

DYING TO SERVE: Militarism, Affect, and the Politics of Sacrifice in the Pakistan Army. *South Asia In Motion.* By Maria Rashid. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020. xiii, 267 pp. (Tables, B&W photos) US\$28.00, paper. ISBN 9781503611986.

Over the course of the last decade, scholarship on the Pakistan Army has proliferated; however, Rashid's *Dying to Serve* stands out because she has done what others have been unable to do: conduct research among and on the enlisted ranks of the Pakistan Army and their families, with a particular focus on the district of Chakwal. That Rashid identified these men as a site of important empirical work is to her commendation; that she devised a suitable research methodology to conduct the work is remarkable.

In the first chapter, "Technology of Rule," she acknowledges that she has privileged access because her father is a "proud, third generation army man" (xiii). This does raise questions of replicability and subject position, which I view as the cost inherent in this work and the other empirical benefits it bestows. In this opening chapter, she describes attending the 2015 *Youm-e-Difāh* (Defense Day), which is "a national military commemorative ceremony" (1). Seated in the press area, she saw a sign "NoK" (Next of Kin), which is where the families of dead soldiers would sit, most of whom came from Pakistan's villages. The show featured music, a colourful stage, and "larger than life screens" (2). Before the finale commenced, the music stopped and the master of ceremonies welcomed the mother of a "martyr" (*shaheed*), which is how the Pakistan Army refers to its slain soldiers. The mother walked on stage and approached the dais, where she stood confidently. "Her eyes glistened with tears as she spoke lovingly of her son ... [When] she spoke her voice did not waver. She spoke with pride and poise, her head held high. Her grief hung in the air, but more touching to watch was her resolve, her ability to stand firm and resolute against the overwhelming loss that this death had brought her" (2). The camera lingered on her, then "swung to the audience, where some watched in awe, while other sobbed or cried silently" (3). One is struck by the "farce-like nature of the spectacle" she describes, and the "impulse of these families to lend themselves to these orchestrations around death" (3).

Rashid's brilliance lies not only in the keenness of her observation and analysis, but also in the captivating language of her exposition. The remainder of this first chapter dilates upon the utility of the mother's grief to the institution to valorize this grief, while also instrumentalizing it to ensure acceptance of yet more grief among an ever-expanding pool of mothers whose sons will die in the various forever wars that Pakistan manufactures. Rashid explains lucidly how the army and its various technologies of rule deploy the grief and sacrifice of these families to maintain the military's hegemonic grasp over the country.

The second chapter, "A Calibrated Dose of Grief," focuses on national

military commemorations, such as the one detailed above. These spectacles are worthy empirical subjects for two reasons. First, they “define the master narrative” through which the army both shapes and cultivates the way in which citizens understand the military and the various functions—constitutional as well as extra-constitutional—the army assumes. Second, these performative ceremonies “represent a site for the examination of relationships—between soldiers, families, and the institution of the military—that lie at the heart of militarism” (24).

In chapter 3, “Land of the Valiant,” her gaze moves from the national stage to Chakwal, which is renowned for producing soldiers and officers. Here she offers a historical discussion of the practices and policies of the British Indian Army and the ways in which they influenced the national recruitment policies of the present Pakistan Army. She pays particular attention to the costs—but also the benefits—these policies have imposed on the families and community of this so-called “martial district.” She finds continuity between pre- and post-independent policies for three interdependent reasons. First, military recruitment is driven by economic motives. Second, enlistment in the army has been normalized as a profession, with “long-term systematic, often generational investment that may mean the difference between a life of penury and a more settled existence with the security of social welfare” (55). Finally, her interlocutors consistently articulated the role of nationalist and religious motivations for their choices.

In chapter 4, “Manufacturing Soldiers,” Rashid explores the ways in which the army renders peasants into soldiers. Here she both studies how the military views its soldier classes and the aspirations it holds, and the fears it carries as well as the kind of soldiers the army seeks to forge. Additionally, through family interviews, she garners insights into the ways in which the soldiers experience these “rituals of transformation and the ways he copes within these regimes of discipline” (88). This is where Rashid’s access—with all of the compromises it may impose upon other aspects of her empirical undertaking—is remarkable. No one has bothered to conceive of, much less embark upon, such a study.

In chapter 5, “Grief and its Aftermath,” Rashid recounts the way in which the dead are received in Chakwal, as well as the compensation policies of the army detailed in the sixth chapter (“The Value of Loss”). Chapter 7, “The Bodies Left Behind,” focuses on disabled soldiers, while the eighth chapter, “Pro Patria Mori,” addresses Pakistan’s ostensible participation in the US-led war on terror as well as its own desultory fight against terrorism. Both chapters 7 and 8 examine the sometimes fraught relationship between the military and the men and families upon which its missions at home and abroad rest. In the final chapter, “A Post-military World?” the author reflects on the different ways the army cultivates the men and families who render its forever wars possible as well as its relationship with the nation it has subjugated for its organizational needs. She also delves into the personal

perquisites the institution bestows upon the men and their families. By more deeply re-examining the affective technologies employed by the army, she aims to both destabilize and mitigate the appeal of militarism to its subject.

There are peccadillos that can be vexing if one perseverates on them. For example, she doesn't challenge Pakistan's own history of militarism, especially the sub-conventional warfare which began in Kashmir in 1947 and in Afghanistan in 1973. Methodologically, this book offers much fodder for discussion among scholars and students alike. In short, this is a brilliantly conceived and executed volume.

Georgetown University, Washington, DC

C. CHRISTINE FAIR

SIKH NATIONALISM: From a Dominant Minority to an Ethno-Religious Diaspora. *New Approaches to Asian History*. By Gurharpal Singh and Giorgio Shani. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 250 pp. (Maps, figures, tables.) US\$89.99, cloth. ISBN 9781107136540.

Gurharpal Singh and Giorgio Shani's book is a major contribution to the study of Sikh nationalism and the nationalism of so-called "small peoples"—that is, ethnic groups or "nations" without their own sovereign states. The book makes important area studies and theoretical/comparative contributions to the existing academic literature on the topic. The book's easy-to-read analytic narrative makes it accessible to the general educated audience, as well as the more specialized academic community.

The book's primary purpose is to decipher and explain the historical origins and evolution of Sikh nationalism. As the authors state, "[t]he central argument of this book is quite simple: we need to move beyond existing tropes, especially religion, that have defined Sikh subjectivities. An integrated approach to nationalism, identity and diaspora offers a more comprehensive understanding of Sikh aspirations for self-determination" (1). As such, the authors acknowledge the various ways to conceptualize the Sikhs: as a "religious community," an evolving political "nation," and/or a "minority group" in both India and the worldwide diaspora. Keeping the analytical task of explaining Sikh nationalism in the forefront, the authors appropriately focus on the second conceptualization—that of the Sikhs as an evolving stateless (or diasporic) "nation." Of particular analytical importance is the authors' methodological choice of avoiding a "critical theory" approach consisting of interpretative "deconstruction," in favour of an "empirical/positivist" macro-historical approach attempting to explain the evolution of Sikh nationalism from the beginning of the community/nation to the present. In fact, the various chapters of the book, except for the introduction and chapter on the Sikh diaspora, are in chronological order.

In taking this empirical/positivist approach, the authors make an