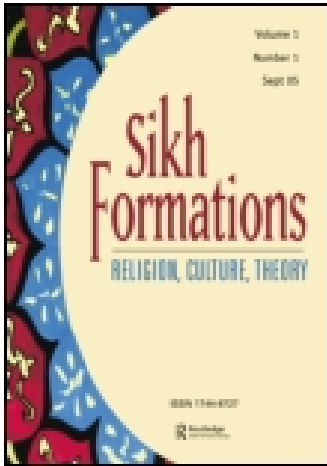


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### LOSING MY RELIGION

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# Katy Pal Sian

## LOSING MY RELIGION

### Sikhs in the UK

*In the wake of the war on terror the British Sikh diaspora has made a conscious effort to distinguish and set themselves apart from the Muslim community. Although historically this distinction is not novel, within the UK such an effort to illustrate this difference has been enforced to a much greater extent and has become more prominent within a context in which Sikhs have often been mistaken for being Muslim. In an attempt to distance themselves from being represented as or amongst Muslims, Sikhs have adopted many of the racial pathologies which are widely embedded within Western culture and its antipathy towards Muslims and Islam. Recent years have thus seen the development of a Sikh variant of Islamophobia which shares some of the general themes associated with Islamophobic discourse but it also has unique inflections reflecting the particularities of Sikh history and contemporary circumstances. This article will examine the consequences of Sikh attempts to distinguish themselves from Muslims especially when this distinction comes in the form of uncritical assimilation. I will examine the cost of such assimilation upon Sikhs and Sikhness arguing for the development of alternative or counter-hegemonic narratives principally centred around decolonisation rather than assimilation.*

### Introduction

This article will explore the various issues the Sikh case raises against the backdrop of assumed liberal-democratic principles and practices surrounding national integration, citizenship and multiculturalism. Citizenship for ethnic minorities is structurally characterised by irony (Sayyid 2006).<sup>1</sup> That is, ethnic minorities are constantly confronted with gaps and evasions of the national narrative. Thus, their sense of belonging is tempered by the way in which that very belonging is often undermined by racist exclusions and interrogations. As a consequence, it is curious to find ethnic minority positions which so forcefully embrace the national ideal as an attempt to erase all traces of their ironic condition. Among Britain's South Asian settlers, Sikhs have largely come to represent a 'model' community – that is fully integrated into British society. This article will explore the implications of Sikh assimilation against the backdrop of the war on terror and the Muslim 'threat' to understand the extent to which Sikhism and Sikhness has been depoliticised, that is through their integration into the national majority community alongside subscribing to an Islamophobic discourse, have Sikhs in the UK lost their religion?

The place of Sikhs within the constellation of symbols that constitute the British South Asian imaginary is emblematic and marked out in popular culture (e.g. *Bend it like Beckham*). It is however also contested as various campaigns to articulate a distinct Sikh identity have demonstrated. In the earlier phases of migration Sikh men often found it easier to get employed if they took off their turbans, but in 1959 when a Sikh was banned from wearing his turban in the workplace the issue became political as the Sikh community launched a number of campaigns and protests to gain the right to wear turbans at work (Brah 2006, 38). A more recent example can be demonstrated with the case of a Sikh pupil's expulsion from school in Wales for wearing the *Kara* in November 2007; however, in July 2008 the student won her battle as the school was found guilty of indirect discrimination under the race relations legislation and equality laws (*The Guardian* 2008).

Sikhs are protected with Jews under The Race Relations Act (1976). It is thus important to understand that the appearance of Sikhs as Sikhs occurs in relationship with both the Anglo-British national majority and ethnicised postcolonial minorities (specifically British South Asians); thus attempts to articulate a distinct Sikh collective identity have to negotiate between both of these constituencies. How then have Sikhs negotiated the anomalies (i.e. new values, practice of religion, shift from agrarian to industrial work ...) that they have met as a result of migratory displacement and, more significantly, how has such dislocation shaped, or rather impacted, representations and articulations of Sikh identity in the context of Britain's ethnically marked populations?

