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Producing the Islamist Subject: Liberalism and the Postcolonial State

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This paper examines how Islamist publications represent the history of Pakistan as a story of betrayal by the country's leaders. These publications emphasize that the very ideology which forms the basis of Pakistan has been sidelined. I contend that this imagining of an Islamic state is not inconsistent with liberal ideology. Through an examination of critical histories of Pakistan, I show how these organizations are formed within the politics of the postcolonial state. Adapting Homi Bhabha's (1994) theorization of ambivalence, I argue that Islamist organizations are actually the 'slippage' of liberalism in Pakistan. While Islamists call for an Islamic system, they imagine change within a legal framework and operate within the parameters of the state. In fact, Islamists position themselves as intermediaries between liberals and militants, attempting to reform the former and integrate the latter. Islamists construct an interesting dualism within the political arena: on one side, they position the United States and subservient Pakistani leaders, and on the other, they place militant organizations such as the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Tehrik-e-Nafaz-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM). In the process, religious organizations become the spokespersons for Islamic politics in Pakistan, and the protectors of Islamic identity, taking over the role historically occupied by the liberal leadership.

Introduction

Talal Asad (2007) asks if there is such a thing as "a religiously motivated terrorism? If so, how does it differ from other cruelties? What makes its motivation—as opposed to the simple intent to kill—religious?" (2007: 1) Adapting this question to understand Islamist ideology, one could ask: what makes religious demands on nationhood different from secular ones? How are these claims based on faith as opposed to socio-political realities? In response to his questions on violence, Asad asserts that terrorism is a part of "militant action in the unequal world we inhabit" (2007: 2) and that instead of bifurcating the world into categories of 'good' and 'evil,' 'religious' and 'secular,' we would do well to understand terrorism as part of a cycle of violence, alongside modern war, that is part of liberalism. Similarly, to write off religious actors in Pakistan as part of a clash between religious and secular sensibilities within Muslim countries would be to ignore the convergence of ideas that takes place amongst these two groups.

What makes religious demands on nationhood different from secular ones?

In this paper, I examine four editorials that appeared in different Islamist magazines during the 2009 war between the Pakistan Army and militants associated with the Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) and Tehrik-e-Nafaz-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) in Swat and Malakand. By analyzing the writings of Islamist organizations – by which I mean groups that espouse a role in the political structure and attempt to work within the confines of the state – in Pakistan, I show that their discourse is not unique to religion; it is part of broader liberal civil society narratives about the state, sovereignty and subjectivity.

Before I begin, a brief note about my data, and the place of Islamist publications in the context of Pakistani media would be useful. To put it mildly, the transformation of the media landscape in Pakistan since 2000 has been radical. From a handful of television channels, the country now has over 90 stations in English, Urdu and various regional languages, with over 20 dedicated to news and current events. The print media in this period has grown at a substantially slower rate but

has also witnessed the addition of a few daily publications in English and Urdu. With the exception of the state-owned Pakistan Television (PTV), these channels and publications are privately owned and are not controlled by the state. However, they are generally critical of militant organizations and support the Pakistan Army's operations in the northern areas, while retaining an unflattering opinion of the United States and of government in Pakistan. Islamist publications do not fall into the category of mainstream media even though some newspapers and magazines claim a readership of over 100,000 (Rana 2008). The opinions in these publications favour an Islamic state and are sympathetic toward or even supportive of (depending on their affiliation and ideological bent) the mujahideen in Afghanistan and Kashmir and militant organizations inside Pakistan. In all, there are over 100 newspapers and magazines published by various hard-line and more moderate Islamist groups. The majority of these are written in Urdu, with a sizable number also published in English, Arabic, Persian, Sindhi and Pashto (Rana 2008). The publications I analyze in this paper were all collected during a fieldwork visit between June and August 2009; they are in Urdu and I am responsible for the translations. I was able to procure 11 different publications (15 issues in all) printed between May and July 2009, which include substantial coverage of the war in Malakand and Swat[1]. The articles examined from across these publications share thematic similarities and construct similar narratives of Pakistani history. I have chosen the four pieces examined in this paper because, as editorials, they convey the stance of the publication in which they appear, and they exemplify how Islamists construct history to outline the failures of the Pakistani state.

