

Un-vanishing Angularities? Placing Pakistani Christians in Third-Millennium Cultural Texts

Madeline Clements

Abstract

In 1947, Jinnah imagined Pakistan as a secular state in which religious communities' 'angularities' would 'vanish'. Yet, with the consolidation of a national ideology which invokes Islam as Pakistan's reason for being, this vision has become eroded. In the wake of 9/11 and the West-led 'war on terror', the vulnerability of Pakistan's Christian minority to acts of 'retaliation' on account of a mistaken 'Western' affiliation, and to more ambiguous forms of social and legal discrimination, seems ever more apparent, and problematic to address. This chapter offers contextualised readings of autobiographical, oratorical and photographic texts produced in the wake of such events as the 2011 murder of Pakistan's Minorities Minister Shahbaz Bhatti, who had defended the Christian woman Asia Bibi against blasphemy charges, and the 2013 attacks on Lahore's Joseph Colony. It argues against the championing of these creative outputs as 'representative' of minority experience. Instead, it proposes a cautious unfolding of what they may reveal about the scope that exists in third-millennium Pakistan for the place of its indigenous Christians to be articulated, made visible, and imagined differently.

Keywords

9/11, Pakistan, Christians, non-Muslim minorities, memoir, autobiography, photography, representation, Asia Bibi, *Blasphemy*, Aasia Nasir, Malcolm Hucheson, Joseph Colony.

List of Plates

Plate 1, *Joseph Colony: A Poverty of Wishes* [title image], Malcolm Hutcheson (2014)

Plate 2, *Paga Bibi, Joseph Colony, 2010*, Malcolm Hutcheson (2014)

Plate 3, *A Church in Negative: 1. The One; 2. Apostolic; 3. Universal; 4. Holy*, Malcolm Hutcheson (2014)

Plate 4, *Pervaiz Masih holds the only remaining photograph of his brother, Ashraf Masih, at his grave side. He died while cleaning a sewer pipe in Bachwa Colony, Bagdami Bagh, Lahore, during the rains in January 2008*, Malcolm Hutcheson (2010)

Biographical Note

Madeline Clements is Research Lecturer in English Studies at Teesside University, and was Assistant Professor of English at Forman Christian College, Lahore from 2014-15. She completed her doctorate at the University of East London. Her articles, chapters and reviews have been published in journals, books and literary supplements including *Sohbet*, *Wasafiri*, *Imagining Muslims*, *Dawn* and the *TLS*. Her monograph, *Writing Islam from a South Asian Muslim Perspective: Rushdie, Hamid, Aslam, Shamsie*, was published by Palgrave in 2015.

Un-vanishing Angularities? Placing Pakistani Christians in Third-Millennium Cultural Texts

Madeline Clements

On the nation's inauguration, Muhammad Ali Jinnah imagined Pakistan as a secular state in which majority and minority religious communities' 'angularities' would 'vanish' (1947: n.p.) Their beliefs, while 'fully protected', would cease to define them publicly (n.p.).

Subcontinental Christian leaders, trusting more to their community's safety in a new nation created for a (Muslim) minority, as opposed to amongst a Hindu majority, had requested Christians' inclusion in Pakistan prior to partition, and played a small but significant role in voting for the country's creation (Anjum and Tariq 2012: 440-2; Kamran and Purewal n.d.: 2-4). Following its foundation, Christians, Hindus, Parsis, indeed all persons of 'whatever creed' who were prepared 'to play their part as ...loyal citizens', were to be made welcome as Pakistanis, in accordance with Jinnah's understanding of Islamic religious tolerance (in Syed 2008: 106).ⁱ

The reality, however, has been somewhat different. The inclusion of minorities such as Christians was perhaps always problematic in a territory created in the name of Islam where a sense of patriotism and national commitment would (inevitably) be measured on the basis of religion. Since as early as 1948, members of Pakistan's Muslim and non-Muslim minorities have fallen prey to accusations of disloyalty, cast by politicians and religious groups as traitors to the nation ('potential fifth-columnists in a Hindu-Indian plan' to regain control of Pakistani lands and covert British agents), but also, by virtue of their divergent beliefs, as violators of Islamic tenets (Jalal 2014: 58-9; Ispahani: loc 316).ⁱⁱ The displacement of the Quaid-i-Azam's (rhetorically) inclusive and egalitarian vision by a national ideology which promotes an exclusive 'Islam' as Pakistan's '*raison d'être*' (Riaz 2011: 19), and the related marginalisation of the country's minorities, has long been resisted by cultural critics

who would challenge ‘the State’s [monolithic] image of itself and the identity of the people that reside ... within it’ (Hashmi 2002: 8-7). In a post-9/11 context of ‘war on terror’ and heightened international sensitivity to Islamisation, Pakistan’s already embattled Christian communities’ vulnerability both to acts of ‘retaliation’ on account of their supposed ‘Western’ affiliations, and to more ambiguous forms of social and legal discrimination, seems intense. It presents both a cause of external consternation, and an increasingly problematic internal reality for local critics to address.

Contemporary observers have not been blind to the contradictions in Jinnah’s inaugural rhetoric. Sadia Abbas notes, for example, that his apparent negation of ethnic and religious identities seems to ‘go against the very grain of metropolitan multiculturalism’, in which minority groups’ agency is contingent on the recognition of their right to articulate difference (2014: 137). Yet, in twenty-first century contexts, non-Muslim Pakistanis continue to invoke Jinnah’s founding words to ‘assert ... the necessity of ... creating the conditions in which religious difference is publicly and safely possible’ (137-8). Conscious of this paradox, I seek to trace what creative non-fiction texts can say about the ‘vanishing’ or evacuation of Pakistani Christian communities’ ‘angularities’ from the nation’s public space; and how far these foreground or make visible Christians’ creedal and cultural differences.

This chapter offers contextualised readings of literary, oral and visual texts produced and circulated in the wake the 2009 arrest of Asia Bibi on blasphemy charges and the 2013 arson attack on Joseph Colony: events which brought Christian communities’ ‘plight’ to world attention and prompted internal calls for the reform and re-cognition of Jinnah’s founding vision. Deploying auto/biographical, oratorical, documentary, and aesthetic forms and techniques, such cultural expressions may articulate and make visible, but also overlook, obfuscate, or exaggerate the complex social, economic and political dynamics, and theological divergences, which render Pakistani Christians unequal. Hence I argue against

their championing as ‘representative’ of a largely silent and subaltern minority. Instead, I propose a cautious unfolding of what such creative texts can reveal about the space afforded in the third millennium to the South Asian followers of an apparently ‘Western’ faith in their majority-Muslim homeland. In doing so, I also question from whose perspective the position of Pakistani Christians can currently be envisaged or expressed, and explore what scope may exist within Pakistan for their place to be imagined differently.

The position of Pakistan’s Christians, and of other religious minorities such as Hindus, Sikhs, Ahmadis, and of certain non-Sunni Islamic sects such as Shi’as and Ismailis, has become increasingly precarious as the nation has evolved from an imagined homeland for Indian Muslims where all would be extended equal citizenship (Jalal 2014: 56-60; 283-4). This is a reality perhaps less discussed than tacitly acknowledged in Pakistan, but it is also one corroborated by a small number of scholars and studies published within and beyond its borders (Gabriel 2006; Moghal 2003; Walbridge 2003, 2005). The now Islamic Republic’s commitment to enabling Muslims to live in accordance with Quranic teachings, as outlined in the 1949 Objectives Resolution and incorporated into the 1973 Constitution, has ‘potentially contradicted promises ... assuring [non-Muslims] freedom to practice their religions and develop their cultures’ and left them to ‘occupy a nebulous position’ as Pakistanis theoretically (Jalal 2014: 56; Walbridge 2003: 97). Meanwhile, schemes, laws and procedures, such as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s schools’ nationalisation programme; the Islamization of legislation under General Zia-ul-Haq; and the maintenance of an electoral system which effectively withholds direct representation from non-Muslim voters, licensed by this existential shift, have led to the curbing of religious freedoms in practice (Jalal 2014: 223). Such developments are repeatedly referred to in the negative in scholarship on Pakistani Christians and minority rights, the most notorious being Zia’s ‘black’ (blasphemy)

laws, which have rendered Pakistan's ambiguously-placed Christian citizens particularly vulnerable (Walbridge 2005: 120).