To begin to address these questions this article will take into account the current context in which recent years have seen a fragmentation of the British ethnoscape; in other words, the homogeneity of postcolonial settlement has given way to diverse trajectories as various groups of postcolonial settlers have variegated experiences. For example, social divisions between Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims on the one hand, and Indian and African-Asian Sikhs and Hindus on the other, have become increasingly marked most prominently in sectors of class, education and upward social mobility (McLoughlin 2006, 138). Apart from the social differentiation caused by the postcolonial settlement process, another factor in the radical transformation of Britain's ethnoscape is also worth noting, which has been the emergence of a distinct Muslim public identity, a process accelerated by the war on terror. As such this article will examine the impact of such shifts in the (re)configuration of British Sikhs.<sup>2</sup>

### **Sikhs in the ethnoscape: assimilation and the war on terror**

The term 'ethnoscape' was first introduced by Appadurai (2008). According to Appadurai the ethnoscape refers to the globalised spatial dispersion of ethnicised communities (Schetter 2005, 2). Thus, we can understand the global Sikh diaspora in terms of an ethnoscape. In which case, the relationship between Sikh settlement in the UK and the British national majority would be an aspect of this transcontinental, transnational ethnoscape. Appadurai defines the term as:

... The landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups

and individuals constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree. This is not to say that there are no relatively stable communities and networks of kinship, friendship, work, and leisure, as well as of birth, residence, and other filial forms. But it is to say that the wrap of these stabilities is everywhere shot through the woof of human motion, as more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move or the fantasies of wanting to move. What is more, both these realities and fantasies now function on larger scales, as men and women from villages in India think not just of moving to Poona or Madras but of moving to Dubai and Houston, and refugees from Sri Lanka find themselves in South India as well as in Switzerland, just as the Hmong are driven to London as well as to Philadelphia. And as international capital shifts its needs, as production and technology generate different needs, as nation-states shift their policies on refugee populations, these moving groups can never afford to let their imaginations rest too long, even if they wish to.

(Appadurai 2008, 52)<sup>3</sup>

In contrast to Appadurai's theorisation of ethnoscape which emphasises the idea of people on the move as being central and de-emphasises territoriality, Anthony Smith's understanding of the ethnoscape on the other hand ties it more closely to territorial fixity and is less concerned about the flows of people, as he goes on to explain:

... the territorialisation of ethnic memory, i.e. the belief shared by ethnic groups in a common spatial frame of origin. Thus it is not necessary for the members of an ethnic group to settle or dominate their ethnoscape. The collective fiction that affiliation with an ethnic group is related to a certain space is sufficient. Ethnic groups 'make geography' and 'produce space' to legitimise their existence in space and time. However, like the temporal dimension of ethnic origin, ethnoscaples are social constructions which can be and are modified in keeping with given endeavours and interests.

(Schetter 2005, 2)

Smith's version of ethnoscape is largely centred on issues of collective memory and imagined geographies. Under Smith's notion of ethnoscape one could include Khalistan/Punjab, a mythic construction of the homeland of all Sikhs.<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of this article however, we will understand the concept of the ethnoscape as centres of connected ethnically marked spaces. It is the landscape, primarily urban, which displays the most visible manifestations often in bricks and mortar of British South Asian settlement. Shops, places of worship and eateries, as well as distinct use of colours and sounds, are all examples of how British South Asian's have changed the built form of Britain's cities. The creation of what Nasser (2006) describes as 'borderlands' in which Anglo-British hegemony jostles with British South Asian presence and the subsequent negotiations and conflicts of identity and locality give rise to distinct British South Asian ethnoscaples (Ibid.).<sup>5</sup> Often these borderland neighbourhoods signify, at least in the popular consciousness, a specific inflection of British South Asian identity, for example, Sikhs-Southhall, Kashmiri/Pakistani-Bradford and Gujarati-Leicester.

The Sikh ethnoscapes within Britain become nodes of the wider Sikh global community connecting Sikhs in Punjab, Vancouver, Singapore ... .

