

Disciplining the Body, Disciplining the Body-Politic: Physical Culture and Social Violence among North Indian Wrestlers

NORBERT PEABODY

University of Cambridge

In the early evening of 14 September 1989, ferocious Hindu-Muslim rioting broke out in the city of Kota in the north Indian state of Rajasthan. The rioting started during the Hindu festival of Anant Chaturdashi, while celebrants were taking out religious processions through the city. Although most of the violence occurred during that first night, it would be another three days before the Indian army could restore an uneasy peace to the city and nearly three weeks more would pass before the military curfew that eventually confined city's inhabitants to their houses for all but a few hours a day was fully lifted.¹ The mayhem claimed the lives of twenty-six individuals and left a further ninety-nine injured in hospital. Countless more 'walking wounded' were treated on an outpatient basis in local dispensaries or by friends or neighbors. In addition, vandalism, arson, and looting caused property losses exceeding ten million rupees.² Although Muslims constituted only 9 percent of the city's population of roughly half-a-million, they suffered the vast majority of the casualties and bore a disproportionate amount of property loss. By convention we commonly refer to such rioting as 'Hindu-Muslim violence,' but the parity implied in this formula is deeply misleading. The vast majority of victims were Muslims.

Acknowledgments: Drafts of this paper were presented at the London School of Economics and Political Science and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris. Catherine Clémentin-Ojha and Claude Markovits deserve special thanks for their hospitality in Paris where I was given the opportunity to develop my ideas during an extended visit. In addition, I am grateful for the constructive criticisms of Jacob Copeman, Matthew Engleke, Chris Fuller, Jean-Claude Galey, Kriti Kapila, Johnny Parry, Vijay Pinch, Nate Roberts, Michael Scott, Charles Stafford, Denis Vidal, Rupa Vishwanath, and three anonymous *CSSH* reviewers.

¹ For sources on the riots, see Appendix 1.

² For an assessment of the data on casualties, see Appendix 2.

The riots in Kota were linked to a larger, anti-Muslim agenda that was advanced by a loose but coordinated grouping of Hindu nationalist political parties, civic associations, and cultural organizations, collectively known as the Sangh Parivar, which include the Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangh (RSS, National Volunteers' Society), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian Peoples' Party), the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP, World Hindu Council), and the Shiv Sena (Shiva's Army), among others.³ This movement, which has existed in somewhat inchoate form ever since Indian Independence in 1947 and which has discernable roots in colonial India, had been gathering popular support and assertive self-confidence during the 1980s and was responsible for several infamous, large-scale attacks on Muslims during the following two decades. Two of these have received particular scrutiny. The first occurred in Bombay from December 1992 through January 1993 during the aftermath of the destruction of the Babri Masjid (mosque) in Ayodhya, and the second resulted from the systematic, state-sponsored pogrom against Muslims in Gujarat in January 2002. Each of these disturbances resulted in the murder of several thousand Muslims. Leading up to and interspersed between these riots were numerous smaller-scale attacks on Muslims in provincial cities across north India, of which Kota's riots in 1989 were but one example. All this is now common knowledge.

What is less known about the riots in Kota is that among those people who were at the heart of the disturbances insofar as they *personally* lead the attacks and had the requisite technical training to do so—people whom Paul Brass (1997: 9) has called “riot specialists”—were practitioners of a distinct north Indian form of wrestling, known variously as *kushti*, *pahalwani*, or *mallayuddha*.⁴ In Kota the festival of Anant Chaturdashi, during whose celebrations the riots broke out, has become closely associated with wrestlers. Anant Chaturdashi is the culminating day of the ten-day-long festival of Ganesh Chaturthi, which honors the elephant-headed god Ganesh. On the festival's final day, processions bearing images of Ganesh are paraded through the city, and these processions are led by troops of wrestlers (*pahalwans*), which are organized by the different gymnasias (*akhadas* or *vyayamshalas*) where they train. During these processions wrestlers perform exhibitions of their skills, which

³ Among the many worthy studies of this topic are Anderson and Dalme 1987; Basu et al. 1993; Hansen 1999; 2001; Jaffrelot 1996; Juergensmeyer 1993; Tambiah 1996; and van der Veer 1994.

⁴ The involvement of wrestlers in Kota's riots was widely reported in local vernacular newspapers such as *Desh ki Dharti* and *Rajasthan Patrika*. Similarly, Mayaram (1993: 2529) and Kakar (1996: 56–86) reported the involvement of wrestlers in the 1990 riots in Jaipur and Hyderabad, respectively. For the participation of wrestlers in collective violence in north India during the early twentieth century, see Chandavarkar (1998: 112–16), Freitag (1989: 122, 225), and Gooptu (2001: 291–315). Hansen also discusses the critical role of wrestlers in fomenting anti-Muslim sentiment in the early twentieth century, through their authorship and performance of popular Nautanki plays, which often had “a Hindu revivalist tone bordering on communalism” (1992: 110ff).

involve not only forms of grappling and acrobatics but also the use of traditional weapons such as clubs, maces, pikes, coits, and swords. Significantly, although Kota has not been a ‘riot prone’ city in the same way that Meerut, Ahmedabad, or Hyderabad have, the previous large-scale rioting in Kota, thirty-three years earlier in 1956, also erupted on Anant Chaturdashi and also involved wrestlers (Bhargava 1993: 2; Engineer 1989: 2703).

To the extent that non-Indians know anything about Indian *kushti*, one must credit the writings of the anthropologist Joseph Alter, especially his immensely important ethnography on *kushti*, *The Wrestler’s Body* (1992), which he has supplemented with numerous articles.⁵ Alter’s writings have explored how wrestlers shape their identity and moral being through various physical, sexual, behavioral, and dietary techniques that place a high premium on the self-control and self-discipline of one’s own body. For Alter, one of the most important public outcomes of this way of life during the later twentieth century was the development of what he calls the “somatic nationalism” of wrestlers. Alter (1992: 261–64; 1993; 1994a; 1994b) suggests that wrestlers hold nationalist aspirations that are quite different from other Hindu nationalists who, significantly, also advocate regimes of physical discipline as an essential part of the nation-(re)building process. Hindu nationalists, particularly those associated with the RSS, engage in callisthenic regimes in order to fortify the Hindu nation, which, they claim, has become weak and effeminate during the last five centuries as the result of foreign domination. Callisthenic regimes, which involve the regimented and synchronized “martial choreography” (Alter 1992: 261) of large groups of youths, are intended to foster a masculine, corporate, Hindu identity in which strength comes in numbers. Moreover, this type of strength is directed against an adversary in Islam that is located outside of the individual body. The wrestler’s way of life, on the other hand, is intended to improve the nation through improving the self. It is a solitary pursuit, or one that is engaged upon in small numbers, and the weakness wrestlers attempt to overcome is to be found in their own passions. Thus the discipline in which wrestlers engage is one where regimes of physical control are turned inward onto the self, and the strength that wrestlers develop is not projected outward onto a larger body politic. For this reason, Alter argues that although wrestlers may be associated with organizations such as the RSS or the Shiv Sena, and although they may have engaged in Hindu nationalist violence on occasion, these wrestlers have not done so *qua* wrestlers. The connection between political violence and *kushti* thus is largely coincidental.

Although Alter is correct that there is no *necessary* connection between the forms of “somatic nationalism” espoused by wrestlers and broader expressions of “militant Hindu nationalism,” this essay will suggest that the relationship

⁵ For example, Alter 1993; 1994a; 1994b; 1995; 2004; 2005.

between the two is something more than happenstance. Through an analysis of the forms of social violence deployed by Kota's wrestlers on behalf of the Hindu right, this study will argue that Kota's wrestlers freighted their actions with values, practices, and ethics deriving from Indian wrestling. Kota's wrestlers were not merely rioters who happened to be wrestlers. Rather, their identity as wrestlers directly informed their actions as rioters. In particular, I shall argue that a locally exalted variant of wrestling known as *vajramushti kushti*, or 'fighting with thunderbolt fists,' which historically permitted the use of hand-held weapons and was linked to the religious practices of Shakta tantrism, left a clear imprint on the aims and forms of collective violence perpetrated by wrestlers. Shaktism is the path of Hinduism known for its worship of the "divine feminine" in the form of various terrifying goddesses—such as Kali, Devi, and Durga—and, importantly, for the centrality it accords to "blood sacrifice" in mediating with the divine. In its tantric form, Shaktism has further developed various esoteric sexual techniques that privilege female uterine blood as a source of extra-mundane power. This essay will argue that certain actions of wrestlers during Kota's riots in 1989 are traceable to ideas about the "circulation" of blood deriving from these beliefs.⁶ As a result, Kota's violence had textures, trajectories, and outcomes that were somewhat different from the forms of anti-Muslim violence pervasive elsewhere in India. At the same time, however, this essay will not suggest that the wrestlers' actions smoothly reproduced an invariant set of traditional beliefs and practices. Rather it will argue that elements of the wrestlers' cosmology have been re-weighted and recombined in order to incorporate new orientations deriving from Hindu nationalism. In other words, without constituting a complete break with the past, the wrestlers' cosmology has nevertheless shifted to accommodate values, some of which were previously marginal to wrestling, others of which were completely novel to it.