The members of Pakistan's largest non-Muslim religious minority, which includes, for example, Punjabi Christians and Goan Catholics, are by no means homogeneous in descent, denomination or socio-economic status (Walbridge 2005: 115). Yet, as Linda Walbridge has observed, 'it is imperative to understand that a large number ... work as sweepers or sanitation workers, jobs that are associated with "untouchability"', and hence with the lowest ranks of the Hindu caste system (115-6). This social stigma which impedes their attainment of equal status as humans and as citizens despite Jinnah's promises to the contrary. At the same time, the fact that a considerable part of the Pakistani Christian church exists as a result of colonial-era conversions has 'painted an image that [its followers] are the toadies and stool-pigeons of the Christian West', which subcontinental religious leaders fought to oust prior to independence (Gabriel 2007: 98). Hence, residing in popular (Muslim) imaginations as doubly alien, Pakistan's Christians seem, ironically, and 'increasingly' compelled to seek 'sources of identity other than ... nationality', which may set them apart from their Muslim neighbours, 'in order to feel that they are part of something larger than themselves' (Walbridge 2005: 122). These include a 'unified Christian' (but not necessarily Western) sense of self which surfaces in the aesthetic and other discourses I proceed to discuss (123).

In the immediate aftermath of the World Trade Centre attacks, acts of 'retaliation' directly related to the launching of the US-led campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan, such as the killing of sixteen Punjabi Christians at a Bahawalpur church, have undoubtedly intensified the sense of embattlement among a community which already felt itself the 'target ... of systematic oppression' (119; 2003: 246). Abbas (2014: 147) suggests Pakistani Christians' current, postcolonial 'plight' should be understood as 'exacerbated by ... imperial

encounter[s]' in which they have been 'inscribed as traitors by ... religious actors ... newly antagonistic to Empire', but linked to groups whose hostility to minorities has a longer history. South Asian Christian scholars hold differing opinions about the extent of the negative impact on Pakistani Christians as a result, on the one hand, of animosity generated by President Bush's targeting of Muslim countries and extremist groups in the 'war on terror', supported by Pakistan's own President, Pervez Musharraf, and, on the other, of Christians' neglect by Western churches eager to show 'solidarity' with diasporic Muslims vulnerable to Islamophobia (Gabriel 2007: 80; Sookhdeo 2002: 352-3).ⁱⁱⁱ However, what is perhaps clear is that when American and European observers — governmental, media, academic — consider the status of 'fellow' Christians in Pakistan, it is to observe and regret the state of "modern-day martyrdom" (Shatzmiller 2005: ix) apparently imposed upon them as a result the prejudices of Pakistan's Muslim population and parliament's enactment of Islamic laws.

My exploration of contemporary texts by and about Pakistani Christians is written with a consciousness of the criticisms that can be lodged by churches and human rights campaigners, locally and globally, in relation to Christians' current living conditions and unequal status as 'citizens' in an Islamic Pakistan which seems increasingly conservative. But this chapter also retains an awareness that for writers, artists and activists operating in such situations 'to speak of injustice is to court the possibility of being called a traitor or of being accused of producing "recruitable" narratives', which, in turn, may fuel Islamophobia (Abbas 2014: 147). In an age in which 'we cannot deny that the international media is out to get the soul of Islam' (d'Souza in Walbridge 2003: 177), this is something I seek to avoid, even as I hasten to engage with and to elucidate how Pakistani Christians are positioned, nationally and internationally, by means of at times highly critical perspectives.

The literary, aural and visual works discussed, selected with a view to exploring the ways in which the place of Christians in the postcolonial Islamic Republic is and can currently be imagined, might broadly be termed cultural texts. Emotive and aesthetic in appeal, and carefully constructed to foreground particular political perspectives, they are not straightforwardly representative. The events with which they deal: Asia Bibi's sentencing to death following a dispute with workmates in the Punjab village of Ittan Wali; the shooting in Islamabad of her 'champion' Shahbaz Bhatti; and the burning of Joseph Colony in Lahore's Badami Bagh by Muslims from a local madrassa, have occurred in a contemporary Pakistani context overshadowed by global 'war on terror'. Yet these occurrences should be located on a continuum with earlier incidents which have briefly brought Pakistani Christians' grievances to wider national and international attention. These include the suicide of Pakistan's first indigenous Catholic Bishop, John Joseph, committed in protest against the blasphemy laws under which another Christian, Ayub Masih, was given a death penalty. Hence the texts I consider should be understood as in dialogue with longer-term issues — Islamisation, sectarianism, questions of caste — which have undermined Pakistani Christians' sense of legitimacy and belonging as citizens, albeit ones compounded by anti-Western sentiment and acts of 'Islamic' terror in the post-9/11 period.

First, I turn to *Blasphemy*, the memoir 'written' in English by Bibi (2012) with French journalist Anne-Isabelle Tollet's assistance, which positions the Pakistani Christian woman as unwelcome in her inhospitable homeland and in desperate need of saving. Second, I return to the oration Christian politician Aasia Nasir (2012) delivered to Pakistan's National Assembly in March 2011 in tribute to the murdered Shahbaz Bhatti. Here I build on Abbas' (2014: 133-147) analysis to highlight how Nasir's poetic speech decries and bears witness to a 'condition of perpetual erasure', ultimately challenging listeners to confront the question of Christians' place in Pakistan's past and future history. Lastly, I focus on Malcolm

Hutcheson's (2014) at times startlingly direct combination of written word and still image in his photographic project *Joseph Colony*. I argue that the then Lahore (now Scotland) based photographer's penetrating portraits suspend their Christian subjects in a space at once starkly real and somewhere other, between the documentary and the aesthetic, where ambiguous, seemingly ethnographic images refuse neatly to 'fit with what people ... believe things look like' or think they know, thus opening up alternative possibilities(8-9).

No place like home in Pakistan — the auto/biography of Asia Bibi

Blasphemy: A Memoir: Sentenced to Death Over a Cup of Water was 'written' by Asia Bibi (herself illiterate) with the assistance of *France24*'s Pakistan reporter, and published in Britain by Virago in 2012. Introduced by a preface from Tollet (in Bibi 2012: xii), who describes herself as 'the pen' to Asia's 'voice', it provides Bibi's recollections of the period from her arrest in June 2009 to the days following the funeral of her lawyer Shahbaz Bhatti in April 2011. These were confided by Bibi to her husband in prison and relayed to Tollet from Urdu to English with an interpreter's assistance. The resulting prison narrative points, ostensibly simply, to the 'suffocating' space inhabited by Christians in a majority-Muslim state which cannot socially and legally accommodate those who differ in terms of faith(Bibi 2012: 124-5).