In a research paper delivered at the inaugural South Asia Research Group (SARG) conference, I examined how rumours circulating in Pakistan's major urban centers centralize Islam when constructing the Pakistani subject. In these rumours, Pakistan is equated with Islam while those designated enemies of the nation are constructed as non-Muslim and therefore not Pakistani. Islam is centralized in this discourse,

which suggests that piety does not endorse violence and obstruct or undermine the operation of the state. At the same time, these rumours are concerned with state security and progress; they suggest the existence of a homogenous body politic, and endorse the legitimacy of the state, including its monopoly over violence. The ideas within these rumours speak to a more mainstream discourse prevalent in Pakistan that is concerned with both the sanctity of Islam and the preservation of the modern state. It is my argument that this is a liberal discourse emerging from the genealogy of the postcolonial Pakistani state. I contend that this liberal discourse in Pakistan "continually produces its slippage" (Bhabha 1994: 122) and that Islamist organizations and their discourse is part of this process.

Barbara Metcalf (2004) has shown how every Pakistani political leader has used an Islamic framework when presenting their vision for the nation. Islam has been thought of as the most powerful ideological tool with which to unify and control the multiple ethnic groups living in the country. In the formative years, this discourse was based on an opposition to Hindu India, with Pakistan being represented as a homeland for the Muslims of South Asia. Metcalf argues that this changed after the formation of Bangladesh in 1971 when Pakistan's "claim to be a Muslim homeland [was] undercut by its reduction to the third largest Muslim population of the subcontinent" (2004: 219). At this point, Pakistani leaders such as the liberal Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto began identifying with the countries of the Middle East to locate Pakistan in a broader Islamic history.

Even before the events of 1971, under the Ayub Khan regime, Pakistani historiography was fashioned to "read back into the past the self-conscious religious identity of the present" (Metcalf 2004: 224), turning conquerors into heroes and constructing a narrative where the lost glory of Islam in the subcontinent was to be reclaimed. Despite the Ayub regime's rhetoric, its project was a modernist one where Islam did not provide a "guide to policies or actions," it was instead "the ultimate interest served by the policies followed" (Metcalf

2004: 224). But Islam became central to the language used by the regime and was deployed, unsuccessfully, as a means for unification and identity building. In the process, the regime's pandering to elite interests led to all regional forms of Islam being rejected, further polarizing the country's various ethnic populations. Just as the Urdu language project gave prominence to central symbols while marginalizing regional cultures, successive liberal and modernist governments have both collected and invented a language for Islam in Pakistan and attempted to give the state ownership over religion.

The Pakistani establishment has been invested in building a nationalism around Islam since the formation of the state in 1947. At the same time, Pakistan was imagined as a "secular, liberal democracy" (Metcalf 2004: 1), and has been committed to the project of modernity since its inception. The engagement with religion has therefore been a liberal one, premised on a "modern interpretation of Islam" (Metcalf 2004: 225) while serving the interests of the country's elite. "For those of the elite committed to a Western-style state and technological advancement, religion was to be modern too" (Metcalf 2004: 225). While progressive movements have historically been curtailed in Pakistan, this has intersected with the agendas of the ruling class and the international political climate (Toor 2011). State formation in Pakistan, therefore, has been a liberal agenda serviced by Islamic rhetoric.

Islamist organizations have emerged within this push and pull between liberal goals and the banner of Islamic unification, and attempted to articulate the place of Islam within the context of the liberal state. However, the discourse produced by these organizations uses the symbols and language of the liberal state. When attempting to break into the mainstream and appeal to the populace, these organizations have turned to the "language of (liberal) democracy, individual rights and, most importantly, the nation" (Toor 2011: 106). While liberal Pakistani leaders have coated the language of nation building with an Islamic veneer, religious organizations have latched onto liberal democratic ideals to further their Islamic project. Espousing ideals such as liberty, freedom, equality and

sovereignty, Islamist organizations are modern in origin and make up[2].