In asserting that wrestlers' engagement with collective violence in Kota was at least partially informed by their way of life *qua* wrestler, I am not merely attempting to correct an obscure social fact in the ethnographic record concerning *kushti's* compatibility with militant Hindu nationalism. I also aim to contribute to the sociology of violence by furthering an understanding of what has become one of the most puzzling and disturbing aspects of collective violence more generally, namely that perpetrators of collective violence rarely express remorse or shame about their actions, even well after the event when

⁶ In making this claim, I do not aim to question Alter's data or conclusions regarding the wrestlers he studied. I have no reason to doubt that the wrestlers he studied refused to reconcile their way of life with the militant politics of the Hindu right. I simply mean to suggest that the wrestlers' way of life is sufficiently flexible to accommodate several different stances towards militant Hindu nationalism. The disjunctive stance that Alter identifies and the more constitutive stance that I describe are each possible positions for wrestlers who participate in the violence of religious nationalism.

the passions of the moment have long subsided.⁷ Those who engage in violence often speak enthusiastically about their participation in it with unburdened openness and, indeed, pride, and they apparently suffer no collective malaise nor betray any lasting psychic toll as a result of their actions. This fact has prompted Sudhir Kakar (1996: 160–69) to suggest that the perpetrators of anti-Muslim violence experience “persecutory fantasies,” whereby they see themselves as victims of violence perpetrated by their prey. One witnesses the expression of such delusions in Kota as well, where wrestlers universally accused Muslims of having started the riots and justified their own actions in terms of “self-defense” (*atma-raksha*).⁸ What Kakar’s analysis does not adequately explain, however, is the post-riot “sociality” that many of Kota’s wrestlers exhibited toward their victims. Unlike other instances of communal violence in India where bloodshed signaled a complete rupture in social relations between the two communities, typically indexed by economic boycotts and increased residential ghettoization, this was not witnessed in Kota. Rather after Kota’s riots many perpetrators of violence continued to patronize Muslim businesses and engage in other everyday forms of social intercourse that came with living in religiously mixed neighborhoods. This sociality in no way represented a return to the *status ante quo*, however, as memory of the violence has remained vivid for Hindus and Muslims alike. Instead, the twin idioms of sexual penetration and blood sacrifice that informed Kota’s collective violence were based on a logic of sexual subordination and incorporation (rather than exorcism and annihilation) that domesticated Muslims within the body-politic, rendering them, at least for a while, as “not wholly other,” and more akin to dangerous, but enabling sexual partners than fully differentiated bearers of evil.

SETTINGS OF VIOLENCE

Of Kota’s roughly half-million inhabitants in 1989 (536,000 in the 1991 census) 9 percent were Muslim and 89 percent Hindu. By Indian standards of the time, the city was relatively prosperous. Development initiatives of successive “five year plans” in India’s post-Independence, command economy had established Kota as Rajasthan’s second-largest center of industry. The city also indirectly enjoyed the benefits of successful cash-crop agriculture in the surrounding countryside, which was a green revolution area. Some Muslim families had benefited from the expansion of the local economy to enjoy a degree of affluence. There also had always been a tiny Muslim elite of highly educated and relatively well-to-do professionals, such as lawyers,

⁷ This essay thus contributes to analyses of the perpetrators of violence, rather than its victims.

⁸ Wrestlers routinely made this assertion to me during my fieldwork. It was also the point of view expressed by the newspaper *Rajasthan Patrika* in its reporting on the riots (15 Sept. 1989: 1; and 16 Sept. 1989: 1).

doctors, and civil servants. In addition, Kota has long been home to a prosperous community of Bohra Muslims who were successful in trade and small-scale finance. Finally, the 1980s also witnessed a trickle of Muslim guest workers returning to Kota from the Persian Gulf, many of whom were using their savings to establish small businesses. Despite their visibility, the success of these groups remained highly atypical within the larger Muslim community. The vast majority of Kota's Muslims were firmly part of the city's underclass. Most Muslims worked as short-term contract and casual day-laborers in the city's many industries, workshops, and construction sites or as self-employed but poorly remunerated artisans in a wide variety of trades such as leatherworking, carpentry, oil pressing, metalworking, stone cutting, spinning, weaving, kite making, bicycle repair, and so on. Kota's Muslim population as a whole ranked exceptionally low on nearly all socio-economic indicators.⁹

Prior to the riots, small pockets of Muslim settlement were dotted across many areas of the city, but the largest concentration of Muslims was, by far, inside the medieval fortifications of the old walled city that lay at the heart of the modern municipality. Muslims were particularly clustered in the contiguous neighborhoods (*mohallas*) around the center of the main bazaar, an area known as Ghantaghar. It was in this *mohalla*, as the Anant Chaturdashi procession tried to enter it, that the riots of 1989 started and the worst of the violence and destruction was experienced. Although Muslims comprised a small minority of the city's population, within Ghantaghar and the surrounding four or five *mohallas* their numbers may have constituted a slight local majority. Nevertheless, even in these areas Muslims were never fully segregated from Hindus in separate ghettos. Instead, Hindus and Muslims lived and worked in close proximity.

Ironically, this intimacy manifested itself in the broad, nonsectarian appeal of Indian *kushti*. *Kushti* attracts participants and followers from across the social spectrum, including Muslims. Academic sources and wrestlers alike stress that the sport is a hybrid of two earlier forms of wrestling: an indigenous form dating to the first millennium B.C.E. and a Persian form that was brought to India in the sixteenth century. As a result, Nita Kumar (1988: 114) has suggested that wrestlers—regardless of religion—participate in a shared “moral universe” whose attitudes, practices, and orientations overlap significantly. This common ground can be witnessed in the fact that Hindu and Muslim wrestlers revere a single pantheon of exemplary champions and that all wrestlers periodically come together for competitive tournaments known as *dangals*. Furthermore, up until the early 1950s all wrestlers in Kota, regardless of social or religious background, made at least one important annual public affirmation of solidarity insofar as they jointly participated in the

⁹ Concerning the socioeconomic deprivation among Muslims in India and in Kota, respectively, see Sachar 2006, and Ali and Sikand 2006.

celebration of Moharram when they accompanied the *tazias*, representing the funeral biers of the martyred Imam Hussein and his family, as they were paraded through the city streets. Although this practice has since ended for reasons that will be discussed below, Hindu wrestlers in Kota still acknowledge *kushti*'s Muslim heritage. Not only do Hindu wrestlers generally refer to the discipline by the Persian terms *kushti* or *pahalwani* in preference to the Sanskritic *mallayudha*, but senior-ranking wrestlers, Hindu and Muslim alike, also continue to adopt the Persian title *ustad*, meaning master, instead of the more recognizably Hindu title of *guru*. Similarly, Hindu wrestlers often affirm that Muslims make better wrestlers on account of their superior diet (including the eating of beef), the more rigorous discipline maintained in their gymnasia and, importantly, the more intimate historical relationship they enjoy with the tradition.

On the other hand, running contrary to this catholicism, the day-to-day training of wrestlers in Kota's fifty-odd *akhadas* is socially segmented.¹⁰ For one thing, membership in the vast majority of Kota's individual gymnasia is religiously exclusive. Hindus and Muslims train in separate *akhadas*. This religious separation, however, is not entirely of a different order than that existing among other *akhadas*. For example, Untouchables are also categorically excluded from most gymnasia and generally train in their own facilities. Similarly, many of the *akhadas* catering to 'caste' Hindus display *de facto* social segmentation (without being categorically so). The most significant divide in this respect falls between those *akhadas* that are largely composed of the highest, "twice-born" castes and *akhadas* whose membership derives mostly from the relatively low ranking (but not Untouchable) castes that today are collectively known as OBCs (Other Backward Castes). Finally, Kota has a handful of *akhadas* whose membership is drawn from a single caste. The most prominent of these gymnasia are two *akhadas* belonging to the community of *Jethis*, or *Jyeshthimallas*. Today the *Jethis* consider themselves a subgroup of Gujarati Modh Brahmins, and although their identification in terms of a caste may be a modern phenomenon,¹¹ it is clear that they have long maintained a distinct identity within the broader wrestling world insofar as historically they engaged in the armed form of *vajramushti* wrestling, along with the unarmed forms of grappling common to all wrestlers. Thus, despite its broad popular appeal and many shared orientations, *kushti* has been simultaneously beset with tendencies of social division that have manifest

¹⁰ Membership in *akhadas* typically ranges between twenty-five and ninety wrestlers.

¹¹ Even the *Jethi*'s caste Purana, the sixteenth-century *Mallapurana*, is quite equivocal on who can become a *Jethi* insofar as it outlines manifold criteria for classifying *Jethis* based variously on descent, size, or ability and, until recently, the *Jethis* practiced much more open recruitment in which talented non-Modh Brahmins were often incorporated into the community (Sandesara and Mehta 1964: 13).

themselves along several different, crosscutting social fault lines including, but not restricted to, religion.