Candidly prefaced and confessional in tone, *Blasphemy* immediately brings the reader into an intimate relationship with Bibi and her helper. Yet the memoir's ventriloquial provenance, not uncommon for this genre, presents considerable problems when it comes to the attribution of any agency, ownership or authorship to the 'real' (Pakistani, Christian) woman who has apparently uttered these unaffected words. For example, when reflecting on the quality of Pakistani Christian belonging, 'Asia' asserts:

In Pakistan, it's a bit like being an orphan...The government has given us the same rights [but] ... we aren't always accepted by society. At home, we didn't keep any crosses ...,

just a small bible hidden under the mattress ... I can't read ... but that bible is our own little treasure (Bibi 2012: 30).

The childhood simile and domestic detail, simply combined, seem to 'tell' a great deal about the limits placed on religious freedom in present-day Pakistan. They reveal how, far from feeling 'free to go to [their] temples' (Jinnah 1947: n.p.), Christians like Bibi cannot display modest signs of faith within their private homes, so strong is their fear of offending Muslims. This may well be the case, but in a memoir boldly proffered 'in the name of religious freedom' by Tollet (in Bibi 2012: xiii), who comes from a muscularly secular European country where the *public* wearing of 'conspicuous' religious symbols is policed, it seems almost strategically placed: aimed at bolstering the cultural politics of the 'war on terror'. It positions the individual, oppressed female Christian subject, whom Tollet would rescue against a bigoted mass of 'Muslim neighbours', whose muezzin's cries and Ramzan rituals Bibi (2012: 29) does her best to accommodate.

Nakedly marketed as a 'heart-breaking' account of injustice, the memoir also problematically encourages its largely foreign, English-speaking readers to imagine themselves participants — by virtue of purchasing the book — in the greater act of rescuing a poor Christian 'wife and mother', whose attitudes resemble their own, from her home country's nefarious Muslim, male authorities (Tollet in Bibi 2012: vii-xiii). The prefatory framing of *Blasphemy* as a cry for help, and Tollet's shaping of Bibi's ensuing narrative as the woeful tale of a tolerant, downtrodden South Asian woman's struggle against fanatical Islamic perspectives, surely replicates the neo-colonial 'saving discourse' Cara Cilano (2015: 158) describes as a product of the 'war on terror'. As Cilano explains, this operates to establish a 'moralistic hierarchization that ascribes "good" and "bad" qualities to ... epically pitted discursive positions' on either side of a constructed East-West divide, and to present 'essentialized and gendered subjectivities that appear natural or outside of ... history', thus displacing more varied and less polarising viewpoints (158). In *Blasphemy*, Bibi's 'voice', if

not exactly vanishing, becomes indistinguishable from Tollet's own as it is co-opted into a grander narrative (of Western-influenced Christian liberality versus Eastern Islamic intolerance), which tends — like those Cilano discusses — 'towards moralism' and is 'laden with affective resonance' (160). As a result the positions Bibi's (2012: 3, 6, 13) account identifies of herself and fellow Christians as 'good Pakistani[s and] Catholics'; 'men and women first, and followers of a religion second'; and as poor, honest, patriotic labourers toiling for their land, seem suspect: finessed by a French saviour to fit a secular, humanitarian agenda. For the same reason the more frustrated and unsettling perspectives Bibi would offer of Christian Pakistanis as 'orphans' in their own land, flattered by a foreigner's tears or a mention from Pope Benedict; as near-invisible pariahs 'supposed to make excuses for existing'; and as caught in a paradox: 'blasphemers' if they say they believe in 'God and Jesus Christ', or 'traitors' to their own faith if they express devotion to 'Allah', lose their potency (30, 47, 113-4, 132-3). Yet the critiques, implicit and explicit, which the memoir contains, whether of the Islamic Republic or the 'universal' Western church, both of which have commanded Pakistani Christians' loyalties historically but failed to protect them, nevertheless linger (Walbridge 2005: 125). They encourage us to listen for an 'alternative narrative' or attempt to 'formulate a "countersentence"' which might offer a more nuanced perspective (Cilano 2015: 170). With that in mind this chapter proceeds to trace the recurrence of the more critical stations Bibi (with Tollet) maps in the cultural forms it goes on to examine, which I argue cannot easily be dismissed as the product of conspiring Western 'liberal' and anti-Muslim imaginations.

'To be, or not to be' — Aasia Nasir's oration on the murder of Shahbaz Bhatti

Rather than calling on foreign listeners to petition for the intervention of Western politicians, which might effect the 'saving' of women like Bibi (Tollet in Bibi 2012: xii), Christian MNA Aasia Nasir effectively placed herself next in the line of fire in the speech she made on a

related matter on 3 March 2011.^{iv} The previous day had seen the murder of the Christian Minorities Minister Shahbaz Bhatti by ‘self-described Taliban gunmen’, who had taken up Bibi’s case following the assassination of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer by his bodyguard Mumtaz Qadri (Walsh 2011: n.p.). Since Qadri’s hanging in February 2016, Islamic groups have continued to urge the government to execute Bibi rather than appear to respond to ‘international pressure’ for leniency, while she and her supporters have again been threatened (AFP 2016: n.p.). Although conscious of the toxicity of Bibi’s case, Nasir remained standing in order to protest Bhatti’s killing after a commemorative silence in Pakistan’s National Assembly in March 2011. Abbas (2014: 135) describes the speech she proceeded to make as ‘an elegy produced from within the space of complaint’ which, in my opinion quite volubly, ‘embodied and revealed ... the contradictions of the status of religious minorities in the nation State’ both as Jinnah once imagined it, and as it now exists. These include contradictions around the Christian minority’s continued lack of equality despite demonstrations of service made throughout the period of the nation’s history, which also surface in Bibi’s auto/biography (Nasir 2012: 250).

Much has been made, both in the introduction to the English-language translation of Nasir’s speech printed in the British magazine *Critical Muslim*, and in Abbas’ (2014: 133-147) reading of the Urdu original, of Nasir’s incorporation of lines by the progressive poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz. These are taken from poems that bear witness to past injustices and executions which took place in Pakistan and in America: *Ham jo taarik rahon mein maray gaiy* (‘we who were executed in the darkest lanes’), and *Lahu ka suragh* (‘sign of blood’) (Nasir 2012: 247).^v Nasir opens with the former poem’s powerful penultimate stanza:

As the evening of tyranny dissolved in your memory
 We walked on as far as our feet could carry us
 A song on our lips, a lamp of sadness in our heart
 Our grief bore witness to our love for your beauty

Look, we remained true to that love

We, who were executed in the dark lanes (Mad Guru 2011: n.p.).^{vi}

Her invocation of the spirit of Faiz, Pakistan's resistant, revolutionary, patriotic poet, and her deployment of his heavily symbolic sacrificial language, certainly intensifies the sense of 'yearning to be allowed to belong in one's own home' conveyed by her ensuing speech (Abbas 2014: 137). This is a home, Nasir proceeds painstakingly to remind the Assembly, which Christians chose over a separate land, shed their blood to serve, and for the dream of which they remain prepared to die, despite Muslim-majority governments' seemingly wilful negation of their historic contribution, disregard for their present wellbeing, and tendency to dismiss them as American or European affiliates (2012: 249. 251-2). As she raises the spectre of state oppression ('*sitam*') conjured by Faiz's lines, Nasir simultaneously demonstrates her knowledge of Urdu poetry, thereby enacting her committed community's right to lay claim to Pakistan's shared cultural inheritance and the national identity it enfolds.

