was known for his stirring lectures on topics both literary and religious, and, as such, was someone frequently invited to speak in various different kinds of venues, including the occasion at hand. Since he spoke in public on a regular basis, he was well-practiced at the art, and was particularly skillful at speaking extemporaneously and speaking in a manner that was appropriate to the audience at hand. In the excerpts that we examine below, we can see his skill in moving across themes chronotopically, taking the attention and understanding of the audience from the world of the sacred to the world of contemporary struggles, and then back again, employing various techniques, including scriptural quotation, vocabulary associated with the scripture, historical reference, and imagery, to effect this movement.

After taking his position at the front of the congregation, the final speaker of the day, after a brief introduction, begins to relate the deceased, with "man", as a broader, more expansive and inclusive type:

example 5.6

is kar ke, jehRe ik insaan hai, uh ik insaan nahin hunda, uh de andar sara dharti braimanD ‘kaTHe hi kar riha hunda hai.
There, where there is a man, he is not just a man. Within him the earth and the cosmos come together.

Here in example 5.6, the speaker says, A man “is not just a man”; that is, he is not just his individual physical being alone, but is nexus for a coalescence of various forces, including both the earth and the heavens. Here the speaker begins to expand the context of the occasion of the funeral itself; the occasion of the remembrance of a life lived is not just the remembrance of one man alone, the marking of the perishing of one individual’s mortal body. The remembrance also touches upon other things that the man came into contact with, experienced, influenced, and also those things that preceded the man’s life and will remain on even after his death.

The speaker continues a few moments later, now bringing the intentions and actions of the deceased into view:

example 5.7

kiunke dukh-sukh de vich hazaraan de (inaudible) *aa ke bol riha hai. jehRa jang karda, oh hi* (inaudible) *te jalia hoiaa banda, jehRa uh sangarsh karda, udon itihas palTda hai.*
Because from the pains and joys of life, thousands (inaudible) of voices are speaking. The one who is fighting the war (inaudible) the one who is on fire, the one who struggles, that is when history takes a turn.

In this passage in example 5.7, the speaker brings up how the strivings of one individual can make a difference, against the background of pain and injustice that make up the daily experiences of the masses of people. The speaker here is speaking of the specific efforts that the deceased had made to improve life in the small village, and also linking this individual, local struggle with the notion of struggle as a more general phenomenon. He says that when one is driven (*jalia hoiaa*, lit. "on fire") and begins to struggle (*sangharsh karda*), that is when "history takes a turn" (*itihas palTda hai*). It should be noted here that these pronouncements are uttered against a general historical backdrop that is shared and is well understood by the audience. A common theme that recurs in written accounts and speeches on Sikh history is the theme of struggle, and in particular, the theme of martyrdom, that is, giving one's life for the cause of upholding the Sikh tradition, whether in warfare, in conflicts with the state, or in other contexts (see also extended examples of this in chapter 6). As described earlier, a significant portion of the brief daily *ardās* prayer is a recounting of the deeds (and methods of execution), of the most well-known of the Sikh martyrs, especially those who were martyred during the Guru period, that is, during the lifetimes of the Sikh Gurus, from the martyrdom of the fifth Guru Guru Arjan Dev Ji in 1606 through the death of the tenth and final human Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, in 1708.

When the speaker then here employs the word *sangharsh*, which translates as "struggle". *Sangharsh* does not necessarily have a religious connotation, but generally refers to a protracted, righteous struggle of some kind, often a struggle against unjust social practices or norms, which will naturally remind a Sikh audience of Sikh martyrs as well. So the speaker here skillfully brings in the idea of righteousness, which can be inspired by a religious principle, even if it not a religious struggle *per se*, into the context of the life of the deceased, an ordinary citizen. He

seems to suggests here that the struggles of even ordinary citizens in everyday situations are righteous in nature; they are connected to larger battles that have both historical and spiritual implications. In the next lines, the speaker opens his discourse out into a much broader theme, touching on broader political trends, and interpreting them again in light of the spiritual struggle:

example 5.8

ethe main maharaj de ghar nun samajik arthaan 'ch nahin bol riha hai, kiunke sikhi nun vi panjab de kei group*aan he* hijack *kita hoiaa, uh sariaan di sanjhi sikhi nahin hai, Guru da ghar sanjha si, par jehRi uh de utte rajniti hoi, uh de chup te raN sikhi baN chuki hai.*
Here I am not speaking of the house of the Guru (i.e., the Sikh tradition) from the perspective of worldly society. Because Sikhi has been hijacked by various groups in Panjab, that is not the Sikhi that belongs to everyone; the house of the Guru was all together, but when it came into the realm of politics, from quietness Sikhi has now become a battlefield.

In the lines in example 5.8, the speaker is most likely not referring to any one specific incident, but rather to the more general sense, that will be discerned and felt by the audience in light of the political context of Panjab over the last several decades, that religion in general, and the Sikh community in particular, have been under siege, from various angles. When he mentions here that Sikhi has been "hijacked" by various groups in Panjab (the speaker does use the English word "hijack" here), he is referring generally to the instrumental uses to which it has been put, particular for the purposes of short-term political gains. The enactment of Sikh principles, or the preservation of the traditions of the Sikh community are not what these groups have in mind. As the speaker says, the Sikhi that has been "hijacked" "is not the Sikhi that belongs to everyone", it has been transformed from "quietness" into a "battlefield". In these lines, the speaker further coalesces the world of the sacred with the mundane world of everyday

action. The spiritual struggle has taken on political dimensions. As in the examples of the other speakers given above, the speaker here is relating the chronotopes of *akaal* and *desh kaal* together here, moving between the scale of the biographical individual (the deceased) to a community and even society-wide scale. He is in fact laminating these worlds together; the world of historical time is already infused with sacred meaning, if we just develop the eyes to see it. The worldly struggle is already a spiritual struggle as well.

In the final lines of his speech, the speaker again brings together the themes of the immediate events in the life of the deceased with the ongoing, broader struggle of the spirit:

example 5.9

main samajhda han ki is maut de naal jehRe jeevan de sare andar hil-jul paida kita hai, uh hil-jul aapNi changiaii jehRi hai, uh saDe upar suTegi, te assin dharti de ik ardaas vala jeevan paida karnge, ik changa samaj paida karnge.
As I understand it, with this death, which has so shaken everyone (here today), the goodness that can emerge even from such a tumult (*hil-jul*), (that goodness) will be thrown upon us, and we will give birth to a new prayer-inspired life on this earth, we will give birth to a (new) good society.

Here the speaker reminds the congregation that the life of the deceased will not go in vain, that when we understand the meanings of the struggles that he engaged in in his lifetime, we will be able to obtain the fruits of those struggles and apply them to our own lives, our own communities. Referring to the struggles mentioned earlier, the speaker says, that while this death has shaken everyone in the immediate term, the tumult (*hil-jul*) that such an event causes also causes us to think through things differently, to see things again with new eyes. With that new perspective, we will then be able to establish a new, righteous community, based on *ardās* (here meaning "prayer", but the speaker clearly also means it more generally, connoting something

like “mindfulness” or “morality”). When the speaker talks about establishing a new society here, he is also clearly not referring only to the immediate community of the village of the deceased, but rather the Sikh community more broadly. He again moves across scales, from the death of this individual being remembered at this funeral, the efforts and struggles of his life, to the broader scale of the ongoing struggles of the spiritual community, and of society as a whole, in a historical sense that transcends any one particular cohort or generation. He has connected the individual with humankind in general, and the contemporary Sikh community with the ideal, righteous, spiritual community more broadly. Thus he fuses historical and sacred time, the individual and the ideal, the token and the type into one framework.

Conclusion

As we have noted in the several examples examined above, the speeches presented at the occasion of this Sikh funeral in Panjab often fulfil several different important roles simultaneously; first, they offer remembrance and praise for the deceased. This is done by presenting the life of the deceased in the context of spiritual struggle more broadly, or the quest to attain attunement with the sacred word. Those who are recognized as having made an extraordinary commitment to the spiritual life will certainly be remembered as such, but on the occasion of speeches for the dead, all members of the congregation, regardless of their capacity or commitment, are recognized as having a place within the encompassing context of the Sikh spiritual quest.

Second, the speeches serve as an occasion for another reminder to those listening to “remember to remember”, to keep the remembrance of the name (*nām simran*) uppermost in their minds and daily practice. The speeches thus serve in the function of exhortation to re-align

one's life if necessary to the world of *śabad*, of the word. Indeed, the occasion of a death serves as perhaps the most stark reminder of the preciousness and brevity of life, which is regarded as the rarest of opportunities to realize the nature of *nām*, to incorporate it into one's body and mind, and in so doing, to attune oneself to a higher purpose.

The occasion of the Sikh funeral is a location where certain Sikh concepts of life and death, and of the worldly and the divine, are delineated, both through ritual and speech. While Sikh funerals fit well into the broader genre of funerals as occasions for the remembrance of the life of the deceased on the part of the family and community, in the Sikh context, the speech around the event attempts to relate the seemingly irreconcilable poles of the binaries of life/death and worldly/divine. Indeed, the speech seems to say that these binaries do not exist in the ways that are often dictated by ordinary perception or "common" sense. This time of transition between life and death affords the space and occasion for the verbal labor which re-laminates these binaries across scales, back into an encompassing Sikh spiritual framework within which they are reconciled once again.

In the next two chapters, we will continue this ethnographic exploration of speech in Sikh religious contexts, focused on the genre of *kathā*, or oral exegesis on the Sikh scripture. As in the case of the funeral speeches presented in this chapter, we will find that the practitioners in these cases employ a wide variety of linguistic means to create moral worlds and assist in the healing of the body and mind, means that go beyond mere doctrinal or referential meaning.

Chapter 6 Creating (Moral) Worlds with Words: Figurative Calibration across Chronotopic Scales in Sikh *kathā*

Gurdwara *Sīs Ganj Sāhib* is among the most important *itihāsik*, or historical, gurdwaras in New Delhi, and in the Sikh tradition more broadly. The gurdwara was built as a memorial to the ninth Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, who, according to Sikh tradition, was executed on the orders of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in 1675 CE, and thus attained *shahīdī*, or martyrdom at this site. The "*Sīs*" of *Sīs Ganj* refers in a respectful register to "head", as the method of Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution was by beheading. The gurdwara is situated along one of the main roads that runs through the Chandni Chowk area of New Delhi, sometimes referred to as "Old Delhi", an area that has been historically an administrative center and one of the most important commercial areas of the city, as well as being one of its most densely populated. Although it probably had its heyday during the later Mughal administrations several centuries ago, many of its narrow, winding streets and old structures remain, and it is still an area bustling with activity.

Entering the main hall on the second floor of the structure, I am struck immediately by the atmospheric contrast with the streets below. Outside the street leading to the gurdwara on this already oppressively hot early summer day in New Delhi is packed with congested traffic, the nonstop blaring of horns of buses, cars, motorcycles, bicycles, and people moving in all directions, from street to sidewalk and from sidewalk to street, and ubiquitous dust. Crossing the threshold of the gurdwara there is a deep hush, the whole space cooled by the thick white marble walls of the outer structure, and a welcoming, even with the constant, but silent, activity of devotees entering the space to pay their respects. After entering the space myself and paying

respects in front of the scripture, *Guru Granth Sahib* (GGS), by performing *maṭha tēk* (literally "touching one's forehead", i.e., prostrating), I find an out of the way spot to seat myself. It seems that I have arrived just in time for a mid-day performance of *kathā*, or oral exegesis, by a *parchārak*, or "preacher"[36].

I had many opportunities to observe, listen to, and record examples of *kathā* throughout my fieldwork. For the purposes of this chapter, I deliberately chose an example of a "quotidian", that is, an everyday, example of this genre. Of course this genre as a whole is not quotidian; it is highly marked in several ways. It takes place in a space considered sacred by Sikhs (and others), and it is performed by authorized representatives who have some degree of training, expertise, and experience in delivering the genre. As far as the genre goes, however, this is a quotidian example in that this is not a well-known parchārak[37], and this would probably be considered a competent, even moving, but not an especially "virtuosic" performance of *kathā* (Bauman 1992). I chose this type of everyday example to show that the various kinds of linguistic resources and devices that this parchārak employs here, and that I argue characterize this genre, are not dependent on virtuosic performance to produce their effects. In fact, it is the linguistic/semiotic ideologies underlying his employment of linguistic resources, and that are broadly shared by many if not most participants in this genre (and their audiences), that are more consequential than individual virtuosic performance.

[36] The Panjabi word *parchār* is cognate with the English "preach", most likely from a shared IE root. A *parchārak* ("preacher") is one who performs *parchār*.

[37] There is, in fact, an unofficial "star" system among parcharaks, with those who are deemed by their publics to have exceptional rhetorical skill or charisma often receiving more frequent invitations to spaces with higher visibility. Among the most prized assignments are overseas tours, generally to places where Sikhs have settled, including the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore and of course the US. More recently parcharaks have begun to tour gurdwaras that have been constructed in newer places where Sikh migrant laborers have begun to settle and establish communities, including parts of the Middle East such as Dubai, and parts of eastern and southern Europe, such as Poland, Italy, and Spain.



Fig. 6.1 Main hall of Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib, Chandni Chowk, New Delhi, showing at the right of the photo the gold *palki*, or throne, where the Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib* is installed and is attended by a *Granthī*, or scriptural reader (speaking to an assistant to his right), and, seated on the small stage in the left of the photo, at furthest left, a *parchārak*, or preacher, accompanied by two *kirtaniya*s, or devotional hymn singers.

De-centering and re-centering authority in metapragmatic talk

As soon as I am seated, a wizened gentleman of about age seventy with a flowing white beard, seated on the low stage set at a slight angle near the higher platform where the scripture is installed, leans towards a microphone placed in front of him, and begins, in a more stentorian voice than I would have imagined, his approximately thirty-six minute talk. Significantly, in a short preamble, before he enters in to the formal part of this talk at (1:33) (indicated by a "key to performance" (Bauman 1992), transcribed below), he engages almost right away at (00:23) in some metapragmatic framing of his own positionality regarding the authority in this setting:

[In the transcripts in this chapter, I have rendered Panjabi language talk in *italics*, and direct quotations from the Sikh Scripture *Guru Granth Sahib* (GGS), along with translations from GGS, in **bold** font]

example 6.1[38]

antar agan *main nahin kai riha, jo Guru ne kiha, tuhade samne rakh (riha)* ***antar agan bahr tan suah / gal pather kaise athah***
Inside there is a fire…I am not saying this, what the Guru has said, (I am placing) in front of you…**Inside there is a fire, outwardly they apply ashes to their bodies / There is a stone around their neck, how can they cross the great ocean?**[39]

This is followed by another similar example of metapragmatic framing somewhat later in the talk:

example 6.2

gur satgur ka jo sikh akhaye so bhalke uTH har nām dhiaavai *main nahin kai riha, Guru di maryada, Guru da updesh suna riha tuhanun. vichaar tusin aap karen.* ***gur satgur ka jo sikh akhaye so bhalke****…*
One who calls themselves a Sikh of the Guru rises early to recite God's name[40].I am not saying this, I am transmitting the Guru's order, the Guru's message to you. Think on this yourselves. **One who calls themselves a Sikh of the Guru rises early**…[here the parchārak leaves off reciting the second half of the line and allows the audience to complete the line, which many in the audience do]

In examples 6.1 and 6.2, the parchārak engages in similar forms of metapragmatic talk; that of shifting authority from his own person to the Guru, here as embodied in Gurbāṇī, the

[38] All translations from Panjabi and Gurbani in this chapter are mine. Renditions of the transcripts in Gurmukhi script is included in the Appendix.
[39] Quotation from *Guru Granth Sahib* (GGS), p. 267.
[40] GGS, p. 305

words of GGS (Mandair 2021, P. Singh 2008). In both of these cases, the parchārak recites a line of Gurbāṇī, or part of a line, and then interrupts his own recitation to insert his own metapragmatic talk. He clarifies, using the same phrase in both cases: *main nahin kai riha* ("I am not saying this"), that, although it is apparently he who is currently speaking (in whose voice the audience is hearing the lines of Gurbāṇī recited), he is, following Goffman (1981), only serving as the Animator, not the Principal, who is the Guru. Following Bauman's notion of "disclaimers of performance" (1992), I will call these examples of metapragmatic talk, in which the speaker is shifting the participant role of Principal away from themselves, "disclaimers of authority". As Bauman notes, regarding disclaimers of performance, we must be careful about assuming *a priori* connections between form and function in language. These disclaimers, in addition to their apparent denotative content, are also "doing" other things beside what they seem to indicate denotatively.

It is a normative belief among the Sikh *sangat* (congregation) that authority is vested in GGS, a belief that most if not nearly all Sikhs would subscribe to. That brings up the question then of why the parchārak needs to de-center and re-center authority repeatedly in his explicit metapragmatic talk. I would suggest that there are other processes at play here. His need to engage in the repeated metapragmatic labor of these disclaimers of authority indicates that the location of authority vis-à-vis his own speech is in fact not self-evident, at least not to the audience. Of course it is the audience whom he is addressing whose perceptions he needs to clarify. It seems that despite his protestations, his animating speech tends to re-locate the origo of authority to his own person from the audience's perspective, and that the participant roles then have to be explicitly re-established. Or, to put it another way, he is invoking a participant role framework (not Goffman's particularly, of course, but one that seems to be analogous) to de-

center and re-center the authority, but that nominalization, just naming the participant roles denotatively in his own metapragmatic framing, is not enough on its own to undo what his speech is "doing" pragmatically with respect to the location of authority in this situation.

There is another dynamic at play here. There is an implied dialogic process of de-centering and re-centering of authority that is occurring through the *parchārak's* metapragmatic talk itself. Despite the fact that the parchārak provides disclaimers of authority and sets himself up as solely as an animator, in Vološinovian terms, his embedding of quotations from Gurbāṇī in his own reported speech imbues them with evaluative stances that are integral for the interpretive process of his audience. It is indeed through his voice that the authority of Gurbāṇī is rendered manifest to the community of listeners, if only temporarily in this speech context. If the authority is located in GGS, as per the parchārak's disclaimers of authority, and as per normative belief, meaning-making for the audience is located in the dialogism between GGS as the source of Gurbāṇī and the reporting context of the parchārak's animation and evaluation of the text as a form of reported speech. Deictic relations in the gurdwara space are also important in meaning-making, as we will see in the next example.

example 6.3

1 *main tan tuhade charnan da parchārak* 2 *mainun thora faida ho javega, tuhade kujh sudhaar ho javega, te mainun Guru Nanak bhaven*[inaudible] *interest vi aavega* 3 *mera jivan safar hai* 4 *meri* duty *lai hai Guru ne* 5 *par main hai hi parchārak* [inaudible]…*parchārak, na vi Granthi, na* head *Granthi ain, na raagi ain, na raag da kamm mainun kujh nahin aaunda, siddha parchārak…parchārak…siddha parchar*	1 I am a parchārak at your service. 2 I will get some small advantage, you will get some improvement, and hopefully [inaudible] become interested in Guru Nanak's words. 3 This is my life's work. 4 This is the duty the Guru has given me. 5 But I am just a parchārak [inaudible]…a parchārak, not a Granthi, not a head Granthi, not a raagi, I don't know anything about raag, just a simple parchārak…parchārak…just simple preaching.

6 *aega zaroor ai kei vari parchaar karde karde phir bande aukhe ho jande ne, kiunke assin sacchiaan gallan kainian ne, uhnaan nun bardasht nahin hona* 7 *te saDe mu(n) chon sacchiaan gallan nikal jandiaan ne, kiunke Guru de kol baithe, sacchiaan gallan nikal jandiaan ne…*	6 It will come to pass for sure that preaching again and again [i.e., frequently, continuously] some people get angry, because we are going to speak the truth, and they won't be able to take it. 7 True words come out of our mouths, because we are seated next to the Guru, true words come out…

Shortly after example 6.2, the parchārak again engages in another, this time extended, stretch of metapragmatic talk, in example 6.3. In this example he indicates that in his own self-assessment he is "just a parchārak…just a simple parchārak" (line 6.3.5). This is yet another way of positioning himself vis-à-vis GGS, through self-deprecation. In the last lines of this this stretch of talk, in lines 6-7 he says, "some people get angry, because we are going to speak the truth, and they won't be able to take it", and, remarkably, in the final line: "True words come out of our mouths, because we are seated next to the Guru, true words come out…" He again indicates that GGS is the source of the authority of his speech, but this time, instead of asserting the location of authority through a participant role framework (characterizing himself as merely an animator), in this case he diagrams a deictic relationship.