Since the late nineteenth century, however, Indian *kushti* has witnessed an increased, albeit still incomplete, division along religious lines, which, without doubt, reflects the larger environment of religious intolerance that accompanied the growing appeal of Hindu nationalism in India. Although Rajasthan as a whole was still ruled by the Congress Party in 1989, Kota City and the surrounding region of southeastern Rajasthan, known as Hadauti, was an area of marked Hindu nationalist sympathies. This support had deep historical roots. L. K. Advani, who eventually became President of the BJP and Deputy Prime Minister of India during BJP rule in the early 1990s, served as a RSS organizer in Hadauti from 1948–1952 (Jaffrelot 1996: 237). Concomitantly, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (the political precursor of the BJP) first won control of Kota's municipal government in 1952 and, during the period 1952–1980, the Hadauti region also elected more than a smattering of Jana Sangh (and later BJP) candidates to both the Rajasthan State Assembly and the National Parliament. This smattering turned into an outright majority representation from 1980 onwards.

From its inception, the Hindu nationalist program of “Hindutva,” or Hindu-ness, has espoused a national regeneration through the reassertion of a strong, well-defined Hindu identity. It has thus posed a direct challenge to the modern Indian state's secular foundations as conceived by Jawaharlal Nehru and his Congress Party. Hindu nationalists have argued that Congress secularism was disingenuous because the authority of the state under Congress leadership promoted the special interests of India's Muslim minority while simultaneously discriminating against the Hindu majority. But more than being simply unfair, the Nehruvian state's favoring of Muslims was specifically decried as a threat to the unity, integrity, and hence strength of the nation. Hindu nationalists, therefore, demanded the establishment of a self-avowedly Hindu state that they claimed, paradoxically, would be truly unitary insofar as Hinduism is uniquely tolerant of all other religions.

Hindu nationalists have been irked by a range of issues that purportedly demonstrate the special entitlements and privileges enjoyed by Muslims, which in turn undermined the unity and strength of the nation. The most frequently cited of these are: (1) the existence of a separate civil code for Muslims governing matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption; and (2) the unique autonomies vis-à-vis the central government enjoyed by Kashmir, India's only state where Muslims constitute a numerical majority. In fact, for many Hindu nationalists these privileges are contemporary manifestations of a much longer history of alleged Muslim political domination stemming back to the Mughal era, the period from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries when north India was ruled by a Muslim dynasty.

Significantly, Hindu nationalists further endow this historical dominance with a contemporary twist in current democratic politics by means of a paranoid demographic logic. Despite the fact that Muslims constitute only 13 percent of the nation's population and longitudinal census data offers no evidence that this percentage is increasing, Hindu nationalists routinely express the fear of being numerically overwhelmed by a Muslim electorate. This demographic fear rests on three bases of dubious factuality: (1) rumors of mass conversion to Islam of India's large population of Untouchables (conversion being one of the principal avenues through which Untouchables have sought to escape their low social status within the caste system); (2) unchecked immigration from neighboring Muslim countries, especially Bangladesh, which Hindu nationalists typically characterize in terms of their uncontrolled population growth; and (3) an exponential growth of India's own Muslim population resulting from the fact that Muslim men can have up to four wives in accordance with the Koran and as safeguarded in the separate civil code for Indian Muslims.¹²

Hindu nationalists further link the specter of Muslim electoral strength within India to India's military rivalry with Pakistan. Hindu nationalists have repeatedly cast aspersions upon the loyalty of India's Muslims, often referring to them as potential fifth columnists who not only would betray India in the event of war with its Islamic neighbor but also who would use their strength at the ballot box to hold India ransom to Pakistan. Reflecting these demographic concerns, Hindu nationalist discourse has taken on highly sexualized tones. For example, the Indian Muslim man is typically portrayed as a hyper-masculine, over-sexed beast, often through the trope of the randy bull buffalo, or *bhaimsa*. Muslim hyper-masculinity is conversely reflected in images of emasculated Hindu men, and the Hindu nationalist leadership has repeatedly exhorted "effeminate" Hindus to reclaim their masculinity by aggressively overturning perceived (or feared) Muslim domination.¹³

Although the general anxieties (if not all the specific grievances) of Hindu nationalism have circulated in India in a somewhat inchoate manner since the beginning of the Independence movement in the late nineteenth century, by the 1980s Hindu nationalism began to find coordinated, mass support across much of India. The dramatic, nationwide surge in Hindutva's appeal has been generally dated to 1984 (e.g., Jaffrelot 1996: 363; Tambiah 1996: 244–47), when the Sangh Parivar began to demand that a sixteenth-century mosque in the city of Ayodhya (the Babri Masjid) be razed and a Hindu temple dedicated to Ram be built on its foundations. The destruction of the

¹² This last assertion, of course, is patently untrue since fertility rates are not determined by the number of wives men have but by the number of children women have, and the available evidence indicates that fertility rates of women in India correlate with socioeconomic status rather than with religion.

¹³ For a powerful example of this rhetoric, see Hansen 2001: 89–92.

mosque (but not the construction of the temple) was eventually realized with great violence in December 1992, three years after Kota's riots.

In order to promote their goal of building the Ram Temple (Rammandir) in Ayodhya, the Sangh Parivar organized a number of public events in the later 1980s that encouraged mass, national participation in the movement, one of which, the Ramshilapujan Rath Yatra, was scheduled to begin on 27 September 1989, just two weeks after the riots in Kota. The Ramshilapujan Rath Yatra consisted of a series of processions that passed through much of India collecting bricks (*shilas*) made of the local earth, each of which was sanctified with an impression of the name of Ram. These bricks were intended for use in the construction of the Rammandir, and their centripetal transport to Ayodhya from all over India would give a concrete physicality to the larger Hindutva project of renewing national unity in a distinctly Hindu idiom. By early September 1989, Sangh Parivar cadres had already arrived in Hadauti in order to organize the procession planned for this region, and many of these activists descended upon Kota for Anant Chaturdashi (Bhargava 1993: 38; Engineer 1989: 2704). That the routes of the Ramshilapujan Rath Yatras were associated with orchestrated anti-Muslim violence is now well documented (Chiriyankandath 1992; Hansen 1999: 161–63; Mayaram 1993), and Kota's riots were a sad prologue to this larger phenomenon.

The growing polarization of religious identities during the run-up to the Ramshilapujan Rath Yatra was further catalyzed by the communalized history of Anant Chaturdashi itself. Kota's current spectacle of Anant Chaturdashi—complete with public processions and mass popular participation—dates, remarkably, only to 1955, and from the outset it has been closely associated with Hindu nationalist sentiment. Historically, the ten-day-long festival of Ganesh Chaturthi, of which Anant Chaturdashi is the final day, was celebrated privately by the family within domestic confines and had neither the public nor corporate character that it currently enjoys (Courtright 1985: 171–88). However, at the end of the nineteenth century Hindu nationalists elsewhere in India had begun to refashion the extant domestic rites into a grand public event that was explicitly intended to foster Hindu solidarity and revitalize national strength in opposition to the domination of “foreigners” (*mlecchas*), among whom were included both the British and Muslims.

This effort was initiated by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, an early Hindu nationalist ideologue who in 1893 staged the first public celebration of Anant Chaturdashi in the western Indian city of Pune. Tilak promoted a new Ganesh festival, in part, because this god had been closely associated with the erstwhile Maratha Empire, the last indigenous polity to seriously resist British colonial expansion during the eighteenth century and which had similarly fought against Mughal expansion into southern India during the seventeenth century (*ibid.*: 235–38). These historical associations gave Ganesh worship a strong martial imprint while simultaneously directing popular animus against

Muslims by lumping them, through the intermediary of the Mughals, with the foreign colonization of the British. These anti-Muslim sentiments were reinforced by a concomitant campaign that the Hindu *akhadas* in Pune quit their previous participation in Moharram and instead join the newly constituted Anant Chaturdashi processions. As a result of this explicit repudiation of local Muslims, and due to the larger anti-Muslim attitudes associated with it, the Pune festival has remained plagued “to a greater or lesser degree by communal violence or the specter of it” (ibid.: 243). For reasons that are beyond the scope of this essay, Kota did not witness these developments until shortly after Partition when a Sindhi refugee turned local RSS activist called on the city’s Hindu wrestlers to desist from their participation in Moharram and instead to join in the celebrations of Anant Chaturdashi that he was newly organizing. The results of this campaign followed Pune’s. Kota’s second public celebration of Anant Chaturdashi in 1956 witnessed riots that left one person dead and scores injured, and the event remained communally charged, if non-violent, during the years up to 1989.

The timing of Kota’s riots—at the confluence of the Ramshilapujan Rath Yatra and Anant Chaturdashi—and of the general outlines of the demonizing of Muslims show quite clearly that Kota’s wrestlers subscribed to important aspects of the Hindu nationalist program and that they did so in a context that foregrounded their identity as wrestlers. The following section, however, explores aspects of wrestlers’ actions that escaped or exceeded meanings deriving from the movement. These meanings “parochialized” (Tambiah 1996: 257–59) Kota’s riots in important ways that significantly colored the texture of the violence there.