I would suggest, however, that interpretations of Nasir's oration might benefit from a slightly lesser emphasis on the significance of her selection of poems drawn from Pakistan's progressive Urdu literary past to frame what she says. As Abbas (2014: 138) herself points out, Nasir's primary source was *Burning Alive*, a documentary produced following the 2009 arson attacks on Christian homes in Gojra in the wake of another blasphemy accusation, which made connections between this violence and increased sectarian aggression after 9/11 (40). Having reviewed Nasir's recitation of verses by Faiz and Sahir Ludhianwi used in the film, Abbas concludes that this points to the existence of an oral (as opposed to written) 'archive' of critical perspectives on the Pakistani state, which suggest a 'more inclusive notion of citizenship' can collectively be imagined (140). Yet the Christian Assembly member's reuse of lines quoted in this locally-produced documentary about the Gojra 'tragedy' may also indicate the potency of the brutal scenes, shown 'from a Christian

perspective' and enhanced by the citation of Urdu poetry, which, for Nasir, found a powerful resonance in events surrounding the unlawful execution of the unprotected Bhatti (Nasir 2012: 250-1; *Pakistani Christians* 2013: n.p.). Some rebalancing seems necessary if we are to listen to other aspects of the message which Nasir is trying to communicate to the Assembly's mostly Muslim, male politicians about the (lack of) place made for and security afforded to Christians in Pakistan, both in the impassioned speech Faiz's words unfold, and through the body with which she performs it.

Abbas's (2014) close and subtle reading of the speech highlights many of the points I would want to make about how Nasir illuminates, abjures, and simultaneously enacts the effacement of Pakistani Christian identities and histories, at times seeming to defer to the exclusive attitudes and beliefs which would further marginalise this minority community. Most significantly, perhaps, Abbas (2014:138) discusses how, in seeking to negate the possibility that a Christian such as Bhatti could defame the Prophet Muhammad, Nasir refers to him as '*ambiyā-e ikhtitam*' ('the last prophet'). At her speech's very heart she thereby not only indicates her 'implicit allegiance' to the Muslim 'doctrine of finality', but appears to 'equat[e its] acceptance' — and hence that of Islamic 'teleology' — with showing 'respect for the Prophet', problematically for Abbas (138). For such turns of phrase effectively 'demonstrate' the practical 'unavailability of religious difference' in the Islamic Republic, whatever its theoretical provisions for the extension of equal rights to minorities (138).

The concessions Nasir makes to Muslim sensitivities — whether intentionally, or as a result of habits of language — may make her appear compliant with the 'vanishing' of Christian difference from the Pakistani public sphere. Yet she is far from unwitting with regard to the paradox of Christians' placement in the third-millennium Islamic Republic. For here, even if the 'equal rights' promised by the Quaid provided citizens prioritise loyalty to Pakistan as a Muslim state over religious or ethnic affiliations have long since eluded them,

Christians might anticipate respect and protection as ‘believers of the God of Abraham’ (Nasir 2012: 251). The reality, as she sees it, however, is that as designated ‘minorities’ (*‘aqliyat’*) in Islamic Pakistan Christians are easy targets, their ‘backs against the wall’ (249). Her indignation at the degraded place she sees Christians as having come to occupy in their adopted homeland is clear. After lamenting Bhatti’s ‘slaughter’ for no ‘crime’ other than his pursuit of what she understands to have been Jinnah’s original, egalitarian vision, for example, she questions her compatriots’ humanity: ‘what kind of people are you?’, ‘this House treats us worse than animals’ (249-250).^{vii} The historical grievances she lets rain imply an answer: a people who have stigmatised Christians as ‘untouchable’; refused to share their plates; enforced the closure of their ‘institutions’; and, in a final, resoundingly bitter complaint — even ‘stole[n] our Saviour [*‘hamare Masiha’*] from us’ (249; Mad Guru 2011).

Nasir’s use of the second person plural in this litany (*‘ap log’*: you people) — ending in the accusation ‘you took’ or ‘stole’ — seems a telling slippage: she begins her speech as an ‘address’ to the long-deceased father of the nation, Jinnah, through the House’s Speaker, and not to Assembly members or the Prime Minister (Mad Guru 2011; Nasir 2012: 249). Yet I would argue that she apostrophises the Quaid less with a view to engaging him as an interlocutor and more as a rhetorical gesture as she invokes his unrealised vision (of Hindus, Christians and Muslims not as ‘angular’ communities but Pakistanis under an Islamic banner) as a secular yardstick by which the sectarian status quo can be measured, and a bone of continuing contention.^{viii} In line with the *Critical Muslim* translation’s title: ‘J’Accuse: Pakistan’, Nasir’s stinging oration is in the main directed at the country’s representatives, gathered in its Assembly (247). These she would shame into facing their complicity in the ‘clear discrimination’, intimidation and ultimately deaths, evidenced by the denial of a case review for Bibi, Gojra killings, and Bhatti’s murder, which are forcing a younger generation

of Christian citizens, including her daughter, to doubt the viability of remaining in the Islamic Republic and challenge their parents' decision to join this filicidal 'motherland' (250-1).

In her closing sentences, Nasir raises before the House a crucial, existential question, the answering of which could lead to greater clarity and even a re-inscription of non-Muslims as legitimate constituents of the nation. She states that it is incumbent on the government to 'decide who is and who isn't a citizen' and whether, contrary to Jinnah's ostensible hope that its religious communities could coexist, 'Pakistan is an Islamic state, for Muslims only' (251). For, she asserts, if there is a chance Christians can 'gain equality', then they will 'remain', but if 'no place for religious minorities' now exists — as seems the case in a post-9/11 period of increased international Christian-Muslim antagonism reflected at a domestic level by blasphemy accusations, assassinations, acts of arson, sectarian bomb attacks and, crucially, lack of state protection even at minister level — they will take their fate in their own hands and 'find another home' (252). Ultimately, then, Nasir ends on a note of strength while also perhaps shielding herself from possible accusations of '*gustaakh*' or 'insolence' towards other parliamentarians. Having claimed that it is a task of government, Nasir (2012: 252) in fact effectively reclaims the decision over staying or leaving, and hence over the Christian minority's future in Pakistan, for her own community. Jaded with official explanations for failing to safeguard religious minorities and acutely conscious of what the government's negation to prevent Bhatti's death must signal, she states:

We have been given a clear message: that whoever raises their voice in support of religious minorities will be met by bullets ... What [is being done] to protect the minorities? We will no longer accept ... lame excuses. The time of decision is upon the Christians of Pakistan: 'to be or not to be, that is the question' (251-2).^{ix}

After this grim near-conclusion, Nasir reminds listeners of the reason for her speech: the martyring of her Christian 'brother', for whom she uses the Islamic honorific '*shaheed*' in a defiant last attempt to proffer the sacrifice he made for his faith and people as worthy of her

Muslim peers' recognition (252). She then proceeds to quote Faiz's '*lahu ka suragh*' as a still impassioned but perhaps less controversial epilogue, and turns to lead a 'symbolic walk out' (252-3).^x The conclusion at which her finely poised oration hints — that if Christians wish to survive they must abandon their commitment to Jinnah's seemingly impossible dream of 'loyal' minorities winning 'equal rights', cease to solicit their compatriots' respect or expect governmental protection, and flee Pakistan — is firmly underscored by her staged exit (250).

Half a decade later, Nasir's speech has engendered no change: Pakistan's government remains under international pressure to identify, arrest and try Bhatti's killers, while Catholic leaders look to the Vatican in Rome to decide the matter of his sainthood. Nasir herself appears 'voiceless and powerless' in the eyes of her fellow Christians (*Pakistan Christian Post*: n. d.: n.p.). It seems the 'time of decision' Nasir pronounced has passed, and the verdict that equal treatment and recognition is 'not to be' for Christians in Muslim Pakistan been delivered (2012: 252). Yet the vast majority, Nasir included, must remain, their imagined exodus a dream which — as her oration demonstrates — can only rhetorically flourish.