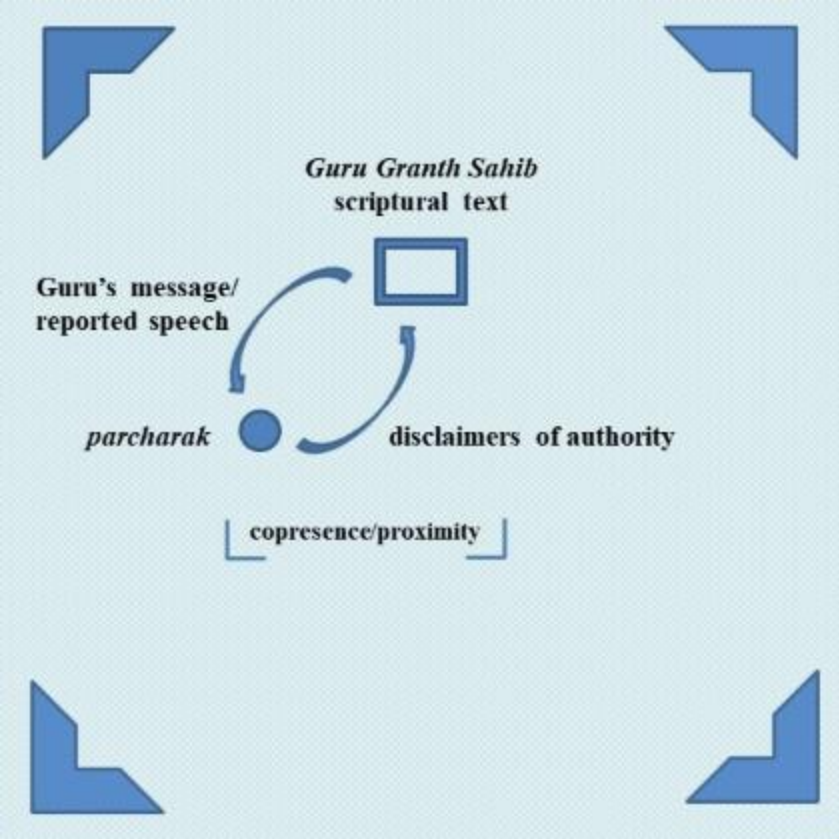


Fig. 6.2 Diagram of the dialogic relationship of authority between the parchārak and the Sikh scriptural text, including both participant role framing and deictic positioning.

Because "we [he and his fellow parchāraks] are seated next to the Guru, true words come out". That is to say, in this case, it is not only Gurbāṇī in its discursive form that lends authority to his speech, but the co-presence with and proximity to GGS as a *saroop*, that is, its physical form. This co-presence and proximity to GGS, particularly in a gurdwara setting is known in the Sikh tradition as *hazūrī*, which can be glossed also as simply "presence". In slightly later part of the talk, he says:

example 6.4

satgur de charn sparsh karne chahe panj mint baiTHe. baiTHe zaroor…satgur de sangat ton bina, kithe DHoi nahin hove.

> You must go and touch the feet of the true Guru [i.e., enter into the presence of GGS in the gurdwara], even if you sit for five minutes. But sit for sure…without the *sangat* (congregation) of the true Guru, you won't be able to find shelter anywhere.

So, there are benefits not only to listening to Gurbāṇī in its spoken and sung forms, but also merely being in the presence of the embodiment of Gurbāṇī, in the form of GGS, ideally in a gurdwara setting in the company of other seekers of truth, is beneficial on its own. It does not just lend authority to the speech of the parchārak, but it is also the impetus for "true words" to "come out" in the speech of the parchārak merely as a result of that very co-presence.

Figure 6.2 depicts in diagrammatic form the dialogic relationship of authority between the parchārak and GGS. As the parchārak animates GGS in its form as text through forms of reported speech, authority tends to get re-centered in the person of the parchārak as the origo of the uttered speech. The parchārak then engages in forms of metapragmatic speech, specifically what I call disclaimers of authority, characterizing himself as "merely" the animator of Gurbāṇī in its spoken form, and explicitly locating the role of principal in GGS, thereby de-centering his own acquired authority and re-centering authority back in GGS. The dialogic process begins again with the next utterance of reported speech. In addition, the mere co-presence with and proximity to GGS which is the ultimate source of truth and authority imbues his own speech with "true words".

If we look at the diagram, we see also that the gurdwara space is set up in such a way to facilitate certain kinds of practice around GGS. First, the physical form of the text is located in such a way that devotees can approach it from and walk around it on all sides. One can also sit in virtually any space in the hall, in *hazūrī* with, that is, in the presence of, GGS. Behind the scripture is a place for a *Granthī*, to sit and read aloud from the scripture on select ritual

occasions, and the low platform where the parchārak is seated, parchār as well as *kirtan*, or devotional singing, can also be performed (as pictured in figure 6.1). That is to say, the gurdwara space is set up in order that practitioners can engage with the scripture in these various semiotic modalities. Meaning-making with the context of the gurdwara is then centered around these various forms of engagement with GGS, not merely in doctrinal contexts.

One thing that the parchārak does not mention in regard to what lends him authority is the setting of the gurdwara itself, and who is authorized to sit on the stage where he is seated and to perform katha in this public setting and in this historical gurdwara. This parchārak, as is the case of most parchāraks, particularly those who perform katha in historical gurdwaras such as Sis Ganj, is part of the retinue of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), the governing body for most of the Sikh historical gurdwaras. Most of these parchāraks are graduates of one of the "missionary" colleges in Panjab[41], either Shaheed Missionary College in Amritsar, or Gurmat Gian Missionary College in Ludhiana. There is an egalitarian ideal within Sikhism, under which anyone theoretically can perform *kathā* in a gurdwara setting, and seeing *kathā* performed by "amateur" parchāraks (that is, knowledgeable but not specially trained or certified) is not entirely uncommon in local gurdwaras. In reality, however, someone without the further ratification and authorization of formal training and approval by the SGPC would be unlikely to be allowed to perform *kathā* in this more prominent setting of a large, historical gurdwara.

[41] The Sikh "missionary" colleges in Panjab, most of which were established in the early 1900s, are something of a misnomer, as very few if any of them actually engage in anything like the "missionary" work as in the Christian tradition, that is, since Sikhism generally does not have tradition of proselytizing, they do not actively seek converts, the activities of the graduates of these colleges are more along the lines of parchār, or preaching, as in the examples in this chapter, and other forms of education in Sikh history, scriptural reading, and so on.

If we are to take the parchārak at his own (metapragmatic) word, that the locus of *ultimate* authority is not in his own speech, but in GGS, the type of authority that he invokes is of a particular kind from among the types of authority that are most frequently invoked when the present speaker in a speech event de-centers their own speech and displaces authority onto another source, whether that source is a sacred text, spirits, ancestors, or the voice of "tradition" in general (cf. Dubois 1992; Keane 1997, 2004; Kuipers 1990). Unlike the Vedas, that for the most part are not attributed to specific authors, the authorship of the compositions of GGS are known and attested. There is in fact a convention for specifying the authorship of the compositions authored by the Sikh Gurus; each one is assigned an appellation taking the formula [*mahala* : ordinal number], *mahala* usually interpreted as meaning "house". So that the appellation *mahala pehla* ("first house") would indicate a composition by the first Guru, Guru Nanak, *mahala dūja* ("second house") by the second Guru, Guru Angad Dev, and so on.

Although GGS, and Gurbāṇī as a whole, is generally conceived of as representing one voice, or one *jōt*, one light, its compositions can be attributed to individual authors. Unlike, say in the case of Lempert's Tibetan monks, who invoke an unspecified voice of "tradition" through particular linguistic markers in their speech (Lempert 2007, 262), when Gurbāṇī is invoked, it can be (and usually is) attributable to specific historical individuals. As I will show in the remainder of this paper, the parchārak enacts several forms of chronotopic lamination, for instance, of the ideal world of Gurbāṇī with the worlds of historical events. His own protestations notwithstanding, the words of the parchārak are "doing" many things, and are an important part of the meaning-making in this context.

maryada **and "natural" order**

After a short preamble, which included the first instance of metapragmatic talk in example 6.1 above, the parchārak begins the formal portion of his talk:

example 6.5

karo man diaan birtiaan ikkaagar, sis nivaiye, fateh gajaiye, waheGuru ji ka khalsa, waheGuru ji ki fateh!
Bring your mind's faculties together as one [concentrate!], let us bow our heads, and declare victory, the Khalsa belongs to WaheGuru, as does the victory!

In its English translation this appears to be a rather dramatic opening, but it is in fact a standard formula, a "key to performance" (Bauman 1992) that frames the talk. He follows this immediately by introducing what seems to be the main theme of this talk:

example 6.6

har cheez di maryada ai. is sharir di vi maryada ai. aur sharir ji ne banaiai, oh di vi, oh vi maryada vich hai. ih jehre sada sharir hai, ih vi maryada vich chalega tan THik ravega.
Every thing is in *maryada*. This body is also in *maryada*. And the one who made this body, is also in *maryada*. This (thing) that is our body, if it will stay in *maryada*, then it will remain well.

The concept of *maryada* has a semantic range that can be situated somewhere between "order", "custom", or "discipline", depending on the specific referent and the scale at which the term is being applied. The term *maryada* is related to the term *hukam*, which generally refers to "cosmic order". The two terms can be thought of as sharing a semantic field, with *maryada* generally referring to human social order, or human forms of conduct, but sometimes used to refer to a more generalized, "natural" order, that includes plants, animals, and other natural phenomena. The cosmic order that *hukam* refers to does not refer merely to natural phenomena,

such as the motion of planetary bodies, but rather the underlying "life force" that enables the planetary bodies to remain in orderly motion. *Hukam* can also be used on occasion to refer to the order of natural phenomena, however. So the two terms have an overlapping semantic range, which can be diagrammed something like this:

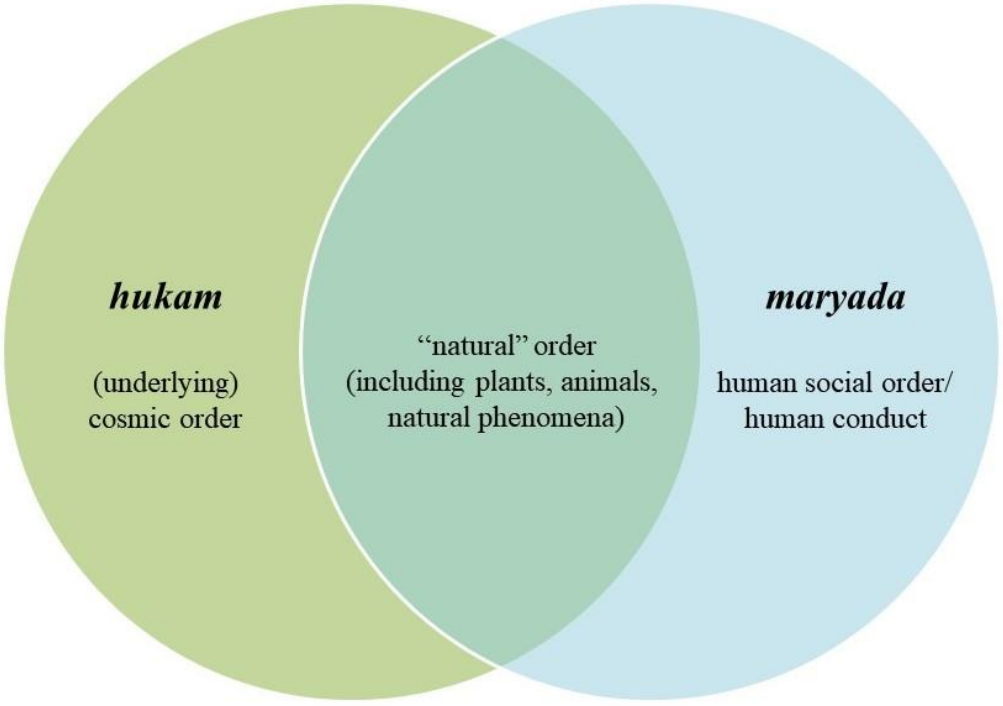


Fig. 6.3 Semantic ranges of *hukam* and *maryada*

Another way to put it would be to say that though the two terms have an overlapping semantic range, *hukam* is generally not used to refer to merely human-scale orders, while *maryada* is generally not used to refer to the generalized, underlying cosmic order. It is important to have a sense of these terms and their relationship because below we will begin to examine how the parchārak through his talk begins to laminate these different chronotopic scales, from the cosmic order through the "natural" order (order of nature), to human-scale

orders, as he generates a system of characterological figures through the use of voicing contrasts and other elements.

In this next example, he begins to draw these scales into comparison. Here we see him articulate some of the ambiguity between the terms *maryada* and *hukam* and the ways that their semantic ranges overlap:

example 6.7

sharir maryada vich hovega tan THik ravega. akal purkh ne jo kujh vi braimaṇḍ vich banaiya, maryada vich hai, ih surj maryada vich hai, ya main ihdan kai devan, surj hukam de vich hai, uh nun maryada kahinde. parhde roj tusin ***hukmai andar sab ko bahr hukam no koe***.
If the body remains within maryada, then it will remain well. Whatever God has made in this universe, it all follows maryada. The sun also follows maryada, or let me say it like this, the sun follows hukam, that is (also) called maryada. You all recite every day: **all are within hukam, there is nothing outside of hukam**[42].

Here he likens the order that the body should follow in order to remain in a healthy state to the order of the sun (referring here to the sun's motion, which follows underlying physical laws). He says, "The sun also follows *maryada*, or let me say it like this, the sun follows *hukam*, which is (also) called *maryada*". He then quotes a short line from Gurbāṇī, a very well-known line that appears at the beginning of the first composition in GGS: "all are within *hukam*, there is nothing outside of *hukam*"; that is, everything in the universe follows the cosmic order. The human social order, *maryada*, should ideally emulate the cosmic order, *hukam*, that guides natural phenomena such as the motion of the planetary bodies, including the sun. When the body follows this order, then "*THik ravega*", it "stays well".

[42] GGS, p. 1

In examples 6.8 and 6.9 the parchārak establishes the importance of *maryada* as religious conduct, and begins to outline a novel kind of rubric within which to categorize religious traditions. Instead of the conventional frameworks that distinguish religious traditions according to systems of belief, allegiance to scriptural texts, doctrinal, sectarian, linguistic, territorial, or other boundaries, he asserts that the underlying concept of *maryada* informs "all of the religions that are in existence" (*jinne vi dharm chale ne*). In doing so, he presents a framework that puts emphasis on a commitment to a certain kind of praxis (in the form of *maryada*) over philosophical or doctrinal system of belief. In these cases he is referring more specifically to *maryada* in the form of religious conduct.

example 6.8

ih puri kainat, puri shristi jehrhi hai, ih vi maryada vich hai, ethe huN main benti karan, jine vi dharm chale ne, kujh maryada karke chale ne. jine vi dharm ne. sare dharm change ne. jithe main stage *te baiTHan, main khulli gall kar riha han. sare dharm change ne, sare devi devte, sabh change ne. sabh change*.
This entire universe, all of creation, also follows maryada. Here I beg your pardon, all the religions that have been started, they have started because of maryada. All the religions. They are all good. Where I am seated here on the stage, I am speaking to you openly. All of the religions are good, all of the goddesses and gods, they are all good, all good.

He notes above in example 6.8 that "all of the religions are good, all of the goddesses and gods, they are all good". The reference to "goddesses and gods" is clearly a reference to the Hindu tradition(s). Sikhism and Islam both tend to abjure the worship of idols, a stance that has often put them in conflict with Hindu traditions in the subcontinent, in which the production, installation, and worship of idols, is a regular part of praxis. The parchārak, however, here diminishes these differences. Within this framework that he is establishing, following the *maryada* of one's religious traditions, for example worshipping gods and goddesses if that is part

of the *maryada* of the tradition, is more fundamentally important than whatever differences might exist at what he regards as surface levels of doctrine. That is to say, following *some* form of *maryada* is more important than *which* form of *maryada* one follows.

example 6.9

ik benti kar devan, uhnan dharman de jehrhe maryada hai, uh de bahut change ne, par lokan ne maryada manni nahin. bahut changi maryada. har dharm de vich maryada chali hai, har dharm jehrha hai, sach de (*paira*) *de riha, har dharm, allha, parmatma de nal, ram de nal, sanun mila riha, har dharm sacch da sandesh de riha, har dharmih vi kahi riha sare bande prabhu de ne. ih* Bible *parh ke dekhlai.*
I beg your pardon, the *maryada*s of those religions, they are very good, but the people do not follow them, very good *maryada*. Every religion follows *maryada*, every religion that there is describing the truth, all of the religions are uniting us with Allah, with Paramatma, with Ram, every religion is giving the message of truth, and every religion is saying this: that all people belong to God. Read the Bible and see.

Here the parchārak makes more explicit reference the traditions that he is bringing together under the rubric of *maryada*. He writes that "every religion follows *maryada*" and that "all of the religions are uniting us with Allah, with Paramatma, with Ram". The names of God that he invokes here clearly index the religious traditions that they are most associated with; Allah of course points to Islam, and Ram to Hinduism. The Sikh scripture GGS invokes many different names for God, including both Allah and Ram, and while Paramatma is a term that is found commonly in both Sikh and Hindu traditions. In light of the overall context of his talk, it seems that the parchārak is using that term to index Sikhism here. That is, he is saying that all three of these major subcontinental religions, Islam, Sikhism, and Hinduism, all follow *maryada*, and all are uniting their followers with God. He also brings Christianity into the comparison, saying, "Read the Bible and see".

Super-categories of religions are of course quite common; we might think of the categories of Judeo-Christian, or Abrahamic religions, or of Dharmic religions (generally denoting religions that are autochthonous to the subcontinent and are deemed to subscribe to the notion of dharma, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism). What makes this parchārak's formulation interesting is that in employing the concept of *maryada*, he establishes a connection across the familiar and conventional Abrahamic/Dharmic divide, a divide which is also often associated with territories, languages, cultural formations, and even "civilizations". We might think of this formulation based on the concept of *maryada* in contrast with the notion of Sikhism presented by Cust, which we examined in chapter 3. There we noted that Cust's formulation of Sikhism was as a religion that was associated in an essential way with a group of people that were bound to a particular territory (Panjab), and language (Panjabi).

Someone might level the criticism that this is merely an idealized, perhaps even a utopian, vision of religions as being essentially "the same", one that does not pay attention to important doctrinal or pragmatic differences, and one that does not align with sociopolitical or historical realities on the ground. However, religious spaces and occasions of religious speech are often places where alternative chronotopes are imagined and enacted in various ways. As I will show through the remainder of this chapter, the parchārak's employment of the concept of *maryada* as a common form of praxis, rather than focusing on conventional shibboleths of differentiation (doctrine, language, place), allow him to engage in complex forms of chronotopic lamination and indexical calibration to generate new kinds of characterological figures. This vision is, far from idealist or non-materialist, deeply imbricated with events and with history, however not the kind of history that is predicated on the familiar conventional chronotopic coordinates of "time" and "place". The distinction he makes is then between those who follow

maryada and those who do not, that is, righteous or non-righteous behavior, rather than along the lines of nominalized "religion", language, or ethnicity.

"Such a vast history"

In the next part of his talk, having gradually moved from the widest scale, that of *hukam*, through the *maryada* of natural phenomena, to the underlying common *maryada* of the world's religious traditions, the parchārak gets more specific, turning his attention to the *maryada* of the Sikh tradition in particular. He begins by describing the *maryada* that the Sikh Gurus have specified for the Sikh Panth, quoting a very well-known line from *Jap Ji Sahib*, the daily morning prayer:

example 6.10

*main ethe ik benti vi karan, Guru Sahiban ne vi saDe vaste kujh maryada banai. Guru Nanak maharaj ne saDe vaste kujh maryada kaim kitiaan. Guru ram das ne saDe vaste kujh maryada banaiaan ne. aur sabh ton pehli maryada hai amrit vele jagNa nitnem karNa. **amrit vela sach nao vaDiaai vichar / karmi aavai kaprha nadri mokh duaar**.*
I would like to ask for your pardon here as well; the Gurus also created *maryada* for us; Guru Nanak Maharaj established *maryada* for us, Guru Ram Das created *maryada* for us. And the first *maryada* is to rise at dawn and say the daily prayers. **Rise at dawn and contemplate the true name. With God's grace we find the door to liberation**[43].

