Building up Oneself as an Ascetic in the Shadow of Devotional Artifacts: The Case of the *malañg-fuqarā* of Pakistan

Delphine Ortis

PhD, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris, France

delphine.ortis@gmail.com

Abstract

This essay presents a reflection on the building process of ascetics belonging to an order “outside religious law” (*be sharʿ*), the Qalandarī, through the case of the *malañg-fuqarā* of a Pakistani Sufi lodge. I hypothesize that being an ascetic is a form of technique of the body and the subject, which results in producing, configuring, and using them, in relation to the Sufi and Twelver Shiʿism artifacts dispensing the healing and miraculous potency of the saint to whom he dedicates his life, and through which he builds himself as potential saint.

Keywords

asceticism – material culture – relic – ritual – Twelver Shiʿism – South Asian – Sufism

When first visiting the “shrine” (*dargāh*) of a Muslim saint in South Asia, one is struck by the physical behavior of the “visitors.”¹ Indeed, everyone touches hands and eyes, caresses and embraces all the devotional artifacts present in the place: the saint’s tomb or the metal or wooden grid (*zariḥ*) that surrounds it, his relics, i.e. the objects that belonged to him, when they are exposed, but also the architectural elements of the tomb, especially the doors and thresholds. As I have shown (Ortis, 2017), according to local conceptions, the *baraka* of the saint, more commonly known in South Asia as “force” (*tāqat* or *shaktī*), emanates from his body and diffuses from his grave to permeate the whole place. Through their gestures, visitors seek to introduce the potency of the place into their bodies. This desire to incorporate any element that could contain the slightest atom of *baraka* can lead visitors to ingest the dust from the ground. If they do this, it is because, according to them, all these artifacts carry within them the potency of the saint, his capacity to act on the course of things and to perform miracles because of his connection with God. D’Souza (1998), in his article on the function of the “metal standard” (*ʿalam*) of Ghāzī ‘Abbās in popular Shiʿite piety, already pointed out the thin line separating “veneration” of the object from its “deification” in South Asian Islam. Ruffle’s article in this volume also shows that the *ʿalam* and replica of Imam Husayn’s Karbala shrine-tomb (*taʿziya*) are endowed with “thing power” in the words of Bennett quoted by her, and that they play an essential role in devotional practices. She analyzes the physical contact that is established between the devotees and these artifacts, which she calls “image objects”, in the *āshūrkhāna* of Hyderabad, through “visual interactions.”

As the history of anthropology shows, in order to account for this type of phenomenon and experience, we have gradually moved from the idea of the “object-sign”, i.e.

a semiotic model according to which the artifacts mobilized in rituals are carriers of meanings, symbols, to that of the “object-subject” (Albert and Kedzierska-Manzo, 2016). Vernant (1965) had marked a first turning point by proposing the notion of “presentification of the divine” instead of that of “representation” which, by implying the idea of an exteriority of the divine being in relation to the object, could not account for the fact that the object itself receives a cult. Then, Gell’s concept of “agency” (1998) reformulated the subject/object duality by highlighting the inscription of the object in an interpersonal relationship with the subject, in which the latter attributes to the object a social role, a capacity for (re-)action and certain intentionality. Ingold (2007) went even further by proposing to take into account the “affordances” of objects, i.e. their latent potentialities to suggest their own use but also to do things by themselves. In the same perspective, Lemonnier’s concept of “communicative function of things” (2012, 2013) proposes to consider the object in a double movement: as thing that embodies but also generates the values underlying social relationships.

To continue this reflection on the place of the artifact in the worship of saints, marked by a strong Shiite impregnation, I would take as a case study a colorful character of Sufism: the antinomist and heterodox ascetic, the *malañg-faqīr* of the Qalandari’s order. The experience of ascetic life is fulfilled for many of them in the service of the tomb of a saint. Not only do they live in constant contact with his potency, but we also observe that they are the main producers of his holiness and the mediators of his potency among with visitors. Indeed, they are the ones who make many of the artifacts present in shrines and put them into action during rituals. But we can also see in this daily work of saint’s service another process of construction: their building up themselves as potential saints. It is the hypothesis of this co-construction, of the holiness and of the ascetism through the manipulation of their artifacts, which I wish to explore here. I hypothesize that being an ascetic is a form of technique of the body and the subject (Warnier, 1999, 2009), which results in producing, configuring and using them, in relation to the Sufi and Twelver Shi’ism artifacts dispensing the healing and miraculous potency of the saint and the Family of the Prophet (*Ahl al-Bayt*) to whom he dedicates his life, and through which he builds himself as potential saint.

I will examine here this process of building up as I observed it in the small pilgrimage town of Sehwan, located in the Province of Sindh (South Pakistan), where is buried the main representative of Qalandari’s order in Pakistan, the saint Lāl Shabbāz Qalandar (d. in 1274).²

This mystical order, categorized in Sufi literature as “outside the religious law [*sharia*]” (*be sharʿ*), deliberately breaks with the rules of *sharia* and advocates the cultural and social maverick; their practices clearly indicate a voluntary renunciation of all social gratification and sexual pleasure.³ The life of Lāl Shabbāz Qalandar is a perfect example: remained celibate and chaste, he led an itinerant ascetic life marked by fasting, meditation sessions and the practice of an ecstatic “dance” (*raqs*) which he himself developed, the *dhamāl* (Frembgen 2012), and which he described in his poetry as the best path leading to the ultimate goal of any Sufi, annihilation in God, this is due to the “mystical love” (*ishq*), the “spiritual intoxication” (*mast*) and the “spiritual ecstasy”

Map of Pakistan and Sehwan's location

FIGURE 1
The tomb of Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar
with the *Gulūband* in a silver
reliquary at the right side
© D. ORTIS, 2018

(*wajd*) it provokes. Finally, his cult combines Sufi devotion and Twelver Shi'ism, as shown by one of the relics of this saint attached to his tomb, named *Gulūband*, which is none other than the stone attached to the neck of the 4th Imam, 'Alī son of Husayn (659–713) called Zayn al-Ābidīn, witness and survivor of the tragedy of Karbala, during his captive crossing of the desert, from Karbala to Damascus, following the martyrdom of his father. As Boivin (2011b: 111) has shown, the “most salient feature” of the Qalandarī in South Asia is the role that plays Shi'ism and the place that holds the Family of the Prophet (*Ahl al-Bayt*) and the Imam 'Alī in devotional practices.