Exposed isolation — Malcolm Hutcheson's photographic portraits of Joseph Colony

Nasir's personal address to the Islamic Republic's National Assembly makes plain what she considers to be the most pressing question facing Christians in Pakistan, and what she deems the most certain answer. Conversely, Malcolm Hutcheson's unfinished summary of the photographic project *Joseph Colony: A Poverty of Wishes* renders what observers 'see' in carefully composed photographs of a subcontinental, urban Christian *basti* more complex than they might previously have appeared (2014: 8-9). Such a claim might seem questionable. Hutcheson, who was resident for many years in Lahore, and was living and teaching there at the time of *Joseph Colony's* creation, is a white, Western and 'nominally Christian' man who considers 'show[ing] the whole structure of a Christian community' to be the 'role' of his work, and hence could be understood as having ethnographic aims (2014: 20;

no date a). In today's Islamic Republic, his observational portraits of beleaguered Christian subjects — unlike the critical perspectives of the Quetta-born and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazal-ur-Rehman Group) affiliated Nasir discussed above — risk being construed as neo-Orientalist: contributing to the construction of Pakistani Christians 'others' as 'homogenised, static, anchored in a rigid traditionalism which... is seen as breaking down through internal economic and moral decay', or as the victims of an intolerant Islamic society (Marcus 2007: 109, 113). Hutcheson's photographs could also, on account of his relative privilege and ethnicity, be assumed to contribute to what Abbas describes as secular, Anglophone 'elites against internal [Muslim] subaltern narratives', and so discredited (2014: 135). Yet to view them in this light is too simple. Firstly, Hutcheson came of age in a period when practitioners on the Indian Subcontinent and beyond, concerned by what Sabeena Gadihoke describes as 'ethical dilemmas to do with the ethnography of otherness', were becoming 'disenchant[ed] with the limitations of documentary realism', and exploring how 'more constructed forms of photography' might enable alternative ways of 'mapping the real' instead (2010: 38-39). Secondly, the images comprising *Joseph Colony* were created in a contemporary context in which Western-educated Muslim Pakistani politicians had described as 'unfortunate' the false blasphemy allegations that inspired the burning and ransacking of Christian homes but promised little action save the attempted 'rehabilitation' (a loaded term given the social problems faced by slum-dwelling Christians) of the *basti*'s marginal inhabitants, apparently more concerned that such sectarian 'vandalism' would 'tarnish' Pakistan's 'image' (*Dawn* 2013: n.p.). Hutcheson's project, by contrast, offers a liminal, outsider-insider's attempt to engage (local) viewers in an intense, subtle and ambiguous appraisal of the place of one particular poor city-dwelling Punjabi Christian community, and of the social, geographical and spiritual implications of its retention of a 'Western' faith affiliation, without pointing the

finger at specific (Muslim) culprits.^{xi} It also provides a means by which their status quo momentarily may be transcended.

In discussing his work it becomes apparent that despite a clear social consciousness, a stated interest in Michel Foucault and how minorities are treated, and a desire to explore what can be ‘told’ from scrutinising a ‘piece of [their] history’, Hutcheson is too cautious — and too cognisant of more commercial photographers’ cynical production of images that ‘fit in with what people seem to believe things look like’ — to conflate the act of visual representation with ‘speaking for’ a particular community (2014: 8; 2015: n.p.).^{xii} Instead, by ‘over-emphasising’ the image-making process, he seeks to ‘de-centre [him]self’ and rather act as a ‘medium’, allowing the sense conveyed by the photographs he shoots, sequences and tries to ‘decode’ ultimately to exceed him (n.p.). Here, Hutcheson appears to acknowledge that his photographs ‘register details that are contingent and extraneous’ to the perspectives he would frame, and to demonstrate his sympathy with what Ulrich Baer identified as the ethical, ‘Barthesian wish to see “beyond what it [the image] permits us to see”’ (Baer quoted in Beckman 2009: 125-126). The not unproblematic hope here is that by presenting observers not with generic images offered as apparently denotative ‘placeholder[s] for the real thing’ (thus reinforcing existing epistemologies of subaltern Pakistani Christian Others), but with selected, excerpted and isolated elements, ‘texture and detail’, the photographer and artist can assist viewers in enquiring into what fragments he frames of the colony may add up to mean, even as he participates in its re/construction (Hutcheson 2015: n.p.).^{xiii}

The first image (Plate 1) with which Hutcheson chooses to confront the readers of his project summary is of Joseph Colony’s gateway (2014: 2-3). **[PRESS! PLACE PLATE 1 ABOUT HERE]** In the image, the colony’s white archway, emblazoned with the *basti*’s name and the sign of the cross, looms large, stark against the night sky. A poster bearing the visage of the ‘mother of the nation’, Fatima Jinnah, posed beside the Pakistani flag, its white stripe

symbolising the inclusion of minorities, is pasted on the interior wall. Beyond, the colony seems to melt into darkness, emphasised by the photograph's monochrome tones.

Hutcheson's choice of horizontal framing hints at 'the wider panorama of "a setting, a situation, a social context"' (important to twentieth-century anthropologists), but stops short of supplying it, concentrating attention instead on the colony's existence as a (self-)contained unit, separate from surrounding city (Pinney 2012: 55). Light dust-spots on the camera's lens effect a sense of distancing. The result is that observers seem invited to stand contemplating this clearly constructed threshold, imagining how it may feel to pass beneath and reside behind its 'Christian' banner.

An abrupt introductory text partly overlaid on Hutcheson's image provides a further framing. It describes the effect of a spate of sectarian violence in Punjab in 2013 on an already precariously situated Christian community, concluding: 'if ... all around is Muslim killing Muslim then you don't feel very safe. If you live in a land where you can be accused of something and that accusation is based on belief ... then you are a prisoner' (2014: 2). The presiding metaphor is emotive: Hutcheson evokes the Christian *basti* whose states of fear, poverty, contradiction and inequality his assertive accompanying text establishes his need (if not his 'right') to use his camera to probe, as a penal colony, a prison to its residents. However, as we read on, we are faced not with consistently arranged anthropological images of representative inmates and explanations of their status within the colony, but with uneven accompanying texts (captions, press cuttings, personal reflections) and ambiguous images which partly "un-anchor" the photograph[s] from [their] textual apparatus', and hence from a single authorised interpretation of the social and moral problems they pose (Beckman 2009: 118). The still portraits of individual figures and family groups in Chapter 1 ('Before the Fire'), for example, created with a traditional *ruh khitch* ('spirit pulling') camera, present steadily observed subjects who appear at home in this 'darkest, and dirtiest industrial corner

of the city' into which their faith community, excluded from public space, has seemingly retreated (Hutcheson 2014: 7, 12; no date b).^{xiv} Yet they also present these people awkwardly posed under Joseph Colony's sign of religious difference (or 'angularity'), and constricted within its walls.

Such images of the colony's interior contrast strikingly in terms of composition and conceit with the quasi-documentary, quasi-anthropological compositions of Hutcheson's contemporary, artist Bani Abidi, in whose *Karachi Series-1* (2008) well-dressed individuals whom captions signal are Hindu, Christian, and Parsi, perform ordinary domestic acts in the city's uncannily empty streets at dusk during Ramadan (a sight not so surreal in South Asia, where more private aspects of Western lives, such as visiting the barber, washing clothes or having a massage, still often take place in public).^{xv} Through this series Abidi stages a 'gesture' on the part of non-Muslim subjects to 'reclaim a time and a place where their status as equal citizens... is not contested': to reassert a right to belong, publicly and visibly, in a daily borrowed moment before the Muslim fast is broken and they are again displaced (Nasar 2014: 33). For her, the photographic image, freed from the burden of realistic representation, offers a means by which we may to enter a parallel world where an alternative place for minorities can be imagined. The irony is that the scenes her photographs purport to 'capture' appear and remain fantastic: 'visual proposition[s] engaged with an aspect of social structure in contemporary urban' Pakistan which, by the absence of the suppression of difference, point to the extent to which it prevails (Nasar 2014: 33-34). While Hutcheson's works are also constructed so as to raise questions, the messages they contain are, I would argue, more challenging to decode by virtue of the original photographs' documentary provenance (drawn from the real, but manipulated; framed by written texts which are both assertive and equivocal) — and hence present more complex and less comfortable perspectives.

