History in Pakistan
and the Will to Architecture

CHRIS MOFFAT
School of History, QMUL

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I. The Matter of Inheritance

The essays in this themed section all approach, via different paths, a single question: what, exactly, does 'the past' mean for Pakistan? Pakistan here signals two things: first, a political idea, ascendant in the 1930s and refined through dispute and argument, both in the path to partition in 1947 and subsequently with reference to the borders of an actually-existing Muslim state in South Asia. Second, Pakistan names the terrain for a certain sort of historical experience, one shaped by its origins in the violent rupture of British India and by further division in 1971 with the independence of Bangladesh. The contributors are interested in the variety of relationships negotiated with the past in this context – from a number of given presents, with a mind to possible futures – and as such position 'historicity' as a provocative entry-point into the politics and public life of Pakistan.[1] Rather than providing a conventional 'introduction' to a series of papers, this essay sets out the stakes for privileging this question of the past – its meaning *for* and presence *within* Pakistan.

[1] Stewart, "Historicity and Anthropology."

An interest in the unsettled potential of the past was prompted in part by a central argument in Faisal Devji's 2013 book *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as Political Idea*. In this book, and most explicitly in a chapter entitled 'A People Without History', Devji argues that it was precisely through a *rejection* of the past that early Muslim nationalists endeavoured to create unity among Pakistan's new community of refugees and strangers. If the new Indian state was able to draw on a language of historical *continuity*, Pakistan's national narrative required a disavowal: the variety of local and regional identities gathered inside new territorial boundaries made it impossible to rely on conventional markers of belonging like blood or soil. This, Devji suggests, helps us understand Muhammad Ali Jinnah's frequent invocation of 'New World' models of nationalism, his calls to 'forget' or 'bury' the past, urging his new countrymen to leave behind the history of fragmentation, dispersal and linguistic or ethnic division that characterised the Muslim community in British India.[2] Islam, as a universal idea disconnected from the particular bequests of history or geography, was wielded polemically against provincialism, and so too did an orientation towards the future facilitate an idea of common cause.[3]

This essay considers the long-term implications of this rejection of the past, exploring where it has been contested by the desire to identify the terms of an *inheritance* – a specific *responsibility* to the past, which may serve or indeed subvert aspirations to national unity. I am particularly interested in how debates over the form and function of an inheritance are played out in the realm of *heritage*, a global concept that has had an intellectually and politically productive career in Pakistan. How are heritage institutions and heritage-making practices affected by Pakistan's uncertain historicity? What is to be protected or preserved, in what way and for what purpose? Focusing on contests over the built environment – the obduracy of certain sites, the ruination of others – I develop an argument about architecture as object, as practice, but also as metaphor for thought, suggesting that a pervasive 'will to architecture' characterises the public life of history in Pakistan. I then consider some of the ways in which this desire for order and foundation may be challenged or disrupted.

II. The Past as a Problem in the History of Pakistan

If anti-historical thinking was, as Devji argues, characteristic of early Muslim nationalism, it has had an ambivalent legacy in the post-colonial state. Certainly, a futurist orientation persists in the radical urban development projects of the 1950s and 1960s, some of which Markus Daechsel has traced in his book on Islamabad, a city whose design and construction was meant to exemplify "both a new way of making sense of the world, and new possibilities of governance."[4] But for most grappling with life in an independent country, it was not the appearance of the new but the obduracy of the old that characterised interactions with the built environment – whether at the level of the prosaic (abandoned homes, shops and buildings, redistributed and re-inhabited) or of

[2] Devji, *Muslim Zion*, 10, 90. For a critical assessment, see Qasmi, "A Master Narrative".
[3] On futurity see also Khan, *Muslim Becoming*.
[4] Daechsel, *Islamabad*, 5.

the epic (the great gateways, fortresses, religious structures and other historic buildings that continued to function as landmarks or points of assembly in cities, towns and villages).

One category available to the new citizenry of Pakistan for negotiating the meaning, function and potential value of this built inheritance remained from the colonial period: this being 'heritage', and the concomitant institutional apparatus associated with its ethic of curating and caring for the past in the present.[5] 'Heritage' was, indeed, a category whose terms and demands emerged from the colonial relationship between Britain and the Indian subcontinent, with the mid nineteenth-century appearance of institutions for preservation (notably, the 1861 Archaeological Survey of India) building on existing practices of repair and restoration traditionally overseen by wealthy elites and local ruling families in their areas of influence.[6] It was the colonial-era archaeologist Sir Mortimer Wheeler who was invited to create "from zero" a new Archaeological Department for the Pakistani government in 1949, using the ancient settlement of Mohenjo-Daro in Sindh as a "training-establishment" for this first, post-colonial generation of surveyors, excavators and preservationists.[7] Wheeler would later be appointed the first President of the Pakistani Museums Department, advising on the establishment of the National Museum of Pakistan in Karachi in 1950.[8] Pakistan's interaction with an international cohort of advisors and professionals on this question of caring for the past would continue through its participation in post-WWII institutions like UNESCO, which it joined in 1949. Indeed, Mohenjo-Daro would be the focus of one of UNESCO's earliest international campaigns on built heritage, protecting the site's foundations from a rising Indus River water table.[9]