We will focus here more particularly on the *malañg-faqīr* of the “Sufi lodge” (named in this region *kāfī*)⁴ of Bodlo Bahār, the closest companion of Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar. Bodlo Bahār has a singular position among the various companions of the Qalandar. He was the disciple who waited for him and prepared his arrival in Sehwan for forty years. Following his martyrdom, Lāl Shahbāz then became the “spiritual master” (*sajjāda nashīn*, lit. standing on the prayer mat) of Bodlo Bahār's shrine and directed the ceremonies of the “anniversary of his death” (*urs*), becoming by a kind of inversion the disciple of his disciple Bodlo Bahār. It is said locally that Bodlo Bahār is the door leading to Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar (in reference to the relationship between the Prophet and 'Alī). For the *malañg-fuqarā* (pl. of *faqīr*) of this lodge serve Bodlo Bahār is like serving Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar. This lodge offers furthermore the advantage of being the largest in Sehwan, with around eighty *fuqarā* initiates, at least twenty of whom reside there permanently. The materials of this paper come from my field observations of their daily lives and my interviews with them (between 2009 and 2018). In what follows, I will first of all be interested in the transformation of the body and the ego of the *malañg-faqīr*, in the transformations they undergo so that the ascetic can be, at the same time, mediator of the power of the saint and actor of his own edification as such, and finally end with some remarks about the relation between the subject and the object.

1 Initiation: Consecration of a New Body and a New Ego

In the introduction, I have used the expression “*malañg-fuqarā*” without explanation, combining the two terms by which they are most commonly designated. This formula reflects the ambiguity of their status, as one of them described it to me: “I am a *malañg* who wears *faqīr*'s clothes. I cannot say myself that I am a *faqīr*; others say so. *Faqīr* is a name that serves and makes people happy. But I can say that I am a *malañg*.”

Proclaiming yourself *malañg*⁵ does not pose any problem; all you have to do is assume a condition that places you at the very bottom of the social ladder, as a member of a

transgressive order, since it is reserved for the “outside religious law” (*be sharʿ*) ascetics in South Asia. The term *faqīr* (pl. *fuqarā*), “poor” is, for its part, well known from the technical vocabulary of mysticism and refers to the fact that the ascetic possesses nothing, not even himself. On the other hand, here, the recognition of this status necessarily passes through a third party, as one of Sehwan’s spiritual masters explained to me: “The *malañg*, to be qualified as a *faqīr qalandarī*, had to work really hard. There are criteria for that and he had to work hard to fulfill them. So he was first prepared, and then evaluated, and it took him years to qualify.” Even if everyone agrees that the process of becoming *faqīr* has accelerated in recent decades, the road to becoming *faqīr* is still long and involves the following two stages: preparation and initiation.

The preparation is done with a *malañg-faqīr* initiated long ago with which the novice concludes an “oath of allegiance” (*bayʿat-e fuqarā*),⁶ during which the first commits himself to form the second and to recommend him to the spiritual master to be initiated, and the second to follow the orders of the first. As a token of their new relationship, “master-disciple” (*murshid-murīd*), the *malañg-faqīr* gives the novice a secret formula or word for meditation.⁷

There follows a more or less long period, which can be counted in years, during which the master-*faqīr* prepares his disciple for the day of his initiation, by teaching him to dance the *dhamāl* of Bodlo Bahār⁸ and by involving him more and more in the management of the lodge (to which I will come back), and consequently by obliging him to spend more and more time there.

When the master-*faqīr* considers that his disciple is ready, he presents him to the spiritual master of the lodge who decides (or not) to initiate him. The initiation ritual, named “Qalandar’s bowl” (*jam-e Qalandar*), takes place during the ‘urs of Lāl Shāhbāz Qalandar.⁹ Kept secret, I only know it by the descriptions given to me by *fuqarā*. This ritual is akin to a (re)birth, from which the novice is reborn with a new body and a new ego in accordance with the state he has acquired through his apprenticeship, but also equipped with tools in order to be able to perfect himself throughout his new life.

His body is first of all rid of its erotic potential by shaving the hair and all the body and facial hair,¹⁰ and then humiliated by earth put on his head. Freed from his virility¹¹ and his pride, he can now don the wise “sex-cover” (*langoṭ*), symbol of the sexual abstinence he is committed to and his first tool allowing him to stick to it.

Then, the novice receives from the spiritual master a new first name, composed from the first name ‘Alī, in honor of Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Abi Ṭalīb (599–661), the Prophet’s cousin, his son-in-law and close companion, and the first Imam,¹² but also the first of the Qalandar, the spiritual master of Lāl Shāhbāz Qalandar. The *fuqarā* attach importance to it, they weave correspondences between its meaning and their personality, seeing for some an idiosyncrasy to cultivate (such as the sweetness for the first name “Sugar of ‘Alī”, Shakar ‘Alī) or for others an invitation to change one’s temperament. The spiritual master then makes him drink a “cup” (*pīālo*) of water mixed with ashes¹³ and consecrated by reciting extracts from the Koran or extracts from the poetry of the Qalandar, hence the name of this ritual, which completes the purification of the body of the novice.

He then receives his second tool, a “begging bowl” (named *kashkol* or *kishtī*), and introduces himself with it to each of the *fuqarā* present under his new name. Next, he puts his third tool on top of his sex-cover: a red unsown cotton tunic, held by a rope around his waist. A *faqīr* then places the blade of a knife over his eyes in order to separate the novice from what he was, as one of them says: “to say death before death and to cut the past”. From this moment, he has neither past nor future and is ready to use his new ascetic tools by leaving immediately for the city, which surrounds the shrine, to receive in his begging bowl the donations of the inhabitants, as the *malañg-faqīr* of

Bodlo Bahār. From that moment on, he publicly displays, as another says: “The I [of the new *malañg*] is finished; ‘The You’ [of the master] begins”, and that he has agreed to be Bodlo Bahār’s servant and to go begging for him his lodge’s food.

After having proven himself by playing *faqīr* for several years, after receiving a new de-erotized body ready for chastity, pure and free of his ego, as well as the main objects tools and attributes which, at the same time, allow him to continue to model his body and ego on this path and to show himself as being modeled on this path (by wearing an outfit that says who you are and therefore who you should be), he can finally be a *faqīr* and hope to be recognized as such by others by serving Bodlo Bahār, as we will see below. If as an anthropologist I have qualified this initiation as (re)birth, the *fuqarā* propose another reading of it: it hides the “secret” (*rāz*) of their “marriage” (*nikah*) with Lāl Shabbāz Qalandar.

2 Being a Wife in a Male World Rather Than a Man in a Female World

This ritual involves the transition from the status of single to that of “wife” (*bīvī*). Before detailing what this means in concrete terms, I would like to discuss this aspect of the *malañg-faqīr* with what has been said about it in the literature on the body in the social sciences. In the abundant production of work on the body in the social sciences and in history of the last thirty years,¹⁴ we must come to terms with the sad observation that Islamic studies have accorded it little importance. For the *be shar‘* ascetics which interest us here, the scholars’ attention was mainly focused on their androgynous practices and their cross-dressing practices,¹⁵ associated with their long hair, brightly colored clothes, their jewelry and the practice of female dance. This “gender reversal”, in the words of Ramet (1996), is interpreted as a prerequisite for spiritual advancement. In my opinion, this interpretation does not correspond exactly to the change that is taking place in the building process of Bodlo Bahār’s *malañg-faqīr*.