When the line "Rise at dawn and contemplate the true name. With God's grace we find the door to liberation", perhaps one of the best known and most often recited lines in GGS, is uttered, the parchārak slows down his cadence, emphasizing each word separately, and much of the crowd joins in. In the case of this quotation from Gurbāṇī, as in most of the other cases in this discourse, there is no additional explanation of the denotational-referential content of the line or

[43] GGS, p. 2

lines. I counted fifteen lines or couplets quoted through the entire thirty-six minute talk, five of them clustered together in the final minute or so in the closing remarks, and in none of the cases did he explain the meaning of any of the lines or parts of the lines in isolation.

Part of the reason could be that many of these lines are well known to much of the audience, and in light of this assumed knowledge, they do not require much in terms of additional explication from him. From my interactions with interlocutors, however, persons with the kind of knowledge that would enable them to be familiar with most or all of the quotations recited in this sample of talk, are rather rare; that is, most people would probably need some kind of commentary to understand at least some of the lines. It could also be that forms of meaning-making around GGS are not primarily predicated on denotational-referential content. I argue here, and will show through the remainder of this chapter, that his primary method of establishing a meaningful context for his audience is through the invocation of characterological figures that inhabit chronotopes that the parchārak then juxtaposes, bringing a set of voices into proximity for explicit comparison. This form of meaning-making can make use of denotational-referential content, but it is not predicated upon it. In the next example, the parchārak continues to indexically ground Sikh *maryada*, this time invoking "history":

example 6.11

ihnan vaDa itihas, tuhade gursikhi da. hai na itihas? Guru di maryada. Guru di maryada vich baiTHe hoe ne, sis te aara chale, maryada. meri Guru di dassi maryada. ih sharir chala jave kiunke sharir te ik din jana ai…sikhi na jave.
Such a vast history, the history of the Gursikhs. Is this not a history? The *maryada* of the Guru. Seated in the Guru's *maryada*, while his head is being sawed, *maryada*. This body can go, because it is going to go one day…but Sikhi should not disappear.

With this stretch of talk, the parchārak begins to laminate the world of *maryada*, the forms of religious praxis ordained by the Guru that are aligned with wider scale natural processes, and ultimately with *hukam*, the cosmic order, with "history", action that takes place within human scales of time and space. He uses the word *itihas,* which is generally translated as "history", though the term may be predicated on a different form of historiography than that the one (or ones) most familiar to us (more on these different notions of history below). He says, "Such a vast history, the history of the Gursikhs" and asks "Is this not a history?" He brings two chronotopic forms together in the same line, "Seated in the Guru's *maryada*, while his head is being sawed, *maryada*" (I will explain the significance of this astonishing image below momentarily). These images juxtapose the ideal world of the Sikh following *maryada* with the present, material world. One thing should perdure through this chronotopic encounter: "This body can go, because it is going to go one day…but Sikhi should not disappear". The material world is subject to decay, but Sikhi[44] "should not disappear". How does or how will Sikhi persist? The next several examples put Sikhism and its ideal forms (*gurmat,* the Guru's teachings, *maryada,* the Guru's path) in direct confrontation with agonistic events of history.

I had some occasional visitors from time to time during my stays in New Delhi and Amritsar who had some familiarity with Sikhism, but had not visited the larger historical Sikh gurdwaras that could be found in in the cities marking important events in Sikh history. On the occasions that I accompanied them on visits to historical gurdwaras, they were often struck by the arresting, explicit images of brutal hardship and torture that we sometimes encountered if we wandered over into a room where these images were housed. Several of the historical gurdwaras, such as Sis Ganj and Bangla Sahib in New Delhi, and Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar, have what

[44] "Sikhi" is an indigenous term for the Sikh tradition, one that emphasizes its processual and pragmatic aspects, versus the nominalized (ultimately colonial) "Sikhism", a term that is rarely heard in non-English contexts.

are known as “museums”, which are generally gallery spaces that feature mostly oil paintings of scenes from Sikh history, and in particular, scenes of Sikh martyrs in their moments of martyrdom. On numerous occasions my colleagues remarked to me what they felt to be a jarring juxtaposition; of the sublime sounds of the Sikh *kirtan* (devotional singing) that could be heard within the main hall, and these arresting images nearby.



Fig. 6.4 Images of Sikh *shahīd*s (martyrs) are commonly found in “museums” in historical Sikh gurdwaras. The images here are of, clockwise from bottom left, Bhai Deyala, Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Seeing these images through the eyes of colleagues who had never seen them before caused me to think about them differently. I had seen these images most of my life, in gurdwara spaces, in books, I had heard the tales retold countless times. Printed reproductions of these images are often produced in sets of a dozen or so, and many people also have them in their

homes. I remember finding them rather gruesome when very young, probably as a pre-adolescent, but over the years, as they were so ubiquitous, I simply got used to them and rarely reflected on them much until these more recent encounters. These discussions with colleagues underlined the point that images (or texts, or forms of discourse) will be read differently according to one's own (linguistic/semiotic) ideological surround. The parchārak's discourse that we are analyzing here provides some insight into how these images (both visual and discursive) are integrated into an overall semiotic system that creates meaning through the lamination and calibration of several different perspectives, perspectives that may seem at odds, such as the cosmic and the pragmatic, or the sublime and the violent. Much of the parchārak's talk is centered around the very reconciliation of this multivocal array that can then be taken up and evaluated in a new way.

example 6.12

1 *kiha si mati das nun dharm badal de musalman ho ja, tainun cchaDD diange.* 2 *kahinde nahin. mere Guru ne maryada dassi ai, main* [inaudible] *karke, main sikh han, sikh ravanga, sikh maranga. sikh maranga.* 3 *maryada.* 4 ***aisa koe hai banda?**, sis te aara chale te si na kare?* 5 ***hai koi aisa?**, sara sharir runh de nal bania hoiya, pairan ton agg laggi hoi ai, tharhpan nahin hai. kurlaT nahin hai. virlap nahin hai.**hai koi aisa?*** 6 ***hai koi aisa?**, saf ubldi deg dikhai de rahihai, ubl riha pani.* 7 *gallan karniaan bariaan sakalliaan ne, sikhi* [inaudible] *aukhahai. gallan karniaan bahut saukhiaan ne.*	1 It was said to Mati Das, "Change your religion, become a Muslim, and we will let you go". 2 He said, "No, my Guru has given me my *maryada*, I [inaudible]…I am a Sikh, I will remain a Sikh, I will die a Sikh. I will die a Sikh". 3 Maryada. 4 **Is there any person like this?** The saw is sawing his head, and not a sound is uttered? 5 **Is there anyone like this?** The whole body is wrapped in cotton, his feet are on fire, not a quiver, not a scream, not a shout. **Is there anyone like this?** 6 **Is there anyone like this?** The boiling cauldron is clearly visible, the water is boiling! 7 Talking is very easy, being a true Sikh is difficult. Talking is very easy.

In example 6.12 the parchārak presents discursively some of those vivid and explicit images typical of Sikh martyrologies described above, as a way of illustrating Sikh *maryada* as imbricated in historical events. Here, he is specifically referencing incidents that, according to Sikh memory, surrounded the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur at the hands of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb at Chandni Chowk in Delhi in 1675 CE. The references to the three figures in this transcript example are to the companions of Guru Tegh Bahadur, who were executed in his presence before Guru Tegh Bahadur was himself executed. They refer to, respectively, Bhai Mati Das, who was executed by being sawn in half, Bhai Sati Das, who was executed by being wrapped in cotton and set ablaze, and Bhai Deyala, who was executed by being boiled alive. He only names one of the figures in this incident, Bhai Mati Das, in the above example 5.12, but it would not be lost on the audience that this story is being retold in Gurdwara Sis Ganj itself, the very site of the memorial of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom.

He begins this segment with a short dialogue in the form of reported speech between an unnamed Mughal authority and Bhai Mati Das. Bhai Mati Das is told that if converts to Islam that his life will be spared. He replies: "No, my Guru has given me my *maryada*…I will die a Sikh". The parchārak then interjects the single word: "*maryada*", as if to say *this* is an example of following *maryada*; continuing to follow and remaining committed to *maryada* even under threat of death, and even up to the moment of death itself. But how do we move from "mere" death to its characterization as martyrdom? How to maintain this significance across different contexts, across time and space? In the lines that follow, the parchārak makes what I argue is a crucial move, from presenting specific instances in history (token-level) to establishing general exemplars (type-level) (Silverstein 2005). These type-level exemplars then serve as "figures of personhood" (Agha 2005) forms of "typification" (Keane 2011, 174) that create recognizable,

durable personae that are then invocable, repeatable, and capable of emulation and other forms of interaction and evaluation.

In lines 4-6, the parchārak sets up a series of parallel lines, punctuating each with the same query (which I have underlined and placed in bold): “Is there anyone like this?”. Each of the lines 4-6 begins with this query and is followed by the image of the martyrdom of the three respective figures:

ex. 6.12.4: “**Is there any person like this?** The saw is sawing his head, and not a sound is uttered?”

ex. 6.12.5: “**Is there anyone like this?** The whole body is wrapped in cotton, his feet are on fire, not a quiver, not a scream, not a shout. **Is there anyone like this?**

ex. 6.12.6: “**Is there anyone like this?** The boiling cauldron is clearly visible, the water is boiling!

The parchārak provides the materials for evaluation through the juxtaposition of the voices of Mughal authority and of the shahid Bhai Mati Das, at first as token utterances in an instance of dialogue between the two. The repeated query “Is there anyone like this?” then invites the audience to take up, compare, and evaluate the characterological figures that are presented, and, in fact, complete those figures by adding their own assessment. The invitation to comparison brings the audience themselves into the array of voices that the parchārak has arranged. The juxtaposition of voices that the parchārak presents here, by “giving tacit moral intuitions explicit form” (Keane 2011, 168), invites the audience to complete the moral evaluation. Figures of personhood are generated when the audience contemplates the question, “Is there anyone like this?” in relation to the images presented of Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, and Bhai Deyala, converting them from biographical individuals in a particular historical

instance into "types" of persons, whose juxtaposition in new frameworks can then also engender further moral intuitions.

kēs as indexical icon

example 6.13

ai Bhai taru Singh jehrha ih sikh kirdaran de nalih milia. gall kiha ya te musalman ban ja nahin tan tere kēs kaT diange. kēs kaTn, saaf itihas. jinaan kēsan di ajj aap beadbi kar lain. aap bande ja ki nai nun kahinde ne ai…meri dhari kaT de meri kēs vi kaT de. jo Guru di maryada saDi sabh ton vaDDi dat Guru ne sanun ditti hai, kēs is Guru di moh hai Bhai. ih kēs aiven na samjho. ih kēs Guru di moh hai.
This Bhai Taru Singh met them with Sikh character. It was said, "Either become a Muslim or we will cut your *kēs*". *Kēs* cut, it is a clear history. That *kēs* that we are ourselves desecrating these days. Men are going themselves to the barber and telling them…cut my beard, and cut my *kēs* also. Which is the most precious gift of our *maryada* that the Guru has given us. This *kēs* is the Guru's love, brother. Don't think of it as just any thing. This *kēs* is the Guru's love.

In example 6.13, the parchārak begins to outline the significance of *kēs*, which in the Sikh tradition, refers to the unshorn hair of the Gursikh, one who has committed themselves to following the Guru's *maryada*. In this example, he begins to tell the story of Bhai Taru Singh, who, as a prisoner of the Mughals, was given the option of converting to Islam or having his *kēs* cut. He then interrupts his own story (he returns to it shortly, in example 6.14 below) by interjecting a commentary on contemporary Sikhs who are "desecrating" their own *kēs* these days, i.e., by themselves having their *kēs* cut. He says further, "Don't think of it as just any thing. This *kēs* is the Guru's love". In this section we will examine *kēs* as a crucial sign that the parchārak uses to indexically calibrate figures of personhood between different chronotopes.

The term *kēs* forms part of a Panjabi honorific register of terms that are used to refer to parts of the body, and sometimes other possessions, of saintly or otherwise highly respected

persons. *Kēs* is thus differentiated from *bāl*, which denotes "hair" in its more ordinary sense, or the hair of ordinary person. The term *sīs*, which we encountered earlier in the chapter in reference to Gurdwara Sīs Ganj, the setting for this talk, likewise occurs in this register as an honorific term for the ordinary term *sir*, denoting "head".

gloss	**ordinary register**	**honorific register**
hair	*bāl*, *vāl*	*kēs*, *kēsh*
head	*sir*	*sīs*
foot	*pair*	*charn*

Fig. 6.5 A sampling of terms that form an honorific register of Panjabi used to refer to parts of the body (and sometimes other possessions) of saintly or otherwise exalted or highly respected figures.

In the context of Sikh praxis, however, *kēs* is also associated with a further series of indexical connections, beyond being part of an honorific register. In fact, I argue that it is not the mere fact of being (unshorn) "hair", but the fact of its deep indexicality that makes it the site of agonistic struggle. As Keane (2003b, 2018) has noted, material objects without an attendant semiotic ideology through which to construe them can be, and often are, taken to be "merely" objects. Additionally, as Hanks notes, indexicality is not a supra-cultural phenomenon, but must be "defined relative to local standards of copresence and relevance" (2000, 125). In his speech, the parchārak makes use of the understanding of "hair" as *kēs* to laminate the characterological figures that he generates across chronotopic scales.

Kēs is a part of a set of five items that are worn on the person of an initiated Khalsa Sikh, known colloquially as the five "Ks", as the name of each begins with /*k*/. The other four items

(*kaṛa*, iron bracelet; *kanga*, small wooden comb, *kirpan*, a short sword, *kachera*, a type of breeches) are "material" objects (though with special significance) in the normal understanding of the term. All of the five Ks are material in form, but *kēs* is the only one of the five that is a part of the body. The significance of *kēs* is often described by Sikhs as a sign of being attuned to the "natural" order. We can describe it in semiotic terms as being in an *iconic* relation with *hukam*, the cosmic order. That is, *kēs*, as unshorn hair, represents the "life energy" of things that live and grow, and processes that occur, importantly, without human intervention. To decide to leave one's hair unshorn then is to represent iconically the processual nature of *hukam*.

Kēs also has indexical dimensions, making it an *indexical icon*. Leaving hair unshorn as a result of following the Guru's *maryada* indexes the teachings of the Guru, as manifested in *maryada* (i.e., praxis), as well as the presence of the Guru through those teachings. *Kēs* also embodies further orders of indexicality (*n*+1…) (Silverstein 2003) in that the keeping of *kēs* serves as a sign both to oneself, and to others, of a commitment to aligning oneself with the teachings of the Guru, by following *maryada*. It thus presupposes the teachings of the Guru, while also entailing new contexts by serving as a further sign of *maryada*, and the presence of the Guru, a sign that can in turn be taken up by others in signaling their own alignment, and so on, in a chain of semiosis.

Like linguistic signs, *kēs* encompasses both individual and social dimensions. *Kēs* is construed as significant through a socially shared semiotic ideology, but the decision to leave one's hair unshorn, and thus to align oneself with the Guru's *maryada* and with other Gursikhs, present and past, can also be taken as a sign of individual agentive subjectivity. That is to say, aligning oneself with the collectivity of Khalsa Sikhs is voluntary, and comes through some form of active effort, mediated by reflexive thought; it is not a state merely conferred based on any *a*

priori characteristics, forms of kinship, and so on. Conversely, the decision to cut one's *kēs* can be taken as a sign of a severing of one's connection (or potential connection) to the Guru by making a conscious decision not to follow *maryada*, and thus also separating oneself from the community of Gursikhs, those who have made the decision to align themselves with *maryada*. This action is equally voluntary.

As the parchārak notes in example 6.13 above, by devaluing, or disregarding the semiotic ideology around *kēs* that gives it its significance ("Don't think of it as just any thing. This *kēs* is the Guru's love") *kēs* is becoming, in the contemporary moment, something that "we are ourselves desecrating". In the final speech example of this chapter, 6.14, the parchārak returns to the story of the martyrdom of Bhai Taru Singh, a story in which *kēs* becomes a critical sign in the indexical calibration of both figures of personhood and chronotopes:

example 6.14

1 *kēs.* 2 *Bhai taru Singh nun kiha tere kēs vaDH diange.* 3 *ih kēsan vala juDa sanun deve.* 4 *uh pata ki kahinda?* 5 *kahinde main kēs tuhade havale nahin karanga, meri tusin khoprhi te DHa sakde ho, par main aapne kēs nahin kaTn dianga.* 6 *sari hairan ne.* 7 *gall hairani vali hai?* 8 *kēs kaTTe jan te manukh bach sakda hai, khoprhi kaTTi javegi te kidaan bachega?* 9 *kiha jalaad ne* "*khoprhi kaTTi javegi kiun kaTTvana ai khoprhi, kēs kaTTva lai*". 10 *kahinda,* "*nahin. ihnan kēsan de vich Guru Gobind Singh maharaj de amrit de cchakke pe hoe han, main ihnan nun nahin kaTTn dianga*". 11 *te sadh sangat ji,lai, uhnan ne kainchiaan jadon kaTTn lagge te kēs nahin kaTTe ge kiunke gursikh ne ardaas kiti hai*:	1 *Kēs*. 2 They said to Bhai Taru Singh we will cut your *kēs*. 3 That *kēs* on your head, give it to us. 4 Do you know what he said? 5 I won't give possession of my *kēs* to you, you can cut my scalp, but I will not let you cut my *kēs*. 6 Everyone was in a state of astonishment. 7 Because it is an astonishing thing, no? 8 If one's *kēs* is cut, then someone can survive, but if one's scalp is cut, how would one survive? 9 The executioner said, "Your scalp will be cut, why do you want your scalp cut, have your *kēs* cut instead". 10 He [Bhai Taru Singh] said "No, in this *kēs* are the ones who have taken *amrit*[45] from Guru Gobind Singh, I will not let it be cut".

[45] Consecrated, or 'holy' water used in the Khalsa initiation ceremony *khande di pahul*.

12 "*ai kalgiaan vale ya ih kēs tere main samjhe hoe ne, har vele main tere janke ihnan di seva, mere kēs nahin han!* 13 *ih kēs teri dat hai, vaheGuru di dat hai, tere baccha, kēs nahin kaTTege, ih khoprhi jehrhi hai, ih ikko teri ai"* 14 *Bhai Sahib Bhai taruSingh,* ***hai koi aisa?***15 *jinan aapNi khoprhi* [inaudible],***hai koi aisa?*** 16 *jine band band kaTTae hon,* ***hai koi aisa?***	11 And, respected congregation, when the blade began to cut, the *kēs* was not cut, because this Gursikh had said a prayer: 12 "Oh, Plumed One[46], I think of this *kēs* as yours, at every moment remembering you I think of serving this (*kēs*), this *kēs* is not mine! 13 This *kēs* is your gift, it is God's gift, because of your protection, it was not cut, this scalp is equally yours" 14 Bhai Sahib Bhai Taru Singh, **is there anyone like this?** 15 Who sacrificed his own scalp? **Is there anyone like this?** 16 Who was cut limb from limb? **Is there anyone like this?**

As we see in this example, the parchārak ends this segment in much the same way as he did in example 6.12, employing virtually the same parallelistic structure, differing only slightly in the order of the text:

ex. 6.14.14: Bhai Sahib Bhai Taru Singh, **is there anyone like this?**

ex. 6.14.15: Who sacrificed his own scalp? **Is there anyone like this?**

ex. 6.14.16: Who was cut limb from limb? **Is there anyone like this?**

Again, the parallel structure of the repeated query, "Is there anyone like this?" invites the audience to make a moral evaluation (this time of Bhai Taru Singh) not merely as an individual, but as a *type* of person, as a Gursikh, as a follower of *maryada*, as a person committed to maintaining *maryada* even at the expense of their life. That is, someone willing to become a *shahīd* ("martyr") for the purpose of preserving *maryada*.

[46]*kalgiaan vale*, "Plumed One", is an epithet for Guru Gobind Singh, who is often depicted as wearing a *kalgi*, a plume, in his turban, a symbol of royalty.