PATTERNS OF VIOLENCE

Although Kota’s riots in 1989 were somewhat unusual in that the majority of the physical violence was perpetrated by wrestlers, the riots otherwise shared many depressing features with collective violence elsewhere in India at the time, including preplanning and logistical support from local officials and politicians, the participation of specialist agitators or “fire tenders” (Brass 1997: 16–18), and the indifference—if not outright collusion—of the police (Engineer 1989; 1995; Bhargava 1993). Kota’s riots also followed a familiar trajectory of identifiable phases.¹⁴ There was an initial buildup period during several months prior to the riots and lasting into the early stages of the Anant Chaturdashi procession itself when “fire tenders” heightened communal tensions in the city through inflammatory anti-Muslim speeches as well as the public broadcast over loudspeakers, and on wall graffiti, of slogans and stereotypes that were simultaneously threatening and degrading to Muslims. This was followed by

¹⁴ For superbly detailed analyses of the anatomy of communal riots in India, see Kakar 1996: 40–47, and Tambiah 1996: 213–43.

a sparking event, which in Kota's case was the allegation that Muslims attacked the Anant Chaturdashi procession with a barrage of stones at the midpoint on its route through the city as it attempted to enter the 'Muslim' *mohalla* of Ghantaghar.¹⁵ This affront led directly to about forty-eight hours of intense collective violence that was openly and brazenly defiant of any state authority. All the killings save one and the vast majority of the casualties were committed during this period. During the first two to three hours of this phase, the police in Kota were suspiciously absent from the city's streets and by the time the local administrative authorities finally did call them out to restore order, they were, initially at least, overwhelmed by the ferocity of the rioting and unable to control it. Then, after the rioters exhausted themselves and the police (now reinforced by the army) were finally able to exert some measure of authority, two weeks of much more sporadic, opportunistic, and furtive violence perpetrated by smaller groups and individuals followed. Finally, there was a long 'run-out' of smoldering hostility and suspicion lasting many months.

Yet despite these important parallels with other recent Indian riots, Kota's violence was not a carbon copy of them. First, despite the region's long and deep association with the Hindu nationalist movement, the casualty rates, while totally unacceptable in any number, were not as high as experienced elsewhere. A brief comparison with Bhagalpur, a city of comparable size and demographic makeup, which experienced rioting just a few weeks after Kota as the result of similar communal tensions stirred up by the Ram Shilapujan Rath Yatra, is suggestive. Compared to the twenty-two Muslims killed in Kota, over a thousand were murdered during Bhagalpur's riots, with several thousand more injured. Moreover, post-riot hostility against Muslims at Kota was less unremitting than in many other riot-torn locales.¹⁶ Although Kota remained exceptionally tense for several months, it did not suffer waves of violent anti-Muslim aftershocks, nor were Kota's Muslims ghettoized in separate residential neighborhoods or expelled to relief camps, nor was there an organized boycott of Muslim businesses and services (all of which were witnessed in Bhagalpur, for example). For several years after 1989, Muslim families who had lived in isolated pockets outside Kota's walled city did retreat to the relative safety of neighborhoods where there were more Muslims. But this relocation was temporary and did not elicit a corresponding exodus of Hindus from 'Muslim' areas. In other words, the riots produced rather asymmetrical reactions from Hindus and Muslims. Whereas Muslims

¹⁵ Interestingly, many Muslim informants did not deny that this stone throwing occurred. They stated that it was not an unreasonable response to a mob of sword wielding and pike twirling wrestlers who were chanting aggressively threatening anti-Muslim slogans. In sum, from their perspective the rioting had already started.

¹⁶ On the Bhagalpur riots, see Pandey 1992.

felt the justifiable need to consolidate into areas where they enjoyed greater safety in numbers, Hindus did not exhibit an aversion to living in the same areas as Muslims. As a result, Hindus and Muslims in Kota continue to engage not only in economic transactions but also in many everyday forms of sociality. In 2005 the city's *qazi*, or head Muslim magistrate, bitterly articulated many grievances concerning specific individuals who were involved in the riots of 1989 but had never faced justice.¹⁷ However, he characterized Hindu-Muslim relations at a more general level as (using the English) "acceptable." Although hardly a ringing affirmation of communal harmony, the *qazi*'s appraisal of the situation in Kota is nevertheless different from many other notorious sites of violence elsewhere in India, where relations between Hindus and Muslims have largely ceased.

The distinctiveness of Kota's experience is also manifest in the unfolding of the riots themselves. For instance, the repertoire of violence that these wrestlers deployed in Kota betrays several distinguishing features. One of the most striking is the *absence* of many forms of violence that have been associated with other communal riots. For example, unlike the riots in Bombay in 1992 and 1993, or Ahmedabad in 2002, where the rape of Muslims (women and men) was widespread, just one case of rape was reported during Kota's riots, and Muslim women and young children were generally spared the worst of the physical violence that was meted out so liberally against Muslim men. Nor, though arson was widely used against Muslim property in Kota, were Muslims themselves immolated by fire, either by "necklacing" or by barricading them in their homes and setting the structures alight. Again, in the Bombay and Ahmedabad riots, many Muslims died in this way.¹⁸ Finally, although ten people (four Hindus and six Muslims) were killed in police firings, wrestlers were adamant that they did not use firearms.¹⁹

Indeed it appears that, apart from the police firings, the repertoire of violence against Muslim bodies was exceptionally narrow and uniform (though no less devastating for that); almost all the violence took the form of stabbings in which assailants used traditional bladed weapons, including the *talwar*

¹⁷ Interview with Qazi Anwar Ahmed, 14 Feb. 2005.

¹⁸ The burning of victims in Bombay was almost the preferred form of violence precisely because it denied the possibility of survivors burying the dead. Burial of the dead is often taken as one of Islam's defining practices, especially when set against the Hindu norm of cremation. So in the context where Hindu nationalists have decried the conversion of "Hindus" (particularly Untouchables) to Islam, immolation by fire became a way of forcibly reincorporating Indian Muslims to the Hindu fold at the point of death. Despite the potential salience of the range of meanings associated with death by fire, this practice did not manifest itself in Kota. For the prevalence of rape and immolation by fire in the Bombay riots of 1992 and 1993, see Hansen 2001: 121–26. For the Ahmedabad riots of 2002, see Shani 2007.

¹⁹ This assertion is apparently corroborated by forensic evidence from the police investigation after the riots, which indicated that nearly all bullets recovered from victims and city streets were of calibers consistent with police weapons (Bhargava 1993: 62).

(a short scimitar-like sword), the *ballam* (a pike with sharpened steel points at both ends), and various types of small knives. The vast majority of the killed or wounded suffered lacerations, with injuries to the head, shoulders, and arms widely reported.²⁰ On the surface it might appear that this use of bladed weapons was the coincidental result of the fact that these were the weapons that the wrestlers *happened* to have on hand for their exhibitions during the Anant Chaturdashi procession. This contention certainly informs the claims by several wrestlers that their actions were spontaneous acts of self-defense in the face of unprovoked Muslim attack. However, it is amply evident that the wrestlers had prepared themselves in advance for the prospect of violence in other ways, such as by carrying stocks of cobbles for hurling into Muslim crowds, and petrol for committing arson. So the decision not to arm themselves with guns clearly involved some element of conscious choice, and the preference for using bladed weapons against Muslim bodies was not entirely the result of happenstance. Indeed, some years after the riots several wrestlers told me that one of the reasons bladed weapons were used during the riots was because it maximized the amount of Muslim blood that flowed in the streets. The intentionality of the wrestlers' use of bladed weapons for drawing blood is further suggested by the slogans that they chanted during the riots, two of the most widely reported of which were, "We shall take revenge on Babur's progeny by spilling their blood,"²¹ and "Kill them, cut them."²²

This preference for using bladed weapons is well illustrated by the most notorious and well-documented killings during the riots, which involved goldsmiths of the Sarrapha bazaar, not far from Ghantaghar. Kota has long had a thriving precious metals bazaar whose artisans included both Hindus and Muslims, who lived and worked for the most part in the same *mohalla*. The religiously mixed character of this neighborhood was indexed by the fact that the *mohalla's* principal mosque—the Chhotipiri ki masjid—and an important local temple—the Shitala Mataji temple—directly faced one another across a narrow lane. When the riots started in Ghantaghar, a group of about fifty wrestlers and other hangers-on from the Akhada Chauth Mata, whose membership comprised a significant number of Hindu goldsmiths from the Sarrapha bazaar, quickly made their way back to this neighborhood where they singled out Muslim neighbors for assault. The mob was armed with swords and, as they swarmed through the Sarrapha bazaar chanting, "Kill them, cut them," they cornered seven Muslim men from the neighborhood in the Chhotipiri ki

²⁰ As a result, the city's blood bank was completely depleted early during the first night of the unrest.

²¹ "*Khun khun kar badla leyengae Babur ke santhanun se.*" Babur was the first Mughal Emperor, one of whose generals purportedly built the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya.

²² "*Mar do, kat do.*"

masjid. The wrestlers hacked four of these men to death and severely wounded another. Several of the victims were decapitated and the head of one Muslim man was left in the main doorway of the mosque facing the Shitala Mataji temple across the lane. Before leaving the mosque, assailants smeared the blood of their victims on their own foreheads.

Deepak Mehta (2000) in his recent analysis of the “ritual wound” in Hindu violence against Muslims in Uttar Pradesh has also discussed the importance that the act of cutting has for Hindus when imagining the subjugated Muslim body. Mehta notes that Hindus often use the term *katua*, or “one who has been cut,” to designate Muslims. In the first instance, this term references the Muslim practice of male circumcision. However, the positive signification that Muslims assign to circumcision as a “spiritual empowerment of the body” is inverted by Hindus to be a sign of bestiality. Not only do many Hindus view circumcision as a fundamentally barbaric act of bodily mutilation but they further freight the act with animalistic qualities by using a derivative of the verb *katna*, which in addition to cutting refers to the bite or sting of an animal. Finally and perhaps most importantly, this act of cutting, which Muslims perform upon themselves, becomes a justification *and* blueprint for Hindus to do likewise upon them during the course of rioting.