A comprehensive study of how Pakistan informed, responded to or subverted an emergent, global 'regime of the sensible' that positioned heritage as policy virtue and asset for 'humanity' remains to be done. But of interest to the present discussion is the tension between this idea of a *general* responsibility to the past and the particularised processes of border-making and identity-consolidation taking place after partition – both within the new state and in the subcontinent more generally. Would some pasts count more than others? Certainly, Wheeler's playful celebration of *Five Thousand Years of Pakistan* – only three years after its foundation – offered too expansive a conception of the country's inheritance for those invested in the rise and consolidation of an Islamic republic.[10] In contrast, the fevered search for traces of the Umayyad General Muhammad Bin Qasim (695-715), credited with introducing Islam to Sindh and thus hailed as forefather of the Pakistani state, has been criticised as too reductive, even as the young

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[5] Swenson and Mandler, *From Plunder to Preservation.*
[6] Rajagopalan, *Building Histories*, 7; Glover, *Making Lahore Modern*.
[7] Wheeler, *My Archaeological Mission,* 81, 88.
[8] Hawkes, *Mortimer Wheeler*, 266-67.
[9] "Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro," UNESCO, accessed 6 March 2017, http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/138. For an illuminating discussion of Wheeler, see Kabir, *Partition's Post-Amnesias*, especially 90-94.
[10] Wheeler, *Five Thousand Years of Pakistan*.

Arab continues to cast a heavy shadow on historical narratives in the country.[11] (*Figure 1*)

The labour of heritage practice provides a forum for negotiating the country's historical specificity. The literary and cultural historian Ananya Jahanara Kabir, to give one example, has reflected on the "enchantment of teracotta" and the importance of *clay* as a material to work with and through for early Pakistani archaeologists and artists, this ancient substance providing a sense of unbroken tradition and the consolation of longevity in the wake of partition's traumas.[12] The art historian Saleema Waraich argues in another context that the presence of ruins has proved productive to narratives of Pakistani nationalism – *not* in terms of alluding to the glory of earlier periods of Muslim rule in the subcontinent, but rather in contributing to an identity of victimization and underlining the necessity for *refuge*. It is precisely the looting and destruction of Mughal monuments in Punjab under subsequent Sikh and then British periods of rule that provides evidence for this self-understanding. For Waraich, ruined buildings and other structures in Lahore were not to be *restored* but rather *preserved* in their states of ruination. She gives the example of the important Mughal site of *Shahi Qila* ('Royal Fort'), where archaeologists chose to partially preserve a Sikh overlay on a Mughal period wall to illustrate the disregard Sikhs had for Mughal architecture.[13] It is a shared experience of Muslim persecution in the subcontinent that is insisted upon, rather than a triumphalist narrative that sees the Mughals as part of a golden age – the latter too provocative a gesture on account of regional histories of persecution under the Mughals, and indeed the fact that a Mughal heritage was being institutionalised in India in Delhi and through sites like the Taj Mahal.[14]

Attempts to catalogue, curate, and thus consolidate an idea of Pakistan's built inheritance coincided with an argument to recognise the mobile, 'portable' heritage brought into the borders of East and West Pakistan by the new conglomeration of peoples after 1947. In a 1955 volume titled *The Cultural Heritage of Pakistan*, the influential historian and civil servant SM Ikram would look to mediate calls to 'bury the past' by highlighting new intellectual and cultural possibilities within Pakistan's fixed borders:

> The cream of Muslim society in Delhi, Lucknow, Patna, Hyderabad and Calcutta is now to be found in Karachi, Lahore, Chittagong and Dacca. The descendants and the heirs of those who enriched the cultural and artistic life of Muslim India are today in Pakistan. The cultural heritage of Pakistan cannot, therefore, be limited to what flowered within its geographical boundaries, and has to contain within its scope all that was noble and beautiful in Muslim India.[15]

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[11] Asif, *A Book of Conquest*; Kabir, *Partition's Post-Amnesias*, 134-35; Abidi, *The Ghost of Muhammad Bin Qasim*.
[12] Kabir, *Partition's Post-Amnesias*, chapter 2.
[13] Waraich, "Locations of Longing," 704.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ikram, "Introduction," iii.

Proponents of a 'national' heritage for this new state – intellectuals, civil servants, politicians and activists – were thus compelled to grapple with uncertain spatial and temporal boundaries in their attempts to identify the value of the past for Pakistan. Ayesha Jalal has suggested that while the "lack of convergence" between Muslim identity and Muslim nationhood in Pakistan has "invited ingenuity in argument", in reality the struggle to define an official historical narrative has been monopolised by the conflict between a "vocal Islamic lobby" and their secular or modernist opponents.[16] I want to suggest that Pakistan's ambiguous inheritance – this uncertainty concerning the boundaries of a political community and the apprehension over what might constitute a common history[17] – has indeed provoked innovation and creative adaptation if we do not restrict our focus to 'official' forms of imagining like school textbooks or state commemorative activity, expanding our lens to consider the multiple contexts in which 'the past' is made meaningful for the present.[18] A central contention of this themed section is that Pakistan may in fact be instructive for thinking about the futures of heritage practice, public history and history education in a world increasingly characterised by precarity, scarcity and insecurity. In this sense, it echoes Naveeda Khan's plea to go 'beyond crisis' in the study of Pakistan and asks what this country might reveal about the conditions and trajectories of the modern world.[19]

III. The Will to Architecture

Architecture, as I have noted, can be the direct 'object' of heritage rhetoric, with advocates calling for the protection of valued buildings, the preservation of vulnerable structures against further damage or threat. Architects, similarly, can be involved in restoration projects, in the planning that takes place around heritage sites, as well as in the identification of 'vernacular' or 'indigenous' architectural styles and building practices, of which I will say more below. But alongside architecture as physical entity and professional practice, we can also recognise the very concept of heritage as *architectonic*, by which I mean the concept transmits a philosophy that privileges stability and structure, the necessity of order and foundation. Architecture, then, can be approached as a *metaphor for thought*, and it is in this sense that I speak of a 'will to architecture' animating public history debates in Pakistan.