Homi Bhabha (1994) argues that the mimetic nature of colonial discourse attempts to create a reformed and identifiable subject. However, by intensifying colonial power and surveillance, mimicry "alienates its own language of liberty" (123). The "ambivalence" inherent in this discourse – the colonial subject is to be "almost the same, but not white" (2004: 128) – produces its slippage in the form of a subject that is at once incomplete and threatening. "It is as if the very nature of the 'colonial' is dependant for its representation upon some strategic limitation or prohibition within the authoritative discourse itself" (2004: 123). It is on this idea of 'ambivalence' and the 'slippage' it produces that I want to focus here. Pakistani state discourse has always been concerned with "the roots of Islamic authority and authenticity" (Rozehnal 2011: 118) on the one hand, and "modernization and development" (Ewing 1983: 251; also see Metcalf 2004; Khan 2006) on the other. This has made for an odd mix, with identity construction, at once, appealing to a "reified universal Islam" (Rozehnal 2011: 118) based on the glorification of Islamic conquerors (Jalal 1995) and to a desired "coming modernity" (Khan 2006: 88). But the two ideas are given incongruous positions: the state and the subject are to be modernized to protect an authentic Islam that must remain static and private, the latter being a prerequisite of secularism.

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The postcolonial Pakistani state adopts a colonial logic in dealing with the question of religion. In turning Islam into a nationalist symbol, the state regulates what constitutes religious practice, with all other forms of Islam falling outside the realm of acceptability. Achille Mbembe (2001) has shown how postcolonial regimes draw their understanding of government from variegated knowledges, both colonial and pre-colonial, which become entangled in the set up of the nascent state. In the case of colonial organization of religion in undivided India, this meant "religion emerged as a unified cohesive category of identification, and … attained a political prominence it had previously lacked" (Iqtidar

2011: 45). This treatment of Islam as a defined category and the resultant emergence of religion in the public sphere has carried over into the postcolonial Pakistani state. Religion here is conceptualized as historic, authentic and to be preserved and kept pure by the state, but practiced in private while the public face of the nation is concerned with modernization and development. But this duality is met with the irony of religion being codified in law and slipping (in its constructed puritanical form) into state.

Islamist organizations, particularly those involved in the political process, are produced within this diachrony of Pakistani liberal discourse. They emerge from the "limitation" of Pakistani liberalism where the state's modernist ideals and Islamic rhetoric coalesce to produce a subjectivity that is split. Islamists are engaged in making Islam part of the democratic process and facilitating its modernity. This is a continuation of the state's liberal project, which discursively produces religion in the public sphere while ensuring its containment within the private. Islamists, on the other hand, want to build a religious state that is guided by the principles of Islam – whatever these might be according to Islamist organizations. Extending the state-driven project of protecting Islam, these groups want to model society on a religious ethics and morality where every citizen is dedicated to building an identity that is grounded in faith. They argue that if Pakistan is a nation made for Muslims then why is Islam being kept out of the realm of governance and social organization. The state has attempted to co-opt Islam to further its modernization project, in the process dividing the country along lines of class, gender and ethnicity, parameters that Islamists groups do not appear to be dismantling even though they propagate an ethical Islamic nation in their discourse. However, Islamists attempt to reformulate the state designation of Islam as a symbol into a project where religion can actually be brought to bear on questions of community and state organization, making Islam relevant to modernity as opposed to placing it in the private realm of the sacred. Pakistanis are not simply meant to be modern subjects who practice Islam; they must actively engage Islam in the process of nation building.

Take, for example, the case of Lal Masjid, a mosque-madrassa complex that was the focus of a Pakistan Army Operation in 2007. In response to Lal Masjid activists shutting down music stores and kidnapping brothel owners in the nation's capital, the government launched a full-fledged military offensive. Faisal Devji (2008) cites the example of the complex's leader Abdul Rashid Ghazi insisting that it is not a 'conservative' institution since Lal Masjid houses a women's madrassa. While Ghazi did not conceptualize Lal Masjid as conservative, the Pakistan government was quick to demolish the "women's seminary once they had occupied the Red Mosque, as if trying in this way to reassert the masculine character of Muslim religiosity against the militants, who in turn protested vociferously against this effort to exclude women from their society" (2008: 21).

What is interesting here is that the Pakistani state, under the 'liberal dictatorship' of General Musharraf (Musharraf used the term 'enlightened moderation' to describe his rule), targeted Lal Masjid's most inclusive branch for demolition, while allowing the mosque itself to be rebuilt after the operation. The state therefore affirmed Lal Masjid's religious aspect while denouncing its broader civil society project. While an Islamist group championed the rights of women to political participation, the state's actions belied its secular credentials. As Islamist organizations assert themselves as political actors, in the process they expose the unequal landscape of Pakistani liberalism, becoming for the state part "resemblance" and part "menace" (Bhabha 1994: 123). I will now turn to examples of these liberal politics in Islamist writings by examining four editorials from different publications written during Operation Black Thunderstorm[3].