The remainder of this essay will supplement Mehta’s analysis by arguing that the significance of cutting in the context of Kota’s anti-Muslim rioting also derives from two modes of violence associated with *vajramushti* wrestling. The first stems from the place of blood, particularly of blood drawn with bladed weapons in close-quarters combat, in the cosmology of health and power of *vajramushti*, especially as informed by Indian tantrism. In the second mode, the alleged bestiality of Muslims as manifest in the act of cutting is freighted with additional meaning for Kota’s wrestlers, insofar as the cutting of animals, paradigmatically the “bull buffalo” (*bhaimsa*), is the *modus operandi* of blood sacrifice as performed within Indian Shaktism. Both these associations have special significance for the styles of violence employed and for the attitudes that wrestlers bear toward their adversaries. The following two sections explore the place of both blood and blood sacrifice within the wrestler’s worldview and how this informs both the repertoire of violence that the rioters deployed and their aversion to those forms of violence they eschewed.

WRESTLING AND TANTRISM

Apart from the fact that training and competitive bouts in Indian *kushti* still take place in a pit of prepared earth rather than on cotton or rubberized mats, competitive *kushti* today bears a striking similarity to Olympic freestyle wrestling. The desired object of pinning the shoulders of one’s opponent to the ground (or, colloquially, “showing him the sky”) and the moves, feints, and throws that are permitted in attaining this goal, are now similar in the two forms of wrestling.

Despite this similarity, the training regimes underpinning each diverge significantly. For one, *pahalwans* routinely deploy a range of martial apparatuses in their daily exercise regimes that are unknown in contemporary freestyle wrestling. The most famous of these are the massive wooden clubs, known as *mugdars* (or *jodis*), which wrestlers swing singly or in pairs, one in each hand, in a looping motion around their head and torso in order to build upper-body strength. Much slimmed-down versions of this apparatus briefly gained renown in the West during the later nineteenth century when they were incorporated into “Swedish” callisthenic regimes, and Alter has devoted considerable attention to them in his writings (Alter 1992: 109–10; 2004; 2005). What Alter only briefly mentions in passing, however, is that wrestlers also routinely swing other weapons such as maces (*gadas*) as well as bladed implements, especially the *talwar* and the *ballam* referred to above. Some *akhadas* in Kota specialize in the swinging of these weapons, and skill in their use is developed into dramatic routines, which wrestlers sometimes perform in public.

The type of unarmed grappling that was the principal focus of Alter’s study, moreover, was historically only one of several overlapping styles of wrestling in north India, many of which were far more gladiatorial in character. For example, some north Indian wrestling traditions today still permit open-handed blows to the head and upper body, and not long ago others allowed closed-fist punching (leading several early European writers to classify *kushti* as boxing). But perhaps the most prestigious of these related traditions employed hand-held, often bladed weapons that were explicitly intended for wounding one’s opponent to the point of drawing blood. This tradition was known as *vajramushti* (lit. “hardened, or thunderbolt, fist,” a term applied to both the style of wrestling and weapons used therein), or more informally as *nakhi ki kushti* (“fighting with claws”).²³ As these names suggest, this wrestling tradition featured the use of various types of knuckle-dusters, short knives, and the infamous *baghnakh*, or tiger-claws.²⁴

²³ Mention of wrestlers fighting with weapons (*ayudha*) can be found in the medieval text, the *Mallapurana* (XIV: 49), the “caste” Purana of the above-mentioned Jethis. In her otherwise brilliantly conceived *Structure and Cognition*, which touches upon the *Mallapurana* and the Jethis, Veena Das (1989: 82) inexplicably states, “By describing wrestling as ‘fighting with hands,’ the Malla Purana implicitly opposes it to ‘fighting with weapons.’” For reasons that should be clear here, the specific terms of Das’ opposition are not entirely felicitous. The use of weapons in wrestling bouts is clearly depicted in Rajasthani miniature paintings from the seventeenth through the early nineteenth centuries (e.g., Cimino, Topsfield, and Tillotson 1985: cat. no. 41; Topsfield 1990: cat. no. 1), and is also described by many precolonial and early colonial European travelers to India, including Fernao Nuniz (in Sewell 1900: 378), Rousselet (1875: 124–27), Scurry (1824: 129–39), and Wilks (1810: 52–53). Both the Comte de Modave (1971: 480) and James Tod (1832: 589–90) specifically mention the use of weapons in wrestling bouts in Kota during the late eighteenth century.

²⁴ *Vajramushti* permitted the use of weapons in one hand only (generally the right) and victory in competitive bouts was accomplished either by the drawing of first blood from the head of one’s

Despite the fact that *vajramushti* were intended specifically for striking the head (!) and were prohibited for blows below the upper torso, early European observers affirmed that *vajramushti* bouts rarely resulted in the death of contestants. Not only did “referees” intervene to stop the bouts before a fatal blow was delivered, but the Jethi wrestlers themselves exercised restraint in their use—these were not no-holds-bared contests.²⁵ Rather, because the consequences of poor technique were so absolute, *vajramushti kushti* was premised on exceptional levels of training, discipline, and self-control. In this regard, *vajramushti* wrestlers shared the same ethic of self-discipline cultivated by other wrestlers, only more so. Nevertheless, European commentators typically expressed disgust at the great loss of blood that wrestlers routinely inflicted upon one another.²⁶ Unsurprisingly then, during colonial rule the use of *vajramushti* in close-quarters combat was censured, and those ‘bloodless’ forms of wrestling that conformed more closely to the *formal* norms of Western ‘sport’ became ascendant.

Although the use of *vajramushti* has all but disappeared from contemporary wrestling practice,²⁷ its valorization in Kota today remains nevertheless strong and informs significant aspects of wrestling more generally. Not only does much of contemporary wrestling’s moralizing and hagiographic lore concern the sanguinary exploits of Jethis, but city residents still refer to the most ferocious local champions as “Jethis,” whether they are Modh Brahmans or not, and they employ the mildly belittling term, “Punjabi *kushti*,” to distinguish the unarmed form of grappling from the locally more exalted (if now nearly obsolete) “*nakhi ki kushti*.”²⁸ Moreover, although *vajramushti* weapons are no longer used, many *akhadas* in Kota still display them and they remain important emblems of the wrestler’s vocation and discipline.

The significance of drawing blood in *vajramushti* wrestling draws on several intersecting sets of beliefs and practices, the most important of which derive from conceptions of what David White (1996) has called the “alchemical

opponent or by immobilizing his armed hand with any one of several locks or holds effected through the use of one’s unarmed hand or legs.

²⁵ This restraint was further enforced by “mechanical” means. Wilks (1810: 52) noted that the *vajramushti*, “is fastened across [the fingers] at an equal distance between the first and second lower joints, in a situation, . . . which does not admit of attempting a severe blow, without the risk of dislocating the first joints of all the fingers.”

²⁶ Inhabitants of Kota still refer to the wrestling ring by the metaphor of a battlefield, or *rangabhumi*, whose literal meaning, ‘colored earth,’ implicitly references the red color of blood. See also *Mallapurana* (VI: 14–15; XIV: 35; XVI: 2; and XVIII: 23, 38, 71). That the wrestling ring was associated with more violent forms of conflict is attested in numerous classical literary sources, such as the *Bhagavata Purana* (X: 44, 18–38), in which Krishna slays king Kamsa in a wrestling pit after first dispatching Kamsa’s most fearsome wrestlers.

²⁷ *Vajramushti* is now practiced only in a few places, notably Baroda and Mysore.

²⁸ The preeminent position of *vajramushti* wrestling within the larger tradition is inscribed in the term ‘Jethi,’ which is a contraction of *jyeshthimalla*, meaning “foremost, or senior, wrestler.”

body,” which emerged out of Indian tantrism, especially that branch associated with the Nath Siddha tradition that was prevalent in western India from the thirteenth century. According to this corporeal cosmology, the human body is a type of catalytic laboratory that has the capacity to transform ‘gross’ substances into more ‘subtle’ ones that confer health, well being, and, indeed, immortality upon the individual. This quest for immortality represents a somewhat unconventional solution to the classical Indic problem of how to achieve liberation (*moksha*) from the karmic cycle of rebirths. Rather than adopting the orthodox goal of giving up worldly attachments in order to establish disembodied union with the absolute at the point of death, the Nath Siddha tradition has instead attempted to escape the tedium of rebirth by avoiding death in the first place.

Within this tradition the human body is the primary instrument for achieving this aim. Through various processes of distillation, blending and, especially, digestion (or heating), the body converts relatively coarse foodstuffs into ever more refined substances such as blood, semen, and, ultimately, the nectar of eternal life known variously as *ras* or *amrit*.²⁹ This process occurs in stages at various locations in the body, particularly in the six *chakras* or “centers of transformation” of *hathayogic* practice that are strung along the spinal column from the anus to the top of the head. Running somewhat contrary to western medical opinion, Indian tantrism holds that the most subtle of death-conquering elixirs is stored in a reservoir in the cranial vault (at the *ajna chakra*) from whence it drips down the throat to the lower abdomen at the point of the umbilicus where it keeps the body warm and bestows vital, life-sustaining energies (White 1996: 27–28).³⁰ Before this desired end result can occur, however, food must be turned into blood, blood into semen, and semen into *amrit*. Kota’s wrestlers are conversant with the general outlines of these theories and interpreted many of their physical practices in light of them. For instance, several wrestlers told me that one of the kinesthetic effects of swinging clubs or swords around their heads was that the swirling motion helped siphon semen up the spinal column from lower *chakras* to the *ajna chakra*.