Admittedly, they also wear long hair (in the form of dreadlocks), jewelry (dangling earrings,¹⁶ bracelets, necklaces, foot chains), wear a long ornate red¹⁷ dress twice a month and during the *‘urs* when they go dancing the ecstatic dance of Lāl Shabbāz Qalandar in his shrine.

But they justify these attributes by mystical explanations and not by identification with the female sex; for example, wearing long hair is a means of preserving the potency accumulated thanks to asceticism and chastity, the wearing of jewels especially set with semi-precious stones, which one thinks that they act on the wearer and on those who are in contact with him, is also a means of accumulating potency, and not of saying that one is like a woman. These jewels are moreover gifts that the *malañg* receive from their spiritual master and from those for whom they intercede; their accumulation is therefore a sign of their spiritual effectiveness. As can be seen here, these characteristics are not artifices of femininity, but mystical tools or techniques. These “temporary

FIGURE 2
Bodlo Bahār’s *malañg-fuqarā*
dancing at the shrine of Lāl
Shabbāz Qalandar
© S. REYNARD, 2012

androgynous performances” according to Anjum’s expression (2015: 99), are not, in my opinion, the endorsement of femininity, since women cannot become *faqīr* due to their feminine nature, which is a source of pollution,¹⁸ but of the servile condition of the wife, as shown by the initiation ritual and the status of *faqīr* to which it opens.

Besides, as a *faqīr* says: “This marriage is not “adultery” (*zinā*) [...] Sexuality is for others. There is no sexuality here. With the Qalandar, our work is “sex-cover” (*langot*). It is full devotion.” As this *faqīr* says, the sex-cover is the tool that allows him to actualize his commitment to be sexually abstinent, to make it pass from virtuality to act: “What do I mean by sex-cover? When a drop of semen is stopped [by the sex-cover], then from a river you become an ocean. There is no comparison between a river and an ocean. And you have to endure it”, in particular by developing “full devotion.”

Chastity is important for two reasons. On the one hand, all sexual intercourse has the effect of distending, of loosening the bonds which attach the *malañg-faqīr* to Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar and to Bodlo Bahār, all the more so if the act is associated with romantic feelings towards the partner; consequently, it compromises progress on the Sufi path. On the other hand, it is a question of following the example of these two saints qualified as “virgins” (*jatī satī*)¹⁹ and who, like many saints of Hindu sects,²⁰ draw their miracle-potency in part from their sexual abstinence. It is a matter of repeating this experience in the hope of reaping the same benefits yourself from it. Finally, only the *fuqarā* who can make believe they are virgins, in particular because they have entered in the *faqīrī* as adolescents or young adults, can stand near Bodlo Bahār’s tomb to receive the visitors. If this duty (notion to which I shall return) is highly valued, it is not without risk for young *fuqarā*, who fear the seductive power of young devout women and the temptation to fall in love with one of them, all the more so today as it is possible for them to continue at a distance the conversation started around the tomb of Bodlo Bahār, thanks to the widespread use of mobile phone. By practicing this duty, young *malañg-fuqarā* test their body and their ego. Equipped with their sex-cover, they improve their chastity technique.

To understand what this status of wife covers, we need to make a detour by going back on the term *faqīr* and the way it is used in Sehwan, where many people are presented as *faqīr*, without having renounced the riches of this world, especially the spiritual masters who demonstrate the opulence of their material life. If we take into account the domains in which it is used, we can note that it is associated with the idea of “service”, “obligation”, “duty” (*khidmat*). What matters in the South Asian context is not so much to have taken a vow of poverty (to which the etymology of the term refers) as to have consented to a total availability of one’s person, one’s “body”, one’s “spirit” and one’s “wealth” (*tan, man, dhan*) for the benefit of one’s master and one’s lodge.²¹ The initiation ritual of the *malañg-faqīr* concluded with a total endorsement of the servile condition (the end of the I, the beginning of the You), of the one who exists only through the service he renders to another superior: “What remains is not the name [of the *faqīr*], it is the work he has done for Bodlo Bahār.”

In South Asia, the servile condition can find its best expression only in the embodiment of the ideal of the condition of wife, of one who can reach God only by loving faithfully and serving docilely her husband, as if he was God Himself (Ortis, 2018). Like a wife to her husband, the *malañg-faqīr* owes enduring and extreme devotion and submission to his masters (Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar, Bodlo Bahār, his master-*faqīr* and his spiritual master), as this one clearly states: “We are the wives of Qalandar and the “servants” (*naukar*) of Bodlo Bahār”. And like a good wife, as another reminds us: “When you become *faqīr* you no longer use your brain but your heart to serve; you follow your leader.” To the intelligence which separates things in order to analyze them, the *malañg-faqīr* must prefer the “passionate love” (*‘išq-e haqīqī*) that brings them

together.²² Their model in this domain is among others Bullhe Shah of Qasur (d. 1758),²³ a Punjabi Sufi poet of the Qādiriyyā Shattariyyā famous for performing the dance of the prostitutes in order to win back the heart of his master (Shāh Inayat Qādiri). Some even see themselves as prostitutes, as this one tells me: “I am the prostitute of Bodlo Bahār, I made a marriage with Qalandar.” This bond of devotional love is represented by the dress worn by the *fuqarā* of Bodlo Bahār during the *dhamāl* at the shrine of Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar, but also by their daily attire, which they call “uniform” (*vardī*) or “disguise” (*bhes*), and which allows them to distinguish themselves in the public space as the *malañg-faqīr* of Bodlo Bahār.

This outfit consists of a long sewn red tunic worn over a loincloth or pants, called by *fuqarā kafnī*. Its name clearly refers to the “unsown shirt” of the “shroud” (*kafan*) and its color to the blood shed by Imam Husayn on the Karbala battlefield. Bodlo Bahār’s *malañg-fuqarā* wear the shroud of Husayn on a daily basis, as they themselves claim. It reminds the state in which Imam Husayn was at the time of his martyrdom, which has been described to me as follows: “Imam Husayn was in the love of his God when he was killed. He was in a state where he had forgotten his body and did not know that he was being killed. This is the passionate love [*‘ishq-e haqīqī*], a feeling that causes a state, where people are not physically aware of what they are doing.” By their attire, they are invited to meditate on the example of Husayn, but also on that of Bodlo Bahār, also martyred in his passionate love for Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar, without being aware that his body was cut into small pieces and cooked and who, hearing Qalandar’s call, came out of the cauldron saying together: “Master, I am here. Give me your order!” We can assume that this *kafnī* is in some way the “initiator mantle” (*khirqā*) of these Sufi ascetics, through which the spiritual masters transmit their esoteric knowledge and *baraka* to their disciples, although nothing has been told to me in this sense by the *malañg-fuqarā*.

