

On each of these questions, Skaria has critical insights to offer. For example, in the book Dangi landscapes do not merely constitute an external and *a priori* “nature” in front of history. Rather, these terrains are actively configured as part of the production of space and the construction of time within historical practice. Indeed, *Hybrid Histories* makes critical contributions to a range of scholarly debates and theoretical discussions, from specific issues of continuity, transition, and rupture represented by colonial rule to the wider rethinking of the environmental history and the historical anthropology of South Asia. However, since Skaria inadequately specifies the broader terms of these discussions and arguments, particularly at the beginning of the book, he is often unjust to his own accounts.

I have various queries concerning specific analyses offered here—questions about the status of the “extra-Dangi” as a historical/conceptual fault-line, and inquiries regarding homogenized representations of western conceptions of “wildness,” for example. This is not a caveat. It is the point of this review. Through its imagining and inscription of theory and narrative as conjoined endeavor, *Hybrid Histories* productively opens up several sites for dialogue—in the work of history, toward the labor of ethnography, as a text in my class.

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Pakistan: A Modern History. By IAN TALBOT. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. xvi, 432 pp. \$35.00 (cloth).

Pakistan's history since independence in 1947 demonstrates convincingly that people do not always receive the government they deserve. Ian Talbot, building on his influential earlier work on the preindependence movements that created Pakistan, here analyzes in detail the distressing political history of this new nation. Yet he argues throughout that radically reformed public policies and a transformed political culture could yet bring stability, accountability, and effectiveness to Pakistan's political processes. Published in 1998, this book includes a brief account of Pakistan's nuclear tests but ends before its miniwar with India in Kargil about Kashmir and the latest military coup, by “Chief Executive” General Musharraf.

Talbot's extensive knowledge of the mass movements and the political maneuverings that produced independent Pakistan in 1947 provides substantial historical depth to his state-centered analysis. Comparative political scientists, he asserts, often focus on political parties, thereby failing to appreciate the powerful effects of ethnic and kinship identities (including *biradaris*) in mobilizing people for political participation, both within and outside of formal political organizations. He further asserts that such political analysts sometimes neglect the historical context, not understanding that many of Pakistan's current political conflicts arose from its colonial heritage of “contested national identity, uneven development, bureaucratic authoritarianism, and imbalance between a weak civil society and dominant military” (p. 17). These factors favored, and continue to favor, a political climate of state enforcement of law and order over and against popular participation, except as resistance to that state. Further, the preindependence indigenous elite and mass-based movements to create Pakistan themselves left legacies of regional versus national conflicts, tensions between Islam and Muslim nationalism, a dominant culture of “political intolerance” (p. 12), residual intermediary political magnates, and

interregional and intraregional disparities. All these diverse factors have continued, Talbot argues, to disrupt nation building and development over the subsequent half-century of Pakistan's existence.

In this volume, Talbot proceeds chronologically to recount the disappointing circumstances and policies of Pakistan's civilian and military rulers through 1998, the first year of Nawaz Sharif's second incumbency. While Talbot regards some rulers, including Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Liaqat Ali Khan, Ayub Khan, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, as having held special promise, and others, including Zia al-Haq, as particularly harmful, each ruler ultimately failed to deliver and left Pakistan worse off than before. Talbot entitles the final part of his book "Ever-decreasing Circles," as Pakistan has spiraled downward since 1988. Yet Talbot does not doubt Pakistan's future existence as a nation.

Talbot's own formula for Pakistan's improved future requires a revival of the preindependence Unionist Party's culture of "consociational, accommodationist politics" (p. 5). He calls for the proportional representation of all of Pakistan's culturally and economically diverse groups in the political process. He further advises that, to allay the fears of Pakistan's other, much smaller provinces about the "Punjabisation of Pakistan," that disproportionately large and internally diverse province should be divided into three (pp. 371–72). Overall, Talbot prescribes for Pakistan's leaders "the five C's of consensus, consent, commitment, conviction and compassion" as "Pakistan's best hope for the future" (pp. 373–74).

Talbot's fine analysis of Pakistan's political history displays both his comprehensive knowledge and his commitment to its improvement. Although Talbot differs in places with Ayesha Jalal, he largely concurs with her larger interpretations in her *Democracy and Authoritarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and *State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Talbot's scholarly political analysis compares well with Shahid Javed Burki's well-informed but more generous economic and political narrative, *Pakistan: Fifty Years of Nationhood*, 3rd edition (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1999). While Talbot writes of the exclusivist "rantings of Islamic ideologues" (p. 6), Burki reflects a more Islamicist interpretation of Pakistani history; they particularly disagree about the significance of General Zia al-Haq's eleven-year rule.

Talbot's book will be essential reading for scholars and students seeking an informed narrative of Pakistani political history. Centering on West Pakistani politics, his narrative reflects the marginalization of East Pakistan even before it split off as Bangladesh in 1971. Although he demonstrates a sound knowledge of political science theory, and appropriately refers to it as relevant, he concentrates on his political narrative about Pakistan. He draws on public records and private papers, and interviews with leading figures, as well as his extensive reading of journalistic and secondary sources. His extensive appendices provide brief biographies of leading politicians and descriptions of political parties and organizations. If he occasionally expects his readers to comprehend allusions to particular events in the Pakistani news, especially in his chapter on recent developments, overall he writes for the general reader. Alas, this narrative proves a sad one about "the Hobbesian jungle which is contemporary Pakistan" (p. 40).

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The Thakali: A Himalayan Ethnography. By MICHAEL VINDING. London: Serindia Publications, 1998. ix, 470 pp.