Against the backdrop of the unsettled ethnoscape recent years have seen the emergence of a Muslim public identity which has produced a situation in which many among the Sikh (and Hindu) communities have sought to distinguish themselves from. Muslims on the one hand appear as 'extremists' who do not integrate into mainstream British society, unlike Sikhs who on the other hand, despite their distinctive external markers, are happy to be integrated. Although historically the distinction between Sikhs and Muslims is not necessarily novel, against the Anglo-British backdrop such an effort to illustrate this difference has been enforced to a much greater extent and has become more prominent within the current climate. As a result Sikhs appear to have adopted the racial pathologies which are widely embedded within western discourse to identify themselves in opposition to Muslims; 'us against them'. The equivocal logic of this discourse can be seen to organise Sikh discourse in Britain. It is within this oppositional binary that the frontiers have been established to divide the 'friends' from the 'enemies'.

The difference between Muslims and Sikhs is also played out through various cultural, political and socio-economic indicators, for example, hegemonic representations of Sikhs include those of a gallant and courageous 'martial race', victims of racial discrimination, activists dedicated to their faith, and talented and educated businessmen (Singh and Tatla 2006, 9). This contrasts with the experiences and representations of British Muslims who according to the 2001 Census are more likely to suffer from poorer housing conditions, possess poorer health and are more likely to be unemployed within the labour market compared with their Sikh (and Hindu) counterparts (Abbas 2005, 10). Moreover, education studies have also shown that the percentage of Muslims with higher educational qualifications was just below the England and Wales average (13.5% versus 14.3%), whereas for Sikhs it was 17% (Abbas 2005, 30). Sikhs in the UK are thus regarded as a community that has integrated and adapted well within society compared with its Muslim counterparts. For Sikhs, the acceptance and, to some extent, the conscious embrace of 'Britishness' enables them to represent a modern, independent and hardworking collective which has subsequently transpired to give them a greater social status and mobility as the mainstream dominant values of British society such as 'westernness', 'secularisation' and 'middle-class occupancy' (Chakraborti and Garland 2004) have been willingly endorsed by the Sikh collective. One of the most interesting aspects of the discourse is the constant way in which Muslims are referred to as the 'other' of Sikhs (Sian 2013a).

This othering of Muslims is used to bolster a distinct Sikh identity even when the othering relies upon what could be described as non-Sikh discourses. Hence, within the general culture 'the failure of Muslims to integrate' is contrasted with the way in which Sikhs are model citizens. Within this discourse, it would appear that Sikh collective is in the process of becoming an increasingly ethnically unmarked community as it represents itself against the increasingly marked Muslim community.<sup>6</sup> Due to their upward mobility and high levels of integration combined with the adoption of 'laid back' attitudes towards religion/culture within the UK, Sikhs appear to be moving towards becoming part of the national majority in which their ethnic status is pointed out to a lesser extent, in other words they appear to have become '... accepted as a legitimate, de-ethnicised part of the national majority' (Hesse and Sayyid 2006, 23);

this poses a direct contrast to British South Asian Muslims whose ‘Muslimness’ is continually emphasised through articulations of the national majority.

This is significant as we see through such accounts the notion of the west as the way forward, and moreover the apparent expectation that migrants within the ‘host’ society embrace the ‘modern’ values of the national majority in a journey ‘in which tadpoles eventually turn into frogs’ (Hesse and Sayyid 2006, 22). To elaborate, there is often a naturalised assumption that ethnicised communities ‘should’ conform and be socialised within mainstream society; this hegemonic account of the migratory process is thus characterised

... with the importation of inscrutable cultures and bizarre practices from another time and distant lands, in which generational movement, from immigrant to citizen, seen as absorption into the British way of life, requires movement from Urdu and Hindu to Cockney and Brummie.