This tunic is therefore associated neither with marriage, nor with the condition of wife, but with that of *faqīr*. If after their initiation, the *malañg-fuqarā* wear a sewn tunic (for convenience it seems), the tunic specially dressed on the day of initiation was, like the shroud’s shirt, not sewn. There are two ways to interpret the absence of sewing. On the one hand, as part of the shroud, it symbolizes the death of the initiate’s ego. It is linked, on the other hand, to the circulation of “breath” (*dam*). In South Asia, according to Hindu ideology, sewn thread (unlike woven thread) prevents the breath from circulating properly.²⁴ The *malañg-fuqarā* must ensure that the breath circulates freely in the upper part of their body; because it is thanks to it that they cure visitors of their little ailments by blowing on them or protect them by blowing into their open mouth. Finally, the rope around the waist that holds the tunic separates the upper part of the pure and socially valued body from its impure and devalued lower part which the *faqīr* must dissociate itself. It is good that with time the tunic of the *faqīr* is covered with snags, mended or not, symbols of its renunciation of worldliness. However, his “patched garment” (*muraqqa’a*) par excellence, typical of Muslim mystics, is his *rillī* or *godrī*, which is a piece of fabric made of patchwork from small pieces of different colors, and which serves as carpet, blanket and mantle. The *godrī* of Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar, one of his relics, is brought by the *malañg-fuqarā* of Bodlo Bahār and of other Sufi lodges to the shrine of the cenotaph of Imam Husayn, on ‘Ashurā, hidden under the fabrics of the latter’s *tābūt* (replica of the coffin that was refused to him) to spend the night there.

The tunic, by reference to its model the *kafnī* and its blood color, like the sex-cover by its shape of chastity belt, have the qualities that they signify. Their materiality establishes the spiritual meaning to be followed. Bodlo Bahār’s *malañg-fuqarā* wear clothes that embody virtues: devotion until martyrdom and chastity; and because they wear these clothes, they are supposed to have within them the qualities they convey. The

FIGURE 3
Malañg-fuqarā putting the *godri*
 of Lāl Shabbāz Qalandar on the
 Imam Husayn's *tābūt*
 © D. ORTIS, 2010

outfit of the *malañg-faqīr* acts, at the same time, on his inner life, but also on those around him, who see in it the proof of the kind of life he has chosen.

If this marriage places the *malañg-fuqarā*, as one of them puts it says, “At the lowest point in society” in this world, it offers them a new status in another world. Indeed, the *fuqarā* abandon, as a man, the “feminine world” (*mū’annas dunyā*) where “worldly love” (*‘ishq-e majāzī*) reigns, to enter, as a wife, in the “masculine world” (*muzakkar dunyā*) where “true love” (*‘ishq-e haqīqī*) reigns. From their point of view, being a wife in a male world rather than a man in a female world is a much better status, even if by the way you lose your freedom.

3 Of the Body to the Ritual Practices and Devotional Artifacts

After the initiation, Bodlo Bahār’s lodge becomes the permanent residence of the *malañg-faqīr* and his place of work. He cannot leave it without the authorization of his spiritual master and, when this is the case, he is most often sent by him to serve other sites related to the cult of Bodlo Bahār. Before the initiation, as a *bay’at valā* (“the one who made the *bay’at* with a *malañg-faqīr*”), he had already practiced the many “duty” (or *farz*), which allow to operate the shrine of Bodlo Bahār, starting with the simplest and least rewarding ones, such as holding the shoe stand at the entrance of the shrine, and sweeping the shrine and the street that borders it. But now he must fully commit to his work to fulfill himself as a *faqīr*. Work experience is here the realization of the ideal of service; it has a double aim.

The first is to forge the character of the *malañg-faqīr*. In concrete terms, the life of *fuqarā* is very irregular; it is marked by periods of intensive work and periods of inactivity. This alternation between work and idleness is a form of permanent testing of the *fuqarā*, a means of testing their determination and the constancy of their character. When the *faqīr* is overworked, he must accomplish each task with the same dedication and endure its pain patiently and without complaint. When he has nothing to do, when time stretches endlessly and boredom wins him over, he must not lose hope and let idleness lose him in drugs, on the contrary he must continue to show his thirst for serving. Both action and inaction are “techniques” (Mauss, 1993 [1936]: 385) by which he learns discipline, patience, resistance, seriousness, and which enable him to adapt his body and his ego to the use he should make of them.

The second aim of the work is to access the truth of Lāl Shabbāz Qalandar. Teaching of the message of the Qalandarī’s way is essentially practical. The *malañg-fuqarā* do

not benefit from theoretical training, in the form of lectures, discussions or reading of texts, presenting the religious and mystical conceptions of Lāl Shāhbāz Qalandar and more broadly of the Qalandarī movement. This knowledge is accessible here through the work given by the master-*faqīr*, by performing technical gestures aimed at educating the body, character and feelings, but not, strictly speaking, the intellect, which we have seen, that it is necessary to get rid of to make way for the impulses of the heart. As they learn, this manual skill is clarified by the memorization of legends and poems, told and recited by the old *fuqarā* around the “fire” (*mach*, see above) at night, referring to the edifying life experiences of Lāl Shāhbāz Qalandar and Bodlo Bahār, but also of other saints such as Bullhe Shah or the Prophet’s Family. The *malañg-faqīr* thus gradually learns to make the link between the duties he performs and the message of these figures of holiness relayed by legends and poems. This training system implies for the young *faqīr* to be the disciple of a master-*faqīr* learned enough to be able to explain what each of the technical gestures learned refers to; it also implies, for the master-*faqīr*, to develop his talents as pedagogue: each one finding in this relationship the means to progress on the path.

The duties can be divided into two categories: those concerning devotional practice and those relating to the management of the lodge. Devotional practice concerns the daily rituals and major festivals performed in honor of Bodlo Bahār and Lāl Shāhbāz Qalandar, as well as Muharram.²⁵ In general, it can be said that a large part of the *fuqarā*’s work consists of staging holiness and performing many small ritual gestures that give visitors access to the miracle potency of Bodlo Bahār.

In South Asia, the tomb of a saint is recognizable by a number of material elements clearly indicating his superiority in status in the social hierarchy (Ortis, 2019), such as “fabrics” (*chādar* and *ghilāf*) covering it and a “turban” (*dastār*) marking the presence of the saint’s head (Ortis, forthcoming). The *malañg-fuqarā* are in charge of making the tomb of Bodlo Bahār conform to this model, by making, on the one hand, the decorative elements which are made of plant material (his turban in eucalyptus leaves, his “aigrette”, *kalangī*, his “necklaces” *har* and *sehrā*, and its “chain of foot”, *karā*, one of the attributes of the *malañg*, in fresh roses) and, on the other hand, by dressing him daily before the opening of the shrine and by ensuring throughout the day to the proper care of his appearance. By their treatment of the tomb, they offer visitors a potency saint to gazing²⁶ and touching.

