LAHORE IN MOTION

INFRASTRUCTURE, HISTORY AND BELONGING IN URBAN PAKISTAN

EDITED BY AMMARA MAQSOOD
CHRIS MOFFAT AND FIZZAH SAJJAD

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Edited by Ammara Maqsood, Chris Moffat and Fizzah Sajjad

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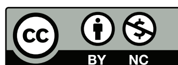

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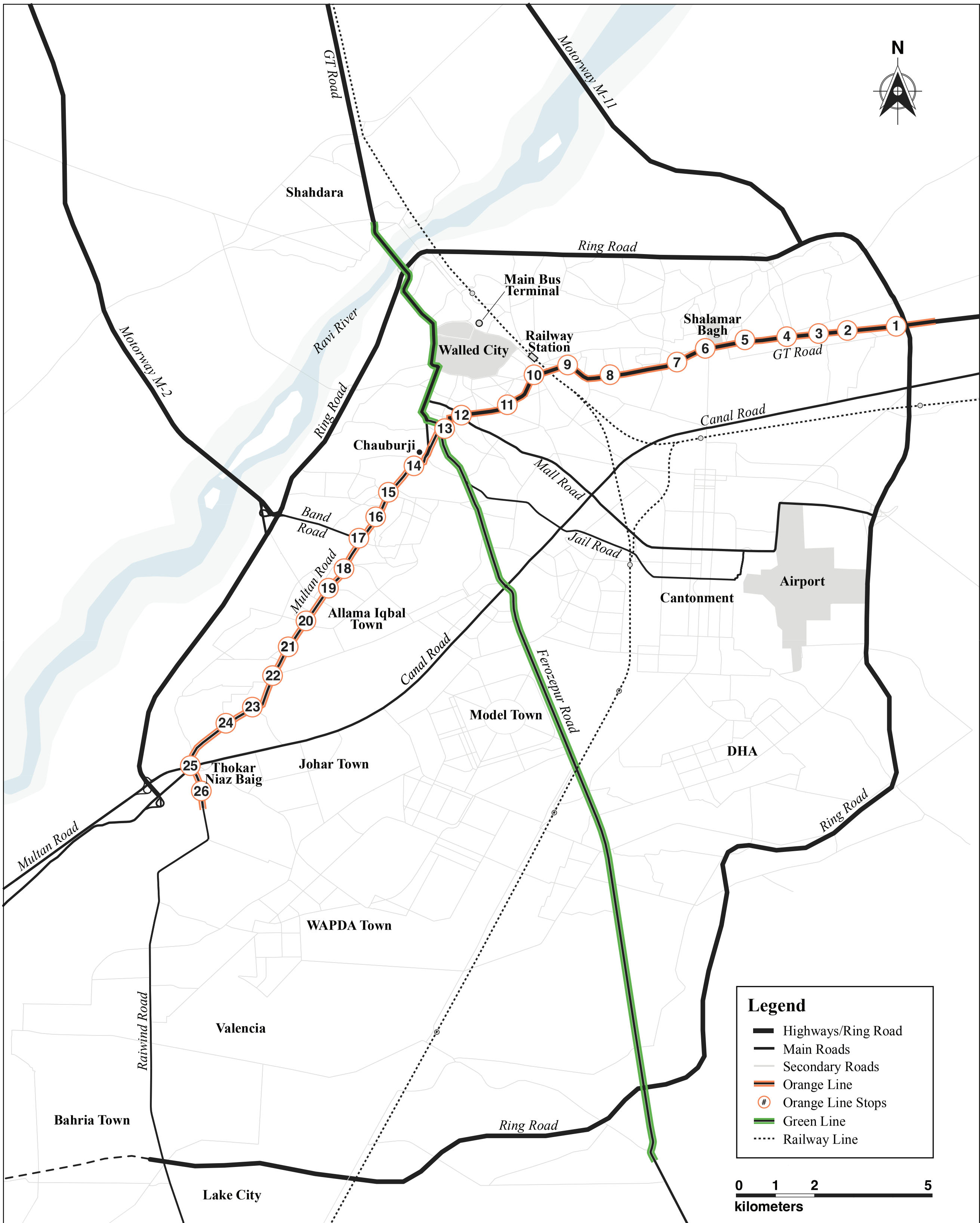
Note on transliteration

Quotations from written and spoken sources have been translated and transliterated by the authors, unless otherwise specified. As such, there is not one consistent style. For the sake of simplicity, commonly used Urdu plurals are indicated by adding s (for instance, maulvis, havelis), except in those cases where that would involve doubling of an s, in which case the broken plural is indicated (for instance, majalis instead of majliss).



Map of Lahore by Hala Bashir Malik, 2024. Roads and routes of the Green and Orange Metro Lines modified from data in the 2012 Lahore Urban Transport Master Plan

Introduction: Walking the Orange Line

Ammara Maqsood, Chris Moffat and Fizzah Sajjad

Friction

In October 2020, Pakistan's first rapid transit metro train was inaugurated in Lahore. The 'Orange Line', as it is known, has dramatically reconfigured Pakistan's second largest city. The metro connects the north-east of Lahore to its south-west along a 27-kilometre route dotted with 26 stations. In a city of 13 million, the train has the capacity to accommodate 30,000 passengers per hour. For most of its path across Lahore, the line takes the form of a viaduct, a raised track elevated over existing roadways, casting a shadow on the buildings and lives that fall beneath. For less than 2 kilometres near its midway point, where the line intersects with the old colonial-era thoroughfare of Lahore, the Mall Road, the metro dips briefly underground.

Even before the line was opened to the public, the monumental form of the viaduct was being integrated into the everyday rhythms of the environments it crossed. Its huge pillars provided ample space for posters and advertisements – cheap buses to Islamabad, news of an upcoming political rally. The paved or bricked islands it created in the middle of traffic-filled streets were turned, where they were wide enough, into new spaces for sociality or trade – men playing ludo near Bund Road, cans of paint for sale on Nicholson Road. Some of these islands acquired young gardens, or were planted with small trees, though much of this greenery wilted early on, covered in layers of dust, hidden from the sky by the viaduct and so unable to be refreshed by rain.

This process of incorporation into Lahori life has not been without its frictions. When construction of the Orange Line was announced in 2015,

Figure 0.1 The Orange Line viaduct, 2022. Image by Hala Bashir Malik.

it prompted vocal opposition across a range of interest groups, from civil society activists to party politicians, religious leaders to local residents' groups. Although never operating as a cohesive coalition, this shifting contingent was nevertheless responsible for a series of street protests, political campaigns and legal challenges over subsequent years. Much of this opposition was linked to the cost and scale of the project and to the nature of its implementation. Financed through a US$1.6 billion soft loan from China, the project was critiqued by many as a costly and unnecessary undertaking, particularly given widespread evidence of underinvestment in areas of health and education in the city. The 27-kilometre route was carved through some of the most densely populated areas of Lahore, and the line's construction required the destruction of small commercial centres and neighbourhoods, displacing thousands of residents. Poor standards of occupational safety resulted in the deaths of at least 50 workers during the five years of construction. Many were migrant labourers, living and working in precarious conditions.[1] Critics also seized on the proximity of the line's path to several historic sites, from the seventeenth-century paradise garden at Shalamar Bagh to the monumental

Mughal gateway Chauburji. Concerns with how official permission was secured to enable construction so close to legally protected built heritage led to a suspension of construction in August 2016, ordered by the Lahore High Court but eventually overturned (with some small concessions) by Pakistan's Supreme Court in late 2017.

At the heart of civil society opposition to the Orange Line project was a deep unease with the Punjab government's relentless pursuit of development, particularly as overseen by the popular centre-right political party in the province, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) and its then-Chief Minister, Shehbaz Sharif. The petition which secured the High Court's order of suspension characterised the Orange Line as a 'white elephant' pursued for 'cheap publicity', a prestige object for the ruling party rather than something genuinely needed by Lahore's residents.[2] Highly visible megaprojects like the Orange Line have been framed plainly by many activists as threats to the city of Lahore – its historic identity, its ways of life and its distinctiveness as an urban centre. The viaduct represented a dramatic example of what some viewed as the 'Dubai-fication' of Lahore: the creation of an anonymised, generic space of glass, steel and concrete, following a Gulf model for prosperity rather than something 'appropriate' to Lahore's proud local culture and centuries-old history.

This brand of critique deploys a narrative that will be familiar across a range of twenty-first century urban contexts: neoliberal development, in the shape of large-scale infrastructure projects and associated speculation and commercialisation, is destroying local ways of navigating, knowing and inhabiting a city. But this narrative has its own risks. In framing development as an external imposition following a 'foreign' logic of neoliberalism, it can flatten our understanding of the 'local', failing to account for the variations in class, ideology and historical experience that shape individual lives in a city. Large-scale projects do, of course, have substantial (and, often, irreversible) impacts, and there does appear to be a shift in the manner and speed in which such developments are taking place. But the ways in which these changes are felt and understood can differ vastly between urban constituencies. They are also frequently contradictory. Many of those dispossessed and displaced by the construction of the Orange Line, for instance, opposed the project entirely. But some readily agreed to leave their homes in the hope that they would resettle in more upwardly mobile neighbourhoods elsewhere in the city. Other affected residents embraced the building of a new mass transit line, but simply wished for their voices to be included in project design and implementation.[3]

Another risk of this narrative is its commitment to an 'authentic' Lahore that must be rescued from braying bulldozers and the vulgar aspirations of careerist politicians. The impact of unregulated expansion on the city's environment – from polluted waterways to shrinking tree coverage to air pollution – certainly demands critical attention. But these processes are not merely symptoms of our neoliberal present. They are in fact constitutive of Lahore's longer history as an urban space, and certainly since its establishment as the colonial capital of British Punjab in 1849 sparked a population and building boom that continues to this day.[4] Earlier rulers had invested lavishly in the city, in particular during the Mughal period (1524–1725) which saw the establishment of many of Lahore's historic landmarks. But it was in the British period that Lahore started expanding confidently beyond its millennia-old historic centre, the Walled City, absorbing the land and older villages around it. In the 1939 essay *Lahore ka Jughrafiya* ('Lahore's Geography'), the Urdu writer Patras Bokhari joked that 'once Lahore had surrounding areas, now it is Lahore that surrounds Lahore'.[5] In documents from 1941, the Lahore Improvement Trust – a colonial institution founded in 1936 to coordinate urban development – was already noting the 'extensive purchases of land in the areas surrounding the centre of Lahore' during the 1920s and 1930s, by residents who hoped to profit from the increase in land values brought about by municipal improvements.[6] Change is a quality of urban life. Rather than lamenting a city 'lost' through change, it is important to interrogate the different ways change takes place, the inequalities that determine who gains and who suffers, and the political ideas and public imaginaries that frame and mediate interventions into the urban environment.

This volume is an attempt to grapple with complexity and contradiction in Lahore's urban landscape. It does so in a way that is intentionally multi-vocal; that jumps back and forth across time; that is open to tangents, fragments and impressions as opposed to authoritative statements and comprehensive accounts. We approach the city as a *forum of frictions*, and the richly generative quality of the Orange Line justifies this concern. In her 2004 ethnography of Indonesia's rainforests, the anthropologist Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing argues that capitalist desires for connectivity – the unimpeded flow of goods, ideas and people – 'come to life in "friction", the grip of worldly encounter'.[7] For Tsing, 'friction' describes those awkward, unstable and creative outcomes produced by attempts to forge links across distance and difference. They might be destructive, they may provoke resistance, but they might also enable new social formations and alter conditions of political or economic possibility.

The chapters in this volume trace the Orange Line's work of connection and the ways this infrastructural project has been awkwardly, unstably and creatively incorporated into the city. Our contributors include academics, artists, activists, architects and more. Some have lived in Lahore for decades, others have made it a home more recently, while several consider it their home but no longer live there. All possess a strong affinity with the city and a deep interest in studying and understanding its histories, politics and everyday transformations. Each contributor was assigned one of the Orange Line's 26 stations and asked to spend time in their respective area, to walk around the station's environs, to speak to people and to note their own thoughts, concerns and associations. Rather than a conventional academic account of infrastructural development in a postcolonial city, our aim was to create a collaborative portrait of how change is experienced and felt, and how larger historical events, government policies and the politics of class, caste, gender and ethnicity become entangled with personal memories and everyday processes of place-making. Contributors were urged to resist the familiar framing of the Orange Line as an imposed obstruction and to avoid making judgements around '(in)authenticity' in the city.

Figure 0.2 A haircut under the Orange Line, Ali Town, 2019. Image by Chris Moffat.

Many were open to this challenge; others felt compelled to push back against our exhortations and to defend a particular vision of Lahore. The volume thus reflects the fragmentation that characterises contemporary urban life. As editors, our approach recognised that belonging to and inhabiting Lahore entails traversing familiarity and unease, safety and risk, connection and disconnection.[8]

Before beginning our journey at Dera Gujran, the Orange Line's easternmost station and the focus of Chapter 1, the remainder of this introduction elaborates on two wider themes informing our project: first, the power and promise of infrastructure, and second, the forms and flows of urban mobility. While our work is grounded in Pakistan, it responds to a wider literature on urban life compiled by historians, anthropologists and geographers, in both the Global South and North. The volume is an experiment in how accounts of the contemporary city might profitably stage difference and contestation. We make no claim to provide a 'representative' sample of Lahore's residents in these pages and are keenly aware of the contingent circumstances that brought this collection of (mostly middle class, mostly cosmopolitan, and primarily academic) contributors together, as well as the limitations this poses. Our aim is rather to model an approach for seeing and writing about the city, one that is simultaneously illuminating and inconclusive, one that grapples with friction in order to understand why urban spaces are so productive for thinking about history, identity, politics and belonging in the modern world.

Infrastructure

Transport infrastructure, by definition, forges new paths for movement. But as Tsing has written, rail lines and roadways are also structures of containment.[9] They define and thus limit where we can go, what directions we can move in. The Orange Line has carved a particular path across Lahore. It has tied previously distant places together, but it has also reshaped those places through the force of connection. In this sense, the metro map is deeply consequential for Lahore, for its people and for the rhythms that animate the city. It has generated new reference points, new landmarks and new ways of seeing the city.

Lahore, like all cities, has been shaped by its particular histories of connection. Located at the crossroads of several historic trading routes – from Kandahar to Delhi, Kashmir to Thatta – Lahore grew into a regional centre due to its importance as a site of commerce.[10] During the Mughal

period, indigo made its way west from Lahore to Aleppo and Armenian carpets travelled east through its markets to Agra.[11] The Mughals cultivated and defended the *Badshahi Sarak*, today known as the Grand Trunk (GT) Road, for its role in trade and communication across the wider empire. In 1849, the British took control of the city after defeating the Sikh empire, nineteenth-century successors to the Mughals. They reshaped Lahore with their own projects of connection and extraction: the upgrading and expansion of canals to move water and goods, and the establishment of a major railway junction and workshops in the city.[12]

For all of these reasons, Lahore has long been a place of mobility and encounter. The city has for centuries brought together diverse ethnic groups, languages, communities and sects, and the hierarchies between different classes and castes have left their imprint on how processes of urbanisation have taken place.[13] Postcolonial Lahore, the capital of Pakistan's powerful Punjab province, is often positioned as ethnically homogenous and 'parochial' in comparison to the more visibly 'cosmopolitan' port city of Karachi. But this overlooks how effective the city has been in 'absorbing' some difference while remaining exclusionary towards others. For instance, Kashmiris who migrated to the Walled City after 1857 are now viewed as 'authentically' Lahori, as are some of the Pashtun groups who have been living in Punjab since pre-partition times or who migrated here via other parts of India. Urdu-speaking migrants who came to Karachi as refugees at partition retain a distinct identity as *Muhajirs*, but those in Lahore rarely use this term to describe themselves. Other forms of difference persist and certain groups remain stubbornly unincorporated or marginalised, including Christian communities who have lived in the city for centuries as well as Pashtun groups who have arrived over the last few decades.[14]

Projects of connection both *respond to* and *produce* fragmentation in Lahore's urban environment. The vocal and visible opposition to the Orange Line detailed in the above section represents only one of many ways that this project came to be imbued with emotional qualities. The Orange Line was propelled, for many, by desire: the desire for swift, air-conditioned mobility across Lahore's famously congested landscape; the desire for Lahore to be recognised as a 'modern', 'world-class' city; and the desire for political clout and authority amongst the planners and decision-makers responsible for the project. The Line's multivalent promise ultimately legitimated the disruptive presence of a 27-kilometre-long construction site, the rumble of its machinery, the flurry of activity that enlisted huge numbers of Pakistani labourers alongside visiting Chinese technicians and advisors. Shehbaz Sharif,

who oversaw the project's advent and most of its building work as Chief Minister of Punjab, described the Orange Line as a 'great gift' (*bahot bara tohfa*) for the people of Lahore.[15] Framing it this way, Sharif invited gratitude, appreciation and the thrill of being favoured.

This deep imbrication of infrastructure with qualities of anticipation, desire and promise is familiar from wider research on megaprojects in modern South Asia. Writing about another landmark development in Pakistan's recent history, the six-lane Islamabad–Lahore motorway, the anthropologist Naveeda Khan reflects on how this state-of-the-art piece of infrastructure came to represent a possible future for the country. Its symbolic power was in part derived from its contrast with poor and deteriorating transport provisions elsewhere: the clean lines and smooth pavement provided not just a path between provincial and national capitals but also an experience of an otherwise elusive modernity.[16]

Nausheen Anwar's work on industrial infrastructure in Pakistan similarly conceptualises infrastructure as an object of 'aspirations and desire'.[17] She explores how roads – but also ports, airports, power distribution centres and more – encapsulate ideas of progress and modernity and thus serve to legitimise developmentalist agendas. Anwar finds that, rather than uniformly bolstering state power, infrastructure can also undermine it due to the frequency of technical failures and breakdowns which arise over time.[18] Infrastructure's role as a tool of legitimacy and governance as well as a stage for contestation is further underlined in a recent volume on spatial politics and infrastructure-led development in Pakistan, edited by Majed Akhter, Aasim Sajjad Akhtar and Hasan Karrar.[19] The editors contextualise Pakistan's contemporary developmental regime in relation to global politics, noting the powerful effects of China's Belt and Road Initiative across Asia and indeed the world. Pakistan's place within this 'New Silk Road' has been consolidated through the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a multi-billion-dollar initiative to modernise transport and energy infrastructure and establish special economic zones for industrial and business development in Pakistan.[20] The aim, according to the Pakistani government, is to provide 'a framework for regional connectivity'.[21] But as Akhter, Akhtar and Karrar note, projects like CPEC refigure core–periphery relations in Pakistan, exacerbating extant processes of securitisation and authoritarian technocratic governance in the country.

Beyond developmental and political imaginaries, infrastructure also grabs the inner life of personal imagination and creative expression, particularly in relation to what it means to be and live the 'urban'. Scenes in public transport serve as a quintessential backdrop in literary and

visual accounts of the city – a way to capture the simultaneous 'busy-ness' and sense of alienation and loneliness that is often seen as characteristic of urban life. The Orange Line has already made its appearance in film representations of Lahore – notably, in the Cannes Jury Prize-winning 2022 feature *Joyland*, for which it staged sun-soaked vistas of the city and where the transgender character Biba troubled the atmosphere in the 'women-only' train carriage.

The Orange Line plays with the imagination of our contributors in different ways. Reflecting on their impressions of sitting on an Orange Line train, some write about how the space smelled different (or of nothing), how it changes behaviour, how it prompts acts of analogy to cities abroad. But most are drawn to the various ways this infrastructure has been incorporated into the city, the frictions attending these processes, and related openings and closures. Some of our contributors note how the novelty of this mode of transport introduces new forms of comportment, especially in relation to how women are able to travel in public space, while at the same time stubbornly reproducing older practices, such as the harsh working conditions and low salaries faced by Orange Line station employees.

An engagement with ideas of progress and futurity in Lahore is particularly pressing considering the tone of lamentation and nostalgia

Figure 0.3 Interior of an Orange Line train, 2024. Image by Chris Moffat.

through which the city is often viewed. In both literary and academic accounts, Lahore is predominantly viewed through the lens of its past. The most influential academic account of Lahore published in recent years, William Glover's 2008 book *Making Lahore Modern*, describes the city as a kind of 'palimpsest'. For Glover, this term encapsulates a 'recurring sense of an older city partially hidden within a newer one, its presence hinted at by abrupt discontinuities of surface, by the remnants of distinct but unrelated plans, or by the sudden appearance of physical traces from the past'.[22] The term is now widely used to frame analyses of Lahore and has become pervasive in English language writing on the city; even many of our contributors reflexively reached for it in constructing their accounts.

Considering how rapidly Lahore grew throughout the twentieth century, and how seriously it was transformed through the upheaval of partition in 1947, the temptations of nostalgia are not entirely surprising. There is, in addition, a longer and pervasive tradition within South Asia – in particular, among Muslim elite groups – of associating cityscapes with loss. Historical work reminds us that emotions of nostalgia, linked to the loss of Muslim power after the Mughals, were integral to resistance efforts and mobilisation against European colonialism.[23] Writings lamenting the nature of change under colonial rule often focused their attention on urban spaces. In her reading of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's 1847 *Asar al-sanadid* ('The Remnant Signs of Ancient Heroes'), a text that described the famous buildings and personages of Delhi, Margit Pernau draws out the various rhetorical devices and imagery deployed to invoke and create a sense of loss and mourning within the reader.[24] Descriptions of the destruction of the city were meant as an *ibrat-nama*, a tale of warning at the inconstancy of the world and of the fleeting nature of splendour and glory', directing the reader towards God.[25] To use Svetlana Boym's terminology, the nostalgia evidenced here is 'reflective' rather than 'restorative', in that its purpose is to create melancholy rather than push for a return-oriented agenda.[26] In other Urdu texts and writings of the time, and particularly after the war in 1857, nostalgia became a literary trope that organised complex feelings of loss and Muslim decline and directly criticised colonial powers.[27]

If nostalgia was previously associated with the onslaught of colonial modernity, then, in the postcolonial city, it is in fact the *failed promise of modernisation* that has inspired a sense of loss. Elite and upper-class circles in Lahore, as well as in other cities like Karachi and Islamabad, often look back to the 1950s and 1960s as a 'golden' period in the country's history: a time when, in their perspective, the country was on a

clear path towards progress.[28] Newspaper articles and social media posts reminiscing about those times often contain photos of westernised hotels and leisure spaces and of the foreign celebrities and well-known personalities that used to visit Pakistan. This kind of 'nostalgic modernity' not only critiques the state for its failure to deliver on the promises of modernisation but also blames the emergence of an 'Islamising' agenda, formally initiated by General Zia-ul-Haq in the 1980s, for erasing the cosmopolitan and plural past of Pakistani cities.[29] Implicit here is a critique of residents and groups in the city that do not share these sensibilities or attachment to the modernisation efforts of the 1950s and 1960s. It reflects the social tensions provoked by the rise of new, more religiously oriented urban classes in Pakistan after Zia.

Glover deployed the term palimpsest to demonstrate how the pursuit of the new and the modern could not erase what came before. Such projects are, indeed, frequently disrupted by durable traces from the past. This is a useful caution against *tabula rasa* visions of teleological progress, but the palimpsest concept also smuggles within it the enchantment of origins, the suggestion of an 'original' beneath accumulated layers. One of our purposes in approaching the city as a 'forum of frictions' was to trouble any stable referent to the 'original' or the 'authentic' in Lahore's built environment. Certainly, the metro's appearance in the urban landscape has been shaped by durable traces from the past – literally, in the case of Chauburji, where the track was altered to allow more space between the train and the Mughal-era gateway. But our interest in these traces is precisely in terms of their present effects. The map of Lahore assembled in this volume is one that is intended for comparison and contrast with other cities in our contemporary moment – in South Asia, across the Global South, even globally. It traces the *generative* potential of infrastructure in a complex urban environment, and so its reference points are subjective and experiential as much as they are material. This is a map that shifts and undulates, depending on the reader. When we write, as above, that the new metro map is *deeply consequential* for Lahore, we mean this in terms of the worlds it opens up and the connections it animates, rather than simply the path it names and consolidates.

Questioning the search for authenticity also allows us to tease out the diverse and often contradictory ways in which belonging is established and experienced in historic cities in the Global South. Displaying an attachment to the past, in terms of genealogical claims and aesthetic taste, is a common rhetorical strategy through which upper-class groups distinguish themselves from others in Lahore.[30]

Figure 0.4 The Orange Line under construction around Chauburji gateway, 2019. Image by Chris Moffat.

Belonging, here, becomes synonymous with lineage and duration. But the present also matters. Notions of who belongs are implicit in state policies on infrastructure and the stakeholders they recognise (and those they do not). The right to belong is articulated in the challenges, opposition and protests raised *against* infrastructural and other urban development projects. Belonging is also established through the physical navigation of the city: the routine of the daily commute, visits to friends and family and going to shop or eat out in different areas. The feelings and emotions that these journeys generate are both personal and political, connected to individual circumstances and the way access to the city is structured differently depending on one's social or economic position. The habitual walk to the corner shop, the warm anticipation of a weekend visit to grandparents, the resigned frustration of being stuck in rush-hour traffic, the sense of exhaustion whilst squeezing into a crowded bus and the fear of being harassed are all, ultimately, emotions and feelings that contribute to a sense of belonging to, a feeling of familiarity with and a way of seeing and knowing a city.

Mobility

The Orange Line's promise of smooth, uninterrupted journeys across the urban landscape is, on the one hand, offered as a powerful alternative to Lahore's unpredictable, traffic-filled roads. But on the other hand, and as some of our contributors illustrate, travel on the Orange Line is still deeply enmeshed with other forms of urban mobility. Orange Line stations have become hubs for all sorts of journeys, their entrances crowded with auto-rickshaws and motorcycle-rickshaws (*qingqis*) dropping passengers off or soliciting new ones. The stations are points of arrival and departure for the metro train, but also for a stunning variety of hyper-local journeys – to and from nearby markets, down and along narrow neighbourhood lanes, to homes, places of work, social spaces and sites of worship.

The proliferation of rickshaws, *qingqis* and minivans around the stations – and across the city – is a direct outcome of an unreliable and inadequate public transport network for a city the size of Lahore. Lahore's bus network in particular has been subject to cycles of investment and disinvestment, unable to keep up with growing demand for travel. Over time, there has been a gradual shift in the modes of transport used by, and available to, the city's residents. As distances between places in this sprawling city have grown, so has the dependence on motorised modes of transport. Bicycles, noted as being the 'most common vehicle on the road' in the 1960s,[31] are now increasingly used by fewer residents, forming only 4 per cent of total trips in the city in 2010.[32] Animal-drawn vehicles, commonly used in post-partition years, have been deliberately phased out by municipal authorities. Walking, while still a major mode of travel as this section will show, has become more challenging with growing distances and disappearing pedestrian infrastructure.

In contrast, the number of automobiles and motorbikes on Pakistan's roads has increased gradually since independence, and skyrocketed since the 2000s, aided in part by the easy availability of credit and encouraged by the declining state of public transport. In 2021, it was estimated that there were 6.29 million registered vehicles in Lahore, a 163 per cent increase over the previous 10 years alone.[33] Those who can afford to do so have exhibited a clear preference for utilising private modes of transport to navigate the city.

In recent years, car-hailing services like Uber and Careem have exploded in popularity amongst a rising urban middle class, allowing them to order a taxi direct to their location via a dedicated smart phone app. These services, which allow different cost options (air-conditioned vs. non-air-conditioned, for instance) and certain security features (like

Figure 0.5 Motorcycles under the Orange Line at Lakshmi Chowk, 2024. Image by Chris Moffat.

sharing driver and route info with a friend), have been advertised as enabling a new convenience of movement, particularly for (middle class) women in the city, even as they can promise little in terms of reducing congestion. Yet, these too remain out of reach for a majority of the city's population due to their high costs. Experiences of urban mobility in Lahore, as elsewhere in the world, remain structured deeply by class. The *tonga*, the bicycle, the *qingqi*, the rickshaw, the bus, the car, the car with a driver and so on, all denote relative status and privilege.

Mobility constraints in Lahore are perpetuated by municipal transport policies which continue to prioritise road building for car users rather than public transport provision or improvements in pedestrian infrastructure. Over the past 30 years, political actors across party divides have supported the channelling of funds into building flyovers, underpasses, road-widening projects and signal-free corridors, all of which aim to facilitate 'uninterrupted' travel for car users. The Lahore Ring Road, an 85-kilometre, six-lane highway which now encircles the city, has not only enabled 'fast' travel predominantly for car users, but has also made possible growing suburbanisation, promising ease of access to previously peripheral lands and triggering booms in new residential development. In 2013, the Punjab Mass Transit Authority

inaugurated the first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor in Lahore. This provided a dedicated right of way for buses, with long sections built on a concrete viaduct, and was the first large-scale project developed for the sake of public transport provision in the city. The quick completion of the project in a 10-month period played an important role in the re-election of the PML-N in the 2013 Punjab provincial elections, presented as proof of the party's ability to deliver.[34] Its construction paved the way not only for the Orange Line – the second priority mass transit corridor identified in Lahore's Urban Transport Master Plan – but also new BRT corridors across major cities in Pakistan, including Islamabad, Multan and Peshawar. Its success as a model for other cities has not been dampened by the fact that the Lahore BRT is already suffering from disrepair and neglect. Unlike road infrastructure projects, the 'need' for mass transit projects continues to be heavily debated in a place like Lahore. Criticism of the disruptions generated by construction or the aesthetic implications of elevated roadways is joined here by resilient, class stigma over use: the BRT corridor, cut off from the main road to avoid traffic, is referred to as the '*jangla* bus' (caged bus). Such criticisms have been loudest in liberal, upper-class circles, yet these groups have been, in a practical sense, least affected by the construction and unlikely to rely on public transport.[35]

According to the 2012 Lahore Urban Transport Master Plan, 32 per cent of total daily trips (one-way journeys to work, school, home etc.) in Lahore were made by walking. And walking, as a form of movement, is as important to this volume as the gliding train around which our chapters are organised. Each contributor was asked to explore the area around a specific Orange Line station by foot – even if their chapter is not necessarily a record of a walk. Our purpose in requesting this was twofold. One, we felt that walking, as a way of navigating the urban environment, makes certain encounters possible, while also allowing for detours and digressions not always open with modes of road or rail transport. Second, we wanted to retain some of the discontinuities, unanticipated delays, stops, starts and surprises that characterise moving across Lahore: the uneven ground and disappearing sidewalks that trouble the pedestrian, the stress and frustration of having to cross a road full of racing traffic, the inevitability of turning one way to find your route closed or redirected to allow for acts of repair, new constructions, public markets or political demonstrations.

The practice of walking and the particular ways of seeing and knowing that it facilitates have long occupied the attention of writers and philosophers, especially in the European context.[36] The drift of the *flâneur*, the strolling man of leisure associated with nineteenth-century

French urban life, later inspired the more radical experiments of Parisian 'psychogeographers' in the 1960s, who sought to map the city according to emotions, impulses and accident, undermining the disciplined flows of work and capital through an embrace of *derivé*.[37] Manan Ahmed Asif has reflected on the very different histories of walking attending a colonial context, where the strolling European represented power and authority rather than frivolity or subversion.[38] In Lahore in the 1860s, the colonial government established the Lawrence Gardens along the Mall Road as a 'picturesque public pleasure ground' for walking. But as Glover notes, the carefully signposted paths meant that the park functioned as 'a prominent setting for the cultivation and display of Anglo-European gentility in the city'.[39] This is not to say that others did not or could not walk, and observers of social life in Lahore's Walled City in the colonial period noted the custom among older men of spending the early hours of the morning outside walking.[40] But such contrasts and connections with European histories of walking underline the importance of asking *who* walks, and whether or not they do so easily, without fear, or if their journeys are marked by obstacles, interruptions and uncertainty. In Lahore today, such distinctions are rife: in the waste-picker who walks due to the necessities of their labour but who is forbidden by caste prejudice from entering certain spaces, for instance; or in the Pashtun student who walks from their residence to campus only to face harassment and questioning at police checkpoints.

Walking in Lahore is a freighted activity, shaped by risk and differentiated according to privilege. The possibility of unencumbered movement within the city is, for instance, heavily gendered. Women step outside the home significantly less frequently than men and remain heavily reliant on male family members for travel needs. They are largely unable to access private modes of transport, including motorcycles and bicycles,[41] leaving them more dependent on public transport, para-transit and walking as a percentage of total trips. Women's excursions are shaped and delimited by impressions around safety in public space, the spectre of sexual harassment and violence, but also ideas about 'appropriate' behaviour. The nature of these concerns varies depending on classed positioning, with working-class women suffering disproportionately due to the absence of dignified transport options. More recently, broad-based initiatives such as the Aurat March (Women's March) have made a wider claim to the city precisely through the act of walking, asserting women's rights in public space through an annual protest procession. Smaller-scale initiatives have also been undertaken by upper-income women's groups, many inspired by Mumbai-based

activists who not only advocate for the right to walk, but the right to 'loiter' or wander aimlessly regardless of gender identity.[42] Yet, gender continues to shape differences in residents' access to, and experiences of, public spaces in the city.

Walking in Lahore is also physically demanding and unsafe. Lahore's streets are not kind to even the able-bodied pedestrian. There remain few provisions for Lahoris in wheelchairs or those with visual impairments to move easily in public space.[43] In recent years, the accelerating environmental crisis in Pakistan has placed new burdens on those who choose or are forced to walk: extreme heat assaults the body during spring and summer months, while severe smog causes all manner of respiratory illnesses and infections in the autumn and winter. Lahore is home to an emerging market for air filtration devices and facemasks, but the vast majority of Lahoris are left to inhabit hazardous levels of pollution with little sense of concern from the government or environmental regulation agencies.

The Orange Line has been defended as a solution to many of these problems: low-cost travel, women-friendly spaces, air-conditioned train cars and an electric alternative to the petrol-fuelled vehicles on traffic-filled roads. And it is certainly a significant addition to an inadequate public transport network. But as only the second of a

Figure 0.6 Interior of an Orange Line station, 2024. Image by Chris Moffat.

proposed eight-line public transit system, and with limited evidence of government commitment to invest further in mass transit in the city, the Orange Line today can appear more as a mitigation than a solution – and one that is already compromised due to the controversies over construction. It is most generously seen as a test case for the future, its long-term success reliant on local buy-in, continued maintenance and its place within an expanding, environmentally sensitive and sustainable public transport provision in Lahore. For now, the viaduct's domineering presence over several of Lahore's main thoroughfares, from GT Road to Multan Road, has not dissuaded the scrimmage of cars and other vehicles travelling beneath. It coexists alongside several other forms of movement and mobility in the metropolis. This plurality is reflected in the chapters that follow: a rickshaw over Garhi Shahu Bridge, a family car racing down Canal Road, a young boy squeezed between his mother and driver in a Hiace van, a solitary walk toward Thokar Niaz Baig before sunrise. Lahore is a city in motion; the chapters that follow capture some of the drama, disquiet and possibility within this dynamic and unfolding scene.

Reading this book

The chapters of this book are organised according to a geographical sequence, following the path carved across Lahore by the Orange Line. But in the same way that traffic on public transport moves in multiple directions, and travel varies between longer and shorter journeys, this volume does not need to be read in order. We encourage readers to dip into parts of Lahore both familiar and strange, to follow companions that interest them, or indeed to take the full trip from Dera Gujran to Ali Town, as the editors have done.

In its movement through the Orange Line's stations, the book traverses many different geographies of Lahore. In the north-east, along GT Road, the viaduct casts its shadow on brick kilns, container markets, industrial spaces and gardens. As the train crosses the city's old colonial centre, it passes churches, cinemas and shrines, dipping underground as it intersects with the Mall Road. Moving to the south-west, the Orange Line resurfaces at Chauburji and forges a connection between the many residential colonies and commercial centres clustered along Multan Road. The terminus in Ali Town is also a beginning, the frontier of the city's onward expansion southward, sprouting with new university campuses, housing schemes and elite gated enclaves.

Tracing the path of the Orange Line, the book foregrounds the metro's work of connection but its chapters also stage the many processes of fragmentation that characterise contemporary urban life. This is evident in the volume's concern for the diverse ways that people move across and within Lahore as well as the hierarchies and distinctions that shape experiences of the city. It is also reflected in our decision to include multiple, often contrasting, voices to compose a portrait of this monumental piece of public infrastructure. The contributions gathered here do not add up to one systematic analysis but are rather fragmented in terms of their starting points, timescales and takeaways. They deploy a range of writing styles – from memoirs to ethnographic field notes, historical accounts to graphic narratives – to capture Lahore from diverse angles and multiple scales.

The volume's interest in flow, friction and fragmentation is an argument in itself: an effort to challenge the one-dimensional ways that southern cities like Lahore are often seen. But a number of recurring themes also appear throughout the chapters, allowing for a reflection on some of the more obdurate or insistent features of urban life in Lahore. Many of our contributors are drawn to *the force of history*: the way different pasts are made present through popular narratives and material remnants, shaping urban pathways and the manner in which

Figure 0.7 Marketing the Orange Line at Makkah Plastic Store, Chowk Yateem Khana, Lahore, 2019. Image by Chris Moffat.

built environments are imagined and navigated. Several attend to *the presence of the sacred* in everyday life, wherein religious communities and individual piety frame how people make meaning and connections in a fast-changing environment, where shrines serve as landmarks and religious posters and slogans cover public walls. A number of chapters dwell on *the power of difference*, whether this be defined or experienced in terms of religion, sect, caste, class, ethnicity or gender, and try to understand how such differences organise or subvert the organisation of space. A cluster of contributions reflect on the *propulsions of commerce*, wherein urban bazaars and marketplaces motivate the particular flows of things, people and money that constitute the city, and where real-estate development and speculation create upheaval from the urban core to its fringes. Finally, almost all chapters acknowledge a relationship between *the political and the personal*, urging us to recognise how large-scale changes affect the way we inhabit the city, structuring, altering or expanding our sense of the possible. These themes stood out to us, as editors, and we expect that each individual reader will draw their own constellations across chapters, collecting insights that speak to their own interests in contemporary urban environments. But in foregrounding these themes, we want to underline the dynamic interplay between urban change and forms of belonging – the various ways people come to identify with, benefit from, or lament a city in motion, and the need to think carefully and critically about how change is imagined and pursued as a result.

Notes

1 Toppa, 'Lahore's metro line opened to fanfare'.
2 Gabol, 'Construction on Lahore's Orange Line metro train to be suspended'.
3 These impressions were collected by Ammara Maqsood and Fizzah Sajjad through their conversations with residents whose homes were demolished to make way for the Orange Line. This research formed part of the British Academy-funded project *Rebuilding Kinship and Care after Dislocation in Urban South Asia: Colombo and Lahore compared*.
4 For an influential account of this history, see Qadeer, *Lahore.* Qadeer has recently updated his 1983 observations in his *Lahore in the 21st Century*.
5 Bokhari, 'Lahore ka Jughrafiya'.
6 Lahore Improvement Trust, *Annual Administration Report 1941–42*, 20.
7 Tsing, *Friction*, 1.
8 For an extraordinary, sole-authored portrait of a new metro system's impact on another city, that of New Delhi, see Sadana, *The Moving City.* Sadana's analysis is propelled by evocative, ethnographic vignettes, meditating on the relationship between infrastructure, development and everyday life in the Indian capital.
9 Tsing, *Friction*, 6.
10 Archaeologists have discovered evidence of settlements on the site of the contemporary Walled City going back thousands of years, but Lahore does not appear consistently in historical records until after the eleventh-century Ghaznavid conquest. Shaped by the arrivals and departures of

successive empires, including the Mamluks and Mongols, Lahore entered a period of relative stability and increased prosperity under the Mughals in the sixteenth century.

11 Mir, 'Lahore as a centre of commerce: 1580–1707'.
12 For a recent appraisal of Lahore's railways, see Rouse, *The State of Lahore under Colonialism*.
13 On the entanglement of urban processes in Lahore with caste, in particular, see Butt, *Life Beyond Waste*.
14 Maqsood, 'The social life of rumours'.
15 This phrase was used by Sharif addressing a ceremony to mark the first test run of an Orange Line train in October 2017. Footage available on *YouTube* via Lahore News HD, 'Orange Train is China's gift for Punjab'.
16 Khan, 'Flaws in the flow'
17 Anwar, *Infrastructure Redux*, 14.
18 For a wider, comparative approach to similar themes, see Anand et al., *The Promise of Infrastructure*. Using examples from Peru to South Africa to Vietnam, the editors argue that infrastructural development not only promises progress, but also *freedom*: the freedom to move, circulate, distribute, consume and travel. See also Larkin, 'The politics and poetics of infrastructure'.
19 Akhter et al., 'The spatial politics of infrastructure-led development in Pakistan'.
20 The Orange Line too has been celebrated by Pakistan and China as a successful CPEC project, even though the project was first conceptualised in 2006, seven years prior to the signing of the CPEC agreement.
21 Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform, Government of Pakistan. 'Introduction: China–Pakistan Economic Corridor'.
22 Glover, *Making Lahore Modern*, 2.
23 Chatterjee et al., 'Feeling modern', 550.
24 Pernau, 'Mapping emotions'.
25 Pernau, 'Mapping emotions', 447.
26 Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*.
27 Tignol, 'Nostalgia and the city'; Zaman, 'Beyond nostalgia'.
28 Maqsood, *The New Pakistani Middle Class*.
29 For nostalgic modernity, see Özyürek, *Nostalgia for the Modern*.
30 Maqsood, *The New Pakistani Middle Class*.
31 Housing and Physical Planning Department, *Master Plan for Greater Lahore*, 21.
32 Japan International Cooperation Agency, *Lahore Urban Transport Master Plan*, vol. 1, Ch.2: 2–113.
33 Motorcycles comprised 69 per cent of these 6.29 million vehicles, and cars/jeeps/station wagons comprised 23 per cent. See Ilyas and Nissar, *Sectoral Emission Inventory of Lahore*.
34 Sajjad and Javed, 'Democracy, legitimacy and mega-project politics'.
35 For an insightful account of life on the BRT, see Ahmad, *Lahore By Metro*, which includes photographs from across the bus network and interviews with passengers.
36 Gros, *A Philosophy of Walking*.
37 On the flâneur see Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*; see also Coverley, *Psychogeography*.
38 Asif, 'A step in New York / A footfall in Lahore'.
39 Glover, *Making Lahore Modern*, 68.
40 Glover, *Making Lahore Modern*, 157. Glover cites Prakash Tandon to demonstrate that this practice continued in the newly established suburbs of late colonial Lahore, such as Model Town.
41 It is worth noting that social norms around women's use of two-wheeled vehicles may be changing. See Sajjad et al. 'Overcoming barriers to women's mobility'.
42 Phadke et al., *Why Loiter?*
43 Adnan, 'Lahore: A city devoid of structure for differently-abled persons'.

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1
Dera Gujran

Chris Moffat

Lahore is contained haphazardly by an orbital highway known as the 'Ring Road', a project conceived in the 1990s but which did not begin to be constructed until 2009. It remains incomplete, though the majority of the loop is functioning and provides some respite from the congestion characterising the city's central arteries. Driving on the eastern section of this tolled route early in the morning, flaws in the design become clear: there are few cars but many pedestrians scrambling across the wide lane-ways. The road's construction cut through existing neighbourhoods, but planners failed to provide convenient alternative routes for those who might need to travel by foot to the opposite side. Along the southern wing, access to the Ring Road is advertised by exclusive housing enclaves like Lake City or Bahria Town. Prospective buyers are reminded that, though these new developments may be on the fringes of the city, they remain connected to Lahore's centres of work and consumption, leisure and entertainment by smooth, signal-free paths of asphalt.

All of the Orange Line's stations fall within the Ring Road's orbit, but the train depot lies just outside its north-east section, a vast complex in the space between the neighbourhoods of Jhuggian Mazang Pind and Kotli Ghazi. Here, within a highly securitised compound of warehouses and office blocks, the line's operation control centre is located, as well as workshops and train parking facilities, a training centre, and other conveniences for employees. At the opposite end of the line, in Ali Town, there is a smaller stable yard – a turning point with some parking space and a washing facility. But the main hub is here, and, like most of the Orange Line, it appears to have landed on the area from above – a slick, grey spacecraft, cut off from the outside world but for some gated

entranceways and, of course, the ascending path of the viaduct, rising over the depot's walls and toward the city.

In early 2019, during a spell in Lahore as Visiting Faculty at Government College University, I went in search of the Orange Line's origin point, tracing the nascent metro's transformation of the city back to this complex. Following the viaduct by foot, east from Dera Gujran station, a barrier soon appeared: a wall made of concrete slabs and topped with a long curl of barbed wire. There was an empty turret inside, but the more effective deterrent was the stray dog, suddenly alert, disturbed by my footsteps from its lounging in the viaduct's shade. This was a quiet place, not yet troubled by the vibrations or noise produced by passing trains. On either side of the track there were modest-sized houses, and while several looked like they had been there for some time, there was much construction going on. Just outside the depot's wall, two men were at work laying bricks for the second-storey walls of a new home. Long sticks of *baans* (bamboo) were tied together to create an external scaffolding, on which one man balanced confidently. The air was cold, and he wore a sweater over his *shalwar kameez*.

This new home, like its neighbours, looked out onto a narrow tract of land covered by the viaduct. Unlike the rest of the route, here there was no road underneath the line's concrete ascendancy. The dusty terrain, on my visit, was being used by a group of young boys for a cricket match, and they clearly relished the space. One of the boys, who wore blue jeans with an American flag patch stitched above the knee, told me that this had all been farmland before. No buildings or structures were destroyed to install the tall pillars that distinguish the line's procession into the city. This was perhaps too neat an explanation, but it is true that there are plenty of open fields in this part of Lahore. On my walk to the complex, I watched men guiding 30 or so buffalo across a main road and through a gas station toward fresh grazing land. New construction now clusters around the viaduct, and along this stretch piles of brick stood in towers at regular intervals, awaiting their fate as part of a wall or other structure, mimicking in their verticality the concrete pillars that carry the metro out of the depot and westward to the Ring Road (Figure 1.1).

Earth and asphalt, brick and concrete. Looking at the depot from above using Google satellite images, there are two notable contrasts. The new, grey rectangle is bordered to the south by a large, reddish-brown triangle and to the north by a small, reddish-pink oval. The triangle is the busy Akram Gujjar Dairy Farm, an ostensibly 'rural' facility here enveloped by urban sprawl and entwined with the consumption economies of the city. The oval is a brick kiln. It is situated on raised land

Figure 1.1 The viaduct emerging from the depot, 2019. Image by Chris Moffat.

that provides views over the expansive depot. To reach the kiln requires navigation through the narrow, densely populated roads of Jhuggian Mazang Pind, asking for advice along the way, since the kiln – in spite of its tall smokestack – is not visible from ground level until reaching the clearing where it sits. It must, however, be easily spotted from the windows of the Orange Line control centre.

The oval shape is characteristic of what is called a 'Bull's Trench' kiln, the traditional and most common structure for brick production across South Asia. I visited the Jhuggian kiln early on another evening, in fading light, and a crew of *nikasiwalas* were busily unstacking bricks, moving them from the kiln to the roadside (see Figure 1.2). I arrived with an acquaintance from a prominent Lahore brick company, someone I had been introduced to by a local architect whose buildings I was researching. Omar, a man in his early twenties, was poised to be the third generation of his family leading the business, centred around two large kilns in nearby Jallo.[1] But Jallo is far enough from the city to still feel like a distinct place, with ample open ground to lay out the rows of hand-moulded clay bricks in preparation for baking. Omar was surprised to see a kiln of this scale operating in such a built-up location. Indeed, his company's sales office is only a five-minute drive away, and he had not known of its existence until I mentioned seeing it on the map.

Lahore's fringes are cluttered with hundreds of oval-shaped brick kilns. They form a small part of Pakistan's considerable kiln industry,

Figure 1.2 The brick kiln in Jhuggian Mazang Pind, with the Orange Line compound in the background, 2019. Image by Chris Moffat.

one that plays an important role in the country's economy due to the importance of fired bricks for all manner of construction work. A recent investigation into the industry's labour conditions by the social scientists Ali Khan, Laila Bushra and Hamid Sultan estimated that there are between eight thousand and ten thousand brick kilns in Pakistan, with almost half of these in Punjab, though the exact number is difficult to determine. Much of the sector operates informally and many kilns are not officially registered.[2] The area between Lahore and the Wagah border – an expanse that begins to the east of the Ring Road and includes places like Jallo – is particularly crowded, its *mitti* (clay) reputed by architects and kiln owners alike to be of excellent quality for moulding bricks.

Bricks are integral to Lahore's built environment. They are deployed everywhere, at every scale – from the walls of imperial Mughal fortresses to the modest, self-build structures that constitute the many *katchi abadis* (informal settlements) across the city. The prominence of brick is in part the result of necessity, since Lahore grew in an area without an abundant alternative building material – there are no great forests, for instance. But it is also due to brick's peculiar qualities: the material is attuned to the climatic conditions of this part of Punjab, holding heat in the cold season and remaining cool in the summer. It is not only outside the depot that piles of brick can be seen awaiting use. It is difficult to travel

anywhere in Lahore without encountering stacks of the red building blocks on roadsides, ubiquitous construction projects *in potentia*.

The kiln is the central institution for this ancient and still flourishing industry. The larger kilns around Lahore are estimated to produce between 20,000 and 30,000 baked bricks *per day*, primarily for domestic consumption but also for export.[3] And yet if brick as a material is valorised in Lahore, the particular processes attending its production have long been subject to critique: the brick industry is, after agricultural work, the primary location for bonded labour in Pakistan. The informality of kiln production and the absence of effective state oversight means that feudal forms of debt slavery continue to be widely practised. Concerns over labour conditions have been joined in recent years by growing consciousness of kiln work's damaging environmental consequences: the role that these voracious, coal-burning fires play in Lahore's ever-worsening smog problem.

The Orange Line has been justified, in part, as a means to reduce reliance on another key contributor to air pollution: automobile traffic. Leaving the depot, the viaduct soon meets the GT Road, a historic and congested route into the city. If one turns east on GT Road, it is only 13 kilometres to Wagah and the border with India. To the west is central Lahore, and beyond this GT Road carries on across Pakistan toward its capital, Islamabad, then to Peshawar and then across the border into Afghanistan.

The pillars supporting the viaduct grow steadily in height to lift the track over the Ring Road, which is itself elevated to allow the perpendicular GT Road to pass underneath. A sign stretches across the Ring Road barrier, declaring this three-tiered intersection the 'Quaid-e-Azam Interchange' (see Figure 1.3). *Quaid-e-Azam*, 'the Great Leader', refers to the founding father of Pakistan, the lawyer and Muslim nationalist Muhammad Ali Jinnah, here honoured by an impressive display of enhanced motor vehicle (and now train) mobility.

The older name for this area is 'Dera Gujran' – and this too is how it is labelled on Orange Line maps. *Dera* derives from Persian and describes a place of habitation, but in Punjab it also evokes the part of a rural village where men meet to socialise or where local authority figures meet petitioners and adjudicate disputes. *Gujran* refers to a historic agricultural community common to North Punjab, the Gujjars. Here, on the crowded outskirts of the megacity, this name transmits an older geography of rural assembly, a remainder from a time only two centuries before when Lahore was concentrated in the walled environs of *anderoon shehr*, the 'inner city', and surrounded by open fields

Figure 1.3 The Quaid-e-Azam Interchange, 2019. Image by Chris Moffat.

and discrete villages. Lahore's rapid nineteenth-century expansion was linked to its designation as a provincial capital within the British empire and the congregation of military, political, economic and educational opportunities here as a result. It is tempting to see Dera Gujran as a place of 'transition' – muddy fields with tents of informal housing and buffalo grazing run up against sites of small industry and traders' warehouses. But increasingly the question of what, exactly, constitutes the 'rural' in Pakistan is up for debate. The percentage of settlements dominated by agricultural production continues to shrink (today this sector represents only one-fifth of the country's GDP), and even remote communities are tied by communication networks, service provision and infrastructural linkages to larger, urban conglomerations. Rather than staging some 'rural to urban' shift, then, Dera Gujran allows us to question the utility of these dichotomised categories, reflecting an 'in between-ness' that appears ever more representative of contemporary life in Pakistan.[4]

Standing on the Ring Road access ramp looking north-west, I can see another brick kiln in the distance, in a neighbourhood called Mominpura, belching black smoke into the air. And yet the spectacle of construction closest to me is not one of brick but of the soaring heights of concrete, facilitating the Orange Line's dramatic entry into the city. The entire viaduct is sustained by regularly spaced concrete pillars, which support a monolithic track bed, a U-shaped concrete girder.

Concrete is also an ancient building material, described by Vitruvius in his first-century BCE *De Architectura*. Like brick, it is cheap and can be made locally. But if brick is deployed in Pakistan to evoke a sense of grounded tradition, the metamorphosis of built forms out of local clay, then concrete brings with it the thrill of the universal and the futuristic. This has much to do with the material's revival in the twentieth century and its role in the great engineering projects of the age, from dams, bridges and flyovers to towering housing blocks and factories. Concrete is the *stuff* of modernity. It is a ubiquitous feature of development schemes while also entangled with projects of individual aspiration.[5] As the anthropologist Michael Taussig reflects, concrete is charged with an element of enchantment: 'You start with stone. You make a powder. And then in the process of building, you add water and end up with a new form of "stone" in accord with the shape desired. It sounds like magic but we call it technology.'[6]

The Lahore Development Authority hired private contractors to pour the extraordinary amounts of concrete required for the Orange Line into moulds all along the metro's path. Pillars and track beds were formed by the exertions of Lahore-based Habib Construction Services, one of the city's largest building firms.[7] The enchantment did not last. In August 2018, Habib's chief executive Shahid Saleem responded to corruption allegations by reporting that the project had turned out to be disastrous for his company.[8] The contract had been agreed on a fixed price, and a series of engineering errors and omissions – alongside court-mandated delays – meant that Habib had to borrow extensive additional funds to complete the agreed work.

Construction is a messy, open-ended exercise, even without this suggestion of possible mistakes in the design and miscommunication between engineers and contractors. It is a convulsing spectacle of labouring bodies, clamorous tools and unruly materials that promises nevertheless a tidy, consolidated conclusion. The path from the Orange Line depot to Dera Gujran station, the first stop on the metro's journey into the city, is a landscape cluttered with the detritus of construction, from scaffolding and brick piles to concrete pillars and steel bars.

Today, the station itself stands tidy and consolidated. Its towering height is impressive – no other station on the route will be as tall, this quality justified by the rise needed to overcome the Ring Road. The wider flux at Dera Gujran promises to remain a feature of this space, this dynamic interchange of historic road, motorway and rail line. Amidst this landscape of asphalt, brick and concrete, the buffalo still roam.

Notes

1 I have used a pseudonym here to protect this person's identity.
2 Khan et al., 'Brick kilns revisited', 190.
3 Ercelawn and Nauman, 'Debt bondage at brick kilns in Pakistan', 23.
4 Ali, 'Underestimating urbanisation'; Zaidi, 'Rethinking urban and rural'.
5 For evidence from the contemporary African context, see Archambault, 'Concrete aspiration and the stuff of transformation in a Mozambican suburb'.
6 Taussig, *My Cocaine Museum*, 162.
7 The laying of track as well as the installation of lighting, water supply, drainage, heating, ventilation and air conditioning was completed by CR-NORINCO, a joint venture of the Chinese Railway Corporation and the China North Industry Corporation.
8 'Contractor describes OMLT as a nightmare project', *The Express Tribune* (27 August 2018).

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2
Islam Bagh

Shandana Waheed

The inauguration of the Orange Line in October 2020 was also the opening of a new geography for the city – the creation of an alternative set of reference points for navigating Lahore's landscape. While ideas of 'heritage' were central to debates over the construction of the new metro – in particular, the threat posed by the overground rail to historic, Mughal-era monuments like Shalamar Gardens and Chauburji – little attention has been paid to the ways in which the Orange Line produces and connects histories in the city. Heritage scholars and practitioners are using alternative methodologies such as counter-mapping to develop non-mainstream, people-driven and bottom-up approaches towards heritage.[1] Such perspectives challenge us to expand our understanding of what counts as 'heritage' and discover dissident geographies moving beyond the architectural and monumental to also account for the cultural, literary, social, intangible and everyday. Marc Augé suggests that travel constructs a fictional relationship between individuals and their surroundings, gaze and landscape, and spectator and spectacle.[2] Thus, public transport like the Orange Line has the capacity for creating new experiences through the act of linking things together which Augé describes as 'correspondences' in his study of the Paris Metro.[3] For me, a traveller can develop their own counter-map of heritage along the metro through these correspondences.

I am an anthropologist who has lived in Lahore for almost a decade now. My interest in and academic research around heritage has drawn me to visit all the major, traditional heritage sites in Lahore. I remember visiting Shalamar Gardens for the first time back in 2012, after I moved to Lahore from Rawalpindi. Driving from my residence in Gulberg to the distant end of Lahore's famous Canal Road, we turned onto GT

Road towards a locality known as Daroghe Wala, which borders the Gardens. Intrigued by the name 'Daroghe Wala', which literally means 'Intendant's Keep', I asked my Lahori friends if we could explore the area. 'There is nothing to see', they said. In a historical city like Lahore, what does it mean to not have anything to see in a particular area or locality? This declaration consequently begs the question of what is worth seeing and why? In her critical analysis of heritage-making processes, Lynn Meskell describes the attribution of heritage value to be selective, political and expert-driven.[4] Counter-mapping can not only create space for alternative narratives that have the potential to offset the power structures through which silences of history are produced, it can also become a way in which people establish their belonging to the city vis-à-vis their personal geographies, the routes by which they make sense of the city. Such an approach can create possibilities for heritage to be imagined outside heavily guarded and expert-defined boundaries.

Almost a decade later, I returned to the same area, riding the new Orange Line to Islam Bagh, one of the stations that serves it. The elevated view of the city provided by the metro was certainly a shift from the gaze that I had become accustomed to travelling by car. The panoramic view of the city encapsulated unevenly built houses, shopping plazas, factories, street vendors, pedestrians, monuments and various types of vehicles running on the roads underneath the metro track, all in motion relative to the world inside the metro. Augé proposes that space stems in effect from this double movement comprised of the traveller's movement and the parallel movement of the landscape that the traveller only catches in glimpses, while the world inside and outside the train remains connected through correspondences.[5] For Augé, correspondences are the means through which the switch from one environment to another environment is facilitated.[6] To me, the relationship between the metro and its environment – two spaces disconnected through design and functionality but connected through correspondences – allows those who encounter these spaces to become part of them and make them what they want them to be. Being a passenger, who was part of the inside world and then stepped out of it to be subsumed in the outside world, allowed me to develop a counter-map of non-monumental heritage across Lahore's various geographies and to design my own experience of the spaces I became a part of.

I stepped out of the train at Islam Bagh station and started walking towards Daroghe Wala, convinced that my friends in 2012 were mistaken and that there was, in fact, much to see. After five minutes, I walked to my left and saw a shopping complex with a signboard that said 'Container

Market' written in Urdu. What appeared first to be a small plaza with multi-product shops soon expanded into a wonderland of unbelievably affordable products that included anything and everything ranging from books, crockery, cosmetics, jewellery and clothes to toys, electric appliances, gym equipment and miscellaneous machinery. This market is said to have been running for more than a decade and a half now. Here in Daroghe Wala is the infamous Chor Bazaar of Lahore, where most of the things are sold by weight with no guarantee and no return or exchange policy. It is a haven for customers who cannot afford to buy such products on fixed company prices from regular markets. Monetary transactions that take place in this space are not based on the qualifications by which the buyers earn their bread and butter, but the skill to bargain, to have an eye for a good product. A willingness to pay for an unwarranted and dubiously branded product is what is needed for the customer to purchase something in this market. Buyers do not ask where these products were made or acquired from, and sellers do not present any warranty cards or design catalogues with any terms and conditions of purchase. Everything is at the discretion of the buyer and seller. Though filled with risk, the market acts as a sort of social leveller – giving a wide variety of customers access to products that might otherwise be unavailable to them, sold for much higher prices at shopping malls and retail stores elsewhere in the city. Some people disagree, claiming that selling items by weight is not cost effective and therefore it is just a trick to lure customers. Like the Orange Line route only moments away, the market is a space of flows and movement in the city – a vibrant, bustling demonstration of everyday urban life in this part of Lahore.

From the container market, I returned to GT Road and walked westwards until I came across a huge, rustic colonial-era structure surrounded by relatively small boundary walls. Reaching the gate, I found a sign reading, 'Indo Pakistan Corporation: Dry Ice & Carbonic Gas Factory'. Compared to the busy marketplace, this building was eerily quiet. Peeking through the grimy windows, I could see high ceilings covered with spider webs. The building's decay appeared in sharp contrast to the recently erected concrete track of the Orange Line that towered beside it. But it is also clear that this building was, at one point in its life, an expression of modernity – of new building techniques and technological innovation. Its survival into the present represents a form of non-monumental architectural heritage, testifying to the palimpsest of different temporalities in a historic city like Lahore. Its spatial aura is very different from, say, the recognised and protected heritage sites such as Shalamar Gardens. And yet this structure too transmits fragments of

the past into the present – an under-acknowledged history of labour, work and commodity production in this part of Lahore. Its straddling of colonial and postcolonial time is captured in the curious 'Indo Pakistan' descriptor on the factory sign (see Figure 2.1).

Right across from the Indo Pakistan Corporation factory, on GT Road, is the house of the Pakistani literary giant Muhammad Salim-ur-Rehman (b.1934). Though a modest dwelling, it too carries within it an important history. The author of the marvellous short story 'Siberia', amongst other works, Salim-ur-Rehman is one of the finest writers of Urdu that Pakistan has produced. I grew up reading his short stories, essays, poems and novels, a corpus which is known for its depth and diversity. It is said that Abdullah Hussain, the author of the Adamjee Prize-winning novel *Udas Naslain* (translated into English as 'The Weary Generations'), stayed with Salim-ur-Rehman at his residence in Daroghe Wala. Hussain's novel, first published in 1963, is regarded as a masterpiece of Urdu literature, reflecting on India's struggle for freedom from colonial rule and the subsequent partition. Almost a century old, the residence of Salim-ur-Rehman is surrounded by lush green trees. Against the busy GT Road and surrounding environs, its significance as a fortress for Pakistan's contemporary literary culture could easily be

Figure 2.1 The Indo Pakistan Corporation Dryice & Carbonic Gas Factory, 2022. Image by Shandana Waheed.

missed – another treasure of the city's history hidden by the rhythms and movements of the everyday.

On my walk from Islam Bagh station to Daroghe Wala, and then to Shalamar Gardens station, I noticed several stalls amidst the usual fruit and vegetable sellers where nothing was being sold. Inspecting them closer, I realised they were information booths operated by the non-political religious organization Dawat-e-Islami. Maulana Ilyas Attar Qadri, who is the founder of the organisation, defines their mission in personal terms: 'I must strive to reform myself and people of the entire world.'[7]

In addition to their centres in different cities of Pakistan, they have a significant digital presence through the Madani Channel which is a platform for preaching Islam. One form of their physical presence in Lahore is these stalls at regular intervals, looking almost like checkpoints, staffed by male representatives in uniform dress drenched in *attar* (Arabic for perfume). Wearing white kurta salwar with a turban in a particular shade of Islamic green covering their heads, they all had charcoal heavy eyes and henna dyed long beards. Radiating their collective identity as '*Attaris*' (the term literally means fragrance sellers) prescribed by their religious leader Muhammad Ilyas Attar Qadri, known as Attar, they manned their posts close to the stairs of each metro station with a small podium with or without a wireless speaker. They described themselves as *Islami Bhais* (Islamic brothers) on a '*Madani* Mission' (signifying an affiliation with the holy city of Madina), working to bring particular Islamic religious and social reforms into Pakistani society. They reached out to people entering and exiting the metro station with their pamphlets and starter kits of Islamic reformation. There was a curious similarity here between the metro stations and the stalls. People visited the stalls just like passengers visited metro stations – in search of a journey. The core difference lies in the nature of the journeys offered: one is a spiritual voyage while the other is a physical movement from one geographical point to another. But both journeys are constituted by a distinct, futuristic promise of arrival. I wondered if the *Islami Bhais* were drawn to this space by this resonance.

A metro map is much more than a travel itinerary. In Marc Augé's words, it is a 'photo album', 'a reminder', 'a memory machine, or a pocket mirror on which some-times are reflected-and lost in a flash-the skylarks of the past'.[8] A meshwork of life histories, a documentary of changing landscapes, it is a repository of clearly remarkable points, but by which ordinary practitioners of everyday life pass without paying much attention, even if they usually stop at these places.[9] Similarly, as an anthropologist interested in heritage, the Orange Line map for me

is capable of providing a counter-map of heritage that could be non-monumental, literary, commercial, ordinary and intangible in nature.

What does it mean to pay closer attention to these worlds, to alight on the 'correspondences' forged by urban travel? For me, drawing on my own interests and autobiography, I am left thinking about the meaning of 'heritage' in this city I call home. Defining heritage through monuments – aesthetically and historically distinct, and so worthy of protection – has become the hallmark of heritage politics in the twenty-first century global context. The commodification of such monuments – through tourism or economies of prestige – fits neatly with neoliberal cultural frameworks. In Lahore, accordingly, official heritage practices have focused on architectural monuments from Mughal, Sikh and colonial eras. Even protests against state-led projects of development like the Orange Line focus overwhelmingly on the protection of monumental artefacts like tombs, gardens and gateways, perhaps at the expense of recognising the other possible consequences for such infrastructure. It is worth asking what is at stake – to use the work of Lynn Meskell – 'when the emphasis is placed upon monuments rather than multi-layered places'.[10] My walk from Islam Bagh station raised several questions in this vein. How can we shift the focus of heritage from monumentality to non-monumental forms of heritage? How can counter-mapping be used as a methodology to reimagine the heritage landscapes of a city? Can a busy marketplace, characterised by transience and even illegality, be conceived as a central part of Lahore's 'intangible' heritage? What is to be done with architectural objects which may be of little aesthetic value, but which can still testify to important histories of working people in Lahore? How should heritage practitioners think about the spaces and places touched by writers and artists, and how should these creative histories be protected?

There is so much in Lahore to challenge our understanding of what 'heritage' could or should mean. Now that the Orange Line is up and running, it is worth changing our perspective on the line as a threat to Lahore's heritage and instead to see it as a device that opens up the urban landscape for new and unexpected encounters with heritage – tangible or intangible, monumental or mundane. Riding the metro for work or pleasure, we can keep ourselves open for those 'correspondences', coincidences and confluences that bring past, present and future together in the city.

Notes

1 Harrison, *Heritage*; Schofield, *Who Needs Experts?*.
2 Augé, *Non-Places*, 86.
3 Augé, *In the Metro*, 53–66.
4 Meskell, *A Future in Ruins*.
5 Augé, *Non-Places*, 85–6.
6 Augé, *In the Metro*, 56.
7 Dawat-e-Islami, 'Dawateislami – Islamic website of an Islamic organization'.
8 Augé, *In the Metro*, 4.
9 Augé, *In the Metro*, 8.
10 Meskell, *A Future in Ruins*, xxi.

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3
Salamatpura

Anushay Malik

During my last visit to Lahore at the end of 2021, in the middle of the pandemic, I asked my father to come along with me on a trip to Salamatpura. He seemed a natural companion, since he had been responsible for introducing me to the older, historic parts of the city when I was a child. He knew all the places where you could get different types of oil made from scratch and the best areas for *kebabs* and *daal*. However, he fell ill with COVID and could not accompany me. When I initially mentioned Salamatpura to my father, who knows the city so well, he surprised me by asking where it is located.

'It's on GT road, near Harbanspura', I told him.

I was intrigued by my father's response. If you search for Salamatpura on Google Maps you will find two locations, one near the Orange Line station (the focus of this chapter), and another 40 kilometres north-west of the station. The question is, which one is the authentic Salamatpura? This volume centres on the Orange Line and so that station and its environs are what I focus on here. My father's Lahore, the Google Maps depiction of it, alongside different literature and academic accounts are all sources that offer glimpses of the city. They are partial narratives that we pick from to build our understanding of the city and how it has changed, mostly convinced that everyone sees the same city that we experience. Much like the Orange Line, the more we use the crowd-sourced technology behind platforms like Google Maps to navigate the city, the more it solidifies its authority, perhaps even surpassing the knowledge gained from first-hand experience living in a place.

I was led to Salamatpura by the Orange Line and the task set by the editors of this volume. At the time of writing, in 2023, the Orange Line

still feels like an outsider in my city. I wonder if, in a few years, people will give directions by referring to 'left of Salamatpura station', as if Lahore had always been laid out that way.

My visit to Salamatpura was very much just a visit. It was temporary, and to a neighbourhood that was not mine. Yet this area is still in Lahore, the city where I was born and where I grew up. I feel I know this city. This is more than a statement. It is a claim to authentic belonging. As an academic I know there is no such thing, but I feel the entitlement anyway. In the same way that traditions and collective senses of belonging are invented,[1] 'the public definition of the [city's] *real* resident',[2] the one who truly belongs, is also a moving thing, one that is always contested by power. There is no one story of what the city is. What I want to do in this chapter is think about the ways in which authenticity and insider status are constructed such that we see some parts of the city and not others, know some histories of the city and not others and come to invest in certain histories and not others.

Let us return to Salamatpura. I travelled there alone on the shiny, new train, getting on at Anarkali. As a woman who grew up in Lahore, the stories I heard as a child still influence how I view public space and this day was no different. I had been told often enough what happens to women who are alone in the city, but in the daylight, with other people around, these stories felt more like background noise. This is just one part of why women experience the city differently and in ways that are completely invisible to male residents. When I walked out of Salamatpura station and headed from the service road toward the north of GT Road, the unfamiliarity of the landscape meant that the background noise came to the forefront. There were shuttered shops – perhaps I was there too early in the morning – and several small factories and workshops.

My academic work as a historian writing on Lahore also influenced how I perceived the environs surrounding Salamatpura station. I work on the history of labour in Lahore, paying particular attention to the period from the 1940s to the 1970s. I knew that the area around GT Road, following exactly where the Orange Line is running today, was where most of the city's industry was concentrated until the early 1960s. Most of these industries were small, but there were some big ones too, like what is now the Pakistan Engineering Company, formerly the Batala Engineering Company, located to the north-west of Salamatpura in Badami Bagh. In the 1960s, the government established several housing and industrial schemes in the south of Lahore, providing incentives for businesses to move there. A housing and industrial plan in Kot Lakhpat (now the Quaid-e-Azam industrial estate) south of Model Town is one

example of this. Cabinet documents from the time reported that workers were complaining about woefully inadequate transport links in the areas where they were being asked to move or to commute for work.[3] Workers commuting from the Packages factory in Kot Lakhpat complained that they were being constantly robbed. These stories are an important reminder that the bustling, heavily populated areas toward the south of Lahore are barely 50 years old. Similarly, areas around what is now the Jinnah Bridge in Cavalry Ground were agricultural land until the 1960s. Lahore was both industrialised near GT Road and agricultural just a few kilometres south. Whether one calls Lahore an 'agricultural' city or an 'industrial' city or the cultural capital of Pakistan may just depend on where you get off on the Orange Line.

Could the empty lots I saw around Salamatpura station, some with seemingly unused small buildings, have once housed some of these small industries? Or had nothing ever been there? Perhaps if I had gone further into the inner streets the view would have changed, but as it so happened, my wariness overpowered my curiosity, and I changed direction, walking eastward all the way down the service road until I reached Mehmood Booti station. The road grew busier as I walked, and the crowd progressively increased as I passed more commercial shops and banks. I began to notice the presence of other women. I saw an older woman walking purposefully with an armload of plastic bags in one hand, speaking to someone on her phone. Younger women held children by the hand, or rode on the backs of motorbikes (driven almost exclusively by men), presumably on their way to work. This felt much more familiar. I turned back, crossed to the other side of GT Road and began walking back.

Between the Mehmood Booti and Salamatpura stations, just a few streets south of GT Road, there is a large market that sells electronic goods. As I walked by, I noticed everything from toyshops to stores with treadmills outside. To me, it made sense that bigger markets begin to appear in this direction. Heading south, as the crow flies, would take you to the much more developed and built-up Canal Road commercial areas and housing schemes.

If you were to go west from Salamatpura station, toward Shalamar Bagh and beyond, you would end up in the oldest parts of the city, often seen as expressing Lahore's 'true' or 'authentic' character. It is noteworthy that the writers of the 1961 District Census for Lahore included a map titled 'Guide Map for Lahore City' and only noted spaces from Shalamar Road westward. Even in this map, Salamatpura was empty space. This is, however, Lahore, and even in such 'empty' spaces you will find places to eat. Walking out of Salamatpura station, there were multiple *naan* and

channa shops nearby. The one on the service road informed me that they did not have a 'family room' – a euphemism for mixed gender spaces – and so I continued on.

Women experience the city differently in the present, but there are also assumptions about their historical role within this city's pasts. Over 15 years ago, in March 2007, I travelled from Lahore to Islamabad as part of a group of students who joined the larger Lawyers' Movement. The Lawyers' Movement was a mass protest that challenged General Pervez Musharraf's interference into the independence of the judiciary during a period of martial rule in Pakistan. It was during this time that I first heard the stories that guided my graduate work. Specifically, these stories focused on how a group of workers in Pakistan in 1969 had been powerful enough to bring down a military dictator. Travelling by bus, I met people whose lives would not have otherwise overlapped with mine. Fiery older women and younger female trade unionists amongst many others. Pakistan is home to a rich tradition of protest poetry and music, but where are the stories and songs that commemorate these women's experiences?

Two months later, I joined the same women in Lahore to celebrate May Day.

In that May Day procession, women marched while men guarded the sides of the group, using sticks to physically deter counter-protesters who tried to forcefully enter the women's march. It reminded me of travelling from the Mall Road to Cantt on the New Khan bus service as an undergraduate in the early 2000s. There was a women's section in the front of the bus and every few rides, a man would try to force his way into the women's section. To prevent him from getting on, there was always a person hanging off that front entrance who would block their way.

Being a woman in Lahore means that your movements in public space are heavily constrained and very often policed. In recent years, the annual *Aurat* (women's) marches organised in Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad have received a lot of attention in the Pakistani news, as if women demanding access to public spaces in their cities is so extraordinary or controversial a thing. This part of the city's story lives only in memory. In other words, to see that women's marches have a longer history in the city, you would have to know someone who was there. You would have had to look further than just May Day in Lahore. You would have had to search for *women's* processions on May Day in Lahore.

So what other narratives emerge when we go searching? What are the other stories about the area around Salamatpura station? Writing this chapter, I found very little information in the English press, but some

local news channels had video footage of Salamatpura in 2016 and 2017 featuring protests by local residents. Video clips from Lahore News in 2017 show the residents of a housing colony in Salamatpura protesting about the poor sewage, water and gas connections in their neighbourhood. Women were in the background of the video watching, but none of them were interviewed by the reporter directly.

Today, the industrial area near GT Road, in this northern part of Lahore, is home to a smattering of small steel mills and hardware stores surrounded by residential areas. In the 1950s, this part of the city was dominated by small factories which extended in an almost continuous belt westward to include Badami Bagh and Mughalpura. The workers in Salamatpura's scattered, smaller industries were connected to one another because of the size and central importance of the Mughalpura railway workshops, where the older, pre-partition workers' movement had an established reputation for militancy. Indeed, the Pakistan Mint, two stations west from Salamatpura takes its name from the nearby factory where workers were powerful and organised enough that they would coordinate protests with the workers of the old Bata factory at least until the 1960s. Newspapers from the 1950s reveal that coordinated protests of workers all along this industrial belt were a frequent occurrence and often proceeded to central Lahore, occupying main thoroughfares like Mall Road. This history of workers' organisation and power has no equivalent in the present. It is not preserved in the area's infrastructure, nor do I expect any government would be willing to fund a plaque to commemorate it.

Memory can be a capricious thing, and one should be wary of claims that present it as evidence of an 'authentic' history. Lahore is not alone in possessing a past of workers' power when, for a short while from the 1960s to the 1970s, workers were able to affect national politics and contribute to removing a military dictator from power. This memory of the late 1960s in Lahore is important to, and narrated by, several residents of the city, but entirely missing from others. Those who are insiders to this narrative of workers' power in the north of Lahore, who have worked with unions and discussed their history in the city, carry this memory with them and see it as a crucial part of Lahore's heritage. For instance, in an interview I did in 2017 in Youhanabad, a mainly Christian settlement in Lahore, one of the older men I spoke to had worked in the railway workshops in Mughalpura between the 1960s and the 1970s. I asked, just out of interest, if he remembered one of the famous worker leaders who had been based there. The second he heard his name he became animated and called over a neighbour, whose

father had also worked in the railways, to tell us more. There, mapping a story of Christians in Lahore, I heard memories of workers in the 1960s and the power they held in the north of Lahore. Youhanabad is in the south of Lahore and is almost always introduced as a 'majority Christian settlement', but this description, clearly, does not capture the multiple and overlapping stories which are meaningful to its residents.

In the final analysis all I can say with certainty is that any experience of belonging in Lahore is shaped, necessarily, by a plurality of narratives, histories and memories. This throws into question any claim to 'authenticity'. I can connect the story of workers in Salamatpura to a larger story of workers' power in the north of Lahore, but that story does not touch the insides of their homes, nor does it necessarily include the women in their lives and the work that they do. As a writer and historian, as someone who constructs stories of the city, this is a challenge as much as an opportunity. It requires, above all, that we think critically about 'the differential exercise of power that makes some narratives possible and silences others'.[4] Rather than simply chronicling what we see and what we hear, it is important to always ask, too, what and who is missing?

Notes

1 Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing traditions'; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.
2 Brown-Saracino. *A Neighborhood that Never Changes*, 151.
3 Malik, 'Public authority and local resistance', 2018, 825–7.
4 Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 25.

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4

Mehmood Booti

Ammar Ali Jan

Mehmood Booti station is located in a vibrant commercial neighbourhood with busy shops and a range of restaurants. The area is home to one of the densest working-class neighbourhoods in Lahore, with many residents engaged in factory work or petty commodity production. Members of the local community now take advantage of the cheap PKR40 metro fare to find employment in industrial hubs near Thokar Niaz Baig, a journey that would have been financially unfeasible without the Orange Line Train (OLT) facilitating it.

Like many other transport infrastructures, the OLT facilitates capital's insatiable demand for more labour by allowing workers from urban peripheries greater mobility. Once a new line enters into operation, the contradictions, controversies and violence that shaped its construction are often forgotten. Mehmood Booti is the site of just such an obscured memory: a testament to the struggles of working people and their role in building large infrastructure projects, as well as evidence of their disposability in the eyes of construction companies and the state. I first visited Mehmood Booti in January 2017 as part of a team of activists, including the journalists Sarah Eleazar and Zahid Ali and the trade union organiser Khalid Mehmood. We travelled to this part of Lahore to investigate a shocking tragedy related to the then under-construction OLT: a fire that had engulfed a workers' hostel and killed seven labourers, injuring dozens more. The obstruction and apathy we encountered from those responsible for the lives and welfare of labourers provides an important glimpse into the conditions of the contemporary working class in Lahore.

The Lahore Development Authority hired Habib Construction Services, one of Pakistan's largest and most influential construction

companies, to oversee the development of the OLT. Habib Construction Services was responsible for ensuring labour standards and following regulations, including the construction of separate rooms for each worker affiliated with the project. But the fire that broke out in January 2017 led to whispers regarding the inadequate health and safety measures taken by the company, deficiencies that risked the lives of many individuals. These discussions were particularly pertinent as a series of factory fires had led to the loss of many innocent lives across Pakistan in recent years. The deadliest incident took place in Baldia Town, Karachi, in 2012, where a factory fire killed 289 people and seriously injured over 600.

After initial shock waves, the news was quickly suppressed in the mainstream media. The OLT project, financed by Chinese soft loans, was entangled with the broader China–Pakistan Economic Corridor, thus intertwining it with discourses of national security. Consequently, after some initial hue and cry, the 24-hour news cycle moved on quickly from the death of a few unknown workers.

I vividly remember when we reached the work site in Mehmood Booti. Dozens of workers rushed towards us to tell horror stories of the exploitation they were facing. Even though we did not have any official authority, workers were relieved with the idea that someone – anyone – had bothered to come to listen to their plight. They complained that they had no fixed working hours, were not given any contracts, payment was often below the legal minimum wage (in 2017 minimum wage was PKR18,000, approximately US$180 at the time of writing in 2022), they were physically abused and were even discouraged from speaking to each other – conditions that would make nineteenth-century British factories look like a picnic in the park.

As we inquired about the incident, a worker broke down while others consoled him. 'Buhat zulm hua hai, sir. Zinda jal gaye bechare' ['It was very unfair, sir. They got burned alive']. All of them paused in silence, recalling the intensity of the tragedy, their own helplessness in the situation, and perhaps taken aback by the fact that they were now being asked by strangers to speak about this incident. One young worker broke the harrowing silence by giving the context and details of the event.

He explained that workers were not given any specific rooms but were asked to rest in a large hall. 'Jail se bhi zyada bura hai' ['It is worse than jail']. We learnt that workers had partitioned the space by hanging clothes on strings, providing for some basic privacy. When the fire broke out, it spread quickly through the clothes hanging across the hall, eventually engulfing the entire building. To make matters worse, the alarm system did not work, nor were there any ambulances at the facility.

‘Aisa lagta hai ke humari jaanon ki koi qadr nahi’ [‘It feels like our lives have no value’].

This brief but harrowing exchange was interrupted by the appearance of heavily armed security guards. They stopped the dialogue and aggressively ordered the crowd of workers to return to work. The young worker narrating the story engaged in a brief scuffle with the security team before being taken to the side by other workers. After this brief tension, we were taken to an office where one of the managers, a man in his forties, questioned us about our motives for visiting the site without permission.

We were honest about our affiliations. Two of our comrades, Sarah and Zahid, introduced themselves as journalists, Khalid Mehmood introduced himself as a trade unionist while I told him about my work as an academic. At the time, we had recently formed the People’s Solidarity Forum, which later evolved into the Haqooq-e-Khalq Party. Zahid, the youngest in our group, accused the management of being responsible for the deaths of the workers. His abrupt words and harsh tone led to an angry retort from the manager, who suggested we were foreign agents trying to destabilise Pakistan’s infrastructural development. It is pertinent to remember that the allegation of being a foreign agent is one that is liberally used across the political spectrum in Pakistan, with often serious consequences for those accused of being part of an alleged conspiracy.

Sarah, Khalid and I had to intervene to calm the situation, knowing that managers such as this had the complete backing of an authoritarian state. We blamed Zahid’s accusation on the hot-headedness that comes with youth, and told them that we were interested in hearing the management’s point of view about the incident. Looking somewhat more relaxed, the manager claimed that all security precautions had been taken and that such incidents could still happen. ‘Ye Allah ki Marzi hai’ [‘This is Allah’s will’].

When pressed on why there were no individual rooms allotted to the workers, even when the project had allocated funds for it, the manager shrugged off the criticism. ‘Ye log sirf complain karte hain, kaam nahi karte. Ye jin ilaqon se aayein hain us hisab se ye buhat araam mein hain’ [‘These people [the workers] only complain but don’t do the work. They are living in luxury compared to the places they actually come from’]. These words betrayed the manager’s feelings of total indifference, if not utter contempt, for the workers he was responsible for. Despite the unfair and illegal labour practices, the management thought it was overcompensating the workers, considering the ‘places

they come from'. His depiction of workers being 'lazy' went against the public pronouncements by the then-Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who claimed that the work on the OLT was being completed at record speed. One would have to assume that this speedy work was being done without workers. Pakistan is, after all, a land of miracles!

We left the place feeling indignant and outraged, hoping to raise the issue in the public domain. Many of our efforts, however, remained unsuccessful. The media was unwilling to publish any further stories on the topic, claiming that the issue was now deemed a threat to 'national security'. The trade union movement was already weak, with less than 1 per cent of the wider Pakistani workforce unionised, and that too mostly in the public sector. Large federations were already fighting a losing battle against the privatisation of public-sector companies and felt that they did not have the capacity to fight on another front. The otherwise vocal opposition parties were also unwilling to take up the issue so as to not disrupt the 'investment climate' in Pakistan, signalling a hard consensus on the disposability of the perished workers.

What added to the difficulty was that most workers were migrant labourers who belonged to South Punjab, an underdeveloped region within Pakistan. This made it more difficult to organise them since, lacking local support networks, they could not sustain themselves in the city in case of a serious conflict with the management. 'The place they come from', as the manager asserted condescendingly, was providing labour for an infrastructure project that cost more to build than the entire budget allocated for South Punjab. Thus, geography, underdevelopment, and censorship combined as tools for disciplining workers into silence, with the overwhelming sense of fear drowning out the screams of mutilated bodies.

As our group of activists continued its micro-struggles for workers' and students' rights, the allegation of being 'foreign agents' – first voiced against us by the manager in a burst of anger – was levelled against our group by the state itself. Sedition charges were raised against me and a few others for organising the Students' Solidarity March in Lahore in 2019. Today, we realise just how explicitly the Mehmood Booti manager embodied the psychic structure of power in Pakistan, one that is in sync with the practices of state officials, both in its cruelty and mediocrity.

It goes without saying that this tragedy at the OLT construction site in Mehmood Booti led neither to justice nor ignited a public debate. When I returned recently to the streets around Mehmood Booti station with Saad Tiwana, a former student activist, I found there were no marks of the violence that this site had witnessed only five years earlier.

Most people we spoke with had not even heard that any such incident took place, representing the disconnect between the world of production and consumption. The labour that went into the construction of the OLT is now part of the latent archaeology of this infrastructure, with workers' struggles vanishing into these monuments of the present.

Fortunately, today, a new group of activists and researchers are working in the area to build political connections with the local community. Professor Nousheen Zaidi, a cancer biologist from the University of Punjab, has recently published a report that suggests that the lead content in water at Mehmood Booti is almost a hundred times higher than the permissible level, indicating that there is more than one way for the working poor to die in the area. This scandal has been cited widely in the media, while a number of environmental lawyers are preparing a petition on the issue in the High Court. A series of free health camps have been initiated by a young Hazara medic, Dr Alia Haider, who is also campaigning on issues of public health in the area. On another front, a young political activist, Muzammil Kakar, is building alliances between brick-kiln workers from the area and left-wing students at university campuses.

OLT workers could not fight conditions of exploitation because they did not receive adequate support from different sections of society. They were forced to repress their anger. Five years later, a professor from Karachi, a doctor from the Hazara community and a student from Balochistan are engaged in building new networks of solidarity with working-class communities around Mehmood Booti. These examples provide glimpses of utopian possibilities in the midst of wider despondency and misery. If such alliances can be further strengthened, then the poor will find an anchor to voice their opposition to violations by those who are currently too powerful to be held accountable.

If the manager supervising workers for Habib Construction Services represented the state, then the angry worker who spontaneously narrated the horrifying details of the fire tragedy represented the eternal potential for defiance. His voice was suppressed by the guards at the site. And yet time has a way of reactivating scattered anger in often unrelated and unexpected encounters. Perhaps the unheard cries for dignity and solidarity from the workers of Mehmood Booti will be reciprocated with renewed forms of struggle against an unjust order. For voices may be temporarily obscured in history, but nothing is ever truly lost.

5

Pakistan Mint

Faizan Ahmad

After living in Lahore for 10 years, the city remains full of surprises. In late 2013, I moved here from my village, Basirpur in Okara. Working as a visual artist in Lahore, I have toured the city extensively, and have documented infrastructure like the Metrobus. My interest in the Orange Line brought me, in early 2023, to the Pakistan Mint area along the GT Road. Established by the British colonial government in 1942, the Pakistan Mint complex also includes residential quarters, a football ground, a children's park, general stores and a *dhobi ghat* (commercial laundry). Apart from minting coins, the establishment manufactures post office stamps, gold bars for banks, medals and seals for military and government officials.

Getting into the Mint colony felt as difficult as finding a way into the safe vault of a bank or getting the sympathies of a politician. It was ridiculous because I made three attempts to get in, equipped with all sorts of excuses, but the security at the gate proved impregnable. Once it became a bit unpleasant and the security guard removed me from the premises. Finally, I was able to enter after befriending a resident of the Mint colony, who agreed to bring me inside although it was illicit. Sitting behind him on his bike, the security waved us through as if I had also lived there all my life. Such strict security around government institutions is a relic of the colonial period, when local people were not allowed to enter the premises of government offices. This measure is still upheld across the width and breadth of the country like a sacred dictum. Whether one wants to visit the historic Anarkali Tomb in the Punjab Civil Secretariat or the State Bank of Pakistan in Lahore, one will inevitably bump one's head into excessive 'security' measures.

Figure 5.1 Two women enter the historic residential quarter while the protected Mint wall stands on the right, 2023. © Faizan Ahmad.

From the outside, the Pakistan Mint colony looked rather unremarkable (see Figure 5.1). Gated communities have become quite the norm in this sprawling city with no end in sight. But once I passed through the green-roofed gate, it appeared as if the bike had taken me into the past. The place reminded me of my hometown Basirpur – more specifically, Basirpur railway station, which I used to frequent as a kid to watch the trains. The train station in my hometown was also built by the British government and in an architectural style that is the hallmark of colonial era infrastructure. However, unlike the station in my village, the Pakistan Mint still functions to this day and has preserved its original appearance. It seemed as if, across the decades after partition, almost no changes had been made to modernise the colony or the Mint facility itself. Tall green trees stood on either side of the road and grass beds spread under them everywhere, except on the road itself. The Mint's manufacturing buildings are confined inside concrete walls topped with barbed wire. There were a few pickets for guards tasked with making sure that nothing unusual happens.

In the Mint colony, the houses meant for senior officials, categorised by employee ranks, have retained their colonial design and triangular rooftops. The houses for the lower employees in the adjacent area were single-storey. In comparison to the modern infrastructure of Lahore, these little houses appeared small and timid. Across the colony, most

of the buildings had doors made of either wood or iron and sometimes protected by iron bars. In the colonial era, the government offices and residential buildings were protected through the excessive use of iron to make sure that no one could break them, which is why they appear awkward like outdated clothes that no one wears in the present day. An old, red postbox was nailed into a wall and though it was tainted with dust, it had not suffered the mess of *paan* spit and bird droppings which is the fate of the footpaths and everything else exposed to birds.

Near the mosque, there were several buildings painted in yellow that had all sorts of wires passing above them between electric poles in utter chaos. Again, it is the fate of most residential areas in Lahore. New buildings are raised and electric wires are suspended in the air without much concern for safety. In the Mint Bazaar, there were general store shops that sold bubble gum, rice, sugar and everything in between. In front of one shop, silver cauldrons were lying uncared for and I could not figure out if a feast was about to be prepared or if it had already passed. Another shop had all the available fruits and vegetables of the season placed in large baskets at the front. Some of the shops had old doors, while others had shutters that can be pulled up and down to facilitate a full view of the products inside.

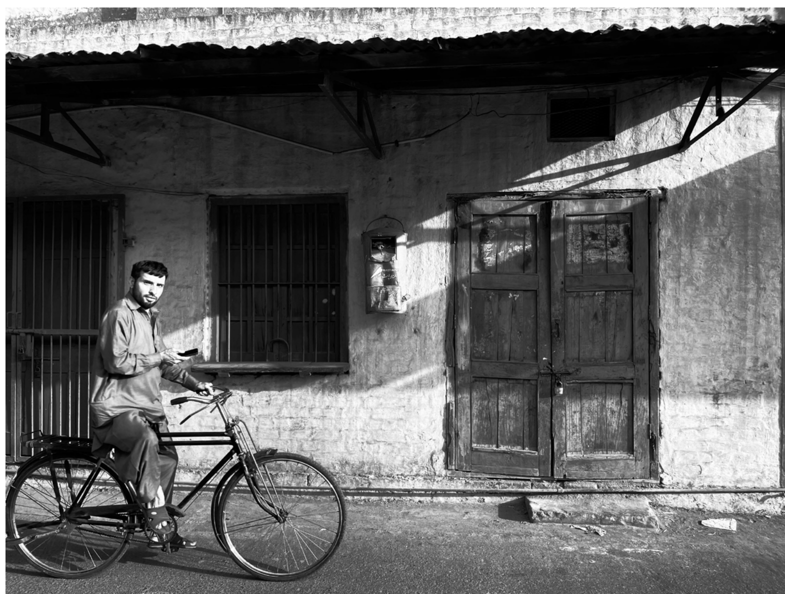

Figure 5.2 An old postbox, a locked door and a curious cyclist in Pakistan Mint, 2023. © Faizan Ahmad.

Figure 5.3 The Mint football ground, a favourite among residents, is seldom empty, 2023. © Faizan Ahmad.

The football ground lacked the glamour of earlier times, an ex-employee of the Mint told me. According to him, young people used to play there passionately and the ground was carefully tended. But somewhere along the way, the ground was left to itself. Though young boys still played there now and then, no one was taking care of the ground itself. In this shabby appearance, it retained a certain timelessness like those old people who stop ageing at one point as if time does not pass for them anymore. There was a broken staircase, assaulted by rain and the passage of time, that led to a double-roomed clubhouse besides the football ground. The rooms had aqua-coloured iron doors and ventilators punctured the ceiling. A few giant trees stood behind the clubhouse. On the ground, a few young boys were kicking a football between themselves in a rectangle.

On all sides of the ground and around the children's park, tall evergreen trees have been providing shade for several decades. In the children's park, there were a few slides and iron structures for children to climb. A few kids had come with their mothers and kept themselves entertained with the slides. Inside the Mint colony, there is a school for girls, which has a yellow-painted building. Adjacent to the school, the tree leaves covered the sidewalk and the grassy beds. Some of the empty plots inside the colony were occupied with nothing but trees, grass and

Figure 5.4 A British-era sports clubhouse facing the Mint football ground, 2023. According to a player, the ground defies the rain, unlike other places in Lahore. © Faizan Ahmad.

Figure 5.5 The old *dhobi ghat* in Pakistan Mint, 2023. © Faizan Ahmad.

small dumps of trash. If it was not for the residents, the creepers and climbers would take over the apartments and the buildings without much difficulty. In Lahore, historically, buildings were raised with trees hugging them on all sides to keep them cool in the hot summers. But across most of the city, trees have been cut down as urban expansion demanded space for new structures. In the Mint colony, the trees and spare plots remain.

Although the Mint facility was only a few hundred yards away, it was not possible for me to go inside. Instead, I wandered around the residential area and ended up in an old *dhobi ghat* where the colony's residents still had their clothes washed and ironed. M. Jameel told me that he worked in the *dhobi ghat*, continuing in the footsteps of his father, who used to hand wash and dry all the clothes in the sunlight. Although the facility has been somewhat modernised with dry-cleaning machines, it still functions with the spirit of large *dhobi ghats* that were once common throughout the subcontinent. Inside the *dhobi ghat* rooms, there were clothes scattered everywhere as if a crowd had undressed and then suddenly disappeared. Near the concrete water container, there were scattered silver containers for clothes and a trash dump rested peacefully under a green tree. In the water itself, the *dhobi*, his friend, the nearby trees and the blue sky of summer were reflected. Though the *dhobi ghat* walls were shedding their white paint and were covered in pockmarks and blisters, demonstrating the passage of time on their surface, the rooms and the cleaning area appeared sturdier than any new building that had been raised anywhere in Lahore in the past month. Near the washing area, a rope for drying clothes in the sun was suspended between trees and had a few clothes spread across it.

Near the *dhobi ghat* I met a shopkeeper, probably in his seventies. He was not comfortable sharing his name but fondly recalled his youth and what he described as the golden old days of the Mint. According to him, everything was held to a higher standard. Government officials would make regular visits to the colony to ensure things were running smoothly for the residents. He seemed disappointed with its present condition, lamenting the changes that had taken place in the city over recent decades. Stepping into his shop, there was an old pot-belly TV and an electric fan that wore a towel across its face. A huge silver trunk occupied a big share of the room, filled with god knows what kind of treasures. Despite his age, the man's room resembled that of young boys who come from other parts of Pakistan to study in Lahore and who keep their belongings scattered across their rooms.

Figure 5.6 Working in the *dhobi ghat*, 2023. © Faizan Ahmad.

Figure 5.7 Mint resident Tanweer, talking with his old friend during a regular Sunday visit, 2023. Tanweer cherishes his childhood and family heritage. © Faizan Ahmad.

Figure 5.8 Inside a shop near the *dhobi ghat*, 2023. © Faizan Ahmad.

The shopkeeper continued to share his memories from his younger days, stories of how he played *kabaddi* in the premises of the Mint, and how the Mint football team used to be quite famous. Possessed by nostalgia, he could not resist comparing the glories of the past with the disappointments of the present and joked how football, which he played in his youth, is a masculine sport and then mocked cricket as an inferior game, even though people love it these days and follow it in droves. Listening to him, I thought how young people like me continuously look towards the future, seduced by its shine and promise, and meanwhile there are people like the shopkeeper who live among us looking back into the past, scoffing at the trends of the day, yearning for something that has been lost. Leaving his shop, the sense of being caught between times was enhanced by the muffled sound of a 1990s Punjabi song echoing somewhere close by in another shop.

Much like the shopkeeper's drift back to his youth, my walk around the Mint colony transported me to the days of my childhood. The sights, smells and sounds of this place stirred memories of playing near the train station in my hometown. It felt as if the spirit of that cherished place had found its home here amidst the charm of the Mint area. Another resident of the colony showed me his house and pointed to the places where his mother and father had died, decades ago, remembering it

Figure 5.9 Rasheed, along with his children, is part of a sixteen-member joint family living in this 10 × 30 feet residence in Pakistan Mint, 2023. He continues his life where his grandfather used to live. © Faizan Ahmad.

all vividly. Listening to the residents and looking at the houses and trees that have withstood the bitter test of time, I thought of the many other small enclaves within Lahore like Pakistan Mint, from the Walled City to Anarkali's Tomb, where it seems that time has become stagnant. Though people have lived in these spaces, worked and grown old, the buildings themselves retain a certain timelessness, as if on any ordinary Sunday, one might see a British soldier, a pre-partition resident or a noble from the Mughal Court come out from any of these buildings. Travelling back to my residence in another part of Lahore, I kept thinking about how time moves fast for us humans and yet, for those sturdy, surviving buildings of the Mughal and British Empires, decades are as good as a few seconds.

6

Shalamar Bagh

Sajjad Kausar

I first came to Shalamar Bagh in early 1986 with the intention of conducting a conservation study of the famous Mughal garden complex. The study formed part of my Master's programme in the Architectural Conservation of Historical Monuments and Sites at the University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. Since that early visit, I have continued to be associated with the Garden in various capacities: as an academic, formally studying and publishing on the site, including for my 1990 co-authored book *Shalamar Garden, Lahore: Landscape, form and meaning*, which provides a detailed historical, political and architectural account of the Garden and its place in the Indian subcontinent;[1] as a teacher and guide, taking my undergraduate architecture students as well as other visitors, architects and family members regularly to the site; as a conservator, periodically participating in official efforts to restore and conserve the Garden;[2] and finally as a civil society member and film-maker, advocating for sustainable conservation principles.[3] My association with Shalamar Bagh now spans over 30 years.

To write this piece, I decided to visit Shalamar Bagh and reflect on how it has changed since my first visit 37 years ago. As I walked across the Garden, I felt a deep sense of sadness thinking of how the experience of the space has transformed over this period. This change in experience is the result of changes both within and outside the Garden's confines.

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Shalamar Bagh was constructed east of the Walled City of Lahore in 1641 at the request of the fifth Mughal emperor of India, Shahjahan.[4] Similar to other Mughal pleasure gardens, this was not just an effort of brick

and mortar but an attempt to create paradise on earth – an interpretation and reflection of Qur'anic descriptions of paradise.[5] Walking inside the Garden nearly four decades ago, I distinctly remember the calming impact of the landscape, the feeling of leaving the city behind, enjoying the greenery, waterways and sounds of birds all around.

Today, in 2023, I enter Shalamar Bagh from near the same place where I entered in 1986. Back then, the Garden was accessed from the highest level, using the door that was adjacent to the emperor's *aramgah* (resting chamber). Today that door is closed, and I enter through a building called Jharoka-e-Daulat Khana-e-Khas-o Aam, which is on the eastern side of the highest level. Shalamar is built over three different levels (see Figure 6.1). Originally, the highest level was for the emperor's family, the middle level was for the emperor's selected guests and the lowest level was open to the public. The main entrance of the Garden was on the western side of the lowest level.

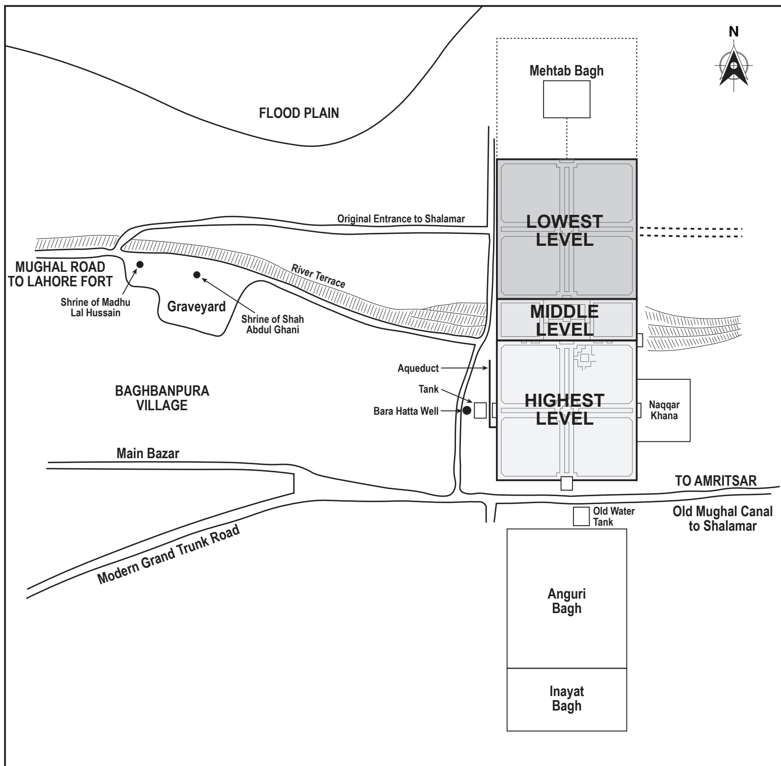

Figure 6.1 Map of Shalamar and its locale. Created by Hala Bashir Malik, based on an earlier version in Sajjad Kausar et al., *Shalamar Garden*, 55.

Figure 6.2 View of the Orange Line and the southern wall of Shalamar Bagh, 2023. Image by Sajjad Kausar.

Entering from the highest level, when I look to my left and right I see the Shalamar *burjis* (corner turrets) marking the boundaries of the space. Right behind them, on the southern side of the Garden, I can see the Orange Line's elevated tracks (see Figure 6.2).

The train appears periodically. The proximity of the rail line to Shalamar's seventeenth-century wall risks impacting its structural integrity and needs to be monitored. In addition, it has also disturbed the visual experience of the Garden both from inside and outside. It is no longer possible to disconnect from city life and immerse oneself in the Garden as one previously could. It has been difficult for policymakers in Lahore to understand that conserving a historical garden is not simply about conserving the built structure, but also about paying attention to the immediate environment outside the garden as well. When the context outside changes, it also starts to affect the atmosphere of the garden inside. For me, this is the biggest change in how the Garden is experienced today as opposed to how it felt in 1986 (see Figures 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6).

The Orange Line runs right behind the emperor's *aramgah*, affecting the entire experience of the Garden. Additionally, houses recently constructed on the eastern side of the Garden towards the lowest level are now merely 8 feet away from the walls of the Garden. This is in clear violation of existing laws that restrict physical construction within 220 feet of historical buildings. It has only been possible with the complicity of public officials and law enforcement agencies. Yet, this is no anomaly. Much of the city has been (and continues to be) built in violation of existing planning laws and standards through the connivance of a range of local actors. In my opinion this means that we need to

Figure 6.3 View of Naqqar Khana, 2003. Image by Sajjad Kausar.

Figure 6.4 View of Naqqar Khana, 2023. Image by Sajjad Kausar.

revisit existing laws and standards, assess their suitability for the local context and develop improved enforcement mechanisms. In the same way, rather than upholding unrealistic, unimplementable standards around historical monuments, it is important to adopt a new approach. We should conduct detailed studies of the sociospatial changes in the vicinity of historical buildings, re-examine existing laws, assess implementation constraints and develop an overarching strategy through which amendments can be made on a case-by-case basis, factoring in local realities and transformations. This, I believe, is essential for the conservation of historical monuments in Pakistan.

Figure 6.5 View of Madina Colony, 1986. Image by Sajjad Kausar.

Figure 6.6 View of Madina Colony, 2023. Image by Sajjad Kausar.

Still standing near the Garden's entrance, my eye turns towards the highest terrace. I can see that the plastering on the internal and external walls, carried out as part of recent conservation efforts, is already crumbling. Restorative work carried out at the Garden over the years has frequently used low-quality variants of *kankar* (small pieces of stone) mixed with lime, which is more readily available in the market than more durable versions. A more appropriate alternative would be lime plaster and lime mortar, but this is not typically used in new construction, resulting in repeated interventions. Contrary to conservation principles that advocate

for minimum intervention, there has also been a tendency to 'over-restore', replacing not just what is damaged, but entire sections of the structure.

All around me I can see a few aspects that have changed significantly. The first is the landscape. There used to be a great many trees growing in the Garden, but they have disappeared with time. Some were eaten by termites, while others were pulled down when new trees were introduced by the Parks and Horticulture Authority in 2006 as part of a new tree-planting scheme. The new plantation has been undertaken without consideration of the symbolism inherent to Mughal horticulture and landscape design. For the Mughals, as noted by Villiers-Stuart in 1913, 'flowering fruit trees represented renewal and a symbol of youth and life … Cypress trees represented eternity', collectively signifying 'life and hope along with death and eternity'.[6] The specific placement and grouping of trees was also symbolic and purposeful.[7] Yet, no attempts have been made to revive such landscaping practices.

As I walk towards the central pond of the highest terrace, I see the Jharoka-e-Daulat Khana Khaas-o-Aam on my right (see Figures 6.7 and 6.8). This building was in a state of disrepair when I first came in 1986 and has since been partially reconstructed on conjecture. To my left is the *Begum ki khwabgah* (residence of the empress). It was reroofed during the Sikh period (early nineteenth century) and changed again towards the latter half of the twentieth century. Behind the *khwabgah*, there used to be water tanks from the Mughal period. After the Mughal period, the British built iron tanks, most likely because of the poor condition of the older tanks at the time. The water tanks from the British period are also not functional now. There was a beautiful tree by the tanks when I first visited which is not there anymore.

Tracing paths taken many times over many years, I make my way towards the building at the northern side of the highest level. This building sits above one of the most beautiful waterfalls (*chaddar*) of the Garden complex. I find myself standing at Shalamar Bagh's main *baradari*, looking out from the highest level to the middle level and beyond towards the end of the lowest terrace. If I compare this to when I came 37 years ago, to my right in the eastern side of the Garden I can see that many houses have been built and are now visible from here. Previously, there was not a single house on the eastern side of the Garden that was visible from inside of the Garden, partially as most houses were built as single-storeys, and partially due to the Garden's high boundary walls. And the same to my left, on the western side of the garden – towards Baghbanpura – there were no houses visible there. Now when

Figure 6.7 Jharoka-e-Khas-o-Aam, 1986. Image by Sajjad Kausar.

Figure 6.8 Jharoka-e-Khas-o-Aam, 2023. Image by Sajjad Kausar.

I look straight above the last *baradari* (Daulat Khana-e-Khas) at the lowest level I can see many mid-rise structures outside. Over the years, the city has crept up against the boundaries of Shalamar Bagh, crowding it in from all sides (see Figures 6.9, 6.10 and 6.11). My proposal is to plant trees along the Garden's boundary walls. This would limit outside visibility, soften the noise of traffic and allow visitors to experience the Garden as originally intended, to some extent.

Figure 6.9 View of the Red Pavilion, western side, 1986. Image by Sajjad Kausar.

Figure 6.10 View of the Red Pavilion, western side, 2023. Image by Sajjad Kausar.

Figure 6.11 View of the Red Pavilion, eastern side, 2023. Image by Sajjad Kausar.

How else might the experience of the Garden be revived? As I further move towards the middle level of the Garden, I can see that the main decorative *talab* (pond) has less water in it now than it used to. The explanation for this also relates to changing environments. Over the past decade, dengue fever has become a major problem in Lahore, and standing water offers a breeding ground for dengue mosquitos. Recently, government authorities introduced fish that eat dengue mosquitoes into the Shalamar Bagh water tanks. Because of this intervention, the dengue mosquito is not a problem anymore. I would say that this is a good solution. Yet, due to a general lack of attention to the Garden by its caretakers, there is still less water flowing in the *talab* than there should be.

Shalamar Bagh was initially fed by a canal known as Shah Neher. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, visitors enjoyed the experience of running water flowing through the decorative ponds. When I visited Shalamar in 1986 though, the water did not flow through the decorative pond. So there are two things: even though the waterways formed a crucial part of the original design, the experience of moving water in the water channels was not there when I first visited the garden, and it is not there now. This, in my opinion, detracts from the experience significantly.

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I converse with Ismail *sahab* who is part of the security team at Shalamar Bagh.[8] He has been working at the Garden for a long time. He tells me something about how many trees used to fill this space.

I: The trees at the time used to be joined at the head. There were mango trees, *jamun* trees. These were cut down, and new ones planted in their place, but it will take time for them to grow. Mango trees, in particular, require a lot of time and care to bloom and bear fruit. There were so many trees previously. Parks and Horticulture Authority cut down many of the young saplings too that had been replanted. And then they planted trees again. We cannot say anything to them. We wouldn't dare.

SK: And what about the floor over here at the main *baradari*?

I: The floor here was installed after the Islamic Conference [a meeting of representatives from Muslim-majority countries that took place in Lahore in 1974]. With regards to the walkways in the Garden, there are still some portions of old flooring close to the periphery walls of the highest terrace.

SK: When I came here the first time, there were very few buildings outside the Garden – I mean behind the eastern and western walls of the middle terrace – and these were mostly single-storey buildings. They were not visible from inside.

I: Very few, and they were only a single storey.

SK: How has the environment changed here based on your observations?

I: The area around the Garden has transformed quite rapidly. There are many houses and mosques that have been built without the approval of the authorities.

SK: How many mosques have been built in close proximity to the Garden?

I: Three.

SK: The attitude of general people, I mean the visitors of the garden, has also changed over time.

I: They are very disrespectful. Now we cannot tell anyone not to do anything. I saw someone climbing on top of a structure and asked him to stop. But instead of listening, he started to misbehave with me.

SK: That's very unfortunate and sad. Thank you for sharing your observations with me.

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After my chat with Ismail *sahab*, I walk over to the middle level, looking out to the central tank.

Until not too long ago, people had permission to go to the platform (*mehtabi*) in the middle of the water tank but that permission has now been withdrawn. Too many visitors came and sat on the *jaalis* (parapets) of the *mehtabi*. If Shalamar Bagh is to remain protected as well as open to members of the public, there is a need for more resources and better management, and indeed more guards and attendants who can ensure that the Garden is navigated with care and respect.

On the northern side of the middle terrace, there is a row of white buildings called the *sawan-bhadon baradaris*.[9] They were named after local rainy months. *Sawan* and *bhadon* are the fifth and sixth months of the Hindu calendar (roughly end of June–September in the Western calendar). In this part of the world, rain is generally a cause of celebration as it rains infrequently and is concentrated in specific months of the year. After long, dry, harsh, hot summer months, rain carries special meaning, and brings people joy. Hence, the main function of the *sawan-bhadon* buildings was to enjoy rain. The buildings were replastered almost two

decades ago and the roof inside has been repaired (a false ceiling, called a *tarseembandi* roof, has been restored). The rest is almost the same as it was 37 years ago. The main entrance doors and the building on the northern end of the lowest level are not in a good state of preservation and demand immediate attention.

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In the Mughal period, garden complexes were designed to provide a taste of Paradise on Earth. They were peaceful places, and the architecture and landscapes rich with symbolic meaning. What should be done with such spaces in the context of a twenty-first-century megacity? What role can they play for the city and for the people who live there? The construction that has built up around Shalamar Bagh's walls cannot be reversed: the city continues to grow rapidly and pressure on space is true across many neighbourhoods. There is still, however, a way for the garden to transport people, to offer them an escape from the dust and stress of urban life. The focus for conservation work in Shalamar Bagh should not only be on the historic built structures inside the garden, as it has been since the beginning of the twentieth century. Equal emphasis is required for maintaining flora and fauna – so creating a space full of trees and greenery and encouraging the presence of birds and insects – through a revival of the symbolic Mughal landscape. Presently, the landscape is haphazard, not following any theme or concept. In my view, landscape conservation should be aligned with the original concept or intention of the designer of the garden. Although the monument was constructed over four centuries ago and the context of the garden has also transformed, it is important to retain the essence of the original concept in order to preserve historical memory and provide a sanctuary, particularly for city residents living in a rapidly densifying environment. Similar methods might be deployed to improve the immediate environment around the garden. In this way, beside glistening waterways and under waving branches, we might still catch a glimpse of a Paradise on Earth in this altered and ever-changing context.

Notes

1 Kausar et al., *Shalamar Garden*.
2 My role on several government committees as well as initiatives led by UNESCO has been to make recommendations regarding the site, but ultimate decision-making powers rest with government bodies.

3 In 2001, I made a documentary titled *Shalamar Garden – An Appeal* (with Abdul Hameed, Abdul Wajid, Fawad Ahmad, Fuzail Ayaz Ahmad, Habib Raza, Malik Sherafshan Shehzad, Mehar Hassan, Nadeem ur Rehman and Sara Zubair) to highlight the urgent need to protect and conserve Shalamar as a key heritage site.
4 Three Shalamar Gardens were constructed by the Mughals in South Asia: one by Emperor Jehangir in Srinagar; Shah Jahan's Bagh in Lahore; and one in Delhi by Emperor Aurangzeb.
5 This intention can be gauged from a couplet inscribed on the Black Pavilion at Shalamar Gardens, Srinagar, which states in Persian: '*Agar firdaus bar roy-e-zamin ast, hamim ast-o hamim ast-o hamin ast*', translating into: 'If there was a Paradise on Earth, this is it, this is it, this is it.'
6 Villiers-Stuart, *Gardens of the Great Mughals*, 150.
7 See Kausar et al. *Shalamar Garden.*
8 Name has been changed to protect the identity of the respondent.
9 A pavilion that is open from all sides, and built in close proximity to a water body. Such pavilions are common to all Mughal Gardens, and aid in attracting moisture carried by the wind.

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7

Baghbanpura

Fizzah Sajjad

Writing about Baghbanpura is a challenging task. With four hundred years of history to its name, this former village settlement has become one of Lahore's most densely populated neighbourhoods. In that transformation, there are countless stories to be told: stories of origins and expansion, of commercialisation and decline, of inward and outward migration, of the area's revered status as the resting place of Sufi poet Shah Hussain.

Baghbanpura was first settled during Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan's rule (1628–58). The original inhabitants of the settlement – often referred to as the Mians of Baghbanpura – previously lived in the village of Ishaqpur, which was taken over for the construction of Shalamar Gardens. In exchange for their ancestral village, the family was given royal patronage in the shape of land to establish Baghbanpura village, and were also given custodianship of the Garden.[1] Over the course of the twentieth century, as the city expanded, most members of this historic lineage moved to other more upscale neighbourhoods in Lahore, setting in motion a trend of outward migration of Baghbanpura's well-to-do families.

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I grew up close to Baghbanpura, about 4 kilometres away in nearby Mughalpura, at the turn of the twenty-first century. Despite the proximity and my sense of familiarity with this part of northern Lahore, I remained largely disconnected from the Baghbanpura neighbourhood as our schooling, family and friends were all based in the 'other' side of town. These were more affluent neighbourhoods that increasingly had little

to no connection with our part of the city. Our days were typically spent commuting long distances to central and south Lahore, only requiring occasional visits further north of Mughalpura, beyond Shalamar Link road. At the same time, much like other women growing up in urban centres, I was also limited in my ability to walk around on my own to explore nearby neighbourhoods, always requiring the presence of a male member of the household due to real and perceived safety concerns.

Writing this piece offered an ideal opportunity for me to reflect on the boundaries that shape our everyday experiences and to gain a deeper understanding of the wider area that I had grown up in. For this purpose, I visited Baghbanpura multiple times, each time with different family members and friends. During these early visits, we walked different parts of the neighbourhood, observing its built fabric, new developments and everyday activities. And yet these walks only revealed so much. I found I needed to visit with someone who knew the area well.

***

Today, a piercingly cold January afternoon in 2023, I am meeting Bilal, my friend's colleague who is deeply familiar with the neighbourhood. Bilal is a sales agent at a multinational company and oversees the distribution of packaged milk products in different parts of Lahore, including Baghbanpura. Because of his work, he visits often and connects with neighbourhood shopkeepers, local merchants and retailers running grocery stores. Joining us soon is Bilal's friend and colleague, Faraz, a former resident, and part of the sales team that focuses specifically on Baghbanpura.

The sun is periodically making an appearance after two weeks of dreary, grey, smog-ridden skies. Air quality, repeatedly hazardous in the preceding days, is ranked only 'unhealthy' today. In relative terms, the day feels like the rarest of aberrations in Lahore: a good winter day to be outdoors. Yet the GT Road, the thoroughfare leading to Baghbanpura, remains packed with vehicular traffic. Like most days, it is loud: horns blaring, motorcycles, rickshaws, *qingqis* (motorcycle-rickshaws) and cars rushing by.

Bilal asks me to meet him by the fast-food outlet KFC on GT Road, a short walk from the Baghbanpura Orange Line station. From there, we walk into the neighbourhood onto a wide street, flanked by houses of a mix of sizes and ages. The majority have simple cement and tile-based façades that were common in the 1980s and 1990s. There is a sprinkling of older structures, with intricate *jaali* (ornate perforations

in walls/stone) work and large art deco patterning, likely constructed in the middle of the twentieth century. Most are built over three floors, taller than city bylaws previously permitted and indicative of the state's minimal regulatory presence in former 'village' settlements. Small gates barricade secondary road offshoots from the main street, installed by residents presumably for security reasons. Occasionally, we come across small piles of trash along the street, although the area remains generally clean.

Bilal and I walk by a small *kiryana* shop (neighbourhood grocery store) that has been carved out of one of the fronts of one of the houses (see Figure 7.1). There is a constant flock of buyers – mostly children – asking for chips, biscuits and sweets. We stop by, introduce ourselves and share our interest in learning more about the neighbourhood. Despite being busy, the shopkeeper responds warmly. He mentions that he lives close by and has been running the shop for nearly a decade.

'You've been here for long. How would you say the neighbourhood has changed while you've been here?'

'Well, there are more and more people leaving this neighbourhood.' He points to a house across the street that is in the process of

Figure 7.1 Neighbourhood grocery store in Baghbanpura, 2023. Image by Fizzah Sajjad.

being torn down. 'That house was sold recently, and as you can see, the new residents have just moved in and have demolished parts of the house to rebuild it …'

'Why are they leaving and where are people going?'

'No one with any money wants to live here anymore. Crime rates here are high and people want more safety for their children. They are choosing to move to [gated] housing societies. They can also afford to do so because property values here are very high. But', he points towards a group of boys playing cricket close by, 'they cannot find this environment in the new societies. People only keep to themselves there. I've seen that former residents keep coming back to visit because they miss this neighbourhood. Here, we all know one another and look out for each other. We are there for all of life's ups and downs, and especially so in death. No one comes to help when anyone passes away in the new societies. They have more safety perhaps, but residents feel isolated.'

His words spark multiple trains of thought. I am reminded of how, throughout my childhood, my siblings and I wanted our parents to move from our family home. Deteriorating service provision in Mughalpura and growing traffic made it increasingly unliveable. We were, much to my embarrassment as an adult, keen to enhance our social standing by changing our place of residence. The move only happened recently for us but I can, at least partly, understand why families are leaving Baghbanpura.

During the course of my PhD fieldwork elsewhere, I have heard similar sentiments echoed by families who have recently moved to a gated housing scheme on the southern outskirts of Lahore. Moving from different neighbourhoods across Lahore, residents frequently cited a desire to leave the *mohalla* and to live in a secure, gated environment with safety for their children and improved service provision.[2] But once there too, while more content with the 'safety', residents complained of isolation, of missing the hustle and bustle of the city.

I mull over the long-term implications of this growing segregation between the *mohalla* and the gated housing society, a result of the state's neglect of its municipal obligations in the former and its rent-seeking complicity in encouraging the latter. We converse some more with the shopkeeper, thank him for his time, and resume our journey on the street. I am now very aware of the multiple overhead banners advertising new housing schemes (see Figure 7.2).

We walk back on to the main road towards the Orange Line station to meet up with Faraz. Faraz's family recently moved from Baghbanpura to Mughalpura, to a bigger house accommodating their growing family.

Figure 7.2 Advertisements for gated housing schemes, 2023. Image by Fizzah Sajjad.

We exchange notes on the move and ask if we can speak to others close to his old residence. He leads the way, and also suggests that we speak to shopkeepers at the Pakistan Bazaar.

We walk along the edge of the main road passing various narrow, secondary streets that look more run-down than what we had seen so far. We eventually find ourselves at the entrance to Pakistan Bazaar, or as it is known colloquially, '*sasta* (cheap) bazaar'. This is one of Baghbanpura's primary attractions and a source of employment largely for informal labour. At first glance, it feels like any other bazaar: small shops lining both ends of the street selling clothing, electronic and household items, interspersed with food stalls selling samosas and *chaat*. As we walk further in, the number of people and motorbikes increases dramatically, with multiple small 'traffic' jams of shoppers and motorcyclists along the way. Unlike other public spaces in the area, a high percentage of the crowd comprises women, jostling to get to their destinations in the market. We repeatedly have to stop to find space to walk between pedestrians and bikes.

‘How much further does the bazaar stretch on for?’ I ask Faraz as we continue walking.

Faraz explains that the bazaar continues this way until Shalamar Gardens, over another 500 metres. The scale of activity and the sheer number of people – more than I have seen in most bazaars in the country – makes that seem entirely plausible. Bilal asserts that there is nothing that one cannot find in the bazaar: clothes, jewellery, crockery, shoes, accessories, wedding and household decorations, electronic goods, everyday household items. And all sold at mass-market prices. Today, specifically, he adds, it is the overlap between Sunday and the onset of winter wedding season that explains the crowd (see Figure 7.3).

After walking for another 20 minutes, we turn into another commercial street, eventually stopping at a retail outlet selling fabric for men’s clothing. There are three men working inside, all extremely welcoming as we introduce ourselves. Residents of close-by Daroghe Wala, these three have been running this shop for around two decades. The bazaar, they explain, does not simply cater to the local population, but to people from across the city who are looking for cheaper prices. People prefer this over Ichra Bazaar[3] because it is less expensive, and in

Figure 7.3 Crowds at Pakistan Bazaar, Baghbanpura, 2023. Image by Fizzah Sajjad.

other places – like Liberty Market[4] – they have heard that shopkeepers are hardly seeing any business during the ongoing period of high inflation. There is no other bazaar that attracts such high footfall, one of them claims. Sales are good here. Looking to build on our earlier conversations, we ask how the area has changed since they started working here.

'You've seen the congestion/traffic here. Because of this, many people do not want to live here anymore. People with the means to do so are moving to housing societies along GT Road or are moving to DHA.[5] There is a lot of pressure from their families to move', he says, referring to male heads of households. 'The Ring Road has also made it easier for them to consider these options as it doesn't take much time to get here by car. Plus, theft and crime here is on the rise.'

'Well it's quite high even in DHA. I've been mugged there myself recently, and this appears to be quite common', I share.

'Yes, but it's likely to be higher here. Also over here, everyone knows if you make a lot of money. They know your daily routines, when you leave for work, when you come back. In DHA, everyone has a lot of money and people are not so concerned about their neighbours or how much wealth they have.'[6]

In contrast to our exchange earlier, it appears that people also have a desire for greater anonymity, or perhaps greater homogeneity and improved social status. Much of what I am hearing today also resonates closely with the growing popularity of enclaves and gated communities across cities globally. Teresa Caldeira, a scholar studying urban segregation, explains that their popularity rests on a desire to distance oneself from the uncertainties of street life and crime, along with a desire for higher status, upward mobility and class separation. Both are at play here, and I understand and relate to why families may want to move.[7] The responsibility, in my opinion, lies with the state's disinterest in investing in adequate service provision, public safety, appropriate mobility solutions and planning ahead effectively. These failings, as Caldeira argues, fundamentally alter the nature of public life in urban centres.

We wrap up our conversation and make our way through the back alleys of the market. The streets here are narrower, less crowded and are dimly lit. Beyond the edge of the market, we turn onto a residential street by a boundary wall. There's a sign that gives directions to the Madho Lal Hussain shrine (see Figure 7.4), which we follow, although it is not our destination today. It is this shrine that brings thousands of devotees to Baghbanpura each year for the three-day *Mela Chiraghan* (Festival of Lights) at the end of March for Shah Hussain's *urs*, or death anniversary.

Figure 7.4 A sign for the shrine of Madho Lal Hussain, 2023. Image by Fizzah Sajjad.

The *mela* and *urs* are said to have been combined during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule in the early nineteenth century. It continues to be the biggest festival in Punjab, drawing in people from across the country, coming to pay their respects to the Sufi saint and poet from the sixteenth century.

Inside the neighbourhood, the streets offer just enough space for a person or a single bike to cross through at a time. The houses here are built on smaller plot sizes, erected taller than elsewhere, leaving barely a trickle of sunlight on the street (see Figure 7.5). Baghbanpura's famed high densities are more clearly visible here. Occasionally, there are pre-partition structures with elaborate doors and windows along the street, likely built in the 1930s and 1940s. Some passageways are made from ageing thin bricks, a common feature of the Sikh period (1768 to 1849). They look dangerously precarious in the present while serving as a reminder of just how far back in the past this settlement stretches (see Figure 7.6).

Hoping to speak to some current residents, preferably women, we knock on the door of a house along the way and an older woman opens it. I introduce myself, with Bilal and Faraz standing further away. Women in the house next door also join in. All of them grew up in Baghbanpura and have lived here their entire lives. They like living here, close to the

Figure 7.5 Densification in Baghbanpura, 2023. Image by Fizzah Sajjad.

Figure 7.6 Passageway in Baghbanpura, 2023. Image by Fizzah Sajjad.

bazaar and the heart of the city. The bazaar, unlike other public spaces, remains easily accessible for both shopping and enjoyment. Despite the gradual exodus of others, they have no plans to leave.

We take our leave just past dusk, as the evening chill starts to take over the air. Tracing our way back to the main GT Road, we pass once more through the bazaar and large crowds, eventually leaving Baghbanpura behind.

On my way back to my parent's home, 4 kilometres away, I feel a vague sense of sadness knowing that I had not been able to develop a deeper relationship with the streets, pathways and structures of my wider neighbourhood due to social norms around women's mobility, as well as my own class anxieties. After all, its rich history, openness, bustling markets and vibrant public life is what makes city life exciting. Yet, I am careful not to romanticise everyday life here, fully cognisant that, in the face of underinvestment, my family too has preferred to move elsewhere.

Baghbanpura's history is reflective of the continuous dislocation and migration that creates, shapes and reshapes urban centres. Among the countless stories that can be told about Baghbanpura, today we heard two major ones: one, personally familiar to me, of declining liveability, of deteriorating safety and status, a story of out-migration to private, gated communities. But equally, we heard another story of pride and warmth, of a well-connected neighbourhood that attracts and welcomes outsiders on a daily basis – the antithesis of exclusive, securitised private housing developments. These tensions between vibrancy and abandonment, gratification and disappointment, openness and insularity, represent a challenge for Baghbanpura and one that it holds in common with many other *mohallas* across Lahore. It remains to be seen whether and how we will address such growing pressures of neglect and underinvestment that are widening disparities across neighbourhoods.

When I set out to write about Baghbanpura, I was intimidated by its 400-year history. Leaving the neighbourhood today, it is the uncertainty of the future that seems most difficult to contemplate.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to Bilal Shabbir and Faraz Jehangir for taking the time to accompany me on one of my walks in Baghbanpura and for sharing their knowledge of the neighbourhood. I am also thankful to the residents of Baghbanpura who graciously answered our questions.

Notes

1 The word *baghban* means gardener. See Koul, *Making New Muslim Arains*, 56.
2 While *mohalla* simply translates into 'neighbourhood', *mohallas* are understood distinctly from planned (frequently gated) communities by virtue of their openness (to outsiders), organic growth and mix of planned and unplanned spaces.
3 A market located in one of Lahore's oldest settlements, along Ferozepur Road, known for offering a diverse range of affordable products including clothing, bedding, furniture, handicrafts etc.
4 A more prestigious market further south in the posh neighbourhood of Gulberg offering clothing, jewellery, wedding decorations etc.
5 Referring to the Defence Housing Authority, a military-run, affluent housing development in Lahore.
6 While housing developments such as DHA are perceived to be safer, Cheema et al., in 'Safeguarding Pakistanis', show that there are significant crime hotspots in such localities as well. Yet, they also show that crimes in the city of Lahore are concentrated in dense commercial centres.
7 See Caldeira. *City of Walls*.

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8
UET
Shakeel Ahmed

On a rare, clear, sunny morning in the otherwise smog-ridden winter of 2022, we – Fizzah Sajjad and Ammara Maqsood (two of this volume's editors) – met Shakeel Ahmed at the main gate of the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) and made our way inside. He directed us to a canteen area, where we sat down to drink tea and converse. Shakeel *sahab*, as we refer to him, has always been generous with the time he has given us. We first met him in 2018 as part of our research into the dispossession and evictions that occurred due to the construction of the Orange Line. Shakeel *sahab*, who is in his fifties, was evicted from his home in 2017 because it was in close proximity to the proposed route of the train. As a result, he and his immediate family were forced to find a new property and now lived in another neighbourhood in north Lahore close to UET.

Shakeel *sahab* was prominent in the activism and protests sparked by the evictions, despite suffering from progressive loss of eyesight. We decided to involve him in this volume not least because of his close association with the area around UET but also as a way of including a perspective beyond voices that are well-versed in English and accustomed to speaking to an international audience. In a narrative interview that lasted about an hour and a half, occasionally interrupted by Ammara's toddler who played in the background, we asked Shakeel *sahab* about his life before and after the demolition of his home. He spoke about his early life in Shuja Colony, near UET, his days working as a businessman for the small shoe factory his family owned, and the problems that he has faced since this business closed down. We learned about the differences between the neighbourhoods he has lived in, and the changes he has seen in Lahore and its transport infrastructure, specifically in the vicinity of UET.

UET provided an ironic backdrop for Shakeel *sahab*'s story. UET represents many aspects of the postcolonial dreams of modernity and progress that shaped Pakistan's early decades and which continue to inform aspirations today. A top engineering university, it draws together the brightest minds and enables them to have successful careers in the country and abroad. In idealised narratives of progress in postcolonial spaces, lateral and vertical mobility overlap – a spatial move to newer parts of the city comes hand in hand with upward mobility. UET is symbolic of that dream. But Shakeel *sahab*'s life tells the opposite story.

We have transcribed, translated and collated his responses and have deliberately excluded parts of the interview where names and the identities of others are discussed. Our interventions have been minimal as we wanted to leave his responses as unaltered as possible and have largely limited ourselves to attending to grammar and flow, and only when absolutely necessary.

Personal history and life-course

We asked Shakeel sahab *about where he had lived as a child, what that area was like, and how it had changed. The conversation then moved on to the ups and downs characterising his life, particularly the failure of his family's shoemaking business, the closure of the canteen that he operated in UET and the onset of his illness.*

We are actually from Allahabad [Uttar Pradesh, India]. My maternal grandparents – my maternal grandmother just passed away three or four years ago in India. My grandfather passed away three years ago …

My childhood was spent here – in the grounds here [by UET]. There used to be many grounds here. Access was easier. There weren't as many gates as you see now – well, they existed, but there were barely any guards here in the way that you see now. So we used to play *gulli-danda*, cricket, hockey and football. It used to be very crowded every Sunday. [I used to live close by] … after UET's zero gate, there is a road going into Shuja Colony. Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman's father's name was Shuja-ur-Rehman. He was the councillor from our area and was also the mayor of Lahore. So he made the colony in his name. The colony originally existed as a *katchi abadi* [squatter settlement]. It was made at partition in 1947. But because they made roads, did the soling – because of that, they gave the colony their name. Otherwise before that it was a *katchi abadi*. They changed the name, and said that *katchi abadi*

is a strange name so should we just call it Shuja colony? I spent my childhood here: *jawan bhi idhar hoye, boorhe bhi idhar hoye* [I grew up here, I became old here].

[At that time,] there was a footpath in the middle of the road, as there is now. With the Orange train coming in, the passengers who use it have benefited because before there used to be only vans. Toyota Hiace wagons used to operate here. Or *tongas* (horse-driven carriages). So we used those for transport. Then they shut down the *tongas*. Then they shut down the wagons. Before that, there used to be buses here too, double-deckers. Single buses also used to run. They shut those down too. [Back then,] it was easy to cross the road. Now, for those who cannot see [like myself], attempting to cross the road is the same as going to touch the stars. People have to wait for long periods of time because the traffic is passing by at such high speeds.

We are Muhajirs. Our elders migrated here [from India]. They said let us stay here. The people there before us [were] Pathans and Punjabis. We were all integrated. We respected one another. Our three main streets were of Muhajirs, Urdu speaking. [But] … many old women used to come who I didn't know. This was when [my family] had a shoe factory. They would say 'son, my neighbour bought shoes but I cannot afford to purchase them'. [They] would speak in Punjabi. I would say '*ma ji* [mother] don't worry ... [you are] a neighbour but this factory is yours, take them'. I would offer the shoes, help put them on. But I don't get such help now [from others].

I did matric in 1981. Afterwards, my father said you should continue with your studies. I said no, I want to do my own business. What is the point of studying when a *karigar* [labourer] here [in the family shoe factory] earns PKR 2,000–5,000/week, whereas an employee [in a regular, office job] earns PKR 1,000–2,000–3,000/week? If our *karigar* earn double that of employees then we must earn more than them even. I convinced my father that I should work with him. Then I went to [Rawal]pindi, Peshawar, Sargodha, Sialkot, Gujranwala and Karachi [and established relationships with different retailers in these cities to distribute and sell our shoes].

During Nawaz Sharif's time [in the 1990s], lots of shoes came from China. Fifty-five per cent … of [Pakistani] factories and warehouses shut down at the time. See, there is a specific quantity of goods that need to be imported, no matter where you want to get them from. They took so much money that they gave them a free hand to bring in 50,000 shoes when only 100 were required. We had to shut down. We faced a lot of difficulties. I kept thinking and thinking and was very worried.

[I started to lose my eyesight] after the business went … everything was fine when it was running. My health was okay. I was fat too. Because *khana peena bhi theek tha* [I could eat well]. Wherever someone goes and is respected, people also make sure you are fed well. Some doctors say you took so much stress that your *parday* [cornea of the eye] were damaged. They say different things … Look, the one who is ruling [*badshahat kar raha ho*], and then his rule ends and he is on the streets: you tell me, how is that person not meant to have any tension? I have had a heart attack. Then I got *sugar* [diabetes]. Then this eye problem. So I went into a crisis.

I had some friends here who worked at the canteen [at UET]. We would stay in touch [*salam dua thi*]. Obviously I would walk around in the *galli* [street], *mohalla* [neighbourhood], people used to ask how we survive and get by. I used to feel a strange depression, to have to answer their questions. People would ask out of love, but I did not like the questioning. *Yaar*, I am not borrowing from you to eat etc. So why do you ask such questions?

So I started to come and sit here [at UET]. Where we entered from today, there was a canteen on the way that is now closed. I bought it back then for PKR 1 lac 90 thousand [PKR 190,000]. I started this in 2010/11 or 2012 and then ran it for five years.

[But the new Vice Chancellor], he had these canteens closed because he said *mulazim* [service staff] sit here. He did not make his employees sit in their offices, but instead imposed a burden on a poor person [*ghareeb admi pe sara malba nikala*]. From gate three where you entered, on the same side, there were two canteens, one they demolished, and one that they closed down [mine]. This is how it happened.

Neighbourhood life, before and after demolition

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Shakeel sahab*'s home near UET was demolished as part of the construction of the Orange Line. We asked him how he was finding life after relocating to a new neighbourhood. We were specifically interested in learning how it compared to his previous neighbourhood.*

I moved to my previous neighbourhood 10 to 12 years ago … where the [Orange] train is passing from now. It was also a *katchi abadi*, a *galli mohalla*.[1] There, people had blended in as if they were relatives. There

was lots of love, people coming and going [to each other's houses]. I lived there for four years, but I used to feel that I had been born there. So there people really liked me … I got along with everyone: the councillor, chairman, MPA [Member Provincial Assembly], MNA [Member National Assembly] – everyone. With one call from me, people would come together, the entire area would come together …

I am completely alone [in my new neighbourhood] … Here people just say *salam* Shakeel *bhai* and walk away. As if it is a *kothi* area,[2] and we don't know each other … I have tried to get to know them better, believe me. If someone offered me a loan, or helped me [otherwise], I would send some *mithai* [sweets] to them using some excuse. Some here, some there. More for big families. I mean, I even distributed 8 to 10 kilos of sweets two or three times on Eid. I thought perhaps we can become friends, maybe we can have some love amongst us. But such *badtameezi* [rudeness]. From the start, they have tried to keep us under pressure [*dabane ki koshish*] … I have seen there are many people who are jealous … no one likes to be out in the street. If the ones who had been there for long stepped out, I would say okay this is because I am new. But no one does … if someone passes away, I go to the funeral. One has to go because of *mohall-e-dari* [neighbourliness]. But such a system does not really exist. Just bury and go.

When I go to the main road from my house … if this is my house, like the IBM building [pointing to a nearby building from the canteen] is here, that is the distance from my house to the road, so one or two people lend me their hand. Sometimes old friends who are passing [stop]. Even those going by in their cars. But my neighbours … some pass by very closely on a motorbike. They do not care. [They do not think], 'let me help him cross'. No such thing.

[People used to help] a lot before. [I see my old neighbours] very occasionally now, because my eyesight is weak as compared to before.

… [Also] it is a time of inflation. Who is meeting anyone? We don't meet siblings so who is meeting each other? I don't think any one of us will be seeing others on holidays, on Sundays. Previously we lived opposite each other, we would greet each other, we would hang out on Sundays. There would be conversation [*gup shup*], we would plan, we would discuss politics and other matters. That doesn't exist now, not at all. Many people have been separated because of the construction of this train [*kafi log juda ho gaye hain is train ke bane se*].

Thoughts on Lahore and the Orange Line

We asked Shakeel sahab *about his thoughts on Lahore and the changes the city has undergone over time. We spoke at length about the Orange Line, asking if he had travelled on it and how he evaluated its successes or limitations.*

… Yes things have changed so much [in Lahore over time]. *Bhai-log* [loved ones] barely meet. *Khoon safed ho gaya Lahore mein*[3] … not sure why. Everyone is after their self-interest. Everyone just wants to be rich, and expects others to come to them, to sit with them, to follow them around, to flatter them [*pere paas bethein, meri chaal parosi karein, TC karein*]. They think they will feed them one meal in return, and that is as far as it goes.

… No, I don't feel that the city is mine. It is a city for thieves, criminals, politicians [*chor chokaron ka, dacaiton ka, MPA, MNA*s *ka*]. [It is] not [a city] for the common person. There is barely any humanity here. I think humanity is leaving Pakistan. Or maybe I don't find people who help. I can't even buy medicine worth 3,500 rupees for myself. So what help is there for someone like me?

[I have used the Orange Line] once … It felt good. I sat from here [UET] and went to the Gajju Matta stop with someone who had to purchase a goat.[4] My friend said you have experience [come with me]. When I had a business, I could bring a camel, a cow, two to three goats – big ones. *Namaishi* [expensive] goats, camels – meaning good ones.

… So yes, I went to Gajju Matta. It was good. When the stop would come, the recording would play, and a woman would speak. She speaks just like they do in countries outside. Each stop would come in a minute. There was no dust, dirt. And the train was closed from all sides. It was not loud. It was quiet inside. I liked this about it.

… It is human nature if we think about ourselves only. But if we think only about ourselves then yes this train should not have been built. Alternatively if we think that offering people a good service is akin to worship [*logon ki sahulat, khalq-e-khuda khidmat karna ibadat hai*] then this is, much like looking out for others, also a form of worship. Just like thinking well of someone.

… The Orange Line does have advantages, but they are limited to those who travel on it … But what advantage is it to people like me? I have travelled once in three or four years. What is the benefit? The thing is that it is a need that people have. People's mothers, sisters and daughters – their respect is intact [*bezadti nahin hai yun kar ke*].

The journey is comfortable. People are not staring at girls and women. You will find this in buses, motorcycles, rickshaws, qingqis … I saw that day that passengers travelling on it were very decent [*suljhe hoye log bethe they*]. So I think more uneducated [*jahil*], uncouth [*awara*] people travel on buses. Some students [those who have graduated from UET], say, 'come sometime and travel on it' [on the Orange Line]. They are doing a job there and earning 50,000–60,000/month.

[What else do I want to say?] … Whenever the orange train has passed from a *galli mohalla*, it has not affected the people on the main road. It has not affected markets [*bazaars*]. The shops are on both sides and the road is in the centre. The bridge is going in the centre of that road … Footpaths [still] have fish markets, *seekh kebabs* being sold, fruit stalls. People are selling *chappal kebabs*, food and *papar*. Commercial activity is continuing as is. If anyone has been disturbed, it's the *galli mohallas*. If the train is going from our old neighbourhood, where there were 100 houses, now 70 to 80 houses are left. The area has lost its vibrancy [*ronak*]. There is no vibrancy [*ronak nahin rahi*]. If you went there at night before [the demolitions], people would be sitting by the *chowks*, bulbs would be on, fires would be lit, people would be bringing wood. But that doesn't exist anymore … because houses were demolished … So that's how it has affected it.

Notes

1 *Galli mohalla*, lit. 'lane neighbourhood', refers to inner-city neighbourhoods marked by stronger community relations, with streets and corner shops serving as regular places for people to meet and socialise. Often contrasted with Westernised housing colonies, that are perceived as more upmarket but also isolated, *galli muhalla* are often considered as 'traditional' city neighbourhoods.

2 *Kothi* area, lit. bungalow area, refers to a modern housing societies, marked by more isolated and private living. See previous note.

3 Lit. 'In Lahore blood has become white', denoting a coldness in people and a reluctance to invest in relationships.

4 Shakeel *sahab* most likely transferred from the Orange Line to the Metro Bus at Anarkali-Lake Road station in order to travel to Gajju Matta, close to the livestock market off Ferozepur Road.

9
Sultanpura

Dawar H. Butt

The rickshaw was not on its regular route. It was Friday. Instead of the usual, wobbly ride back to our residence from school, on the farther side of Cantt, we were motoring shakily towards Garrhi Shahu. Coming from a privileged background and sheltered, at least until my teens, inside a bubble controlled by strict parents, I can be honest and admit that this particular ride to the older part of the city always seemed unnerving. But it was also intriguing.

Why was there a Butt Sweets and a New Butt Sweets side by side? Why were people running across the road? Where did that thin, crowded road on the left disappear to? Why did the rickshaw driver turn off the engine when he reached the top of the bridge? So many questions, but never really asked or answered.

The more familiar area of ‘Cantt’, Lahore’s military cantonment, was established around 170 years ago by the British Raj, which had managed to win Punjab after defeating the Sikh Empire of Ranjit Singh. At that time, the outskirts of the Walled City of Lahore, where gun warfare was frequently staged, had been polluted by putrid remains and gunpowder. The Sikh army cantonment occupied by the new foreign rulers was seen as a place of filth and disease, and it was therefore decided that a special new cantonment would be set up. The British would build designated colonies and quarters for the military and civil officers of the Raj posted in Lahore. This area, several kilometres south-east of the Walled City, is recorded to have been a site of villages, agricultural tracts, *rakh* forests and the tombs of a few notable residents of the city. The cantonment was in fact known as ‘Mian Mir’ Cantt, named after a Sufi saint whose shrine provided a major landmark for the new development. The British also went on a plantation spree and extended

waterways, all part of a greening scheme which they thought would also protect their health against 'local' diseases. This area was eventually given special status and separate municipal control. Even after the British left, Cantonment remained a sparsely populated suburb late into the twentieth century. The introduction of private housing in the late 1980s significantly changed the area.

A near complete antithesis to the orderly world of Cantt, Garrhi Shahu – or Mohallah Syedan, as it was known during the reign of the Mughals – is an older, densely populated, mixed-use area, located in between the Walled City and Cantt. After the fall of the Mughals and amidst power struggles within the emerging Sikh Empire, the area became the fiefdom of an outlaw named Shahu, and hence the name Garrhi Shahu came about, meaning 'stronghold of Shahu'. This part of Lahore gradually fell under British authority in the late nineteenth century as the new rulers expanded the north-western railways into its heart. The establishment of Lahore Junction railway station on the edge of Garrhi Shahu and expansive locomotive works parallel to the old GT Road led to creation of new suburbs such as Mughalpura and Sultanpura, benefiting from the increased security and accessibility.

Our weekly, Friday afternoon journeys took us from Cantt through Garrhi Shahu via Infantry Road, crossing the railway tracks and then turning right on the intersection with Queen Mary Road, near Lala Book Depot. We passed over the railway workshop bridge and finally landed in Sultanpura on GT Road. We then turned right from the intersection and took the first U-turn, right before UET's faculty apartments began. Another left, off the main road, and we had arrived. Here was our residence, for every weekend and every summer, for nearly two decades: my maternal grandparents and mother's home, since 1983, after they moved out of their old Gulberg bungalow.

Sometime before I was born, the rules were written: we had to spend holidays here. It has never been clear to me why this was so. But the tradition continues today, with the next generation. Every Friday, my sister and her daughters come to stay with my parents – even though they live in the same neighbourhood. I am told that, for our family, this arrangement underlines that parents should continue to support and care for their daughters after their marriages, as opposed to the view that parents 'give away' their daughters. It may vary for other Punjabi castes or clans.

While my parents carry on this tradition in their own home, in Cantt, the house in Sultanpura is no longer there. My last memory of the Sultanpura house is of carrying the coffin of my grandfather from

Figure 9.1 Dawar H. Butt's grandparents at their wedding. Image courtesy of the author's family.

the doorway to the GT Road and from there to the UET graveyard. There was some irony in this journey. Before his health declined, my grandfather had never let us step on the main road, fearing the speeding, unruly traffic in this part of Lahore. The memory of this house does not exist in my mind beyond that day, in January 2010. It was a living soul that had put life in that house and, with my grandfather's departure, its memory ceased. My grandmother sold it and moved to a newer part of Lahore, in the south of the city, where she could be closer to my aunt, for better care. My grandfather's deteriorating health and eventual death was the push factor for abandoning this deeply sentimental abode. Two years after his death the house was demolished, torn down to build a commercial plaza.

My grandfather was born in 1921, to a landed family in Firozpur (now in Punjab, India). He lost his parents early in his life. Convinced by his uncle to join the British Indian Army, he never benefited from the lands left in his name. He was shipped off to the Middle East and later to Burma to fight in the Second World War. He never shared much of his service years. The little that we know has been garnered through regimental reports rather than his own words. But perhaps this is the case with many veterans of the war.

At the time of partition in 1947, his unit was allocated to Pakistan. He never saw his village or lands again, but his status brought him close to another, well-resourced and landed family of Sharaqpur. In 1956, he married my grandmother, the eldest daughter of that family. The family

Figure 9.2 Dawar H. Butt's grandfather (second row, fifth from left) with his regiment in the British Indian Army. Image courtesy of the author's family.

Figure 9.3 Dawar H. Butt's grandmother, Shafia Bokhari, second from right, with her mother (centre) and siblings in the Sultanpura *haveli*. Image courtesy of the author's family.

owned an extensive *haveli* compound on GT Road. In the grand scheme of things, this highly contingent event in his life, and the plot of land in Sultanpura that would be gifted to him, is the reason I found myself on a rickshaw to GT Road every Friday afternoon of my youth.

The rickshaw stopped in front of a large, brown metal gate. The air in those days was relatively less dirty, but the Friday rush-hour traffic threw enough dust into the rickshaw that the collar of my school uniform shirt would have a grey tinge. Stepping off was a huge relief. The driveway was long, but unevenly brick-lined. A small, single-storey ruined structure sat immediately inside. Then, there was a grassy lawn with three swings and a see-saw. And finally, a large, two-storey bungalow.

The ruins, I found out much later, used to be a part-time office space for 'Bey-Sheen Trading Co.' – 'Bey' for Bokhari, 'Sheen' for Shafia, after my grandparents' names. Following his retirement from the Army in the 1960s, my grandfather continued to work in the private sector. He ran a small trading business, although the ruins indicated it was not a very successful gig. Among other things, they provided a home to three leeches, which I was unfortunate enough to encounter one monsoon.

The porch was small: a quaint entrance lined with various plants and leading to a wooden door. If you were not careful, the door would smack back after you passed. Although my grandfather did not say much about his military career, the house was dotted with regimental memorabilia. Emptied-out artillery shells converted into tall vases and lamps were common throughout the house. Much later, at his funeral, I would meet one of his closest friends from his service years. I found out that

Figure 9.4 The '13th Lancers' at an officer's wedding in Kharian. The author's grandfather, Lt. Col. Hashmat Ali Bokhari (second row, second from the right), is pictured along with Zia-ul-Haq and a young Jehangir Karamat in the last row. Image courtesy of Dawar H. Butt and family.

he was regimental buddies with a colonel named Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq and the commanding officer of a lieutenant named Jehangir Karamat. In 2017, when I finally met retired General Karamat, he complained about my grandfather's strictness and no-nonsense demeanour. Little did he know that this was something of which I was all too aware.

The Sultanpura house no longer exists. Strangely enough, neither do many photos of the house. Many years ago, a short-circuit fire inside the house destroyed most of the photo albums. After a tedious search for photo negatives, my grandparents were able to recover some photos of their wedding, but nothing else.

Today, in place of the house stands a three-storey plaza. A board suggests there is a school inside. The plaza covers the old driveway and a much smaller house occupies the space where the ruins of Bey-Sheen Trading Co. once stood. You can see all of this from a vantage point high above. This view is from a mammoth structure, seemingly suspended in air. Ten years ago, it could be a figment of fantastical imagination. An ark in the air, in front of our house?

Immovable, wide pillars are spaced over the intersection and U-turn which once led to the house. If the house still existed, this structure would have delayed sunrise over it till at least 9.00 a.m. This is

Figure 9.5 General view from the Sultanpura metro station of the street and area where the house once stood, 2021. Image by Dawar H. Butt.

Figure 9.6 Sultanpura station interior, 2021. Image by Dawar H. Butt.

the Sultanpura station of the Orange Line metro train. It is real enough to have the same GT Road dust thickly layered onto its windows, blurring out the view outside.

The Orange Line's development went hand in hand with the widespread makeover Lahore has undergone in the last decade. The arteries of the city have expanded, but the gunk of urban traffic continues to clog them in various places. Lahore is often at the top among cities ranked for the worst air quality in the world. The city has changed, but the jury is still out as to how much of this change really has been for the good. Such a feeling has been common in the reception of the Orange Line. Some lost their properties completely. Others were simply inconvenienced by the disruptive and drawn-out birthing pangs of a new Lahore. Some have rejoiced at the arrival of a world-class transit system. Some just use it for a stress-free ride to their workplace or university. Whatever your feeling, it stands here now, where houses and the people who lived in them have come and gone. And now, one hopes that it continues to stand.

It is a strange feeling, being on the train. The journey triggers a rush of memories. The train does not wobble or shake when it crosses over the railway workshop, unlike the rickshaw rides of yesteryear. It is as steady as can be. However, a part of me does not want to be here, on it, in this place.

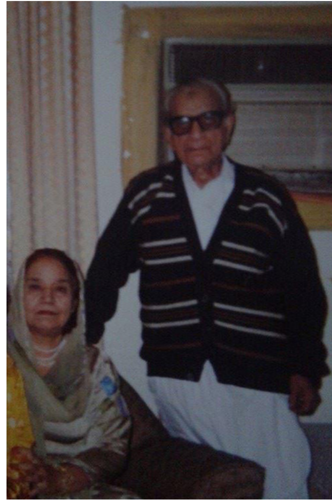

Figure 9.7 Dawar H. Butt's late grandfather and grandmother. Image courtesy of the author's family.

If I exit at Sultanpura, I cannot help but look for the house that has been long gone. If I do not get off here, I will have to travel along the UET graveyard and be reminded of one particularly mournful walk.

I question myself: do other people also associate such powerful memories with an infrastructure project? Can it transport them not only from place to place but also deep into their personal histories? If yes, is it a journey they wish to make frequently? Does someone who uses the train regularly grow out of such reminiscing? Do the everyday users, in need of transit services, even have the luxury of contemplating personal histories on their daily commutes?

I cannot answer these questions for now, because I have been on the train only a couple of times. But I am beginning to realise what it means to be a part of an evolving urban landscape. The house, even if it had existed in 2016, was not in the line of fire determined by the metro's development authorities. But even if it had been, once the 'soul' of that house had left, it had stopped mattering so much to me. This geography of my youth remains embedded in my memory, a place I can still conjure with my eyes closed. There, it is preserved from the bulldozers of development or the rot of decay. In this rapidly changing city, inhabited by so many, I expect I am not the only one keeping roads and driveways, porches and bungalows, safe and sound in my mind's eye.

10

Lahore Railway

Fatima Tassadiq

The built environment of Lahore bears the traces of successive rulers and regimes who controlled this city by the Ravi over the last few centuries. The discontinuities in planning, the mélange of architectural styles, and the juxtaposition of buildings from very different eras provide a constant reminder that Lahore's residents live in an incrementally built space, a palimpsestic city where the old is always partially hidden but never entirely erased.[1] This is particularly true for the areas surrounding the thousand-year-old Walled City. The fringes around this ancient settlement were first inhabited under the Mughal Empire. Though they were temporarily abandoned during the latter half of the eighteenth century, when the city became a battleground between a declining Mughal power and their Sikh and Afghan rivals, they were later repurposed as centres for British colonial residence and administration.[2] A large number of estates, offices and monuments in these suburbs were transformed again in the aftermath of partition. Faced with inadequate official rehabilitation arrangements, refugees flocking to West Punjab settled on different forms of state land.[3] This was particularly true for the more indigent arrivals. The Lahore Railway Station and its surroundings encapsulate this dense and manifold history. Walking around the area's roads and bazaars, one has the distinct feeling of moving through and across centuries.

One bright summer day in 2022, I took the Orange Line from Anarkali to the Railway Station. Getting off at the platform, I was drawn towards the north-facing window by its magnificent view. In the distance I could see the colonial-era Lahore Junction railway station, just visible above the rippling expanse of treetops. A lesser-known history of the station is that, prior to the rebellion of 1857, the

British authorities considered building the railway station closer to the Mian Mir cantonment, south-west of the Walled City. Proximity to the cantonment and Civil Lines would have facilitated the movement of officers, soldiers and supplies.[4] However, the tumultuous events of 1857 changed the colonial regime's priorities. A decision was made to build a secure structure far away from the cantonment, about 1 kilometre east of the Walled City's Delhi Gate. Here, amongst a vast, largely uninhabited landscape, it would be possible to monitor all approaches to the station, especially those from the Walled City.[5] The station itself looks like a medieval castle, boasting thick walls and flanked by crenelated bastions from which fire could be directed at approaching adversaries. I could see the turrets and the twin clock towers now from the Orange Line platform.

The Orange Line's lack of integration with existing transport infrastructure is a key critique of the project. The Lahore Junction railway station is almost 1 kilometre and a 15-minute walk away from the Orange Line station which shares its name. As I exited the station onto Nicholson Road, right where it intersects with Empress Road, I was greeted by about a dozen rickshaws and *qingqis*. The drivers yelled '*lari adda*' and gathered passengers headed to the General Bus Stand at Badami Bagh, 3 kilometres away.

Nicholson Road is named after Brigadier General John Nicholson (1822–57), a firm believer in the imperial civilising mission who quickly rose among the ranks of the East India Company. Celebrated in imperial hagiographies for his imposing physique, piety and valour, Nicholson acquired a legendary reputation. At one point he was known to have kept the decapitated head of a robber chieftain on his desk, a story that served as a warning to all other criminals. Such was the awe he inspired that a cult worshipping him as a saint-like figure emerged in the lands that would later form part of north-west Pakistan.[6] Nicholson, for his part, responded to the cult of 'Nikal Seyn' by having its followers whipped for affronting his Christian sensibilities. The last known follower of the cult died in Abbotabad in 2004.

There was some half-hearted attempt to rename Nicholson Road after Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan in 2011. One of the buildings demolished to construct the Orange Line station was 32 Nicholson Road, the long-term residence of the late Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan (1916–2003), a leading politician in pre-partition India and later Pakistan. Popularly called 'Baba-e-Jamhooriat', Nawabzada's house served as a meeting space for different movements working for the restoration of democracy during periods of martial rule. Leaders like Pir

Pagara and Maulana Bhashani were frequent visitors, as were politicians like the Sharif brothers, Benazir Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari in the years they were out of power.[7] The house had been vacated by Nawabzada's heirs after his death. It was demolished to construct stairs to access the elevated Orange Line station in 2016.[8]

Standing on the edge of Nicholson and Empress Roads, I took a deep breath and started to cross the intersection. With no pedestrian crossing, I waited for a gap in the flow of traffic and dashed across. I was right in the middle of the road when a gust of wind picked up and blew dust in my eyes. Convinced I was about to meet my maker any second, I clutched my bag tightly and sprinted to the other side with my eyes half closed. I arrived safely on the south-east corner of the intersection, home to a section of Lahore's famous Landa Bazaar.

The original Landa Bazaar is located between the Walled City's Delhi Gate and the railway junction in an area called Naulakha. It is named after the seventeenth-century Naulakha Pavillion, built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan purportedly at the cost of nine *lakh* rupees, an exorbitant amount at that time. *Naulakha* in Punjabi means nine *lakhs* and subsequently entered common parlance to denote something precious. Today, this stretch of land is home to some of the oldest bazaars in the city. They are full of used clothes, shoes and bags, donated to charities across the world but subsequently auctioned off. Most of the shops in the area deal in wholesale business, selling to retailers across the city. One of the retail points for merchandise from Naulakha is here, at the corner of Nicholson Road.

I could see hundreds of stalls and carts. The tables were piled with running shoes, slippers, sandals and boots, peppered with coils of belts. The entire market was covered with red tarpaulin, casting an eerie red glow over everything. In between the carts of merchandise there were refreshment stalls of *hakeemi sharbat* and sugarcane juice to help customer and vendors withstand the heat. More hole-in-the-wall shops had been made in the building behind the carts. School bags and clothes were strung up on walls and doors.

A large number of shops in Naulakha and associated Landa bazaars are owned and run by Pashtuns who form an integral part of the city's trading community. The number of ethnic Pashtuns in the city has increased steadily since the 1980s owing to the wars in Afghanistan and later Pakistan army operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, today part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Most recent migrants find work as fruit and vegetable sellers, wage labourers in the construction industry, or are employed in the wholesale trading

and transport/trucking industries which are dominated by prosperous Pashtun families.[9]

The market at the corner of Nicholson and Empress Road was abuzz with rapid fire Pashto as the vendors chatted with each other. I stopped at a cart and looked over a pair of slippers that appeared practically brand new. I asked the vendor their price. 'Rs 900' came the reply. That sounded a bit steep for a pair of used slippers. Maybe it is a very high-end brand, I thought. I assumed that the vendor expected me to bargain down the price. I asked him if the slippers were indeed second-hand. He glowered at me and nodded. I could not tell if he was disgruntled due to the heat or the stupidity of my question. Embarrassed, I moved on quickly.

Across the road from the Landa Bazaar, located inside a bright red-brick boundary wall, I found the Hajj Directorate, popularly called Hajji Camp. Another colonial-era building, once known as Majithia Hostel, it was founded by Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia in 1910 and once housed students of Dyal Singh College. Hajji Camp was established in 1990 by the Ministry of Religious Affairs to facilitate pilgrims arriving in the city to travel to Makkah. Originally housed in Government Islamia Degree College for Women on Tufail Road, the Camp was moved to the vacant Majithia Hostel in 1999.

Next to Hajji Camp, behind a low wall, sits the Qizilbash Palace, more popularly known as Nawab Palace. The Qizilbash family name is synonymous with ideas of treachery or loyalty, depending on which side you are rooting for. The family owes its vast estates and wealth to its staunch support for the British Raj across generations. The Lahore Qizilbashs are descendants of Ali Raza Khan Qizilbash who collaborated with the British during the first Afghan war of 1839. He eventually settled in Lahore in 1849 and continued to support the British in their wars against the Sikhs in Punjab and later during the rebellion of 1857. He was lavishly rewarded for his support and acquired vast estates in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. His descendants played a key role in promoting Shi'ism in nineteenth-century Punjab and became a major sponsor of *majalis*, *taziya* processions and other *azadari* practices in Lahore.[10]

The palace buildings were barely visible from the road due to the dense foliage lining the top of the boundary walls. Two sets of inconspicuous gates on Empress Road were half hidden behind overhanging trees. I asked the guard at one of the gates if I could meet someone in charge and look around. The bored gentleman appeared deeply reluctant and looked me up and down several times, trying to figure out how to get rid of me. I quickly pulled out my student ID and told him that I am a

PhD student 'from America'. That did the trick. He shrugged and pointed towards the manager's office.

Entering the premises, I distinctly felt like I had stepped into a world apart from the bustling road outside. The noise of the traffic faded quickly as I walked through the lush green lawns surrounding the sprawling mansion. Hens strutted around in one corner while a flock of pigeons wandered around in another, sipping water from earthenware bowls on the ground. I entered the building through an arched door at the rear and walked down a high-ceilinged corridor lined with wooden beams and walls decorated with deer busts.

The estate's manager told me that the property was built at the end of the nineteenth century. It was once the Muharram residence of some of the *Zuljinahs* that participated in processions in Lahore. They spent the greater part of the year on Qizilbash Waqf land in Ali Razabad, in the south-west of Lahore, but were moved here in the months leading up to Muharram. Due to security threats during Muharram, the *Zuljinahs* are now directly taken to Karbala-I Gamay Shah, an *imambargah* built by the Qizilbash family in honour of the early nineteenth-century saint. Friends and acquaintances of the Qizilbash family also hosted weddings on the property, but these too have stopped due to security reasons.

At the back of the estate was a mosque built by Mullah Muhammad Saleh Kamboh, a scholar in Emperor Shah Jehan's court. The mosque was whitewashed and new doors and windows had been installed. Kanhaiya Lal, the nineteenth-century historian of Lahore notes that the mosque survived the decline experienced by the city's suburbs under Sikh rule. Like many other structures outside the Walled City, the mosque was used as storage for gunpowder during Ranjit Singh's rule. The British regime subsequently passed it on to Nawab Ali Raza Khan who repaired it.[11]

Across the street from Nawab Palace, on the eastern side of Empress Road, stands the tomb of Mullah Muhammad Saleh Kamboh (d. circa 1675) alongside that of his relative, Sheikh Inayat Ullah Kamboh (1608–71). These are two of the oldest surviving structures in the area. Muhammad Saleh was a noted poet and historian and the author of *Amal-e-Saleh*, better known as *Shah Jahan Nama*, the official biography of Shah Jahan. Sheikh Inayat Ullah worked as a *munshi* in Shah Jahan's court and is known for writing *Bahar-i-Danish*, a collection of romantic tales that went on to become a popular Persian textbook. The exact dates of their deaths are disputed but most historians put them in the late seventeenth century. Some of Muhammad Saleh's family members were also buried here and for a long time the tombs were called *Gumbad Kambohan*.

According to Kanhaiya Lal's *Tarikh-e-Lahore*, parts of the tomb complex were demolished during the Sikh reign and some of the buildings were used to store gunpowder. Under the British, the hexagonal building was converted into a residence for one Mr Seymour while two other doomed structures were converted to a kitchen and a carriage parking area. Gumbad Kambohan is now part of the grounds of St Andrew's Church.[12] The main tomb, painted white with a black dome, now houses administrative offices for the Church school. St Andrew's is also known as the Railway Church since it was built for railway employees in 1899.

The literary critic Sara Suleri once wrote that, in Lahore, 'streets wind absentmindedly between centuries, slapping an edifice of crude modernity against a medieval gate, forgetting and remembering beauty in pockets of merciful respite'.[13] The twenty-first century seems to have added another layer to this palimpsestic space – that of armed security guards, CCTV cameras and barbed wires. Security shapes mobility across the city. Just as the Nawab Palace is no longer open to the public, non-Christian visitors are not allowed into St Andrew's Church without a permit from the authorities. Although the armed security guard allowed me to peek beyond the school gates, stealing a good look at the main Kamboh tomb, he told me apologetically that he would get into serious trouble for letting me into the grounds without permission.

Access to Lahore's extraordinary, multilayered histories is further obstructed by an absence of historical markers and commemoration plaques. But how would heritage markers and plaques function in such a palimpsestic space, this vibrant junction at Nicholson and Empress Roads? Can such complex narratives of construction, erasure, use and reuse be captured with the conventional tools of public history? The richness of this area should propel creative thinking on the part of heritage professionals. But it also requires a wider, public demand to protect this unruly inheritance, embracing the varied people and events that created the city and continue to animate its presents. The area around the Railway Station is a busy, thriving place, marked deeply by its pasts and where history continues to be made.

Notes

1 Glover, *Making Lahore Modern*.
2 Glover, *Making Lahore Modern*.
3 Alvi, *The Informal Sector in Urban Economy*.
4 Ali and Qi, 'Defensible citadel: History and architectural character of the Lahore Railway Station', 2020.

5 Glover, *Making Lahore Modern*.
6 Flinders, 'The Irish soldier worshipped as an Indian god'.
7 Khalti, 'Nightmare on 32 Nicholson Road'.
8 Khalti, 'Nightmare on 32 Nicholson Road'.
9 Maqsood, 'Moving on'.
10 Rieck, *The Shias of Pakistan*.
11 Kanhayalal, *Tarikh-e-Lahore* [*History of Lahore*].
12 Peck, *Lahore*.
13 Suleri, *Meatless Days*, 54.

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11

Lakshmi Chowk

Amen Jaffer

Sometime in the summer of 2013, I began to regularly visit Gawalmandi at the invitation of Peera Ditta, a longtime resident of the locality. I had befriended Peera, an active participant in multiple shrine communities in Lahore, while conducting fieldwork on Sufi shrines in another part of the city. In Gawalmandi, where he resided at the time, Peera was part of a pilgrim association of Shahbaz Qalandar's devotees founded by his maternal uncle.[1]

Along with Anarkali, Royal Park and Qila Gujjar Singh, Gawalmandi is one of the neighbourhoods that come together at the crossroads of Lakshmi Chowk.[2] I had vague memories of Lakshmi Chowk from my childhood in 1990s Lahore: watching a film for the first time at the nearby Gulistan cinema; sitting in the audience of a live musical recording at the Pakistan Television studios further down on Abbot Road; and late-night meals with friends at the original Food Street off Nisbat Road. During these scattered forays into Lakshmi Chowk, the former glories of this area – its halcyon days as the city's fashionable downtown – still seemed tangible. For much of the twentieth century, this was the place to be seen, full of hip restaurants and the centre of Lahore's glamorous film and media industries. However, traversing the streets of this area with Peera, who was familiar with every nook and cranny and seemed to know every other person that we encountered, opened up entirely new worlds.

Unemployed at the time, Peera introduced me to a revolving cast of his friends and relations, almost all men who lived, laboured, hustled and hung out in the area around Lakshmi Chowk. Several of his relatives belonged to the *Momin* caste and lived on rent in tenement-style buildings (*katri*) around Gawalmandi, with one family to a single room and the rooftops and courtyards serving as shared areas for the

entire building. Many of the men worked on daily or piece-rate wages in one of Lahore's largest auto-parts and accessories markets on the nearby Montgomery Road. Identifying both as Shi'a and as devotees of Shahbaz Qalandar, they actively organised and participated in a number of religious events and celebrations in the area. Usually accompanied by Peera, I also began participating in these events and hanging out with these men on *tharras* (raised concrete platforms that perform a similar social function to stoops) and street corners in their neighbourhoods.

One of my earliest and most vivid memories of these trips to Gawalmandi is of a brief visit to collect Peera from his maternal uncle's one-room residence in a dilapidated building off Fleming Road. I was waiting for Peera in my car, which was parked in a narrow lane on the other side of the road, when I saw him approaching accompanied by a heavy-set stranger. Without uttering a word, Peera climbed into the passenger seat while the other gentleman clambered into the back of my car. Even before Peera could complete our introductions, I noticed in the rearview mirror that Peera's friend was pulling something out of his side pocket. It turned out to be a half-bottle of vodka. The gentleman quickly took a massive swig from the bottle and passed it to Peera. Between large vodka gulps, my new friend insisted on acquainting me with the 'proper' history of Gawalmandi, a neighbourhood his family had called home for many generations. 'The first and most important thing you need to know', he proclaimed, 'is that this is the place where the first murder in the history of Pakistan took place.' He said this with the confidence of a person not used to being challenged on their outlandish statements. 'And you know who did it?' A brief dramatic pause followed in which I made a half-hearted attempt to recall stories of partition violence in Lahore, but before I could make any impression, the answer was gustily delivered. 'It was my great grandfather!' I could see that he was positively beaming with pride. Slightly taken aback, I fumbled for some words to keep this unexpected conversation going but was interrupted by the click of the backdoor opening. When I turned around, the gentleman was halfway out of the car, the vodka bottle disappearing back into his pocket, and this intriguing history lesson was already over. I could only watch as he staggered to his next destination.

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Fast forward a few years to November 2021 and I found myself returning to Lakshmi Chowk inside the far more sanitised surroundings of an Orange Line train compartment. Even though this was my third trip on

the recently opened train, I still could not get over its ‘modernity’: the clean white interior with splashes of silver and red; video screens playing clips of Chinese citizens expressing their love and friendship for Pakistan; the glazed, nonchalant expressions on the faces of urbane commuters. Peering outside the windows, it felt as though I was flying through the city as the train ran on its raised tracks. This was not quite the perspective of god as my eyes met the surroundings below at an angle, but I felt like a voyeur peeking into the lives of Lahoris on their exposed rooftops and courtyards below. I experienced an uncanny feeling of a place that was out of place. This had been true of my first encounter with an Orange Line metro station a month ago. Approaching the Khatam-e-Nabuwat station on Multan Road, I was struck by the sight of its hulking steel and glass structure suspended above the city like an alien craft. Entering via escalator, the space inside felt vast, with high ceilings and a large open hallway. But it was also surprisingly empty. I was immediately directed by an attentive staff member to the ticket booth. I noticed several other young staff members milling about in the station, eager to help Lahoris navigate such a new and unfamiliar space. But there was also a sense that the staff were under express instruction to ensure visitors followed the designated order of the space *correctly*. They were there to teach us the ‘proper’ way to move around and inhabit this space.

The infrastructure of the station was also training us in more subtle ways. For example, my temporal sensibility of transport in Lahore is dominated by a lack of trust in time. Getting from one part of the city to another depends on so many factors and there is always the expectation that the unexpected will happen. If someone traveling on the city’s roads informs me that they will reach their destination in 15 minutes, I instinctively interpret this to mean that they will arrive no sooner than half an hour. Accordingly, when I first encountered the screen announcing train arrival times in the Orange Line station, I was naturally suspicious. Seeing that a train was due in three minutes, I turned on a stopwatch on my phone. At exactly 2 minutes and 23 seconds, I heard the rumble of an approaching train. Before the counter had hit three minutes, the train doors were opening while an automated voice on the PA system instructed me to ‘mind the gap between the train and the platform’ in Urdu.

Strangely, my most vivid memory of this first journey on the Orange Line was not of the train or the station. Instead, it was of the smells that flooded my senses when I disembarked from the train and exited the station on to McLeod Road. I was greeted by a heady mix of grey smoke from the rushing traffic, peanuts and corn getting roasted on a wood fire,

grease and paint from a nearby auto workshop and pungent chemicals from a small manufacturing facility. Why this sudden awakening of the olfactory system on stepping out to the outside world? Why was this sense so numbed during my ride on the Orange Line? Did the train and the station have no smell at all? I decided that, during my next ride, I would pay extra attention to the odours around me. However, it was only midway during my next ride that I remembered to do so and immediately discerned the whiff of body odours and a few other assorted aromas. These smells felt quite alien inside the hi-tech and sanitised setting of the train compartment, as if they did not belong in this space, which was why I had to practically force my senses to detect them. It appeared that no one else seemed to have recognised this discord. My fellow commuters seemed to be quite at home in their surroundings, absorbed in their own thoughts or immersed in conversations with each other. Barring a couple of children who excitedly ran around our compartment, there were no signs that there was anything out of the ordinary about this space. Even the kids settled down rather quickly and diverted their attention to a video on their mother's mobile phone. Perhaps I was the only one intent on carving a separate niche for the Orange Line while my fellow citizens were going about the business of assimilating it into their city.

On both the occasions that I disembarked from the train at Lakshmi Chowk station, I traversed the same route that took me around a few markets in the area. As soon as I descended the stairs from the station, I came across the furniture market on McLeod Road which, once upon a time, was a hub for the manufacture and sale of locally made wood furniture. These days, however, its shops only trade in imported Chinese wares made mostly of plastic and metal, yet some of the shops continue to advertise their historical roots in the area.[3] There was also a group of shops within this market that specialised in salon furniture and fixtures. The sight of barber chairs and sinks covered in plastic wrapping, sitting in the middle of the pavement, appeared rather odd to me but none of the other passersby even batted an eyelid at this display. When I was caught staring too long at an ornate sink outside a shop by a shopkeeper, he enthusiastically beckoned me to come inside and 'check out his variety'. I politely declined his invitation.

The next stop on my walk was Carpet Street, just off Fleming Road. I had driven by the turning for this market on multiple occasions when heading towards Peera's neighbourhood, but I knew nothing of its existence at that time. While its entrance was rather spectacular, with a concrete overhead arch proudly announcing the name of the market, the bazaar itself was a sleepy affair. Most of the shops were

closed well into the afternoon on both my visits, and the ones that were open hardly had any customers. The elaborate modernist architecture and the identical design of the shopfronts suggested that this market was probably conceived as a grand project in a bygone era but had deteriorated as Pakistan's hand-knotted carpet industry has rapidly declined over the last two decades. In contrast, Royal Park, my next destination, with its hundreds of printing enterprises, was very much alive. In the age of the sign, there was plenty of business for these printers who had filled the air with a visual cacophony of billboards and posters that loudly proclaimed their magical abilities to sell anything and everything. After getting caught in a traffic jam in the middle of this market, despite being on foot, I finally emerged onto Beadon Road with its bustling shops selling aluminium, glass and other construction materials. The crowd was no less on this thoroughfare, and it was only when I made it to McLeod Road that I got a moment to catch my breath.

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When I first started thinking about the Orange Line, I conceived of it as an infrastructure of disconnection, out of place with the rest of the city. I saw it as a vanity project, through which the state sought not only to impose and impress itself upon its subjects but also to order, discipline and shape them in particular ways. My first impressions of the train and station confirmed this feeling. Taking in the gleaming glass and metal infrastructure, clean aesthetics, vast empty spaces, temporal adherence to the clock and eagerness of metro staff, I was convinced that the Orange Line really was not part of Lahore. However, travelling in the train and roaming around Lakshmi Chowk made me question the entire premise of a place out of place. After all, what really was the definitive 'place' of this iconic landmark of Lahore? Was it its busy restaurants, each claiming to provide the 'authentic' taste of Lahore, or was it lost in the fog of nostalgia for a now-faded cinema industry? Should Lakshmi Chowk be known for the 'first murder in the history of Pakistan', for the gangsters that once made headlines in the city's newspapers or for the numerous markets that rose and fell around it? Did the experiences of Peera Ditta and his friends define Lakshmi? Or is its true signifier the brightly repainted façade of its namesake building, still facing the Chowk though its interior has long been demolished, a hollow monument to the city government's superficial engagements with Lahore's heritage?

Is the Orange Line any more out of place than a shrink-wrapped sink on a busy pavement? This question requires us to examine the entire

premise of being 'in' or 'out' of place. Is being 'in place' determined by compatibility with a place's existing material and sensory realities? Or is it defined by the state and the vision it seeks to impose on society? Should we privilege the social order enacted by a place as the necessary measure of its placeness? There is of course merit to each of these approaches, but rather than considering them separately, we can observe how they all converge in the everyday practices through which residents of Lahore relate to the Orange Line. Lahoris who commute on this train every day, who live and labour around its stations, are neither alienated by it nor subjectivated by the state but are busy discovering all sorts of ways to make this infrastructure a part of their city. Therefore, when I emerged from the Anarkali station after another journey on the train, I was hardly surprised to find a festival celebrating a Sufi saint, Mauj Darya, in full swing in the parking lot behind the station. It seemed that even Anarkali's patron saint, whose shrine had suffered much during the construction of the metro system, had wearily decided to make the Orange Line a part of his spiritual territory.

Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the assistance of Maha Noor Qureshi in exploring and thinking about the many markets of Lakshmi Chowk.

Notes

1 Shahbaz Qalandar is arguably the most popular saint in Lahore (and Pakistan). Even though his tomb is in Sehwan, Sindh, a number of festivals and rituals dedicated to him are organised all over the country and Lahore is an especially important centre.

2 Lakshmi Chowk is located at the intersection of McLeod Road and Abbott Road which turns into Nisbat Road after passing Lakshmi. This intersection is the shape of a tilted cross, like a multiplication sign.

3 For example, Pak Furniture proudly announced that it has been in business in this location since 1947. See https://www.facebook.com/pakfurnitureofficial/.

12
GPO
Hala Bashir Malik

I was born to Pakistani parents in Saudi Arabia and grew up in the Middle East in the late 1980s and 1990s. I was a 'third culture kid', raised in an environment that was not my parents' own, and perhaps understandably I sought out an anchor to latch on to as part of my identity. Having never developed a meaningful connection to Riyadh, the city I was raised in, I was primed to claim Lahore as my own when I moved to the city in 2003 at the age of 16. I had visited Lahore twice before, briefly each time, but now had the opportunity to immerse myself as a college student at Beaconhouse National University (BNU).

As a student of architecture, my first proper understanding of the city came through the lens of its built fabric. Most introductory history lessons demand brevity, and so Lahore's architectural heritage was demarcated into two neat periods: Mughal/Sikh and Colonial. Both of these were in turn identifiable via two distinct urban artefacts: the Walled City for the former, and the Mall Road for the latter. The Walled City is a contained entity with monuments sprinkled amid a densely woven fabric, whereas Mall Road is its total opposite, a wide boulevard that extends outwards from the narrow roads of the old city towards what was then known as the Civil Station. It is lined on both sides with monumental bits of architecture, both public and private, and zaps out towards the south-east, as if seeking as much distance as possible from Lahore's older environs (quite literally, too, since the new Mian Mir Cantonment, where Mall Road terminates, was established by the British administration to replace the old one at Anarkali after a deadly cholera outbreak in the 1850s).

Because I studied it on a map before I was able to physically experience it, the Mall Road was first and foremost a museum for me.

But during those early months in Lahore, at the old BNU campus just off Mall Road, I came to know it as a functioning artery, a living artifact that created and facilitated all manner of urban drama. It took some time for me to realise that it was more than just a sum of its historic buildings. Mall Road was also home to the most important contemporary public institutions of the city, to universities and colleges, to bazaars old (Anarkali) and new (Hall Road mobile market), to eateries and outlets that long-term residents of the city had frequented since childhood, to offices for lawyers and doctors and opticians – the type that Lahore families consulted for generations. My experience of Mall Road was also affected by the politics of the day. The mid-2000s were years of extreme unrest in Pakistan. The country was ruled by the military dictator General Pervez Musharraf and deeply enmeshed in the American-led Global War on Terror. Because of the centrality of its location and the importance of the institutions it hosted, Mall Road emerged as both a site for protests and the target of terrorist attacks. It was consequently layered with a highly visible security infrastructure. And yet, amidst all of that, it also provided the perfect canvas for us architecture students, inviting our speculative exercises with its many leftover spaces and abandoned or depleted structures.

In our third year, we were taken to the General Post Office (GPO) intersection by our studio instructor, who parked us in front of a gap that existed between the art deco E. Plomer & Co. building and the vast Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) building (previously Masson Narsingdas building). The block was designed in the shape of a triangle, mirroring the GPO plot on the opposite side of the *chowk*. The buildings were constructed in a U-shaped form looking outwards, leaving an empty space in the middle of the block, which was only accessible from this opening on Mall Road. Looking through revealed a brilliant, colonial-style bungalow placed neatly in the middle of this supposed void. The first time I saw it, I was left in awe mainly at the fact that, despite having passed this section of the road many times before, I had never noticed this bungalow peeking out from that gap until that moment. This was when I realised that Mall Road was not only about what it showcased through its magnificent, street-facing architecture, but about what it contained within its crevices (some obvious and others not so much, especially to a 'new' resident). I became obsessed with finding these hidden spaces. There were the beautiful Ganga Ram mansions, located beside the majestic Dyal Singh building, that I chanced upon accidentally while looking for a camera store. I then stumbled upon the Holy Trinity Church, nestled behind the YMCA and Pak Tea House building, while working on a project. Later, I found the Punjab Public Library hiding

Figure 12.1 E. Plomer & Co., Chemists and Druggists, Mall Road, 2012. Image by Chris Moffat.

away in a Mughal-era baradari behind the National College of Arts. I realised the famous Nila Gumbad bicycle bazaar was named after the blue-domed shrine tucked behind the sprawl of stalls. I did not even know the Mauj Darya shrine existed behind the GPO until the construction of the Orange Line began.

It was not that these buildings were deliberately designed to be hidden, but that over time, as the built environment densified on and

around the Mall Road, it slowly started to conceal structures like a vine creeping up along a wall. Our studio instructor asked us to develop a proposal for the space between the E. Plomer and the ICI buildings. How could architects activate this hidden plaza at the heart of the city? My proposal for the site ended up being a bean-shaped dance theatre that hugged itself around the back side of the E. Plomer building, clinging on like a parasite, accessible only through a secret underground tunnel accessed by a simple winding staircase. I had imagined yet another secret to be unravelled to those who slowed down and took the time to look hard enough.

The following term we were tasked with figuring out a design solution for another plot on Mall Road, this one hosting the landmark Tollinton Market. At the time of our visit, the Market stood abandoned and quite derelict. Rumours of demolition had been circulating for a decade. Constructed in 1864 and predating any other colonial building in this area, it was originally intended to be a temporary structure, hosting an exhibition of local craft and artisanal industries. And yet it survived long past this initial use, serving for over a century as a fruit and vegetable market before traders eventually shifted to new spaces elsewhere. No one was sure what to do with the oldest colonial structure of Mall Road and it turned out neither did this group of young architecture students. At best we could imagine an extension to the Lahore Museum, sited across the road from Tollinton, while imagining the structure of Tollinton itself as a sacred artefact, untouchable. I remember proposing that we put a giant glass box around Tollinton, protecting and displaying the building as part of the museum's collections. It was, eventually, restored in the mid-2000s, and has served since as the Lahore City Heritage Museum and as an exhibition space for a wide number of arts and cultural events.

Our penultimate studio project at Beaconhouse tasked us with redesigning the building that once housed Pak Tea House, a famous café, a short walk away from GPO Chowk. Originally called 'India Tea House' but renamed after partition, Pak Tea House was an establishment famous for being the main haunt of many intellectuals, poets, writers and activists of the city in the early postcolonial years. Surviving to the end of the twentieth century, it had fallen into disrepair and the owner decided to finally shut it down in 1999. The proposition to demolish such an important building and put something new in its place felt almost sacrilegious. From an architectural perspective, there was nothing extraordinary about the structure that housed Pak Tea House, and so the conversation revolved around whether it was the building

itself that carried value or the people that visited it. This conversation was not limited just to our studio; once it had been shut down, there was quite a lot of debate in Lahore's press and public forums on whether or not the Pak Tea House was worth resurrecting. Most contended that the intellectuals of the city were now far more likely to visit coffee shops in upscale neighbourhoods of DHA and Gulberg rather than a tea house on Mall Road. But ultimately, the erasure of this historic institution was not an option. Pak Tea House was eventually relaunched by the city government in 2013, with great fanfare. It is still active, in its original building, serving tea and snacks to students and workers in the area, its walls decorated with images of famous clients from decades past.

These two projects made me realise just how seductive it can be to see Lahore through the lens of nostalgia, harking back to 'the city that was', even if most of us have never experienced it. I often wondered why the people of Lahore, including myself, allowed so much deference to its past, and concluded that it was perhaps because it gave the contemporary city legitimacy as a centre of power and culture by way of its lineage. I soon realised, however, that this reverence mainly extended to a very limited imaginary of the city, and one focused overwhelmingly on the physicality of its monuments. It did not help to recognise and celebrate the city it had become and was transforming into. Nostalgia is a potent framework for imagining the city, but it can become dangerous when it becomes the only perspective, overriding the richness and complexity of everyday, lived experiences. This is not to say that the monumental buildings of our past do not need to be protected, but rather that it is pertinent to be cognisant of the consequences such discourses of 'protection' have for the way a building might be used or inhabited. My glass box over the Tollinton Market seems an extreme example, in this light!

With the announcement of the Orange Line train in the mid-2010s, the Mall Road faced another transformation. Though the metro runs above ground for most of its 27-kilometre route, it dips underground as it crosses Mall Road. There are two underground stations – one at GPO Chowk, and the next at Anarkali-Lake Road. The decision to go underground at this point in the Line was made, in part, to avoid disrupting the historic sightlines of colonial Lahore – a curious privilege, since the viaduct elsewhere runs close to Mughal monuments like Shalimar Bagh and Chauburji. But because the underground section was created through the 'cut and cover' method – where the tunnel is dug out from the surface and then filled in once complete – the construction still caused enormous disruption and destruction in the area. It required

the clearing out of a densely populated neighbourhood just behind GPO Chowk and the flattening of its buildings to the ground. Ordinary homes rather than monumental structures, the Lahore Development Authority decided they could be sacrificed for this major development project.

With the line in operation and the tunnels filled, the upheaval caused by the Orange Line has now passed. But it did not spare the historic GPO Chowk entirely. Several years of construction resulted in the loss of the intersection's dense foliage, with trees and green patches now gone and replaced by a barren landscape of tar, tuff tiles and extended traffic lanes. This nondescript plaza is punctured only by two standalone entrance portals into the station beneath. Although these could be seen, generously, as invitations to explore another hidden layer of the city, this time underground, they arguably lack the romance and mystery of the gap between the nearby E. Plomer and ICI buildings which enchanted my imagination those many years ago.

If I were to take a student of architecture to the same spot next to E. Plomer today, I would invite them to look at it through the same lens we did back in the early 2000s, encouraging them to appreciate the hidden potential of the city, the opportunities offered to those who stop and take the time to look. I would implore them to search beyond the monumental façades of Mall Road and focus instead on the mundane, the everyday, and the negative spaces that allow for the chance encounters that characterise urban life. Lahore will continue to change and grow. Rather than focusing our energies simply on protecting landmark buildings, we also need to cultivate spaces that compel creativity and curiosity from those that pass through them. Arriving in Lahore from Riyadh in 2003, I was searching for an anchor, something stable to help ground my identity. What I have learned by living here is that it is the ongoing adventure of discovery and surprise that is the true gift of this city.

13

Anarkali-Lake Road

Shafaq Sohail

It was a Saturday night in the middle of December, a night too chilly for people to congregate at the shrine of Baba Mauj Darya and mellow its bitterly cold marble floors under the warmth of their feet. A night when the misty, toasty pockets of breath escaping as deep sighs, routine conversations or jovial chuckles were not enough to break the spell of the stiff air stagnating over the shrine.

A few women still trickled in. They steered their young children to play and turned to each other to complain about the rise in gas load shedding and bemoan tenants that usurp the kitchen when the pressure resumes. Their conversation progressed like a daily ritual, interrupted only when they noticed a man standing by the tomb, laboriously scraping off remnants of old posters plastered outside the tomb's wall. In place of outdated invitations – some to last year's *urs* (gathering in honour of the saint's death anniversary), and others to previous months' gatherings – he needed to put up an announcement for that month's congregation, *khatam shareef*. But the remnants of the old clung to the wall with more conviction than his efforts to rub them off.

'Let it be', called one of the elderly women, 'let the past linger a little longer if it insists' ['Maazi agar zid karay tou usko rehnay dou thori aur dair'].

And the *maazi* (past) did frequently linger at the shrine: sometimes as a constant yet concealed presence, rendered perceptible only in narrations of the saint's legends, and other times through the devotees' recollections of parts of the shrine long effaced due to demolitions and development at the site.

When I initially visited Baba Mauj Darya's shrine in 2018, much of these alterations had already taken place. Both the shrine's courtyard

and mosque had been demolished to install underground tracks for the Orange Line Train (OLT) and the houses encircling the shrine had been flattened to build the train's Anarkali station. While the destruction of these buildings left a barren, soil-coated tract in its wake, the station being built nearby emerged as a spectacle. Its dome, minaret-like pillars and *mihrab*-shaped windows carried an unmistakable resemblance to the architecture of a mosque. However, even as the appearance and space of the shrine visibly diminished or even disappeared, the soil overlaying the quarried land still carried imprints of the ravaged sections. The fact of their absence still pervaded conversations taking place amongst shrine visitors.

In these conversations, time – and not just the past – was swayed and warped at will. It condensed distances spanning centuries into the nuances of a succinct allegory. It bent, stretched and compressed, fusing into a palimpsest that, like residues of flyers clinging to the tomb's wall that night, allowed stories of the past to persist alongside the unfolding present. In one such conversation, a devotee narrated to me Baba Mauj Darya's crucial role in the siege of Chhattisgarh (1567) in one sentence, and in the next, she ruminated on political decisions that had led to displacements and demolitions for the OLT. She concluded that the same saint who rewarded Emperor Akbar's deference with his support in the conquest punished the elected government's irreverence towards his shrine with Nawaz Sharif's removal as the prime minister.

The narrator continued to move through the past and the present without obstruction, braiding them together in a neat progression. She connected the state of ruination that was on display when the project was being implemented with the signs Baba Mauj Darya had foretold ahead of Akbar's successful conquest. He had declared that, on the thunderous night of his arrival, only his tent would emerge unscathed amid the flattened campsite, triumphant against the catastrophic onslaught of the storm. And thus similarly, to her, it was no coincidence that in the wake of the Orange Line's construction, his tomb too appeared to be the only building spared in the vicinity, towering over the remnants of buildings vacated and demolished. It was not merely by luck that, despite the disruption, echoes of *qawwals* (musicians) praising the saint and his God continued to guide passersby to his *darbaar* (shrine), strings of lights enlivening the tomb every night attested to his sustained eminence in the neighbourhood, and the fresh sheets of flowers laid over his grave every day or overused oil lamps swaddled in layers of soot and ash reified the shrine as a site of congregation and communion.

Yeh tou unki fatah hai; this is his triumph. Her retelling of the victory at Chhattisgarh became a fitting declaration of victory against

the threats of devastation from the OLT's construction. Ruins provided an emblem of said victories in both versions. I have also been told that the saint, who earned his name from changing the flow of the river Ravi centuries ago, also forced revisions to the route of the Orange Line which was believed to have been originally designed to pass through the saint's grave. The man relaying this story to me suggested that, just like he had admonished the river into retreat, he punished any labourers excavating too close to his grave by turning them blind.

The past that lingers at the shrine thus abridges distances of time and space. It evinces the ways in which miracles of yore inform miracles of today. In these narrations, time is moulded into a continuum, its gaps truncated into irrelevance, or morphed into an obedient, most obliging *mureed* (disciple). But it is not merely time that transmutes, for the detailing of miracles and memories disrupt the givenness of the physical and built form of the shrine too.

Over the years, a tarred road and pavement have been constructed over land that once hosted the shrine's courtyard and mosque. Though these new infrastructures offer no reminders of the structures they have supplanted, visitors continue to invoke these erased spaces in conversations and map them back onto the shrine's new landscape. A woman recalls a story of seeking comfort under the shade of the banyan tree in the old courtyard, noting how it had bent low just above her crouched body, as if taking her frail frame into a protective embrace. References are made to the demolished mosque, an extension of the shrine itself, as visitors lament the decision of its demolition or compare its memory to the new mosque now built adjacent to the shrine.

On days when elaborate images of the demolished compartments are not explicitly evoked, they can still be glimpsed as backdrops in anecdotes that devotees narrate. They move backward in time, taking me along too, to the old entrance of the shrine – an alleyway that is enclosed between the buildings lined along the Edward Road. They urge me to take a second look to understand how this alley on the other side of the road had once opened into the shrine. If I trail the narrators in these journeys through their memories, they conjure for me an image of the shrine's old layout, adorn the alleyway in ornaments and lights again, conjoin it with the rest of the shrine and make me forget, for a moment, the presence of the new road that now cuts through them.

The imagery woven by such remembrances overlaps with the current landscape of the shrine and its vicinity, affirming and preserving their memory and allowing them to exist in momentary recollections or fleeting conversations. The way people inhabit the new spaces of and

around the shrine in turn become reminiscent of its older layout. Part of the new pavement just below the *dargah*'s staircase starts resembling the old courtyard every time people congregate there. *Qawwals* that do not find space in the shrine settle down on the pavement with their harmoniums, inviting passersby with the hums of a familiar melody. In colder months, they source and collect branches to light when the night approaches and welcome visitors to share the warmth of their makeshift bonfires. As night falls, street hawkers join, unloading baskets of goods that they have been carrying all day. Some kind visitors cast seeds on the footpath on their way back, inviting pigeons, too, to join this little extemporary congregation that has assembled. In no time, the pavement begins serving a purpose not much different from the courtyard that was once present in its stead, inviting people to recast their presence and negotiate the boundaries that demarcate the shrine's physical domain.

Ascribing old purposes to new infrastructures, sketching outlines of effaced layouts over existing landscapes and inventing contemporary references for the saint's legends are all practices that offer some semblance of continuity across time and space. This happens both through the ways of being facilitated by the shrine and the stories that visitors share. Continuity, in turn, becomes an emblem of the past persisting. It undergirds how stories that are remembered – the lessons that they convey and the attributes of the saint they represent – are woven into the social fabric of the shrine, informing ways in which devotees inhabit its space and interact with people who congregate there.

This continuum becomes visible when the language of miracles seeps into the realms of the mundane, prompting people to share the wonder they experience in their everyday lives, like someone finding money under their prayer mat, another determining divine meanings in their dream or a stranger initiating a conversation with me with the question 'Apka kya maujza hai?' ['What is your experience of a miracle?']

It is exhibited when exchanges are sustained in unconventional ways. I ask a man a question and he offers me rosebuds from the grave of the saint in lieu of a verbal response. An offering, a *tabbaruq* – a suggestion that he did not know the answer to my question, but that he also did not wish to turn me away empty-handed.

These exchanges in turn constantly offer new insights about the social landscape of the shrine. They allow one to notice the seamless cooperation at play when the caretaker sweeps the carpeted floor of the tomb, and visitors and *qawwals* sitting inside all deftly fall into rhythm with him. The *qawwals* shift in their positions without once breaking their melody, women reading Surah Yaseen raise their crossed legs

without having to look up from their booklets, and the caretaker in turn does not let his cleaning inconvenience those in conversation with the saint, silently sniffling and whispering to him with their foreheads pressed against his grave.

Beyond these scenes of seemingly organic cooperation exist instances of people embodying, exhibiting and extending empathy to visitors both old and new. I see this in the concern that causes an elderly woman to admonish me for not wearing clothes that are warm enough, 'Ni kuriye tenu thand nai lagdi?' ['Young one, do you never feel cold?'] and in the care that is expressed, through words and gestures, when people engage. Like the hand of this one *khaala* at the shrine, resting in the lap of a woman she was consoling; how it stayed there during the entirety of their conversation, her palm partially open, sometimes stretching out as if collecting the last rays of the sun before it set, other times delicately flipping mid-sentence to straighten the creases on the woman's shirt.

These ways of being become symbolic of the intricate links between the past, the space and the people who embody both. They constitute and reveal the connections of the shrine's present social and spatial landscape to the legends of the saints and the pasts of the space. And in doing so, they allow practices and stories to carry and cradle the past in ways that make it a source of reflection on the present and future of the shrine.

A few days after the flyer for *khatam shareef* had been put up, a new layer over remnants of older ones, someone had already attempted, only half-heartedly it seemed, to scrape it off. Underneath the torn paper peeked an inscription from an older poster – 'Khatam shareef mai baa-wuzu shirkat farmayen. Shukria.' ['Join the monthly congregation in the state of ablution. Thanks.']

Old as they are, the instructions conveyed in the inscription were still fitting and timely for the upcoming *khatam shareef*. They will be so for every forthcoming congregation until they, too, are eventually ripped off, only to be replaced by a crisp, new sheet of paper carrying the same invitation for a different month. Every few months, relics will amass, a palimpsest will form and the *silsila*, chain of actions, will continue.

14
Chauburji

Umber bin Ibad

The Chauburji neighbourhood of Lahore is named after the Mughal-era monument at its heart – a historic gateway of four towers, built in 1646 during the rule of Shah Jahan and originally serving as an entrance to a sprawling paradise garden. Today, no trace of that garden remains. The monument is surrounded on all sides by busy lanes of car traffic. In recent years, the flow of automobiles has been joined by the regular, gliding presence of the Orange Line metro train, its elevated track curving around Chauburji and passing through a station just south of the monument on Multan Road. In my lifetime, the old gateway has been a steady witness to the dynamism of Lahore life: waves of migration, urban expansion, political upheaval and more. The Orange Line is only the latest addition to this constantly shifting scene.

My maternal family left Ludhiana and travelled to Lahore at the time of partition in 1947. At this time, the monument stood alone by a narrow road connecting the Secretariat at Lower Mall to Poonch House Secretariat at Multan Road. There were fields all around and, in pictures from this period, one can still see farmers working the land. In another photograph from the early twentieth century, displayed in a museum at the Shahi Hamam in Lahore, Anarkali's Tomb in the Secretariat is visible in the distance behind the structure. The area was home to a residential neighbourhood, Chauburji Quarters, on the southern side away from the fields. On the western side, there were the settlements of Sham Nagar and Raj Garh at some distance.

Chauburji Quarters was built by the British to provide residence for government employees. Its distinctive, red-bricked buildings appear at the point where (Islamia Park) Poonch Road leaves Multan Road for another British-period residential area of Arya Nagar, and where, at the

Figure 14.1 The Chauburji gateway, photographed in the 1880s. The image is part of the Bellew Collection of Architectural Views, British Library.

corner, one can find the recently built Temple Road Police Station. The residences stretch down to Ganda Nala (Kacha Ferozepur) Road. This area, like many other parts of Lahore, was a site of rioting and violence at the time of partition. The exodus of non-Muslim communities from their homes in Chauburji Quarters meant that the area also became a site for the resettlement of migrant families in the years after 1947. One of these red-brick homes was allotted to my uncle and gave shelter to my 2-year-old mother and her parents after they arrived empty-handed from East Punjab. After living here for a few months, my mother and her parents moved to a newly built housing area just a hundred metres away from Chauburji Quarters. Oral accounts from my family suggest that the south-western side of the Multan Road was used by the British Army for firing practice, and thus the first housing society developed there after partition was called ‘Old Rifle Range’, part of Chauburji Park.

My maternal family was one of the earliest residents of Old Rifle Range after its development in 1949. It took another 25 years

before another society with the name New Chauburji Park developed in the fields behind Old Rifle Range. It was owned by one of the richest business families in the country, the Saigols, founders of the Kohinoor Group. The residential area then stretched from the Chauburji monument to the end of Sham Nagar, adjacent to the MAO College Ground in the west and Punjab University Ground in the north. Many famous cricket players from Lahore – including Imran Khan, Ramiz Raja and Wasim Akram – played in the nets of different clubs on the MAO College Ground. The ground, however, lost its charm for the cricketers due to the founding of new clubs in other parts of the city and frequent clashes with the owners of the ground over rental costs in the late 1990s.

Green space in the area continued to disappear as parcels of adjacent land were sold for residential purposes. The final blow came with the start of the construction of the metrobus (2011–13), and later, of the Orange Line train project (2015–22), when the grounds on Lake Road and in Chauburji Quarters became storehouses for building materials and supplies for both projects.[1] One can still find dozens of sports shops just under the Orange Line's Chauburji station, however – a legacy of the neighbourhood's earlier status as a cricket destination.

Chauburji has, over the years, become an important junction. It connects several key arteries of this ever-expanding city of Lahore, including Lake Road, Poonch (Islamia Park) Road and Multan Road. Bahawalpur Road on its eastern side leads to Ferozepur Road at Mozang Chungi. It also connects with Temple Road through a narrow lane, now lined with workshops for rickshaws around Janazgah metrobus station. It is difficult to imagine that, centuries ago, the monument served as a threshold to the calm serenity of a garden, built by a Mughal princess and stretching to the banks of the river Ravi.

The identity of the princess remains debated, with differing perspectives presented in oral and written accounts. One of the difficulties relates to the plaque written in Persian on the Chauburji structure itself, which reads, 'Sahib-e-Zebinda, Begum-e-Dauran had this built in 1646'. The great nineteenth-century historian of Lahore, Syed Muhammad Latif (1851–1902) translates the full inscription as follows:

> This garden, in the pattern of the garden of paradise, has been founded …
> [the second line has been effaced]
> The garden has been bestowed on Mian Bai
> By the bounty of Zebinda Begam, the lady of the age.[2]

For Latif, and for most of the locals residing around Chauburji, the 'Zebinda Begum' or the lady of the age was the princess Zaib-un-Nisa (1637–1702), the daughter of Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir, whose tomb is close to Chauburji further along Multan Road. Princess Zaib un-Nisa, however, bestowed this garden to her maiden, Fakhr un-Nisa and commissioned the construction of another garden and a settlement, named Nawa Kot (a new settlement), around her tomb.

Another account, authored by the Punjab Department of Archaeology, suggests that the tomb of Princess Zaib-un-Nisa is in fact in Delhi, India. They argue that the tomb in Nawa Kot is of Mian Bai Fakhr un-Nisa and others. This account acknowledges the commissioning of another nearby garden by the princess, stressing that it was gifted to her maiden Mian Bai Fakhr-un-Nisa even during her lifetime.[3] Another strand of this account, while taking into consideration the construction date of the structure as 1646, completely denies an association with Zaib-un-Nisa, who was only 9 years old at the time. For this account, the title of the plaque 'Supreme among Women of the Age, Mistress of the Ladies of the Realm, Queen of the World, Queen of all Times' suggests that the Begum-e-Dauran (the Queen of all Times) was Princess Jehan Ara, the daughter of Shah Jahan and sister of Aurangzeb Alamgir.[4]

The Chauburji gateway has been the subject of numerous conservation efforts over the decades. Individual towers have crumbled, and their reconstruction has relied on the shifting priorities and funding decisions of the governments of the day. In this cycle of decay, dereliction and restoration, it is not alone among Lahore's historic monuments. A more sinister story of destruction attends two nearby local landmarks, Jain Mandir and another Hindu temple which once stood beside a bus stop across from the Chauburji Ground. In 1992, following the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, India, by Hindu nationalists who believed the mosque had been built over the birthplace of Lord Ram, these two buildings were attacked by groups of Lahoris in retaliation. They were incensed by the news and took out their anger on these symbols of the city's religious minorities. Both buildings were demolished using bulldozers, hammers and other tools. Many small businesses and residences surrounded these temples, which were once integrated into everyday Lahore life. I used to go to the *tandoor* in the temple to get freshly baked bread in my childhood. After the completion of the Orange Line, the Punjab government announced plans to rebuild the Jain Mandir in 2022. However, the Hindu temple is lost forever – its memory is captured only in the name of the nearby bus stop, known

locally as ‘Mandir stop’, which falls on one of the routes through the nearby P&T (Postal and Telegraph) Quarters.

The wave of violence in 1992 was not an abrupt occurrence but part of the already deteriorating sectarian environment around the Chauburji gateway. An early example of this is the founding of the Sipah-e-Sihaba in 1985. A Sunni sectarian group, the Sipah-e-Sihaba challenged the Islamic identity of Shi’a Muslims through political activism and the use of violence. I remember an explosion of grenades in the Chauburji Ground during one of the proceedings of Sipah-e-Sihaba in the early 1990s. Around that same time, Riaz Basra, an active leader of Sipah-e-Sihaba, killed an Iranian diplomat and hid in the Saadi Park area at Bahawalpur Road, a residential area adjacent to Chauburji, before allegedly becoming a mastermind of hundreds of sectarian killings along the Afghan–Pakistan border and a founder of a militant Lashkar-e-Jhangavi in 1996. Over time, cultural institutions like the Venus Cinema at Multan Road began to disappear. New shopping centres as well as mosques have proliferated. The significant expansion of the Masjid Al Qadsia at the northern end of Chauburji area, connected with the Lake Road, has had a major effect on the neighbourhood. Even before gaining international prominence as the centre for the activities of Hafiz Saeed and his Lashkar-e-Taiba following alleged terrorist attacks inside India after 2001, the mosque had already become a dominating local structure from the early 1990s. The expansion of the mosque coincided with the Afghan war and the training of militants for fighting at both eastern and western borders of Pakistan. Even today, after being taken over by the government following Hafiz Saeed’s imprisonment for terror financing,[5] it still has a dominating, fort-like structure and its activities frequently encroach on the road outside, disrupting traffic.

The Chauburji monument, at the centre of the neighbourhood where I was born, has always been much more than a ‘historical’ structure for me. The gateway has been a constant presence on my daily journeys, first as a child between my school and home, and later as an adult between my workplace and residence. The Adabistan-e-Sophia, my school, was at the very end of the Bahawalpur Road adjoining Chauburji and Mozang Chungi at Ferozepur Road. During my childhood, the Bahawalpur Road was not crowded and, as it passes through Miani Sahib, the oldest graveyard of Lahore, the journey always had an element of an adventure. During the last four decades the calmness of Miani Sahib has been reduced because of the sprawling auto workshops and commercial structures stretching from Chauburji to Mozang Chungi. The increasing land encroachment here has led to a court case for the delimitation of

the graveyard. It resulted in some of the encroached land being vacated and the construction of a wall all around the graveyard. Regardless, the vibrant shrine life within the graveyard continues to attract passers-by, drawn to participate in spiritual activities. The brightened spaces at shrines in the graveyard and the wall on both sides of the road reduced the aura of the graveyard, to the point that my mother no longer insists that we read a prayer for the dead as we pass along the road from Chauburji to Mozang Chungi.

The enclosure of the graveyard mirrors changes to the space around the Chaurburji monument following the construction of the Orange Line. The gateway became a lightning rod for controversies around the new infrastructure project, since the original plans for construction saw the elevated railway passing the historic structure by a mere 40 to 50 feet. Aside from the risks attending any construction work so close to a heritage site, there were also concerns that vibrations created by passing trains once the line was in operation would lead to long-term damage to the monument. The efforts of local activists, including the Lahore Conservation Society, saw an intervention from the Lahore High Court[6] that ensured the railway would be at least 150 to 200 feet away from the structure. The gateway has also been reinforced and redecorated by the Punjab Department of Archaeology, its dulled façades brightened by new tiles and paintwork. The grounds around it have been beautified after years of muddy construction work. But the government has also installed an iron rail fence around this space, making it impossible for any passer-by to enter the green space easily. With accessibility at street level dramatically reduced, one wonders who all this work of conservation and beautification was for. But then the train comes gliding along the track, and it is clear that those with the best view are not local residents but the passing passengers of the Orange Line, overlooking the gateway from the elevated rail. Chauburji has witnessed centuries of change and upheaval in Lahore. It is now itself a spectacular sight to be witnessed as part of the Orange Line experience, incorporated handily into this new, twenty-first-century monument to Lahore.

Notes

1 The grounds were returned to use in 2018. However, they have lost their past lustre.
2 Latif, *Lahore*, 189.
3 'Tomb of Zaib-un-Nisa'.
4 Munir, 'Princess Jehan Ara's Chauburji'.
5 'Pakistan: Hafiz Saeed gets 31 years in jail for terror financing'.

6 Shaukat and Tanveer, 'LHC suspends work on Orange Line train project'. This decision was overturned by the Supreme Court, and construction work was allowed to resume under certain conditions. See Bhatti, 'SC sets aside LHC decision against Orange Line train'.

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15

Gulshan-e-Ravi

Ammara Maqsood

Who speaks for the city and to whom is an enduring theme in this volume, and one that underpins some of my own academic concerns. In my work on middle-class life in Pakistan, I write about styles of self-representation and, in particular, the idea of performing for an imagined outsider on a 'global stage'. Often, this imagined outsider takes the form of a stereotypical Westerner, inclined to think of all Muslims as terrorists and extremists and view Pakistan as 'backward'. And, consequently, self-portrayals are geared towards convincing this outsider otherwise. In bourgeois circles in Lahore, for instance, this translates into displaying an attachment to Sufism – proclaimed as the 'authentic' Islam of the region and contrasted with Saudi-inspired Wahhabism, locally viewed as fuelling Islamic extremism. For an anthropologist, this narrative is an uncomfortable one, not least because those who represent it on a 'global stage' – whether by writing about it in international publications and on social media or by curating it on screen, in exhibitions and festivals – otherwise lead lives that are far removed from local expressions of and belief in mysticism. For this reason, I have always been careful not to romanticise the presence of Sufism and associated ideas of and stories about transcendence in everyday life in Lahore. Sometimes, however, some of these stories are so powerful that they engulf you despite your best intentions. This is an essay about one such instance and how a story – perhaps like a good public transport network – can, for a moment, connect areas and people who otherwise have no association with one another.

***

Fizzah Sajjad and I stood in, what felt like, no man's land. As part of our research on evictions related to the Orange Line, we were in the middle of a site visit.[1] Construction for the Orange Line in Anarkali had led to the demolition of numerous residential buildings, shops and part of the courtyard of the shrine of Mauj Darya. On either side, there were half-demolished houses, homes that had been – in some cases, quite literally – cut into two to make way for the construction of the Orange Line. Facing them was the half-completed structure of the Anarkali-Lake road station. The dusty space in the middle where we were standing, dotted with rubble from all the destruction and construction, had been reserved for the construction of a parking lot. It felt odd to stand in that desolate emptiness. My mind drifted and I started thinking about the shrine of Bibi Pak Daman close to the railway station, a kilometre away from Anarkali. I wondered if this space had once been like that neighbourhood. Sometime in the autumn of 2016 I began to regularly visit Bibi Pak Daman. I first went out of curiosity, by way of accompanying an interlocuter from fieldwork but returned a couple of weeks later with my sister. Soon after, we started visiting every Thursday, a trip that I continue to make whenever I am in Lahore. I am not certain why it became such a regular visit for my sister and myself – I suppose in the unsettling time following our father's death a year earlier, the routine of an intimate trip together felt re-grounding. I cannot say I felt a deep connection to anyone there, but I liked the feeling of being enveloped in an energy much bigger than myself.

The congested, winding streets around the Bibi Pak Daman shrine heave with busyness and emotion as, throughout the year, thousands of visitors visit the shrine to pray, ask for help and pay their respects to Bibi. Said to house the grave of Ruqayyah, the daughter of 'Ali ibn Abu Talib, the nephew and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, Bibi Pak Daman has special significance for Shi'as. In practice though, both the shrine and the figure of Bibi Pak Daman is revered by Sunnis and Shi'a's alike and is indicative of the broader attachment in Muslim South Asia to the *panjtan*. Literally meaning 'five people', *panjtan* refers to the Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Fatima, her husband (and the Prophet's cousin) Ali and their children Hussain and Hasan. Together, the five are considered as the most chaste and purified personages in South Asian Islam and this reverence is reflective of the larger importance given to genealogy and blood ties in Sufi and popular Islamic practices in the region. Bibi Pak Daman is genealogically connected to Ruqayyah but its presence and appeal merge into the wider popularity of Bibi Fatima, the Prophet's daughter and the wife of Ali, often viewed as the protector and saviour of anyone undergoing difficulty.[2]

I was brought back to the present by the mention of an *imambargah*, a space used for gatherings (*majalis*) to commemorate Hussain and, sometimes, other imams, by our guide, a resident of the semi-demolished neighbourhood. He mentioned that the government had been so brutal in acquiring land for the construction that they did not even care about breaking down an *imambargah*. He claimed that the family that owned the land passed it off as a residential property, simply to profit from the compensation being offered and the government also did not look into the matter. In part because of the association between the *imambargah* and the *panjtan*, that I had been just thinking about, and, in part, because Fizzah, who has a Shi'a background finds my interest in these things amusing, I turned towards her and jokingly said, 'I bet Bibi did not like this.' Fizzah laughed and nodded, in response. We soon moved on to discuss other aspects of the demolition and the amount of compensation offered and met other families that had been affected by the construction. But our guide's comment about the *imambargah* stayed with me, and I kept thinking about it later on. I was not convinced of, nor interested in, the truth value of his claim but more in how his remarks were a way of articulating the moral tensions and ambivalences that had been unleashed in the neighbourhood. As much of our research has shown, forced displacement from a familiar neighbourhood breaks down networks of care and affinity that residents depend on for everyday wellbeing as well as in moments of crises.[3] Many of the people displaced by the Orange Line construction that we spoke to feel vulnerable, alienated and alone in their new areas. But, equally, not everyone had been completely happy in their old neighbourhood of Anarkali either. Most of the buildings and houses in the area were 'evacuee properties', originally owned by Hindu and Sikh families who left for India at the time of partition and were then distributed and allotted to incoming Muslim refugees. The families currently occupying the properties did not possess legal papers for them, making it hard to sell the property or officially give ownership to their children. The compensation scheme launched by the government simply required a utility bill as a claim of ownership. For families that wanted to move to more upwardly mobile areas or those who wanted to leave a joint family arrangement and live separately, the compensation scheme offered a way to liquidate the property that had not been available before. But this opportunity came at the cost of family disagreements, between those who wanted to move and those who did not, and around who was owed what share of the money being offered.

The family that had allegedly sold the *imambargah* had relocated to Gulshan-e-Ravi, a middle-class residential area, south of Anarkali.

Developed by the Lahore Development Authority in the 1970s, the residential colony had been part of the broader thrust at the time to cater for middle-class housing by expanding towards the south-west.[4] Like neighbouring Samanabad, it was originally intended for professional groups and mid-level (grade 17–18) civil servants. But from 1980s onwards, it rapidly drew in families involved in small businesses, shops and commercial activities, who were attracted to the idea of living in a 'modern' residential area but in close proximity to the city and Mall Road. Like other residential colonies in the south-west that lost some of their appeal when, in the late 1980s, the eastern side of Lahore was expanded for housing under the auspices of the Defence Housing Authority (DHA) (formerly Lahore Cantonment Cooperative Housing Society), Gulshan-e-Ravi is no longer as attractive a destination as it was when first developed. It remains, however, an appealing choice for aspiring and upwardly mobile groups, who cannot afford the exorbitant property prices of DHA schemes. The aspirations for upward mobility and the desire for a modern lifestyle of Gulshan-e-Ravi's contemporary residents are visible in the billboards and advertisements that dot its aerial vista. As the Orange Line train comes into the area, one can see numerous signs for schools, tuition centres offering prep courses for professional exams and for English language proficiency tests for immigration purposes, as well as advertisements of outlet shops for local brands.

Fizzah went to Gulshan-e-Ravi to meet the family of the *imambargah*, and interviewed two women of the family, one younger and the other from an older generation. Their responses to her questions and attitude reflected some of the ambivalences and tensions of leaving their old home and the overall toll that upward mobility sometimes takes on a family. One of the women spoke of the calm and openness of not living in a cramped neighbourhood like Anarkali but it was clear that they missed – perhaps one more than the other – the intimacies and familiarity of the old neighbourhood. Perhaps the women were aware of the rumours circulating about them because they started talking about the heartlessness with which the *alam*, a flag commemorating the martyrs of Karbala, outside their house had been torn down. Apparently, the family had made the Lahore Development Authority officials promise to leave the *alam* untouched and they had agreed, only to take it down as soon as the family left. They also explained that their property had been residential, with one part dedicated for *majalis* and gatherings so it had de facto become an *imambargah* but was not a formal one. They insisted that it had been their home, and they had not sold off the property under false pretences. Bibi Fatima appeared again in the conversation.

Fizzah mentioned her first, as a way of reassuring the women that she believed their claim that the property had been their home and said that she knew that a family of a Syed background like them would never want to offend Bibi Fatima like this. The women latched on to this as an outlet for all the overwhelming changes that they had been dealing with and emphatically agreed. Later one of them spoke of the difficulties that had befallen them since moving, including a man from the family getting injured in a motorcycle accident, and that this was the time they needed the protection of Bibi.

Why did Bibi Fatima come into the interview? Perhaps, as a way of creating familiarity and trust, Fizzah may have referred to her own background with the women at the beginning of the interaction and that had paved the way for other shared reference points to emerge as they talked. Perhaps she had brought it up just to see how the women would respond. In any case, here, like in the previous instance, the mention of Bibi Fatima forged a connection and allowed an outlet for the excesses of emotion and multiplicity of meaning that do not conform to the black-and-whiteness of rational language and decision-making. It is a way of talking of the ambivalences and uncertainties caused by disruption as well as a shared familiar reference to overcome it. And, it is a reminder that people are connected to another, and find connections, not only through present relationships but also through their past and through spectral ties.

Fizzah and I live otherwise disconnected lives from the displaced family, living in a different part of the city and preoccupied with dissimilar concerns. But in moments of crises, whether coming to terms with a bereavement or grappling with the odd contingencies of life in a sprawling city, we also look for meaning in Bibi Fatima.

A few weeks later, while showing some visiting members of our project team around Lahore, Fizzah left behind her new phone in a shop. She later found it, only to be involved in a horrible mugging a couple of weeks after where she was forced to hand over her wallet and phone at gunpoint. Oddly enough, the phone turned up again – it had probably been tossed away by the muggers and Fizzah found it when looking around in the nearby streets. Both incidents, the mugging and the phone being left behind, had occurred in the DHA, a distance away – geographically and in terms of aspirational reach – from Gulshan-e-Ravi. Yet, as Fizzah and I talked about the events and grappled with their strangeness and horror, it seemed that we, too, had no language than to recourse to Bibi Fatima. 'I really do need to thank her', Fizzah said. How else could we explain all that had occurred?

Notes

1 The research was supported by the grant 'Rebuilding Kinship and Care after Dislocation: Lahore and Colombo Compared', funded by the British Academy–Global Challenges Research Fund, Cities and Infrastructure Programme and led by Professor Jonathan Spencer (Principal Investigator).
2 In Muslim South Asia, in moments of difficulty or distress, people often ask Bibi Fatima or other personages, such as Imam Ali, for help. Often, this involves promising that, once the difficulty has ended, to read a *maujza* (a story centred around the miraculous help offered by Fatima or Ali) in a gathering and to distribute sweets.
3 Maqsood and Sajjad, 'Victim, broker, activist, fixer'; Abeyasekera et al., 'Losing a home'; Abeyasekera et al., 'Discipline in Sri Lanka, punish in Pakistan'.
4 Maqsood, *The New Pakistani Middle Class*; Qadeer, *Lahore in the 21st Century*.

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16

Samanabad

Azka Shoaib

The dots and lines on a transit route map do not merely represent static, concrete objects on the ground; they trace the contours of mobility, both geographical and social. Lahore's Orange Line is no different. Despite its limited expanse, a single path through the city, it connects the two versions of Lahore that I have known most intimately. The south-western starting point for the Orange Line metro train, Ali Town station on Raiwind Road, is the nearest station to my current residence in Wapda Town, one of the many gated housing societies dotting the expanding boundary of the sprawling city. From there I can travel to Samanabad, located a short distance away from Islamia Park, the neighbourhood where I spent the better half of my childhood. The two neighbourhoods are similar and distinct in many ways. Unlike Islamia Park, Wapda Town is a planned, gated housing society, with relatively bigger plots of land, privatised security, its own dedicated market and a neighbourhood park for each block. But what remains similar across these two geographical areas are the religiously conservative, middle-class ethos of the residents.

Public transit links around Islamia Park are not new. My mother tells me stories of travelling – albeit infrequently – on the privately operated minibuses from Chauburji Chowk, a short rickshaw ride, or a 15-minute walk away from our old residence in Islamia Park, to her workplace on Montgomery Road in the mid-1980s. The minibus, with only two designated seats for women and no air conditioning, is not comparable to the Orange Line, though. The Orange Line is an emblem of modernity and technological advancement, but for me, it also serves as a connection with my past. A little over a year after its inauguration, in December 2021, I took a ride on the metro. I exited the train at the Samanabad station, took the stairs to street level and stepped out of the

pristine and quiet station into the dusty and chaotic traffic of Multan Road. I had only been in this part of the city twice in the last 15 years.

My family's story in Islamia Park started in 1974. This was a time before Lahore had been struck by the epidemic of gated, private housing societies that now plague the outskirts of the city, consuming vast tracts of arable land. A handful of government housing schemes providing for its employees had been introduced but the city, for the most part, retained its cohesiveness.

My grandfather, a retired accountant from the Audit General's office in Layyah, moved into an 8-*marla* house on Kamal Street in Islamia Park, Lahore (1 *marla* is the equivalent of 225 square feet). He had little say in the matter, since his friend of 40 years, a retired subdivisional officer known to us as Chaudhry *sahab,* had insisted they spend their retirement years as neighbours, across the street from each other.

Chaudhry *sahab* had learnt three things during his time as a government servant: persistence, the value of old friendships and the art of persuasion. It was no wonder he later went on to pursue a career as a lawyer. Before my grandfather could express any reluctance to leave his community in Chauburji Quarters, where he had lived for 20 years, Chaudhry *sahab* had already bought the 20-*marla* plot of land for him on 19 Kamal Street. He had also managed to dissuade some notorious local power brokers in the neighbourhood from grabbing the land while it remained vacant. He did this by constructing a *chaar deewari* (four walls) around it. My grandfather later divided the land and built three houses – one for himself, and the other two for his elder sons. He could repay Chaudhry *sahab*'s loan for the plot over the years, he was told, with an air of nonchalance that made it clear Chaudhry *sahab* was not a man who kept score.

You could not have met a pair so different from each other as these two. In appearance, the two men were full of contrasts. Chaudhry *sahab* kept a clean-shaven face. His slicked back dyed hair hid any hints of grey, and his meticulously ironed burgundy suits evoked an old man's desire to hold onto notions of respectability infused with a colonial hangover. My grandfather, on the other hand, wore his dhoti with pride, doused himself in *itr*, a cologne, and combed his snow-white long beard every Friday before *jummah* prayer. The two friends never went to the same mosque. Chaudhry *sahab* offered his prayers in the Barelvi Masjid, five times a day, every day without fail, while my grandfather, being a staunch Ahl-e-Hadis offered his prayers in the Ahl-e-Hadis Masjid. The two men never compromised on their beliefs. Despite these differences,

their friendship never faltered. Sectarianism as a dividing force had not penetrated and suffocated public life in Pakistan just yet.

Over the next three decades at 19 Kamal Street, the keys for the adjoining two houses where my uncles lived transferred through many hands, from distant relatives to a range of renters. New people moved in as older ones moved out to posh new neighbourhoods, in search of larger houses and better drainage – all of which was made possible by heftier pay cheques. With this regular turnover, new friendships were forged while old ones were maintained. The sense of community and camaraderie on Kamal Street remained a constant. I wonder if it was the narrow streets and the physical proximity of the houses that gave a sense of safety on the streets and made everyday interaction with the neighbours so seamless.

Members of the Gujjar community, a major caste historically associated with occupations of agriculture and husbandry, were the de facto political actors in Islamia Park who held substantial influence at the local level. Their lineage dates back to the eighth-century Gujjar kingdom in Rajasthan but because of the diversity within the community, it is hard to trace back the origin of the Gujjars who came to reside in Islamia Park. Among these was Jagga Gujjar, a character whose life story became central to the plot of a number of Lollywood Punjabi movies. He resided in a *haveli* not too far from 19 Kamal Street and was popularly known for Jagga tax, a payment traders and shopkeepers were demanded in exchange for security and the permission to encroach and squat on land. He died in an infamous police encounter years before I was born, but his status remained that of a local legend. The Gujjars next door took immense pride in being associated with him. Songs from the critically acclaimed 1979 film *Wehshi Gujjar* (*Jagga Tax*) could frequently be heard blaring from their *dera* (abode), outside which buffaloes, tethered to a rope on the street outside, lazily sunbathed.

Knowing who is who in the neighbourhood made the side streets feel safe, even for my 10-year-old self. Growing up in Islamia Park in the early 1990s and 2000s, I had constructed a mental map of places I could walk to and those that were out of bounds for me as a girl on foot. I had annotated this map with my own landmarks and boundaries, like hand-drawn markings on a paper map to make sense of the space as I knew it. I could extract this nifty guide from memory at leisure, its contours shepherding me through the neighbourhood. I had marked the busy Poonch Road as out of bounds. If my brother and I had compared notes on which public spaces we were allowed to occupy, there would be stark differences. The city streets seemed gendered. Young, unmarried

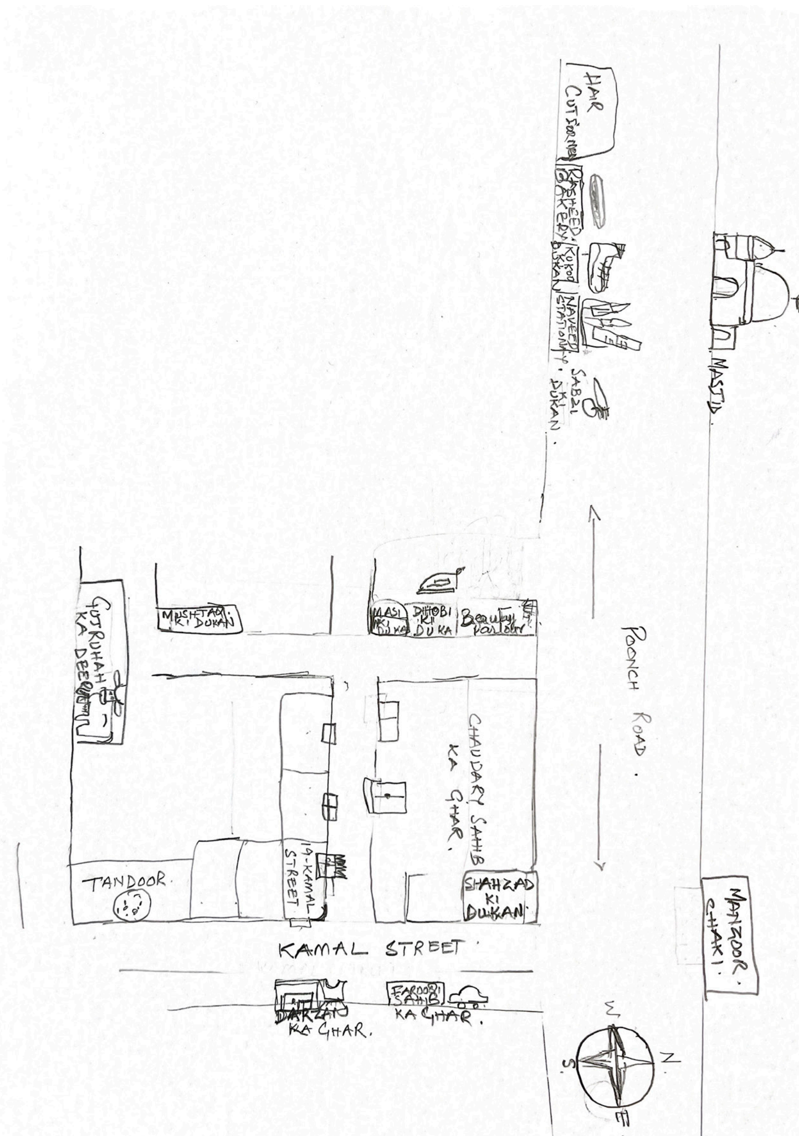

Figure 16.1 Azka Shoaib's hand-drawn map of Islamia Park, recreated from childhood memories in 2024.

girls were seldom sighted alone on the main arterial Poonch Road, where all the major street vendors, butcher shops, bakeries, men's barber shops and mosques were located. Perhaps the young women were considered too naïve and fragile to navigate the heavy traffic of Poonch Road on foot.

I was allowed to go to the men's barber shop, accompanied by my mother, until I was too big to fit in the shop's highchair for kids. Then,

from my pre-teens, visits to the men's barber shop were replaced with visits to the women's salon tucked in the side street adjacent to our house. The women's salon used to have posters plastered on the windows, showcasing white women with puffy hairstyles and swirly strands of blonde hair with a centre parting, probably from the 1970s and 1980s. Inside, one of the hair stylists would have the same puffy hair, dyed to a lighter shade of brown, with a fringe matted on her forehead. I wonder if that was a marketing gimmick to demonstrate their styling capabilities.

Glancing at the landmarks I had created for myself on Kamal Street became a ritual of sorts. I did it even when I knew perfectly well where to turn and how far to walk. On my recent visit to Islamia Park, I found this habit had not changed. As I walked down the familiar streets, they felt a little too small. I could not tell if it was because my strides had become longer or because I had become too accustomed to the wider streets of Wapda Town.

In 2021, the geography of Islamia Park looks a little different from how it did in the early 2000s. Whether this is a ripple effect of the construction of two splendid Orange Line stations nearby, or simply a reflection of the broader property boom Lahore has experienced in the last decade and a half, I do not have sufficient evidence to infer a correlation. Chaudhry *sahab*'s old house on Kamal street is now torn down. A tall plaza is being constructed in its place. I remember it was routine for me to glance across the street toward the top window of his house whenever I stepped out. This was where his eldest daughter-in-law would appear around 9 o'clock in the morning, every weekend without fail, as soon as the *sabzi wala* came, pushing his rickety vegetable cart stacked with greens and reds. Riffat aunty would pop her head out the window. Her first question was always the same: '*Kya bhao hain*?', which roughly translates to 'What is the rate?' She was never entirely satisfied with the *sabzi wala*'s answer and proceeded to express her disapproval, always sprinkled with a sarcastic jibe and a comparison to the *mandi*'s (market's) rates. The *sabzi wala* had memorised the routine by now. He would respond with a lament about *mehngai* (price hikes) and express praise for his higher quality vegetables. He would demonstrate his point by picking up one of the items and waving it in the air. The haggling would continue for a minute or so before Riffat aunty scrunched up her nose, a sign of her surrender, and narrowed her eyes, doing the math and finally confirming her order. Next came my favourite part: Riffat aunty would let down a basket attached to a string. The *sabzi wala* would pick out the items from the stack on his cart, nodding to her instructions to weigh the vegetables carefully, and would then place them in her brown

plastic basket. I marvelled at this system she had fashioned that allowed her to bypass the inconvenience of navigating the busy Poonch Road.

I found that *Maasi ki dukaan*, a makeshift shop that was run out of the small, residential quarters of an elderly woman, is now closed. It was located a mere 10 feet away from my house and was the reference point from which I gauged the distance to everything else. I visited it every afternoon. The shop's panoply of colourful candies, Top Pops, Chilli Milli and bunties used to sit on an elevated rectangular slab enclosed with a railing on three sides. The fourth side was covered with a hanging, ragged cloth. Behind it used to sit Maasi Nazeerah, cross-legged, with a wrinkly face and a short stick in her hand to help her grab items too far for her to reach. On rare occasions, when she was too sick to man the stall, her husband would be seen on the other side of the cloth hanging. Every Eid, a table would be added next to the slab, displaying a collection of plastic toys. My favourite one used to be the tiny white horse with a propeller pump attached.

I hope the closure of this shop is only temporary. I seek comfort in the last conversation we had some years ago. Maasi Nazeerah had delightedly announced that, unlike the garbage collector's son who had taken up his father's profession, her son had been employed at a wealthy man's house, a sign of upward mobility in her books.

The *tandoor* that used to operate on the vacant land behind our house, serving hot rotis and plates of spicy daal, has now been displaced by a newly built house. The electric blue FX owned by our neighbour, Farooqui uncle, is no longer parked outside our old home's window. The last I heard, he had moved to Defence Housing Authority, an affluent housing society where many middle-class Lahoris aspired to live and so enter the ranks of the 'elite'. The old gaming centre with its snooker tables and Bollywood-inspired playlist, as well as the convenience store *Shahzad ki dukaan* and *Manzoor chakki*, a shop that sold flour and rice, have been replaced with a real-estate agent's office and a milk shop. I wonder if the latter is owned by the milkman from the Gujjar family who used to live in the large *haveli* with the tiny door on Kamal Street, and delivered milk to us on his rattling scooter.

My family left Islamia Park in 2003, in the midst of a property slump – the house was sold to a family of six and the inheritance divided among my grandfather's children. By the early 2000s, old transformers that had not been replaced in decades were struggling to handle the rising demand, and electricity blackouts had become a frequent occurrence in the neighbourhood. Even though this was quoted as one of the reasons for our move, the aspiration to become a homeowner in a gated housing

society had been hanging in the air for a while. A series of events at my father's workplace made it possible for him to receive enough funds to buy a 1-*kanal* plot of land (about 5,400 square feet) and construct a two-storey, four-bedroom house with a garden in Wapda Town where three of his elder brothers had already moved.

Much has changed in our lives and in the city in this time. Islamia Park still holds some remnants of my childhood, but it is no stranger to the effects of Lahore's property boom. These are apparent in what remains and what does not in the neighbourhood today. Wapda Town, too, has experienced some haphazard development: commercial areas have enmeshed with the residential, raising an outcry from residents who believe this to be an antithesis of what a planned gated housing society should look like.

On my recent visit back to Islamia Park, I could not help but think back to the cartography of permissible spaces I had drawn up as a girl. My ability to walk to Samanabad station or even to the nearest bus stop at Chauburji Chowk would still be hampered as an adult, and now a visually impaired woman, due to the lack of unobstructed pedestrian infrastructure and the presence of heavy traffic on Poonch Road and Multan Road/ National Highway 5. The Orange Line has opened up new possibilities for movement in Lahore, but the last-mile problem – how to access each point in the network – remains unresolved, especially for women and individuals with disabilities. My journey from Ali Town to Samanabad was, in many ways, a journey back in time. But it was also a reminder that mobilities in the city remain stratified, and the geographies we inhabit as Lahoris cannot simply be divided into static categories of the old and the new, but ought to be understood as part of a living organism in constant flux.

17
Bund Road
Mishele Ijaz

> 'Lahur ra jan barabar kharida-im
> Jan dada-im va jannat-i digar kharida-im'
>
> ['I bought Lahore at the price of my life
> And giving up my soul attained a second paradise']
>
> Nur Jahan (1577–1645)[1]

Today is a busy afternoon in Lahore, streets engulfed by traffic, pigeons peering at the people on the roads, men leering at the women walking by. I drive from the tree-laden streets around Mall Road to the smoke-ridden junction at Bund Road. I want to check the site of the newly constructed Orange Line metro, hoping to understand why my city was torn apart to make room for its path.

The Orange Line is not the first of its kind in my city. Recent development initiatives in Lahore have taken the shape of large-scale infrastructure projects, including continuously expanding highways, underpasses, mass transit systems and gated housing communities. This paradigm of development is implemented by agencies that aspire for Lahore to be counted amongst other 'world-class cities' of today. It seeks to create an identity for the city based on the services and experiences it can provide rather than something attuned to its particular social, economic and historical context.

Following the announcement of the Orange Line in 2015, several citizens groups in Lahore rushed to condemn plans for the overhead train track, the construction of which threatened the seventeenth-century Mughal monument Chauburji alongside other urban heritage sites. The action of these groups, which I supported at the time, prompted a court challenge and secured some small concessions – ensuring, for instance,

a minimum distance between the monument and the elevated rail line. However, my concern was that some key questions regarding the need for this specific train were never thoroughly addressed. The ways in which the Orange Line responded to the public transport requirements of the Lahore, its relevance in light of previously funded transportation studies, the mode of transportation it ought to adopt, the route that would be the most effective, its alignment with prevailing real estate trends, long-term economic feasibility and the rationale behind the entire planning model were never the subject of thorough discourse between the planning agencies and the people of Lahore. At the end of the day, it would be the people of my city that would live in the midst of this 'project'. Its success or failure should not be determined by the fact that it was allowed to be built; it will be determined, over the course of decades, in the ways it impacts our memory of and relationship with the city of Lahore.

Our relationship with our cities is an intimate one. Much like our families, our cities play an important role in nurturing us. They give us an identity, shape our understandings of the world around us and expose us to a diversity of communities and social values. This relationship may not always be one of love, but it is inherently laden with expectations. We expect our cities to provide us with shelter, with comfort and with a continuing sense of hope. In doing so, we inadvertently form a mental picture of what we expect our city to look like, and what we envision its future to hold. This picture varies from person to person and is often the root of much conflict surrounding the idea of 'development' in a city.

It is the nature of this relationship that has brought me here today, staring at the Orange Line station at Bund Road, standing at the edge of the chaotic traffic engulfing Multan Road. This time, I have not come to protest. I come with the hope that perhaps seeing the train will grant me some solace.

The train, however, is nowhere to be seen. Eight rowdy lanes of traffic hurtle along this road. In the middle rests the giant station, supported by a spine of steel and concrete. Cars zoom past, motorcycles meander through the traffic, cyclists struggle to find their space. Shopkeepers are busy chatting with each other, immersed in debates over the prime minister's governing style. I look up again. Still no train, just a silent overhead station, reaching down to street level with its protruding staircases and escalators (see Figure 17.1).

I expected the station to be more intimidating, more daunting, more threatening. I think back to the scores of families displaced to make room for the train's path. I had imagined that the built structure

Figure 17.1 The Orange Line station at Bund Road, 2021. Image by Mishele Ijaz.

would tower triumphantly over the remains of the buildings that had been engulfed by the project. Instead, the station appears as an outcast, shunned by all in the vicinity, clinging to the track the way a small child clings to its mother's legs.

A shopkeeper catches me staring at the station and calls me over to his shop. He points across the road to the other side, through the smoke hovering between cars.

'It has divided us; it is the border between us and them.' I struggle to decipher what he means.

'How is this a border?' I ask him. 'Where is the divide?' I decide to walk across to see for myself. I cannot. There is no crossing, just the constant movement of speeding cars. The other side of the road is barely visible. He is right. This train station and the train track marks a border. A brutal divide, filled with obstacles in the form of unruly traffic, uneven tarmac, exposed drains and piles of garbage (see Figure 17.2).

'It wasn't always like this. My shop used to be bigger, now the road has eaten up most of it. I used to get customers from the other side, now no one bothers crossing over. We're lucky if there is only one accident a day. This Orange Line has made the traffic worse.'

I look up again as the shopkeeper details his dislike of the giant steel box. For him, the box is a reminder of the massacre that created it. During the construction process, shops and buildings were sliced, roads

Figure 17.2 Crossing Multan Road under the Orange Line track, 2021. Image by Mishele Ijaz.

were torn apart, and neighbourhoods separated, birds displaced, history altered. Not everyone remembers this violent process now, and he knows that. People of this city forget and move on. The city adapts to new forms of chaos. It continues to grow around its wounds, which may heal quickly or fester.

'Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar.'

The minaret of a nearby mosque stands taller than the Orange Line track (see Figure 17.3). It asserts its presence, its importance, its power, welcoming a group of men entering for the Friday prayer. In the distance another mosque calls for the same prayer, though its call seems smaller, hidden, protected from the busy flow of Multan Road. I follow this call into a side street, trying to locate the source. On the left, a winding road echoes with the sound of motorcycles and rickshaws. It is filled with men of all ages, attending carts of all sizes, some selling rose petals, gladioli or marigold and painting the street as it leads into a little neighbourhood.

The neighbourhood, Pakki Thatti, provides a home for the hidden mosque. Part of its name, 'Thatti', derives from one of its founders, Thatti Ram, who, along with other members of the Arrain agricultural community common to this part of Punjab, cultivated this land in the late 1700s during the era of Governor Lehna Singh. The other part 'Pakki', which translates as 'permanent', was added later in the Mughal era, when newer, permanent structures were erected in the village.

Figure 17.3 A mosque on Multan Road, near the Bund Road Orange Line station, 2021. Image by Mishele Ijaz.

I see no traces of that village today. Instead, as I walk deeper into the neighbourhood, I am greeted by another line of vendors. Their carts are laden with scarves and socks, speaking of the winter that is on its way to engulf the city. Women haggle with the vendors over prices and rummage through their bags for change. Successful buyers walk ahead, dispersing into the network of little streets leading to their homes.

As I follow these paths deeper inside Pakki Thatti, the chaos of the outside is replaced by the stillness of the warm afternoon, the shrill chirps of mynas, the occasional chatter of men and the scent of lunch on the stove. The Orange Line does not exist here. Cars are not a threat; children on cycles dominate the streets. The call for prayer has ended, however, and the mosque remains hidden from my sight. Instead, a face peers at me through a door. An old man rests on a rusty garden chair, enjoying

the sound of the mynas from the street. I walk over to him hoping to ask him about the hidden mosque. He continues to gaze at me, but his mind is elsewhere. I ask him about the mosque and he points towards Multan Road. I ask if there is another mosque inside these cluster of buildings. He begins to speak about the neighbourhood.

'There was no building [here]. This was all farmland. Greenery everywhere. Orchards and orchards of pears and guavas. Lemon trees too!'

His name is Iqbal. He points to the houses around him, a sea of modest residences huddled next to each other. I try to imagine the orchards, the fruity scent of ripe guava as Iqbal continues to talk about his life, the 70 years he has spent in Pakki Thatti. He reminisces about the early days of Multan Road before it became victim to smoke and chaos. The time when not a single car could be seen on the road, when Pakki Thatti was a small village, when the ideology of 'development' had not quite pulled these lands into its grasp. Iqbal claims to be the oldest living resident of the area, with most of his childhood friends having passed on or relocated to other parts of Lahore.

'There is development everywhere, housing societies piling on top of each other. This city is overflowing with people. In my childhood, we used to have gardens spanning over 5 and 6 *kanal* [2.5 and 3 square kilometres], now everywhere they are selling houses on plots of less than half a *kanal* (250 square metres). Everything is going too fast, even these youngsters on their motorbikes, always zooming past me.'

Iqbal continues to conjure memories of the old Pakki Thatti, sitting on his chair. One of the oldest structures he remembers seeing in his childhood is a shrine. He points to a green dome across the street.

'Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar.'

As soon as he does, another call for prayer echoes from the dome. There it is! The hidden mosque is next to this shrine, bearing a green dome peering from behind the wall. The wall is new, but the shrine was built in 1935, before Iqbal was born. As Iqbal concludes his stories, I thank him and make my way to the shrine, deeper into the neighbourhood, further away from Bund Road, further away from the Orange Line. A humble corridor greets me, paved by uneven bricks, leading to a metal gate. As I step inside, the shrine presents itself in its full glory. Its polished floor and freshly painted arches draw me inside. It is quiet here, calm – just one man silently sweeping the marble floor. He barely gives me a glance before returning to his broom. The only sound here is of the birds flying across the dome, of the leaves as the sunlight dances through them, falling on the shrine.

I catch a few whispers from the shrine itself, tales of its beloved saint, Syed Hakim Ali Shah, born in Gujranwala over a century ago (see Figure 17.4). The walls of the shrine echo his farewell to his wife and children, his decision to embark on his spiritual journey, roaming

Figure 17.4 The shrine of Syed Hakim Ali Shah, 2021. Image by Mishele Ijaz.

the jungles through East Punjab and central India, living in forests with little food and in tattered clothes. Stories of his love for the Qu'ran and for his creator spread across cities, as more and more people embarked on similar spiritual journeys under his guidance. He eventually settled in this village, Pakki Thatti, and remained here until his passing in 1940. Today, the shrine serves as a place of solace for his followers, but also a reminder of the Lahore that used to be. This Lahore is found increasingly only in the whispers of old buildings and the stories of old men and women. It is gradually being devoured, piece by piece, by an ideology that refuses to acknowledge its existence.

I sit here for a while, memorising this quiet corner of the city, knowing that one day it may also be enveloped by the pressures of a relentlessly expanding city. The chaos of Multan Road still rings in my ears. The smoke of those cars still burns my throat. The shrine continues to sing of its past, but it is difficult to listen without a sense of melancholy, already mourning its loss to a future that is yet to come.

As I make my way back to the Bund Road station, the green dome recedes behind trees and buildings. Iqbal is no longer sitting at his door. Motorcyclists zoom past me. Children have gone inside, the scent of dinners on the stove lingers in the air. The evening breeze swims through the streets, dissipating as it hits the main thoroughfare of Multan Road. I hear the train approaching. It has finally arrived at its station.

Note

1 Quoted in Suvorova, *Lahore*, 26.

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18

Salahuddin Road

Timothy P. A. Cooper

In the 1990s a film professional named S. M. Shahid wrote a guidebook for budding actors. It was 'dedicated to those young people … separated from their parents' and estranged from their families due to the social stigma attending their involvement in the local Lollywood film industry.[1] The book aimed to help runaways avoid the networks of fraudsters, pimps and cheats that stood in the way of their access to centres of industry activity like Lahore's Evernew Studio on Multan Road. Shahid's book also helped me to think about the relationship between film and public morality in Pakistan, the focus of long-term ethnographic fieldwork I conducted in Lahore between 2017 and 2020. Spending my days among media traders on the city's Hall Road, visiting decaying analogue cinemas and gleaming multiplexes, and grappling with the city's struggling, indigenous, 'Lollywood' industry, I found that the movement and materiality of film images revealed much about the micro-politics of secular and religious life in Pakistan.

While the centre of gravity for the national film industry had changed to the southern city of Karachi by the late 2010s, Evernew Studio continued to provide a base for the production of Punjabi and Pashto-language films. I met the studio's most experienced professional, the film editor Z. A. Zulfi, through his nephew, who worked for a television wholesaler on Hall Road. Zulfi never had to navigate the moral or generational anxieties that inspired Shahid's book. His mother had encouraged him to follow his uncles into the film industry. As a schoolboy in the late 1960s, he came to work in a major studio in Karachi and observed the splicing of celluloid strips and the sequencing of sound. He learned that a film comes together through its debris – on flatbed editing stations, through discarded frames, gummy emulsion and fragile

perforations stuck together with sticky tape. Thanks to his decades of experience, Zulfi did not see the production of Pashto films or the waning of Lahore-based production as any kind of aberration. He had worked as a studio assistant during the making of Pakistan's first Pashto-language film *Yousuf Khan Sherbano* and the first Gujarati-language film *Maa Te Maa*, both made in 1970. After a brief stint working for the national television broadcaster PTV in Islamabad, he came to Lahore. In a career spanning 50 years, he edited over 300 films and won 10 national awards given by the short-lived National Film Development Corporation.

Like the stretch of the Orange Line between the Salahuddin and Sabzazar stations that looms beside it, Evernew Studio is an uncanny exception to Lahore's urban sprawl of shrines, markets and colonial architecture. The ornate gates emblazoned with the name of the studio open out on to a long, rectangular courtyard boasting well-tended gardens and fountains. These elegant surroundings are easily the equal of the finest hotels and *havelis* in the city, for which they have doubled as an idealised backdrop for the song-and-dance sequences that populate Lollywood films. Next to the studio floors, pitch black and vast as aircraft hangars, a warren of streets and alleyways have provided the backdrop for thousands of movies. They have barely changed since the studio was last renovated following the success of the 1956 Punjabi movie *Dullah Bhatti*, produced by studio owner Agha Gul's company Evernew Pictures. Visitors to the studio will find a green dome used in films set everywhere from Palestine to internal Sindh, a police station that doubles as a *haveli*, and tall, gated doors that have figured as the prestigious entrance to a hallowed university or the forbidding mouth of Lahore's Kot Lakhpat prison. When I stood at these gates, I saw the whitewashed vastness of the unfinished Orange Line dominate the skyline, ruining many of the high-angle shots that the studio itself was designed to facilitate (see Figure 18.1).

The development of synchronic sound, recorded alongside moving images, necessitated the creation of modern film studios. By the end of the silent era, innovations in camera technology had made outdoor shooting the norm. But the new 'talkie' film could not coexist with the ambient noise of city streets, nor could the larger, more cumbersome sound cameras navigate rough terrain or confined spaces. The coming of sound required the creation of simulated cities in studio lots: a Lahore, and an India or a Pakistan assembled through icons, signs and symbols, all able to be silenced, dubbed, framed and adapted. As the years progressed such spaces grew, becoming cities in miniature with their own physical and social character, with *wild walls* capable of

Figure 18.1 The Orange Line's elevated track, photographed from Evernew Studios, 2018. Image by Timothy P. A. Cooper.

sliding aside to allow the movement of cameras. Unlike the cities, towns or villages that they emulated, studio-streets were designed to be frictionless, offering visual pleasure, and allowing the free and unfettered movement of bodies in space and time. It was a utopia of a kind, particularly in the peculiar root of the word as it lies somewhere between *good place* and *non-place.*

As one of a trio of nearby lots that includes Shahnoor and Bari Studios, Evernew stood out for its possession of what was, for many years, Pakistan's only domestic laboratory for the processing of celluloid film. The lab closed in 2015 and with it ended one of the world's last celluloid industries in a global marketplace now reliant on digital technology. Inside the abandoned lab I saw loose strips of film litter the floor, while a devotional poster of the Kaaba indicated its recent heritage as an ordinary place of work. Although full of decay, it reverberated with signs of life. The trickling sound of running water and the busy rustling of nesting birds led Zulfi and I to a storeroom where stacks of film cans lay encrusted with dust and rust. Interspersed along the dark walls, the dim flickering lights and the wobbly floorboards were stacks of paper memorabilia, song books, lobby cards, posters, all among the ubiquitous peels of celluloid film curling and browning in the variable temperature (see Figure 18.2).

The problems that led to the closure of the film lab also gave rise to the distinct aesthetic of Lollywood films. Always hampered by a lack of funding, the high rate of import duties on processing in the 1980s meant

Figure 18.2 Discarded celluloid in Evernew Studios, 2018. Image by Timothy P. A. Cooper.

that chemicals required for developing one reel were stretched for 8, 10 or even 20 reels, leading to overexposure, saturated colours and an improperly fixed image. Expired film was bought from Iran for as little as a fifth of the price of new stock. Despite the clarity and verisimilitude of digital film, Zulfi found it to be 'unnatural'. What he described to me as the 'rain' of scratched celluloid, or the 'fog' of poorly processed film stock, more closely resonated with the environmental conditions of everyday life in his city. When conducting research on Lahore's Hall Road, several of my interlocutors remembered small markets dedicated to the sale of discarded strips of 35 mm Pakistani films, refashioned and sold as kinetic

toys to be placed over night-lights for the entertainment of children. Zulfi himself seemed ambivalent about whether Lollywood films should have been preserved, or even if it was ever the government's remit to do so. Surrounded by hundreds of boxed flat-screen televisions, Zulfi's nephew told me he equated a film in storage with failure. 'Flop films', those bereft of an audience are those that are 'on the shelf or in the archive', as he described them, rather than playing in movie theatres.

Zulfi was most perturbed by his experience of being invited to a local university to give a workshop. He took with him safety film, cellulose acetate used as the base for photographic emulsions, negative and positive reels, and a 35 mm strip with optical sound. When the students responded with astonishment at the materiality of the medium, Zulfi felt their education in film was doomed. For him, thinking in images and working with the thing-ness of film are two sides of the same coin. While the grain and the patina of celluloid-era Lollywood film might evoke the messy and contingent forces of daily existence, the difficulties of knowledge transmission between generations or the absence of the state, for Zulfi the labour of editing occupies a different philosophy of mind. This philosophy of mind comes from its evocation of spaces, times and concepts about which it speculates. He gave me an example from his career as an editor.

It was April 1986. In a few short years, the era of Zia-ul-Haq – the theocratic military ruler who stole power in a 1977 coup – would reach its sudden end. Benazir Bhutto, the daughter of the prime minister deposed by Zia and executed at the behest of his courts, had returned from the United Kingdom to lead her father's Pakistan People's Party (PPP). She was greeted by a crowd of millions at Lahore's national monument, the Minar-e-Pakistan. As the crowds progressed from the city to Iqbal Park, the slogan 'People's Party *aa gaye, aa gaye* [have returned]' resounded in waves. On the other side of the city, Zulfi was working on editing *Ghulami*, a Punjabi film whose producer was involved in PPP politics and who had organised a crew to record Benazir's demonstration. Zulfi was given the footage to edit and carefully watched over four hours of rushes, soaking up the sounds, images and the atmosphere emanating from the three-million-strong crowd. Towards the end of the speech, slogans were raised against the incumbent ruler. 'General Zia *Jayega, Jayega* [must go].' He decided to end his coverage on that note. As a skilled and experienced editor, he was aware that the affective force carried by the sound of thousands of enthused voices was more powerful than the image from which it emerged, of Benazir and her supporters on stage. What was more, the multitude of voices was even more stirring than a

shot of the crowd itself, innumerable and vanishing into the dark of night. Zulfi searched long and hard for a closing shot that would do justice to the sound of the chanted slogan. Earlier on in the footage, he had noted a well-framed shot of a plane flying over the Minar-e-Pakistan. The fact that Benazir had arrived directly from the airport to give her speech must have been fresh in the mind of one of the cameramen. Movement, monumentality, modernity; the inky black of night, the distant white arrow of a Pakistan International Airlines plane. It was an appropriate image to illustrate the energy of the assembled crowd chanting, 'General Zia *must go, must go*.' As he recounted ending his round of editing with this shot, he began laughing, 'That is how General Zia actually went.' Two years later Zia's plane crashed after departing from Bahawalpur Airport, bringing to an end over a decade of military rule.

What is it about film that allows it to tell the future, even when its images are not experienced as prophecies?

In his guidebook for budding actors, S. M. Shahid suggested it was the ontology of film that young people found so appealing, defining film as, 'walking and talking pictures lingering on screen'.[2] It is also this ability to both distil time and movement, and make them reproducible, that allows film images to distribute themselves across shared pasts, presents and futures. To Shahid's definition, the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze might have added *thinking*. In his two-volume work on film, Deleuze argued that while philosophy creates concepts, cinema reproduces the machinations of thought in fragments of time, collages of movement and sound, sequences and juxtapositions.[3] These are not theories about film, but *film as thought.* Zulfi's edit did not speculate on the end of Zia, nor did it tell the future; it manifested in the present what Deleuze called the 'coexistence of all the sheets of the past'.[4] To think through film is to become immersed in the presence of the experiences to which it gives rise. Despite their jarring proximity, Evernew Studios and the Orange Line metro train are suitable companions in the '*forum of frictions*' this book documents. Both reorganise the lived experience of space, appeal to the promises of bodies in movement and make these experiences reproducible. Both give rise to images of time and movement – from the uncanny vision of Lahore that the Orange Line's elevated track affords to the overexposed celluloid of Lollywood cinema and its uncertain antiquity – that interrogate, occupy and think alongside the rain and fog of everyday life in the city.

Notes

1 Shahid, *Film Acting Guide*, 5 (author's translation).
2 Shahid, *Film Acting Guide*, 19 (author's translation).
3 Deleuze, *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*.
4 Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 99.

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19
Khatam-e-Nabbuwat/Shahnoor
Ali Raza

18 January 2021: Surrounded by television cameras and countless mobile phones on a bright winter afternoon, a group of *maulvis* from the Aalmi Majlis Tahaffuz-e-Khatam-e-Nabbuwat[1] gathered at the entrance of a recently renamed metro station in Lahore. A select few were garlanded with flowers. A panaflex banner hanging above this august assembly declared it as an occasion for expressing gratitude at the renaming of Orange Line station number 19 as 'Khatam-e-Nabbuwat' station.

Among the media outlets covering this celebration was KTV, a self-described 'web-based TV channel established in 2019 with an objective of providing quality programmes on topics relating to the finality of prophethood, [and] honour of prophethood'.[2] The TV channel's mission included spreading awareness on '*radd-i-Qadiyaniat*' (Rejection of '*Qadiyaniat*')[3] along with covering assorted 'current affairs' and 'national and international developments'.

In front of escalators carrying commuters to and from the Orange Line platform, a KTV reporter – suitably decked out in a pink sweater and bright red scarf – interviewed a high-ranking *maulana* on his long struggle to get the station renamed. The *maulana* described how Islamist parties had come together with area residents and the 'entire city of Lahore' to get the station renamed. The local union council acceded to their demand and voted, unanimously, all 274 members, to have the station renamed. But, according to the *maulana*, this decision ran into (unspecified) administrative objections and hurdles. The matter was then taken to the Lahore High Court, which, in a 'historic' decision, decreed that station 19 be renamed as *Khatam-e-Nabbuwat* station. For the *maulana*, this victory was not simply a victory for the

area's residents. It was a victory for the entire city and indeed the *entire* Muslim *ummah* ('community of believers'). It was also a rejection of '*Qadiyaniat*'.

With the learned *maulana* nodding approvingly in the background, the reporter turned towards the camera and declared this day as a joyous occasion for all Lahoris; considerably more joyous, in fact, than a few months earlier when this 'modern' train was inaugurated. Other interviewees pointed out that potential blasphemers and renouncers of the finality of prophethood would be chastised whenever they passed through this station. Pious believers would be spiritually uplifted and cleansed, because no Muslim worth his (always referred to as 'his') salt could ever pass through this station without sending God's blessings and their humble salutations to Prophet Muhammad.

There were some predictable hiccups. Even after the decision to rename station 19 had been made, a technical glitch threatened to sour this historic victory. As it turned out, the train's computerised announcement system could not properly enunciate the name of the station. This, as another *maulvi* recounted to KTV's reporter, necessitated another *bharpoor ihtejaaj* ('intense agitation'). This, too, led to a historic victory. There is nothing that man cannot do, the *maulvi* added, once he sets his mind to it. The train's computer eventually 'learnt' the new name, with the happy outcome that 'Khatam-e-Nabbuwat station' was announced loudly and clearly, much to the delight of the Prophet's *ashiqaan* ('lovers'). Other *ashiqaan*, though, were not quite satisfied. As one YouTuber commented, the announcement system could only manage a very muffled '*Khatt-may*'. '*Nab-BU-wat*' remained incomprehensible and barely audible.

Still, the station and its immediate surroundings leave passing commuters in no doubt about the significance of its name. In the grand foyer, where commuters purchase tickets and pass through turnstiles on their way to catch the next train, hangs a banner with the Qur'anic verse, in both Arabic and its Urdu translation, declaring the Holy Prophet to be the seal of all Prophets (*Surah e Ahzab*, Verse 40).[4] Just outside the station, on each of the massive and imposing columns that support the enormous weight of the platform, are signs put up by the *Aalmi Majlis-e-Tahaffuz-e-Khatam-e-Nabbuwat* that read: 'Orange Line istation nambar 19, Khatam-e-Nabbuwat istation, Gormint aur High Court say manzoor shuda' ['Orange Line station number 19: Khatam-e-Nabbuwat station, approved by the Government and High Court'].

Next to the station, two panaflex banners hang from a four-storey building and an awkwardly leaning electricity pole. Each is emblazoned

with a Qur'anic verse reminding believers to send their salutations and blessings on the Holy Prophet.

And yet, in the surrounding streets, the station is still referred to by its earlier name: Shahnoor. The train, too, gestures at this former title. 'Shahnoor' is etched on the panel showing the train's passage through the 26 stations that dot its 27-kilometre route. Above it, the label of Khatam-e-Nabbuwat appears freshly glued on the panel, a hint, perhaps, that the transition from Shahnoor to Khatam-e-Nabbuwat is not yet complete (see Figure 19.1).

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A few minutes' walk from the station, across the historic and ever-bustling Multan Road, is the landmark after which the station was originally named: the now decrepit Shahnoor Studios. But this, too, was the product of a renaming. Established as Shorey Studios, this compound housed one of the half-dozen studios that made colonial Lahore one of undivided India's leading centres of film production. Owned by the father–son duo Roshan Lal and Roop Kishore, Shorey Studios were abandoned in 1947 during the devastation of partition. Unclaimed for years, they were eventually acquired in 1951 by one of the subcontinent's most renowned film producers and directors: Syed Shaukat Hussain Rizvi.

Born in 1914 in the town of Azamgarh, United Provinces, Rizvi began his career in the fast-growing Indian film industry in 1930. He started out as

Figure 19.1 Khatam-e-Nabbuwat label on the Orange Line station map, 2022. Image by Ali Raza.

a lowly assistant in Calcutta. Over successive years, he progressed through the industry and moved to Bombay. He directed his first film, *Khandaan*, in 1942. Even in a time of global war and anti-colonial agitation – or perhaps because of it – *Khandaan* was an instant hit. The film was notable for its stellar cast, including an up-and-coming acting and singing sensation named Noor Jehan. *Khandaan* firmly established Rizvi as a talented director and its box-office success allowed him to lay the foundations for Shaukat Art Productions. He and Noor Jehan fell in love and married in 1943, a year after the film's release. The following years saw several successful films from Shaukat Art Productions, including *Jugnu*, released in 1947 with Noor Jehan starring alongside Dilip Kumar, in which a young Muhammad Rafi made his debut as a singer.

After partition, Rizvi and Noor Jehan migrated to Pakistan with their three children. In Lahore, they set about reviving their stalled film careers. In 1951, they acquired the abandoned Shorey Studios and renamed it 'Shah'-'Noor' after themselves.[5] In the years to come, Shahnoor produced hundreds of films. Their first Punjabi film, *Chanway* – released the very year Shahnoor was founded – was a massive hit. It was also a film in which Noor Jehan made her directorial debut, alongside featuring as lead actor and singer (she sang 11 of the film's 12 songs). Despite their success, Noor Jehan and Rizvi's partnership did not last long. They divorced in 1955. As part of the divorce settlement, Noor Jehan kept custody of their three children whilst Rizvi kept their studios.[6]

Shahnoor Studios remained Shahnoor Studios. Today, not much is left of a once bustling compound, which in its heyday saw the most renowned figures in the Urdu, Punjabi and Pashto film industry pass through its gates. The studio compound lies in a decrepit state. It is now mostly used for residential purposes, with few visible markers of Shahnoor's glory days.

Rizvi died in 1999. He left behind a rich legacy and countless films to his name. He also laid the ground for a procession that begins from Shahnoor on the eighth day of Muharram – when Shi'as remember Abbas, the flag bearer of Hussain's army at Karbala. Every year on this day, since the early 1950s, the compound comes to life with thousands of mourners clad in black. Accompanied by a *Zuljinah* and assorted *tazias* and *alams*,[7] the mourners set off on foot, walk across Multan Road under the Orange Line's tracks towards Imambargah Qamar-e-Bani Hashim, located a few kilometres away. This is also where Syed Shaukat Hussain Rizvi is buried.

Today, the defunct studios stand as both a testament to an undying love for Hussain, the Prince of Martyrs, and a reminder of the love once

shared by one of the subcontinent's most glamorous and successful celebrity partnerships.

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In years past, much of this history has been overshadowed by another major development, and another Rizvi. The area around Shahnoor became infamous as the starting point for multiple agitations led by the fiery Allama Khadim Hussain Rizvi (no relation to S. H. Rizvi). For years, Rizvi served as the *Khateeb* (chief cleric) of Jama-e-Masjid, Rehmatul-lil-Alameen, located a few minutes' walk from Shahnoor/Khatam-e-Nabbuwat station. Rizvi founded an organisation called Tehreek-e-Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah in 2015, which after two years simply became Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP). He shot to national fame as a defender of Mumtaz Qadri, the bodyguard who killed Punjab Governor Salman Taseer in January 2011 after Taseer criticised Pakistan's blasphemy laws.[8] Rizvi sustained his notoriety through a series of violent protests, 'long' marches and mass rallies aimed at condemning blasphemers and protecting the honour of the beloved Prophet.

Khadim Rizvi died in November 2020, following a *dharna* (sit in) in Islamabad condemning the French president's alleged remarks against Islam. His funeral was, most likely, the largest funeral Lahore has ever witnessed, a testament to his remarkable popularity amongst great swathes of the city's population and beyond. He was buried in his mosque, just over a kilometre from Shahnoor Studios. His *darbar* (shrine) is today frequented by devotees seeking his blessings. Entering the small room housing his grave, followers softly chant *Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah* ('I submit to / I come to / I obey you, O Prophet of Allah'), the chief slogan of the TLP. They scatter fresh rose petals on to an ever-rising mound. Some kiss the wooden frame that lines his grave. Others respectfully touch his turban which sits just underneath his *qatba* (gravestone) and the multi-coloured neon lights that illuminate the room. A few lovingly pick fresh petals from the many thousands that cover his grave and gently nibble them for *barkat* (blessings).

Khadim Hussain's *darbar* stands in marked contrast with other structures in the neighbourhood. For one, it has an imposing minaret that towers above all other structures. It is also covered in sparkling new tilework. Beside the mosque, a few *phool farosh* (flower sellers) conduct brisk business. The walls above their roadside stalls are plastered with images of Baba ji, as he is fondly called, and the many slogans he popularised in a way that few before him ever did: 'Tajdar e Khatam e

Nabbuwat, Zindabad Zindabad'; 'Labbaik ya Rasool Allah' and the most fatal of all slogans, 'Man Sabba Nabiyan Faqtulu hu'.[9]

Right next to the main entrance of the *darbar* and *masjid* (mosque) are metal shoe racks where devotees are invited to leave their shoes, free of charge. They come and go at all hours of the day, but not before obtaining the blessings of Baba ji and the modest *langar* (food and drink) that is offered from time to time to all who visit his grave.

Lahore, this timeless city of shrines and holy figures, has acquired yet another *darbar* and saint.

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Baba ji's first miracle (other than his reported return to life shortly after he was pronounced dead) was the renaming of Shahnoor station to Khatam-e-Nabbuwat. Whilst the change had been under consideration for some time, it was formally adopted shortly after Baba ji's death. Naturally, the TLP could not have been happier. In yet another YouTube video, a TLP leader expressed his gratitude and declared this decision as a victory for all believers and ardent lovers of the Prophet. This station, he added, will stand until *Qayamat* (the end of days) as a reminder of the sacrifices made by Allama Khadim Hussain Rizvi in upholding the honour of the Prophet and His status as the Last of all Prophets.

And yet, underneath this conscious erasure of place names lurk other memories and histories. Not all are easy to efface. Even amidst the enforced piety in the station's environs, it is easy to spot signs of the mundanity, profanity and absurdity of everyday life. Right beside the two banners exhorting believers to send salutations and blessings on the Prophet, a massive advertisement offers a special, limited-time discount to kids looking to learn karate. Another poster, plastered on a lamppost, flogs a miracle medicine that can transform a 'weak' body into a beautiful and 'PLUMP' body for a paltry 1500 rupees.[10] Meanwhile, on the dust-covered glass at the station's entrance (see Figure 19.2), right opposite a column with TEHREEK-e-LABBAIK PAKISTAN spray painted in bold, capitalised, letters, I see that someone has gingerly traced:

Love is Fake … Fake …

Figure 19.2 Dust on the windows of Khatam-e-Nabbuwat/Shahnoor station entrance, 2022. Image by Ali Raza.

Notes

1 World Congress for the Protection of the Finality of Prophethood.

2 See the coverage posted on *YouTube* on 19 January 2021, 'KTV | Orange Line Metro Train | Khatam-e-Nabuwat Lahore'.

3 '*Qadiyaniat*' is a pejorative term used for the Ahmadi faith, declared non-Muslim by the constitution of Pakistan in 1974. The relevant constitutional amendment declared that 'A person who does not believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of The Prophethood of Muhammad (Peace be upon him), the last of the Prophets, or claims to be a Prophet, in any sense of the word or of any description whatsoever, after Muhammad (Peace be upon him), or recognies such a claimant as a Prophet or religious reformer, is not a Muslim for the purposes of the Constitution or law.' This was specifically designed to target Ahmadis, who follow the nineteenth-century religious reformer (or, as their detractors allege, 'false prophet') Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The amendment has been weaponised by organisations dedicated to defending the 'finality of prophethood'. This includes the Aalmi Majlis-e-Tahaffuz-e-Khatam-e-Nabbuwat (not to be confused with the more modestly named Majlis-e-Tahaffuz-e-Khatam-e-Nabbuwat) and dozens of other organisations. Today, the amendment and related blasphemy laws are used as a means for persecuting this most vulnerable of religious minorities in Pakistan.

4 This verse is widely held to be the definitive declaration on the finality of the Prophethood, and one which Ahmadis are allegedly in violation of.

5 'Shah' is an honorific term for Syeds, descendants of the Prophet.

6 Lodhi, '21 years on'.

7 *Zuljinahs*, *alams* and *tazia* are symbols of commemoration meant to honour and mourn the seventh-century martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson, Hussain, at Karbala (in modern-day Iraq). The 10 days of Muharram, the first month in the Islamic calendar, are some of the most important and sacred of days for Shi' as (and many Sunnis too).

8 For many on the religious right, Qadri's act made him a *ghazi* (a warrior) while his execution in 2016 made him a *shaheed*, a martyr.

9 'Whoever insults the Prophet, kill him.' The killers of Priyantha Kumara, a Sri Lankan man murdered in Sialkot following a blasphemy accusation in 2021, cited this alleged *hadith* as justification for his lynching.

10 Emphasis in original. The top line of the advert reads 'Kamzor jism ko khubsurat aur MOTA karne-waali dawa'. 'Mota' literally means fat and typically also signifies health and wellbeing.

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20
Sabzazar

Umair Javed

A flock of *qingqis* (motorcycle rickshaws) and auto-rickshaws compete for passengers at a congested spot under a large electricity pole, located only a handful of meters away from the Sabzazar Orange Line station. Tailing the *qingqis* from the metro station takes you into Sabzazar – literally 'green garden' – along a heavily commercialised artery that serves as the neighbourhood's main boulevard.

It is a journey through congested traffic of all types. The gridlock is heightened by the fact that the boulevard is dug up and partially closed on one side, with work to replace a trunk sewage line approaching two years at the time of writing in 2023.

Passengers clustered at regular interruptions – outside bank branches, restaurants and hardware and sanitary stores – make the road seem like an informal feeder route for the mass transit line, ferrying people back and forth along the stretch for as little as 20 rupees. Given the absence of usable footpaths, the burden placed on the commuters is to wait while occupying the tiniest sliver of road space.

If you follow the auto-rickshaws, the journeys are less linear. They take passengers down narrow neighbourhood lanes, towards closely clustered *kiryana* stores, and eventually to the metal gates of Sabzazar's homes. The rickshaw costs more than double, or even triple, the cost of *qingqis* from the metro station, but saves the commuter a couple of thousand steps. A reasonable trade-off for more prosperous residents.

Planners call these 'para-transit' solutions. The government built a mass transit line on an elevated track with a large station. It is up to the people to figure out a way to get to it. They can choose to walk the entire way, navigating on a sliver of dug-up road. They can walk and wait amidst dust and traffic for a *qingqi*. Or they can hail a rickshaw from

a street corner and pay more than what the metro ticket will eventually cost.

In the words of one Sabzazar resident, 'ye hamesha aadha kaam kartay hay' (they – i.e. the government – only do half the job). For locals, building a mass transit station for the area is just half the job. Helping residents get to it safely is the task that remains outstanding. Replacing the old, faulty sewage line is the fulfilled half. Leaving the road dug-up for two years is the unfulfilled bit. Go back long enough and it is possible to view the Sabzazar housing scheme, in its entirety, as a half-kept promise of the state.

Sabzazar was developed in the 1980s by the Lahore Development Authority (LDA) – the primary government entity responsible for developing and regulating urban infrastructure in the city. It covers almost one thousand acres of formerly agricultural land to the south-west of Lahore. The scheme was planned as an extension to Allama Iqbal Town, another LDA development from the previous decade that lies to its east across Multan Road, the city's major north–south artery.

Early accounts of Sabzazar's development are not readily available but LDA records suggest that the project was designed to increase the supply of affordable, suburban and planned residential land for 'common citizens'. Affordability was primarily a question of plot size, and here Sabzazar (and the adjacent Allama Iqbal Town) differed from earlier LDA projects. The majority of the plots offered in these two schemes were 10 *marlas* or less (1 *marla* = 225 square feet), compared to older projects such as Gulberg and Garden Town, where plot sizes ranged from 1 to 6 *kanals* (1 *kanal* = 20 *marlas*). The sale of land took place through an application-based ballot process. Successful applicants had to pay a government-determined price for the land and then a series of development charges before receiving possession.

The idea of Sabzazar reflects the developmental ambitions of post-colonial governance that shaped urbanisation in late-twentieth-century Pakistan. At its heart was the state's desire to convert agrarian form into urban use, informed by ideas about rapid modernisation and more 'profitable' and 'efficient' use of land. To do so it drew on powers of eminent domain enshrined in frequently coercive land acquisition regulations. Beginning in the early 1980s, rural landowners from the area that eventually became Sabzazar received notices stating that their land was to be acquired for 'developmental' purposes. The law, and jurisprudence at the time, left little room for contestation.

The scheme also reflects the ideological currents that shaped the priorities of a heavily bureaucratised municipal management. They are

expressed in the mapping of wide boulevards, block-wise ordered streets, specifically designated commercial areas, amenity plots for educational institutions and neighbourhood parks on to the western peri-urban fringe of the city. Surrounded by rapidly expanding informal settlements, Sabzazar was conceived as an instrument in the attempt to make a modern metropolis. Its final form was meant to denote the bureaucrat's imagination – neat, ordered and legible.

But as with many large urban development projects, the inadequacies and contradictions of a flawed state machinery become obvious in their unfolding. Marketed as a welfare-enhancing initiative for the 'common citizen', Sabzazar failed on that premise from the outset. The LDA reserved a large number of plots at a concessionary price for its own officers and for others serving in the Government of Punjab. These were made available in a separate ballot.

The plots eventually allocated to the general public were reportedly expensive, and development charges on a 3-*marla* plot alone were nearly 30,000 rupees in 1985 – almost five times the annual average household income at the time. Given its location on the south-western fringe of the city, the scheme made sense only to those who had private means of transport or, more categorically, for those who were not really interested in moving but were looking to store excess savings in land. Thus Sabzazar's 'common citizen' was actually the middle-class citizen, and in 1980s Pakistan, the middle-class citizen was most often found in the higher tiers of government service.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, other related contradictions came to the fore. To secure political stability, both military and civilian governments distributed a steady flow of favours and material patronage to political allies. Urban land became convenient currency, and a complicit LDA greased most trades. In Sabzazar alone, 260 plots were allegedly given to politicians, bureaucrats and party supporters through the discretionary authority of Nawaz Sharif during his stint as Chief Minister of Punjab (1985–90). One legislator from Rawalpindi reportedly received 14 plots in Sabzazar and other LDA schemes.

As urban real estate became increasingly politicised, Sabzazar's transactions and reputation grew murkier. Growing up in New Garden Town, an older LDA scheme, during the 1990s, I remember hearing stories about luckless relatives embroiled in its land disputes. As with many from that first, post-partition generation who looked for barometers to measure civilisational decline, my father would occasionally cite LDA scandals – including those in Sabzazar – as an example of governmental and societal decay. These were nearly always accompanied by a refracted

element of parenting: an embedded 'be grateful we have an un-litigated roof over our heads' sort of lesson.

While writing this chapter, I went looking for evidence of some of those scandals. Newspaper reporting on dubious land deals is hard to find, but there are a range of cases documented in legal records from judicial proceedings and ombudsman interventions. Some of the earliest complainants were local landowners who had sold agricultural land to the government under the promise of receiving developed residential plots. The case of one such landowner, Mrs Fehmida Naureen, is instructive. In 1984, she transferred 2 *kanals* of agricultural land to the LDA with the expectation that she would be allocated two residential plots. It took 14 years and an intervention from the government ombudsman's office for this expectation to materialise.[1]

The politics of forged land registries and *qabza* (forcible takeovers) eventually subsumed all, even the preferred beneficiaries of this scheme. A retired government officer, formerly Secretary of the Communication and Works Department, was an allottee of a 3-*marla* plot in 1989 but had to fight a decade-long court case against the LDA for possession. He was unable to receive possession for an additional two years even after the court ruled in his favour.[2] A professional athlete awarded a plot in 1986 for sporting achievement under the Chief Minister's discretionary quota saw his entitlement summarily cancelled by the LDA on the pretext of a fire in their record room 25 years later.[3] Many successful applicants complained of delays in getting possession, despite making full payment, while the ignominy of multiple people ending up with the same plot number became commonplace.

By the late 1990s, Sabzazar was widely seen as a compromised locality, tainted by the LDA's corruption and marred by the long-drawn-out litigation of competing claimants and proposed beneficiaries. A decade and a half after its initial development, only a quarter of its 4,000 plots were occupied, with the rest either mired in legal controversy or retained empty as repositories of wealth for the already privileged. Much like the mass transit line's promise of smooth connectivity, compromised by poor linkages to the neighbourhoods it is meant to serve, Sabzazar's promise of a secure and suburban middle-class existence was only half-kept.

The locality suffered a brief and dark foray into national prominence at the twilight of the twentieth century. On 4 April 1998, brothers Waseem and Rauf, along with their companions Shakeel, Salahuddin and Ashraf, were shot dead in an extrajudicial encounter by policemen from Sabzazar police station. The men were suspected of armed robbery, and the police claimed that they opened fire while fleeing.

The Sabzazar encounter case, as it was called, would have remained just another example of police brutality from the 1990s until national politics found some use for it. In March 2001, the military regime of General Musharraf filed murder charges against Shehbaz Sharif – a political opponent and the deposed Chief Minister of Punjab – for having directly ordered the police to commit the killings as part of an effort to assert greater political control in Lahore's peri-urban fringes. An anti-terrorism court handed out a guilty verdict, preventing Shehbaz Sharif from contesting elections that were due to be held in a few months. The case eventually went into appeal and finally ended in acquittal in 2008, after the victims' families dropped the charges – just in time for Shehbaz Sharif to return as Chief Minister.

Fortunes for the scheme have changed unevenly since then. Population pressures, escalating land values, and improvements in the city's main arteries that specifically cater to car owners have led to a gradual influx of residents. This relentless expansion has filled out Sabzazar by default, with homes now constructed on nearly every street. As of 2023, local real-estate brokers I spoke to estimated that no more than 15 per cent of existing plots are now empty.

A more recent dynamic, in part aided by the improved road infrastructure, is Sabzazar's relentless commercialisation. With new suburban developments appearing much further south of Sabzazar, what was once the south-western fringe of the city now appears to be much closer to the city's commercial centres. Reflecting the privatised and increasingly market-oriented foundations of urban life in Pakistan, many older homes on the scheme's main roads have been converted into private schools, private hospitals and clinics, and real-estate offices. As in older localities elsewhere in Lahore, loud declarations about the potential for commercial enterprise in a well-connected neighbourhood have pushed up land values considerably. A nondescript 3-*marla* home in Sabzazar now costs 33 times the country's average per capita income.

Through all the intervening years of land politics, scandal, commercialisation and the current jump in property prices, the initial promise of ordered, suburban life in Sabzazar has been half-kept at best. Current residents protest government indifference to upkeep and maintenance in the neighbourhood, asserting that they have been abandoned as newer schemes were built and serviced elsewhere in the city. There are complaints about solid waste management and residential sewage lines. Piped natural gas is fleeting in the summer and a distant memory by wintertime. The pretence of planned distinctions between commercial and residential spaces seems to have been done away with altogether.

A small bribe to an LDA functionary is enough to produce the right type of commercialisation order.

The complaints are occasionally punctuated by a recognition of the government's efforts at introducing mass transit to the area, however belatedly. The usual refrain one hears is 'something has been delivered, even if a lot more is needed'. This is entirely in line with the longstanding contradictions of statehood in Pakistan. Perhaps out of constitutional compulsions and the promise captured in its initial foundation, the state still adheres to an idea of 'delivering something' to its citizens. But it falters at many steps – in its definition of the citizenry, in managing political considerations and in actively persisting with sustained service.

Notes

1 *Punjab Ombudsman Office – Annual Report*, 1998
2 *Punjab Ombudsman Office – Annual Report*, 2001
3 Lahore Development Authority Commission Inquiry – Ref 21/2016: Mohammad Hussain s/o Hassan Din, r/o H. No. 24, Street No. 02 Taj Park Siddique Colony, Noor Road, Badami Bagh Lahore. Vs. 1. Lahore Development Authority through Director General, 467/0-11, Main Boulevard, M.A. Johar Town, Lahore. 2. Director, Land Development I, 467/0-11, Main Boulevard, M.A. Johar Town, Lahore.

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21

Awan Town

Nida Kirmani

When I travelled to Awan Town last November – a largely middle-class residential area located in the Iqbal Town *tehsil* of Lahore – it was my first time visiting the area. Despite spending much of the last decade living in Lahore, I had never actually conducted fieldwork in the city. Most of my ethnographic focus has been in the area of Lyari, a dense, working-class area in Karachi. For this reason, when asked to contribute to this volume, the prospect of a mini-ethnography of Lahore felt both exciting and intimidating. In order to quell some of my initial fears – as women often do – I took a male friend who is a native of the city and who grew up not far from the area to help me navigate. I was especially curious about what the experience of riding the train was for women and whether it was opening up new avenues of mobility for them. At first glance, my impression of the train itself was good. I saw women travelling on the train with their families but also in all-women groups – they looked relaxed – and I personally felt comfortable on the train as well, which is rare in a context where one is otherwise almost constantly stared at by men.

When we got out of the station on Multan Road, however, the atmosphere became different. It was a Sunday evening, so while there was a steady flow of people coming in and out of the station, the traffic was light. Unlike the men exiting the station, the women did not linger but hurried on to their destinations. There was a *chai* stand as you exited where only men were sitting around. There were also several food stands selling snacks where a few women could also be found with male companions. I tried speaking to some of the men working at these stands, but beyond curt responses, I did not get much from them. I decided to ask my friend to chat with men as well while I listened, since, clearly, it was

not normal for a random lady to make small talk with men. My friend had a little more luck than me, but this did not seem like a sustainable strategy in terms of finding out more about this area. After walking a short distance down the Main Road, which became more residential the further one walked away from Multan Road, we decided to go back to the *chai* stall, have a cup of tea and re-strategise.

While we were drinking our *chai*, my friend asked whether I should just walk up to some of the women who were coming in and out of the station and try talking to them. This seemed like it might feel awkward given the fact that most seemed either busy with their families or in a hurry to get to where they were going. As pointed out in the book *Why Loiter?* (2011), which focuses on Mumbai, women in public spaces can never be found idly hanging around in the same way that men do; they must cloak themselves in a guise of respectability by either surrounding themselves with family or hurrying to get to their destination. For women, hanging around with no clear purpose is suspect. Having spent time in various South Asian cities, I have realised that the absence of women in public places is particularly conspicuous in Lahore. In Mumbai, Delhi or even Karachi, one occasionally sees some women, but it feels like a rare sight in Lahore. Hence, finding women to chat with in or around the station seemed next to impossible.

I decided to ask the older gentlemen running the stall, who seemed friendly and curious, whether he might know any women who may be interested in speaking with us. The *chai-wala* immediately agreed to help and disappeared into the station. He emerged a few minutes later with the station manager to whom he introduced me to as 'his sister', despite our acquaintance of less than 10 minutes. The station manager agreed to help, and we followed him up the escalators back into the station.

The station manager introduced me to the young woman who was in charge of checking bags as women and children entered the station. She was a petite 20-year-old in a uniform, with a scarf loosely draped around her head. Thankfully for me, this young woman was not at all shy. In fact, she seemed ready to burst. She told me her name was Mariyam; she moved to Lahore six months ago from Pakpattan – a small city about 160 kilometres away from Lahore, which is best known for the shrine of the Sufi saint, Baba Farid. After initially working as a tout for a pharmaceutical company, Mariyam landed a job as a security guard for a private security firm, which paid slightly better and held the promise of future job security. Mariyam used her pay to fund her studies. 'I didn't want to end up [like] my siblings,' she said without any explanation. She is one of seven, and their father, who I later found out

was estranged from her mother since she was a child, passed away some years back.

I asked Mariyam how the Orange Line impacted women, thinking more about the experience of female passengers rather than the workers. She responded immediately, 'It has a terrible impact!', bursting my initial bubble of optimism. She proceeded to tell me how she works six days a week for 20,000 PKR (approximately £84 at the time of writing in 2022), which is the minimum wage in Punjab, but she says she hardly ever gets to take home the full amount. 'They find any excuse to cut our salaries.' This includes being a few minutes late or taking a sick day.

A few weeks before, Mariyam tripped and fell on the stairs of the working women's hostel, where she shares a room, and ended up breaking her tooth. Ironically, she fell while she was rushing so as not to be late for her shift and have her wages cut. She ended up spending the day in hospital dealing with her injury. Despite the fact that she sent photos of her medical reports and her broken tooth to her manager, they deducted PKR 4,000 PKR from her next pay cheque – one-fifth of her month's pay.

Mariyam is employed by Security 2000, a private company subcontracted by the government that, according to news reports, employs around 500 security staff and, like most security firms, is run by retired military officers. Employees like Mariyam get no sick days, no time off for holidays, and technically no breaks, not even for meals. The workers eat, of course, but in a hurry since it is technically treated as a favour rather than a right. The same is true for being able to actually ride the train. Fellow staff members allow each other to travel for free, but it is officially not allowed by the company. While the male staff take their meals together, since Mariyam is the only woman staff member at the station, she eats alone in small booth next to the x-ray machine.

Mariyam works at three different stations, Awan Town, Khatam-e-Nabbuwat and Sabzazar, sometimes working the morning shift, which is 6.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m., and sometimes afternoon/evening shift, which is 2.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. She says she wishes she had a fixed schedule at one particular station so she could organise her life more easily but, so far, the company has not agreed. Mariyam also gets told to do overtime regularly, which means working a 16-hour shift; I say 'told' because she does not have a choice to refuse, and while it means a little extra money (550 PKR for an overtime shift), it also means she has to work for 16 hours straight with little or no prior notice.

The next time I visited Mariyam, she was working an overtime shift at Wahdat Road station, which is not one of her regular stations.

Mariyam told me more about her family and her move to Lahore. I found out that Mariyam is the only child from her parent's marriage; the other six siblings are from her mother and father's previous marriages. Three of her siblings live at home with her mother in Pakpattan, including two brothers with their wives and children and recently, her sister also moved in with her family after her husband had a stroke. This seems to be what pushed Mariyam to leave home on her own and pursue a better life for herself in Lahore.

When she had first moved to Lahore, about six months ago, she stayed with her two *khalas* (her mother's sisters), but this did not work out, and she ended up taking a room in a working women's hostel. Here, she pays 4,000 PKR per month and shares with another woman who works in a beauty parlour. The hostel is in Thokar Niaz Baig, a few stops away from the stations where Mariyam usually has her duty. She has to leave the house at 5.30 a.m. in order to make it in time for her 6.00 a.m. shift. Because the trains only start running at that time, Mariyam walks from her hostel and takes a *qingqi* (pronounced 'chingchi') – a Chinese-produced rickshaw that seats six to eight people – from the main road to the station. A few days later, she sent me a grainy video of the walks she makes daily just after sunrise to show me just how desolate it is when she is going to work. My big-sister instinct kicked in as I worried for her safety during these lonely commutes.

I made a plan to travel with Mariyam on her way home from work one day to get a sense of her commute first-hand, but when I arrived at Sabzazar Station, where her shift was due to end at 2.00 p.m. that day, she told me that she just found out that she had to work overtime again. I asked Mariyam what would happen if she refused to take the overtime shift, and she said 'they'd tell me to turn in my uniform'. She tells me that there is no point in complaining to the upper management. 'They treat women *so* disrespectfully! There is no point in talking to them.' I asked whether there were any women at the head office, and she said they were all men. 'If there was a woman there, I would probably break down and cry in front of her.' Mariyam would love to find a better-paying job with fixed hours; I ask what kind of job she would like and she says, 'I don't really know, just something respectable.'

A few weeks later, I called Mariyam to see how she was doing, and she told me that she had quit her job and moved back to Pakpattan. She said her mother was not well, and the hostel had changed the timings for when residents could come and go for the winter months. Therefore, she was not able to leave in time to reach her morning shift, and the doors were closed by the time she returned from her evening shift. Mariyam

tried to find another place to stay, but it seemed the stress of trying to navigate Lahore on her own was outweighing the stress of living at home with her family in Pakpattan. For now, her dream of finding a respectable job and building a better life for herself in Lahore would have to be placed on hold.

Mariyam's story highlights the complex manner in which development interventions, such as the Orange Line, alter the gendered fabric of the city. While the train has opened new modes of mobility for women in the city, particularly the middle and lower middle classes, and while it is also providing employment opportunities for some, the change is limited by the constraints of patriarchy and neoliberalism. Women may be able to get from point A to point B with less hassle, but they still cannot occupy public space in the same way as men. For women employees, like Mariyam, the opportunities are even more limited; they may find a place within the urban economy but only at the bottom rungs where they exist in a state of constant precarity.

22
Wahdat Road

Fahd Ali

We sit quietly and sip our tea. It is March 2022, and the temperatures have been unusually high for this time of year. There is a terrible warm breeze that hits our faces each time we raise our heads to take a drink. The big, overhead rail structures of the Orange Line nearby seem to be sizzling and one can hear the pillars rumble as a train whizzes by. I am at a small open *chai* hotel on the side of the service lane near the metro station at the intersection of Lahore's Wahdat and Multan Roads, two of the busiest roads in Lahore. It is a lazy afternoon and I can catch snippets of surrounding conversations at the *chai* hotel, which are mostly about the prospects of a change in government in Islamabad. I take another sip from my cup and ask if the new train line has benefited the area. The question is not directed at anyone in particular – I am merely attempting to initiate a conversation, but it turns a few heads. One man in a nearby group quickly responds in affirmative. Another asks me if I am new to the area because the project has transformed it completely. I am in a way *new*, I suppose. The last time I was in this part of the town was more than 15 years ago.

I have not travelled in Lahore's public transport for more than 15 years. The last time I can recall taking a bus to somewhere in Lahore was back in 2007. Since then, I have spent six years studying in the United States where using public transport was part of everyday life. But ever since my return to Pakistan in 2013, I have not made any effort to travel by public transport for intra-city travel. The choice is entirely deliberate. It is aided, first, by my mother's acquisition of a car and later being able to afford one myself. Using public transport is essentially a class-based experience in Pakistan. This is aided by the splintered nature of the infrastructure that services the poor and lower-middle-class areas well but

skirts around posher localities. In the years since my return to Pakistan, I have not made any effort to even 'experience' the new public transport services that have been introduced for travelling in Lahore. Taking the Orange Line to the Wahdat Road stop was certainly a 'new' experience in a city that continues to face several challenges in providing accessible transport to its residents.

In my childhood, travelling on Wahdat Road to Allama Iqbal Town was a persistent feature of my brothers' and my life. Our cousins used to live there and, being almost the same age and in the same school, we often had sleepovers and hung out together. The ride in the Orange Line with my five-year-old son seems like a far cry from the experiences of my childhood. The train station itself carries you to a different world. One often hears remarks at the station about how this does not feel like Pakistan. It is an extraordinary experience with its cleanliness, automatic ticketing machines, well-mannered and helpful staff and, most of all, the punctuality of the service itself. Lahore's public transport system has transformed in many ways over recent years. The city is now served by a driverless Orange Line train service, Lahore Metrobus and TransLahore bus services that ply on different routes.

Growing up in Lahore, moving around the city was a daily challenge. In the 1980s and 1990s, the city's transport system was dominated by privately run 16-seater wagons, popularly called 'Toyota' or 'Hiace'. The wagons displayed numbers on their windscreens that represented their routes. Most of their operations were unlicensed and they did not follow any pre-authorised routes. The latter was never an issue. All that required the wagon drivers to start following a different route was to display a different number. More often than not, this happened during the middle of a wagon ride – passengers were given the option to either get off the wagon or come along on the new route!

The wagons had a very particular seating arrangement. The original seats were usually replaced with customised smaller seats that would increase the passenger capacity from 14 to 16 in the main compartment. The front seat was reserved for women. There were no laws or rules regulating this, but the back compartment was usually packed with men, who often had to bend down to stand in the wagon. The women could only be accommodated in the front but sometimes, when there were more than two female passengers, in the back of the wagon as well. There were several things that I realised about this even as a child and later as a young adult. The front passenger seat could technically allow only one passenger. Yet it was common for two women to be squeezed there. Often, this meant that the female passenger who sat next to the

driver was within the 'accidental touching' distance. I remember this so vividly as a child travelling with my mother. Often, she would ask my younger brother or me to sit next to the driver whose hands would often rub our thighs. On rare occasions, we would get a chance to sit next to the window. Those were some of the best experiences. We would quickly roll down the window and feel the air brushing through our fingers as the wagon sped through the traffic to reach its next stop. Abuse in the wagons was quite common. It would often happen at the hands of fellow passengers. Without any recourse to an alternative, we had to rely on whatever was available in terms of mass transport. As we grew older and started travelling alone, the 'accidental touching' became more intentional and shifted to the main passenger compartment.

A few kilometres from the station, on the main Wahdat Road, is Lahore's famous Kareem block market. Kareem block is part of the many sub-blocks of the larger middle- and lower-middle-class residential neighbourhood, Allama Iqbal Town. The market is famous for providing visitors an opportunity to buy cheap clothes that are largely readymade waste or rejected export orders from the many textile factories in Lahore and adjoining cities. In my teens, a visit to my cousin's place would often involve going to the Kareem block market to look for cheap U2 or Metallica T-shirts. In those years, the market consisted of a big plaza with many small shops in it. In the past 10 years or so, the place has completely transformed. In addition to the old building, one can see many prominent local and foreign brands with their 'factory outlets' selling discounted clothing and footwear items. There is now a McDonalds on the opposite side of Kareem block market, on Wahdat Road. Such changes reflect the emergence of new consumption patterns of residents in the surrounding area.

Back at the *chai* hotel, the conversation quickly moves to the difference the Orange Line has made in everyday life. People are eager to tell me stories of how convenient it is to take the train to the central railway station for inter-city travel. The subsidised travel fare means that where a person would pay PKR 150 for a rickshaw ride to the railway station, the Orange Line only charges PKR 40. But this is not the only transformation. Before the Line became operational, the Punjab government had already launched two other transport services, the Lahore Metrobus and TransLahore. The Lahore Metrobus plies a dedicated lane mostly along Ferozepur Road, while the TransLahore service provides the feeder routes to both the Metrobus service and the Orange Line. The Wahdat Road station is also served by the TransLahore buses travelling on both Wahdat Road and Multan Road.

I was somewhat surprised to see some Hiace vans parked on the side of the road near the *chai* hotel with drivers idly waiting for the passengers to show up. I ask if these still ply the old routes. In their dilapidated condition, they look like artefacts from a bygone era. And so is their current service. They continue largely because the state is not bothered enough to forcibly remove them. Their fares are higher, but their 'ready availability' means that passengers can rely on them, especially if they miss the relatively more strictly scheduled public transport service. But no one really cares for the old Hiaces anymore. Echoes of how the 'world class, *yorup istyle* (European-style)' service has beautified the area dominate the conversation. The 'beautification' has more material aspects to it too. The widening of the roads and the creation of a service lane has meant a small improvement in parking space availability. It is easier for customers to stop and buy 'stuff', as a *paan* shop owner and a food joint owner tell me. There are, of course, costs borne by many local area residents and businesses as well. Those crop up in the conversation sporadically. Many residents and business owners were physically relocated or evicted from the area as they were 'illegally' occupying state-owned land. Years of neglect before the Orange Line and related road-widening projects had given a quasi-permanency to their 'claims'. But such a cost – like the associated benefits – is unevenly distributed over the residents and businesses in the surrounding area.

In many ways, the changes around the Wahdat Road Orange Line station reflect the larger transformations that have occurred all over Lahore in the past 15 years. These infrastructural projects, justified by a developmentalist agenda, shift and shape the everyday relationship between the state and its citizens. They bring to the fore of the public realm important questions of legality, costs, benefits and everyday mobility. The *chai* hotel conversation turns to the ever-prevalent theme of corruption in Punjab's politics and its relationship with large infrastructure projects, particularly those started by the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) during its tenure from 2008–2018. 'Lut ke te kha gaye ne, per sadi sahulat da v sochday ne' ['They may have robbed us of our wealth but at least they think of providing us with some comfort']. That comment alone carries a nuanced and perhaps a very pragmatic reconciliation with the larger forces at play in contemporary Pakistan. Lahore's urban transport landscape – whether the Orange Line train, the Metrobus, or the TransLahore bus – is a space that is occupied both with the 'spectacle' of construction (underpasses, overhead bridges, cordoned-off bus lanes and signal-less corridors) and a subtle exclusion of the poor. In a way, it is a remarkably true representation of a city that

has a façade of accessibility and openness but which, underneath this veneer, is very effective in keeping in place the boundaries of class and wealth.

I do not really miss anything from my childhood experiences of using public transport in Lahore. I am, in a way, extremely happy that I no longer have to rely on it as my main mode of navigating the city. Upward class mobility is isolating but I am grateful for the modest respite it has brought to my life. My five-year-old son, on the other hand, was fascinated by the train ride. During our 45-minute-long ride, he chatted non-stop, barraging me with questions ranging from the colour of the train to how it runs without a driver. Hopefully, as he grows up, Lahore's public transport experience will transform into a more inclusive and humane one.

23
Hanjarwal

Tahir Kamran

Hanjarwal village is located on the outskirts of Lahore, towards its south-west, on the Multan Road. This village-cum-small town has rarely attracted the attention of writers and has thus far eluded the scholarly gaze. Barring a couple of newspaper articles reporting on local elections, Hanjarwal has been consigned to obscurity. Iqbal Qaiser's writing is the sole exception. The Punjabi scholar has identified revenue records of the area which confirm its antiquity as well as its social and demographic significance. Works by eminent historians of Lahore such as Kanhaiya Lal (*Tarikh-i-Lahore* and *Tarikh-i-Punjab*), Nur Ahmad Chishti (*Tehqiqat-i-Chishti*) and Syed Muhammad Latif (*History of Lahore*) do not refer to Hanjarwal, despite the locality's long-standing strategic importance on the road leading to Multan. Even encyclopaedic studies of the city like *Naqoosh Lahore Number* (published in 1961) surprisingly do not cover Hanjarwal, perhaps taking their cue from the silence in the Lahore Gazetteers. Even older residents of Lahore, when asked, could not share anything valuable with reference to Hanjarwal. The area has been consigned to the periphery – not only spatially and socially, but also in terms of historical writing.

The Orange Line rail project is poised to challenge this geographical isolation and its attendant sociopolitical marginalisation. Out of 26 stations on the route of the metro train, Hanjarwal is the third stop from the Ali Town terminus, coming after Thokar Niaz Baig and Canal View. Canal View is a markedly posh residential area, where very wealthy Lahoris live. Niaz Baig has attained prominence as a commercial hub and as the main entry-point to Lahore on the city's west side, linking the Multan Road (N-5 National Highway) to the Islamabad (M-2) Motorway. The junction is also connected to the Lahore Ring Road and hosts the

Lahore Jinnah Bus Terminal. Thokar Niaz Baig is home to many affluent housing schemes and colonies, including EME Sector of Defence Housing Authority (DHA), Mohafiz Town, Izmer, Doctor's Colony and Johar Town.

Despite existing quite close to Canal View and Niaz Baig, Hanjarwal is a very different settlement. It is a congested habitation with a primarily lower-middle-class population, most of whom do not enjoy the amenities of such areas as Gulberg, Model Town, and DHA. Along with many other housing societies along the Multan Road, it lacks basic civic amenities.[1] Residents complain about the lack of good schools, sewerage, and clean drinking water. On my walks around Hanjarwal, I spoke to Javaid who owns a small grocery shop just a stone's throw distance from the Orange Line train station.[2] He told me that, when it rains, the streets are deluged and rendered untraversable.

The Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) has politically dominated Lahore for the past three decades and Hanjarwal is no exception.[3] Politicians have, however, paid scant attention to improving the conditions of its people. An older resident, who migrated from Amritsar in August 1947 and settled in Hanjarwal, told me of his disappointment and said he thinks PML-N will not win the constituency in future elections. Local people resent the harm done to the locality by the politics of patronage. He termed Hanjarwal, alongside Niaz Baig, as a '*badnam manshiat faroshi ka adda*' (notorious drug-peddling den). A few other residents I spoke to revealed, on the condition of anonymity, the soaring scale of sexual crime in Hanjarwal. Much hope has been placed on the arrival of the Orange Line, with the connection promising to improve conditions by increasing economic opportunities. To assess these possibilities, I will turn now to the locality's historical development and social demography. Hanjarwal's political economy must also be understood in terms of the area's dominant *biraderi* – the Khokhar (Rajput), historically a warrior group.

As the legend goes, three brothers by the names of Allaudin, Dursain and Malik Mian came from Multan during the reign of the Mughal King Nur ud Din Jehangir (1569–1627) and established a settlement by the name of Hanjarwal.[4] The village was named in honour of their father Hanjar Khan, a scion of Khokhar Rajputs.[5] Due to its location on the road leading to Multan, the settlement flourished and its population grew steadily. Its peaceful existence was severely jeopardised in the eighteenth century when the Afghan ruler Ahmad Shah Abdali (1722–73) invaded the Punjab on eight occasions between 1748 and 1767. Lahore bore the brunt of his military campaigns and Hanjarwal was ravaged into a wasteland. Deprived of their homes and hearths, the village's residents deserted the area and migrated to different places to

escape Abdali's rampage. When Abdali's incursions ceased, the Punjab in general and Lahore specifically was left in a state of disorder and anarchy. Immediately before the ascendency of Ranjit Singh, Lahore was trifurcated between three Sikhs rulers: Sardar Lehna Singh, Sobha Singh and Gujjar Singh.[6] Hanjarwal and Niaz Baig came into the possession of Sobha Singh, whose sway extended to Chauburji and Ichra, also part of his dominion.[7] Each of the Sardars ruled their own part of Lahore and focused their efforts on extracting money from the area's residents. Under Sobha Singh's rule, Hanjarwal was rebuilt on the ruins of its previous location. Gradually, people belonging to other castes and kinships came and settled in Hanjarwal and acquired or built property. Iqbal Qaiser furnishes the names of major figures like Pir Bakhsh Jat, Sahi Shah Karam Bakhsh Nai, Pir Bakhsh Mirasi, Madla Bahman (Brahman) and Sajhi Shah, among others.

From its beginnings as a *gaon* (village), Hanjarwal's population has been overwhelmingly Muslim. There are no traces of temples or *gurdwaras* in the area. Currently it has twelve mosques which belong to *Ahl-i-Sunnat-wal-Jammat* denomination.[8] This state of religious uniformity helps to explain why there are no major incidents of sectarian violence associated with the area's modern history. Hanjarwal does have a church for the Christian residents of the area. There are two graveyards: *Kabaristan* Baba Gulab Shah, and *Kabaristan* Dara Hanjar Pirwala. These graveyards are dotted with 12 mausoleums.[9] The most prominent of these mausoleums is the one erected for Abdul Nabi us-Samad Khawaja Jan Muhammad Chishti (1919–1972). But the *urs* (death anniversary of the saint) is not celebrated at these sites. One may surmise that local residents have been impacted by puritanical religious influences associated with the area. Adjacent to Hanjarwal is Mansoura, the headquarters of the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI).[10] Founded in 1942 by Abu Ala Maududi, JI became an Islamist party with a reformist agenda.[11] The JI has, as a result, been wielding some political influence here, though this has diminished quite appreciably during the last 25 years or so. It happened because more violent religious organisations with sectarian agendas sprang into existence from 1990s onwards. Masjid Rahmat ulil Almeen, the headquarters of Tehreek-Laibaik Ya Rasul Allah,[12] a Barelwi outfit which has made its mark in Pakistan in recent years due to its agitational style of politics, exists not very far from Hanjarwal.

Khokhars remain prominent in Hanjarwal but Guhmihar Bhattis, Syeds, Arains and Kumbohs also live in the locality.[13] The Khokhars are factionally divided so that both national and provincial elections for the area's seats involve clashes between rival clan candidates. Malik

Muhammad Afzal Khokhar has been returned as member of the National Assembly in recent elections as the PML-N candidate, defeating Malik Karamat Khokhar who campaigned on a Tehreek-i-Insaf ticket. However, in 2018, Afzal Khokhar contested elections from a different constituency and fielded his brother, Saif ul Malook Khokhar, as Hanjarwal's PML-N candidate. Karamat Khokhar won the election and was, at the time of writing (in 2022), member of the National Assembly from NA-135, the constituency that includes Hanjarwal alongside adjoining areas.

Factional divisions between Khokars have often resulted in violence: internecine conflict has turned bloody on several occasions. In 2020, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) served notices on Afzal Khokar, Saif ul Malook Khokar and Shafi Khokar for their alleged involvement in land grabbing, money laundering and other crimes. According to a report in *Dawn*, the FIA alerted the Khokar brothers that it is

> conducting a criminal inquiry/investigation with respect to the charges of money laundering of proceeds of land grabbing and various other crimes. As per the evidence collected so far it has transpired that you [the aforementioned Khokar brothers] have been involved in organised land grabbing in Lahore and its outskirts. Moreover, it has come to [the] fore that you have been involved in money laundering and have amassed assets which are disproportionate to your known sources of income (through proceeds of crime).[14]

Afzal and Saif ul Malook are said to be 'major' financiers of the PML-N and considered close to the deposed premier Nawaz Sharif and his daughter, party vice president Maryam Nawaz.[15]

The domination of public representation in Hanjarwal by figures like the Khokar brothers may help to explain the lack of improvement in the living conditions of Hanjarwal's residents over many years. Political action appears to be guided by a desire for power and authority rather than service or accountability. These figures are well-versed in electoral politics and will usually go to great lengths to secure electoral victory. The social and economic development of the areas they represent is marginal to their political agenda. Other government officials too have turned a blind eye to Hanjarwal. Ironically Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif himself was a candidate for provincial assembly in the 2013 elections. He did not come to Hanjarwal after the elections. Another factor plaguing Hanjarwal is the lack of a progressive middle class – a social grouping that might help to demand good educational facilities for their children,

functional health care and modern infrastructure. Residents in search of such amenities tend to shift out of Hanjarwal in the quest for a better life.

Hanjarwal's inclusion on the route of the Orange Line train will help to connect the area with the rest of the city. However, the self-employed people that I spoke to during my time in Hanjarwal – for instance, local vegetable vendors or fruit sellers – opined that the rail was of little significance for them because their major concern is with transporting merchandise, something that is not possible through this passenger train system. Lower-middle-class people, working in offices, are the principal local beneficiaries. While appreciating the public transport initiative on the part of Shehbaz Sharif's provincial government, I would underscore in conclusion that the institutions of quality education as well as state-of-the-art health care are essential to ensure ameliorative change in the vicinity. These would be vital for fostering the development of human resources. To ensure transformation for the better, change from within is extremely important. The Punjab provincial government ought to be sensitive about the complex challenges facing places like Hanjarwal: areas which exist within a modern megacity and yet remain consigned to social marginality.

Notes

1. Khan, 'Constituency profile'.
2. Conversation with Javaid, resident of Hanjarwal on 26 March 2022.
3. Hanjarwal used to fall in the constituency NA-128 but prior to the 2018 elections the constituency was changed to NA-135.
4. Qaiser, *Pindan Wichon Pind Sunneeda*, 78.
5. For a colonial-era description of Khokhars see, Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 172–5.
6. Kanhaiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, 181–5.
7. Shuja-ud-Din, 'Siyasi aur Saqafati Tarikh', 111.
8. Shuja-ud-Din, 'Siyasi aur Saqafati Tarikh', 111.
9. Shuja-ud-Din, 'Siyasi aur Saqafati Tarikh', 111.
10. Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution*, 58–9.
11. See for details, Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution.*
12. Kamran, 'Unpacking the myth of Barelvi eclecticism'.
13. Qaiser, *Pindan Wichon Pind Sunida*, 78.
14. Tahir, 'Land grab, money laundering'.
15. Tahir, 'Land grab, money laundering'.

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24

Canal View

Bibi Hajra

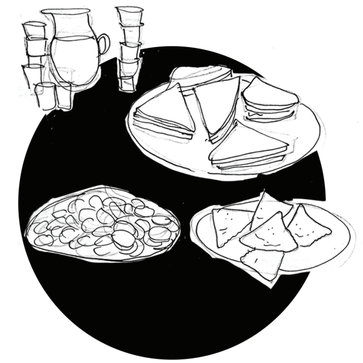
Artwork by Bibi Hajra, © 2025

Facing the canal, hidden behind a green belt of guava trees and guava stalls are the brick walls of Canal View Housing Society. This is where I spent a very exciting childhood.

As a child, I loved the fact that the name of my neighbourhood had the word 'canal' in it. In the summers, along with so many others, I loved swimming in the canal with my brothers. Even though we did not have visual access to it from where the houses were, just being so close to one of the most popular public features of Lahore was so exciting.

There was the canal and then there was Aunty Gul, a woman who lived down my street and who invited children to read Qur'an with her every evening. Going to her house was an event. We would run out in the street, ring door bells, collect everyone and then march to her house together making a lot of noise.

Aunty Gul believed in big things. Now that I look back, I feel she got all of us together for a reason beyond the Qur'an reading. It was to make us do something together which required discipline and a sustained ritual. This would later inculcate in us a sensibility that shaped our neighbourhood.



I recall she always had snacks for us. Many of us saw that as a big incentive for getting together at her house.

Aunty Gul lived with her husband and four children. She lived in rented portions of houses and, as the rents increased, she would move to cheaper portions around Canal View. Because we visited her in different blocks as she moved, we were able to navigate the neighbourhood as well.

The mood of the Qur'an sessions was such that even after they were over we engaged in conversations about life, and our larger purpose in it.

Back then there were many empty plots around us. These were often occupied by the *Pakhiwaas* (nomadic communities) and Afghan immigrants. They lived in tents and would rear cattle and spend much of their time working in people's homes. In the evenings their children often played with the other residents' children on the streets. Amongst them I had some good friends, one who lived on the plot at one end of my street and another who lived on the plot on the opposite end of my street.

One day we decided to get their dolls married to each other. We gathered a lot of children together and took the female doll's *baraat* (wedding procession) down the street to the male doll. I remember us talking about how the marriage of the dolls at each end of our streets meant we had become 'relatives' and must stick together.

As time passed and as Aunty Gul moved from one block to another her Qur'an sessions became quite popular and within a few years she had a large number of women and children attendees. Over time the sessions also changed format. Apart from reading Qur'an daily, she would organise a *dars* (Qur'an reading, translation and a discussion session) in which women and children sat in front of her and posed questions about religion, life and society.

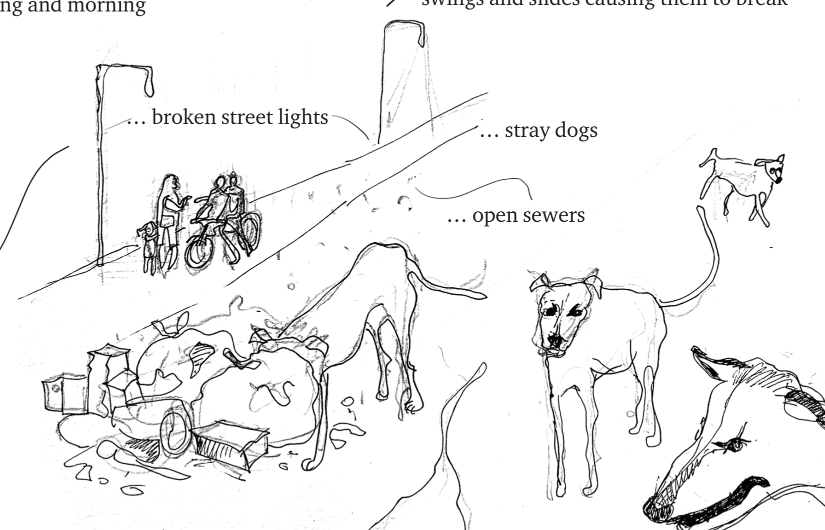
Soon in her sessions women started discussing matters regarding the neighbourhood. Many issues came up ...

Some spoke about broken roads, lack of water drainage, barren green belts ...

Many women reported being mugged on the road during their evening and morning walks ...

Some complained about not having access to the main park because it was often crowded with male students from the nearby *madrasa*. They played volleyball which caused the grass to die.

... and they would sit on children's swings and slides causing them to break



... no speed control on residential streets

... broken street lights

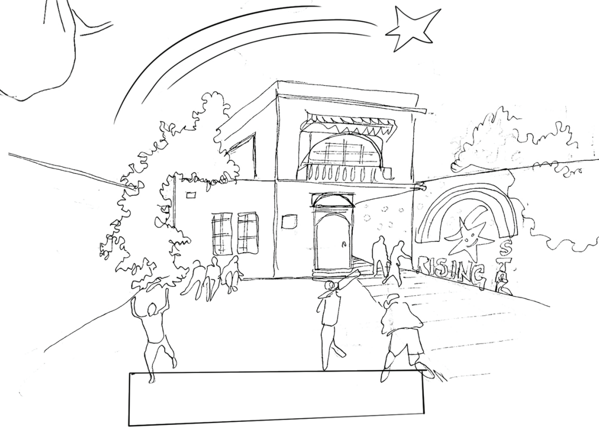
... stray dogs

... open sewers

... unattended trash

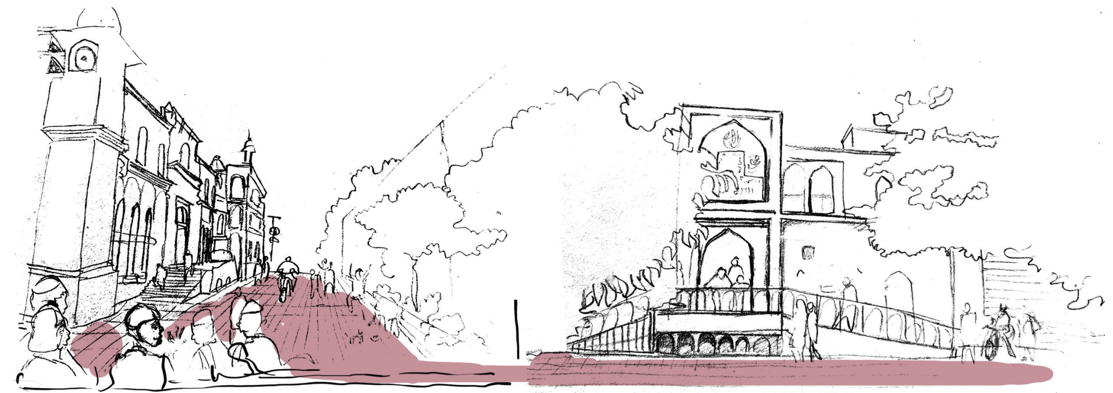
The community was already very social and the outside was important for everyone. This spirit was further strengthened by the routine gatherings of women that Aunty Gul initiated. In the future other women began to offer spaces in their homes for these sessions too. Soon the *dars* became more than a session for reflection on religion. We had one-dish parties, fund-raising funfairs and eventually Aunty Gul would establish a committee by the name of 'Canal View Women's Charity and Welfare Society' (CVWCWS) in which the member residents of Canal View would come together to resolve issues and pressurise the governing body to facilitate them where necessary.

One of the star projects of the CVWCWS was The Rising Star Elementary School. This was founded in 2009 in an 8-marla (2,000 square feet) house donated by one of the members. The other members helped to furnish it and continue to donate money for free education, books and uniform for its students and also other running costs, such as bills and salaries.



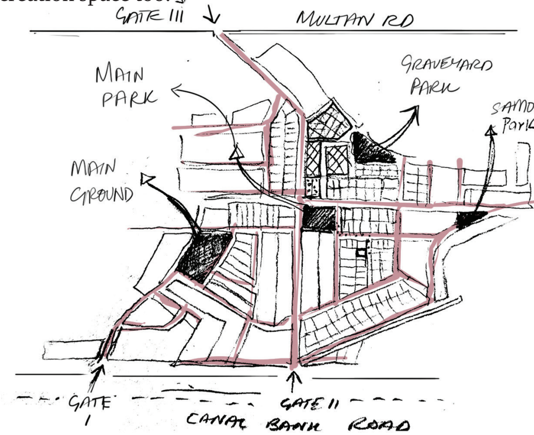
In their manifesto the committee makes it clear that their intention is to give education to those who cannot afford it with 'dignity' and 'self-respect' and that all members work as volunteers without monetary gain for the betterment of the 'school and society'.

The second significant change that the CVWCWS has played an important role in bringing about is the safety of the streets for women and children. This is done by reporting any activity that seems unwanted – in CVWCWS sessions and more recently on chat groups online. Women often report by taking photos of what they feel needs to change and forwarding them to the CVWCWS group chats, which are then later brought to the notice of a female representative of the government who also happens to be on the CVWCWS chat group as a member.

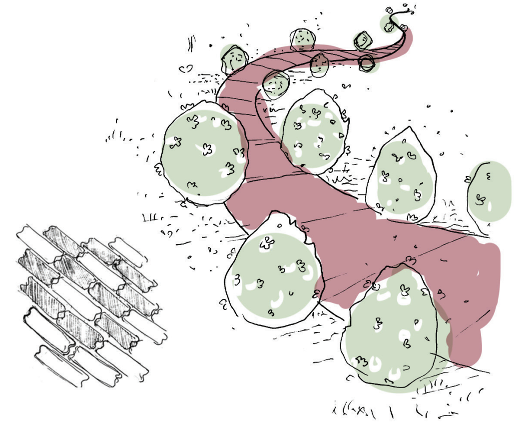


In resolving the open space issue it was noted that the Jamia Masjid had a *madrassa* that was growing in pupil count. It seemed important that the students of the *madrassa* had a recreation space too.

The streets were paved with tuff tiles thanks to the CVWCWS. Drainage issues were addressed and speed breakers were introduced in the residential streets.

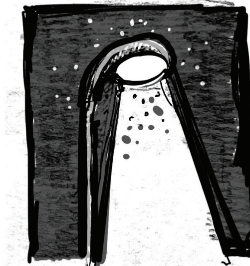


There are four main recreational areas in Canal View.



The Main Ground is now designated for events and funfairs. The triangular park on the east side, also known as 'Samosa' park, is assigned to men and the *madrassa* students. The Graveyard park close to the commercial area hosts weekly *sabzi mandis* (vegetable markets). The Main Park has taken on a more 'exclusive' character. Made just for the women and children, the grass has been replanted and the jogging track paved and skirted with neatly trimmed flower bushes. The children's swings and slides have been reinstalled and made age appropriate. Flowering trees are planted along the outer fence to maintain a sense of privacy from the road side. There are lamp posts, fencing, gates and even a guard on duty!

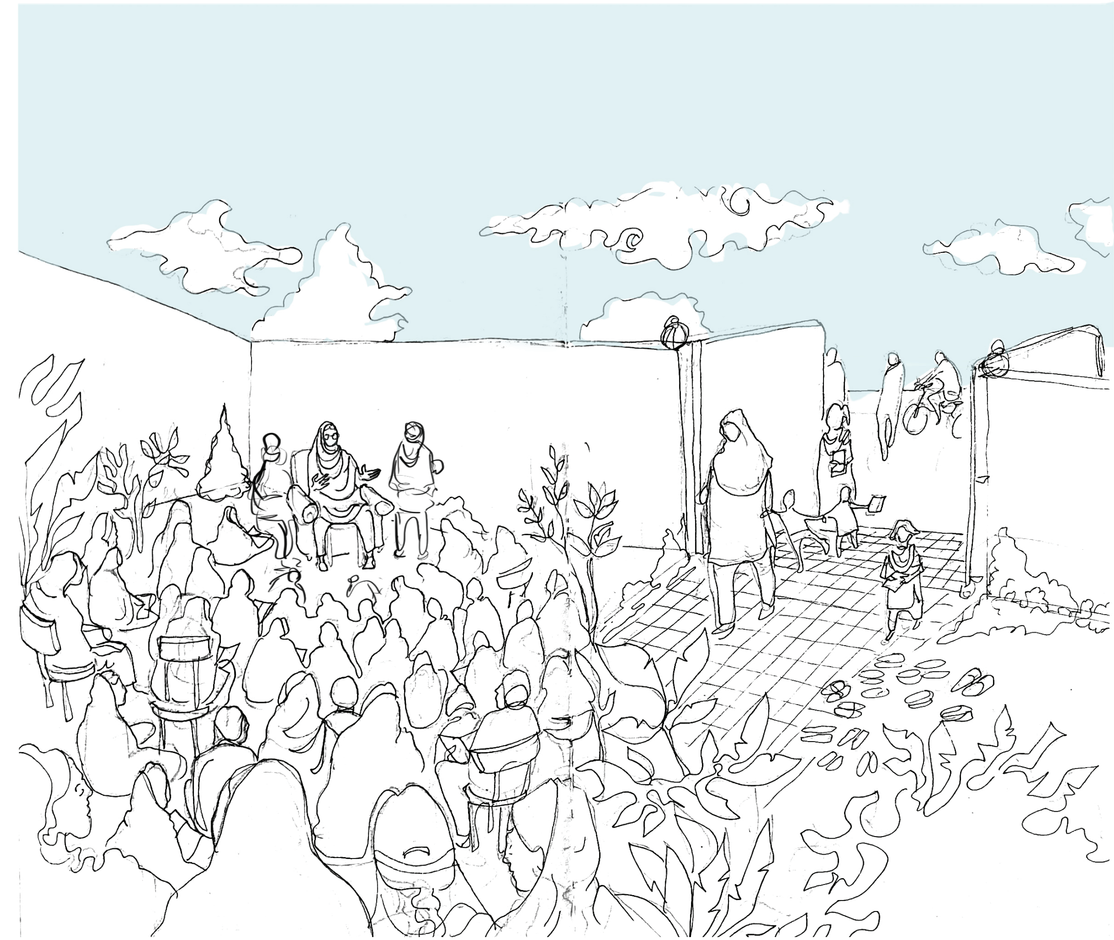
Each address was given a waste-collecting bin …



Street lights were fixed …

Today the cobbled streets bordered with narrow strips of green belts, benches and street lights make one feel as if the indoors are spilling out. Residents feel the streets are safe and homely. Despite occasional reports of petty crime, the presence of children and women has visibly increased and walking to the market feels like a stroll in the park. In Ramzan some residents of our street open their front gates and drag out their tables and chairs. They bring a dish each and sit across the table for *sehri* in the middle of the night. Children do pranks and youngsters play the guitar till the Azaan. This illustration is a view of my street at the end of which was once an empty plot where the *Pakhiwaas* and Afghan families were camped. They were eventually forced to leave and the old water well that served as a landmark for us children was sealed.

As children we felt a sense of loss. We could not understand it since it happened within days and the empty plots suddenly turned into construction sites. Upon hearing about the displaced families, members of the CVWCWS did not do anything to protect their camps, as if their rights to the neighbourhood were as temporary as their dwellings. Some families did come forward and offered them accommodation in the quarters of their own homes in return for doing domestic work for them. My grandmother took in a family who lived at the end of our street. I found it very awkward to have a friend live in a small room in our house while her mother did our chores. These events were perhaps the first lessons in class consciousness for all of us children.



In a recent leaflet that was distributed around Canal View, the CVWCWS declares their future ambition to construct a purpose-built school to cater to the growing population of underserved groups in the locality. They also call for funding from the members and cooperation from the administration to eventually build a community centre for women where a larger organisation can be established. Such aspirations point to the growing permanence of the institutions of this area, which are themselves products of its shifting position in the city. No longer a peripheral area, it is now connected to the rest of the city through a bustling, eight-lane signal-free road and the newly built Orange Line metro train. My three cousins, who still reside there, now boast of their new found mobility as they walk to the nearby Canal View metro station in small groups and hop onto the train to be transported to destinations that I had not even heard of as a child. When I asked their mother about the train, she treated it as a matter of fact, as if it was only natural that a place like Canal View would enjoy such connectivity. Clearly the small, insular world that I had left behind has found its place in the city.

25

Thokar Niaz Baig

Ali Usman Qasmi

To explore Thokar Niaz Baig is to encounter the dynamic history of Lahore and its many suburbs, settlements and villages. Classic texts on Lahore's history – such as the works of Latif[1] and Kanhaiya Lal[2] – describe Thokar Niaz Baig (more conveniently referred to by its shorthand, Thokar) as a separate entity situated 6 *kos* (18 kilometres) south of Lahore and adjacent to another village, Ichra. Lahore today is a collection of these villages, boroughs and hamlets, many of which have been seamlessly incorporated into its urban sprawl over the centuries. Michel de Certeau's theorisation of the city as 'palimpsest' suggests that, while our understanding of the urban environment is informed by the most recent 'layer', earlier histories remain legible beneath the surface.[3] They may be invoked as a form of hauntology for the city's residents, as a residue of memories and of enduring, affective attachments with places, pavements and material objects. As I will show in this chapter, these residues can be stubbornly persistent, capable of generating unintended meanings, encounters and consequences in the present.

The work of writer and activist Iqbal Qaiser provides one example of how these histories can be productively retrieved. Qaiser is collecting data from revenue records of about 200 villages that have become part of Lahore. The fantastic thing about land revenue records is that it is about *land* and *revenue*, which means that it will have abiding interest and no 'weeding officer' in the archive will discard it. While there have been numerous changes in land deeds, which map processes of appropriation and dispossession, the revenue record embodies a certain kind of 'archival truth'. Lahore's rapid urban expansion and its transformation to suit the aesthetics of a new middle class has resulted in a physical restructuring of previously rural landscapes as well as the erasure of diverse

pasts through the rebranding of areas with new and fashionable names. Still, the *actual* title in the revenue record remains the same.[4] You might be living in a 2-*kanal* (about 10,800 square feet) bungalow near some Major Muhammad Shabbir Sharif Road in DHA, but on the Google map, it is still labelled Herasingh Wala. I am not sure how and why Google maps conform to the entry records in the revenue department's *bastas*, but they do!

Thokar is one area that has retained its original name and a sense of distinctness across centuries of change. Not so long ago, it had an outer wall to guard against invasions. One can still find traces of it. In other words, Thokar was as much of a *walled city* as Lahore once was. It is just that ever since Lahore's walls came crumbling down, it has expanded in all directions to claim other areas *as* Lahore. Whatever distinctness Thokar had is now retained in its name. For the new Pakistani middle class, as theorised by Ammara Maqsood, there is an aspiration for modernity, which, in specific iterations, translates into an aversion to rustic Punjabiness.[5] It is not surprising that the new housing societies with fancy names like 'Valencia', built on the agrarian ruins of Kahna Kaccha, are eager to shed the uncouthness associated with these traditional names. Not only that, the change in nomenclature corresponds with a shift in the landscapes, not just in terms of lush fields overrun by asphalt, but palm trees and pines replacing *kikkar* and *borh*. But Thokar Niaz Baig and Hanjarwal still stand out. And proud.

I grew up in Lahore in a place which was, back then, a new fringe, a recently established town for middle-class groups – Allama Iqbal Town. As an 1980s kid, Thokar, in my imagination, was a rugged den of outlaws. It was at the other end of civilisation. Hanjarwal, two stops on the Orange Line before Thokar, was notorious for its *badmash* and criminals. Thokar and Hanjarwal were at Lahore's boundary and defined the limits of the Pakistani state's authority. After *maghrib*, it was imprudent to go beyond Shahnoor Studios on Multan Road and Jinnah Hospital along the canal. The situation started to change in the 1990s.

The Lahore Development Authority had been eyeing southward expansion of Lahore from the early 1980s. But the area had first to be brought within the ambit of the state. Thokar served as the headquarters of the outlawed Shi'a militant group, Sipah Muhammad. Strategically located on the city's outskirts away from the intrusive state apparatus, Thokar was also home to a predominantly Shi'a population. Thokar's ancient walls might have held invading lashkars at bay, but they were not good enough to ward off the contingent of elite police forces in armoured vehicles who eventually overran the headquarters without much effort

in 1996. A greater effort was required to clear the area of criminal gangs. 'Encounter killings' helped the urban expansion process through the 1990s. It is a method that has been successfully used elsewhere, most recently in facilitating the establishment of Bahria Town Karachi.[6] The state might have conquered this unruly rural territory, but there are still some aspects of the 'rural' that have survived in Thokar. One enduring practice is the keeping of cattle and buffaloes for fresh milk. A few years ago, I read a half-page notification in a newspaper issued by the Lahore Municipality outlawing the domestication of buffaloes, possibly because of a threat to public hygiene. But that's not the only *threat* that they pose. They cause a much more serious nuisance when they go for a bath in the canal in droves and then emerge running out of it onto surrounding roads as well. The spectacle and the traffic nuisance that it causes sit uncomfortably with the reshaped urban landscape and serve as an obstinate residue of the massive dispossession project that has led to the conversion of farmland into housing societies.

The Orange Line Metro can be seen as another attempt to subsume Lahore's diverse and unruly pasts into a clean and rationalised space. Removed from the smells and sounds of the street, the train enables visitors to *look down* upon the city from its elevated track. As Khawaja Hassan – one of the key planners of the project during Shehbaz Sharif's tenure – put it, the ride from the top allows for a viewing of the city and, hence, a fun ride. Travellers will commute to work while simultaneously enjoying the scenic beauty of Shalamar Gardens, he said on a talk show in 2017. But Hassan's statement was not purely about aesthetic enjoyment. It was also an argument against an 'underground' rail system, which would have been more costly but potentially less harmful to the city's historic built environment and its many heritage buildings. Still, it raises an interesting question about how the Orange Line has enabled new ways of seeing the city – a certain kind of voyeurism, as de Certeau called it, facilitated by the totality of the view it offers and the technocratic normative grid it has written into the city's text.

I decided to start my first trip on the Orange Line from the opposite end, towards Dera Gujran, to cover the maximum distance to Thokar. To enable this, I drove my car to a station – perhaps contrary to the spirit of public transport, but that said I was not travelling as a commuter but as an ethnographer, and an amateurish one at that. I parked my car near Pakistan Mint, took the stairs to reach the station, and asked the person at the information desk for a ticket. Judging by my social status and the fact that I was there to 'check out' the metro and see how it was *just like Europe*, he offered me a single-ride ticket. But I insisted on buying the

Metro Card and loaded it with 500 rupees. The Metro Card, for me, was a kind of a souvenir. I keep it in my wallet as a marker of my residence in the city. But it is also a reminder that while I live in that city, I do not share the same spaces with the overwhelming majority of the people who reside here. I keep additional credit in my Metro Card, but I know I will never use it – not, at least, as a matter of *routine*.

As the train whizzed past various landmarks along GT Road, I stood clasping the handrail, looking intently outside the window as scenes changed like shuffling of flashcards: houses, shrines, markets and a sea of people walking on the streets. Faizan Abbas Naqvi, a.k.a. *Lahore ka Khoji* – a title bestowed on him for his encyclopaedic knowledge of the city – was accompanying me on this journey. He pointed out various historical sites to me as the train glided through several stations. I had never experienced Lahore in this way.

The commuters appeared much at ease with the recently opened metro. Its regimented space requires a certain disciplining of the body that did not appear alien to them. In that aspect, the metro has already been effective as a transformative piece of infrastructure. It sets a path for users to follow: a rationalised space and a regulated temporality. The train halts periodically according to a precise timetable. It requires visitors to wait patiently on a platform within a station that is conceived of as a closed, purpose-built space – and one that is closely surveilled.

I am sure there will be ways in which commuters come to navigate the Orange Line in a way that undermines the order that the metro's securitised architecture is designed to establish. The multiplicity of pathways, journeys and expectations cannot be constrained entirely to the vision that planners have set for the metro. But I am also curious to know how much of this order commuters will come to internalise. It will be interesting, for instance, to see if the station names on the Orange Line map are adopted to describe the geography of the city. Will 'Chburji' *really become* Chauburji? Will whatever remains of Shahnoor Studios now be forgotten because commuters will get off at Khatam-e-Nabbuwat station? This remains to be seen. For now, the commuters appeared laid-back and relaxed. They had clearly used the train more often and knew what metro travel entailed: waiting behind the line for the clickety-clack of the closing door, *minding the gap*, listening to music, reading *forwarded as received* WhatsApp messages as city scenes outside the window changed like a cascade.

Faizan and I got off at Thokar. Our friend, Zahid Hasan – a brilliant fiction writer and Punjabi language instructor at Lahore University of

Management Sciences – joined us outside the station. We were here to visit one of the most important historic Hindu temples in the city – Bhadra Kali. Built in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the massive dome-structured *mandir* was once positioned on the bank of the mighty Ravi, though the water has long since receded to the west of Thokar. Bhadra Kali was for centuries home to the biggest religious festival for Lahore's Hindus.

Here we were, '6 *kos* from Lahore', in the city's 'outskirts', standing in front of the marvellous Bhadra Kali Mandir. Much of the structure has been demolished, but you can still spot its dome from the edge of a narrow lane leading towards it. The address on a nearby house signals its presence: Mohalla Bhadra Kali Street, Thokar Niaz Baig. Faizan told us that the city government had officially changed the name to 'Badar Street'. Why? Because it still rhymed with Bhadra, but carried an Islamic significance: Badar was the place where Prophet Muhammad led Muslims in their first battle against the infidels of Mecca. This was not the only act of redescription: someone had installed a Pakistan flag on top of the *mandir*'s central dome. It serves to mark the territory of the temple as a government school.

Residents have encroached upon much of the ground around the *mandir*, the space where the annual *mela* used to take place. Mostly Meos – migrants from Rajasthan and Haryana – had settled in the area. The school's headmaster, Ashfaq Ahmad, himself a Meo, welcomed us inside the structure. His forefathers had come to this area after 1947. 'We were allotted houses and lands here and were asked to take care of this temple. Maybe the policymakers thought that since we were converts from Hinduism, we will take good care of the temple', he told us. They did take care of the temple, though it was not because they were converts. The *mandir*, though desolate, remained safe until the attack on the Babri mosque by Hindu nationalists in India in 1992. Frenzied mobs responding to this insult in Pakistan did not care that Muslim families used Lahore's surviving *mandirs* as residential units, and burnt many of them down. Bhadra Kali survived, though the protestors were able to destroy one of the main wooden gates.

The headmaster showed us a register of the school council's proceedings, recording the history of the building. I learnt from this record that, in the 1980s, the nearby government school was inundated during massive floods that caused widespread destruction in the neighbourhood. The local community then made efforts to transform the site of the *mandir* and set up a new government school. Since then, the building has served this function as a public school.

From the *mandir*'s rooftop, one can see breathtaking views of lush green fields in the distance – yet to be converted into housing societies – and the tall minarets of nearby mosques and *imambargahs*. This is what remains of Thokar's 'walled city' and its life. Bhadra Kali provides a vantage point from which the layered histories of the city become discernible. Intransigent memories fight forced amnesia. The palimpsest, forever acquiring new layers of development, appropriation and transformation, remains marked by the visual traces and built heritage of Lahore's diverse and multiple pasts. These remnants make alternative histories possible. To rephrase de Certeau, the *mandir* asserts what the rationalised ordering of the cityscape hides and threatens to eradicate. Given the archival lack, both in terms of inadequate documentation and a permanent threat to the architecture of the *mandir*, the urban walker in seeking out and conjuring these alternative histories must also archive the physical structure and its social setting. The archiving makes retrievability possible once a mob or flash flood has destroyed the monument. That would make sure that the *mandirs* continue to haunt us even after they are long gone. This story of Bhadra Kali, a vignette as a narrative strategy, offers the possibility of retrieval, reclamation and reconnection.

Notes

1. Latif, *Lahore*.
2. Lal, *Tarikh-i-Lahore*.
3. De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 202.
4. Fatima Tassadiq's recent work, 'Producing dispossessed and humanitarian subjects', documents the bureaucratic practices that help produce the aura of record as authenticating markers, the limitations and inconsistencies of these practices, and their impacts on the way citizens negotiate with the state to make claims for compensation or assert ownership rights.
5. Maqsood, *The New Pakistani Middle Class*.
6. For a detailed overview of police brutality and staged encounters to intimidate villagers as a tactic for land grab, see Zaman and Ali, 'Rao Anwar and the Killing Fields of Karachi'.

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26

Ali Town

Mina Malik

In 1991, when my 27-year-old mother moved from America back to Pakistan, she brought with her various things: three children, a General Electric washer and dryer, a fridge that dispensed ice, lithographs of Monet's water lilies and cases full of cassette tapes displaying her eclectic tastes. These cases included tapes from a subscription called 'Endless Love', unlabelled TDX tapes with songs Amma recorded off the radio and a few very fashionable, ultra-fresh albums, including Milli Vanilli's *Girl You Know It's True*, Paula Abdul's *Spellbound* and *Step by Step*, New Kids on the Block's first album – Amma was not fussy about her music. Our family radio cassette player was a modest, slender thing, and we were accustomed to it playing tunes all day in our sunny kitchen in Beaverton, a suburb of pre-hipster Portland, Oregon. We knew all the words to 'Rush, Rush' and 'Hazard' the same way we knew what to whisper when washing our hands. Mother-osmosis: that process of imbibing knowledge from your primary caregiver without conscious thought. Mother-osmosis is the reason why my siblings and I instinctively smooth out a ruffled bedspread or immediately say 'thanks' when handed any item. It also helps explain our ability to sing the chorus of a song we have only just heard by the time the second bridge rolls around.

The first thing Amma did when we bought a car in Lahore was to have it fitted with what we called, back then, a 'deck'. It was a sound-system, and much too fancy for the quite basic, quite tiny Alto that my mother rocketed around town in, children in tow. The deck's best feature was the sound-level display: eight bars in five colours that surged and subsided with the music, depending on the volume, treble and bass notes. The bars started out yellow, moved up to green and at really high, excellent moments – like the 'In The Air Tonight' drum solo – red.

Nothing augmented the beat dropping more than a bar hitting the red, and we knew it. Music in the car was an integral part of our lives because Saigol Estate, the suburb where we lived, was a solid 30 minutes from anywhere. The only interesting thing about Saigol Estate, other than the posh name, was the infamous politician's farmhouse behind our house, complete with peacocks housed inside a massive atrium that overlooked our back-wall rockery. To do anything required a drive – even the nearest convenience store, a modest little shack that sold eggs and bread, was a 10-minute drive away. We measured distances with songs. We would pile into the car with either one of my parents behind the wheel (by then, Abbu had wrapped up business in the US and joined us) and coast off down Canal Road, Whitney Houston belting out her signature tunes as we whizzed down the smooth asphalt.

It sounds positively Ancient Mariner to say it now, but in the mid-1990s, the Canal Road had barely any traffic. You could tell where you were from how long you had to stop at the lights. The Garden Town stoplight was always the first point of delay. Turning left at this intersection meant I would soon be arriving at my best friend's house; going straight through it, as we did almost every day, meant we were heading to our school, located just before Canal met Mall Road. Each side of Canal Road was dense with trees. Depending on where you were, there would be the canal on one side and a sunken grassy pit on the other, designed to catch excess rainwater during the monsoons. The flora that flanked Canal Road was varied: there were weeping willows on the canal banks, trailing their tips in the water; tall eucalyptus with pale branchless trunks; ficus and jaamun trees. I do not remember flowering trees – there was a noticeable lack of yellow amaltas or scarlet sumbal. As a tree-planting adult, I have learned that municipal gardeners do not approve of flowering or fruiting trees because they are considered 'messy'. It seems odd, as creatures of nature, to wish to control it so definitively. What is it about the unpredictability of faunal and floral life that is so unnerving?

Control is a varied beast. Famously, Adele was the first musician to have the online streaming platform Spotify change their 'shuffle' option. This option disrupted the intended sequence of songs on an album, which, Adele argued, compromised the narrative of the listening experience. If you were in my mother's Alto in 1993, you knew the sequence of each side of an album by heart. You had to endure something annoying – 'Hazard' tends to wear thin after 15 listens – to get to what you really wanted: 'Ice Ice Baby', for example. We were not in the habit of forwarding songs or rewinding them. For a car

ride, you want immediacy because the time of travel is limited, but for some character-building reason my parents expected us to endure. The most lasting *endurance* applied to my father's music. He listened to the same Mohammad Rafi collection every day for two years. But change inexorably crept up on us, and our eclectic tape collection provided the soundtrack as we grew older and watched our neighbourhood and the wider city change.

In the early days in Saigol Estate, our house was surrounded by a barely tamed wilderness of empty plots, their scrubby bushes hiding the gypsy teenagers who brought their handful of goats to graze. Gradually, this wilderness gave way to more houses. One built opposite ours featured a disco ball hanging in the middle of its porch, and so the house was forevermore dubbed 'Disco'. Over the years, Saigol Estate developed an air of self-containment: a quiet neighbourhood of tidy, large houses, with its park around the water tank. But the world around it moved swiftly on. The influential politician sold his farmhouse, and a hospital was constructed in its place. Today, if you are on a high floor in the hospital, you can peer straight into our former garden.

In 1995, the radio offering suddenly grew beyond sleepy, AM-only Radio Pakistan to include the chic, English music-playing FM 100. Our reliance on cassettes began to wobble. For the first time, you could listen to modern music, curated by young, hip radio jockeys. Revolutionary! The Canal Road remained the same in essence, though the landscape changed. Behind the thinning trees, buildings appeared: apartments, more houses and shops. Our Alto was upgraded to a Cultus, which came with a built-in tape deck. It was not a patch on *the* deck, but it did not matter. Technology began to move forward at a breakneck speed. The cassettes gave way to 'tape adapters', which connected to portable CD players (and later iPods) with a wire. The next car included a built-in CD player alongside the tape deck, and the car after that dropped the tape altogether and came with a USB port.

In the early noughties, the party in government began constructing the first of Lahore's 12 underpasses. The first three of these were carved beside the Canal Road to accommodate growing streams of traffic, headed variously to the university campuses mushrooming around that area, to Thokar to access the new M-2 motorway or, once a year, to Raiwind to join the *ijtema*. Months of roadwork sent out earthquake-like tremors that rattled our windows, covered all the surviving trees in dust and resulted in hugely congested alternative traffic routes. But then, at last, there were three underpasses, tiled in grey and blue and named after poets, opening up the road. We discovered that it was fun to rocket

down into an underpass belting out hits by the Backstreet Boys, and the commute to school was reduced by a song and a half.

Once the house at the end of our lane was replaced by a petrol pump, my parents decided it was time to move from Saigol Estate. It did not feel like home anymore. The lanes on Canal Road were now doubled, and traffic lights had been installed at our turn-off. Long gone was the Garden Town 'halfway' marker. We now seemed to be halfway to other places. Our Swiss Family Robinson outpost on the periphery of Lahore was now thoroughly modernised, but with a particularity that jarred. And so we packed up the boxes of cassettes, the washing machine and dryer, the fridge with the ice dispenser and the Monet lithographs once more and drove to the other side of town, to a new *veerana* where there was not another house for a mile all around. Here, when there was a storm, the wind whistled around our rattling windows.

When you drive down the canal today, you will encounter more underpasses than those initial three. If you travel west past Saigol Estate, you will end up in Thokar, where the *ijtema* still happens amidst a maze of concrete overpasses and bridges where Canal Road intersects with a street now called 'Nazariya-e-Pakistan'. The irony is not lost upon me: one vision for our country – *nazariya* – is here realised in monumental arcs of concrete. To someone clambering up the steps of the Ali Town Orange Line station, not far from the Thokar intersection on Raiwind Road, taking a train that soars over the street, the bridge, the canal, looking down at a city spread out below them, can be a thrill that places them in an international context; an experience of progress that connects them to a commuter in Tokyo or Berlin. The Sharifs, architects of the Orange Line, promised to turn Lahore into Dubai – a promise made to people who have only seen it in photos. To them, it might be more important to feel like they have claimed a modern identity, something that sets them aside from the villages they visit during holidays. Perhaps it is ultimately more useful to their everyday life than missing the uprooted trees and access to the canal being blocked off with steel girders, all in service to this strange fever-dream of Modernity. Not everyone will miss the old houses knocked down to make way for rail lines, underpasses and roundabouts, in the same way nobody misses old cassettes: they served a purpose that has evolved, and the form must too.

But oh, form. Our old house in Saigol Estate is still the same: red brick, softened with weather and time; Amma's palm trees and the eucalyptus we planted along the periphery now very tall indeed. The house has been an office, a school and an office again. It is odd to think of desks and swivel chairs in my former bedroom, to know that our front

door with its stained glass panels has been opened and closed with business-like efficiency countless times by complete strangers. That children other than myself and my siblings have tossed basketballs through the hoop on the patio and run across the lawn, hiding behind the pine trees. But I am sure that nobody has got a Sony double-tape deck and CD player sound system at the ready, with all the cassettes and CDs at hand, to be played for impromptu dance parties in the foyer, on the black marble floor. The click of a cassette settling into a player, that tiny thrill of your finger being too close to the machinery as you pushed it inside; carefully lifting a CD out of its case by the edges, reading the lyrics inside the cover booklet. Sometimes form feels important, something to hold on to even as your feet take you forward. In the end, home is where the music is.

Afterword: Riding the Orange Line

Manan Ahmed Asif

A memory of Lahore from my teen years, back in the mid-1980s, remains with me as an image of the 'quintessential' Lahore. I am standing in the evening dusk near a bus stop trying to catch a ride home before the sun fully sets and darkness eats up the single-lane, cratered road in front of me. Generally, this stop right outside Saddar Bazaar in the Cantonment had a fair share of options: a *sarkari* bus, operated usually by Lahore Municipal Corporation with 25-*anna* tickets; a *tonga*, or single-horse carriage which could seat up to five people and could either be rented *saalam* (all five seats) or a single seat for one rupee; a minivan, usually a hilux with three rows of seating and a perch for the conductor at the door, operated by private companies like the Dogars, the Gujjars and the Butt Corporations, who could cram in 15 or more men at the cost of 50 *anna* each; or a rickshaw, a two-stroke engine balanced onto three wheels with a tin canopy that could seat two or three in the back, with the price per ride entirely up to your bargaining skills. In the wider transport ecosystem of Lahore, there were also the black-body, yellow-top taxis, but those never came to the Cantonment area. That particular night there was nothing. Not even the usual Sohrab bicycles, Honda motorcycles or Suzuki FXs. I walked home, racing against the last of the sunshine and the packs of dogs.

I remember that evening because getting from where I lived to where I studied meant using all of the above means of transportation and that night all of them failed for me. This was a rare occurrence. Usually, at least the last resort – to hitch a ride on a motorcycle or a car (with the subsequent fears of boorish and harassing uncles) – would come through. I also remember that anomalous evening because, as a denizen of mobile Lahore, I studied intimately the patterns of traffic and

transportation and was rarely caught off-guard. As I write this, a thought occurs to me that perhaps that was the night when we found out that Pakistan's then-military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq had fallen from the sky in his C-130 aircraft. Surely not.

In the years since, the *tongas* have disappeared. The city also legislated the many private minivans out of existence. The sedan car has become an aspirational object for Lahore's middle classes, increasingly visible on the city's roads. Lahore's surrounding agricultural land and villages have been parcelled and sold into new housing schemes and colonies. The military-led or military-industrial-led property schemes announce themselves from every billboard. Those who live in these new colonies do not need nor desire public transportation – this is a Lahore for private vehicles only. The relatively new Ring Road makes a semi-circle around Lahore to connect these new exurbias. But the city has also been crisscrossed by two new major public transport options: in 2013, an elevated Bus Rapid Transit line was introduced and, in 2020, the Orange Line made its debut.

The end (or beginning) of the Orange Line closest to my home is Dera Gujran. When we moved to this area in the early 1980s, it was mostly agricultural land. Due north from my home, crossing over various *baghs* (gardens) and two *bastis* (villages), was a large settlement I remember as a *dodhi gaon* (village of buffalo milk herders). Now, it is labelled on the Orange Line map as Dera Gujran. I once played a cricket match against the *dodhi* team near their village. We thought we were one of the better teams in Lahore and we were mercilessly beaten by them. After the match we were treated with lassi and each player on our team received butter and a bag full of *kinnow* (oranges). There were many orchards cultivating this particular, Punjabi variety of citrus nearby, next to the shallow ponds for the water buffaloes. When I rode up the shiny escalators of the Dera Gujran station in August 2024, I was delighted by what the elevation allowed me to see. Beyond the wall was a large expanse of land with a makeshift graveyard of old transportation mini-vans, their rusted skeletons semi-submerged in a shallow pond shared with water buffaloes. I think the resulting smile did not leave my face for the entirety of my ride.

In this volume, *Lahore in Motion*, readers are invited to navigate Lahore by exploring the areas around each Orange Line station. In this afterword, I want to connect this geography by reflecting on a journey along the metro's 26 stops. It takes about an hour to go from Dera Gujran in the north-east to Ali Town in the south-west. The open gangway with side-panelled seats and wide windows allows clean sight lines within

and outside the elevated train. When I get on the train at Dera Gujran on a working-day morning, it is sparsely populated. Yet, within 20 minutes of leaving the first station, there is barely standing room. I am in the very last carriage and around me are young students, clerical workers and day labourers. The women and family sections are at the front of the train and the segregation of sexes in these areas is managed by contracted platform security. I cannot see all the way to the front. The Orange Line hugs Lahori walls and store fronts. Watching from inside the train is almost a voyeuristic act. It reminds me of the Loop in Chicago, where I lived for many years and where the Green Line twists between skyscrapers and mid-century office buildings.

The Orange Line opens up to the rider an architecture of horizons. The rooftops are smoother than the façades of buildings and less crowded than the streets. They present a more melancholic view, devoid of the colour and noise at the street level. One rooftop is covered in *qaleen* (rugs) and men appear hunched over, cleaning the weaves. An open window shows a water-cooler and a hand holding a cigarette. Someone putting up their laundry to dry. A mother reading to her child on a *manji* (jute-bed). A tableaux of a tea ceremony laid out on a table, with no attendees. As the train moves, smooth and frictionless, a number of different Lahores come into view. Three sheets of rusted corrugated tin hold up a roof over a family next to a tall office building. A *katchi abadi* (semi-permanent settlement) of 30-odd homes lies sandwiched between two lanes of a red-bricked neighbourhood. The dome of a medieval monument peeks out above a cluster of intertwined tree branches and electric transformer. From the street, one would only see a large billboard for 'Cannon Primax Foam'. Snippets of green, enclosed behind walls, highlight how little shade is left in the city. Soon, the train approaches the Lakshmi building. Pre-1947, it had the goddess Lakshmi etched in the centre of its top arch. That was replaced by a calligraphic *Allahu Akbar* (God is Great) at some point in the 1990s. I am startled to see that it is now denuded of both.

The train turns and dips underground. When it emerges, it runs perilously close to the Chauburji monument. The seventeenth-century structure takes on a toy-like demeanour when one's gaze comes abreast with its turrets. I look around to see if anyone is looking out the windows, but no one seems to be. As has always been the case in Lahore, the past lies visibly unseen in the everyday city. The train rushes south and the arterial streets of Lahore begin to intersect with one another under the line. The traffic begins to thin out. At Ali Town, I cross platforms, turning around to take the train back to Dera Gujran.

This time, those embarking onto the train are largely day labourers returning from their shifts in nearby building sites. They are covered in that fine red brick dust that one can recognize from afar. The return journey allows me to see the other side of the track. There is some greenery at last: a *waqf* land attached to a shrine, the former site of a prison, a new colony. The hubbub inside the train is Punjabi. A man recounts to another a *TikTok* video which was making fun of the current regime. Another one scrolls through Bollywood songs from the 1970s and 1980s on his phone. I zone out, listening to the interweaving strands of music and the automated announcement: *Agla chawk Salamatpura Station. Baray mehrbani ba'in janib say utrain* (Next Stop is Salamatpura Station. Please get off at the left side). One of the men sitting next to me is a worker contracted by SEMC PVT, which manages security and cleaning for the Orange Line stations. I ask him about working for the Orange Line. He tells me that he makes around PKR32,000 a month (around US$115 or £87 at the time of writing, in 2024). He shrugs when I ask if he can survive on it. It is a month-by-month subcontract, unlike the train captain or the station-attending staff who are Punjab metro train employees; the captain makes around PKR100,000 per month. I ask my new acquaintance about the physical work of sweeping and keeping the station clean in the Lahori heat or cold. This is a good topic. He speaks at length about the precarity and physical hardship of the work. A gentleman sitting on his other side chimes in and asks his own question about the operation of the Orange Line. Soon enough, a mini-salon is taking place, debating the economics of the Orange Line in the last car of the train. Everyone in the conversation loves the train and uses it almost daily but everyone is afraid that it will be taken away from them. It is cheaper than most other options – the average ticket is around PKR30 but to ride the full length is PKR40 – and is extremely clean and very modern in its sensibility.

I exit the train on arrival back at Dera Gujran station. Outside the station, a short walk takes me to a *dhaba* which has delicious *chikar cholay* and *roti*. Eating my meal, I mull over the changes in the landscape wrought by the Orange Line near this edge of Lahore. The area was once all orchards and farms and agricultural land. Now one can only witness the rapid pushing of industry (including industrial waste) and large factories to the north-east of Lahore. The horseshoe-shaped Ring Road bifurcates and segregates the *haves* from those that *have-to-work-for-the haves*. No one in my current social circles – fellow academics in the middle or upwardly mobile middle class – rides the Orange Line. They do not live near it or work near it, and all have their own cars in any event. One person confessed to have taken some out-of-country visitors for a

‘ride’ on the Line. It remained a novelty item for them. I asked if the many Mughal monuments or British-era buildings visible from the Line were part of their tour. They confessed to not knowing anything about them but were eager to catch the views from the Line if I could provide them with an annotated map.

When the Punjab government began developing the Lahore Rapid Mass Transit System in 2006, the Orange Line was only one of four planned lines. The ‘Green Line’, which became the Lahore Metrobus, opened in 2013 and cuts diagonally across the city from Shahdara to Gajju Matta, skirting the Walled City as well as Model Town, one of the earliest planned suburbs in the subcontinent. Two lines remain unbuilt. The proposed Purple Line will go east from Bhatti Chowk and then south to the Airport, along the very road near Saddar that I stood by, waiting for a ride, so long ago. The proposed Blue Line will travel from the west of the city, passing some of the most staid and wealthy neighbourhoods of Gulberg and moving south to terminate near Valencia housing society. Together, the four lines laid out in the planning map neatly surround (but do not traverse) Cantonment and the numerous Defence Housing colonies where much of the property value of Lahore currently rests.

Lahore is a segregated city. Class, religion and caste are the main vectors of segregation. The partitioning of Lahore from its own past constitutes another type of segregation: the segregation of affect. The essays in *Lahore in Motion* highlight the complex and local ways in which memory and history undergird the rider’s engagement with the Orange Line, just as much as the line itself forces new visions of the city into being. In material ways, the Orange Line destabilises some of these segregations: chiefly, by making available a cheap, clean and efficient public transportation system to a city that desperately needs it. The elevated line expands the architecture of horizons across an urban terrain which is segmented into smaller pieces by gates and barriers. The displacement and destruction antecedent to the metro’s creation are now invisible except as rapid glimpses from a speeding train carriage. Those who ride the Orange Line now ‘see’ a new perspective that they did not have before. They may imagine themselves into a new public, with its own attendant politics, taking in more of their city and thus demanding more from it.

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‘A lovely, mind-boggling tapestry of a book. *Lahore in Motion* gives us sharp, short glimpses into how Lahore lives, dies, plays, goes to work, prays, celebrates, resists and surrenders. Intimate forays into how a city reinvents itself, struggles to breathe and remembers that other imagined Lahore of legends.’
Mohammed Hanif, author of *Rebel English Academy*

‘A compelling journey with electric insights about Lahore’s old and new geographies one metro station at a time. Each author provides an intricate and personal gateway into the city to muse and reflect on how people live, aspire and remember.’
Rashmi Sadana, author of *The Moving City: Scenes from the Delhi Metro and the social life of infrastructure*

Lahore in Motion provides a portrait of the Pakistani metropolis by tracing the path of the city’s first metro rail corridor. Construction for this major piece of public infrastructure began in 2015 and, over subsequent years, the nascent ‘Orange Line’ rapidly reconfigured Lahore’s urban landscape. The volume collects stories from a series of walks along the metro’s 27-kilometre path, bringing together a wide variety of authors – including academics and activists, architects and artists – to reflect on the relationship between urban change and belonging in a historic city.

Contributors navigate the friction generated by the Orange Line’s construction and reflect on how this project of connection both responds to and produces fragmentation in the urban environment. The book brings together critical insights on the politics of infrastructure in South Asia and the desires and dispossessions fuelling projects of development in the Global South, assessing how they unevenly inflect the intimate rhythms of everyday life in one of the world’s most populous cities.

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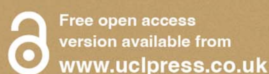

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