In this example the parchārak extends the significance of *kēs* as a sign, highlighting the indexical properties of what, as I elucidated above, serves as an indexical icon. In lines 2, 3, and 9 in example 14 above, echoing example 5.13 above where the parchārak began to tell the story before interrupting himself with another example. the voice of the Mughal authority/executioner again asks Bhai Taru Singh to either convert to Islam or give up his *kēs*. Bhai Taru Singh refuses, saying in line 6.14.10: "No, in this *kēs* are the ones who have taken *amrit* from Guru Gobind Singh, I will not let it be cut", and further, in lines 6.14.13-14 "Oh, Plumed One, I think of this *kēs* as yours, at every moment remembering you I think of serving this (*kēs*), this *kēs* is not mine! This *kēs* is your gift, it is God's gift, because of your protection, it was not cut".

In these lines Bhai Taru Singh (animated of course through the voice of the parchārak), draws a direct (contiguous/indexical) connection between his *kēs* and "the ones who have taken *amrit* from Guru Gobind Singh", that is, the Gursikhs, the followers of *maryada* of the past. They are "in this *kēs*", and therefore he "will not let it be cut"; that is, he will not allow his connection to *maryada* (and, by extension, to Gursikhs of the past and ultimately to Guru Gobind Singh) to be severed by severing his *kēs*. He says further, "Oh, Plumed One (an epithet of Guru Gobind Singh), I think of this *kēs* as yours…this *kēs* is not mine!" That is, Bhai Taru Singh characterizes his *kēs* as not merely an individual possession of his own, but one that, heightening the indexical connection yet further, "belongs" to Guru Gobind Singh, it *is* Guru Gobind Singh's *kēs*. Of course here we must understand *kēs* as not "merely" its material form, but also as a sign, an indexical icon. It is its properties as an indexical icon that allows for these connections of contiguity and resemblance to be made simultaneously. *Kēs* does take material form as well. Its physical severance means that it will no longer be able to serve in a sign-bearing capacity as *kēs*. It will become "merely" hair at that point. This is something that Bhai Taru Singh and the

executioner both understand, and at least in this specific way, both share in an understanding of this semiotic ideology. This is one reason why *kēs* plays such a pivotal role in this story of Bhai Taru Singh's martyrdom.

Conclusion

As I argue, the parchārak has throughout this talk developed a series of indexical calibrations across various chronotopic scales. Beginning at the widest possible scale (within this system of chronotopes), he starts with *hukam* (cosmic order), likens it to *maryada* (natural order), and then draws a connection between the natural order ("the sun") and the human body (exs. 6.6-6.7). In the next set of examples he asserts the fact that "all religions" are based upon *maryada*, and each religion has its own form of it, although, he adds, most religious adherents do not follow the *maryada* of their religion (exs. 6.8-6.9). He then begins to outline the specific details of Sikh *maryada*, adding that "This body can go, because it is going to go one day…but Sikhi should not disappear (exs. 6.10-6.11). How does "Sikhi" then perdure across semiotic instances? In the last set of examples, the parchārak presents a series of events from history, stories of Sikh *shahīd*s, at the moments of their martyrdom (exs. 6.12 and 6.14). In the last example, he underscores the significance of *kēs* as a sign that is simultaneously iconic of *hukam*, the cosmic order, and indexical of *maryada*, the teachings/presence of the Guru. Finally, he transforms these token-level historical instances into type-level figures of personhood by inviting the audience to make their own moral evaluation of the juxtaposition of voices that he presents (exs. 6.12 and 6.14).

In this series of moves the parchārak is performing what I call here *figurative calibration*, that is, indexical regimentation across chronotopic scales through the use of figures of

personhood along with other signs. Through this form of figurative calibration the parchārak is able to move both ways along this series of chronotopic scales; that is from the more general (and to some extent abstract) scales of *hukam-maryada*, through their enactment in historical instances (e.g., in the form of token-level enactments of Sikh *maryada*), and through the presentation of these token-level historical instances, generalize them into types, i.e., figures of personhood, that can then be entextualized and employed for further voicing contrasts that, through emulation, create further signs in an ongoing process of semiosis:

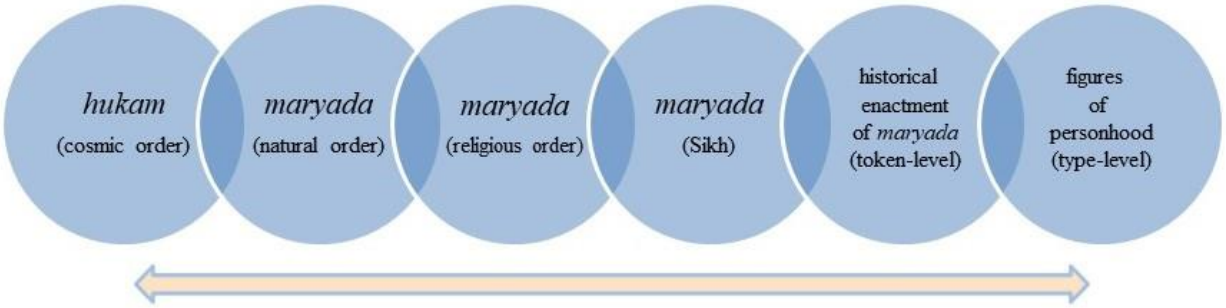


Fig. 6.6 Indexical calibrations across scales, from *hukam* to *figures of personhood*.

The process can work in reverse as well; for instance, in the case of Bhai Taru Singh (ex. 5.14), his *kēs*, along with his commitment to maintaining it, index Sikh *maryada*, and through Sikh *maryada* the presence of the Guru and his teachings, as well as the Sikh past and the Sikh present. *Kēs* also serves as an *iconic* image of *hukam-maryada*, that is, natural processes and the cosmic order. The parchārak thus links, through this form of figurative calibration, non-human chronotopes with human, and imbricates abstract processes with "history".

As Silverstein and Irvine note, in two different, but I argue, complementary, accounts of "persuasion", it can involve "a meta-level of language use" (Silverstein 1981, 1), as well as "affective involvement in one's listeners" (Irvine 1990, 152). The parchārak, I argue, in the

examples presented in this chapter, is making use of both of these aspects of language, and additionally, using figurative calibration to laminate figures of personhood across various chronotopic scales, imbricating them in what Eisenlohr calls the "complex interplay and coexistence of multiple dimensions of temporal regimentation" (2004, 96). These "multiple dimensions of temporal regimentation", however, are not limited to the two familiar types; "empty, homogeneous", and "messianic". If we, following Irvine, "take seriously Bakhtin's suggestion that a person's discourse, or voice, is always already engaged in a dialogue with precedents" (2004, 105), and also the notion that "the concept[s] of 'voice'…and 'chronotope' are intimately linked (Agha 2007, 330), then we also have to take into account the possibility of a multiplicity of chronotopes. Even if the stories of the Sikh *shahīd*s are extracted from the flow of history and "entextualized" (Bauman & Briggs 1990, Silverstein & Urban 1996), which they must be to some extent in order for the parchārak to "present" them, I argue that they are still highly dependent on forms of indexicality for their rhetorical and persuasive power. Figurative calibration is one way to maintain a degree of indexical richness across chronotopic scales.

Chapter 7 "How is it a healing force?": Sikh Metapragmatics and Linguistic Engagement

Introduction

We examined in the last chapter how a parchārak creates a "moral world" through the generation of figures of personhood, which can then be employed in "figurative calibration" across chronotopic scales, imbricating chronotopes at the widest end of the scale, those of *hukam* and *maryada*, with specific historic enactments, and allowing listeners to align themselves with these characterological figures as "types", offering affordances for engagement at any point along the scale. In that chapter we saw some examples of scriptural language (Gurbāṇī) being quoted in the form of reported speech, with little, if any, explication of the denotational-referential content of that scriptural language. Nevertheless, the parchārak took pains to employ "disclaimers of authority" to de-center himself and his own speech as the authoritative locus, and re-center that authoritative locus in the scriptural text *Guru Granth Sahib* (GGS). Whatever (secondary) authority accrued to the parchārak (according to his own account) came through the fact of his "animating" the text, that is quoting the text for the audience, and through his physical proximity/copresence with the text. As I argued, one of the primary things that the parchārak was "doing" with words in the examples I presented, or at the least the aspect that I foregrounded in my analysis, was an explication of various dimensions of Sikh *maryada*, that is, Sikh praxis, again through the generation of figures of personhood and their indexical calibration across chronotopes.

In this chapter we will examine another example of a parchārak's "doing" things with words, again through forms of metapragmatic talk, but in this case the focus will be on the

realization of meaning-forms of Gurbāṇī. As in the last chapter, we again see in the examples that follow relatively little emphasis on denotational-referential explication of individual words or lines of the scripture; instead the emphasis is on the alignment and attunement with Gurbāṇī, along multiple dimensions, especially including its manifestation in material forms. As the parchārak emphasizes, however (this indeed may be considered the main topic of this stretch of talk), material engagement, while necessary, is not sufficient in and of itself to enact the change in consciousness (which will ultimately lead to changes in praxis, in ways of being in the world) that is ostensibly the main goal of engaging with GGS. These changes also require an "understanding" of Gurbāṇī. Both of these dimensions go hand in hand according to the parchārak, and are not to be considered as isolable features. The form of the language, and reflexive understanding of it/engagement with it are both parts of a process of "meaning-making" in the context of Gurbāṇī. In this regard, as we will see in the examples below, the parchārak employs forms of indexical calibration across meta-pragmatic (and meta-meta pragmatic) commentary, rendering "a poetic of dense patterning" (Silverstein 1993, 53) across dialogic strata.

Towards the end of his essay "Poetry of Grammar and the Grammar of Poetry", Jakobson calls for an inquiry into "how the poetic delight in verbal structures duly proportioned grows into a preceptive power leading to action" (1968, 608). Following in a similar vein, Silverstein suggests that in answer to the question of how "to bring the traditional wisdom of one area of life systematically to bear on another area of life, in particular, on right and proper conduct? The simplest answer is, speak poetry" (Silverstein 1981, 5). In this chapter I will demonstrate several of the ways in which the scriptural language of GGS is brought to bear upon "action" and "conduct". As indicated above, it is rarely through a process of "decoding" of the denotational

meaning of a word or line of the text, but rather, through complex forms of engagement that take into account multiple dimensions of language, of which the denotational is of course one, but in this case, perhaps a relatively minor one. As Keane notes that "scriptures depend for their persistence and power on social dynamics surrounding contextualization and entextualization" (2004, 444). In this chapter I hope to illuminate some of the ways that, despite the strong tendency towards grammaticalization of language, including the language of GGS, that we observed in chapter 4, there still persist practices of metapragmatic realizations of the "meaning" of Gurbāṇī through reflexive engagements with its both its formal and material features. Unlike forms of grammaticalization, however, these are generally not formally encoded in texts, but rather enacted in real time in the course of "actual events of language use" (Silverstein 1993, 41).

Engagement with Gurbāṇī, the language of GGS, or with *gurmat*, the thought of the Sikh Gurus, is for the purpose of understanding the nature of the ego in order to re-orient oneself to the self, and to the world at large. This is done through forms of praxis, rather than by the mere acceptance of doctrinal structures or assent to forms of belief in the sense that Asad refers to (1993). As Mandair writes, *gurmat* is "a teaching centered on human action rather than a transcendental philosophy" (2009, 379). As for authorized guidance in leading a practitioner towards, not precisely "right conduct" but perhaps more accurately, "correct intuition", the existence, presence, contents of GGS are a starting point, something that most every Sikh would agree to. However, as I will argue in this chapter, that guidance is not predicated solely, or even primarily, upon *the denotational-referential dimension* of GGS. Rather, as I will demonstrate below, the signs of the devotee's path emerge through engagement with the fullness of the linguistic dimensions of GGS, realized through complexly layered understandings around the text, the creation and establishment of relevant context(s), and frameworks of interpretation. This

is a highly mediated process that is more centered in the creation of forms of discourse through densely patterned forms of metapragmatic indexical calibration than it is on denotational-referential content.

Language and materiality

In this chapter we again examine the setting of a parchārak giving a talk in a gurdwara setting, this time at Bangla Sahib gurdwara, another historical Sikh gurdwara located centrally in the city of New Delhi, just a few blocks from the central hub of Connaught Place. Like Gurdwara Sis Ganj, it is also a popular destination for local Delhi-ites of all persuasions looking for a moment of respite from the sometimes chaotic urban life of the city, but also for Sikh and other Indian tourists, and sometimes foreign tourists, as a pilgrimage site. The setting is again a midday session during the regular work week, when devotees of many different socio-cultural backgrounds convene at the gurdwara complex to take a few minutes, or sometimes longer, to sit in the *hazūrī*, or in the presence of, GGS. As in the case of the parchārak in the last chapter, this parchārak is also part of the traveling retinue of parchāraks employed by the SGPC who perform regular *kathā* services (generally at set times) at major historical gurdwaras on a rotating basis.

The excerpted examples in this chapter are taken from a stretch of talk of about eleven minutes that was part of a longer general discourse of about an hour. In this particular stretch of talk, the parchārak is focused on an interpretation of yet another interpretation of Gurbāṇī, specifically an interpretive verse written by the early seventeenth century Sikh exegete Bhai Gurdas, whose works feature centrally in the Sikh interpretive canon. In the examples that follow, the parchārak engages in in various forms of indexical calibrations across three semiotic locations, that of the scripture, GGS, that of Bhai Gurdas's commentarial verse, and that of the

present speech-event, that is, the parchārak's own discourse. This indexical calibration is necessary to some degree to bring these three linguistic worlds in consonance, not least because they involve three distinguishable "codes"; that of the language of Gurbāṇī, the language of Bhai Gurdas (a form of Braj Bhasha, an early modern dialect of northern India), and that of the contemporary Panjabi of the parchārak. As we will see, however, there is more involved in this calibration than in merely glossing the denotational content of the words across these speech events.

Canonical parallelism in GGS

Before we proceed, it may be useful to provide a brief example of the kinds of canonical parallelism that we find pervasively throughout GGS. As I argue below, these poetic structures (as well as other kinds of structures) inform both the commentary of Bhai Gurdas and the meta-commentary of the parchārak as well, and provide one way in which the three linguistic realms are calibrated. The example below comes from the opening lines of the composition *Jap Ji Sahib*, the main daily Sikh prayer which opens GGS. As they form the very beginning of the scripture, these lines are some of the best well-known and most recited of the lines that appear in GGS.The composition itself begins with the single emphatic word "*jap*", meaning "torecite". The composition as a whole gets its name from this opening word. The word "*jap*" is then followed by a distich[47] which displays the intensive kind of parallelism that is characteristic of the remainder of the composition:

example 7.1

1 ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥ 2 ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥ ੧ ॥	1 *ād sach jugād sach* 2 *hai bhī sach Nānak hosī bhī sach*[48]	1 true in the beginning, true through the ages

[47] A distich is a set of two lines, or couplet.
[48] GGS 1

		2 is true, Nanak, will always be true

This distich displays a "double parallelism", between hemistichs[49], and also between the two lines of the distich. Within the first line we have assonance between *ād* and *jugād*. In the second line we see assonance again with the long vowel /ī/ repeated in *bhī* in the first hemistich and again in *hosī bhī* in the second. Through both lines we see the epistrophic[50] repetition of the word *sach* (true), which appears four times and sets the framework for the distich by linking the concept of "truth" to each of four distinct temporal modes. The first temporal indication is *ād*, meaning "origin" or "beginning", while the second "*jugād*" refers to a succession of ages or epochs, i.e., time conceptualized as a progression through cycles. The first hemistich of line 2 of the distich moves the reference point into the present tense, and then time is again projected away from the present, into the not yet existent with "will always be". The conception of "truth" unfolds in temporal terms that are placed in parallel across the distich. The epistrophic positioning of the word *sach* represents iconically its constancy through various temporal framings.

This gradual unfolding development over the course of the distich is of course anchored by the "recurrent returns" to the emphatic syllable *sach* (Jakobson 1966, 399). The use of repeated parallel structures here on both phonemic and semantic levels serves to underscore the conceptual importance of *sach* ("truth") and iconically demonstrate its movement within a temporal framing. This distich helps to lay the groundwork for some of the conceptualization of time that follows. This is only the briefest of examples, from the first full couplet of GGS;

[49] A hemistich is a half-line.
[50] Epistropherefers to the repetition of a word or clause at the end of successive clauses.

unfortunately space does not permit me to delve further into this vast topic here, but needless to say, the 1430 pages of GGS consist of compositions that display the same kind (as well as many other varieties; semantic, phonemic, morphological, metaphorical) of dense canonical parallelism exemplified here. We will now turn to the parchārak's turn at talk and examine some of the metapragmatic techniques he employs (including the use of parallelism) to indexically calibrate various speech forms.

Words and action

The parchārak begins this stretch of talk with a short introduction to a particular composition of Bhai Gurdas, as mentioned, an early seventeenth century Sikh devotee and exegete who lived contemporaneously with four of the Sikh Gurus. He is credited with inscribing the first recension of GGS in 1604, and wrote a long series of *vār*s, a type of poetic composition, which vary in content from eyewitness history of the early Sikh communities to poetic commentary on the compositions of the Sikh Gurus. His works form the foundation of the formal, written Sikh exegetical tradition, and remain in print and are still widely read by Sikhs today. As mentioned above, he wrote mostly in a language known as Braj Bhasha, which was prevalent during the early modern period in the northern region of the subcontinent for literary works in both poetry and prose. Although there is a fair amount of mutual intelligibility with several of the contemporary northern Indo-Aryan vernaculars, for those unfamiliar with the language, it can be its own challenge to understand this language of exegesis, in addition to the language of GGS.

In these first two short examples, the parchārak begins to establish in his reading of Bhai Gurdas's (hereafter BG) short exegetical verse[51] (which consists of four extended lines) about how to engage with the language of Gurbāṇī; the language itself is important, but language alone cannot take the place of action:

The transcript examples in this chapter from 7.2 through 7.4 and 7.6 through 7.8 use the following key: Transliterations of the parchārak's Panjabi commentary are in *italic font*, quotations from Bhai Gurdas (17th century commentary) in transliteration from Braj Bhasha are in ***red bold italics***, and transliterations of scriptural quotations from GGS are rendered in ***green bold italics***. My English glosses correspond; e.g., **bold red font** for Bhai Gurdas's commentary, and **bold green font** those of GGS. I have indicated other linguistic notes, such as different linguistic modalities, in **bold** with brackets, e.g., **[sung]**. Example 6.5 uses a slightly different key detailed there.

example 7.2a

Bhai Sahib Bhai Gurdas ji ne baRa piara havala ditta hai. sat udahrnaan dittiaan ne samjhaun lei, sat udahrnaan, kidde siaNe ne. bei aapNe Guru prati tun kujh samajh sake. Bhai Sahib kahinde ne:
[sung] ***khanḍ khanḍ kahai jeh bana swaad meeTho aavai***
miThas udon aegi jadon adda chimcha chini aapNe mukh 'ch paenga, koi miThi vastu munh 'ch paenga.

Bhai Sahib Bhai Gurdas Ji gives us such a precious example, he has given us seven examples to instruct us, seven examples, how wise is he. So that you can understand something about your Guru. Bhai Sahib says:
[sung] "**By repeating 'sugar, sugar' the tongue does not experience taste**"
You will experience sweetness when you put half a spoon of sugar in your mouth, when you put some sweet thing in your mouth.

example 7.2b

[51] The original verse, transliteration, and gloss are included in the appendices.

[sung] ***khanḍ khanḍ kahai jihba na swaad meeTho aavai agan agan kahai seet na binas hai*** *kise manukh nun ThanD lagdi hove te heater dur pia hove, lakRaan dur peiyaan hoN, te dur baiTha kah ijave "agg, agg, agg" kahinda agg agg kiha thoRa ThanD dur honi ai? tun agg balte uh de kol ja, sek (...) teri sardi dur ho javegi.*
[sung] "**By repeating 'sugar, sugar' the tongue does not experience taste, by [just] saying 'fire, fire', cold does not come to an end**" If a person is feeling cold, and the "heater" is far away, the wood is far away, and sitting far away he repeats "fire, fire, fire", by saying fire do think the cold will go away? You start a fire and go warm yourself by it…and the cold will go away.