The Betrayal of History

An editorial in the June 2009 issue of *Ahl-e-Hadith* magazine, affiliated with the Jamiat Ahl-e-Hadith organization, focuses on how Pakistan's leaders have adopted a subservient attitude toward the United States and cannot differentiate true friendships, which are defined as being based on equality,

from false ones. Focusing on Pakistan's relationships with India and the United States, the author argues that "*Bharat* (India) is our eternal enemy" ("Witness Crossing" 2009: 3) creating the image of a timeless conflict between the two nations. To substantiate this, he alludes to India's role during the fall of Dhaka in 1971 and its actions in Kashmir, quickly shifting focus to allegations that the Indian government is involved in the conflicts in Balochistan, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Swat. Despite this, "President Zardari is thinking of it [India] as a friend" (3). Pakistani leaders, the article suggests, do not know how to choose their friends, often trusting those who are intent on destroying the nation by destabilizing it both politically and economically. The author next points to the United States: "We want relations with America on an equal basis because only on an equal basis can friendships be strong" (3). But the article insists that this is not the case as the United States is intent on exerting control over, and compromising, Pakistan's sovereignty. The relationship that the two nations currently share is based purely on American needs. Pakistan's leaders, the author suggests, are incapable of finding friends who they can trust, those who also have Pakistan's interests in mind.

The editorial then draws a parallel between colonial governance and Pakistan's relationship with the United States. "After great sacrifices we got independence. First we were subservient to Britain, now America is interfering in our internal and external affairs. Our leaders are its obedient servants" (3). Independence gained from the colonial power is talked about as a sacrifice that promised freedom and an honourable future for the Muslims of South Asia, but this ideal has been lost in the years that followed. Instead, once again due to the timidity of Pakistan's leaders, the people are being denied their rights and freedom – first there was subservience to Britain and now America. The article observes that during a press conference given by American special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke, Pakistani President Asif "Zardari stood with his hands folded" (3). His posture is taken as representing a "slavish attitude" that has "brought shame to Pakistan's dignity and respect"

(3). Here Zardari's compliance to American whims is likened to a comprador, or a brown *sahib*, doing the bidding of his colonial masters at the expense of his own people[4]. He stands with his arms folded, head down, a picture of compliance and servitude, working with the United States to undermine Pakistan's sovereignty. The article ends by stating that the "need of the moment is to escape American hegemony as soon as possible and solve our own problems" (4). The writer makes it clear, however, that with leaders like Zardari at the helm this will never happen.

This theme of pusillanimous leaders also appears in Saeed Ahmed Jalalpuri's editorial in *Khatm-e-Nubuwwat* magazine (affiliated with the organization of the same name and printed in Karachi) alongside the idea that Pakistan as a nation has been moving toward its demise since Partition because of the leadership's failure to build a nation in the name of Islam[5]. Jalalpuri (2009) writes that the country's "beauty and grace is diminishing day by day," alluding to the passage of time, in which the hopes and expectations of "Muslims [who] sacrificed their lives" (5) to form Pakistan have been trampled on. History has witnessed the decaying of this nation and in the "62 years [that] have passed since Pakistan was founded … it has not reached even one step toward its goals" (5). Instead, in the time it has existed as a country, Pakistan has already been "split into two, and in the remaining dim piece, those dancing to the tunes of strangers have played such games the thought of which would make your hair stand on ends" (5). Jalalpuri mentions two historical events in this article – Partition and the formation of Bangladesh. These are significant in that they both mark a geographical split, the first forming Pakistan itself and the second reducing its size and marking the formation of a new country. Pakistan was created out of sacrifice, out of chaos – a region of the world had to be divided to make it possible for this country to exist – but in its short history, one which should have been memorable in terms of growth and the realization of ambitious goals, it has been defined by more chaos, more breakage and now, possibly the dissolution of what is left over. This is how Jalalpuri constructs the history of Pakistan.