The artifacts are often created by the *malañg-fuqarā* from the offerings (flowers and fabrics) brought by visitors to Bodlo Bahār. The way they do it is somehow similar to do-it-yourself associated with aesthetic research, the importance of which latter in religious or mystical experience should not be underestimated. The *malañg-fuqarā* seek to make Bodlo Bahār’s shrine visible beautiful. Several of their creations are moreover ephemeral; because what matters beyond the objects themselves is the work of meditation that the *faqīr* performs during the time in which he manufactures them. Each of these artifacts contains the prayers and breath of the *malañg-fuqarā* who made them.

The *malañg-fuqarā* still have to stand next to the Twelver Shi’a devotional objects, from the opening to the closing of the sanctuary, which are inside its enclosure, such as: be seated at the foot of the “metal standard” (*‘alam*) of Ghāzī ‘Abbās and distribute salt to visitors so that, as the *malañg-fuqarā*’s say, their hearts are as sweet as sugar; or sit at the foot of the “coffin” (*tābūt*) of Imam Husayn and decorate it with the garlands of flowers and rose petals brought by the visitors; or next to the “cradle” (*jhūlā*) of ‘Alī Asghar (Husayn’s infant son) and rock him while praying and meditating.²⁷ The love for the Imams translates concretely in the dedicated care of their artifact. For all these duties, furthermore, the *malañg-fuqarā* are physically seated under the hand personifying the *panjetan-e pāk*, the “Five Holy Ones” (the Prophet Muhammad, Fatimah al-Zahra, ‘Alī

ibn Abi Talib, Hasan ibn ‘Ali, and Husayn ibn ‘Ali, also known as the *Ahl al-Bayt*, the people of the House of the Prophet, or the Prophetic Holy Family),²⁸ who assists those who place themselves under his protection and curses the Sunnis. The *malañg-fuqarā* do not handle simple artifacts but “complex devices” (Latour, 1993), which act on those who look at and touch them and which oblige to “respect moral injunctions” such as love and loyalty towards the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

The *malañg-fuqarā* also organize the *dhamāl* of Bodlo Bahār, a dance which causes “intoxication” (*mast*) until “spiritual ecstasy” (*wajd*), and for which they make themselves drummers or dancers, and occasionally exorcists of possessed visitors, who take advantage of the *dhamāl* to be exorcized. This is the time of day when the *malañg-fuqarā* show the good control of their breath through the good mastery of their gesture, and visitors can see the potency of their ecstasy. More precise the dance step is in its execution, better it follows the rhythm of the cymbal beats, more powerful are the intoxication and ecstasy of the *malañg-faqīr*. More the group of *malañg-fuqarā* dancing together is beautiful to watch, more, according to them, it arouses vocation. Through this ritual, the *malañg-fuqarā* show both the potency of Bodlo Bahār and Lāl Shabbāz Qalandar, but also their own.

Finally, they are the ones who prepare and distribute the food from the “common kitchen” (*langer*) of the Bodlo Bahār’s Lodge, which feeds *fuqarā* but also all those who present themselves at the time of its distribution. Lunch consists of a curry prepared with overripe vegetables donated by city merchants and bread. The evening meal is the one brought by the *malañg-faqīr* who assumes the duty of the “camel” (*dāīcī*) of Bodlo Bahār.²⁹

After the *dhamāl*, when it is dark, he puts on the camel’s outfit (glittering red shirt, white trousers, red turban), slings over one side a bag at the bottom of which is a begging bowl and on the other a bell, the tinkling of which he uses to announce himself, since he is forbidden to speak, he also holds a bucket in one hand and stuck under the other arm the *malañg*’s stick, which reminds us that he is ready to defend Bodlo Bahār. He goes barefoot on the run, imitating the movement of the camel’s foot, and to the rhythm of the music of the *dhamāl* that he reproduces with his bell, around the town to collect from the inhabitants the remains of their meal put in bulk in the bag (about 40 kg of food) and collect a mixture of milk (buffalo, cow and goat, about ten liters) in his bucket, where the donators also put coins and banknotes.

The *fuqarā* feed on food considered, in South Asia, unsuitable for circulation outside the family circle, because as a remains (and for other reasons that cannot be developed here) it is impure. However, according to them and visitors, it is “clean and pure” (*sāf shafāf*) in this context, and anyone who has minor ailments sees them disappear by eating it. The meals from the Bodlo Bahār’s common kitchen are therefore sought after by visitors for their healing virtues. If lunch is distributed to them, the evening meal is (rather) reserved for *fuqarā* and their “guests” (*mahmān*, a notion to which I will return). Every *faqīr* has obligation to eat it. One does not hesitate to wake the sleeping one to drink at least one glass of milk (drunk sweetened after removing the money), by force if necessary.

This food and the way it is acquired is a daily reminder to the *malañg-fuqarā* of the end of their ego. Their allowance of food is also their salary, the *fuqarā* can only exchange it for their labor power; they are not allowed to beg for their food. Here the act of begging is sublimated by the effort it required on the part of the *malañg-faqīr*. The difficulty of this duty is first of all of a physical nature, you have to be in good physical condition to run for two hours loaded like a camel, and have sufficient concentration not to get injured on the dirty and stoned road at night.³⁰ Few *malañg-fuqarā* are capable of accomplishing this duty and even less over time. But the difficulty is

FIGURE 4

The return of the camel (in red) putting down her objects tools; prayer of another *malañg-faqīr* on the food and milk brought back by the camel

© S. REYNARD, 2010

also moral, because the *faqīr* which ensures the duty of the camel is under the “special surveillance” (*khās nigranī*) of Bodlo Bahār. He must show himself, and therefore be, irreproachable to benefit from this privileged moment in their relationship, so that Bodlo Bahār watches over him and supports him rather than supervises and punishes him. Indeed, not being able to accomplish this duty is not only a question of physical condition for the *malañg-fuqarā*, it also concerns their ego. If the “carnal soul” (*naḥs*) of the *faqīr* is too “weak” (*kamzor*), his breath will not be in rhythm with the rhythm of the *dhamāl*, so the *faqīr* will not be in ecstasy with Bodlo Bahār and therefore will not benefit from its potency.

To purify their carnal soul and make it less weak, the *malañg-fuqarā* also consume the “smoke” (*dhūāñ*) of the “fire place” (*mach*) of their “abode” or “shelter” (*āstānah*), where they live in a community surrounded by devotional posters, but also near a graveyard and on the edge of a vast garbage dump, where neighborhood residents dispose of their garbage, a devalued site that also reminds them of the low status they have chosen to assume. Every evening, at “sunset” (*maghrib*), a *faqīr* lights the fire of the different *āstānah*, with cow dung cakes and so that it lasts all night long. It is a fire that smokes but does not burn.³¹ Nothing should be thrown into it, because it also has the function of purifying the *āstānah*. The *malañg-fuqarā* also consume in large quantities the smoke of cannabis cigarette, the drug of the soul and the ultimate tool for destroying the ego and intensifying mystical experiences.