In example 7.2a the parchārak says that just saying the words "sugar, sugar", one cannot experience the taste of sugar itself, one must ingest the substance itself in order to taste sweetness. In a similar vein, in example 7.2b, he completes the line of BG, adding the second half, which says that merely repeating the words "fire, fire" out loud will not bring an end to the cold that one is experiencing. To end the discomfort of feeling cold, one will have to engage in some form of action, that is, to get up and to start a fire oneself, to sit in proximity to it, and thereby one will come to feel its warmth. In these two examples the parchārak (through BG's composition) distinguishes the difference between the symbolic representations of words and "actions" in the world. In the following examples, he will continue to develop this theme.

In these examples we also see that the parchārak moves into a singing voice whenever rendering the lines of BG. He continues this practice throughout the turn at talk, with one brief exception which we will see below in the final example, in which he recites a line of BG's that is not part of the exegetical verse that he is quoting here. In this sung performance, his shift in style provides a form of metapragmatic commentary on BG's composition itself, differentiating it from his own discourse, which takes place in Panjabi. However, the Panjabi that the parchārak engages in is not the everyday Panjabi of the normal activities outside of the gurdwara, the genre

of *kathā*, as we saw in the last chapter as well. It itself is a marked form of Panjabi in comparison with the everyday, vernacular form of the language . His performance of *kathā*, therefore involves a double differentiation; his language is distinguished from everyday Panjabi on the one hand, but to make the distinction between his own language and that of BG's (and later, the language of GGS), he enters into a sung register to make clear the (more exalted) status of the language(s) of his reported speech in these examples. In sung performance there is also an affective dimension, which we will examine in more detail below.

In this next example the parchārak begins to outline the importance of both action and "understanding" in engaging with the language of Gurbāṇī:

example 7.3

teesri udahrn ditti, koi banda hove bimar. taRphda hove. divaiyaan da naa(n) lia, injectionan da naa(n) lia thoRa Thiik hoNa hai? tainun ilaaj karauna paiNa hai. **[sung]** ***baid baid kahai. baid baid kahai rog miTat na kahun ko*** *vaid vaid kiha thoRa rog miTNa ai? tun "Guru Guru" kari jae, thoRa rog miT jaNa ai? Guru bare samajhNa vi tan pave gana?* **[sung]** ***baid baid kahai rog miTat na kahun ko*** *kainda vaid vaid kiha rog nahin miTNa. uh de vaste koi yatan karna pavega.*
He gives a third example. a person is ill. He is writhing. He is taking the name of medicines, he is taking the name of injections, do you think he will get better? You will have to arrange a cure. **[sung]** "**Repeating 'physician, physician'.The disease will not end just by repeating 'physician, physician'**" Just by saying "doctor, doctor" do you really think the disease will stop? You keep saying "Guru, Guru", do you think that with that alone the disease will end? You will have to understand something about the Guru as well, no? **[sung]** "**The disease will not end just by repeating 'physician, physician'**" He says just repeating "doctor" the disease will not end. For that you will have to make some effort.

In this verse he continues with the theme of the inefficacy of merely repeating words out loud to engender some kind of material effect. In the case of the lines he discusses in this

example, the repeated words (from BG's composition) are "physician, physician". The parchārak says that merely repeating the word "physician" will not in and of itself bring about a cure for the underlying disease. He also extends this example by adding in another example that is not present in BG's original composition. He says, "You keep saying "Guru, Guru", do you think that with that alone the disease will end?". Here he is referring to those practitioners who (likely) merely repeat the word "Guru" (or perhaps the more common mantra "Waheguru") in the hope of ameliorating some underlying (material) condition, or, alternatively, imploring the Guru to grant their wishes. He follows this line (of his own) by adding another observation that is not in BG's original composition, but is perhaps implied; he says "You will have to understand something about the Guru as well, no?". Understanding the Guru here (both in BG's original composition and in the parchārak's rendering) cannot come from merely repeating words (or mantras), but must involve another process. As I will show in further examples below, however, this process is not one of merely making sense of the denotational meaning of words.

In the final line of this example, the parchārak says, "He says just repeating 'doctor' the disease will not end. For that you will have to make some effort". The word for "effort" that the parchārak uses here is the Panjabi word *yatan*. His use of the word *yatan* implies that the mere presence of the words of GGS, or even their mere repetition, is not efficacious in and of itself for the goal of understanding, and thereby healing, the ego and the maladies that it engenders in its unreflexive forms. The words of Gurbāṇī, insofar as they are useful to the practitioner, require dialogical and reflexive engagement. In other words, the practitioner needs to be attentive to the forms of awareness that accompany a striving engagement with the words of Gurbāṇī The development of those forms of awareness is the main goal, not the engagement with the words of Gurbāṇī alone. The implication in these lines is that Gurbāṇī does not emanate meaning on its

own; the insights that are to be gained from engagement with it must come through active efforts on the part of the practitioner. This means an awareness of both the goal in mind and the medium through which that goal is to be achieved. In this formulation, effort and understanding go hand in hand.

example 7.4

sattvin udahrn Bhai Sahib ne suraj di ditti. Bhai Sahib kaiN lagge: **[sung]** ***taise…*** **[interrupting sung part]** *ih gurmat hai. ih udahrna nahin, ethe huN gurmat shuru ho gei. Bhai Sahib da nivekla tarika ih hai vi jadon pauRiaan likhde ne, kabbit likhde ne, udahrnan ton baad akhirli tuk vich gurmat samjhauNde ne vi aa gurmat ai. sikh rahit maryada vich vi ihnan da rachnavan nun paRN, gauN, vicharan da adhi kar ditta vi ihnan diaan rachnavaan kirtan de roop vich viakhaa de roop vich vartiaan ja sakdiaan ne. baRi piaari sikhia ditti Bhai Sahib ne.*
The seventh example Bhai Sahib gives is of the sun. Bhai Sahib says: **[sung]** "**In that way**…" **[interrupting his sung part]** This is gurmat. This is not an example, this is where *gurmat* begins. This is an original technique of Bhai Sahib's that when he writes a stanza, a kabbit[52], after providing examples, in the last line, he explains gurmat: "This is *gurmat*". In the *Sikh Maryada*[53] authority is given to read, sing, comment upon his works; his works can be sung as *kirtan*[54] and referred to in the form of commentary. What a precious teaching Bhai Sahib has given us.

In example 7.4 the parchārak provides his own metapragmatic analysis of BG's commentary. He begins to sing the line, then interrupts himself, saying that "This is *gurmat*"; that is to say, this part (beginning with the fourth and final line of the stanza) represents the teachings of the Guru. There is an important set of distinctions here regarding the nature of authority between the original scriptural text GGS, BG's commentary on it, and the parchārak's

[52]*kabbit* is a poetic form
[53]*Sikh Maryada* is the modern Sikh code of conduct, published by the SGPC in the 1950s.
[54] That is, the works of Bhai Gurdas can be sung as *kirtan* in Sikh gurdwaras as Gurbani, the language of the scripture.

own interpretation of the commentary. In the following lines he clarifies the position of the writings of BG within the Sikh institutional canon. He says that according to the *Sikh Maryada*, or code of conduct published in the 1950s by the SGPC, the works of Bhai Gurdas, that is, his poetic compositions that serve as interpretations of the original compositions in GGS can be sung alongside Gurbāṇī in a gurdwara setting[55], and can be referred to for the purpose of performing *kathā*, or exposition of the meanings of GGS.

As someone who was the contemporary of four of the Sikh Gurus, knew them personally, and played a foundational role in establishing the institution of the Sikh interpretive tradition, this places Bhai Gurdas at a level of authority just below that of the Sikh Gurus themselves. Bhai Gurdas's work is often referred to in the tradition as "*gurbāṇī di kunji*", or the "key to [understanding] Gurbāṇī". To engage with his commentary then is to engage with the work of someone who had first hand knowledge of the Gurus' own expectations when it comes to questions of praxis, the most authoritative ways to engage with Gurbāṇī, and what one can expect from such an engagement. It is important to note here that the tradition of *kathā*, or interpretation, goes back (according to Sikh tradition) to the compiler of the first recension of GGS, the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev. He is said to have instructed BG to sit in a location near the gurdwara Harmandir Sahib where the first recension of GGS was installed and provide explanations of Gurbāṇī to the Sikhs who would come to listen to *kirtan*. The place where this daily oral commentary took place was just outside of the Harmandir Sahib complex, and is today marked by the gurdwara known as Manji Sahib. This is important because it establishes the tradition of metapraxis, of layered understandings of the meanings of Gurbāṇī, as part of the

[55] There are only two figures in the Sikh canon whose works do not appear in GGS, but are authorized by the SGPC to be sung as *kirtan* in a gurdwara setting; the first of these is Bhai Gurdas, who we are discussing here, and the second is the Sikh Persian poet Bhai Nand Lal Goya, who was a member of Guru Gobind Singh's court at the turn of the eighteenth century and wrote mystical poetry on the Sikh experience.

tradition from its outset. Metapragmatic engagement with GGS was and remains an important part of the tradition. In the following examples we will see further what role that metapragmatics plays in establishing contexts for the unfolding of meaning around GGS.

Parallelism and indexical calibration

In example 7.5 we have a further example of the parchārak's rendering of BG's commentary, that is to say, the parchārak's meta-meta-pragmatic commentary. In this particular short stretch of talk, the parchārak engages in a highly structured, highly parallelistic discourse that resembles both BG's commentary, which in turn, given its pervasive forms of parallelism, seems itself to have been informed by the kind of canonical parallelism that appears in GGS as well. In this brief example, virtually every segment of the two tristichs[56], in this example lines 1-3 and 5-7, respectively, falls into a canonical parallelistic pattern. Of course part of the visual patterning of the transcript below is an artifact of my own arrangement of this discursive text in such a way as to highlight that very patterning, in a quasi-poetic format. However, I would argue that the text itself suggests such an arrangement if it is indeed parallelistic patterning that we are looking for, which I argue does exist in the text, whether it is given attention or not. I have color coded the segments that fall in parallel with each other, across both the transliteration and the gloss, to provide a visual indication of the parallel structures, which I will discuss further below.

example 7.5a

1 ***koi gyaan diaan goshTiaan kari jaave*****,**	1 **Someone is delivering lectures on wisdom,**
2 ***koi* mechanical repetition *shabad raTijave*****,**	2 **Someone is repeating** words by "**mechanical repetition**"**,**
3 ***koi mantar di taraan paRi jave*****,**	3 **Someone is reciting** like **mantras**,

[56] A tristich is a set of three lines.

example 7.5b

4 *kainde:* 5 ***is taraan hoega jiven koi "khaṇḍ khaṇḍ" kaih riha par khaṇḍ da swaad nahin mania,*** 6 ***is taraan hai jiven koi "dhan dhan" kaih riha par hai kangal,*** 7 ***is taraan hai jiven koi manukh hai ga bimaar hai, "vaidvaid" kahi janda ai, par vaid di divaai khaN nun tyaar koi nahin.***	4 They say: 5 **It will be as if someone is saying "sugar, sugar" but is not experiencing the taste of sugar,** 6 **It is as if someone is saying "money, money", but is penniless,** 7 **It is as if a person is ill, they are saying "doctor, doctor", but no one is ready to take the medicine.**

In these examples 7.5a and 7.5b, as mentioned above, we see a similar kind of canonical parallelistic patterning that we have seen in the brief examples of BG's original commentary that the parchārak has rendered in forms of reported (sung) speech in examples 7.2 through 7.4. This pervasive parallelism also echoes the kind of dense parallelistic patterning that we saw in the short example of Gurbāṇī from example 7.1 above. Here for instance there are examples of anaphoric[57] repetition at the beginnings of both sets of lines 1-3 and 5-7. In lines 1-3, we see multiple forms of semantic parallelism, in types of speech genres "lectures on wisdom", "mechanical repetition", and "mantras" and in the ends of the lines as well with verbs of speaking; "delivering", "repeating", and "reciting". In lines 5-7 we see a similar kind of semantic parallelism in forms of reduplication; "*khaṇḍ khaṇḍ* ", "*dhan dhan*", and "*vaid vaid*", and in the verb of speaking *kaiṇa* ("to say") in each line. Each of the lines 5-7 also ends with epistrophic antithesis, contrasting ideas juxtaposed at the ends of successive clauses. The combination of

[57] Anaphora refers to the repetition of a word or series of words at the beginning of successive clauses.

anaphora and epistrophe can be further subsumed under the category symploce[58]. And so on. The parallelism in the parchārak's meta-pragmatic commentary is pervasive, as it is in BG's meta-commentary and GGS itself. The reduplicative forms are the same forms that appear in BG's original commentary, and appear here as forms of reported speech, but the discourse around these forms of reported speech also falls into patterns of semantic parallelism that do not appear in the commentary. Is this just a random occurrence? I posit here that this is not incidental, but rather a highly reflexive form of indexical calibration on the part of the parchārak between the linguistic worlds of his present-moment *kathā*, the metapragmatic commentary of BG, and the original scriptural language of GGS. A question that might be asked is what end does it serve to calibrate these linguistic, chronotopic, and conceptual worlds?

We know that formality, in the various forms that it can take, does not signify on its own based solely upon its structural elements. It is not always associated with the maintenance of an established order. As part of the deployment of a set of other linguistic resources, it can be used as a form of "creativity" (Irvine 1979, 773). As I argue here, the structures that the parchārak is creating here in real time are not only structures of formal linguistics, as in the example of canonical parallelism produced in his speech above, but also metapragmatic in nature, structures that have something to say about how we come to interpret the very linguistic structures that he is reporting and producing. Another way to put it is that the parallel structures in his speech in example 7.5 above function as poetic structures on one level, but also serve to describe "how" the commentarial language (and in turn the scriptural language) works, how they should be taken up, and how to engage with them. Whereas some of his earlier metapragmatic talk was of an explicit order, e.g., "For that you will have to make some effort" (example 7.3), the parallel

[58]Symploce refers to the combination of anaphora and epistrophe within the same line.

structures can function at different levels of explicitness/implicitness. For instance, reduplicative forms, which are pervasive in many of the world's languages, being surface level segmentable forms, can be relatively more subject to conscious awareness (and manipulation). Other forms of parallelism, such as such as forms of semantic parallelism, may function at a level relatively more covert, or below the threshold of conscious, reflexive awareness.

As Silverstein notes, "public forms of ritual use not just a sufficiency, but a superabundance of metapragmatic-pragmatic strata laminations to leave no aspect of entextualization to chance" (1993, 53). In this example, we see this kind of "superabundance of metapragmatic-pragmatic strata laminations" that Silverstein describes in the forms of pervasive parallelism that occur in the original scriptural language of GGS, in BG's poetic commentary, and in the parchārak's discursive (but poetically structured) meta-commentary. As Silverstein continues, "nomic calibration" is characterized by "the presuppositional stipulation of mutually disjoint ontic realms" (ibid., 52). I argue here however that the worlds of GGS, of BG's commentary, and of the parchārak's contemporary speech are not "ontically" separate; the world of GGS is not an "other realm" (ibid.), an "otherworld" (Keane 2008, S120), or a metaphysical world (Mandair 2021, 108), but rather are parts of the same world of language. They engender different levels of authority, they have different functions, and entail different forms of engagement, but they still exist within the same realm of language, and these different authoritative, functional, and participatory strata can be indexically calibrated:

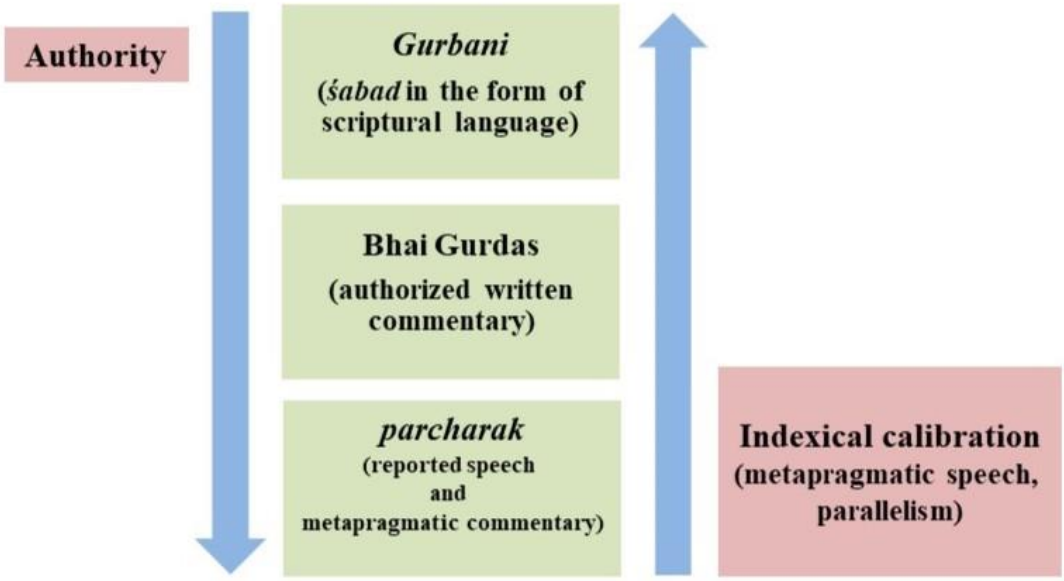


Fig. 7.1 Indexical calibration and structures of authority

That the language of Gurbāṇī forms the ultimate authoritative source for Sikh practitioners is a given within the Sikh tradition, but the ways that that authority is made manifest occurs through various forms of metapragmatic engagement. It is not its mere existence, but the ways that forms of engagement allow for the development of the consciousness of practitioners that lend it authority, as evidenced in the speech of the parchārak that we have examined so far. The goal is not obeisance, but *attunement*, as we will see in the further examples that we will examine below. The "authority" here then should not be taken in its colloquial sense as, as mentioned above, the ability to enforce obedience, but rather authority in the sense of guidance towards more fruitful intuition. Fig. 7.1 above may look somewhat reminiscent of my Fig. 6.2 from the last chapter, which depicted the relationship between a parchārak and GGS in physical proximity, but there are some salient differences. Fig. 6.2 depicted how the parchārak in that example de-centered authority (from his own person) and re-centered it in GGS through "disclaimers of performance" in a situation of co-presence. Fig. 7.1

above rather depicts visually how indexical calibration serves to laminate different strata through metapragmatic and pragmatic means. The goal here is not to disclaim authority, and to re-center it somewhere else, but rather to attune to that authority, to establish an indexical connection with it.

In the case of example 7.5 above, the presence of pervasive parallelism in the parchārak's talk, which in turn "parallels" the more authoritative speech of BG's commentary and the language of GGS, serves to establish that connection by indexically calibrating the present moment of speech (and the attention of its listeners) to these other levels. The phenomenon of parallelism has been posited to serve several different possible functions: it can play a role in the transmission of culture (Jakobson 1968, 603), and it can have metapragmatic (Silverstein 1993), cognitive (Mannheim 1986), or affective (Irvine 1990) functions. That is to say, that "indexicality" can take several different dimensions; it can be pointing to more than one thing simultaneously. Here I posit that the pervasive form of parallelism that we see in example 6.5, which is indexically calibrated to the other speech levels depicted above, is serving all of these functions simultaneously. It brings attention to multiple linguistic functions (Jakobson 1960) at the same time, which is more amenable to multi-sensory, multi-modal engagements than a focus on a denotational-referential dimension alone.

Before leaving this example, I wanted to focus for a moment on example 7.5a, line 2 above, where the parchārak invokes the term "mechanical repetition". This is one of the very few instances in this entire stretch of talk, and indeed in his entire hour-long discourse on this occasion in which he invokes an English term. The only other occasion in the examples that I have transcribed here is the use of the term "heater" in example 7.2b, a term that has been more or less indigenized into most South Asian dialects at this point. The term "mechanical

repetition", however, is of course a much more specific term, one that is not likely to be in the vocabulary of the average Panjabi-medium school educated citizen, but one that rather has a particular meaning in the context in which the parchārak employs it here. We cannot know the specific provenance of this term, where the parchārak may have come across it, but it is of course not implausible that it has come down through a colonial genealogy. Recall Trumpp's comments from chapter 3 about GGS, that it "only repeat[s], in endless variations, what has been already said" (Trumpp 2004 [1877], vii). In choosing the specific English term "mechanical repetition" to admonish against this practice, the parchārak is still responding in some way to this form of colonial accusation (which was not limited of course to Trumpp).