The notion of a 'will to architecture' was developed by the Japanese philosopher and literary critic Kojin Karatani to describe what he perceived to be the "obsessive recurrence" of architectural terms in Western philosophical discourse since Plato, at least – the ubiquity of which, for Karatani, betrays a desire for *foundation,* for a solid edifice on which to fasten otherwise unstable

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[16] Jalal, "Conjuring Pakistan," 74.
[17] Ali reflects on this latter in his "Communists in a Muslim Land", 506.
[18] See also Kabir, "Hieroglyphs and Broken Links", on non-narrative forms of remembering in Pakistan. I came to Kabir's *Partition's Post-Amnesias* late in the revision stage of this essay: its focus on cultural producers in Pakistan and Bangladesh makes this point on innovation and adaptation abundantly clear. Kabir's engagement with the question of generational change is particularly rich.
[19] Khan, *Beyond Crisis*.

philosophical systems. Karatani's interest in architecture as metaphor returns to the term's Greek roots – *arkhe* for 'origins', *tekton* for 'craftsman' – and interrogates the philosopher's role as a 'craftsman of origins', positioning this figure's *will* to establish order and structure as one possible response to the reality of "a chaotic and manifold becoming." For Karatani, it is a sense of crisis that animates this desire to construct a solid edifice, such that the 'will to architecture' serves to reveal that which it lacks – the very absence of foundation.[20] This, to me, seems an apt entry point to the troubled life of public history in Pakistan: the various attempts to assign order and direction to what Devji describes as the country's "radical and unprecedented beginning", an event for which Jinnah could find "no parallel in the history of the world".[21] As will be clear, my interest is not simply in the 'will to architecture' as metaphor but also in the manner in which these desires are played out in a very material sense, through actual building activities and heritage practice in Pakistan.

The lack of consensus over what the past *could* or *should* mean for Pakistan is characterised by multiple, competing attempts to identify the terms of an inheritance – an endeavour necessarily entangled with attempts to design possible futures.[22] There are perhaps three general ways to think about heritage and its architectonic – that is, its ordering, foundation-setting – function in Pakistan, the nature of the edifice it seeks to erect. In the first place, heritage policy and practice can play a role in attempts to 'nationalize' the past, with historical sites identified for their convergence with those "officially concocted national soporifics" Jalal has argued permeate the country's educational system, and which work to combat competing trends of regional identity.[23] Second, a more expansive notion of heritage can function to mediate rupture, pointing to continuities that transcend the trauma of partition. Indeed, the research expertise of some of Pakistan's preeminent archaeologists has typically cut across national borders: Ahmad Hasan Dani was a specialist on Central Asia; FA Khan's work linked the Indus Valley to Iran.[24] Relics of the subcontinent's Buddhist heritage were mobilised in the early decades of Pakistan's existence as a way to bind the Western wing to the East, substantiating an argument for cultural integrity across territorial distance.[25] Pakistan is here posited as a 'guardian' or 'custodian' of the past it has inherited within its territory, rather than the sole worthy 'progenitor' or authoritative 'owner'. This project, so orientated towards the regional, arguably became easier to reconcile with the national after the break of East from West Pakistan in 1971; Ananya Kabir has noted, for instance, how claims to an 'Indus Valley' inheritance were increasingly made by non-Sindhis looking to reconfigure Pakistani identity after the independence of Bangladesh.[26]

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[20] Karatani, *Architecture as Metaphor*, 7-8, 18.
[21] Devji, *Muslim Zion*, 89.
[22] Harrison, "Beyond 'Natural' and 'Cultural' Heritage."
[23] Jalal, 'Conjuring Pakistan,' 77.
[24] Dani, *New Light on Central Asia*; Khan, *Indus Valley and Early Iran*.
[25] Kabir, *Partition's Post-Amnesias*, 93.
[26] Kabir, 'Hieroglyphs and Broken Links', 498.

Third, heritage rhetoric – its call to responsibility, its demand to care for the past – may be deployed as part of an oppositional politics, intending to illuminate alternative or counter-histories that official narratives overlook or obscure, pointing to contradictions or absences. These calls to protect suppressed or subordinated histories may be directed against the state directly, in polemical form, or they may promote local heritage-making practices that flourish without state support. They may work to fracture ideas of the national, or suggest paths toward its alternative realization.[27] Arguments in this style can be radical and disruptive, but at times – as Ammara Maqsood has recently pointed out – they appear entwined intimately with established middle class sentiment in urban centres and a nostalgia for lost freedoms or foreclosed possibility in a rapidly changing polity.[28]