The *fuqarā* values their ability to be satisfied with the same unsavory and unpleasant foods throughout the years and in small quantities. To practice eating badly, not to take pleasure in it, to detach oneself from the gustatory pleasures which occupy an essential place in the Pakistani culture, also take part in the techniques of building process of the *malañg-faqīr*. Like the control of sexual desires, that of gustatory pleasures, aim to limit the stain of the body as much as possible. Food is associated with defecation which, like everything concerning organic life in South Asia, is a source of impurity. Remaining as pure as possible therefore implies learning to control one’s biological functions, to minimize one’s organic life, which can be recognized in the thinness of the body or in the ability to drink water by making it immediately come out through the penis; facts which are themselves interpreted as signs of *faqīr*’s progress along the Sufi path. As

we can see here, what the *malañg* eat is part of their building up oneself like *fuqarā*. Similarly, these meal distributions, which are entirely based on the responsibility of the *malañg-fuqarā*, give to this lodge an image of prosperity, which is reflected in the formal ban on begging in the Bodlo Bahār's neighborhood. God and his saints provide the necessary if we turn to him.

Regarding the duties relating to the management of the lodge, they are most often carried out by the so-called "great (*baṛe*) *fuqarā*." As Ewing (1984: 370) also noted, the asymmetrical, hierarchical relationship based on "commandment" (*hukum*), which structures the ideal of "service" (*khidmat*), extends to the relationships between *malañg-fuqarā* themselves. At the Bodlo Bahār's lodge, there is an order of precedence between the "little (*choṭe*) *fuqarā*" and the "big (*baṛe*) *fuqarā*", visible in particular in the services (preparing cigarettes or cannabis pipes, bringing tea, etc.) that the little ones return to the big ones *fuqarā*. Above the latter, the "very big (*baṛā sā*) *faqīr*" reigns, here called *vado faqīr* or *kotvāl*. This one is responsible for assigning each *faqīr* its daily tasks, ensuring that everyone does it in compliance with the rules, resolving any conflicts between *fuqarā* or between *faqīr* and the visitor. He is the one who reports directly to the spiritual master. To take on this responsibility, one must be experienced, inspire respect and authority in all the others *fuqarā*, and have as main qualities: intelligence of the heart, patience and tolerance. The hierarchy here is based on age and experience, but belonging to the Sayyed caste, the highest of the Muslim caste system, which of the descendants of the Family of the Prophet, is also an advantage, especially since the spiritual master of this lodge is not. So he takes care to surround himself with big *fuqarā* Sayyed who can manipulate the relics of Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar, like his begging bowl and his metal standard, when they come to Bodlo Bahār. Among the most mundane duties, being an accountant is considered the most difficult; the difficulty here is moral, one must learn to resist the temptation to steal the thousands of rupees that circulate every day on the tomb.

The work and collective life of the *malañg-fuqarā* involves hardening one's body, getting to know oneself, mastering one's emotions (not getting angry, not falling in love) and developing empathy in one's relationships with others, as well as respecting moral rules (refrain from adultery, lying and stealing³²), in short, weaving a new relationship with the world. The personal discipline of each *malañg-fuqarā* is supervised by his master-*faqīr*, the *vado faqīr* and ultimately the spiritual master, who does not hesitate to resort to corporal punishment if necessary.

All *malañg-fuqarā* must regularly take responsibility for each duty; as one of them says: "The path [*tarīqat*] of Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar is hidden. You understand when you lose everything and you become *faqīr*. To become *faqīr* is difficult. If you don't take "responsibility" [*zimedārī*], you will not be able to do the experience of the finder [*wāridat-e wajid* (*vajūd* in Arabic)]. You will not be a perfect *faqīr*." Taking responsibility means climbing the *fuqarā* hierarchy by investing in the most difficult duties requiring irreproachable moral rectitude. Ideally, any *malañg-faqīr* should be able to accomplish all the duties of a day's work alone, which represents a working day of about 20 hours! At present, only one *faqīr* has been recognized as perfect, Ashiq 'Alī malañg described in these terms by those who knew him: "Everybody loved him. He took care of everything that happened here. That's why everyone respected him. He was the most responsible [i.e. he was the *vado faqīr*] for 25 years. 25 years of duty! Bodlo Bahār's system is *fuqarā* that makes it work; it is not the spiritual master. He was a model man with a big heart full of affection. He was an ideal man." In the *āstānah* his bed is still there and pending his worthy successor, only the spiritual master has the right to rest there. His tomb is also worshiped by the *malañg-fuqarā*. This assertion should not lead one to believe that the spiritual master of Bodlo Bahār is not the object of great devotion on the part

of his *malañg-fuqarā*, who fear his wrath and seek his assent and affection. He is the descendant of Bodlo Bahār's brother and through this blood tie, he has a privileged relationship with Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar, which makes him one of the legitimate heirs and guides of the path *qalandarī*, and the holder of "thaumaturgical powers" (*karāmat*).

4 The *malañg-faqīr* in the Eyes of Devotees: A Potential Saint

At the end of this dive into the experience of the life of the ascetic, one may wonder whether the work of transformation that he imposes on his body and ego, in order to conform them to the path traced by Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar and Bodlo Bahār, for being a living example of it, also contributes to making him an object of devotion that attracts visitors. Indeed, any *malañg-faqīr* of Bodlo Bahār has the potential to become a saint, as attested by numerous popular legends echoing their magical exploits and miracles, and the local cults developing over their graves; this was also observed by Frembgen (2002: 271).

In Sehwan, the pious visit of some devotees of Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar implies also visiting the *malañg-fuqarā*, with the aim of obtaining benefits comparable (but not equivalent) to those expected from the saint. Their visits to the *malañg-fuqarā* resemble in some ways to that accomplished in the tomb, we find in any case in the bodily attitude of the visitors the need to have physical contact with the *malañg-fuqarā* (as well as with the tomb and the artifacts or relics of the shrine); as one of them says: "Descendants of the Prophet [Sayyed] touch my feet because I am a *faqīr*. *Bābā, faqīr*, Bodlo, these names are used for me." Visitors are not limited to the feet of *fuqarā*, they also seek to be in contact with their bodily substances, by drinking from the same cup as them or by sharing their cigarette. They also expect from the breath of the *fuqarā*, exhaled directly on their bodies or in their mouths, and from the amulets made by them healing and protection, based on verses from the Koran and magic squares.

For their part, the *malañg-fuqarā* act in such a way that these visitors return more and more regularly; they seek to retain them by treating them with the respect which one owes in Pakistan to the "guest" (*mahmān*), by offering them a seat, drink and food (from the *langer*, especially camel's food) and smoking (cannabis), while taking advantage of the opportunity to spread the message of Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar among them. In the long term, the aim is to turn visitors into *bay'at valā* and then new ones *fuqarā* for the spiritual master and thus progress in the esteem of the latter and in the hierarchy of the *malañg-fuqarā*. In fact, it is through the establishment of new networks of devotees that the *fuqarā* bring their institution to life and deploy it on the national territory.