Because of its proximate role as the ingredient from which nectar is most directly created, the wrestlers studied by Alter were particularly concerned with the production and retention of semen (indeed for them semen was *amrit*), and Alter has detailed how their specialized dietary and exercise regimes were specifically tailored to promote its genesis. Similarly, Alter showed that many wrestlers were equally anxious to prevent the loss of semen—whether this occurred through sexual intercourse, nocturnal emissions,

²⁹ For example, it is commonly claimed that one drop of semen is made from the distillate of sixty drops of blood.

³⁰ The Rajasthani informants of Morris Carstairs (1961: 83–84) estimated that the *ajna chakra* had a capacity of “twenty tolas,” or 6.8 ounces.

or masturbation—and, to this end, much effort was put into controlling erotic emotion and sensual desire. For these reasons, wrestlers ideally followed the strictures of *brahmacharya*, the first of the four Hindu life-stages, which is associated with religious learning, discipleship, and sexual abstinence. Reflecting these values, several of my wrestling informants in Kota cited an anxiety about semen loss as underlying the aversion to rape as an instrument of violence in the city's riots in 1989. Moreover, they responded with disbelief and disapproval to my reports of the widespread instance of rape during communal riots elsewhere in India. Kota's wrestlers did not generally see rape as either a legitimate form of violence or empowering. Just the opposite—it squandered precious stores of semen.³¹

Although a majority of Kota's wrestlers are young, unmarried, and (ideally) celibate, there are nevertheless many who are older, married, and sexually active. This last matter was not only attested by the presence of their children but also explicitly avowed in everyday conversation. Affirmation of their sexual activity was particularly strong among Jethis who explicitly linked the wrestling tradition to genealogical descent. In affirming their sexuality in this way, these wrestlers self-consciously enjoined the way of life of the householder (*grihastha*), the second of the Hindu life-stages. The prevalence of this practice represents a significant departure from Alter's ethnography in which all wrestlers apparently adhere (or aspire) to the norms of *brahmacharya*. That many wrestlers in Kota are sexually active does not negate Alter's larger thesis about the importance of semen retention in their worldview. But it does situate it in a somewhat different set of sexual practices that he does not discuss, which derives from Indian tantrism. Moreover, these sexual techniques are based on beliefs about female sexuality and uterine blood that supplement and reposition Alter's discussion of male celibacy and semen.

Indian tantrism has long been well known for privileging various esoteric sexual techniques in the quest for divine powers and immortality. The most famous of these practices is *coitus interruptus* whereby the male devotee in sexual union with his female partner (*yogini*) redirects his discharge of semen away from his partner's womb and channels it up his spinal column into the storage chamber in the cranial vault. Remarkably, this practice is only an early step towards ever more difficult sexual techniques that climax in the practice whereby the adept fully ejaculates within his partner and then, through the dexterity of 'urethral suction' (*vajroli mudra*), reabsorbs his own ejaculate, along with the menstrual and sexual discharge of his partner, back into his penis before sending the mixture up the spinal column. The male

³¹ As is well known, rape need not entail the discharge of semen nor even penile penetration (other objects sufficing). Nevertheless, most wrestlers in Kota spoke of rape as a sexual act rather than one of violence. For similar sentiments among wrestlers in Hyderabad, see Kakar (1996: 83–86).

adept remains the active agent and primary beneficiary of this sexual discipline; nevertheless the female partner is accorded an indispensable role in the process, especially as female uterine blood is considered a particularly potent type of semen in its own right, which is far more powerful than that produced by the male partner.³² Although it is notoriously difficult to get reliable first-hand information on actual sexual practice, many of my wrestling informants nevertheless freely discussed these sexual techniques, if only in boastful, post-workout banter.³³

One important outcome of the critical role of women in this ontology of power has been the active tradition of women engaging, if not in actual wrestling, at least in the exercise regimes that are closely associated with wrestling.³⁴ This tradition flourished in Rajasthan until the early nineteenth century, when it declined under colonial influence, and it is enjoying resurgence today. Kota, for instance, has several women's *akhadas*, such as the Shri Durgashakti Vyayamshala, where women perform traditional wrestling exercises. Although further research is required on the matter, it appears that the exercises associated with wrestling have an analogous effect on women as on men in augmenting supplies of blood and, by extension, uterine fluids.

These beliefs concerning the importance of uterine fluids in the production of *amrit* in the cranial vault also explain why *vajramushti* wrestlers made the drawing of blood from the *head* the specific object of their combat. Causing one's opponent to bleed from the head—the locus and store of the life-giving elixir that was made from the mixture of male semen and female uterine blood—weakened him in ways going beyond simple anaemia. Indeed, given that “*vajra*” remains a common euphemism for a hardened penis, this act also referenced the sexual penetration of one's opponent and extraction of his “uterine” blood. Even today, during ordinary *kushti* bouts, when a wrestler draws blood from an opponent (most frequently by causing a nosebleed), it is common to hear the wrestler boast that he deflowered his opponent. Blooding an opponent thus simultaneously asserted the masculinity of the victor while feminizing the vanquished. Although my wrestling informants never explicitly commented on the prevalence of head wounds reported during Kota's riots, gendered ideas about bleeding from the head were certainly consonant with their frequent reference to Muslim victims as “cunts” (*chut*).

³² On this matter, see Carstairs 1961: 102–4; Marglin 1985: 58–60; and White 2003: 73–79.

³³ That wrestling has been associated historically with beliefs concerning the beneficial power deriving from sexual intercourse and the mixing of male and female sexual fluids can be seen in the wedding practices of Rajasthan's erstwhile ruling dynasties that traditionally were accompanied by wrestling matches, in which conjoined wrestlers were a metaphor for sexual union.

³⁴ For example, see Cimino, Topsfield, and Tillotson 1985: cat. no. 62.

WRESTLING AND SACRIFICE

The practice of drawing blood from the head by wrestlers, as informed by tantrism, intersects with a second important set of practices involving blood and the head, namely the performance of blood sacrifice by decapitation in the context of Indian Shaktism. Blood sacrifice is most commonly associated with worship of the Goddess, in her various manifestations such as Kali, Devi, Durga, or Shakti. The Goddess is unusual insofar as she is not domesticated by attachment to a male deity. She either appears alone or, if in the presence of a consort (typically Shiva), she is in no way subordinate to him. Indeed, quite often the opposite is true, as Shiva frequently appears before (or beneath) the Goddess as an acolyte, passive sexual object, or sacrificial victim (sometimes as all three). One of the most distinguishing characteristics of the Goddess is the unbounded “blood-lust” with which she attacks her enemies. Her limitless fury is prototypically manifest in her battle with and decapitation of the buffalo demon Mahishasur who, significantly, is also her husband and principal devotee.

This event is commemorated each autumn during the “nine night” long festival of Navratri, also known as Durgapuja. On this occasion, the Goddess’ immolation of Mahishasur is re-enacted by devotees who offer her a “blood sacrifice” (*balidan*, or simply *bali*). The paradigmatic sacrificial animal is a healthy, adult male buffalo, recalling Mahishasur, but in this current “degenerate age” (the *kali yuga*), less expensive male goats have become the norm. Sacrificial animals are typically immolated by decapitation with the single stroke of a sword, and the head of the victim is generally offered to the Goddess by placing it on the ground (or on a post) just outside the door to sanctum sanctorum of her temple for her to consume through her gaze (*darshan*).³⁵ In some cases, blood that gushes from the victim is brought directly to the Goddess and splattered on her. The animal’s meat is then butchered, cooked, and served in a eucharistic meal. The blood from the sacrificial animal is also sometimes used for making a sacred mark, or *tilak*, on the forehead of devotees. Rarely, it is also consumed.

As Suchitra Samanta (1994) has discussed in her superb study of blood sacrifice in Bengal, the sacrificial victim is typically something that belongs to the sacrificer and with which the sacrificer enjoys some degree of intimacy.³⁶ This intimacy is desired because the sacrificial victim is in some sense regarded as a substitute or, better, a homology for the sacrificer insofar as the sacrificial victim, whom Samanta aptly calls the “self-animal,” is consumed by the Goddess, and is subsequently refined into more subtle substances by being

³⁵ Although *darshan* is usually conceived in terms of a devotee’s vision of the divine image, the reverse process also holds true.

³⁶ See also Biardeau (1984; 1989) and Harlan (2003: 21–25) for important analyses of blood sacrifice in Rajasthan.

reabsorbed into her divine being through digestion. Thus the sacrificial victim becomes an important enabler for the sacrificer as the victim's union with the divine becomes the principal means through which the self is refined and perfected.³⁷

On the face of it, the unbounded passions associated with the Goddess sit awkwardly with the emphasis on self-control prevalent in wrestling. Moreover, the privileging of death (through sacrifice) as a mode of mediating with an extra-mundane divine in Goddess-worship is somewhat at odds with tantrism, which seeks to conquer death altogether by finding the divine in the here-and-now of sex. These tensions, no doubt, account for why iconic representations of the goddess do not generally appear in wrestling *akhadas*, and blood sacrifice is not normally performed in the context thereof. Indeed the most ubiquitous deity in the gymnasium is instead the monkey-god Hanuman, who is best known from the Ramayan epic both for his great physical prowess and his unwavering discipleship to Lord Ram.