What is of further interest here is that the parchārak is here, as I have outlined, developing the argument of BG's original exegetical verse, which itself also admonishes against the practice of repeating empty words without corresponding action (e.g., Ex. 6.3: "The disease will not end just by repeating 'physician, physician'"). That is to say, BG was in some sense in the early seventeenth century warning against the same practice that is being critiqued in the phrase "mechanical repetition". In that case, we would need to investigate the provenance of the phrase "mechanical repetition" itself; is itself a calque of an indigenous term of critique? The terms that the parchārak employs in example 7.5a to set up his parallels are of interest: "lectures on wisdom", "mechanical repetition", and "mantras". Of these, the first, "lectures on wisdom" (*gyaan diaan goshTiaan*) is from BG's original commentary. The second and third, "mechanical repetition" and "mantras" do not appear in BG's commentary, but are the parchārak's own. Of these, "lectures on wisdom", meant here in the sense of pedantry, could be from most any tradition. "Mechanical repetition" and "mantras" in the ways that they are used here seem to be aimed more at perceived stereotypical practices of Hindus; that is, unreflexive repetition of

mantras without engagements with other dimensions of language, including the denotational. So the parchārak's meta-commentary invokes terms from three different locations: "lectures on wisdom" from BG's commentary, "mechanical repetition" from a colonial critique (perhaps?), and "mantras" from the Hindu tradition.

"How is it a healing force?"

In example 7.6 below, the parchārak introduces the language of GGS as a form of reported speech for the first time in this stretch of talk:

example 7.6

sare kahindeaan ***mera vaid Guru…Gobinda***. aao bhagaan valio, ik vari vekhio tan sei mera vaid Guru Gobinda hai kiven. oh kiven mainun arogta dinda, kiven mere jeevan de vichon bimaariaan kaDda, aao, ik vari satgur diaan ihnaan pangtiaan vall dhiaan te deiye. vakei Guru vaidhai. par oh vaid hai kiven? **[sung]** ***baid Guru Gobinda, merabaid Guru Gobinda, baid Guru Gobinda*** **[congregation joins in singing]** ***mera baid Guru Gobinda, baid Guru Gobinda, mera baid Guru Gobinda*** **[the parchārak and congregation continue singing these lines together in this fashion for several more minutes]** *uh vaid hai kiven, te kiven ilaaj karda hai*?
Everyone says, "**the healing force is…the Guru**". Come, fortunate ones, let us see one time *how* the Guru is the healing force. How does he make one free of disease, how does he remove illness from my life, come, let us focus on these lines of the Guru. Indeed the Guru is the healing force, but in what way does that healing force work? **[sung] The Guru is the healing force, my healing force is the Guru, the Guru is the healing force [congregation joins in singing] my healing force is the Guru, the Guru is the healing force, my healing force is the Guru [the parchārak and congregation continue singing these lines together in this fashion for several more minutes]** How is it a healing force? And how does it heal?

In this example I have chosen to gloss the term *baid*, which I have glossed above as "doctor" or "physician", as "healing force" This gloss better conveys the sense that is meant

here, which is wider than the merely literal translation as “physician” or “doctor”. Here the parchārak poses the metapragmatic questions, “Indeed the Guru is the healing force, but in what way does that healing force work?” In answer to this question, he enters into an extended stretch of sung scriptural text, evoking a response in return from the audience. He sings the line from GGS: “my healing force is the Guru”, repeating it (sometimes removing the possessive particle “my”) and the congregation joins in with him, and continues to sing. It is a regular practice in the gurdwara, so those familiar with the space do not need any prompting from the parchārak to begin singing. The congregational singing continues for several minutes, with the parchārak sometimes joining in and sometimes listening attentively. The hall is filled for a few minutes with the powerful, unison, melodious sound of the congregation and the parchārak singing, in a regular, relaxed rhythm. It seems for a moment almost like a canonical enactment of Durkheim’s “collective effervescence” (2008 [1915]). There is most certainly a sense in which congregational gatherings, collective action, and engagement with language in it material forms (here in the form of musical sounds) play important roles in Sikh practice. As we have seen in some of the examples above, and will see further in examples below, engagement with the language of GGS is only a first step; it must be combined with *bibek*, or discrimination, in discerning the values that might be manifested in the various dimensions of the language that will lead to proper intuition, and then, to correct action.

Dusenbery writes that the among the primary aims of Sikh practice is “incorporating the Guru’s divinely coded substances” (1992, 393). As we have seen in the examples in this chapter, however, at least according to this parchārak’s interpretation (and meta-interpretation), engagement with the language of GGS in its material forms is a necessary but not sufficient means to achieve the Sikh idea of liberation. The idea of “coded substances” is one that

Dusenbery seems to have inherited from Marriott, who writes that "code and substance…cannot have separate existences in this world of constituted things as conceived by most South Asians…before one begins to think of Hindu transactions, one thus needs firmly to understand that those who transact as well as what and how they transact are thought to be inseparably 'code-substance' or 'substance-code'" (Marriott 1976, 110). Marriott's notion of "substance-code" (he writes later that he prefers the latter term) is part of his overarching theory of the "systematic monism and particularism that pervade Hindu sociology", that might be clarified if they were "relieved of the peculiar Western philosophic burdens of dualism, universalism, and individualism" (ibid., 109).

It is of note that Dusenbery himself later in the same essay writes that "Neither would I deny the possible copresence of dualistic and nondualistic ideologies among previous generations of Sikhs. Indeed, one can find statements from the Gurus themselves that appear to challenge the received monistic understandings of their followers, including points in the text of the Ādi Granth itself whence the Guru admonishes his followers to understand and not merely recite mechanistically the hymns of the Gurus (as was the practice with Vedic mantras)". As we have seen in several of the examples above, this is one of the main subjects of this stretch of the parchārak's talk. In example 7.5 above, the parchārak (echoing BG's commentary) admonishes his listeners precisely against "mechanical repetition" and "reciting like mantras" (i.e., reciting by rote without paying attention to the other dimensions of language), exactly the practices that Dusenbery notes that the Sikh Gurus and "previous generations" of Sikhs advocated against. Unfortunately, this is a thread that Dusenbery (nor others in his wake, with the exception of Mandair 2009, 2021) does not pursue any further, however.

Dusenbery is right on the one hand to point out the importance of the materiality of language in Sikh practice. However, he seems to have applied the notion of "substance-code" to South Asian societies/religious traditions in general, rather than examining Sikh ideologies specifically, which are in dialogue with other South Asian ideologies of language in an ideological field. In his effort (following Marriott) to provide a counter-example to what he characterizes as the Western dualistic ideology of language, he of course ends up creating yet another dualism, this time between "Western" and "Sikh" ideologies of language. He has not put a fine enough point on his notion of a Sikh ideology of language, and limits it to the part that seems to counter the Western notion most symmetrically, that is, the Sikh focus on the materiality of signs (versus the Western focus on the non-materiality and arbitrariness of signs). As I argued in chapter 4, "Sikh" ideologies of language have and to some extent still do run the gamut from those that hew close to the Vedic paradigm to those who have embraced contemporary scientific methods of linguistic analysis. There have also been those who, and we can include the parchārak whose work is examined in this chapter among this number, have tried to differentiate themselves from both the Vedic paradigm, and to the extent that they are able, from the scientific paradigm as well. That is to say, the field of Sikh language ideologies is a complex one, and one that is internally differentiated as well as being differentiated from other language ideologies that it is in dialogue with. We have to pay close attention to both of these aspects to understand the dynamics of Sikh ideological positioning and functioning.

"The method of living life"

In example 7.7 below, the parchārak begins to connect the idea of the Guru as "healing force" with the need to translate this healing into action in the world. The "healing" he refers to

is the healing of the ego, or the egoic state of mind that is focused on the individual self as the origo. As Mandair writes: "those who come into contact with a *satGuru* (*śabda-Guru*) and are able to embark on a path of self-realization or praxis begin to struggle against the conventional ego" (2021, 92-93). What kind of person does this engagement then engender?

example 7.7

vakei Guru vaid hai. zindagi jiuN da tarika dinda ai. Bhai Sahib bakshish karde ne: **[sung]** ***taise gyaan goshT kahat na rahit pave*** *rahit hove koi na jo kahinda uh de te turda koi na hove, teriaan gyaan goshTiaan, tere mantar japNe, tere abhiaas kite, kis arth? rahit nahin pai, turia nahin. te jadon Guru da gyaan samajh aa gei, phir turn da tarika aa gia.*
Indeed the Guru is the healing force. He provides the method of living life. Bhai Sahib blesses us: **[sung]** "**Listening to lectures, one does not does not follow the path of action**" There is no one following the path, the people who talk, none of them act on what they say, your lectures full of wisdom, your repetition of mantras, the spiritual exercises you have done, of what use [are they]? You have not followed the path, you have not walked the walk. And then when you understand the Guru's words, then the method of living life also comes to you.

The parchārak opens this example, referring to a line of the just completed round of congregational singing, by saying, "Indeed the Guru is the healing force. He provides the method of living life". The phrase he uses here to refer to "method of living life" is *jiuN da tarika*. The word *tarika* in Panjabi can mean "way" or "method" in its everyday sense, but it also resonates with the Arabic term *tarīqa* (which comes into Panjabi likely through Persian), which can also refer to a Sufi order or school of thought. The term thus has connotations of religious practice as well. Echoing the examples that he has presented above, he continues, "your lectures full of wisdom, your repetition of mantras, the spiritual exercises you have done, of what use [are they]? You have not followed the path, you have not walked the walk". Again he emphasizes

engagement with words as a first step. Engaging with Gurbāṇī as a "healing force" is to re-orient the ego from a way of living centered on self towards a relational way of being in the world. This should also result in action in the world in some capacity. As the parchārak says here in the final line of this example, "And then when you understand the Guru's words, then the method of living life also comes to you". In the final example in this chapter, the parchārak turns to an account of how we might recognize someone who has successfully followed the path of wisdom. By what signs might we know them? As with the examples of engaging with the scriptural language above, the parchārak suggests that the answer is not in discourse alone:

example 7.8

1 *kiven?* 2 *jadon Guru de gyaan da suraj andar uday hoiyai. uday pan.* 3 *uday pan da arth pan* meaning *suraj, uday da arth hai prakash ho gia.* 4 *jadon andar chine, andar vekh lia.* 5 *samrath aa gei zindagi jiuN da tarika aa gia.* 6 *te bhagaan valio jadon suraj chaRhdai na, suraj kise nun saneha nahin deN jande vi main chaRh pia Bhai.* 7 *suraj chaRhe te aapNe aap samaaj nun pata lagg janda ai.* 8 *suraj dasaN thoRa kise nun kiha ki main chaRh pia?* 9 *main roshni de ditti ai?* 10 *bhalia suraj ki hai, tere zindagi de guN. jiven suraj kise nun dasaN nahin aunda ki main roshni de chukka han.* 11 *teri zindagi jadon guN paida hoe na, dasaN di loRh nahin paiNi tere guN aapNe aap duniya nun pata lagg jaNe ne.* 12 *Guru Nanak ji kise nun dasaN nahin sige main rabb da roopaan mere vich rabbi guN ne.* 13 *jadon ture san Bhai Sahib nun kaihNa pia*	1 How? 2 When the sun of the Guru's wisdom has risen inside. The sunrise. 3 The meaning of *uday pan* being: *pan* meaning "sun", and *uday* meaning "having risen". 4 When someone has looked inside. 5 Strength has come, the way of living life has come. 6 And fortunate ones, when the sun rises, no? The sun does not send a message to anyone that I have risen. 7 When the sun has risen then it comes on its own to the understanding. 8 Do you think the sun needs to tell anyone that I have risen? 9 That I have provided light? 10 Fortunate ones, what is the sun? Your life's good qualities. Just as the sun does not come to tell anyone that I have provided light. 11 When good qualities manifest themselves in your life, there will be no need to tell anyone, the world will come to know on its own. 12 Guru Nanak Ji did not go to tell anyone that I have come in the form of God, that there are godly qualities in me.

14 ***satgur Nanak pargaTia miTi dhundh jag*** **[pause…then with congregation]** ***chanaN hoa***. 15 *te jiun jiun Guru Sahib turde ge, turde ge, kise nun nahin kiha mere vich ih guN ne, jo main kaih riha, uh de te turda han.* 16 *vekhaN vale aapNe aap hi andaza lagga lia jo kahinde ho vakei tuhaDe jeevan 'chhai. tussin us nun kama ke vekhia hai.* 17 *suraj kahiN nahin aunda main roshni ditti hai.* 18 *bass, ih gyaan hai. iho gyaan sanun patitan ton…puneet karN di takt pe rakde han.* 19 *te ih gyaan kise hor kolon nahin milda. Guru kolon prapat hunda hai*.	13 When he set out on his journey, Bhai Sahib had to say: 14 "**When Satguru Nanak's presence was revealed, the mist cleared [pause…then with congregation] and light spread over all the earth**" 15 And wherever the Guru went and went, he did not say to anyone that these are my qualities, and that I act upon what I say. 16 The people who saw him made their own estimate that "what you say is indeed evident in your life. You have earned those qualities". 17 The sun does not come and say I have given light. 18 This is wisdom, this wisdom gives us strength to transform us from fallen ones into holy ones. 19 And this wisdom does not come from anyone else. It is received from the Guru only.

In this extended example, the parchārak describes the process by which others may recognize the self-realized person, who "has looked inside. [to whom] strength has come, the way of living life has come" (lines 4-5). That is, the person who engaged with Gurbāṇī, with the path of *bibek*, discrimination, and of self-reflection, and who has discovered the intuition that will lead them to "the way of living life" (*zindagi jiuN da tarika*). In line 6 he says, "And fortunate ones, when the sun rises, no? The sun does not send a message to anyone that I have risen". He says further in lines 10-11, "Fortunate ones, what is the sun? Your life's good qualities. Just as the sun does not come to tell anyone that I have provided light. When good qualities manifest themselves in your life, there will be no need to tell anyone, the world will come to know on its own".

He then provides the example of Guru Nanak, in line 12, "Guru Nanak Ji did not go to tell anyone that I have come in the form of God, that there are godly qualities in me". What Guru

Nanak did not (need to) put in discursive form, his interpreter put into discursive form; in lines 13-14, the parchārak says, “When he set out on his journey, Bhai Sahib had to say: When Satguru Nanak’s presence was revealed, the mist cleared [pause…then with congregation] and light spread over all the earth”. The Bhai Sahib he is referring to here is again Bhai Gurdas. The quotation he then presents is one of BG’s most well-known lines; at first he quotes just half of the line, then, after a pause, the congregation, having recognized the line, joins in to complete it with him. The parchārak says further that, “The people who saw him made their own estimate that ‘what you say is indeed evident in your life. You have earned those qualities’” (line 16).

I want to bring our attention here once again to what the parchārak (as well as his interpretive interlocutor, Bhai Gurdas) have to say about the role of language in Sikh praxis. In the stretch of talk that we have been examining through this chapter, the emphasis has been on the general superfluousness of words, if they do not lead to a change in one’s consciousness, if they do not lead to some form of “action” in the world. In this formulation, words on their own do not have much significance if they are not tied in some way to some form of praxis. There is a place for words, however, and engagement with Gurbāṇī specifically, as the means that leads to right intuition, and thus right action. This engagement however cannot come through passively listening to “lectures on wisdom”, or unreflexively engaging in forms of “mechanical repetition”, but through non-discursive engagement that is both actively attentive and reflexive. The answer to the question “How is the Guru a healing force?” is not one that can be answered through discourse, but must be sensed through other means, corporeal, affective, intuitive. These all have material correlates, but their manifestation in linguistic signs is not necessarily the only, or the best, way to know them.

Conclusion

The mere fact of the existence of GGS is not enough, according to these interpreters, one must engage in the effort at "attunement" (Trix 1993, 19), which is not a passive activity. I argue here that the fact that the parchārak has to go through so much linguistic labor to apprise his audience of the proper methods of engaging with Gurbāṇī suggests that these ideas are not themselves self-evident. The linguistic labor that is involved in establishing the metapragmatic coordinates for deriving the benefits of an engagement with Gurbāṇī presupposes that there are other language ideologies in the field which may not be as relevant, or may not be consonant with the process of the re-orientation in this context. If the parchārak is calling for the necessity of *yatan*, of "effort", then that seems to presuppose the fact that people are not engaging in this *yatan* presently. Again, as in the case of the previous chapter, the gurdwara space is a place where alternative chronotopes, ideologies, and metapragmatic regimes can be presented, or even suggested, that might not have a place in the world outside of the gurdwara.

The various forms of metapragmatic speech engaged in here are less about "what", that is, about propositional understandings of the world, and more about "how"; what kinds of approaches and frameworks are the most useful, effective for engaging with and making sense of the world? For acting in the world? Metapragmatic speech plays an essential role in the establishment of relevant frameworks. In the examples we have seen above, this metapragmatic speech helps to put words in their proper place in relation to understanding and to action. Mere mindless engagement with words is not sufficient; effective engagement with words, with language requires an active consciousness on the part of the practitioner, one that can discriminate and put those words into proportion in relation to other aspects of their lives. The

words of GGS are ultimately authoritative, but the ways that they are realized must be shaped with language about those words, that is, in metapragmatic speech.

The metapragmatic speech of the parchārak here helps to bring the contents of GGS into dialogue with the social dynamics of the community at large. While the text of GGS remains constant, these social dynamics continue to change through time. Metapragmatic speech is then necessary to reinscribe those ideologies of language that will enable practitioners to engage with Gurbāṇī in the changing social conditions and through changes in language as well. It is of note that the *jiuN da tarika*, the way of living life that the parchārak refers to, is not given any specificity as to its contents. It is a "way" that is to be understood through the intuition that is derived when one engages in the proper way with Gurbāṇī. Neither are the signs of this realization conventional ones that can be known beforehand. They are signs that must be interpreted through the ongoing dynamic flow of existence; they cannot be known in advance.

The metapragmatic framing then does not provide the content of experience, but rather the ways in which one might most fruitfully engage with that content. The goal is to become a fully relational being, one that is embedded with others dialogically, not centered on the self. The ultimate goal of action in the world is to perform *seva*, that is, selfless action for others. There has to be a guide for that action, however, that guide is to be found in Gurbāṇī. This requires an approach to Gurbāṇī that takes into account all of the senses and all of the dimensions of language, particularly its indexical dimensions. While denotational meanings may be limited, in some cases, monosemic, indexical connections are in theory unlimited. They allow us to branch out into other realms outside of ourselves and our limited ego. A metapragmatic approach helps us to realize these other dimensions of language that might otherwise be hidden to us. It allows us to unfold the different dimensions of meaning that cannot be encompassed in a merely

denotative approach. The meta-meta-commentary of the parchārak then allows his audience to take a social approach to meaning-making, bringing it more in consonance with the social nature of language itself. The meanings of Gurbāṇī are socially mediated, but also made available for individuals to take in and to apply to their own lives.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

The modern era has been broadly been characterized by a shift in ideas about language towards forms that are ideologized as more purified, stripped of their social embeddedness and indexicality (Bauman & Briggs 2003, 5). At the same time, language has tended to become (ideologized as) more dematerialized, with more attention paid to its arbitrary nature and symbolic functions than on its material form (Keane 2003b, 422). In a similar vein, language has become deontologized, removed as the ground of thought, and instead conceived of as a transparent vehicle for thoughts that exist apart from language (Mandair 2009, 347). These shifts in ideologies of language have been prompted by a series of social, political, and religious projects, several of them associated with colonial and imperial enterprises, and with the adoption of "scientific" methods, which has in turn engendered new forms of subjectivity.

In this dissertation I have shown how the colonial linguistics regime has had an especially important role to play in these major shifts in ideas about language. Orientalist scholars in India, representing ideas prevalent in the early colonial enterprise, were interested in enumerating languages grammatically and classifying them, activities that they felt would give them a better understanding of the minds of the natives, especially in areas like law, at a time when it seemed to them that the native civilization had reached a stage of degeneracy and decay. Understanding the underlying structures of language, that were hidden to most of the native population, was a means of both "unlocking" the knowledge that they kept closely guarded, and also a way to ultimately bypass the need to interact with the natives altogether. Armed with a grammar and copies of the "ancient" texts, law books in particular, the colonial administration would be able

to rule their new subjects in a rational fashion, without having to rely on untrustworthy interlocutors.