Whether or not we consider him successful in transforming himself into a concerned, critical observer (as opposed to a purveyor of exoticist or moralistic portraits), Hutcheson's images allow several of the complaints and paradoxes highlighted in Bibi's and Nasir's differently positioned texts to resurface. These include, for example, the victimisation, marginalisation and even ghettoisation of Pakistani (and specifically Punjabi) Christians, despite their indigeneity, on account of result of their supposed loyalty to a 'Western' religion and association with 'untouchable' professions. The title photograph (Plate 1), for example, may point to the un-belonging of Christian minorities in an Islamic Republic which should provide for and protect them, but also perhaps gesture to their compliance with their own public 'vanishing' and hence with the effacement of plural Pakistani and non-Muslim identities. It may invite a particular (embattled) reading, but it raises rather than answers questions about how the situation of Joseph Colony's current residents should be interpreted, and — through the inclusion of details which may or may not be 'extraneous', such as the Fatima Jinnah poster — expands its 'critical and political possibilities' (Beckman 2009: 118, 125).

Hutcheson's (2015: n.p.) images also foreground bodies and artefacts which fail to fit with received notions and stereotypical Western or Eastern perspectives at a time when 'multiple levels of misunderstanding' persist regarding Christians' international affiliations, ethnicity and poverty, misunderstandings which have long provided causes for contempt and justifications for persecution, but been rendered more dangerous by the 'unstable atmosphere' after 9/11 (Walbridge 2003: 119-22, 247). 'Paga Bibi' (Plate 2), for example, presents an elderly South Asian lady, draped elegantly in a *dupatta* and posed somewhat stiffly against Joseph Colony's white-washed walls, who bears no obvious markers of (Christian or Western) Otherness (Hutcheson 2014: 16). **[PRESS! PLACE PLATE 2 ABOUT HERE]**. Neither returning nor avoiding the photographer's gaze, she seems powerfully to

reside in the image, as she does in this restricted space, her presence not captured but gradually, unswervingly imposed. It is the viewer perhaps — whether Western or Pakistani, Christian or Muslim— who is invited to question *their* place in *her* (private, imposed) domain.

This portrait is followed by a luminous quartet of images (Plate 3) of artefacts (again, not obviously ethnically or religiously marked or offering anthropological ‘object lessons’) found in the arson’s ashes which Hutcheson suggests may ‘represent a form of Church’ (2014: 20-26). **[PRESS! PLACE PLATE 3 ABOUT HERE]**. Yet the Pakistani Church he offers viewers in abstract form is unexpected. Rather than presenting images which expose the hybrid interior of a subcontinental church to curious foreign or non-Christian eyes, Hutcheson pulls together photographs of charred objects — a trunk confining a bride’s burnt dowry, melted electrical switches — under the titles ‘The One’, ‘Apostolic’, ‘Universal’ and ‘Holy’ (20). Created in response to the Christian community’s need for a place of reflection and catharsis, these images elevate found objects to the level of the aesthetic (which Geeta Kapur perceptively identifies as ‘a framing proposition’ symptomatic of ‘the auteur’s chosen positionality’, reached by passing ‘through and beyond the inevitable ethnography of the photo-archive’), and of holy relic, by virtue of their excerption, enlargement, and exhibition (2010: 46). The items selected to symbolise the resurrected church’s foundations, such as ‘the burnt photograph [which] could contain the image of anyone’, or the melded wires which suggest ‘the continuation of connection from the Apostles to now’, are affective (22, 24). Yet the commemorative ‘Church in Negative’ Hutcheson proposes (like Abidi’s scenarios in which minorities take centre stage in Karachi’s streets) exists only in imaginative space: in the mind, on the page, or within gallery walls (20). Its four foundational images exude pain and emptiness — no face can be traced in the photo-frame’s tarnished centre; molten cables like flayed flesh link viewers to Jesus’ disciples. Ultimately perhaps, Hutcheson’s atypical

ecclesial representation conveys a sense of the ‘poverty’ of resources he would have us understand are available to Badami Bagh’s isolated Christian community as they struggle to ‘rehabilitate’ and rebuild the colony, even as it salvages some spiritual sustenance from the fire’s detritus.

Conclusions: divergent, ambiguous appraisals

Together, the non-fiction and documentary texts analysed here offer divergent and often ambiguous appraisals of Pakistani Christians’ place in a third-millennium Islamic Republic where Jinnah’s vision of minority rights is both revered and contested, and of how their experiences may be articulated and imagined from differently invested cultural and political positions. Bibi’s *Blasphemy* presents grievances that might win sympathy amongst international readers, human rights actors, and upholders of the notion of a ‘universal’ church sensitive, particularly after 9/11, to Muslim incursions on Christian ‘religious freedoms’ as they envisage them (Tollet in Bibi 2012: xii). Yet it lacks (local) credibility, due particularly to Tollet’s heavy hand in shaping it. The problematic auto/biography’s existence reinforces Bibi’s need for an international identity to help transcend her indigenous state at a time when the anti-Western and anti-Christian stance of political Islamic parties whose foundation long predates 2001 has been reasserted and exaggerated. Ultimately, *Blasphemy* appears to confirm the very limited space Pakistan affords to poor Christian transgressors of unwritten societal ‘roles’ who would ‘demand rights’ and annunciate their complaints (Walbridge 2003: 97; 2005: 125). However, read against the grain, it may also reveal how Western ‘saving’ discourses legitimised by the ‘war on terror’ context, and not just illiteracy or fear of causing offence, lead to the silencing of women like Bibi.

Nasir takes up Bibi’s complaints in her 2011 speech, championing her cause by placing disenfranchised Pakistani Christian citizens in a historic, postcolonial context of broken secular promises and deep-rooted social inequalities in which the rights due to

minorities as Jinnah's true citizens have not been granted and their limited freedoms steadily eroded. Yet Nasir negates an often-assumed, unpatriotic loyalty to the 'Christian' West, increasingly hazardous in an era in which the personal beliefs and safety of Muslims at home and in the diaspora have been challenged by the anti-terror policies of Europe and the US. Instead she foregrounds indigenous identities, domestic commitments, and a seeming preparedness to 'vanish' faith 'angularities'. While she deploys deflective apostrophic and framing devices, her Urdu oration directly communicates to a national audience the sense that majority-minority relationships have pushed multiply humiliated Christians to recognise that their existence within Muslim Pakistan is today unviable, and indeed perhaps always was. The very limited means Nasir and the Pakistani Christian community she would represent now have, seven decades after Pakistan's creation, to articulate a choice over where they reside, are evidenced by her rhetoric, subsequent silence, and absence from the National Assembly.