The *malañg-fuqarā* who have a lot of guests gain recognition within their community, which translates into more valued responsibilities and by the status of "big *faqīr*" (*barā faqīr*), but also among visitors who estimate the power of an ascetic by the number of people he is able to attract around him and by the number of gifts (jewelry, money, funds for the construction of the *āstānah*) that he receives and that he distributes before the end of the day or that he keeps for himself as a sign of his potency (especially jeweler set with semi-precious stone).

5 Concluding Remarks: Think Body and Object Together

The description of the initiation ritual and the life of the *malañg-faqīr* has highlighted how much its building up implies a complete modification of one's person (body and ego) through the experience of passionate love (for the Qalandar, Bodlo Bahār and the

Prophet's Family), a life of work and servitude involving loss of freedom and exemplary behavior (respect for discipline, self-control, physical endurance to pain) and detachment from worldly pleasures (sexual and gustatory). I have tried to show, inspired by the concept of "body-instrument" of Warnier (1999), that the body and the subjectivity of the *malañg-faqīr* are "technical objects" which work with the aim "of produce them, configure them and make use of them" (2009: 19), according to what is expected of an ascetic, but also according to what the latter himself expects from his work. Following the example of the spirituality of Christian monks studied by Bartholeyns (2016), it has been shown that the life of the *malañg-fuqarā* is also based on a material life whose daily experience is conceived as the very instrument of their spiritual life. Here too the garment and tools of *faqīr* make the *faqīr*, not only because they designate it as such in the public space, but above all because they participate in its transformation and building up. This shows that, contrary to what Bartholeyns asserts, in the East the model of asceticism is not solely that of contemplative, disregarding material mediation and work (2016: 163).

About the Author

The author is also an associate researcher at CEIAS, lecturer at ESSEC, INALCO and EHESS. She has been conducting research for several years on the ritual practices of worship of Muslim saints in South Asia, on the organization of their shrines and on the relations between Sufism and Shi'ism.

Bibliography

- Albert, J.-P., and Kedzierska-Manzo, A. (2016). Des objets-signes aux objets-sujets. *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 174, pp. 13–25.
- Andrieu, B. (2006). *Le Dictionnaire du corps en sciences humaines et sociales*. Paris: CNRS Editions.
- Anjum, T. (2015). Androgyny as a Metaphorical Practice in South Asian Sufi Culture. *Journal of Asian Civilizations* Vol. 38 (1), pp. 91–112.
- Bartholeyns, G. (2016). Quand l'objet donne l'exemple. La vie d'un moine au Moyen Âge, une spiritualité toute matérielle. *Archives de Sciences sociales des Religions*, 174, pp. 149–68.
- Bartholeyns, G. (2010). Faire de l'anthropologie esthétique. *Civilisations*, 59 (2), pp. 9–40.
- Bartholeyns, G. and Joulain, F. (2014). Faire corps. Introduction, *Techniques & Culture* 62, pp. 4–13.
- Bellamy, C. (2011). *The Powerful Ephemeral. Everyday Healing in an Ambiguously Islamic Place*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Bigelow, A. (2010). *Sharing the Sacred. Practicing Pluralism in Muslim North India*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Boivin, M. (2012). *Le soufisme antinomien dans le sous-continent indien. La'l Shahbâz Qalandar et sa tradition, XIII^e–XX^e siècles*. Paris: Cerf.
- Boivin, M. (2011b). Le qalandar et le shâh. Les savoirs fakirs et leur impact sur la société du Sud Pakistan. *Archives de Sciences sociales des Religions*, 154, pp. 101–20.
- Boivin, M. (2011a). *Artefacts of Devotion. A Sufi Repertoire of the Qalandariyya in Sehwan Sharif (South Pakistan)*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Boivin, M. (2008). Shivaite Cults and Sufi Centres: A Reappraisal of the Medieval Legacy in Sindh. In: M. Boivin, eds., *Sindh through History and Representations. French Contributions to Sindh studies*, Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Bullough, V.L. and Bullough, B. (1993). *Crossdressing, sex, and gender*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- Corbin, A., Courtine, J.-J., and Vigarello, G., eds. (2005–6). *Histoire du corps* (3 tomes). Paris: Seuil.
- D'Souza, D. (1998). In the Presence of the Martyrs: the 'Alam in popular Shī'ī Piety, *The Muslim World*, vol. LXXXVIII, n 1, pp. 67–80.
- Ewing, K. (1984). Malangs of the Punjab: intoxication or adab as the path to God. In: B.D. Metcalf (eds.), *Moral conduct and authority: the place of adab in South Asian Islam*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Frembgen, J.W. (2012). *Dhamāl* and the Performing Body: Trance Dance in the Devotional Sufi Practice of Pakistan. *Journal of Sufi Studies*, pp. 77–113.
- Frembgen, J.W. (2008). *Journey to God: sufis and dervishes in Islam*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Frembgen, J.W. (2002). Du derviche au saint: la construction du charisme dans le soufisme pakistanais contemporain. In: C. Mayeur-Jaouan (eds.), *Saints et héros du Moyen-Orient contemporain*, Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose.
- Gell, A. (1998). *Art and Agency: an Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Godelier, M. and Panoff M., eds. (1998). *La production du corps. Approches anthropologiques et historiques*. Paris: Éditions des archives contemporaines.
- Green, N. (2012). *Making Space: Sufis and Settlers in Early Modern India*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ingold, T. (2007). Materials against Materiality. *Archaeological Dialogues*, 14 (1), pp. 1–16.
- Karamustafa, A.T. (1994). *Unruly friends of God: dervish groups in the Islamic later middle period, 1200–1500*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- Kasmani, Omar (2015). *Off the Lines. Fakir Orientations of Gender, Body and Space in Sehwan Sharif, Pakistan*, Dissertation Doctor of Philosophy, Social and Cultural Anthropology, Freie Universität Berlin (unpublished).
- Kugle, S. (2007). *Sufis and saints' bodies: mysticism, corporeality, and sacred power in Islam*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Latour, B. (1993). *La clef de Berlin et autres leçons d'un amateur de sciences*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Lemonnier, P. (2013). De l'immatériel dans le matériel ... et réciproquement! Techniques et communication non verbale. *Journal de la Société des Océanistes*, 136–7, pp. 15–26.
- Lemonnier, P. (2012). *Mundane Objects. Materiality and non-verbal communication*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.
- Marsano, M. (2007). *Dictionnaire du corps*. Paris: PUF.
- Matringe, D. (1995). Pakistan. In: Henri Chambert-Loir and Claude Guillot, eds., *Le Culte des saints dans le monde musulman*, Paris: Éditions de École française d'Extrême-Orient, Études thématiques 4, pp. 167–91.
- Mauss, M. (1993 [first 1936]). Notion de technique du corps, *Sociologie et anthropologie*. Paris: PUF, pp 365–86.
- Ortis, D. (forthcoming). De la richesse des sanctuaires musulmans en Asie du Sud: la circulation des étoffes des saints. *Moussons*, 1–29.
- Ortis, D. (2019). La tombe, miroir de la destinée des morts? Analyse de différents espaces funéraires dans une ville de pèlerinage pakistanaise (Sehwan Sharīf, Sindh), *REMM* 146, pp. 47–70.
- Ortis, D. (2018). Le triomphe du désir. Analyse du rituel de mariage d'un martyr musulman en Inde du nord. In: Capdeville-Zeng and Ortis, eds., *Les institutions de l'amour: Cour, amour, mariage. Enquêtes anthropologiques en Asie et dans l'Océan Indien*, Paris: Presses de l'INALCO, pp. 212–43.
- Ortis, D. (2017). From Potent Dead to Potent Places? Reflections on Muslim Saint Shrines in South Asia. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, pp. 483–500.
- Papas, A. (2020a). Antinomianism (*ibāḥa, ibāḥiyya*). *The Encyclopaedia of Islam (three)*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, pp. 22–27.
- Papas, A. (2020b). Malang. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam (three)*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, pp. 117–20.