These three functions can of course overlap, but what they share explicitly is the desire for a stability not yet achieved: there is always *more work to be done* – to consolidate the authority of a national past, to improve the state's guardianship over plural pasts, or to fortify and legitimate alternative traditions. It is this *will* to architecture that animates debates over heritage in Pakistan, constituting a terrain of struggle, propelling creative adaptations, but also producing a sense of frustration – typically, due to the 'failure' of official organisations to prevent the decay of buildings or other structures deemed valuable by heritage advocates. This failure can be a problem of funding or apparent disinterest – in 2011, the federal Department of Archaeology and Museums was controversially devolved to provincial administrations in a chaotic process that saw a dramatic fissuring of personnel, expertise and resources. But 'failure' might also be the result of wilful denigration, as where the government supports development programmes or urban infrastructure projects that directly threaten sites of historic interest. This latter charge has characterised debates over the controversial 'Orange Line' project in Lahore – a twenty-six station rapid transit system that began construction in 2015 and which, at the time of writing, is still under way. The route's proximity to eleven historic sites in Lahore – from the Shalimar Gardens to the Zeb-un-Nisa Tomb – has provoked fierce criticism of the Lahore Development Authority, ranging from arguments that the Line will spoil urban aesthetics (causing 'obstructed' or 'garish' views) to the suggestion that it will actually compromise the stability of the city's built heritage, causing further deterioration.[29] The desolation produced by construction around the monumental 17th century Mughal gateway Chauburji – protected under the 1975 Antiquities Act – has been upheld as evidence of the local government's short-sightedness and disregard. (*Figure 2)*

In August 2016, a petition filed by the celebrated Pakistani architect and heritage activist Kamil Khan Mumtaz, representing some twenty citizens organisations, succeeded in getting the Lahore High Court to suspend construction on the Orange Line. The petitioners directly questioned the legitimacy of the 'No

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[27] On the challenges and opportunities presented, for example, by the history of the Khudai Khidmatgar movement, see Banerjee, *The Pathan Unarmed*.
[28] Maqsood, *The New Pakistani Middle Class*, especially Chapter One.
[29] Lahore Metro Aur Aap (Campaign Website), accessed 6 March 2017, http://www.lahoremetroauraap.org.

Objection Certificates' awarded to the project by the Director General of the Punjab Province Archaeology Department. They demanded that further activity be halted until the input of "independent consultants consisting of a panel of experts of international status" was acquired.[30] Notably, Mumtaz's petition did not focus simply on the aesthetic and structural implications of the project, but connected his heritage argument to the well-being of Lahore's vulnerable or marginalised communities, criticising the government's acquisition of land from citizens by "hook or by crook" and the pursuit of a "white elephant" for "cheap publicity".[31]

Mumtaz's intervention – consistent with his broader efforts as an architect to connect a desire to care for the past with an agenda of humility and justice in the present[32] – is helpful in demonstrating how heritage arguments may also reflect particular ideas of 'the people', in addition to perspectives on the responsibilities and power of the state.[33] It was, indeed, a concern for the manifestation of 'elite' and 'popular' divides in the articulation and institutionalisation of heritage that prompted the emergence of critical heritage studies in the 1980s.[34] In Pakistan, 'the people' may be construed as a reservoir for important cultural traditions, or the potential beneficiaries of a robust heritage policy (as with Mumtaz), but there is also a tendency in heritage discourse to position the general population as 'indifferent' to or uninformed about their inheritance in the built environment. The average Pakistani citizen has been presented, at times, as disrespectful, or at least not properly attentive, such that the failure to protect heritage sites becomes as much a failure of individual responsibility as that of state action.[35] The will to architecture here acquires a didactic dimension: Pakistani citizens must be *taught* to appreciate their history. But this viewpoint is based on specific understanding of heritage, and indeed part of the polemic of critical heritage studies has been to move away from an idea of a *universal* or *inherent* 'heritage value', and instead – following Rodney Harrison – to approach heritage as "collaborative, dialogical and interactive, a material-discursive process in which past and future arise out of dialogue and encounter between multiple embodied subjects in (and with) the present."[36]

This critical perspective allows scholars to acknowledge how the heritage concept interacts *with* and is made meaningful *through* the varieties of historical experience evident across Pakistan's social and geographical spectrum – the variant ways individuals and communities negotiate a relationship to the past and their responsibility to an inheritance. The essays in this themed section attempt to capture some of this variety, though they are also intended as an invitation to further research in this rich area. In the final sections of my own essay, I want to focus on two attempts to navigate and animate an inheritance

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[30] "Construction on Lahore's Orange Line Metro Train to be suspended: LHC," *Dawn,* August 19 2016.
[31] Ibid. See also Khan, "Why the Orange Line Metro Train in Lahore is highly controversial".
[32] Mumtaz, *Modernity and Tradition*; Ezdi, "The Architect of Ideas."
[33] Geismar, "Anthropology and Heritage Regimes."
[34] Harrison, *Heritage*; Smith, *Uses of Heritage*.
[35] Waraich too reflects on this tendency in "Locations of Longing," 706.
[36] Harrison, "Beyond 'Natural' and 'Cultural' Heritage," 27.

that emphasise a dialogic and participatory dimension: the first drawing directly on architectural practice but seeking to subvert the authority of the architect; the second engaging the built environment of the city but dispensing with a desire for foundation. Though divergent in terms of context, community and indeed political horizons, both cases demonstrate how a committed retrieval of the past is pursued with the aim of reconfiguring the present, and always with a mind to possible futures. The state, in both cases, is absent, even as these initiatives confront some of the most important issues in Pakistan's twenty-first century – from natural disaster and infrastructural limitations on the country's frontiers to the routinized threats of violence in the public spaces of one of its largest cities. In articulating a heritage argument or experimenting with heritage-making practices, each takes advantage of Pakistan's uncertain historicity and responds to the 'invitation to ingenuity' proffered by this context.