(Hesse and Sayyid 2006, 22)

For Hesse and Sayyid (2006), such ‘absorption’ of ‘Britishness’ refers to the way in which these ethnicised migratory communities have been ‘assimilated, rather than assimilating’; this process is thus regarded as the only source of renovation in which the replacement of the non-west with the west is implied if not imposed upon such communities living within the British ethnoscape (Hesse and Sayyid 2006, 22). Put another way, Goldberg (1994) suggests that, ‘blending into the mainstream melting pot meant renouncing – often in clearly public ways – one’s subjectivity, who one literally was: in name, in culture, and, as far as possible, in colour (Goldberg 1994, 3).

What is interesting then is the extent to which the Sikh diaspora have assimilated within the British public and state apparatus as they appear to represent a community which has become more and more ethnically unmarked against the national majority. What this means is that the signifiers of ethnic minority status become less restrictive for Sikhs in particular contexts. For example since the protests of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s the wearing of the Sikh turban in the UK tends to be less problematic than the wearing of the *hijab*; so while the turban is still distinctively Sikh it is less likely to be seen as something external to the national majority’s vision of Britain. Ethnic unmarking then denotes a process by which ethnicised minorities are accommodated as different rather than antagonist elements within the national community (Sayyid 2003, 144).

Through their embracing of ‘Britishness’ Sikhs have come to adopt a status which symbolises notions of modernity and liberalism, an identity typically associated with the west. However, Sikhs have remained a community who have fought to remain distinct; thus through their absorption of the British way of life, this distinctiveness is both challenged and undermined through such ethnic unmarking. This tension reproduces the ‘dialectic’ of marking and unmarking for as Sayyid (2003) points out unmarking removes the specific identity of a cultural formation whilst marking removes its capacity to transcend its cultural limits. On the one hand, ethnic unmarking enables the Sikh community to ‘integrate’ more fully into Anglo-British society but on the other the cost of this ‘integration’ is the weakening of their distinctive identity (Sayyid 2003, 144). In other words, the contrast between Sikhs on the one hand and Muslims on the other has paved the way for articulating a separate Sikh identity which aligns

itself with the majority community. Such a process of ethnic unmarking enables Sikhs to integrate into the majority community and also facilitates the narration of a western character (Sayyid 2003). There is thus a clear paradox being created where we see attempts to assert a Sikh identity; however this can only be imagined in the context of a westernising gaze which sees no future for these proud heritages except through uncritical assimilation into the host society (Sian 2012).

The war on terror created conditions in which Islamophobia flourished. As such the Sikh community were not immune to this development – but again the Sikhs were in an ambiguous relationship as both consumers of the Islamophobic discourse, which would seem to confirm the negative image of the Muslim community, but also as victims of Islamophobia since many Islamophobes could not tell the difference between a Sikh or a Muslim. One manifestation of this was the manufacturing of T-shirts bearing the *Khanda*, with the slogan parading ‘Don’t freak I’m a Sikh’ (Sian 2010). Though one can dismiss this as commercial opportunism the interesting point is that the manufacturers felt that a T-shirt bearing such a slogan would have some sort of purchase in contemporary Britain. A similar T-shirt bearing the slogan ‘Don’t panic I’m Islamic’ could also be bought. This ironically illustrates the shared fate of both Muslims and Sikhs. The war on terror and the attendant panics seem to necessitate that both communities wear T-shirts which in a humorous way to try and allay the anxieties of the general population. The humorous tone however should not detract from the serious subtext that these products point to. Despite the existence of both these T-shirts the dominant discourse within the Sikh community did not find common cause with Muslims; rather it perpetuated the split between both communities, for example Kundnani (2002) describes a demonstration in which:

Some Sikhs, instead of marching with Muslims and calling for an end to any revenge attacks, marched separately with banners saying ‘we are not Muslims’, as if American Muslims were any more valid as targets for revenge than they were.

(Kundnani 2002)

This shows the way in which the hegemonic Sikh discourse sought to articulate a position in which Sikh interests (i.e. not to be confused with Muslims) were seen to be more important than general the principles (i.e. the exclusionary and discriminating nature of the disciplining of ethnic minorities). At one level such behaviour is not difficult to understand as Tariq Modood expresses:

If a group has bad press or is seen as likely to drag you down in terms of your social status or the way you are perceived by the rest of society, then you want to distance yourselves from that group ... At the moment, Muslims are certainly playing that role for other South Asians.