On the other hand, an important exception to this norm is the *gymnasias* of the Jethis, which exclusively contain shrines of the goddess in her manifestation as Nimbaja Devi, to the exclusion of all other deities. Jethis worship her as a matter of daily routine, at major festivals and, importantly, immediately prior to wrestling matches. As Brahmins intent on maintaining their ritual purity, the Jethis do not, however, perform blood sacrifice to Nimbaja Devi in the classic sense of immolating animals, owing to the "death pollution" associated with killing living beings. Jethis nevertheless do honor Nimbaja Devi with the 'sacrifice' of coconuts. The coconut, a trope for the human head roughly paralleling European metaphors for 'nut,' is a common vegetal substitute for animals in sacrifice and is, typically, smashed open with a pointed stone.³⁸ Substitution or no, the lethal intent of the Jethis' coconut sacrifice remains indexed by their practice of smashing coconuts *outside* the precincts of the *akhada*, thereby insulating Nimbaja Devi in the gymnasium from any residual "death pollution" associated therewith. This custom thus parallels practice at other goddess temples where animal sacrifice is typically performed at some remove from the deity's *sanctum sanctorum*.

Even in those *akhadas* where there is no iconic representation of the goddess, there are nonetheless significant latent affirmations of her presence. For example, nearly all wrestlers in Kota held that some manifestation of the goddess resided in the wrestling pit itself. The goddess in India has long had a close association with the earth (Marglin 1985: 159–61), and wrestlers

³⁷ Given this soteriology, *self-sacrifice* (*atma-bali*), in which the sacrificator offers his own life to the goddess, has been one of the most esteemed and enduring of all ideals of sacrifice (Harlan 2003: 19–27).

³⁸ For the logic, use, and efficacy of vegetal substitutes for animal victims in blood sacrifice, see Samanta 1994.

generally display a reverential attitude toward the soil of the wrestling pit insofar as they offer it prayers and incense before stepping into it. The close connection between the goddess and the pit is made explicit during performance of *mitti puja*, or “worship of the earth.” On this occasion wrestlers mound up earth from the pit into an aniconic manifestation of the goddess and recite prayers invoking her to come reside there. Votive offerings are then presented to the earthen mound. Given her presence therein, wrestlers attribute special regenerative powers to the earth of the pit, which they view as a source of *shakti* (the feminine energy deriving from the goddess). Wrestlers, therefore, often cover themselves with this soil after strenuous workouts or when they have received strains or bruises. Several wrestlers further commented that when fatigued during a competitive bout they preferred to be in the otherwise disadvantageous position underneath their opponent, in full contact with the earth of the pit, in order to recoup strength. These beliefs explain the reticence of many contemporary Indian wrestlers to abandon the traditional earthen pit in favor of modern, rubberized sport-mats.

Although most wrestlers themselves abstain from animal sacrifice (at least in the context of the *akhada*), wrestling competitions have always been nested within larger events in which blood sacrifice is eminently manifest. Perhaps the most important of these occasions is during Navratri/Durgapuja, which is also the principal time of year for staging wrestling tournaments. Historically, this link was more than temporal coincidence since the two events were linked in the court spectacle of the erstwhile ruling dynasties in which royal buffalo sacrifices were immediately preceded by animal combat, unarmed forms of grappling, and, finally, *vajramushti* bouts.

I was told many times that during the riots in Kota it generally had not been the intent of wrestlers to kill Muslims. They merely wanted to “teach them a lesson” or “put them in their place.” Wrestlers nevertheless did not deny that some among their community had killed, and several informants explained this breach in self-discipline by saying that the goddess had “come into” those wrestlers who killed. Indeed, they cited as evidence of this possession the idiom of violence witnessed during the massacre at the Chhotipiri ki masjid, which was especially suggestive of blood sacrifice to the goddess insofar as the (male) victims were decapitated and the head of one was ‘offered’ to Shitala Mataji. While most of my wrestling informants said they did not fully embrace these actions, few condemned them outright, for the mode of empowerment through sacrifice remained profoundly imbricated with a number of practices associated with wrestling. As one of these informants put it, “they have chosen to follow a different path but the end is the same.”

CONCLUSION

Ever since Rene Girard’s (1977) influential writings on violence and the sacred, the trope of sacrifice has been used to make sense of the motivation to collective

violence against minority communities, especially when this violence is intended to bring about the rebirth or regeneration of the larger social body. This understanding of “sacrificial violence” has been tied particularly to theories of exorcism. Numerous scholars have suggested that the collective violence perpetrated by one community against another is informed by ideas about purification in which the self is cleansed through the complete *expulsion and destruction* of a demonic and defiling Other. For example, Natalie Zemon Davis in her classic study of “the rites of violence” in sixteenth-century France shows how acts of collective violence were “selected from a repertory of traditional punishments and forms of destruction” (1973: 53), the most important of which derived from the Bible and religious liturgy. In particular, she describes how many acts of collective violence drew on “rites of exorcism” for their form and logic and were “intended to purify the religious community” (ibid.: 81–83). Over the years, this view of collective violence as a form of exorcism has experienced numerous incarnations and extensions in the analysis of communal unrest in South Asia (e.g., Kapferer 1988: 101ff; Hansen 1996; Kakar 1996: 160–62; Tambiah 1996: 311ff).

Exorcism practices have undeniably informed much South Asian communal violence. However, exorcism does not exhaust the range of cultural belief informing sacrifice and the forms of collective violence that may flow from it. Indeed, as Veena Das has argued, the standard equation of sacrifice with exorcism—particularly when exorcism is understood as an attempt to expiate and exterminate pollution—draws rather heavily on assumptions about sin that derive from Semitic religious traditions.³⁹ Das explains: “Anthropological discourse on sacrifice assumes that the sacrificator [i.e., sacrificer] is a bearer of pollution, sin or guilt and the sacrificial cult provides the means for cleansing the person or the social body of these moral stains. Further the immolation of the victim becomes a central moment of the sacrifice since it constitutes the renunciation of a significant object by the sacrificator to bring about a sudden and violent cleansing of sin. . .” (1983: 445).

Yet when one considers sacrifice in its Indian forms one finds that it is premised on a different relation with the divine that has different outcomes for the sacrificial act. While there are some areas of significant overlap between sacrifice and exorcism, they are not entirely congruent categories precisely because of the different relationships they establish between the perpetrators of the violent/sacrificial act and their victims. These divergences are manifest both during the act of violence as well as later in the perpetrators’ demeanor toward their victims. The act of sacrifice is not intended to totally expunge or annihilate the victim. Instead, sacrifice, as an act of regeneration is premised on foundations that recognize some degree of mutuality, inter-subjectivity, and

³⁹ As Das (1983: 445) has noted, these assumptions inform the highly influential analytic tradition concerning sacrifice deriving from Hubert and Mauss (1964 [1899]).

identification between the sacrificer and the victim. Within this cosmology sacrifice is an act of reabsorption, incorporation, and encompassment of the victim into the sacrificer, albeit within a position of clear subordination.

Much scholarship on anti-Muslim violence in India in the last decade has focused on the grand, cataclysmic outbursts of collective violence—such as in Bombay or Ahmedabad—that have resulted in loss of life on a massive scale, the displacement of tens of thousands, and institutionalization of permanent hostilities between communities. Yet this essay has documented that other violent situations, despite profound links to these larger events, have been played out with effects and outcomes that are different than those experienced in the paradigmatic cases. These findings point to the need to develop finer-grained grammars of violence. Not all violence is the same. Indeed, not all collective violence in India is the same. For some time analysts have been wary of exploring the finer textures of violence for fear that their research might degenerate into “pornography of violence.” However, this reticence is not without analytic costs since much of the specific meaning freighted in violence is contained in this level of detail, and timidity in approaching this detail has meant that we continue to avert our attention from the varied topographies of meaning that violence expresses.

APPENDIX 1: SOURCES CONCERNING THE RIOTS

My understanding of riots in Kota draws on several sources, including: (1) interviews with local informants during a total of seven months of field research in 1990, 2001, 2004, and 2005; (2) contemporary reporting in two local newspapers, *Rajasthan Patrika* and *Desh ki Dharti*; and (3) two external reports on the riots. The first of these reports was written for the Institute of Islamic Studies, Bombay by the social activist and scholar Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer and was based on a field investigation conducted by Dr. K. S. Durrany immediately after the riots. The report’s main findings were published in two articles (Engineer 1989; 1995). The second report was compiled by Justice S. N. Bhargava (1993) as part of his official government inquiry into the riots. The Bhargava Commission was established in October 1989 by the Congress government in Rajasthan, but its work was done under a BJP administration (which came to power in 1990) and its findings were submitted to the government in April 1993 while the BJP was still in power. BJP pressure considerably curtailed the commission’s mandate and the investigation was ultimately restricted to reviewing police actions during the riots. Although the conclusions of the Bhargava Report are extremely anodyne, it remains a rich source of primary data concerning the riots.