IV. Yasmeen Lari's Barefoot Architecture

Karatani's critique of the 'will to architecture' in Western thought is premised on the idea that the compulsion to *foundation* is "only one choice among many" – one possible response to the "chaotic and manifold becoming" characterising what it means to be human.[37] And yet Karatani cautions against nominating the figure of 'the poet' as some subversive alternative to Plato's celebration of the architect: "to do so would only lead us to another sanctification."[38] Rather, he notes that while Plato admired the architect as *metaphor*, he despised the architect as a man, precisely because architecture as a profession necessarily navigates the vicissitudes of context, and is thus dependent on dialogue with the client and collaboration with builders. However refined the original master design, "no architect can predict the results of construction."[39] And so rather than sanctify the poet, Karatani's solution is to substitute *secular* architecture as metaphor: to recognise the architect and architecture as fully exposed to contingency. It is with this in mind that I want to explore the thought and practice of Karachi-based architect and heritage campaigner Yasmeen Lari, and particularly the opening her work leaves for the disavowal of mastery, for creative negotiations with context.

Yasmeen Lari was born in 1941 in Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab, and in the early 1960s trained as an architect in England at the Oxford School of Architecture (now the School of Architecture at Oxford Brookes University). Celebrated as Pakistan's first female architect, she established her practice Lari Associates in Karachi in 1964 and combined an interest in low-cost housing with client work for the corporate, state and military sectors. Among her best-known projects are the Anguri Bagh Housing project in Lahore (1977), the Taj Mahal Hotel in Karachi (1981), and the Pakistan State Oil House (1991). Alongside her practice, Lari founded the Heritage Foundation of Pakistan in 1980 with her husband, the historian Suhail Zaheer Lari. She describes this project retrospectively as part of a process of "unlearning" – an attempt to depart from the prescriptions

[37] Karatani, *Architecture as Metaphor*, 18.
[38] Ibid, 127.
[39] Ibid, 126-27.

advocated by her architectural teachers in the West and to better "relate to the reality" of Pakistan."[40]

The Foundation's work has been part documentary – i.e. "to document and conserve the traditional and historic built environment in Pakistan" – and part consciousness-raising, aiming to "create an awareness of Pakistan's rich and diverse historic architecture and art." It is, finally, part activist, intending to promote heritage "for social integration, peace and development."[41] Lari's early efforts with the Foundation were sanctioned by official authorities in Pakistan and indeed promoted by General Zia-ul-Haq, Pakistan's President under martial law from 1977 to 1988, who praised Lari's attempts to weave "the rich variety of Islamic traditions into the diverse modern architectural forms."[42] Restoration projects pursued by the Foundation in Sindh – such as the tombs and monuments of Thatta and Makli Hill, the largest necropolis in the world – have been supported by corporate bodies such as the State Oil Company and the Pakistani government's Export Promotion Board. I do not want to focus on this history of entanglement with state and commercial entities aside from signalling it and acknowledging the particular authority and access it made possible. I am more interested in exploring Lari's recent experimentation with 'indigenous' methods of architecture, her mobilisation of archaeological sites for this purpose, and her explicit pursuit of a dialogic relationship with the communities she works with concerning the meaning and function of heritage.

In the late 1980s, Lari began denouncing what she saw as a "lack of knowledge of indigenous technologies" among Pakistani architects, lamenting what she called "instant vernacular" – a cookie-cutter approach wherein "the traditional elements are applied [to structures] as superficially as were the domes and arches in 'Instant Islamic' buildings a decade or two ago."[43] She has cited the Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy and his 1969 book *Architecture for the Poor* as an important influence on her work. Lari thus connects to a wider historical moment in which architects from the global south who had been trained in a modernist tradition begin turning against the 'absolutist' prescriptions of their teachers in the West, positing instead the economic, structural and aesthetic value of locally-available materials – in Fathy's case, mud bricks – while seeking also to honour localised building expertise, learning from its enduring forms and techniques.[44] Mumtaz, noted above, who also trained in England in the 1960s,

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[40] Gillin, "Pakistan's First Female Architect."
[41] 'Mission', Heritage Foundation, accessed March 6, 2017, www.heritagefoundationpak.org/Page/1307/About-Us.
[42] Zia-ul-Haq, "Inaugural Address," 18.
[43] Lari, *Traditional Architecture of Thatta*, vii.
[44] Though widely celebrated, Fathy's programme for an architecture 'for the poor' has found serious critics, not least among his target 'clientele' in Egyptian peasant populations. The romance associated with brick and mudhouses can conflict with local aspirations and desires for modernity. To give one example, Fathy's 'New Gourna' scheme did not include infrastructure for running water, due to the architect's belief that water wells should continue to function as a centre for community life. Locals, skeptical of this denial of basic modern conveniences, rebelled against Fathy's vanguardist vision, and inded many refused to enter the new homes provided. See Pyla, "The Many Lives of New Gourna." Lari has not commented on these critiques, but her interest in more participatory methods of construction might be seen as an adaptation to the paternalism associated with Fathy's work.