The methods of acquiring this linguistic and grammatical knowledge, not to mention the texts upon which they were based, however, were in fact dependent on native interlocutors. Many of these interlocutors were members of elite classes of their own communities, for instance Brahmins of Hindu communities, and maulvis of Muslim communities, who had their own interests and agendas and often conservative views on language and the relationship between their "classical" traditions and vernaculars. The Orientalists who worked with these natives tended to absorb their ideologies of language as well, whether consciously or not, which in turn shaped many of their own ideas about the languages they were analyzing and the relationships between them. These ideas in turn became part of the "common sense" of the colonial regime and were largely carried forward through the colonial enterprise without much modification. In that way these early linguistic encounters were especially consequential.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the colonial regime had annexed the Panjab region, the last of the major territories of the subcontinent to be brought into the imperial fold. What had been sporadic interactions between colonists and Sikhs prior to the annexation now became more direct and sustained, and colonial policies, attitudes, and methods began to have more influence on the ways that Sikhs began to think of themselves and their own relationships to their languages, particular their relationship to their scriptural language. Robert Cust outlined an elaborate theory about the relationship of the Sikh community, who he regarded as the "Protestants" of India, to the territory of Panjab, and to the Panjabi language. Whereas the term "Sikh" had earlier designated a "disciple", or a follower of the Sikh Gurus, under Cust's formulation it came to be employed as an ethnonym, a name for an ethnic group with

inextricable ties to land and language. Soon after Cust's formulation, Sikh ideas about their own tradition were sharply challenged by Ernest Trumpp's attempted translation of the Sikh scripture, which he did not regard as having any value other than as a repository for archaic linguistic forms.

Trumpp's training as a disciplinary linguist shaped the ways that he was able to see and understand language and its properties; for him the only dimension of language that was of relevance was its denotational-referential dimension; those features that could be described in a formal grammar. Macauliffe, a few decades later, and partly in order to make "reparations" to the Sikh community for the damage caused by Trumpp's misinterpretation of the Sikh tradition, embarked on a new translation. This translation also had its own limitations, however, as it also focused primarily on the denotational dimension of language, trying to distill a "simple" English meaning out of the text and misapprehending the importance of engagement with material forms of the language in Sikh praxis.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the "scientific" view of language had become part of the common sense of the era, and the only legitimate way to analyze and understand language, particularly for those who wanted to participate in mainstream scientific discourse. Reform-minded Sikhs of the Singh Sabha felt that it was important for Sikhs to be able to dialogue with the colonial regime, and to participate in forms of public discourse, and so sought ways in which they could accommodate what they regarded as the essential tenets and practices of Sikhism to the contemporary scientific temper. Singh Sabha intellectuals embarked upon a program of linguistic analysis that included the writing of grammars, dictionaries, and encyclopedias, genres that had not existed in the Sikh tradition previously. This marked a significant shift from oral modes of transmission of Sikh knowledge, and previous forms of interpretation and practice, to

these new, codified forms that could be widely disseminated through print, bypassing the need for interpersonal transmission. In diaspora populations, where in person communication with religious experts was not always available or possible, communities came to rely on these codified print encapsulations of Sikh knowledge, and the mediation of that knowledge through other languages, such as English.

Even with the advent of these new forms of knowledge transmission, traditional methods have continued to co-exist, even if they have been somewhat marginalized. The gurdwara space still remains an important venue for the transmission of forms of knowledge, especially in the forms of implicit attitudes, approaches, and orientations to the scriptural language, and ways to understand how the scriptural language mediates subjectivities and ways of being in the world. The genre of *kathā*, or oral exegesis, is still a vital location where these types of knowledge, that cannot be easily codified into print or other forms, continue to flourish. *Kathā* employs a variety of linguistic properties to produce its effects in listeners, including forms of reflexivity, metapragmatic talk, indexical calibration, the generation of alternative chronotopes, and figures of personhood that perdure across chronotopic strata and different scales, poetic forms including parallelism, and musical modes, and affective engagements through speech styles and prosodic variations. Sikhs understand their own scriptural language to possess many other functional dimensions besides the denotational; its poetic, indexical, and affective dimensions were equally important, if not more so, in the goal of the attunement of one's subjectivity to different scales of consciousness, such as attunement with *hukam*, the cosmic order. All of these resources engender not merely forms of propositional knowledge, but ways of being in the world and of interacting with history through a connection with processes that exceed one's immediate surroundings or a limited individual consciousness.

This dissertation has attempted to illuminate some of these sites of linguistic encounter both on wider and more intimate scales, and show how language ideologies play an important in mediating social understandings and social life more broadly. It has tried to show how language ideologies are situated historically, and how they are products of and developments from previous configurations of ideologies and the enactments and attempted enactments of various projects. While not determinative, language ideologies shape the ways that we understand and interact with the world and with each other.

As I wrote in the Introduction to this dissertation, I myself was raised as part of the Sikh diaspora and grew up walking between, or sometimes upon, many cultural and linguistic boundaries and fault lines as a regular course of business. In coming to deal with various social issues over time, I came to realize at some point that my own perspectives, formed much of the time at these various intersections, was not necessarily the perspective that most people, and institutions, brought to bear on these issues. As I mentioned earlier, 1984 and its aftermath were watershed historical moments for anyone growing up in the Sikh community in the last few decades, but there were many other issues to deal with, and to try to make sense of as well, even if they were less dramatic or visible. Some of those had to do with Sikh identity, but as I came to realize, many of those had to do with much broader social processes that were not limited to the Sikh community alone.

Among these, particularly since the middle of the twentieth century, but being felt more intensely once again, especially in recent years as major geo-political, socio-economic, and environmental shifts continue to take place and to re-configure social and political landscapes, has been the question of decolonization. We are now at the three-quarter of a century mark in the (nominally) post-colonial trajectory of India and Pakistan, and well over half a century in the

trajectory of many of the newly-independent nations of the continents of Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin and South America. And yet the question of decolonization still seems to be a vexed one. Can we yet point to a single example of "successful" decolonization? What would that decolonization look like? By what metric or metrics would we measure it?

We are hard pressed to come with even s single example, if decolonization is to mean something more than the removal of the state apparatus and the monopoly on violence of the colonizer. The vexing question is how could this be the case? Even if many of us are broadly sympathetic with the idea of decolonization as a means of redressing the most egregious harms that were perpetrated by colonial regimes? This dissertation project has brought home for me the fact that the deeper, more perduring effects of colonialism have been those that are some of the least spectacular, the most implicit, and therefore all the more difficult to name. As I have shown here, many of the deep epistemological shifts that are products of the colonial encounter have been rendered invisible, part of the common sense of the colonial regime. This common sense, whose structures have been rendered implicit, has largely been inherited by post-colonial regimes, even while they discard other ideas or institutions of the colonizers that are more readily available to conscious awareness, such as visible symbols.

What this dissertation project has opened for me is a world of epistemological entanglements that are much more complex than can be seen if we only employ what have come to be conventional ways of seeing (implicit ideas that have become part of *our* common sense) in terms of the categories we have known, or what seemed in earlier eras to be self-evident. Some of them are well-known binaries: self/other, colonizer/colonized, east/west, and so on. But the retrenchment of many of these categories in different forms (for instance the shift from the categories of colonizer/colonized to developed/developing, and now to Global North/Global

South) should tell us that we, those of us who are interested in developing a level of analysis that moves us beyond the qualitative re-inscription of these categories under new names, are perhaps not looking in the right places to focus our vision and critical thought.

These are some of the questions I have tried to open up in this dissertation, at least in a preliminary way, by combining approaches; employing a historical analysis of the development of ideas that have conditioned the present moment, but not limiting the analysis to the description of those conditions alone; also using an ethnographic lens to examine how these conditioning forces continue to play themselves out on the ground. They are rarely determinative on their own. In future research I hope to extend this approach to further examine the role that ideologies play in the persistence of epistemological structures over time, and across seeming cultural or political divides, across the colonial/colonized divide, for instance. My hypothesis is that, having passed through the colonial encounter, with all of the epistemological entanglements that it involved, the parties to that encounter will now have to reconfigure their conceptual understandings of the parameters of the issues at hand. Sikh communities, for instance, now positioned in a global diaspora, in formerly colonized lands as well as now in erstwhile settler colonies, will have to give some serious thought as to their own positionalities within and across these nation-state forms, given their own commitments to maintaining systems of values, relationships to language, and ways of being in the world, that will have to continue to be accommodated to a variety of different socio-political arrangements. Understanding the complex genealogies that have given rise to, and the epistemological structures that undergird, their current understandings of themselves as a community, and of other communities that they find themselves in relation with, will be crucial to the success of those projects.

Appendix: Transcript examples in Gurmukhi script (chapters 5-7)

Chapter 5

example 5.1
ਸ. _____ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ, ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਭੇਟ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ, ਇਹ ਮਾਤ ਲੋਕ ਦੇ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਕਰਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਨ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਜਿਓ।

example 5.2
ਆਪ ਦੀ ਧੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਨੀ (inaudible) ਕਈ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਛਰੇ ਹੋਏ ਆਤਮਾ (inaudible) ਤੇਰੀ ਸਹਿਜ ਪਾਠ ਅਰੰਭ ਸਨ। ਸੋ ਆਪ ਦੀ ਪਾਠ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਰਹਿਮ ਦਾ (inaudible) ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਜੀਓ। ਆਦ ਮੱਦ ਅੰਤ, ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਗੁਰਬਾਨੀ ਦੇ ਜਾਪ ਹੋਏ (inaudible) ਭੋਗ ਪਾਏ ਗਏ ਹਨ।

example 5.3
ਪਵਿੱਤਰ ਭਾਗ ਗੁਰਬਾਨੀ ਦਾ ਫੱਲ ਵਿਛਰੇ ਹੋਏ ਆਤਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਜੀ, ਆਪਣੇ ਪਵਿੱਤਰ ਚਰਨਾਂ ਕਮਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਖੇ ਨਿਵਾਸ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਣਾ, ਆਵਾਗਵਨ ਦੇ ਚੱਕਰ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖਣਾ।

example 5.4
ਹਰ ਸੰਤਾਨ ਦੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਰਨੀ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਜੀਓ। ਜਿਨੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਆਪ ਦੇ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਹਾਜ਼ਰੀਆਂ ਭਰੀਆਂ, ਸਰਬਤ ਨੂੰ ਉੱਚਾ ਉੱਚਾ ਜੀਵਨ, ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ, ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਦਾਤਾਂ, ਨਿਤਨੇਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਦਾਤਾਂ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਨੀਆਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਜੀ। ਸੁਖ ਹੋਵੈ, ਨਾਮ ਜਿਤਾਵੈ, ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ, ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਤੇਰੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਸਰਬਤ ਦਾ ਭੱਲਾ।

example 5.5
ਧਨ ਧਨ ਸਿਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਮਾਹਾਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਪਾਵਨ ਪਵਿੱਤਰ (inaudible) ਜੁੜ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ ਆਪਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ, ਸਾਡੇ ਤੋਂ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਰ ਚੁੱਕੇ S. _____ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਲਈ ਮਾਹਾਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਰੂਹ ਦਸਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਉਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਚਰਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਚੇ ਪਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਸੰਗਤ ਦੀ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਰੀ ਆਤਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਚਰਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਵਾਸ ਬਖਸ਼ਣ। ਸਾਡਾ ਮਾਹਾਰਜ਼ ਦੀ ਹਜ਼ੂਰੀ ’ਚ ਤੇ ਧੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਸਰਵਨ ਕਰਨਾ, ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਪਾਵਨ ਪਵਿੱਤਰ ਬਚਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜਣਾ, ਜਿੱਥੇ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਕੁਲ ਕਾਇਨਾਤ ਦਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਬਖਸ਼ਦੀ ਹੈ, ਉੱਥੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਦੁਨਿਆ ‘ਚ ਆਉਣਾ, ਜਿੱਥੇ ਦੈਵੀ ਹੁਕਮ ‘ਚ ਹੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਚਲੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਹਾਂ, ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ (inaudible), ਉੱਥੇ ਦੈਵੀ ਹੁਕਮ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਰਮਜ਼ਿਆ ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਏਥੇ ਤੁਰ ਕੇ ਬਾਵੀ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਨੇ, ਇਲਾਹੀ ਹੁਕਮ ਨੇ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਮਝ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਐ ਕੇ ਬੰਦਾ ਦੁਨਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਆ ਕੇ, ਜਿੱਥੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਫਰਜ਼ ਨਿਭਾਉਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ, (inaudible), ਇਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ (inaudible) ਉਹ ਭੁਲ ਨਾ ਜਾਵੇ, ਤੇ ਜਦੋਂ (inaudible) ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਰਮਜ਼ ਜੇਹੜੀ ਐ, ਉਹ ਇਹ ਜਾਗ (ਵਿਚ?) ਆਉਂਦੀ ਐ, ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਦੁਨਿਆ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ, ਕੀ ਕਰਣ ਆਏ ਸੀ। ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ

ਗੁਰਮਤ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ, ਹੋਲੀ ਆਪਾਂ ਸਾਂਝ ਪਾਵਾਂਗੇ, ਮੈਂ ਸ. _____ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਾਂਗਾ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਣ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ, ਆਪਣੇ ਸਾਂਝ ਪਾਉਣ।

example 5.6
ਇਸ ਕਰ ਕੇ, ਜੇਹੜਾ ਇੱਕ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਇੱਕ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਉਹ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਸਾਰਾ ਧਰਤੀ ਬਰਹਿਮੰਡ ‘ਕਠੇ ਹੀ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

example 5.7
ਕਿਉਂਕੇ ਦੁਖ-ਸੁਖ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ (...) ਆ ਕੇ ਬੋਲ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇਹੜਾ ਜੰਗ ਕਰਦਾ ਉਹ ਹੀ (...)। ਤੇ ਜਲਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਬੰਦਾ, ਜੇਹੜਾ ਉਹ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦਾ (...) ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਦਾ, ਉਦੋਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਪਲਟਦਾ ਹੈ।

example 5.8
ਏੱਥੇ ਮੈਂ ਮਾਹਾਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਅਰਥਾਂ ‘ਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਬੋਲ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਕਿਉਂਕੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਗਰੂਪਾਂ ਨੇ ਹਾਇਜੈਕ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ, ਉਹ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝੀ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ, ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਘਰ ਸਾਂਝਾ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਜੇਹੜੀ ਉਹ ਦੇ ਉੱਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਹੋਈ, ਉਹ ਦੇ ਚੁੱਪ ਤੇ ਰਣ? ਸਿੱਖੀ ਬਣ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਹੈ।

example 5.9
ਮੈਂ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਮੌਤ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੇਹੜੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਹਿਲ-ਜੁਲ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਹਿਲ-ਜੁਲ ਆਪਣੀ ਚੰਗੀਆਈ ਜੇਹੜੀ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਸਾਡੇ ਉਪਰ ਸੁਟੇਗੀ, ਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਧਰਤੀ ਦੇ ਉੱਤੇ ਇਕ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਵਾਲਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨਗੇ, ਇਕ ਚੰਗਾ ਸਮਾਜ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨਗੇ।

Chapter 6

example 6.1
ਅੰਤਰਿ ਅਗਨਿ, ਮੈਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੈ ਰਿਹਾ, ਜੋ ਗੁਰੂ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ, ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਰੱਖ (ਰਿਹਾ):
ਅੰਤਰਿ ਅਗਨਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਤਨੁ ਸੁਆਹ ॥
ਗਲਿ ਪਾਥਰ ਕੈਸੇ ਤਰੈ ਅਥਾਹ ॥ (GGS 267)

example 6.2
ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਸਿਖੁ ਅਖਾਏ ਸੁ ਭਲਕੇ ਉਠਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥ (GGS 305)
ਮੈਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੈ ਰਿਹਾ, ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ, ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਸੁਣਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪ ਕਾਰੇਂ
ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਸਿਖੁ ਅਖਾਏ ਸੁ ਭਲਕੇ...

example 6.3

ਮੈਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਚਹਰਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਰਚਾਰਕ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਥੋੜਾ ਫੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ, ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਕੁਝ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ, ਤੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਭਾਵੇਂ [inaudible] interest ਵੀ ਆਵੇਗਾ। ਮੇਰਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਸਫਰ ਹੈ। ਮੇਰੀ duty ਲਾਈ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਨੇ। ਪਰ ਮੈਂ ਹੈ ਹੀ ਪਰਚਅਰਕ...[inaudible] ਪਰਚਾਰਕ, ਨਾ ਵੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀ, ਨਾ head ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀ ਐਂ, ਨਾ ਰਾਗੀ ਐਂ, ਨਾ ਰਾਗ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਕੁੱਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦਾ, ਸਿੱਧਾ ਪਰਚਾਰਕ...ਪਰਚਾਰਕ...ਸਿੱਧਾ ਪਰਚਾਰ। ਆਏਗਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਐ, ਕਈ ਵਾਰੀ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਕਰਦੇ ਫਿਰ ਬੰਦੇ ਅਊਖੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਨੇ, ਕਿਉਂਕੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਸੱਚੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਹਿਣੀਆਂ ਨੇ, ਉਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਰਦਾਸ਼ਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਣਾ, ਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਮੂੰਹ ਚੋਂ ਸੱਚੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਨਿਕਲ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਨੇ, ਕਿਉਂਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਕੋਲ ਬੈਠੇ, ਸੱਚੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਨਿਕਲ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਨੇ...

example 6.4
ਸਤਗੁਰ ਦੇ ਚਰਨ ਸਪਰਸ਼ ਕਰਣੇ, ਚਾਹੇ ਪੰਜ ਮਿੰਟ ਬੈਠੇ। ਬੈਠੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ...ਸਤਗੁਰ ਦੇ ਸੰਗਤ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾ ਕਿਥੇ ਢੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਵੇ।

example 6.5
ਕਰੋ ਮਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਿਰਤੀਆਂ ਇੱਕਾਗਰ, ਸੀਸ ਨਿਵਾਈਏ, ਫਤੇਹ ਗਜਾਈਏ, ਵਾਹੇਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਵਾਹੇਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤੇਹ!

example 6.6
ਹਰ ਚੀਜ਼ ਦੀ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਐ। ਇਸ ਸ਼ਰੀਰ ਦੀ ਵੀ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਐ। ਔਰ ਸ਼ਰੀਰ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਬਣਾਈਆ, ਉਹ ਦੀ ਵੀ, ਉਹ ਵੀ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ, ਇਹ ਜੇਹੜੇ ਸਾਡਾ ਸ਼ਰੀਰ ਹੈ, ਇਹ ਵੀ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਲੇਗਾ ਤਾਂ ਠੀਕ ਰਵੇਗਾ।

example 6.7
ਸ਼ਰੀਰ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਰਵੇਗਾ ਤਾਂ ਠੀਕ ਰਵੇਗਾ। ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਨੇ ਜੋ ਕੁਝ ਵੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਬਣਾਇਆ, ਸਭ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ, ਇਹ ਸੂਰਜ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ, ਯਾ ਮੈਂ ਇਹਦਾਂ ਕਹਿ ਦੇਵਾਂ, ਸੂਰਜ ਹੁਕਮ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਨੂੰ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ। ਪੜਦੇ ਰੋਜ ਤੁਸੀਂ:
ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥ (GGS 1)

example 6.8
ਇਹ ਪੂਰੀ ਕਾਇਨਾਤ, ਪੂਰੀ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਜਿਹੜੀ ਹੈ, ਇਹ ਵੀ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ, ਏਥੇ ਹੁਣ ਮੈਂ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਾਂ, ਜਿਨੇ ਵੀ ਧਰਮ ਚਲੇ ਨੇ, ਕੁਝ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਚਲੇ ਨੇ। ਜਿਨੇ ਵੀ ਧਰਮ ਨੇ। ਸਾਰੇ ਧਰਮ ਚੰਗੇ ਨੇ। ਜਿਥੇ ਮੈਂ stage ਤੇ ਬੈਠਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਖੁੱਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ। ਸਾਰੇ ਧਰਮ ਚੰਗੇ ਨੇ, ਸਾਰੇ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਤੇ, ਸਭ ਚੰਗੇ ਨੇ। ਸਭ ਚੰਗੇ।

example 6.9
ਇਕ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰ ਦੇਵਾਂ, ਉਨਾਂ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੇਹੜੇ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਦੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਚੰਗੀ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਮੱਨੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਬਹੁਤ ਚੰਗੀ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ। ਹਰ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਚਲੀ ਹੈ, ਹਰ ਧਰਮ ਜੇਹੜਾ ਹੈ, ਸਚ ਦੇ (ਪੈਰਾ) ਦੇ