(Nagarajah 2005)

At another level, however, it is deeply troubling that the hegemonic discourse within the Sikh community naturalised Islamophobia rather than contribute to its questioning. The absence of irony within this dominant discourse facilitates its absorption within the framework of coloniality. The breakdown of a unified British South Asian subject position caused primarily by the emergence of a Muslim political identity opens up a number of

possibilities for re-articulating constituent groups that were covered by the British South Asian label. In the absence of the British South Asian one could imagine a number of possible subjectivities emerging, for example, a Punjabi identity, or Indian identity. The insistence that Sikhs constitute a distinct ethnically marked population is not the uncovering of a pre-existing identity that the British South Asian subsumed; rather it is the uncovering of the political process of identity formation. The current articulation of a distinct Sikh subject position is dominated by a discourse in which Islamophobia plays an increasingly central role. There is no necessary reason however why a Sikh subject position could not be articulated in which Islamophobia would be absent or at least marginal.

### Recentering Sikhness: post/decolonial Sikhs

The construction of a people (that is a collective agency) is a fundamental task of any politics (Laclau 2006). To construct a Sikh people, or the Sikh *Qaum*,<sup>7</sup> is complicated by nature in light of Sikh settlement in the UK. This settlement as we have seen is both diasporic and postcolonial. The diasporic condition means that the Sikh community has to articulate its identity in a homeless situation. The postcolonial condition means that the questioning of some of the ways in which the Sikh hegemonic discourse constructs its relationship with Britain increasingly requires a re-articulation. The postcolonial condition effects the construction of a Sikh *Qaum* in three principal ways. First, the postcolonial condition problematises the historical role of Sikhs as soldiers of the Empire and ‘defenders’ of the British Empire. That is, following the conquest of the independent Sikh kingdom by the British in the second Anglo–Sikh war (1848–1849) the Sikhs came to be designated as one of the ‘martial races’ which provided one of the main sources of manpower to the British Indian Army. Sikhs were over-represented (relative to their population) in the British Indian army and police forces.<sup>8</sup> The postcolonial condition generalises a critique of colonial rule and thus makes it more difficult to sustain the idea that support for the British Empire should translate into full acceptance in the contemporary Anglo-British national majority.

Second, the postcolonial condition, by weakening the difference between the west and non-west makes it possible for Sikhs, especially those based in the UK, as well as other ethnically marked populations, to potentially make the transition from non-Europeaness to Europeaness. In other words, the apparent erosion (at least at a superficial level) of the ‘colour line’ suggests that if ethnically marked populations modify their behaviour their chances of becoming ethnically unmarked are very high as there is no longer a biological racism to prevent such a transformation. Third, the upheavals in the ethnoscaples of western plutocracies caused by the emergence of a distinct Muslim political identity have helped to provide a model by which other communities may seek to project themselves as well as a threat. The Muslim mobilisation disrupts the balance between the British state and other ethnic minorities by making them too powerful so that the British state is forced to give in to their demands at the expense of other ethnic minorities.

The co-existence of the diasporic and postcolonial condition however does not mean that the current hegemonic discourse in the Sikh community in the UK is the only possible way in which Sikh identity can be constructed. It can be argued that the conjunction between the diasporic and postcolonial condition undermines the hegemonic discourse



and opens up the space for other ways of thinking about Sikh identities. We have seen how the earlier struggles that have helped to establish a distinct Sikh identity in the context of British race relations legislation often implied a politicisation which did not seek to portray Sikhs as a compliant law-abiding community. In the choice between nation and faith, Sikhs were willing to say that they would disobey national laws so that they could obey the scriptural injunctions of Sikhism (e.g. turban, *Kara* etc), as Mandair (2009) points out, mobilisations of this nature illustrate

... the effort expended by South Asian immigrants and settlers in Britain to reproduce their heritage traditions in a manner that does not necessarily conform to the ideological demands of contemporary multiculturalism.