Hutcheson's photographic project *Joseph Colony* offers, by contrast, intensified and ambivalent observations of life from within segregated, religiously-marked spaces which the Quaid would encourage Christians to vacate, and from which Nasir would distance herself in the interests of demonstrating loyalty. Still and slightly awkward portraits locate the settlement's low-paid and socially stigmatised Punjabi Christian residents, like Bibi, at a far remove both from the 'universal' church of which they are notional affiliates, and from their Pakistani Muslim neighbours, although they appear equally indigenous. The burnt *basti*'s fragments, made through abstraction to transcend their earthly properties, hint at the possibility of founding the colony's 'church' anew —at least in spirit and in visual form — from the aftermath of subcontinental sectarian violence. Simultaneously, however, such shards point to the emptiness of this prospect, which provides no hope of a change to the status quo, or of Nasir's proud exodus, but rather just an acceptance of the unequal and

embattled terms (so different from those advanced by Jinnah) on which the vast majority of poor Christian communities in today's Islamic Republic have come to live.

An image in Hutcheson's (2010: 42-3) *Ganda Nala* ('open sewer') series, which preceded *Joseph Colony*, shows the final surviving photograph of sewer worker Ashraf Masih resting in his bereaved brother's outstretched palm (Plate 4). **[PRESS! PLACE PLATE 4 ABOUT HERE]**. As it seems intended to suggest, we should remain conscious that representations of Pakistani Christians in cultural texts of the third millennium, including those created with Christians' compliance and featuring their words or hands, such as the non-fictional works I have examined, are nevertheless (com)posed to 'generate ...aesthetic possibilities, which may in turn inform political thinking' to a variety of ends (Bennett 2012: 51).^{xvi} These could be deployed to bolster pro-Western and anti-Islamic discourses prevalent in the aftermath of 9/11, and to showcase the plight of Pakistan's frequently targeted Christian citizens to the wider world. Yet, as I have endeavoured to demonstrate, such texts may also provide complex and at times contradictory internal perspectives which point to the colonial legacies and long-established social stigmas, inconsistencies in Jinnah's much-cited vision, and neo-imperial antagonisms which combine to inform contemporary Christian positions and perspectives. Hence a plurality of voices and images must continue to be sought, and their framings questioned, if we are to understand how, through such imaginative texts, Christian subjects' place in Pakistan's far from monolithic society may be acknowledged, addressed, and even re-envisioned.

References

- Abbas, S. (2014) *At Freedom's Limit: Islam and the Postcolonial Predicament*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- AFP (2016) 'Fears grow for Asia Bibi after Mumtaz Qadri's hanging', 5 March. Available at: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1059784/fears-grow-for-asia-bibi-after-mumtaz-qadris-hanging/#ifrndnloc> (Accessed 27 May 2016).
- Anjum, M. and S. Tariq (2012) 'The role of Christians in the freedom movement of Pakistan: an appraisal', *Pakistan Journal of Social Social Sciences*, 32 (2), pp. 437-443.
- Beckman, K. (2009) 'Nothing to Say: The War on Terror and the Mad Photography of Roland Barthes'. *Grey Room* 34 (Winter), pp. 104-134.
- Bennett J (2012) *Practical Aesthetics: Events, Affects and Art After 9/11*. London: IB Tauris.
- Bibi, A. (2012). *Blasphemy: The True, Heartbreaking Story of a Woman Sentenced to Death over a Cup of Water*, with Tollet, A-I. London: Virago.
- Cilano, C. (2015) 'Saving Pakistan from Brown Men: Benazir Bhutto as Pakistan's Last Best Hope for Democracy', in Chambers, C. and Herbert, C. (eds.) *Imagining Muslims in South Asia and the Diaspora: Secularism, Religion, Representations*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 157-171.
- Cohen, S. P. (2004) *The Idea of Pakistan*. Washington: Brookings.
- Dawn (2013) 'Dozens of houses torched as mob attacks Lahore Christian locality', 9 March. Available at: <http://www.dawn.com/news/791408/mob-attacks-christian-neighbourhood-in-lahore> (Accessed 19 December 2015).
- Gabriel, T. (2007) *Christian Citizens in an Islamic State: The Pakistan Experience* (Aldershot: Ashgate).

- Gadihoke, S. (2010) 'Journeys into Inner and Outer Worlds: Photography's in Encounter with Public Space in India', in Ogg, K. (ed.) *Where Three Dreams Cross: 150 Years of Photography from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh*. Berlin: Steidl, pp. 34-45.
- Hamid, O. S. (2013) *The Prisoner*. Basingstoke: Pan Macmillan.
- Hanif, M. (2011) *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Hashmi, S. (2002) *Unveiling the Visible: Lives and Works of Women Artists of Pakistan*. Islamabad: ActionAid Pakistan.
- Hutcheson, M. (2010) *Ganda Nala: A Short History of Water in the Punjab*. Lahore: National College of Arts.
- _____. (2014) *Joseph Colony: A Poverty of Wishes*. Unpublished photographic book.
- _____. (2015) Conversation with Madeline Clements, 26 October.
- _____ (no date a) 'Joseph Colony'. Available at:
http://www.malcolmhutcheson.com/works/joseph_colony/jc.html (Accessed 8 December 2015).
- _____ (no date b) 'Traditional Ruh Khitch'. Available at:
<http://www.malcolmhutcheson.com/traditional.html> (Accessed 14 June 2016).
- Jalal, A. (2014) *The Struggle for Pakistan: A Muslim Homeland and Global Politics*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Jinnah, M. A. (1947) 'First Presidential Address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, August 11 1947'. Available at:
http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/legislation/constituent_address_11aug1947.html
(Accessed: 24 November 2015).

- Ispahani, F. (2015) *Purifying the Land of the Pure: Pakistan's Religious Minorities*. Kindle edn. Nodia: Harper Collins India.
- Kamran, T. and N. Purewal (no date) 'Pakistan's religious *others*: reflections on the minority discourse on Christians in Punjab'. Available at:
https://www.academia.edu/7980939/Pakistani_Christians (Accessed: 1 June 2016).
- Kapur, G. (2010) 'Familial Narratives and their Accidental Denouement', in Ogg, K. (ed.) *Where Three Dreams Cross: 150 Years of Photography from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh*. Berlin: Steidl, pp. 46-63.
- Mad Guru (2011) *Asiya Nasir on the Martyrdom of Shaheed Shahbaz Bhatti* [embedded Youtube film and English transcription]. Available at:
<http://www.madguru.com/archives/1597> (Accessed: 25 November 2015).
- Marcus, J. (2007) 'Orientalism', in Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., Delamont, S., Lofland, J., and Lofland, L. (eds.) *Handbook of Ethnography*. London: Sage, pp. 109-117.
- Moghal, D.(2003) 'Working Alongside Muslims in Pakistan'. Paper presented at CCOM Asia Forum Conference, [location unknown], 9 May. Available at:
<http://www.daga.org.hk/readingroom/fundamentalism/christianity/30509ccom2.htm>
(Accessed 17 May 2016).
- Nasar, H. (2010) 'From "Spirit Pulling to "Thinking" Photography', in Ogg, K. (ed.) *Where Three Dreams Cross: 150 Years of Photography from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh*. Berlin: Steidl, pp. 15-19.
- _____ (2014) 'Zones of Risk'. *Take on Art: Sacred*, 13 (4), pp. 32-34.
- Nasir, A. (2012) 'J'Accuse: Pakistan'. Translated by Waqar Ahmad. *Critical Muslim*, 1: *The Arabs Are Alive*, pp. 247-253.

Pakistani Christians. (2013) 'Gojra Riots Report', *Facebook*, 8 February. Available at:
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=456825671037746&id=356569611063353 (Accessed 3 December 2015).

Pakistan Christian Post (no date) 'Asiya Nasir a Christian woman MNA affiliated with Jamiat Ulma-e-Islam JUI (F)'. Available at:
<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/headlinenews.php?hnewsid=2948#sthash.GwE3iXv1.dpuf> 'http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/headlinenews.php?hnewsid=2948' (Accessed 21 June 2016).