But why did this happen, Jalalpuri asks. His answer indicts the leaders that have come, gone and are still around. Phrases such as "those dancing to the tune of strangers" suggest that the "ruling lords" (2009: 6) have carried out the worst kind of betrayal. They are the ones responsible for Pakistan's economic fortunes, "burdened" as it is "with heavy debts" as well as a "shortage of water and electricity" and now the refugee crisis caused by the Swat operation that has rendered "two and a half to three [million] people homeless" (2009: 6). In what appears to be a rather ironic suggestion, Jalalpuri places hope for the future in the hands of these same leaders: "May God instill some sense into the ruling masters that they refrain from this cruelty and barbarism" (2009: 6). When read in the context of the article, however, this statement reveals that the leadership's first and most significant mistake was to turn their backs on the founding purpose of Pakistan, a nation made in the name of "Islam and Islamic system" (2009: 5). By betraying the purpose of the nation – a country for Muslims achieved through the sacrifices made by "sincere Muslims" (2009: 5) – these leaders allowed Pakistan to become a victim of foreign viruses while they themselves have been infected by greed. The body metaphor runs throughout Jalalpuri's narrative, bringing to mind the idea of a disease spreading: first the leaders, who gave in to greed, were infected and then the nation, too, became sick.

Pakistan's history is once again presented as the failure of its leaders in *Al-Mimbar* magazine, with the author arguing that those in power have acted as if they are above the law and regularly succumbed to the will of external forces. The writer asks a historical question centered on the Swat operation at the beginning of the article: "Which of our mistakes have spoilt conditions to this extent that we have no other choice but to keep spilling blood?" ("Whips Raining" 2009: 4). The answer points to a corrupt and self-interested leadership: "obedience, flattery and slavery [is in] their nature" and they are willing to sell "Pakistan's interests" (4) to America. The use of the word "slavery" and the phrase "slavish attitude" to describe the actions of the government once again evokes the memory of colonialism. As was the case with the editorial

from *Ahl-e-Hadith* magazine discussed earlier in this section, Pakistan's leaders are still intent on serving a western master. They are unable to conceive of Pakistan as a sovereign state that needs to represent the interests of its own people, instead they continue to acts as compradors – the author uses the phrase "continuous slavish attitude," drawing a genealogical connection between these leaders and the ones who served before them – eager to barter the nation and turn "everything upside down for personal gain" (4).

This history of betrayal allows the author to create and reawaken old memories and place them alongside the events taking place in Swat. The image he constructs through this combining of the past and the present is one of the death of a national ethos, something that has been in the works since the creation of Pakistan. He argues that the nation's "ideology has been sacrificed" to serve external interests instead of fostering the Pakistan that was "created in the name of Islam" (2009: 4). What is being suggested here, when these two statements are taken together, is that a particular historical trajectory was supposed to be followed and bring to fruition an Islamic state in accordance with the will of the people. The use of the word "ideology" is reminiscent of Abul ala' Mawdudi's conception of Pakistan becoming an ideological state[6].

For Mawdudi, the state was to be built on a moral code drawn from Islam, and the values, beliefs and principles of each individual would be a mirror of the state. There would, in other words, be no incongruence between the ideology of the individual and the state (Mawdudi 1955). In the *Al-Mimbar* editorial the implication is that since this ideological state was not created, the very essence of what Pakistan and its people represent and value was betrayed and trampled on by an obsequious leadership. By betraying the meaning of Pakistan, the "ideology" that binds the nation and its people, the leadership has stunted its development and not allowed an actual nation to emerge. Instead, what now exists is reminiscent of the colony that preceded it: a land controlled and operated by the United States through local leaders (once again we see the appearance of the comprador/brown *sahib*

theme) imbued with a "slavish attitude".

In an editorial for the *Chasm-e-Baidar* magazine, the writer argues that Pakistan's "experiments" with democracy have revealed that this system of government is "an enemy of the people" ("Present Democracy" 2009: 5). Once again, history, as the passage of time, is brought up to support this claim. The use of the word "experiments" suggests that democracy has been implemented on numerous occasions throughout the country's history. But on each occasion, "the masses [have been] duped [and] … [m]oney earned through sweat and blood by the masses is snatched and given to the elite" (5). The author reviews Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's government in the 1970s and those of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif in the 1990s, stating that these were driven by greed and corruption, and benefited only the nation's elite classes. Democracy is therefore a system instituted to exploit the masses and serve the interests of the ruling classes. After moving from Pakistan's democratic history to a series of global examples such as the violence against Muslims in Gujarat to America's wars in Vietnam, Cambodia, Afghanistan, etc., and contemporary cases of discrimination against Muslims in Europe, the author terms democracy worse than blasphemy:

> If a system does not provide justice … education, health and other basic necessities … then it is worse than a blasphemous system wherein at least these necessities are being provided … the burden of the rulers debauchery has been put on the masses and the elite have been pampered, that is why it is not only not Islamic but worse than blasphemy and an anti-people system ("Present Democracy" 2009: 5).

The theme of betrayal comes across in socio-economic terms in these passages and once again the country's leaders are responsible for the oppression of the people. Even though the author focuses on democracy and the rule of elected leaders, it is clear that the military elite is also included in the category of the ruling classes – army generals are mentioned as getting rich off this systematic inequality and the Musharraf regime is lumped in with democratic governments. But along with the population, the very idea of what Pakistan should have stood

for has once again been betrayed: “If this democracy had been kept under God’s codes (which is Islamic system) then without doubt it would have been a blessing for humanity because … it would have provided justice without discrimination, stopped tyranny and force and looked after basic human rights” (“Present Democracy” 2009: 5).

In asserting that an Islamic system – which is in no way defined in this or any of the other articles – would have provided “human rights” and curtailed all the distress brought on by democracy, the author suggests that a great mistake was made in Pakistan’s history. Had Pakistan’s leaders adhered to the path laid out for the country, had they chosen to govern according to an Islamic system, then they would not have fallen victim to corruption and the nation would have prospered. But the article does not dismiss the idea of democratic participation or the structure of a democratic set up altogether. Instead, the author asks for democracy to be instituted according to “God’s code, which is an Islamic system”, suggesting that democracy guided by Islam can “stop tyranny” and provide “human rights” (“Present Democracy” 2009: 5).

The dominant narrative in these texts is that the nation’s history is one of betrayal, both by the local leadership and foreign nations posing as friends. Pakistan is conceptualized as a nation created in the name of Islam and, by extension, for Muslims. This historical vision remains unrealized due to post-Partition leaders who have “sold” the nation on countless occasions and acted purely in self-interest. They have even made slaves of themselves, regularly capitulating to the whims of the United States instead of asserting the sovereignty of their own nation. This is seen as reminiscent of subservience to colonialism, and now the leaders have retained this attitude in their dealings with the United States. In the Islamist narrative of history: where great sacrifices were made to found a country out of the ignominy of colonialism, where there was once the promise of a nation that could take its place in the history of nations, there is now Pakistan, unfinished, in turmoil and slowly fading.

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By tracing the past, isolating moments of breakage and destruction, the articles try to identify what went wrong and how it can be repaired. The cover story of *Azaan-e-Fajr* magazine states exactly this: "History is a mirror in which people and nations can see a glimpse of their abilities and shortcomings. They can inspect in detail the rise and fall of their ancestors. In light of these facts, they can chart a course for their future" ("We Have to Decide" 2009: 24). An Islamic system represents the potential of Pakistan, it is what the country was founded for and only through its institution can the nation take its place in history. The editorials, as well as the vast majority of my fieldwork data from Islamist circles, position an Islamic system as one which guarantees human rights and equality. This system is turned into the true embodiment of liberal politics – as the editorial writer in Chasm-e-Baidar argues, keeping the democratic system within god's code "would have provided justice without discrimination, stopped tyranny and force, and looked after basic human rights" ("Present Democracy" 2009: 5). It is through an Islamic political set up that Pakistan will reach its "goal" (Jalalpuri 2009: 5) and achieve its desired modernity. Since Pakistan's inception, the leaderships' greatest failure, therefore, constitutes a betrayal of history itself.

Liberalism's Interlocutors: The Islamist Intermediary

All four editorials work within the established parameters of the state and demonstrate a concern for its development. The country's leaders are chastised for not facilitating progress and allowing foreign powers (the external enemy as opposed to the enemy within) to gain control over Pakistan; progress and state development are essential markers of the nation's success. While the articles suggest that an Islamic system is the way forward for Pakistan, their use of the language of progress, citizen representation, institutional development, and state sovereignty, points to a real investment in the process of democracy and modernity. Humeira Iqtidar (2011) has shown how Islamist organizations potentially open up conceptual space for the secularization of Pakistani society. She separates secularization from secularism to

show that the former involves the incorporation of religion into society and its subsequent rationalization. While these organizations do not consciously identify with secularism, "they are secularizing, that is, they are facilitating a process of secularization as rationalization of religion" (2011: 22). Precisely by bringing religion into the public sphere, the Islamists open the debate on how religion fits into modern life, a dialogue the Pakistani state has largely avoided by insisting that Islam is the moral code unifying all Pakistanis.