describes a similar 'conversion' in the 1980s, effected in part by his reading of Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar's 1973 study of Sufi thought and form in Persian architecture, *The Sense of Unity*. This moment, consonant with a growing cynicism across the postcolonial world regarding the promises of developmental modernism, inaugurated his career-defining interest in the intersection of craft traditions and Islamic cosmology in Pakistan.[45]

"Tradition," in Fathy's phrase, "is not synonymous with stagnation,"[46] and it is here that Lari's sustained research into Pakistan's built inheritance – a deep and multilayered engagement, both archival and archaeological, obvious in her 1996 book on Karachi, *The Dual City*, with Mihail S Lari – is connected directly with her contemporary architectural practice. Since the early 2000s Lari has been developing a distinct approach to building and design that she has labelled variously as the pursuit of "a traditional future" or seeking "a future in the past". Rigorously contextual – and as such producing an ambivalent relationship with that category of the 'national' – Lari's experiments consider Pakistan's built heritage not simply as something to be 'protected' or 'catalogued' but as a resource for intervening in and mediating the problems of the present.

It was a moment of crisis that provoked Lari's new experiments with heritage architecture – the 2005 earthquake in Azad Kashmir, northern Pakistan. Following this natural disaster – one of the worst in South Asian history, 7.6 on the Richter Scale, resulting in the deaths of over eighty thousand people and displacing millions more – teams associated with Lari's Heritage Foundation were enlisted to support rehabilitation programmes in the region. While the Foundation's teams had previously been deployed as part of efforts to document historic sites and coordinate conservation work, now they would be tasked with using this knowledge and experience to facilitate an architecture of *resilience*. In contrast to rehabilitation efforts pursuing the rapid erection of concrete and mortar homes for those displaced, the Heritage Foundation sought to collaborate with communities: first, by sourcing local materials like lime and bamboo, the resilience of which was defended with reference to the survival of centuries-old structures made of this material in Pakistan; and second, by drawing on local traditions and methods of construction to ensure that those who would be living in rehabilitated towns and villages could both participate in the building process and be equipped to oversee necessary maintenance in years to come.[47]

Lari describes this agenda to link local communities, heritage knowledge and a collaborative architecture of resilience as the remit of the 'barefoot architect' – the name echoing Mao's 'barefoot doctors' and indeed sharing this figure's characteristics of mobility, adaptability and sensitivity to local particularity. Lari's barefoot architects – coordinated by a 'Heritage Control Centre' in their areas of work – combine an interest in the documentation of 'vernacular methodologies' in rural areas, research into local sites of historic significance, and the provision of technical guidance and training programmes related to

[45] Kamil Khan Mumtaz, interviewed by the author, Lahore, February 12, 2018; see also Mumtaz, *Modernity and Tradition,* 42.
[46] Fathy, *Architecture for the Poor,* 24.
[47] Heritage Foundation, "Siran Valley."

these traditions in local communities.[48] In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, where the Heritage Foundation supported rehabilitation efforts following mass flooding in 2010, 'Mobile Barefoot Karavan Teams' composed of student volunteers, locally trained artisans and villagers enlisted as "social mobilizers" were deployed throughout the region to provide technical input and support for construction efforts.[49] Again, a guiding principle for the project was to animate "heritage and tradition for [the] involvement of communities and self-confidence."[50] But the use of traditional methods and materials from bamboo cross-bracing to adobe-and-mud walls was also presented as compliant with 'Disaster Risk Reduction' (or DRR) principles, thus promising to fortify communities against the possibility of future disaster. Lari's insistence on the value of lime for creating water-proof walls was informed directly by her experience of working in archaeological sites: she routinely cites the fourteenth century necropolis at Makli as an example of the *instructive* value of Pakistan's built heritage for contemporary architecture.[51]

There is a provocative convergence here between a sense of responsibility to the past, the language of development, and an understanding of the dynamic potential of 'the people' as carriers and indeed guardians of historical knowledge. The barefoot architect's work is no doubt pedagogical in form, in the sense that they aim – in Lari's words – to combat a cycle of dependency by creating a culture of self-reliance.[52] But this assumption of authority is self-subverting in at least two ways. First, in their deference to 'indigenous technologies', and indeed an openness to surprise and discovery, the barefoot architect accepts that the student, too, may have much to teach the teacher. Second, if the teacher assumes a position of authority – in the transmission of technical advice, the demonstration of building technologies, etc. – then they also recognise that this authority is limited and temporary. Success is to be measured through the full transmission of that expertise and the ability of the student to then teach others. Though Lari's barefoot architecture remains invested in 'making' and 'building' – setting a foundation, erecting a stable edifice – it privileges at the same time responsiveness to context and the necessity of dialogue. It navigates the architectural while avoiding the sanctification of the architect. Pakistan's uncertain historicity appears thus not as a cause for lament but rather as an opening or opportunity: the past is not simply 'there' to be documented and preserved but its potential may be *activated* to reconfigure the present. The meaning of a 'heritage' emerges through conversation and experimentation, and is highly attuned to context; it is participatory in nature, and following what scholars have called 'the new heritage paradigm', can actually have "little to do with the past" and instead involve practices that are "fundamentally concerned with assembling and designing the future."[53]

V. Street Theatre's Mobile Monuments

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[48] Heritage Foundation, "Build Back Safer with Vernacular Methodologies," 6.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid, 3.
[51] Yasmeen Lari, interviewed by the author, Karachi, November 10, 2016.
[52] Lari, "Learning from Vernacular Heritage."
[53] Harrison, "Beyond 'Natural' and 'Cultural' Heritage," 35.

If Lari's engagement with Pakistan's built heritage is focused through the question of *resilience*, then my second example privileges fluidity and impermanence within the built environment – radicalising the uncertainty and interruptive potential characteristic of this country's relationship to its pasts. To approach street theatre in urban Pakistan alongside Lari's professional practice of making and building may seem counterintuitive, but I am interested in the former's capacity for constructive work in the city's imagined and imaginative landscapes – within the 'real' phantasmagorias of city life.[54] The street theatre performer shares with the barefoot architect a deep sensitivity to context: their aim is to respond to and animate that context through a minimalist and mobile form of storytelling that, I want to suggest, is invested in the promotion and cultivation of certain political and cultural traditions in non-foundational ways. My central example here is the conjuring of a prison cell on a roadside in Shadman Colony, Lahore – the area where the city's Central Jail, now destroyed, used to stand. This location provides an entry point into the alternative geography street theatre creates as testimonial to Punjab's revolutionary inheritance.

Street theatre's emergence in twentieth century British India was provoked in part as a reaction to the elite and introspective atmosphere of proscenium theatre, whose relatively peripheral significance in modern South Asian cultures was due to its entanglement with colonial institutions and the English education system.[55] The Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), one of the earliest organised bodies of political theatre artists, was founded in 1942 to act as cultural wing of the Communist Party of India. It drew equally from agitprop elements of Marxist cultural politics and South Asian traditions of travelling singers and poets. Performances were to be held in accessible spaces – on street corners, outside places of work – and characterised by a density of local allusions, an emphasis on engagement and direct eye contact with the audience.[56]

Although left and communist theatre troupes like IPTA had a presence in Lahore before partition, most shifted to East Punjab in 1947. It was conditions of state repression and censorship that prompted a revival of activist street theatre in 1980s Pakistan, operating in clandestine opposition to the military dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq. Prominent among these was Lahore's Ajoka Theatre, founded in 1984 by Madeeha Gauhar and reflecting Pakistani street-theatre's alignment not with political parties but with specific causes: in Ajoka's case, ties to the women's movement and calls for a secular humanism. The early history of this group is characterized by Urdu and Punjabi adaptations of plays by Bertolt Brecht, Badal Sircar and others, but thanks to Ajoka's in-house playwright Shahid

[54] Pile, *Real Cities*.
[55] An exception here would be Parsi Theatre, which was not restricted to elite audiences and could take mobile form in the sense that companies would tour the country and set up tin-roofed playhouses for their shows. See Gupta, *The Parsi Theatre.* Companies like Prithvi Theatre, founded in 1940, would remain critical of proscenium forms they saw as 'apolitical', failing to respond to nationalist or revolutionary demands. I owe this point to Salma Siddique, with thanks.
[56] van Erven, *The Playful Revolution*; Deshpande (ed.), *Theatre of the Streets.*

Nadeem the group's plays increasingly reflected Pakistani realities – an early play, *Choolah*, conjured through its actors the built form of a domestic residence, making visible the confinement of women within the four walls of a home. Ajoka's investment in animating alternative histories that criticise Islamisation in Pakistan is well known – consider plays on the eighteenth century poet and philosopher Bulleh Shah, or more recent works on the Mughal Prince Dara Shikoh – but over the decades this concern has also facilitated their absorption into 'official' heritage institutions interested in collecting and promoting folk legends, songs and poetry.[57] Ajoka exists today as one of Pakistan's pre-eminent proscenium theatre organisations, a transformation that reflects the temptation of a stable edifice – the difficulty of navigating a 'chaotic and manifold becoming' and its risks over an extended period of time. But I am interested here in the continuing polemical potential of heritage, and the possibility of street theatre to erect transient, mobile monuments rather than a stable architecture.

The group Punjab Lok Rahs ['Folkways'] was established in 1987 by students critical of Zia, but also in response to the path Ajoka's work was taking. The idea was to operate as a more egalitarian collective and to produce plays solely in Punjabi, perceived crucial for the group's remit to communicate with the urban poor and village communities.[58] It is ironic, perhaps, that this ethic of Punjabi linguistic particularity was developed in part by interaction with a Bengali: Tahir Mehdi, a founding member of Lok Rahs, spoke proudly of the critical turn in the group's history following a workshop with legendary theatre practitioner Badal Sircar, who visited Lahore from Calcutta in the late 1980s.[59] Lok Rahs has carried on Sircar's pedagogical imperative, hosting annual workshops on the circle play and other street theatre techniques for activist groups across Punjab.

For Qaisar Abbas, another member of the group I met with in Lahore, the insistence on Punjabi is not simply a question of accessibility but also an attempt to activate the reservoir of resistance tropes in the language's poetic tradition, one which he argues is "culturally rich and rooted in the people". It is Lok Rahs' attention to this inheritance – centuries old but perceived as threatened by centralizing state and religious imperatives in Pakistan – that fuels their interest in the 1920s revolutionary Bhagat Singh (1907-1931), whom Abbas praises as a "son of the soil", part of a Punjabi heritage that "has been snatched from us."[60]

Bhagat Singh, an iconic figure during the subcontinent's anticolonial struggle, lived his political life in Lahore and was executed in the city – hanged by colonial authorities in 1931 for shooting a police officer in Lahore and bombing the Legislative Assembly in New Delhi. And yet his representation as a Sikh (or more controversially, his identification as an atheist) and his widespread celebration in postcolonial India means he has been exorcised from Pakistan's national space – allocated to another history, another inheritance, too far removed from a

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[57] For a parallel case in Indian street theatre, see Zook, 'The Farcical Mosaic."
[58] Afzal-Khan, *A Critical Stage.*
[59] Tahir Mehdi, interview by author, Lahore, May 8, 2012.
[60] Qaisar Abbas, interview by author, Lahore, May 8, 2012. See also Syed, *Recurrent Patterns in Punjabi Poetry.*

carefully curated narrative of Muslim action and overcoming.[61] This erasure has been contested in a variety of forms, the most vocal in recent years being the call to name a chowk, or roundabout, in Shadman, Lahore, after the revolutionary. The chowk is significant because it is built on the former site of Lahore Central Jail, demolished in 1958. Campaigners claim it is located on the gallows ground where Bhagat Singh 'kissed the hangman's noose' on 23 March 1931.[62] But if this quest for *official* recognition is consonant with the architectonic nature of heritage arguments I have discussed above, street theatre practitioners like the Lok Rahs have experimented with alternative ways to mark the site and its value for a certain inheritance, creating a temporary, transient monument in Shadman.

On 23 March 2011, Lok Rahs – in collaboration with theatre activist Huma Safdar – performed Davinder Singh Daman's play, *Chippan Ton Pehlan* ('Before Sunset')[63] at one corner of Shadman Chowk to mark Bhagat Singh's eightieth death anniversary. Daman's play is an interpretation of the revolutionary's final days in prison, and focuses on the revolutionary's relationship with his jail cell cleaner Bhoga, an untouchable, whom he calls *bebe* ['mother'] and invites to cook for him. Inside the audience circle, the Lok Rahs conjure the structure of the jail cell, using only a bench and small props. (*Figure 3*) Street theatre is designed to interrupt the regular flow of movement and commerce in an urban environment; here, the public is confronted with a spectral monument to an obscured inheritance – and this, too, on a significant day for Pakistan's 'official' narrative, 23 March being celebrated as 'Republic Day'.[64] Because Bhagat Singh's story is not well known in Pakistan, Abbas suggests, the play has been useful for prompting questions, encouraging reflection. This is true to Lok Rahs' theatre technique, which he suggests is about eliminating fear and "talking and experiencing freedom". Rather than enshrining an authoritative account on a stable edifice, this is about using gestures and voice to invite the past into the present, precisely for its disruptive potential. At the end of the performance, the jail cell is cleared and the performers disappear into the crowd.

This form of theatre practice must negotiate the dangers attending public assembly in contemporary Pakistan: the possibility of militant attacks or indeed more routine practices of reactionary intimidation. In recent years, fears for the safety of audiences have led to a reduction in performances or a retreat to safer spaces like university campuses. But this informal prohibition also accelerates the practice's disruptive potential. Street theatre – in its agitprop form – creates a space to negotiate the relationship between pasts, presents and possible futures in a collective, public manner. Rather than trying to *escape* the vertigo of Pakistan's uncertain historicity, the unsettled nature of the past is taken advantage of to open alternative horizons, to raise new and meaningful questions about the present. Karatani, I have noted, sees the will to architecture

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[61] On Bhagat Singh's afterlives in India, see Moffat, "Politics and the Work of the Dead"

[62] Moffat, "Infinite Inquilab."; Saeeda Diep, interview by author, Lahore, 7 May 2012.

[63] Daman, *Chippan ton Pehlan*. The title translates literally as 'before hiding' or 'before going into hiding', suggesting the setting of the sun and in this way referring to Bhagat Singh's hanging. I am grateful to Sara Kazmi for her insights here.

[64] Republic Day marks both the 1940 Lahore Resolution which called for Muslim autonomy and the 1956 constitution which created the Islamic Republic.

as only one possible response to "a chaotic and manifold becoming."[65] Street theatre explores a different choice, aiming to deter and disrupt any smooth process of becoming through the illumination of alternative histories and a commitment to the insurgent potential of heritage.

The remainder of this themed section is interested similarly in the variety of responses articulated by intellectuals, writers, artists and activists to Pakistan's uncertain historicity. Interdisciplinary in form, the essays explore intersections of separatism and peace, film cultures and archives, memorialisation and violence. This interrogation of the meaning of 'the past' for Pakistan is intended as an invitation for further investigation and further debate, both within the state's borders – from Gwadar to Gilgit – and in the areas where the country casts a heavy shadow, from Indian Kashmir to Bangladesh. It follows calls to move beyond familiar scholarly preoccupations with state failure, fragmentation and corruption in this context, approaching Pakistan instead as a site of creative contest and adaptation.[66] How might the particular philosophies of history, archival strategies and heritage-making practices evident amongst its peoples and communities be instructive for the present? What is their purchase in a world increasingly grappling with questions of precarity, scarcity and insecurity, the instability of the present and the uncertainty of a future to come?

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[65] Karatani, *Architecture as Metaphor*, 18.
[66] Khan, *Beyond Crisis*.

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