ਰਿਹਾ, ਹਰ ਧਰਮ ਅੱਲ੍ਹਾ, ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ, ਰਾਮ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ, ਸਾਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਾ ਰਿਹਾ, ਹਰ ਧਰਮ ਸੱਚ ਦਾ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਰਿਹਾ, ਹਰ ਧਰਮ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਹਿ ਰਿਹਾ ਸਾਰੇ ਬੰਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਦੇ ਨੇ। ਇਹ Bible ਪੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਦੇਖ ਲੈ।

example 6.10

ਮੈਂ ਏਥੇ ਇਕ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਵੀ ਕਰਾਂ, ਗੁਰੂ ਸਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਬਨਾਈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਨੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਕਾਇਮ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ। ਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮ ਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਬਣਾਈਆਂ ਨੇ। ਔਰ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲੇ ਜਾਗਣਾ ਨਿਤਨੇਮ ਕਰਨਾ। ਇਹ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਹੈ।
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਉ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ ਕਰਮੀ ਆਵੈ ਕਪੜਾ ਨਦਰੀ ਮੋਖੁ ਦੁਆਰੁ ॥ (GGS 2)

example 6.11

ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵੱਡਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ, ਤੁਹਾਡਾ, ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਾ। ਹੈ ਨਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ? ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ। ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠੇ ਹੋਏ ਨੇ, ਸੀਸ ਤੇ ਆਰਾ ਚਲੇ, ਮਰਯਾਦਾ। ਮੇਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਦੱਸੀ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ। ਇਹ ਸ਼ਰੀਰ ਚਲਾ ਜਾਵੇ ਕਿਉਂਕੇ ਸ਼ਰੀਰ ਤੇ ਇਕ ਦਿਨ ਜਾਣਾ ਐ...ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨਾ ਜਾਵੇ।

example 6.12

ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਮਤੀ ਦਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਬਦਲ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਹੋ ਜਾ, ਤੈਨੂੰ ਛੱਡ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ। ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ। ਮੇਰੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨੇ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਦੱਸੀ ਐ, ਮੈਂ (...) ਕਰ ਕੇ, ਮੈਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਾਂ, ਸਿੱਖ ਰਵਾਂਗਾ, ਮਰਾਂਗਾ, ਸਿੱਖ ਮਰਾਂਗਾ। ਮਰਯਾਦਾ। ਐਸਾ ਕੋਈ ਹੈ ਬੰਦਾ, ਸੀਸ ਤੇ ਆਰਾ ਚਲੇ ਤੇ ਸੀ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ? ਹੈ ਕੋਈ ਐਸਾ, ਸਾਰਾ ਸ਼ਰੀਰ ਰੂੰਹ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਬਣਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ, ਪੈਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਅੱਗ ਲੱਗੀ ਹੋਈ ਐ, ਥੜਪਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਕੁਰਲਾਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਵਿਰਲਾਪ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਹੈ ਕੋਈ ਐਸਾ? ਹੈ ਕੋਈ ਐਸਾ, ਸਾਫ ਉਬਲਦੀ ਦੇਗ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਦੇ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ, ਉਬਲ ਰਿਹਾ ਪਾਣੀ। ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਰਣੀਆਂ ਬੜੀਆਂ ਸਕੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੇ, ਸਿੱਖੀ (ਸਿੱਖਰ ਨੂੰ ਆਉਣਾ) ਔਖਾ ਹੈ। ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਰਣੀਆਂ ਬਹਤ ਸੌਖੀਆਂ ਨੇ।

example 6.13

ਐ ਭਾਈ ਤਾਰੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੇਹੜਾ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਿਰਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਮਿਲਿਆ। ਗੱਲ ਕਿਹਾ ਯਾ ਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਬਣ ਜਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਤੇਰੇ ਕੇਸ ਕਟ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ। ਕੇਸ ਕੱਟਣ, ਸਾਫ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ। ਜਿਨਾਂ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਅੱਜ ਆਪ ਬੇਅਦਬੀ ਕਰ ਲੈਣ। ਆਪ ਬੰਦੇ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਨਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ ਐ, ਥੱਲੇ ਕਰ ਲੈਣਾ, ਮੇਰੀ ਧਾਰੀ ਕੱਟ ਦੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਕੇਸ ਵੀ ਕੱਟ ਦੇ। ਜੋ ਰੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਸਾਡੀ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਦਾਤ ਗੁਰੂ ਨੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ, ਕੇਸ ਇਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਮੋਹ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ। ਇਹ ਕੇਸ ਐਵੇਂ ਨਾ ਸਮਝੋ। ਇਹ ਕੇਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਮੋਹ ਹੈ।

example 6.14

ਕੇਸ। ਭਾਈ ਤਾਰੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਹਾ ਤੇਰੇ ਕੇਸ ਵੱਢ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ। ਇਹ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਜੂੜਾ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੇਵੇ। ਉਹ ਪਤਾ ਕੀ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ? ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਮੈਂ ਕੇਸ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਾਂਗਾ, ਮੇਰੀ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਖੋਪੜੀ ਤੇ ਢਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ, ਪਰ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਕੇਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੱਟਣ ਦਿਆਂਗਾ। ਸਾਰੇ ਹੈਰਾਨ ਨੇ। ਗੱਲ ਹੈਰਾਨੀ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੈ? ਕੇਸ ਕੱਟੇ ਜਾਣ ਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਬਚ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਖੋਪੜੀ ਕੱਟੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ

ਤੇ ਕਿਦਾਂ ਬਚੇਗਾ? ਕਿਹਾ ਜੱਲਾਦ ਨੇ ਖੋਪੜੀ ਕੱਟੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ ਕਿਉਂ ਕੱਟਵਾਨੈ ਖੋਪੜੀ, ਕੇਸ ਕੱਟਵਾਲੈ। ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਾਹਾਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਅਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੇ ਛੱਕੇ ਪਏ ਹੋਏ ਨੇ, ਮੈਂ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੱਟਣ ਦਿਆਂਗਾ। ਤੇ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤ ਜੀ, (...) ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਕੈਂਚੀਆਂ ਜਦੋਂ ਕੱਟਣ ਲੱਗੇ ਤੇ ਕੇਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੱਟੇ ਗਏ ਕਿਉਂਕੇ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਨੇ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। “ਐ ਕਲਗੀਆਂ ਵਾਲਿਆ ਇਹ ਕੇਸ ਤੇਰੇ ਮੈਂ ਸਮਝੇ ਹੋਏ ਨੇ, ਹਰ ਵੇਲੇ ਮੈਂ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਾਣ ਕੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ, ਮੇਰੇ ਕੇਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਨ! ਇਹ ਕੇਸ ਤੇ ਤੇਰੀ ਦਾਤ ਹੈ, ਵਾਹੇਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਦਾਤ ਹੈ, ਤੇਰੇ ਬੱਚਾ, ਕੇਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੱਟੇ ਗਏ, ਇਹ ਖੋਪੜੀ ਜੇਹੜੀ ਹੈ, ਇਹ (…)”। ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਭਾਈ ਤਾਰੂ ਸਿੰਘ, ਹੈ ਕੋਈ ਐਸਾ? ਜਿਨਾਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਖੋਪੜੀ (ਕੁਰਬਾਈ ਹੋਏ), ਹੈ ਕੋਈ ਐਸਾ? ਜਿਹਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਬੰਦ ਬੰਦ ਕੱਟਾਏ ਹੋਣ, ਹੈ ਕੋਈ ਐਸਾ?

Chapter 7

example 7.1
ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥
ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥ ੧ ॥ (GGS 1)

example 7.2a
ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਬੜਾ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਐ। ਸੱਤ ਉਦਾਹਰਨਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ, ਸੱਤ ਉਦਾਹਰਨਾਂ, ਕਿੱਦੇ ਸਿਆਣੇ ਨੇ। ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਸੱਤ ਉਦਾਹਰਨਾਂ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ। ਬਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਤੂੰ ਕੁਝ ਸਮਝ ਸਕੇ। ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ:
(singing) ਖਾਂਡ ਖਾਂਡ ਕਹੈ ਜਿਹਬਾ ਨ ਸਵਾਦ ਮੀਠੇ ਆਵੈ। (BG 437)
ਮਿਠਾਸ ਉਦੋਂ ਆਏਗੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਅੱਦਾ ਚਿਮਚਾ ਚੀਨੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਮੁਖ ‘ਚ ਪਾਏਂਗਾ, ਕੋਈ ਮਿੱਠੀ ਵਸਤੂ ਮੂੰ ‘ਚ ਪਾਏਂਗਾ।

example 7.2b
(singing) ਖਾਂਡ ਖਾਂਡ ਕਹੈ ਜਿਹਬਾ ਨ ਸਵਾਦ ਮੀਠੇ ਆਵੈ ਅਗਨਿ ਅਗਨਿ ਕਹੈ ਸੀਤ ਨ ਬਿਨਾਸ ਹੈ॥ (BG 437)
ਕਿਸੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਠੰਡ ਲੱਗਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਤੇ heater ਦੂਰ ਪਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ, ਲਕੜਾਂ ਦੂਰ ਪਈਆਂ ਹੋਣ, ਤੇ ਦੂਰ ਬੈਠਾ ਕਹੀ ਜਾਵੇ “ਅੱਗ, ਅੱਗ, ਅੱਗ” ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਅੱਗ ਅੱਗ ਕਿਹਾ ਥੋੜਾ ਠੰਡ ਦੂਰ ਹੋਣੀ ਐ? ਤੂੰ ਅੱਗ ਬਾਲ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਦੇ ਕੋਲ ਜਾ, ਸੇਕ (...) ਤੇਰੀ ਸਰਦੀ ਦੂਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ।

example 7.3
ਤੀਸਰੀ ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਦਿੱਤੀ, ਕੋਈ ਬੰਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਬਿਮਾਰ। ਤੜਫਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ। ਦਿਵਾਈਆਂ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਲਿਆ, injectionਆਂ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਲਿਆ ਥੋੜਾ ਠੀਕ ਹੋਣਾ ਐ? (2:00) ਤੈਨੂੰ ਇਲਾਜ ਕਰਾਉਣਾ ਪੈਣਾ ਹੈ।
(singing) ਬੈਦ ਬੈਦ ਕਹੈ। ਬੈਦ ਬੈਦ ਕਹੈ ਰੋਗ ਮਿਟਤ ਨ ਕਾਹੂੰ ਕੋ। (BG 437)
ਵੈਦ ਵੈਦ ਕਿਹਾ ਥੋੜਾ ਰੋਗ ਮਿਟਣਾ ਐ? ਤੂੰ “ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ” ਕਰੀ ਜਾਏ ਥੋੜਾ ਰੋਗ ਮਿਟ ਜਾਣਾ ਐ? ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਵੀ ਤਾਂ ਪਵੇਗਾ ਨਾ?

(singing) ਬੈਦ ਬੈਦ ਕਹੈ ਰੋਗ ਮਿਟਤ ਨ ਕਾਹੂੰ ਕੋ। (BG 437)
ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਵੈਦ ਵੈਦ ਕਿਹਾ ਰੋਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਟਣਾ। ਉਹ ਦੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਵੇਗਾ।

example 7.4
ਸਤਵੀਂ ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਸੂਰਜ ਦੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗੇ
(singing) "ਤੈਸੇ"
ਇਹ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਉਦਾਹਰਨਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ, ਏਥੇ ਹੁਣ ਗਰਮਤ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਨਿਵੇਕਲਾ ਤਰੀਕਾ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਵੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਪੌੜੀਆਂ ਲਿੱਖਦੇ ਨੇ, ਕਬਿੱਤ ਲਿੱਖਦੇ ਨੇ, ਉਦਾਹਰਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਅਖੀਰਲੀ ਤੁਕ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਂਦੇ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਆ ਗਰਮਤ ਐ। (5:00) ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੜਣ, ਗਾਉਣ, ਵਿਚਾਰਨ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਵੀ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਕਿਰਤਨ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਵਰਤੀਆਂ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀਆਂ ਨੇ। ਬੜੀ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ।

example 7.5a
ਕੋਈ ਗਿਆਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਗੋਸ਼ਟੀਆਂ ਕਰੀ ਜਾਵੇ, ਕੋਈ mechanical repetition ਸ਼ਬਦ ਰਟੀ ਜਾਵੇ, ਕੋਈ ਮੰਤਰ ਦੀ ਤਰਾਂ ਪੜੀ ਜਾਵੇ,

example 7.5b
ਕਹਿੰਦੇ: ਇਸ ਤਰਾਂ ਹੋਏਗਾ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ "ਖੰਡ ਖੰਡ" ਕਹਿ ਰਿਹਾ ਪਰ ਖੰਡ ਦਾ ਸਵਾਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਾਨਿਆ। (ਇਤ) ਇਸ ਤਰਾਂ ਹੈ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ "ਧਨ ਧਨ" ਕਿਹ ਰਿਹਾ ਪਰ ਹੈ ਕੰਗਾਲ। (ਇਤ) ਇਸ ਤਰਾਂ ਹੈ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਹੈਗਾ ਬਿਮਾਰ ਐ, "ਵੈਦ ਵੈਦ" ਕਹੀ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਐ, ਪਰ ਵੈਦ ਦੀ ਦਿਵਾਈ ਖਾਣ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ।

example 7.6
ਸਾਰੇ ਕਿਹੰਦੇ ਆਂ ਮੇਰਾ ਵੈਦ ਗੁਰੂ...ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ। (GGS 618) (6:00)
ਆਉ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਵਾਲਿਉ, ਇਕ ਵਾਰੀ ਵੇਖਿਉ ਤਾਂ ਸਈ ਮੇਰਾ ਵੈਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿਵੇਂ। ਉਹ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਅਰੋਗਤਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ, ਕਿਵੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬਿਮਾਰੀਆਂ ਕੱਢਦਾ, ਆਉ ਇਕ ਵਾਰੀ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਪੰਗਤੀਆਂ ਵੱਲ ਧਿਆਨ ਤੇ ਦਈਏ। ਵਾਕਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਵੈਦ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਉਹ ਵੈਦ ਹੈ ਕਿਵੇਂ?
(singing) ਮੇਰਾ ਬੈਦੁ ਰੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ, ਮੇਰਾ ਬੈਦੁ ਰੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ। ਬੈਦੁ ਰੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ, ਮੇਰਾ ਬੈਦੁ ਰੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ। (sangat) ਬੈਦੁ ਰੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ, ਮੇਰਾ ਬੈਦੁ ਰੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ। ਬੈਦੁ ਰੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ, ਮੇਰਾ ਬੈਦੁ ਰੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ।
ਸਾਰੇ ਹਾਸ਼ਰੀ ਲੁਆਉ ਜੀ ਆਪਣੀ। ਸਾਰੇ,
(singing) ਬੈਦੁ ਰੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ, ਮੇਰਾ ਬੈਦੁ ਰੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ, ਬੈਦੁ ਰੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ (sangat) ਮੇਰਾ ਬੈਦੁ ਰੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ। ਬੈਦੁ ਰੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ, ਮੇਰਾ ਬੈਦੁ ਰੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਾ। (7:00)
ਉਹ ਵੈਦ ਹੈ ਕਿਵੇਂ, ਤੇ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਇਲਾਜ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ?

example 7.7

ਵਾਕਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਵੈਦ ਹੈ। ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਜਿਊਣ ਦਾ ਤਰੀਕਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਐ। ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬਕਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਦੇ ਨੇ:

(singing) ਤੈਸੇ ਗਯਾਨ ਗੋਸਟਿ ਕਹਤ [ਕਰਤ] ਨ ਰਹਤ ਪਾਵੈ। (BG 437)

ਰਹਤ ਹੋਵੇ ਕੋਈ ਨਾ ਜੋ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਉਹ ਦੇ ਤੇ ਤੁਰਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ, ਤੇਰੀਆਂ ਗਿਆਨ ਗੋਸ਼ਟੀਆਂ, ਤੇਰੇ ਮੰਤਰ ਜੱਪਣੇ, ਤੇਰੇ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਕੀਤੇ, ਕਿਸ ਅਰਥ? ਰਹਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾਈ, ਤੁਰਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ। ਤੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਸਮਝ ਆ ਗਈ, ਫਿਰ ਤੁਰਨ ਦਾ ਤਰੀਕਾ ਆ ਗਿਆ।

example 7.8

ਕਿਵੇਂ? ਜਦੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਸੂਰਜ ਅੰਦਰ ਉਦੇ ਹੋਇਐ। ਉਦੇ ਪਾਨ। ਉਦੇ ਪਾਨ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਪਾਨ meaning ਸੂਰਜ, ਉਦੇ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਹੈ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਜਦੋਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਚੀਨੇ, ਅੰਦਰ ਵੇਖ ਲਿਆ। ਸਮਰੱਥ ਆ ਗਈ ਸ਼ਿੰਦਾਗੀ ਜਿਉਣ ਦਾ ਤਰੀਕਾ ਆ ਗਿਆ। ਤੇ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਵਾਲਿਉ ਜਦੋਂ ਸੂਰਜ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੈ ਨਾ, ਸੂਰਜ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਨੇਹਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇਣ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਵੀ ਮੈਂ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਪਿਆ ਭਾਈ। ਸੂਰਜ ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਐ। ਸੂਰਜ ਦੱਸਣ ਥੋੜਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਪਿਆ? ਮੈਂ ਰੋਸ਼ਨੀ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਐ? ਭੱਲਿਆ ਸੂਰਜ ਕੀ ਹੈ, ਤੇਰੇ ਸ਼ਿੰਦਾਗੀ ਦੇ ਗੁਣ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸੂਰਜ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਦੱਸਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਰੋਸ਼ਨੀ ਦੇ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਹਾਂ। ਤੇਰੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਗੁਣ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਏ ਨਾ, ਦੱਸਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈਣੀ ਤੇਰੇ ਗੁਣ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗ ਜਾਣੇ ਨੇ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਦੱਸਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਗਏ ਮੈਂ ਰੱਬ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਆਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਰੱਬੀ ਗੁਣ ਨੇ। ਜਦੋਂ ਤੁਰੇ ਸਨ ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਪਿਆ

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਆ ਮਿਟੀ ਧੁੰਧੁ ਜਗਿ (pause) (with sangat) ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਆ। (BG 27)

ਤੇ ਜਿਉਂ ਜਿਉਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੁਰਦੇ ਗਏ, ਤੁਰਦੇ ਗਏ, ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਗੁਣ ਨੇ, ਜੋ ਮੈਂ ਕਹਿ ਰਿਹਾ, ਉਹ ਦੇ ਤੇ ਤੁਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਵੇਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ਾ ਲੱਗਾ ਲਿਆ ਜੋ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਵਾਕਈ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਜੀਵਨ ‘ਚ ਹੈ। ਤੁਸੀਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਮਾ ਕੇ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸੂਰਜ ਕਹਿਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਮੈਂ ਰੋਸ਼ਨੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ। ਬੱਸ, ਇਹ ਗਿਆਨ ਹੈ। ਇਹੋ ਗਿਆਨ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਪਤਿਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ...ਪੁਨੀਤ ਕਰਣ ਦੀ ਤਾਕਤ ਪਏ ਰਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਤੇ ਇਹ ਗਿਆਨ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ। ਗੁਰੂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

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