Secularism is often simply understood as the separation of church and state. A fuller understanding shows how secularism is about the management of religion by the state (Asad 2003), making it a part of the liberal mode of governance where individuals and communities are to be regulated for the collective good. The Pakistani state's current engagement with Islam is focused on its management and limiting its spillover into the public sphere. The Islamist push to make religion public might appear to be the antithesis of secularism but this demand is actually about how to manage religion in the context of the state. In this process, religion is made into a subject of debate as opposed to a sacred belief that requires protection. Faisal Devji (2005) has shown a similar irony in his analysis of the disparate entities that comprise the global Al-Qaeda led 'Jihad'. They democratize Islam through a global nexus of participation, reinterpretation, and "fragmentation of traditional structures of Muslim authority" (xvi). Islamists who oppose the jihad reinforce the position of the state, legitimizing its authority to moderate religion, thus, Devji argues, becoming more liberal.

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Pakistan's Islamist organizations therefore respond to both local conditions – this would be the unarticulated place of Islam in the nation's modernity – and to the global context of the jihad, which pushes these organizations more into the mainstream and away from any aspirations of radical opposition. The articles on the Operation Black Thunderstorm provide a comprehensive understanding of Islamist discourse and subjectivity precisely because they respond to both the affects of the global affects of Al-Qaeda's jihad and

political conditions within the Pakistani state. While militant organizations such as the Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) Pakistan are opposed to the state and endorse violence against the government, the Islamists are invested in its reform and do not call for violence against the state itself. According to Jalalpuri (2009), the "source of unity" in Pakistan is a combination of "faith, religion, country and nation" (5), and the fortunes of the people are tied to its prosperity. And unlike the liberals, they want to make Islam part of the public sphere, locating in religion the moral guidelines to deal with inequality and civil unrest: "If this democracy had been kept under God's codes (which is Islamic system) then without doubt it would have … provided justice without discrimination, stopped tyranny and force, and looked after basic human rights" ("Present Democracy" 2009: 5). In opposing militants as well as liberal state organization, Islamists position themselves as intermediaries between the two groups. In the process, however, their discourse becomes more liberal as it attempts to merge opposing groups under the umbrella of the state, simultaneously guaranteeing inclusion and repression.

While they champion the language of human rights and equality, Islamists intend to fortify the disciplinary apparatuses of the state. Their discourse involves the same ambivalent notion of liberty outlined in Bhabha's (1994) analysis of colonial discourse. Jalalpuri (2009) writes that the country's Muslims can be united via fear of god and the government, and love of the faith and nation. This statement contains all the elements of a disciplinary system of power where the state governs its subjects through a "regime of truth" (Foucault 1972: 131). In *Al-Mimbar*: "The writ of the state should be everywhere, from top to bottom, from north to south, from east to west" ("Whips Raining" 2009: 4). And in *Chasm-e-Baidar*: "the labourers need justice and fair play, security of life and property" ("Present Democracy" 2009: 5). Here, the state's right to control the population and enforce justice through security is validated and upheld. The TTP and Tehrik-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) are seen as overstepping the boundaries of dissent and are therefore legitimate targets of the state's disciplinary apparatus.

"Sufi Mohammad [leader of the TNSM] and his aides should have remained within their limits," reads the editorial in A*l-Mimbar*, which goes on to say that the TNSM and TTP have "knowingly or unknowingly come in the way of providing law and justice to the people of Pakistan" ("Whips Raining" 2009: 5). In *Chasm-e-Baidar* the author argues that the TNSM has misunderstood the issue: it is not a battle between Islam and "paganism," instead it is an "issue of basic human rights" ("Present Democracy" 2009: 5). And in *Khatm-e-Nubuwwat*, Jalalpuri (2009) writes that the Pakistan Army is killing citizens while allowing the "troublemakers"(6) to operate freely in Swat, suggesting that the Taliban are indeed enemies of the state but the Pakistan government is too corrupt to effectively clean house. Even as the articles condemn militant organizations, their authors manage to connect militant violence to the historic failures of Pakistan's leadership and its capitulation to American demands. They hold the government and the militants equally responsible for the conflict, which itself is situated within the violence of imperialism.