(Mandair 2009, 2)

This determination to be Sikhs in the UK meant the denaturalisation of the Anglo-centric hegemonic order which instituted Britain's ethnoscape. In these struggles and mobilisations one can see the fragments of the decolonial. What is required is a narrative that stitches these fragments together and provides a vision of Sikh identity which is critical and politically conscious. Only the development of such a common sense within the Sikh communities can guarantee the future of a distinct Sikh presence or identity. These struggles provide a glimmer of hope of a Sikh identity which does not have to go through the detours of Islamophobia in its vain pursuit of the labyrinths of western history (Sayyid 2003, xxii). The decolonial vision of Sikhness offers the promise of a self-confident community able to confront its problems, secure in the knowledge that breaking the chains of coloniality would reinforce rather than undermine its future.

To overcome the loss of a distinct religious identity confronting Sikhs in the contemporary British diaspora requires a rearticulation in terms of the expansion of the logic of decolonisation. The decolonial refers to set of interventions which seek to advance the process of decolonisation in the age of the postcolonial, in other words, projects that seek to move away from the colonial gaze and beyond postcoloniality. To argue for a decolonial discourse is not however to demand a return to the secularist logic that defined much of the initial activism of British South Asian settlers; rather, it is to acknowledge that the postcolonial condition makes such traditional notions beloved of secular politics difficult to sustain. Not only have Muslims with their campaigns for faith schools, *halal* meat etc. shown the ability to mobilise outside the secular framework, but also Sikh successes can be demonstrated around the issues of the turban, the *Kara* and the *Kirpan* which all work to reinforce the possibility of such mobilisations.

The difficulty of secular anti-colonial politics was that it failed to accept that collective identities were not predetermined and that the process of mobilisation was constitutive of a people. The idea that class-based formations were the only legitimate sources of identification and empowerment was continually belied by the experience of British South Asians who found solace in what were typically termed religious identities. There was a lack of appreciation, and to some extent a denial, for the possibility of so-called religious identities becoming political. The decolonial accepts that the construction of a Sikh subject position is not inherently regressive nor is it inherently progressive. Rather, it opens up a politics of being Sikh by which the largest possible number of those who identify themselves as Sikh can participate within and call upon resources from the heritage that is available to them, e.g. the universal message of Guru Nanak, Sikh insistence

of gender equality and so on. Such resources would enable ordinary Sikh men and women to become involved within a community-wide conversation determining the contours of what it means to be a Sikh in the UK without external validation from the wider national majority. Such a communal conversation would only be effective if it was a means of elaborating Sikhness in its own terms rather than internalising the western hegemonic discourse in which Sikh subjectivity would always be marginal (Sian 2013b).

Sikhs in the current climate tend to emphasise aspects of their identity which are assumed to have a resemblance to the traits which form the hegemonic version of western identity. By inserting themselves into the western/Muslim-antithesis, Sikhs represent themselves as an ethnically marked community whose hostility towards Muslims differentiates them from Muslims and thus moves them closer to western forms of identification; this can be seen by the way in which Sikh adaptation to specific cultural western practices such as drinking, socialising and entrepreneurship demonstrates that Sikhs are not just part of the ethnically marked 'underclass' (a notion typically appropriated to mark 'troublesome' Muslims). In the contemporary Sikh diaspora, Sikhness is implicitly 'westernising', as such ethnic marking is removed through the subscription to a global western Islamophobic discourse combined with the assimilationist model enforced by the west. However, this need not be the future to narrate Sikh *being* in Britain.

## Conclusion

This article has argued that the emergence of a distinct Sikh identity is not merely the reflection of an already existing Sikh communal formation, but rather reflects a two-fold process: on the one hand the interactions between the Anglo-British national majority and the postcolonial ethnicised minorities, and on the other, interactions between postcolonial ethnicised minorities in particular intra-British South Asian relations. In the wake of the war on terror this two-fold process has converged around the figure of the Muslim. The emergence of a Muslim public identity subverts the category of British South Asian; this opens up a space for reconfiguring Britain's postcolonial ethnicised minorities. The challenge for the Sikh community is what will Sikhness mean in the context of the British ethnoscape. Being mistaken for Muslims is not only an empirical problem, but it also raises conceptual issues regarding Sikh identity.