- Ramet, S.P. (1996). Gender Reversals and Gender Cultures: An Introduction. In: Ramet, eds., *Gender reversals and gender cultures: anthropological and historical perspectives*, London & New York: Routledge, pp. 1–21.
- Vernant, J.-P., (2006 [1965]). De la présentification de l'invisible à l'imitation de l'apparence, *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs. Études de psychologie historique*, Paris: Maspéro.
- Warnier, J.-P. (2009). Les technologies du sujet. *Techniques & Culture* 52–3, pp. 148–67.
- Warnier, J.-P. (1999). *Construire la culture matérielle. L'homme qui pensait avec ses doigts*, Paris: PUF.

Notes

- 1 This form of “pilgrimage” or “pious visit” (*ziyāra*) has been the subject of abundant literature; for south Asia, see, among others, Green (2012), Bellamy (2011), Bigelow (2010).
- 2 See about him the numerous works of Boivin (among others 2012, 2011a).
- 3 See about the Qalandari's order Karamustafa (1994) and Papas (2020a, 2020b).
- 4 Like all Sufi lodges in Sehwan, it is built around the tomb of a companion of Lāl Shabbāz Qalandar, in this case Bodlo Bahār, and a “throne” (*gaddī*) occupied by a spiritual master, here the descendant of Bodlo Bahār's brother; the latter having remained celibate all his life.
- 5 The etymology of the word *malañg* is uncertain (Papas, 2020b). According to Parsapajouh (personal communication), in Persian *malañg* means “intoxicated with joy”, but also “stupid”. See about the Pakistani *malañg* Ewing (1984).
- 6 This ritual has never been described to me in detail.
- 7 The word itself matters less than the confidential nature of its transmission and the circumstances of its utterance, which make it all the more valuable.
- 8 This one is a bit different from the *dhamāl* of Lāl Shabbāz Qalandar. The dance consists of two different dance steps: the one performed at the sanctuary of Lāl Shabbāz Qalandar and a second one (specific to these *malañg-fuqarā's*) that evokes the martyrdom of Bodlo Bahār (described below).
- 9 The *urs* is the main festival of Lāl Shabbāz Qalandar; it celebrates his death.
- 10 According to Papas, the ritual shaving of the *malañg* is called the “four blows” (*car zarb*); personal communication.
- 11 In South Asia, the beard and moustache, among other things, are a sign of virility.
- 12 About the importance of the cult of 'Alī in Twelver Shi'ism see the Parsapajouh's article in this volume.
- 13 I guess these ashes are from the “fire place” (*called mach*) of their “abode” or “shelter” (*āstānah*), which I will come back to.
- 14 See among others Andrieu (2006), Bartholeyns (2010), Bartholeyns & Joulain (2014), Corbin & al. (2005–2006), Godelier & Panoff (1998), Marzano (2007).
- 15 See on this subject Anjum (2015), Bullough (1993), Frembgen (2002, 2008), Kugle (2007) and Ramet (1996).
- 16 Wearing earrings is not reserved for women in South Asia; however, the ear pendant is a design in principle reserved for women.
- 17 Red is both the color of Lāl Shabbāz Qalandar (*lāl*, also written *la'al*, means “red” and “ruby”), and that of marriage in South Asia.
- 18 However, we can see that practices are starting to change in this domain. Today there are three women fuqarā at the Bodlo Bahār's lodge; see Kasmani (2015).
- 19 Another companion of Lāl Shabbāz Qalandar, Ibrahim *jatī satī*, as his name suggests is also a virgin. His tomb is located against the shrine of Shabbāz, on the north side of the building.
- 20 Two Hindu sects have long dominated religious life of Sehwan: the Shaivite ascetic order of the Nāthpanth and the “River Path”, Daryāpanth, dedicated to the tutelary deity of Sindh, Udero Lāl, avatar of the Vedic god Varuna and incarnation of the Indus. The local Hindu population saw in Lāl Shabbāz Qalandar an incarnation of Shiva and worshipped him under the name of the king, who was in the fifth century, the spiritual master of the yogi nāthpanthi installed in Sehwan, Raja Bharthari (see Boivin 2008).
- 21 It seems that here we are close to the Hindu notion of *sevā*, which also implies obedience to a *guru* and service and his *ashram*.
- 22 We can note that Parsapajouh's article in this volume also underlines the fundamental role of love in Twelver Shi'ism.
- 23 See Matringe (1995).

- 24 The traditional Hindu clothing (*sārī* and *dhotī*) is seamless.
- 25 Muharram is commemorated with pomp in Sehwan and in the name of Lāl Shāhbāz Qalandar who, through his personal *‘alam*, leads the five-day processions which parade day and night through the city.
- 26 About the importance of the gazing in the Twelver Shi’ism’s cult in India, see the Ruffle’s article in this volume.
- 27 All Bodlo Bahār’s *malañg-fuqarā* are not Shiite by birth, they become so in a way by their apprenticeship. However, since the cult of *Ahl al-Bayt* is also present among Sunnis in South Asia, these Twelver Shi’a devotional objects may already be present in their environment, or at least not unknown to them.
- 28 About the importance of the cult of *ahl al-bayt* in Twelver Shi’ism, see the article by Parsapajouh in this volume.
- 29 According to a legend, Bodlo Bahār’s camel collected for him the food of his *langer*; she was kidnapped and eaten by the other Sufis in the town, jealous that she collected more food than them. To perpetuate the tradition, the *duty* now is the responsibility of the *malañg-fuqarā*.
- 30 There is no street lighting in Sehwan and power cuts are common.
- 31 The *fuqarā* themselves specify that this practice is of Hindu origin.
- 32 One can assume that there are other moral rules, but only these three have been brought to my attention.