For this reason, Islamists seek to bring militant groups within the purview of government while removing the Pakistani state from the global sphere of American influence. The trappings of imperialism are identified as historical and contemporary causes of militancy and dysfunction in Pakistani governance. Hence, a peace agreement could not be implemented in Swat because the TNSM did not stay "within their limits" and the "liberal, secular and sectarian classes" ("Whips Raining" 2009: 4), as well as the media, were opposed to an entente. These animosities were exploited by Pakistan's "external enemies [who] cannot bear peace in our country in any way" ("Whips Raining" 2009: 5). What the warring parties do not understand is that they actually need to cooperate and ensure that Pakistan escapes "American hegemony as soon as possible" ("Witness Crossing" 2009: 4). The question of sovereignty is central to the establishment of peace: only through self-determination can the Pakistani state mediate internal conflict and move beyond being a mere "puppet" ("Witness Crossing" 2009: 4).

Islamists centralize the state as the institution they want to preserve and through which they intend to achieve their political goals. It is the state that an Islamic system is meant to develop both on a spiritual and moral level, and on an economic and institutional one. Jalalpuri talks about the refugee crisis being a drain on the country's economic and monetary resources; in *Ahl-e-Hadith*, the author begins with the socio-economic costs of India controlling water flow in Kashmir; and the editorial in *Chasm-e-Baidar* deals with the corrupt allocation of taxes. These arguments highlight a concern with economic factors and development amongst Islamist organizations. For this reason, the Islamists are opposed to the project of the militant organizations and condemn their actions. That Islamists have supported the Taliban in Afghanistan in the past, for instance, and this is only an example of their entanglement with the country's liberal institutions – the latter too have favored militancy as a strategic foreign policy tool (Hussain 2007; Mamdani 2004; Rashid 2000; Shahzad 2011). Their opposition to liberals, on the other hand, is singularly based on the place of religion in politics – i.e. the project of secularism.

In all other respects, Islamists mirror liberal ideals: the modernization of the country; institutional control of the populace; protection of private property; the states sovereign status, etc. Pakistan's Islamist organizations operate within the parameters of liberalism while disavowing the category. They are the product of postcolonial liberalism in Pakistan, a split subject that is, "almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 1994: 122).

ENDNOTES

[1] The magazines and newspapers collected are: *Azan-e-Fajr*, *Takbeer*, *Mahod, Zarb-e-Momin*, *Al-Haq*, *Ahl-e-Hadith*, *Chasm-e-Baidar*, *Al-Misbah*, *Al-Mimbar*, *Al-Qalam* and *Khatm-e-Nubuwwat*.

[2] John Gray (2007) has argued that Al-Qaeda is a modern organization and has little to do with Islam or pre-modern ideas. Its violence challenges the state, demands social change and is a tactic and concept that belongs specifically to the modern world. Faisal Devji (2005), meanwhile, has shown how the organizations that comprise the global jihad fragment and reorganize the systems of authority present in the Islamic world. He has shown how these groups go beyond the more conservative, statist approach of traditional Islamist groups. It would therefore be incorrect to categorize Al-Qaeda and its affiliates as pre-modern. State-based Islamist organizations are similarly a response to the excess and dark chapters of modernity that have most severely affected what is now the third world (Metcalf 2004). Their origins and ambitions, and the ways that they deal with religion, make them modern organizations. Al-Qaeda and its affiliates are an extension of Islamist politics, challenging certain ideas of authority, while maintaining other practices of exclusion and purity.

[3] Operation Black Thunderstorm was a military offensive by the Pakistan Army carried out from April to December 2009 to retake control of the Buner, Lower Dir, Swat and Shangla areas in Pakistan from the Taliban.

[4] This is a fairly common term in Pakistan, originally used to describe the Indian elite that was loyal to the British colonizer. It now denotes westernized Pakistanis who display cultural values and ideological aspirations that are seen as English and more recently American.

[5] Jalalpuri, who was assassinated at Karachi on 11 March 2010, was the leader of the Almi Majlis Tahaffuz-e-Khatm-e-Nubuwwat, an organization dedicated to uniting Muslims all over the world to “safeguard the sanctity of prophet hood and the finality of prophet hood” (“Introduction to Majlis” n.d.).

[6] Mawdudi, founder of the Jamaat-e-Islami, is a renowned and influential scholar of Islam who imagined Pakistan becoming an ideological state.

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