However, a decolonised Sikh identity which this article has argued for would see the replacement of a Muslim antagonist with an antagonism directed towards the racial colonial hierarchy that enframes the current world order. The decolonisation of a Sikh identity opens up the possibility for Sikhs to narrate themselves in the world in more universal terms than the particularities of their 'clashes' with Muslims. A decolonised Sikh identity would not try to insert Sikhs along the western pole of the west/non-west divide, but rather direct itself towards the elimination of the cardinal division. In more specific terms this would mean emphasising and embracing the traditions of the Sikh community which see them as part of a postcolonial ethnically marked minority able to narrate its own distinct character rather than trying to present itself as a westernising population. As this article has shown there is no Sikh identity to be discovered but

only a political struggle attempting to establish different ways of being Sikh. The current hegemonic discourse does not have to be the future of the Sikh community; it is possible to imagine different ways of being Sikh and given the postcolonial condition it is perhaps necessary to do so (Sian 2013b). The Sikh community in Britain has the potential to articulate this decolonial version of Sikh identity; time will tell if they take up the challenge and promise of decolonisation.

## Notes

- 1 See Sayyid (2006).
- 2 For elaboration of the ideas presented in this article see: Sian (2013a) and Sian (2010) in Sayyid and Wakil (2010).
- 3 It can be argued that the flipside of this cosmopolitan celebration found in Appardurai's theorisation of ethnoscares can be seen in the contrast that Barber (1996) establishes between what he calls 'McWorld' and rather problematically '*Jihad*'. According to Barber, McWorld produces a reaction which leads to an affirmation of 'tribal' and ethnic fundamentalism; thus the contrast between the easy movement of the world of cosmopolitan flows is played out against the evocation of xenophobia, racism and its other manifestations; for more details see Barber (1996). Furthermore, this can also be seen in the way in which racism has not necessarily diminished as a result of globalisation and the prosperity it is often thought to bring, but rather, it has increased as the case of the Irish republic demonstrates.
- 4 It should be clear that mythic does not mean false or inauthentic; myths in this sense hold a social function in which they serve to unify and give a common sense of identity to the Sikh collective. For details of some of the myths available to Sikhs see Dusenbury (1995, 17–39).
- 5 Some of the more violent aspects of the conflict between identity and locality can be analysed through Hesse's concept of white territoriality in his discussion of racist violence, see Hesse (2002).
- 6 The concept of marking and unmarking arises from linguistics in which the unmarked term is the more general category, whereas the marked term is the more restricted. This restriction is shown by the edition of prefixes of suffixes, for example, lion and lioness, where lion refers to both the male and the species in general, lioness however only refers to female lions (Sayyid 2003, 143). See also Lyons (1968) for the elaboration of the concept in linguistics, Lyons (1968).
- 7 Shani (2007) describes the Sikh *Qaum* (a term which refers to the global Sikh community) as being similar to the *Umma* (the global Muslim community); this reading is based on Sayyid's reading of the *Umma* in which Sayyid rejects the categories of nation or civilisation in favour of a reworked notion of diaspora as a way of conceptualising the *Umma*. See: Sayyid (2000) in Hesse (2000).
- 8 This is not to discount the many Sikhs who fought against British colonial rule, for example, over half the Indian Liberation Army was made up of Sikh soldiers, but rather that the hegemonic discourse about the Sikh community is very ambivalent about the anti-colonial heritage that Sikhs could call upon. The discourse seeks to downplay the anti-colonial credentials of the Sikh *Qaum* as means of 'fitting in' with Anglo-centric notions of Britishness. For some of details of involvement of Sikhs in the anti-colonial struggle, see <http://www.sikhlionz.com/preindependence.htm>.

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