Pinney, C. (2010) 'Coming Out Better', in Ogg, K. (ed.) *Where Three Dreams Cross: 150 Years of Photography from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh*. Berlin: Steidl, pp. 25-33.

_____ (2012) *Exposures: Photography and Anthropology*. London: Reaktion Books.

Riaz, A. (2011) 'Religion as Political Identity in South Asia', in Ahmed, I. (ed.) *The Politics of Religion in South and Southeast Asia*. Abingdon: Routledge, 13-25.

Robinson, F. (2011) 'Jinnah, Mohamed Ali' (1876-1948), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn. Available at: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34191> (Accessed 25 May 2016).

Shah, B. (2010) *Slum Child*. New Delhi: Tranquebar.

Shatzmiller, M. (2005) 'Introduction', in Shatzmiller, M. (ed.) *Nationalism and Minority Identities in Islamic Societies*. Montreal: McGill - Queen's University Press, pp. vii-xiii.

Sookhdeo, P. (2002) *A People Betrayed: The Impact of Islamization on the Christian Community in Pakistan*. Pewsey: Isaac Publishing.

Spivak, G. C. (1988) 'Can the Subaltern Speak', in Williams, P. and Chrisman, C. (eds.) *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, pp. 66-111.

Walbridge, L. S. (2003) *The Christians of Pakistan: The Passion of Bishop John Joseph*.
Abingdon: Routledge.

_____ (2005) 'The Christians of Pakistan: The Interaction of Law and Caste in
Maintaining "Outsider" Status, in Shatzmiller, M. (ed.) *Nationalism and Minority
Identities in Islamic Societies*. Montreal: McGill - Queen's University Press, pp. 108-126.

Walsh, D. (2011) 'Pakistan Minister Shahbaz Bhatti Shot Dead in Islamabad', *The Guardian*,
2 March. Available at: [http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/02/pakistan-minister-
shot-dead-islamabad](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/02/pakistan-minister-shot-dead-islamabad) (Accessed 4 December 2015).

ⁱ Jinnah was a Shi'i Muslim, educated at a Christian mission school and trained in British constitutional principles (Robinson 2011: n.p.; Cohen 2004: 43-5). It is difficult to assess to how far he may have anticipated that the creation of a homeland for Indian Muslims would mean the perpetuation of minority status for its Christian citizens, and hence of their sense of their own vulnerability despite having opted to live within independent Pakistan's supposedly protective borders. However, as Jalal (2014: 59) points out, in the years prior to partition, Jinnah had resisted attempts by religious scholars such as Abul Ala Mawdudi to ensure the exclusion of non-Muslims living in Islamic states from equal citizenship rights and avoided efforts to 'lay ... down a precise definition of a true believer', conscious of the divisiveness of such endeavours. However, Jinnah could not have foreseen the problems a global event like 9/11 would bring for Subcontinental Christians residing, post-colonisation, in a modern, majority-Muslim nation.

ⁱⁱ Walbridge (2005:117) does however note that, in Pakistan's early years, Christians 'were not [generally] targets of persecution' and despite suffering some insults about not belonging 'continued to believe that there was a place for them in Pakistan'.

ⁱⁱⁱ Sookhdeo (2002: 352) states Christians suffered 'retaliation from Muslims seeking vengeance on supposed [American] allies' after the October 2001 airstrikes on Afghanistan. Gabriel (2007: 80) quotes Pakistani bishops' as suggesting that despite 'critical attitudes' to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, anti-American sentiment had 'not impacted too adversely'.

^{iv} Nasir (2012: 25) asserted: 'yesterday, my brother was killed ... [Y]ou can riddle my body with bullets. You will not be able to silence the minorities' according to Waqar Ahmad's translation. Blogger Mad Guru's (2011: n.p.) more literal version concludes: 'fill Asiya Nasir with bullet holes, you will not be able to silence this voice'. In my discussion I navigate between these translations and the video of the Urdu original (accessed via Mad Guru).

^v Their invocation has not been uncommon in this context: artist Faiza Butt, for example, used *Ham jo taarik* in 'Zaever Zangeer', exhibited in *Letters to Taseer* at Lahore's Drawing Room Gallery in January 2012.

^{vi} I choose Mad Guru's translation here in preference over the one by Agha Shahid Ali reproduced in Ahmad's translation because Mad Guru's retention of 'we' for 'ham', and hence of the plural and collective (as opposed to the individual and poetic) sense of the second person plural. This seems truer to the spirit of Nasir's complaint.

^{vii} Nasir makes no overt mention of Bhatti's declared commitment to reforming Pakistan's blasphemy laws here.

^{viii} By this act of apostrophe Nasir may deflect accusations of offence to living members of the Assembly.

^{ix} The quotation from *Hamlet* at the speech's final climax is uttered in English.

^x The emotive lines from Faiz with which Nasir drew her speech to a close were, in Abbas' (2014: 141) quite literal translation: 'The ... orphaned blood kept calling out / Noone had the capacity to listen, nor the ... mind ... and so the account was purified / This was the blood of those who dwelt in the dust and was consumed by the dust'. Speaking of the cleansing of other subaltern lives from the records of a pure ('*paak*') Pakistan, and conjuring once more the spectre of the unprotected, indigenous orphan ('*yateem*') they seem to echo Nasir's earlier expressed dismay at the vanishing of Christians stigmatised as untouchable sweepers from the official histories of their own motherland. I suggest that Faiz's words provided a less controversial ending to Nasir's protestation because the sentiments they contained were effectively authorised not by the female Christian member of parliament but, by virtue of his poem's citation, by a decades-dead poet of considerable national standing.

^{xi} Works have been exhibited in such public spaces as the Al Hamra Arts Centre (during Lahore Literature Festival, 2015).

^{xii} Hutcheson's work is, admittedly, highly authored, and his aims in exposing Christians' imprisonment in the colony's life-cycle political, shaped in particular by his preoccupation with the way power operates in society to trap minorities and maintain states of fear and oppression (2014: 40). I would argue, however, that he avoids adopting a position that 'valorizes the concrete experience of the oppressed, while being ... uncritical about the role of the intellectual [as artist]' (Spivak 1988: 69).

^{xiii} As Beckman (2009: 122), quoting Judith Butler, reminds us, 'the photograph, like narrative, is involved "in the framing process, is already interpreting what will count within the frame"'.

^{xiv} As Hammad Nasar (2010: 15-16) explains, the *ruh khitch* camera is 'a sort-of handmade portable studio, where black and white images can be produced without a separate darkroom'. The images it produces 'display an intense stillness' which Nasar suggests is 'partly attributable to the physical requirement of the apparatus', which takes a subject's likeness 'directly onto the photographic paper' and 'necessitates that [he or she] remains as still as possible during exposure times of up to four seconds' (16).

^{xv} These can be viewed at:

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3353193&partId=1&people=173448&peoA=173448-3-17&page=1 (accessed 23 January 2017).

^{xvi} Pakistani (Muslim) creative writers such as Bina Shah (2010), Mohammed Hanif (2011) and Omar Shahid Hamid (2013) have addressed in their English-language novels issues pertaining to the position of Christians in third-millennium Islamic Republic similar to those discussed in this chapter. However, such novels are relatively rare, due to some extent to fears of violent repercussions, and authors have focused with much greater frequency on the challenges posed to Islamic identities by 9/11. My choice of autobiographical and documentary texts by (nominally) Christian writers and artists is deliberate as I seek alternative discourses because they gesture towards real-life experiences and perspectives which are not fictionalised.