APPENDIX 2: COUNTING THE DEAD AND INJURED

Statistics regarding the dead and injured in Indian riots are often highly politicized and vary depending upon their source. It is not uncommon for different sources to cite casualty figures for a single riot that vary by a factor of five.

Although data concerning Kota's riots also vary, the range is much narrower and there is a broad agreement as to the general scale of the violence at least when it comes to reporting the dead. At the low end of the spectrum are the statistics of the official government inquiry (Bhargava 1993: 19), which states that only twenty people were killed, of whom sixteen were Muslims and four were Hindus. The Bhargava Report's statistics regarding the injured are somewhat more equivocal insofar as they adopt a tripartite categorization with twenty-four identified as Muslim, thirty-five as Hindu, and forty as "police and government officials." During conversation with me, Justice Bhargava freely offered that these statistics probably under-report Muslim casualties insofar as they were based on data collected from the morgue and patient wards at the city's only hospital, where Muslims were much less likely to bring their dead and injured owing to its location in a predominantly Hindu part of the city (20 Sept. 2004 interview). Several other sources cite casualty rates among Muslims that are higher than the Bhargava Report. The city's *qazi*, or Muslim magistrate (Qazi Anwar Ahmed, 14 Feb. 2005 interview), the local Urdu language newspaper *Tulu'-e-Subh* (cited in Engineer 1989: 2705), and the Qaumi Ekta Executive Committee, a local civic unity organization (Pandit Somnath Sharma, 26 Sept. 2004 interview), all put the number of Muslim dead at twenty-two, with a further four Hindus killed. The *qazi* accounted for the discrepancy between his figures and the Bhargava Report's, by explaining that six of the Muslim dead were never brought to the city morgue and therefore were not entered into official records. Without citing specific numbers, the *qazi* further asserted that the number of Muslims who were seriously injured was far greater than indicated in the Bhargava Report for precisely the same reasons as surmised by Bhargava himself. The *qazi's* estimation would appear to be borne out by the fact that the ratio of Muslim dead to Muslim wounded (1:1.2) in the Bhargava report is exceptionally high when compared to the same ratio amongst Hindus (1:8.75). For these reasons, I have greater confidence in the data from the above-cited, non-governmental sources, particularly bearing in mind that the government's statistics, however much they downplay the levels of violence against Muslims, do not differ by a magnitude of scale.

REFERENCES

- Ali, Imran and Yoginder Sikand. 2006. Survey of Socio-Economic Conditions of Muslims in India. <http://countercurrents.org/comm.-sikand090206.htm>.
- Alter, Joseph S. 1992. *The Wrestler's Body: Identity and Ideology in North India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1993. The Body of One Color: Indian Wrestling, the Indian State and Utopian Somatics. *Cultural Anthropology* 8: 49–72.
- . 1994a. Somatic Nationalism and Militant Hinduism. *Modern Asian Studies* 28: 557–88.
- . 1994b. Celibacy, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Gender into Nationalism. *Journal of Asian Studies* 53: 45–66.

- . 1995. The Celibate Wrestler: Sexual Chaos, Embodied Balance, and Competitive Politics in North India. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, N. S., 29: 109–31.
- . 2004. Indian Clubs and Colonialism: Hindu Masculinity and Muscular Christianity. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46: 497–534.
- . 2005. Empowering Yourself: Sport, Sexuality and Autoeroticism in North Indian Jori Swinging. In, James Mill, ed., *Subaltern Sports: Politics and Sport in South Asia*. London: Anthem Press, 47–59.
- Anderson Walter, S. and Shridhar D. Dalme. 1987. *The Brotherhood in Saffron: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Basu, Tapan, P. Datta, Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar, and S. Sen. 1993. *Khaki Shorts, Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.
- Bhargava, Justice S. N. 1993. Report of the Commission of Enquiry on Communal Riots in Kota. Unpub. report submitted to the Government of Rajasthan.
- Biardeau, Madeleine. 1984. The Sami Tree and the Sacrificial Buffalo. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (N.S.) 18: 1–23.
- . 1989. *Histoires de poteaux: Variations védiques autour de la Déesse hindoue*. Paris: École française de l'Extrême-Orient.
- Brass, Paul R. 1997. *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Carstairs, G. Morris. 1961. *The Twice-Born: A Study of a Community of High-Caste Hindus*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Chandavarkar, Rajnarayan. 1998. *Imperial Power and Popular Politics: Class, Resistance and the State in India, c. 1850–1950*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chiriyankandath, James. 1992. Tricolour and Saffron: Congress and the Neo-Hindu Challenge. In, Subrata Mitra and James Chiriyankandath, eds., *Electoral Politics in India: A Changing Landscape*. New Delhi: Segment Books, 55–80.
- Cimino, Rosa M., Andrew Topsfield, and G.H.R. Tillotson. 1985. *Life at Court in Rajasthan*. Florence: n.p.
- Courtright, Paul B. 1985. *Ganesa: Lord of Obstacles, Lord of Beginnings*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Das, Veena. 1983. The Language of Sacrifice. *Man* 18: 445–62.
- . 1989. *Structure and Cognition: Aspects of Hindu Caste and Ritual*, 2d ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Davis, Natalie Zemon. 1973. The Rites of Violence: Religious Riots in Sixteenth-Century France. *Past and Present* 59: 51–91.
- Engineer, Asghar Ali, 1989. Kota: Another Case of Planned Violence? *Economic and Political Weekly* 24: 2703–5.
- . 1995. Kota: Another Graveyard of Secularism? In *Lifting the Veil: Communal Violence and Communal Harmony in Contemporary India*. Hyderabad: Sangam Books, 165–72.
- Freitag, Sandria B., 1989. *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Girard, Rene. 1977. *Violence and the Sacred*. Patrick Gregory, trans. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.
- Gooptu, Nandini. 2001. *The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early Twentieth-Century India*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Hansen, Kathryn. 1992. *Grounds for Play: The Nautanki Theatre of North India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hansen, Thomas Blom. 1996. Recuperating Masculinity: Hindu Nationalism, Violence and the Exorcism of the Muslim Other. *Critique of Anthropology* 16: 137–72.

- . 1999. *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 2001. *Wages of Violence: Naming and Identity in Postcolonial Bombay*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Harlan, Lindsey. 2003. *The Goddesses' Henchmen: Gender in Indian Hero Worship*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hubert, Henri and Marcel Mauss. 1964 [1899]. *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function*, W. D. Halls, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Jaffrelot, Christophe. 1996. *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics, 1925 to the 1990s: Strategies of Identity-Building, Implantation and Mobilisation*. London: Hurst.
- Juergensmeyer, Mark. 1993. *Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kakar, Sudhir. 1996. *The Colors of Violence: Cultural Identities, Religion, and Conflict*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kapferer, Bruce. 1988. *Legends of People, Myths of State: Violence, Intolerance, and Political Culture in Sri Lanka and Australia*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Kumar, Nita. 1988. *The Artisans of Banaras: Popular Culture and Identity, 1880–1986*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Marglin, Frederique Apffel. 1985. *Wives of the God-King: The Rituals of the Devadasis of Puri*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Mayaram, Shail. 1993. Communal Violence in Jaipur. *Economic and Political Weekly* 28: 2524–41.
- Mehta, Deepak. 2000. Circumcision, Body, Masculinity: The Ritual Wound and Collective Violence. In, Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Manphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds, eds., *Violence and Subjectivity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 79–101.
- Modave, le Comte de (Louis Laurent de Federbe). 1971. *Voyage en Inde du Comte de Modave*. J. Deloche, ed. Paris: École française de l'Extrême-Orient.
- Pandey, Gyanendra. 1992. In Defense of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today. *Representations* 37: 27–55.
- Rousselet, Louis. 1875. *L'Inde des Rajahs: Voyage dans l'Inde Centrale dans les Presidences de Bomay et du Bengale*. Paris: Librairie Hachette.
- Sachar, Justice Rajinder (Chairperson). 2006. *Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India*. New Delhi: Government of India, Cabinet Secretariat.
- Samanta, Suchitra. 1994. The “Self Animal” and Divine Digestion: Goat Sacrifice to the Goddess Kali in Bengal. *Journal of Asian Studies* 53: 779–804.
- Sandesara, B. J. and R. N. Mehta, eds. 1964. *Malla Purana*. Baroda: Oriental Institute.
- Scurry, James. 1824. *The Captivity, Sufferings and Escape of James Scurry*. London: Henry Fisher.
- Sewell, Robert. 1900. *A Forgotten Empire (Vijayanagar)*. London: Swan Sonnenschein.
- Shani, Ornit. 1996. *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2007. *Communalism, Caste and Hindu Nationalism: The Violence in Gujarat*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tambiah, Stanley. 1996. *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tod, James. 1832. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han, or the Central and Western Rajpoot States*, vol. 2. London.

- Topsfield, Andrew. 1990. *The City Palace Museum, Udaipur: Paintings of Mewar Court Life*. Ahmedabad: Mapin.
- van der Veer, Peter. 1994. *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- White, David Gordon. 1996. *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2003. *Kiss of the Yogini: "Tantric Sex" in Its South Asian Contexts*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wilks, Mark. 1810. *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, vol. I. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme.