

UC Irvine

UC Irvine Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Sikh Diasporic Necropolitics: Critical Visual Geographies of Hate and State Violence

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4973j62m>

Author

Kaur, Tavleen

Publication Date

2019

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

Sikh Diasporic Necropolitics: Critical Visual Geographies of Hate and State Violence

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Visual Studies

by

Tavleen Kaur

Dissertation Committee:
Associate Professor Bridget R. Cooks, Chair
Associate Professor Sohail Daulatzai
Assistant Professor Anneeth Kaur Hundle
Associate Professor Lyle Massey
Associate Professor Judy Tzu-Chun Wu

2019

DEDICATION

To

those who live, breathe, speak, and are *Ik Oankar*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
CURRICULUM VITAE	vii
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION	xi
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: Thoughts and Prayers	52
Hate Violence Stream One: Bodies and Buildings	55
Hate Violence Stream Two: The Legality of Hate	68
Hate Violence Stream Three: Translating Hate	87
Conclusion	96
CHAPTER 2: Resisting Domes, Resistant Domes: A Sikh American Hate-Love Story	100
Charhdi Kala	109
Domed If You Do, Domed If You Don't	129
Gurdwara Open House Programs	142
Gurdwaras as "Total Spaces"	148
Conclusion	153
CHAPTER 3: What's in a Name?	162
Afternoon Strolls, Turbans, Cremations, and Parks: Four Case Studies	173
RAG HEAD	202
Conclusion	221
CONCLUSION	230
EPILOGUE	244
BIBLIOGRAPHY	262

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1.1	Punjab in <i>Little Orphan Annie</i> 50
Figure 1.2	A 1930s poster advertisement by Cadillac 50
Figure 1.3	Kenneth Dunan in 1938, dressed as a Sikh man 50
Figure 1.4	Ricardo Montalban, dressed as Khan Noonien Singh 50
Figure 1.5	Hadji Raheed Singh in <i>The Adventures of Jonny Quest</i> 51
Figure 1.6	The Thuggee cult Chief Guard from <i>Indiana Jones</i> 51
Figure 1.7	Zoltar in <i>Big</i> 51
Figure 2.1	The Charhdi Kala 6K Flyer 159
Figure 2.3	Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Buena Park, 2015 159
Figure 2.4	National Sikh Campaign Image from 2017 159
Figure 3.1	Lion motifs at the Singh and Kaur Park, Elk Grove 226
Figure 3.2	Traditional South Asian design motifs for Singh and Kaur Park 226
Figure 3.3	Islamic, Hindu, and Sikh architectural elements for the park 227
Figure 3.4	More Islamic, Hindu, and Sikh architectural elements 227
Figure 3.5	Shaheed Bhai Jaswant Singh Khalra Park sign in Fresno 227
Figure 3.6	A bench at Adenia Park with “Charhdi Kala” message 228
Figure 3.7	A bench at Adenia Park with the text “Singh atey Kaur” 228
Figure 3.8	A bench at Adenia Park with the text “Sarbat da Bhala” 229
Figure 3.9	The welcome sign at Adenia Park 229

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The backbone and scaffolding of this dissertation is Guru Nanak Sahib's *Ik Oankar*, as explicated in Guru Granth Sahib, and as demonstrated by Guru Panth Sahib. So, the first and foremost *shukar* goes to Guru Granth Sahib and Guru Panth Sahib for showing me what *Ik Oankar* looks, feels, and sounds like.

How do I even begin to thank the Indigenous communities whose land and resources allow me to survive and thrive? Thank you for allowing me to be among you and for showing me what love in and for the universe looks like. Please bare with me as I learn the ways of this love and allyship.

When it came to putting down ideas on paper, feedback and support from my exam and dissertation committees is the reason my dissertation could take this shape. I would like to express sincere appreciation for my committee chair, Professor Bridget Cooks, who took me on as a student even amidst countless other responsibilities. I feel humbled and grateful for receiving the patience and care with which Dr. Cooks guided me through this process. Thank you to Dr. Cooks for setting me up for success. Professor Judy Tzu-Chun Wu has been deeply invested and supportive of my project since day one, and I cannot thank her enough for her feedback and generosity. Her enthusiasm for my project and her assistance in helping me connect theoretical dots from beyond my vision of the project have made this dissertation transnational and transdisciplinary in ways I could not have imagined alone. I would like to express deep gratitude to Professor Anneeth Kaur Hundle for giving me so much of her time and care throughout the writing process. She has been an incredible example of what it means to be a Punjabi Sikh woman academic from long before our paths intersected here at UCI. Taking one class with Professor Sohail Daulatzai changed the mental landscape of my thoughts on empire and imperialism in ways I cannot even begin to describe. Thank you, Dr. Daulatzai, for all that you bring to this campus and beyond, and thank you for being on my committee as someone who so critically understands where I'm coming from. I would like to express sincere gratitude to Professor Lyle Massey. Dr. Massey's support for my project, including her willingness to be on my committee, came right when I needed it the most. Thank you for being such a great example of what it means to have a student's back. Getting to the dissertation-writing point would not have been possible without Professor Bliss Lim's willingness to be on my exam committee. Thank you, Dr. Lim, for your help and feedback and for pushing me to see parts of this project in ways I had not originally imagined.

Completing the dissertation is a team effort, and I had the pleasure of having some of the best teammates a graduate student could ask for. Thank you to my friends and colleagues, Finley Freibert, Matt Knutson, Benjamin Kruger-Robbins, and Louise Sider. It is humbling to think back to our first days in the program. I also want to thank all the other members of the Visual Studies community for their support and comments over all the times we had the opportunity to discuss our projects. I would like to thank my friends Kourosh Alizadeh, Elaine Andres, Jessica Cabrera, Kacey Calahane, Erica Cheung, Sam Grabowska, Jess Lee, Marketus Presswood, Lori

Smithey, and Sabrina Nasir for their constant support and feedback during our writing group meetings. Thank you to the Graduate Resource Center, Professor Roxanne Varzi, and Professor Judy Tzu-Chun Wu for organizing writing group meetings. Dissertations truly are a group effort.

I would also like to thank the wider UCI community for supporting my project in many ways, especially the School of Humanities and its group of affiliates and supporters. This campus and I are fortunate to have administrative support and educational opportunities from an amazing team of people. I would like to express my gratitude to people whom I had the pleasure of meeting, learning from, and working with: Jennifer Choy, Amrit Deol, Robert Escalante, Amy Fujitani, Cecilia Flanagan, Arielle Hinojosa-Garcia, Randeep Hothi, Punnu Jaitla, Harleen Kaur, Julia Lupton, Prabhdeep Kehal, Claire Jean Kim, Arvind Mandair, Matt McCabe, Mike Normandia, Jasleen Singh, Beth Pace, Clara Quijano, Susan Showler, Amanda Swain, and Eva Yonas. Thank you for all that you do.

Embarking on this long journey meant lots of ups and downs. I would like to thank my family and my *sangat* for being like mountain peaks I could sit with when the wind got too gusty and for being like trees whose shade I could sit under when the heat became unbearable. To my parents, Davinder Kaur and Harbinder Singh, my sister Jasbir Kaur, and the joys of my life—Sidhak Singh and Sehej Singh: thank you for being with me even when I couldn't make time to. Thank you also to my Sikh families located across the globe for adopting me as your granddaughter, daughter, sister, and friend.

To Inderpal Singh, *bff pff aaf*, thank you for being who you are. I could not have done this project without the love and joy that you bring into my life every single day.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Tavleen Kaur

- 2008 B.A. in International Studies, University of North Carolina, Charlotte
- 2010 M.S. in Architectural History and Theory, University of Washington, Seattle
M.S. Thesis: “The Bedi Samadhs in Una: An Architectural Study of the Samadh Typology Through a Religious and Socio-political Context”
- 2012 M.S. in Architectural History and Theory, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
M.S. Thesis: “The Limits of Public Spatial Expression: Negotiation of Law, Religion, and Secularism Among Sikh Diasporic Communities”
- 2019 Ph.D. in Visual Studies, University of California, Irvine
Dissertation: “Sikh Diasporic Necropolitics: Critical Visual Geographies of State and Hate Violence”

FIELD OF STUDY

Architectural History and Theory, Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies, Cultural Studies, Ethnic Studies, Sikh Studies, Visual Studies

Professional Experience

- 2016-2019 Teaching Assistant, University of California, Irvine
- 2018 Instructor, University of California, Irvine
- 2017 Instructor, California State University, Fullerton
- 2017 AB540/Undocumented Ally Training, University of California, Irvine
- 2016 Sustainability Initiative Intern. University of California, Irvine
- 2016 FLEX College Prep Tutor. Irvine, California
- 2014 Associate Director, Dasvandh Network. Detroit, Michigan
- 2013 Administrative Assistant, College of Architecture & Urban Planning. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- 2008-12 Graduate Student Instructor. UW Seattle and UM Ann Arbor
- 2005-08 Library Assistant. University of North Carolina, Charlotte
- 2008 Architecture Teaching Assistant. Duke TIP. Davidson College, NC

Publications

- Forth. 2020 “Contemporary Sikh Art,” in *The Sikh World*, London: Routledge
- Forth. 2020 “Brick by Brick: Sovereignty in and of the Sikh Built Environment” in *Critical*

- Forth. 2020 “Ungovernable and Inviolable: Acts of resistance in and against immigrant detention” in *Amerasia Journal*
- 2018 “Sikh Diasporic Feminisms: A Labor of Undoing” in *Sikh Formations. Religion, Culture, Theory*.
- 2018 Review, *Sikhism. A Very Short Introduction*, by Eleanor Nesbitt, in *Sikh Formations. Religion, Culture, Theory*
- 2017 “Sikh Architecture” in *Encyclopedia of Indian Religions*
- 2017 “Sikh Art” in *Encyclopedia of Indian Religions*
- 2013 “In What Style Should We Memorialize?” in *Sikh Formations. Religion, Culture, Theory*

Archival & Ethnographic Research

- 2017-2019 Conducted architectural research on Sikh architecture and personal interviews with Sikh advocacy leaders in the United States
- 2016 Conducted personal interviews with the early immigrants from South Asia
- 2014 Translated handwritten documents from Punjabi to English, Ensaaf
- 2011 Examined architectural treatises from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, UM
- 2010 Researched handwritten manuscripts from the eighteenth century, State Archives of Punjab in Patiala, India
- 2008 Photo documented historic forts from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, Punjab

Awards, Grants, and Fellowships

- 2019 Graduate Humanities Fellowship, UC Irvine
- 2018 Graduate Student Research Grant, UC Irvine
- 2017 Humanities Out There Fellow, UC Irvine
- 2017 Ajeet Singh Matharu Memorial Scholarship for Groundbreaking Research
- 2016 UC Berkeley-American Institute of Pakistan Studies Urdu Language Program in Pakistan
- 2016 Robyn Shikiya Memorial Graduate Award in Visual Studies
- 2015 UC Irvine Humanities Commons Collaborative Grant
- 2014 UC Irvine Visual Studies Doctoral Fellowship
- 2011 Foreign Language & Area Studies Academic Year and Summer Fellowship
- 2009 American Institute of Indian Studies Summer Fellowship

Conferences and Talks

- 2019 “Domed If You Do, Domed If You Don’t: Built Environment Heritage and Modernity.” Gender In and Out of Punjab Conference, Yale University
- 2019 “Ungovernable and Inviolable: Acts of Resistance in and against Immigrant

- 2018 Detention.” Association For Asian American Studies Conference
 “Get out of my country!” Hate Violence on Gurdwaras, Mosques, and Temples in North America. Society of Architectural Historians Conference
- 2018 “Brick by Brick: Sovereignty in and of the Sikh Built Environment.” Reclaiming Diasporicity: An Interdisciplinary Workshop, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- 2017 “Hate and Heritage in the Sikh Public Sphere in North America.” Loyola Marymount University. Los Angeles, California
- 2017 “Vandalized Walls and Repurposed Halls. Hate and Heritage in the North American Public Sphere.” Graduate Sikh Students Conference, Stanford University
- 2016 “From McDonald’s to Prayer Hall. Tracing Architectural Identity in North America. *Access Asia, Journal of Asian Studies*
- 2014 “Diasporic Architectural Identities: Constructing Buildings, Reconstructing Narratives,” *Guest Lecture in Art His 42A, Arts of India*, University of California, Irvine
- 2011 From Dharamshala to Gurdwara: Institutionalization of Sikh Public Space. *Planning+Architecture Research Group*, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- 2010 Women as Objects in and Producers of the Sikh Social and Built Environment, *Sikh Feminist Research Institute*. University of Toronto

Academic and Volunteer Service

- 2017-present Volunteer, cultural and material resources provider for detainees at various immigrant detention centers in California
- 2019 Panelist, Immigration and Asylum Issues, UCI
- 2018 Panel Respondent, “What is Asian American Feminisms?,” UCI
- 2018 Assistant, Southern California Regional Asian America and Pacific Islander Studies Group
- 2017 Volunteer, “Centering Stories. A Symposium on Undocumented Asian American and Pacific Islander Students,” UCI
- 2016 Co-organizer, Visual Studies Graduate Student & Recruitment Conference, UCI
- 2015 Co-founder, Critical Visual Geographies Collective, UCI
- 2015 Teaching Assistant Professional Development Program (TAPDP), UCI
- 2014-15 Volunteer Teacher, Sikh Youth Alliance of North America
- 2011-13 Co-founder, Michigan Sikh Studies Forum, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- 2012 Co-curator, The Art of Sikh Revolution. Montreal, Quebec
- 2012 Member, Landscaping Inequality, Interdisciplinary Reading Group, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- 2011 Volunteer, Society of Architectural Historians

Languages

Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu

Areas of Research & Interest

Architectural History & Theory

Asian American & Pacific Islander Studies

Critical Race Studies

Cultural Resources Management

Diaspora Studies

Educational Democracy

Film & Media Studies

Hate Studies

Immigrant Justice & Rights

Refugee & Migration Studies

Restorative Justice

Sikh and Punjab Studies

Social Justice

Sustainability and Green Building

Urban History

Visual Studies

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Sikh Diasporic Necropolitics: Critical Visual Geographies of Hate and State Violence

By

Tavleen Kaur

Doctor of Philosophy in Visual Studies

University of California, Irvine, 2019

Professor Bridget R. Cooks, Chair

This dissertation examines how ethno-religious communities are affected by and respond to white supremacist hate violence on their bodies and buildings in the contemporary moment. I illustrate how the violent construction of white nationhood in and outside the U.S. through the latter's statecraft of Islamophobia translates to precarity for Muslims and "Muslim-looking" bodies and buildings, particularly Sikhs and *gurdwaras*.

I critique education and awareness programs that Sikh advocacy organizations in the U.S. have created as their means to combat the hate violence that results from white supremacy. My analysis of these programs reveals that their insistence on the Sikh community as a "model minority" is not only anti-Black and anti-Indigenous, but that such a narrative also evades the harsh realities of significant portions of Sikhs in the U.S. who are working class, undocumented, and far from the elitist narrative of "Sikhs in America" that these programs articulate. Since many of these education and awareness programs proliferated in the growing global

Islamophobia after 9/11, I argue that their focus on who Sikhs are has the pernicious implication of who Sikhs are not: Muslims. Through these critiques, my dissertation brings to light the inherent Islamophobia that structures Sikh advocacy in the U.S.

Through a mixed methodology of interviews, data and media analysis, photographs, and site visits, I also look at various memorial activities and institutions created by Sikh communities across the globe. I focus specifically on ones that contextualize Sikhs' struggles with state and hate violence with those faced by other racialized communities. I argue that, in order for true alignment with Sikh ethos, and for reasons of long-term efficacy, the current structure of Sikh advocacy in the U.S. must be revised such that it is staunchly anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist. My dissertation serves as a rubric through which to imagine this revision.

INTRODUCTION

I. Overview

My dissertation, titled, “Sikh Diasporic Necropolitics: Critical Visual Geographies of Hate and State Violence,” is about the different ways that the Sikh community is affected by and responds to white supremacist hate violence in the public sphere in the contemporary period. My geographic focus is the United States not only because of the high frequency of hate violence faced by Sikhs here, but also because it is here that I am most closely connected with the Sikh community. My project is as personal as it is political. I examine how Sikh bodies and buildings become targets of hate violence because of the visual and political rhetoric of Islamophobia they are stereotypically seen and racialized with.

“The Sikh community” is neither a monolithic group, nor a geographically confined one. As with any faith-based community, there are multiple subgroups under the umbrella of “the Sikh community,” some with deep contestations among them on varying opinions on religiosity and exegesis. Outside of its homeland in India, “the Sikh community” is inclusive of small pockets of Sikhs across the globe to upward of half a million Sikhs in areas like California, New York, and London. For the purposes of my dissertation, by “the Sikh community,” I mean the carefully curated image of Sikhs in the United States by Sikh advocacy organizations after 9/11 (discussed below).

Due to their faith requirements, especially of men’s turbans and beards, and building traditions using domes and arches, Sikhs bodies and buildings are often seen as Muslim, as these visual markers are common among Muslim communities across the world. The misidentification of Sikhs as Muslims was especially apparent after 9/11 when Sikhs, as well as Muslims and

anyone suspected of being Muslim, were being attacked and killed by “patriotic” white Americans taking “justice” into their own hands to avenge the violence from the events. In the wave of awareness and advocacy that ensued because of the violence on Sikh bodies and buildings after 9/11, many Sikh individuals, community activists, and leaders of advocacy organizations in the U.S. described the hate violence Sikhs were facing as cases of “mistaken identity.”¹ In trying to protect their own community against hate violence by making statements on Sikhs’ innocence and distance from Muslims and Islam, many Sikhs failed to see the problematic implications of the “mistaken identity” idea, as it implies that there is a correct (i.e. Muslim) target for the hate violence Sikhs faced and continue to face.

Only a decade after 9/11 did some Sikh activists and organizations abandon the “mistaken identity” narrative, opting instead to refer to the hate violence Sikhs face as part of a “collective struggle.”² However, I argue that, even after they’ve stopped using the term “mistaken identity,” Sikh activists and organizations raising “awareness” on Sikhs, in theory, replicate what they’ve allegedly abandoned in foregoing the use of “mistaken identity.” This is so because the goal of raising awareness is to educate others about who Sikhs are, and this effort itself implicates what Sikhs are not: Muslim. Though small-scale, individualistic efforts to educate others on the Sikh faith and its followers have been part of Sikh-American life since before 9/11, it was only after the latter that Sikh advocacy became a formal, institutional, and nationwide project of educating others on.³ Awareness-centered advocacy puts the onus of

¹ Tamara Lush, “Post-9/11, Sikhs Say They Are Mistaken Targets,” msnbc.com, July 11, 2011, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/43715106/ns/us_news-life/t/post--sikhs-say-they-are-mistaken-targets/.

² Valarie Kaur and Simran Jeet Singh, “Two Sikh American Activists: Let’s Retire ‘Mistaken Identity,’” *Washington Post* (blog), August 10, 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/guest-voices/post/two-sikh-american-activists-lets-retire-mistaken-identity/2012/08/10/776ab9d8-e329-11e1-a25e-15067bb31849_blog.html.

³ An example of pre-9/11 Sikh advocacy is what I witnessed as a young adult at my local *gurdwara* in North Carolina. Thoroughly Every year, the *gurdwara*'s administrative board would organize a "Public Relations Day," inviting neighboring churches and local political service officials to visit the *gurdwara* and learn about the Sikh faith. These kinds of small-scale events were common at many *gurdwaras* all along the East Coast and Midwest of

addressing hate violence on the affected communities, largely leaving individual and systemic perpetrators unaddressed and unaccountable. Specifically with regard to Sikh advocacy in the United States, my dissertation is about addressing what is left unaddressed. While I critique Sikh organizations' advocacy work and awareness campaigns post-9/11, I do so by first calling attention to *why* Sikhs have been racialized as “the enemy.”

Much of my critique in the first half of this dissertation is surrounding the work by The Sikh Coalition, the largest Sikh organization in the U.S., and one that was “founded by volunteers on the night of September 11, 2001 in response to a torrent of violent attacks against Sikh Americans throughout the United States.”⁴ Understandably, responding to hate violence as it was happening required the Coalition to jump into action rapidly, and the organization is to be commended for its ability to do so through its volunteers, who ranged from lawyers, educators, and physicians working on site amidst the rubble of the towers. In the panic, shock, confusion, and anger that loomed over the United States in the days following 9/11, hate violence became accepted by Sikhs as the “natural” and expected aftermath of the attacks.⁵ Those early

the U.S and were independently organized by the *gurdwaras'* administration, not through an overarching, nationwide Sikh organization that facilitated the events' programming. The latter became part and parcel of "Sikh advocacy" throughout the United States starting around 1996, when the Sikh Mediawatch and Resource Task Force (SMART) was founded. SMART was mostly centered on media analysis of representations of Sikhs and on educating non-Sikhs. Taking heed of the needs of Sikh communities in the post-9/11 U.S., SMART was renamed in 2004 to the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF). “History,” SALDEF, Accessed July 29, 2019. <http://saldef.org/archive/about-us/history/>.

⁴ “History,” *Sikh Coalition* (blog), accessed July 1, 2019, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/about-us/history/>.

⁵ From the days after 9/11, I vividly remember conversations taking place at my local *gurdwara* by some of its members sharing stories of the backlash they had faced. An elderly, turbaned Sikh man shared that when he was in his car at a traffic light, a white man in the car beside his looked at him (the Sikh man), and made a hand gesture of holding a gun and shooting at him. Another Sikh man, who was middle-aged and did not wear a turban, shared that he woke up to his car's tires being slashed, even though he had never had any altercations with neighbors. These are two of hundreds of stories from my home state alone. As more and more such incidents took place, there was not much discussion among my local and surrounding *gurdwara* communities on why Sikhs were facing backlash. The only immediate action *gurdwara* committee members and community leaders could take was to encourage vigilance, which they did in the form of handing out U.S. flag stickers for Sikhs to put on their cars and U.S. flag pins for them to wear on their clothes.

moments did not lend themselves to historicized and critical reflection by the Sikh Coalition on why Sikhs were being targeted with hate violence.⁶

However, now, nearly two decades later, the Coalition's assimilationist narrative, reproduction of the "model minority" myth, and its pro-military stance have squarely aligned the Sikh faith and its half a million adherents in the U.S. that it claims to represent with imperialism, militarism, anti-Indigeneity, and anti-Blackness.⁷ Throughout this process, there has still been little to no thorough explanation of exactly why Sikhs, and other racialized minorities that the Coalition expresses solidarity with, are struck with hate. Take, for instance, the Sikh Coalition's "Fact Sheet on Post-9/11 Discrimination and Violence against Sikh Americans."⁸ The Fact Sheet lists Sikh-specific statistics in four areas: hate crimes, school bullying, workplace discrimination, and racial and religious profiling. The Fact Sheet does not list why, "In the first month after 9/11 attacks, **over 300 cases** of violence and discrimination against Sikh Americans throughout the United States" took place (original emphasis).⁹ Between accepting and expecting hate violence, and responding and reacting to it, the crucial middle step of understanding why it was all happening in the first place has been missing. My purpose is to answer the "why" question. Without this understanding, advocacy work will not only be circuitous and exhausting but will also make only a nominal difference in countering imperialism that deems (Black and) Brown skin, language, faith, and space threatening.¹⁰

⁶ That is not to say, however, that scholarly critique on why Brown bodies have been racialized from long before 9/11 did not exist.

⁷ In Chapter Four, I discuss in detail how and why the Sikh Coalition's narrative on Sikhs in the U.S. is anti-Black and anti-Indigenous.

⁸ "Fact Sheet on Post-9/11 Discrimination and Violence against Sikh Americans" (The Sikh Coalition), accessed July 13, 2019, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/images/documents/fact%20sheet%20on%20hate%20against%20sikhs%20in%20america%20post%209-11%201.pdf>.

⁹ "Fact Sheet on Post-9/11 Discrimination and Violence against Sikh Americans."

¹⁰ Kumarini Silva, *Brown Threat. Identification in the Security State* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/48132>.

II. Literature Review

At the annual conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, I shared some of my research on racialized buildings being stand-ins for hate violence on racialized bodies. An audience member, a fellow architectural history and theory (AHT) scholar, asked for clarification on what was architectural about my research. Because I had spoken on and shown images of hateful graffiti on architecturally unremarkable, mundane buildings (architecture with a lowercase a, as they are colloquially referred to within the field), my project seemed a misfit in the field of AHT. However, having to address the audience member's question in the first place points toward the current (and ongoing) crisis in the field of AHT. At most, within AHT, a project like mine would be categorized as a study of vernacular, "lowercase a" architecture, not ones designed by "starchitects." Resisting such a polarizing categorization of the work as either Architecture versus architecture, my project challenges the conventional norms of AHT methodology and pedagogy. The discomfort caused by this challenge was evident, for instance, by the question I received.

The question gives rise to even more questions: Where and how does a project like mine on the social life of buildings fit within the methodological conventions of AHT? Is it too disruptive for the field that my research on how buildings are (ab)used does not utilize images of floor plans and sections—staples of architectural study? Is it too unruly that my research analyzes the social history surrounding buildings and not their (un)esteemed designers? Is it too foreign to capture those moments in the life of a building that are never meant to be seen?

Architectural historian Leland Roth begins his architectural survey book by stating, “Architecture is an unavoidable art.”¹¹ Through meticulous design and precise calculations, architecture is an art form that is about seeing and experiencing space. The unsightly is either concealed or simply does not exist. My project, however, is entirely about the unsightly: it not only shows the unsightly but pays particular attention to how and why the unsightly is created. By focusing on unsightly markings, such as racist graffiti spray painted on buildings, my project brings to the forefront painful histories of these buildings and of the people who create and use them. In doing so, my project not only contributes to architectural studies but does so by arguing for a radical reimagination of the field of Architectural History and Theory. My project makes the field confront the spectres it has long relegated in its curriculum as optional electives, not as integral areas in a holistic and decolonized study of architecture. Without the kind of disciplinary confrontation a project like mine forces, the field of architecture will continue to be a neocolonial academic epistemology that is comfortable with reproducing a “west versus the rest” narrative.

Fields like Cultural Studies and Ethnic Studies have radically shifted the western academy, as scholarship produced therein calls for decentering the west as the sole proprietor of culture and knowledge production. This shift has been embarrassingly slow in architecture due to the disciplinary history of the field. Arising out of colonial projects of surveillance and classification, the earliest works on “world architecture” are orientalist surveys of iconic buildings, as encountered by colonial architects and archaeologists.¹² How Architectural History and Theory is conceived of today comes as a direct inheritance from not only western epistemes

¹¹ Leland M. Roth, *Understanding Architecture: Its Elements, History, and Meaning*. Routledge, 2018, p. 1

¹² See Tapati Guha-Thakurta’s *Monuments, Objects, Histories : Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (2004) for a thorough discussion of how colonial architects and engineers like James Fergusson and Alexander Cunningham, respectively, created stylistic divisions in what was otherwise a fluid vocabulary of architecture used across the South Asian subcontinent.

Guha-Thakurta, Tapati. *Monuments, Objects, Histories : Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India*. Columbia University Press, 2004.

of architectural design and construction but also from colonial-era publications on purported stylistic divisions and markers in the built environment of the Global South. Just as in colonial-era surveys of the built environment, architectural design and building traditions of Indigenous populations of present-day Australia and New Zealand, and of sub-Saharan Africa, continue to be marginalized, if discussed at all, in “world architecture” textbooks and classes.¹³

Critiquing the overwhelmingly west-centric positionality of Architectural History and Theory, architectural historian Kathleen James-Chakraborty argues for greater consideration of how the built environment has been transforming in relation to global migration and transnational ties.¹⁴ Urban planner and geographer Libby Porter directly confronts the erasure of Indigenous practices of building and planning, arguing that present-day practices of urban planning have deep roots in settler colonialism and empire.¹⁵ Specifically with regard to the fantasies of modernity as a colonial import, architect, historian, and planner Jyoti Hosagrahar challenges the traditional versus modern binary, arguing instead for a more nuanced look at Indigeneity forms of modernity.¹⁶ It should be noted that Hosagrahar’s work on Indigenous

¹³ In an attempt to decolonize and disentangle Architectural History and Theory from a ‘west versus the rest’ division, *A Global History of Architecture* (2010, first ed.) by Francis D.K. Ching, Mark Jarzombek, and Vikramaditya Prakash adopts an alternate approach from that of other surveys texts. Rather than subdividing the book based on geography and style, as done in *A World History of Architecture* (2003, first ed.), *A Global History of Architecture* organizes its content chronologically. While this approach is noteworthy and a significantly more global approach to architectural study than earlier survey textbooks, even this publication has little to say about the building traditions and heritage of sub-Saharan Africa and of marginalized groups, like Indigenous people in present-day North America, New Zealand, and Australia. It is important to note that these survey texts are products of the direct lineage of colonial-era texts, such as James Fergusson’s *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (1876) and Banister Fletcher’s *A History of Architecture* (1896).

Francis D. K. Ching, Mark Jarzombek, and Vikramaditya Prakash. *A Global History of Architecture*. Hoboken, N.J: J. Wiley & Sons, 2007. Print.

James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*. London: Murray, 1876. Print.

Sir Banister Fletcher and Dan Cruickshank. *Sir Banister Fletcher’s a History of Architecture*. Architectural Press, 1996 (orig. 1896).

¹⁴ James-Chakraborty, Kathleen. “Beyond Postcolonialism: New Directions for the History of Nonwestern Architecture.” *Frontiers of Architectural Research*, vol. 3, no. 1, Mar. 2014, pp. 1–9.

¹⁵ Libby Porter, *Unlearning the Colonial Cultures of Planning*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2010.

¹⁶ Jyoti Hosagrahar, *Indigenous Modernities: Negotiating Architecture, Urbanism and Colonialism*. Routledge, 2005.

[South Asian] modernity was published in the same year (2005) as architect and architectural historian Swati Chattopadhyay's work on Calcutta.¹⁷ The timing of these works is not coincidental, especially since, on a theoretical level, both works are in conversation with each other. They both utilize postcolonial theory to not only rethink how space is discussed, but on whose terms as well. Using feminist and postcolonial theories, Chattopadhyay critiques *representations* of Calcutta, not Calcutta itself, as an "urban disaster" in both the colonial imaginary of modernism and postcolonial narrativization of the city.¹⁸

Recent scholarship using postcolonial theory and transnational studies as a way into AHT radically pushes the disciplinary boundaries of the latter field. Some examples include architectural historian Brian McLaren's work. McLaren argues that Italian government officials mitigated tradition and modernity on western terms not only as a way to legitimize their colonial occupation of Libya but also to develop a tourism industry advertising a "traditional" and "indigenous" experience of Libya that was framed by colonial presence and intervention.¹⁹ Continuing in the trajectory of postcolonial theory-based critiques, current research by Adedoyin Teriba looks at the connections between an Afro-Brazilian diaspora group from the nineteenth century and its architectural design transplanted in Nigeria.²⁰ Dwight Carter's research looks at the "architectural creolization" of towns in the Indian Ocean not as a process of simplistic

It should be noted that Hosagrahar's work on indigenous [South Asian] modernity was published in the same year as Swati Chattopadhyay's work on Calcutta. The timing of these works is not coincidental, as both works on architecture and urbanism utilize postcolonial theory to not only rethink how space is discussed, but on which terms as well. Using feminist and postcolonial theories, Chattopadhyay critiques of the representations of Calcutta as a 'dreadful' space in the colonial imaginary of modernity.

¹⁷ Swati Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta. Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny*. London: Routledge, 2005.

¹⁸ Chattopadhyay, 3.

¹⁹ Brian McLaren, *Architecture and Tourism in Italian Colonial Libya: An Ambivalent Modernism*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006.

²⁰ I am thankful to Adedoyin for sharing his research topic with me at SAH 2018.

syncretization of Euro-African architectural traditions but as a creation of “some of the most economically relevant building traditions of the modern colonial world.”²¹

These works point toward a marked shift in Architectural History and Theory, a field that is being reoriented from the very areas and people that have historically laid at its margins. As the above and following examples demonstrate, architectural research using the structures of postcolonial theory and methodologies of Cultural Studies and Ethnic Studies is broadening the field in unprecedented ways. It is in this newly created space that my own project on architecture as target of hate violence both finds footing and leaves a trace.

While Architectural History and Theory scholarship has always addressed space, the same cannot be said about its attention to race and the latter’s intimate connection with space. Recent scholarship in Ethnic Studies, however, has addressed this disconnect.²² The exciting linkages and reenvisioning present in this scholarship is evident starting from titles of works therein. For instance, *Asian Americans in the Dixie. Race and Migration in the South* (2013), an edited anthology, challenges the notion that the American South is a racially homogenous space that has been unaffected or untouched by global flows of migration like other parts of the country have.²³ Somewhat similarly, in *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India* (2012), Nico Slate brings to the forefront extremely significant but largely unknown interracial struggle, activism, and solidarity among Black and Brown

²¹ I am thankful to Dwight for sharing his research with me at SAH 2018.

<https://oatd.org/oatd/record?record=california%5C%3Aqt27c9c4xb>

²² Scott Kurashige’s *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles* (2010) is a case in point.

Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

²³ Jigna Desai, and Khyati Y. Joshi. *Asian Americans in Dixie: Race and Migration in the South*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2013.

communities.²⁴ Focusing on the early-to-mid twentieth century, Slate writes about how these communities shared their struggles against racism and empire (among others forces and sources of oppression).

Along the lines of interracial solidarity and placemaking, in *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America* (2012), Vivek Bald writes about early twentieth century stories of an unknown immigrant America.²⁵ Bald gives voice to “lost histories” of South Asian men escaping exploitative labor aboard British ships and settling instead in the U.S. northeast and midwest. As with *Asian Americans in the Dixie* and *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, *Bengali Harlem* also adds multiple layers of complexity to otherwise simplistic and often times homogenous narratives of immigration and settlement.

Another work that complicates race and space is Wendy Cheng’s *The Changs Next Door to the Diazes: Remapping Race in Suburban California* (2013).²⁶ Cheng examines how the various groups and subgroups of Latinx and Asian communities in California’s West San Gabriel Valley have faced discrimination via selective mortgage loan allotment and realtors ghettoizing Asians and Latinx in enclaves.²⁷ She also looks at present-day remarketing of the area as a “colorful” but white neighborhood ripe for gentrification. Cheng’s work comes just a year after *Little White Houses. How the Postwar House Constructed Race in America* (2012) by Dianne Harris.²⁸ While Cheng looks at contemporary housing in a particular area of Southern California,

²⁴ Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012.

²⁵ Vivek Bald, *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013.

²⁶ Wendy Cheng, *The Changs Next Door to the Diazes: Remapping Race in Suburban California*. University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

²⁷ Another recent work that theorizes ‘ethnic enclaves’ is the edited anthology, *Latino Urbanism: The Politics of Planning, Policy and Redevelopment*.

David R. Diaz, and Rodolfo D. Torres. *Latino Urbanism: The Politics of Planning, Policy and Redevelopment*. New York: New York University Press, 2012.

²⁸ Dianne Harris, *Little White Houses: How the Postwar Home Constructed Race in America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Harris traces the overall conception of the middle class family home in the mid-twentieth century. Her archive consists of analyzing print media (such as newspaper advertisements, magazines, flyers, and photographs) in the post-war push for residential construction and homeownership. She argues that these ideas further segregated white populations from the rest of the nation, particularly Blacks.

Works by Wendy Cheng and Dianne Harris fall in line with earlier research on race and space, namely Laura Pulido's. In her seminal essay, "Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California," (2000) Pulido argues for the consideration of race and racism in analyses of unequal access to and hazardous conditions of natural resources.²⁹ The ongoing water contamination crisis in Flint, Michigan disproportionately affecting the city's Black population is Pulido's case in point on the intersections of race, space, and the environment.³⁰ My own research finds a home in the space created by the sampling of works discussed above.

A natural disciplinary home for this dissertation project is Sikh Studies. Although a relatively new formally established field in the modern western academy, colonial scholars took deep interest in writing about Sikh history and exegesis.³¹ All of the colonial-era works on Sikh texts are English translations, often times twice removed from the original texts, as the scholars

²⁹ Laura Pulido, "Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 90, no. 1, 2000, pp. 12–40.

³⁰ Steve Almasy, and Laura Ly. *Flint Water Crisis: Report Says "systemic Racism" Played Role - CNNPolitics*. 18 Feb. 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/02/18/politics/flint-water-report-systemic-racism/index.html>

³¹ Three early works produced in this time were by John Malcolm (1812), Joseph Cunningham (1849), and Max Macauliffe (1909). Of the three, Malcolm is the only one who was in close association with the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and the first to instill the idea of Sikh practice transitioning from pacifist to militarist in the early 17th century.

Joseph Davey Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs: From the Origin of the Nation to the Battles the Sutlej*. Oxford University Press, 1849

Max Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion: Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*. Clarendon Press, 1909.

Sir John Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs: A Singular Nation, Who Inhabit the Provinces of the Punjab [sic], Situated Between the Rivers Jumna and Indus*. J. Murray, 1812.

relied on translations and explanations by native informants of the Gurmukhi script and Punjabi language. The violence of translation in works colonial scholar is evident not only in the misinterpretations of Sikh religious texts, but also in how their scholarship did the work of religion-making of what was otherwise a fluid religious tradition (not unlike other religious traditions of the subcontinent).³²

My work falls in the trajectory of Sikh Studies scholarship produced by Sikh scholars who took to academia in response to the massacres of Sikh people and institutions in East Punjab by the Indian state in and after 1984. My training in Sikh Studies comes directly from being in classes and conversation with these scholars, namely Balbinder Bhogal, Arvind-Pal Singh Mandair, and Harjot Oberoi.³³ I also look to Anneeth Kaur Hundle, Nirinjan Kaur Khalsa, and Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh for interventions in Sikh Feminisms.³⁴ With regard to Critical Race Studies, Sikh Studies interlocutors with whom my work is most closely connected are Balbir K. Singh, Jaideep Singh, and Katy Pal Sian.³⁵ My contribution to Sikh Studies is through the built environment, as my research focus over the last decade has been on Sikh architecture, both in Punjab and in the diaspora. Just as scholars from a generation before mine lived through and

³² Oberoi, 1994.

³³ Bhogal, “Monopolizing Violence Before and After 1984”; Bhogal, “On the Hermeneutics of Sikh Thought and Praxis”; Bhogal, “Text as Sword”; Bhogal, “The Animal Sublime”; Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*; Dressler and Mandair, *Secularism and Religion-Making*; Mandair, “Sikhs, Sovereignty and Modern Government”; Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*.

³⁴ Anneeth Kaur Hundle, “Sikh Diasporic Feminisms: Provocation 1,” *Sikh Formations* 13, no. 4 (2017): 237–240; Nirinjan Kaur Khalsa, “Provocation 3: The Ecology of Sikh Diasporic Feminisms: Interconnected Ethics of Seva and Sovereignty,” *Sikh Formations* 13, no. 4 (2017): 245–249; Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, *Birth of the Khalsa, The: A Feminist Re-Memory of Sikh Identity* (SUNY Press, 2012).

³⁵ Jaideep Singh, “Memory, Invisibility, and the Oak Creek Gurdwara Massacre,” *Sikh Formations* 9, no. 2 (August 1, 2013): 215–25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17448727.2013.828861>; Jaideep Singh, “A New American Apartheid. Racialized, Religious Minorities in the Post-9/11 Era,” *Sikh Formations* 9, no. 2 (August 2013): 115–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17448727.2013.822138>; Jaideep Singh, “No Sikh Jose: Sikh American Community Mobilization and Interracial Coalition Building in the Construction of a Sacred Site,” *UCLA Asian Pacific American Law Journal* 8 (2002): 173; Jaideep Singh, “The Death of Islamophobia: The Rise of Islamo-Racism,” *Race Files*, February 23, 2016, <https://www.racefiles.com/2016/02/23/the-death-of-islamophobia-the-rise-of-islam-racism/>; Jaideep Singh, “The Racialization of Minoritized Religious Identity: Constructing Sacred Sites at the Intersection of White and Christian Supremacy,” in *Revealing the Sacred in Asian and Pacific America* (New York: Routledge, 2003), Singh.

responded to the collective trauma they saw and experienced from Punjab in 1984, my generation of Sikh Studies scholars have lived through and are still processing the violence from Oak Creek in 2012. These two crucial moments are not disconnected from one another, as both resulted from state violence, though, as I argue in my dissertation, Oak Creek is the manifestation of state violence through hate violence. The violence from 1984 (and its aftereffects well into the 1990s) in India, and the shootings from Oak Creek in Wisconsin have become bookends of collective trauma that have shaped Sikh Studies in the United States since 1984. My dissertation is a response to Oak Creek as well.

III. Methodology

As the title of my dissertation implies, my work is hinged on two key methodological frameworks: diasporic necropolitics and critical visual geographies. I created these frameworks after realizing that researching hate violence on bodies and buildings in the contemporary period presents several challenges that cannot be tackled with conventional methodologies of data collection and analysis. The first and foremost challenge is vicarious trauma one suffers from reading and writing about a painful topic. In my visual and textual analysis of records of hate violence (particularly newspaper articles and television news), I have actively resisted reproducing the pain and trauma that these records rely on for as bait to attract readers and viewers. In order to avoid reproducing the trauma of hate violence, I do not write about or include photos of the bloodied, bruised bodies of people who have suffered from hate violence. Rather, to make my arguments, I rely on records of hate violence on buildings (namely mosques

and *gurdwaras*). Though even these records are painful to have to (re)visit, they are the more sensible alternative to using images of violated bodies.

Another challenge arising from my research is related to the above point on visuals. The fast pace at which cases of hate violence accumulate means that initial information on them is available only through immediate coverage by news media and social media. Because the process of scholarly research, writing, and publishing on this topic is significantly slower, part of the methodology for research for this dissertation has required unconventional ways to collect and analyze data. The quantitative specifications on cases of hate violence I have referenced and discussed comes from news articles and press releases surrounding those incidents. However, the media's own bias, for instance, in referring to white supremacists as "gunmen," rather than "the T word" (terrorist), or "the R word" (racist), necessitates qualitative assessment of those cases to come from my own lived experience of belonging to a community that has suffered from this hate violence.³⁶

III.I. Diasporic Necropolitics

In trying to address the above mentioned challenges, I have formulated the frameworks of "diasporic necropolitics" and "critical visual geographies" (CVG). By "diasporic necropolitics," I mean those factors that predispose certain diaspora and minority communities to hate violence and death, both resulting from the terrors of heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, and various

³⁶ Max Boot, "Not All Terrorism Is Treated Equally," *Washington Post*, March 15, 2019, sec. Opinions, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/03/15/not-all-terrorism-is-treated-equally/>; Inderpal Grewal, *Saving the Security State: Exceptional Citizens in Twenty-First-Century America*, Next Wave (Duke University Press) (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017); Aysel Morin, "Framing Terror: The Strategies Newspapers Use to Frame an Act as Terror or Crime," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 93, no. 4 (December 1, 2016): 986–1005, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699016660720>.

types of discrimination therein. I patch together Achille Mbembe's ideas on necropolitics, particularly that "the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die," and Ruth Wilson Gilmore's definition of racism as "the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death."³⁷ By bringing Mbembe and Gilmore's definitions together, I illustrate why and how Brown bodies are made susceptible to "premature death," and that the process involving this production equates to diasporic necropolitics. My reference to death is both in the physical and social sense.

My purpose here is not to simply borrow from theorization of death in works on Afro-pessimism. Rather, my goal is to more specifically understand the onslaught of death from imperialist politics in the present day, inclusive in which is global Islamophobia. "Hate crime" is an insufficient term for understanding the phenomenon of white supremacist hate violence, not only because it implies that such a formation is an individual problem, not a strategically fabricated and systemic one. "Hate crime" places the culpability of such violence in the same category as that of a homicide. Further, the "hate crime" does not capture the depth and expanse of Islamophobia, especially as violence from the latter contours to the demands of imperialist yearning. Diasporic necropolitics goes beyond just the matter of "hate crimes," illustrating how the tactical alignment of media, the political climate, and imperialist projects produce an environment in which Muslim and "Muslim-looking" Black and Brown bodies are rendered suspect and dangerous. This rendering not only normalizes Islamophobia but enables its legal sanction as imperative for global security. When cast as a global threat, subjugating "the Muslim

³⁷ Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 261, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10779285>; Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," trans. Libby Meintjes, *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11.

problem” to social and physical death wherever it is visible is presented as the only viable option for global security.³⁸ Through diasporic necropolitics I not only to discuss how suspect Black and Brown bodies are relegated to social and physical death (whether in film, on the streets, at the airport, or in State of the Union addresses) but also of what becomes of those individuals and communities *after* they have been killed.

III.II. Critical Visual Geographies

Through critical visual geographies, I have utilized a mixed methodology of analyses of media (film, television programs, and some new media), architectural sites, and existing statistical data and qualitative materials. A major constraint in data collection has been not having first hand experience of seeing sites subjected to arson and vandalism. The reason for this constraint is quite logical, as communities whose buildings are targeted with such hate violence immediately mobilize to repair structural damage from arson and clean off racist graffiti from vandalism. In the absence of seeing the sites in their hate-targeted forms, I have had to rely on photographs and videos taken of the arson and vandalism that were then published by news media channels in their reports on those cases. I have coupled reliance on this digital archive with interviews I conducted with some Sikhs who are weekly attendants of the hate violence-affected *gurdwaras* (Sikh faith-based spaces of gathering) I have written about. My dissertation

³⁸ Junaid Rana has written extensively on this idea of the villainization of Muslims as the U.S.’ method of gatekeeping global security. I am also referencing Sohail Daultzai’s work here, exploring how, after 9/11, U.S. politics conflated Black bodies from the “War on Crime” and Muslim ones from the “War on Terror.” Building atop work by both of these scholars,, my focus via “diasporic necropolitics” is on how the Sikh community grapples with and commemorates death resulting from post-9/11 hate violence.

Sohail Daultzai, *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom Beyond America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Junaid Rana, *Terrifying Muslims: Race and Labor in the South Asian Diaspora* (Duke University Press, 2011); Junaid Rana, “The Story of Islamophobia,” *Souls* 9, no. 2 (June 6, 2007): 148–61, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10999940701382607>.

also includes information I learned from interviewing Sikh community activists and leaders who are the lead volunteers of various projects I have analyzed in my dissertation. Being in Southern California, I have been able to visit all the *gurdwaras* and non-*gurdwara* Sikh sites located here that I have written about. Having online access to existing data (such as statistics on the annual number of hate crimes, as collected by the FBI) and content (such as qualitative material, namely press releases and mission statements by Sikh advocacy organizations in the U.S.) has also been extremely helpful and enriching. Combining these various forms of qualitative and quantitative data strengthens the angles through which I analyze and critique the findings I present in my dissertation.

I write about the bringing together of data gathered from photos, videos, interviews, statistics, press releases, mission statements, and site visits as Critical Visual Geographies (CVG). I began formulating this idea early towards the beginning of my doctoral degree program when I realized that the project I wanted to pursue did not neatly fit into established methodological frameworks. Though my project resonates with academic disciplines and subdisciplines of Anthropology, Architectural History and Theory, Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies, Critical Race Studies, Cultural Studies, Ethnic Studies, Political Science, Religious Studies, Sikh Studies, Sociology, South Asian American Studies, and Visual Studies, I have found it generative to bring together these various streams into what I am calling CVG.

III.III. Critical Visual Geographies: The Critical Component

By “critical,” I mean to suggest that how popular news media has been shaping (Black and) Brown bodies and buildings demands immediate, critical review. The benefit of the doubt

granted to white bodies and buildings represented in the media and in the judicial system, even when there is ample evidence to suggest otherwise, is not granted to Black and Brown bodies and buildings.³⁹ In spite of these biases, popular media cannot be ignored because of its broad reach and stronghold in dissemination and reception (mis)information. For the purposes of my dissertation, popular media content, especially from news coverage, is indispensable, despite its usage of problematic tropes.

This indispensability ends up serving two purposes: first, news reports with photos and videos of hate crimes on buildings provide visual data that is otherwise erased from the actual sites, as affected communities quickly wash off and repair damages of hate-motivated arson and vandalism attacks. In other words, if the only remaining trace of hate violence on buildings is the news articles and video coverage of the incidents, I cannot afford to *not* utilize them and also cannot tolerate the biases therein. Second, relying on these reports also helps locate problematic patterns in how hate violence is discussed. Here, I do not mean to point out the obvious—that white supremacist perpetrators of gender- and race-based hate violence are benevolently portrayed in the news as lonewolf shooters and gunmen, not as terrorists.

A key finding I arrive at from the above two points on the indispensability of data from news media is that there is little basis for Sikh communities in framing the hate violence they face as “anti-Sikh,” as case after case of attacks on Sikh bodies and buildings reveals

³⁹ Here I refer to Judith Butler’s essay regarding how the police positioned itself as justifying the brutal killing of Rodney King in 1992. Butler argues that, ““The visual representation of the black male body being beaten on the street by the policemen and their batons was taken up by that racist interpretive framework to construe King as the agent of violence, one whose agency is phantasmatically implied as the narrative precedent and antecedent to the frames that are shown...restrained’... The police are thus structurally placed to protect whiteness against violence, where violence is the imminent action of that black male body.” In other words, the police, and in this case, the jury that decided to acquit King’s murderers, justifies brute violence against Rodney King by arguing that they (the police) acted out of self-defense against a mythological threat, fearing what King *might* have done or *would* have done. This rationale not only defaults the unarmed King as the threat, but also positions the police as the victims. Butler, “Endangered/Endangering,” 18.

Islamophobia as the motivator, not “Sikhophobia.” I emphasize this finding because I could not have arrived at this point without creating and using the framework of CVG, through which, clearly evident racist tropes and structural issues convey their own problematic foundations.

III.IV. Critical Visual Geographies: The Visual Component

First and foremost, my project is visual due to analyses herein of tangible, visible components—architectural sites, film, photographs, posters, and television programs. It is also visual in its critique of how racialized bodies and buildings manifest as suspect visuals in the eyes of white supremacist beholders. In other words, I mean in three sense of the visual: of seeing, being seen, and curating for others to see. In my work I am most critical of the latter meaning of visual, as I critique how some Sikh advocacy organizations present hate crimes faced by Sikhs as a uniquely Sikh and individual problem. Rather than historicizing and contextualizing such hate violence as resulting from systemic processes of racialization and the enabling of an environment of hate to proliferate at every level of society, much of the narrative by Sikh advocacy organizations on hate violence puts the onus of correcting this global phenomenon back on Sikhs. This onus takes the form of awareness campaigns, rather than critical reflection on why Sikhs, like Muslims and other ethnic minorities, become targets of hate violence to begin with.

In my work “visual” also has two other resonances—ephemeral and permanent. Some of the visuals in my project are ephemeral in that cases of racist graffiti lasts but a few days on the structures it is painted on, as these hateful messages are quickly washed off. On the other hand, hijabs, turbans, yarmulke, domes, arches, and Brown skin—the visuals of architectural,

ethnic, and faith identities—are permanent. While the ephemeral visuals can be washed off and painted over, the permanent visuals are deeply rooted in longstanding cultural and religious traditions, hiding or running away from which is not an easy choice, nor an ethically viable option.⁴⁰ Keeping in mind these variable readings of “visual,” I complicate the term to include what is seen and shown, how, and why.

III.V. Critical Visual Geographies: The Geographic Component

When examining the locations of white supremacist hate violence, it is clearly evident that it covers the whole of the globe. Whether in the form of colonialism over extraction of labor and resources, or its more recent manifestation in the form of mass shootings by white supremacists armed with guns, the expanse of this violence demonstrates that it operates as a global phenomenon. In addition to the physical sites at which hate violence takes place, I also treat the bodies it takes place on as “sites.” Throughout my dissertation, I have argued that, in the age of global hate violence enabled by the proliferation of guns, racist tropes reproduced in news media, and online networks (social media, websites, blogs, etc.) of hate rhetoric, it is absolutely crucial to examine how bodies *and* buildings are affected by this phenomenon. I analyze bodies *and* buildings as geographies or sites through which hate violence is worked through by its perpetrators. I argue that the logic and rationale of killing, as employed in the military, are transplanted outside of that context as well. The same logic of sanctioned killing while abroad in the military is at play on U.S. soil, with citizen-soldiers taking upon themselves to personally rid

⁴⁰ That is not to say, however, that people literally embodying these visual identities do not elect to change their external appearances, whether that means cutting one’s hair, or taking off one’s hijab, turban, or yarmulke, in order to appear less conspicuous in today’s volatile environment of hate based on these visuals.

the country of internal “threats” who, due to their turbans, beards, and hijabs, look like the enemy they are trying to defeat at war. While the U.S. engages in its longest-running foreign war, a war that demonizes Muslims, and a war with neither a clear purpose nor an end in sight, “suspect” bodies of Muslims and Sikhs (and Brown bodies at large) and bear the brunt of this war at home. So, by Critical Visual “Geographies,” I mean bodies and buildings whose facades and limbs become sites through which hate is mediated by actors of state and hate violence.

IV. From Exotic to Dangerous

Before delving into chapter summaries, I want to pause and reflect on when and how turbans and beards, key components of Sikh identity, became entrenched in American popular media (radio, film, and television) and imagination. Other components of the visual package of Orientalism are tropes and figures like snake charmers, sheikhs, belly dancers, and other “eastern” markers (clothing, accents, and music). Further, I want to briefly illustrate when and how the shift in American public media took place in which the “exotic” became reconceptualized and reimagined as “dangerous.” I am particularly interested in exploring how these early tropes in American popular media “primed” their white viewers to consume images of men with brown skin, turbans, and beards. In the following paragraphs, I illustrate how these early examples of Orientalist imagery of the “exotic” were first curated for viewing pleasure. Producers and directors of popular media constructed this viewing pleasure out of a sense of cultural superiority, repeatedly typecasting the Orientalized characters as villains, effeminate, barbaric, inherently incapable of being as modern and advanced as the viewers and thus needing foreign intervention. As live news coverage of 9/11 appeared on the television screen, that

viewing pleasure transformed into destructive rage directed not only at the turbaned and bearded men portrayed in the news as the perpetrators of the attacks but also toward all others who matched that visual profile.

Writing about systemic factors that led to the Oak Creek *gurdwara* shootings in 2012, Communication Studies scholar Santhosh Chandrashekar writes, “The turban (and the hijab), which was rendered as a supericonic sign of oriental Islam, also sat on Sikh heads, making them expungable. The vulnerability of Sikhs then is not an accident but is directly related to the ways in which Orientalism imputes disposability onto non-white, non-Christian bodies by rendering them interchangeable.”⁴¹ While I agree with Chandrashekar’s argument on why Sikhs were made “expungeable” before and after 9/11, I wish to go further and locate why and how such “expungability” entered the (white) public psyche in the first place. Inherent in the following paragraphs is also my critique of celebration (by U.S. Sikh advocacy organizations and activists) of seeing the “right” type of Sikhs on television and in films. With regard to this, my critique is that selective celebration upon seeing “real” Sikhs in the media, and disdain over actors merely dressed to look Sikh for the role, bears no weight on why how both these images (“real” and “fake” Sikhs) are produced and how they are consumed at large. As I illustrate below, long before “real” Sikhs became visible on the screen, Orientalist tropes in Hollywood and American television firmly caricatured the association of turban-wearing people as exotic, backward, and dangerous. “Real” Sikhs in American media are not a break away from these earlier representations; they fulfill the same Orientalist desire that earlier Hollywood and television desired. So, while Sikh advocacy organizations emphasize the very real point that most turban-

⁴¹ Santhosh Chandrashekar, “Engendering Threat in the Guise of Protection: Orientalism and Sikh Vulnerability,” *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 12, no. 4 (October 2, 2017): 366–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2017.1371183>.

wearing people in the United States are Sikh (and thus not Muslim), media representations fantasize otherwise.⁴²

The only explanation that the Sikh Coalition gives for why Sikhs being misidentified as Muslims and for why they become targets of hate violence is that the post-9/11 period is “rife with anti-Muslim sentiment and xenophobic violence.”⁴³ I want to dig deeper than this insufficient and broad explanation. What does “anti-Muslim sentiment and xenophobic violence” look, sound, read, and feel like? How exactly are Sikhs imbricated in a social fabric rife with “anti Muslim sentiment and xenophobic violence?” What is Sikhs’ contribution in this sentiment and violence? As a starting point to address these questions, below I provide a brief history of Orientalist tropes in early American media. I then look at how “breaking news” coverage that relies on and recreates these tropes. I conclude my media analysis with a close look at contemporary film and media that features Sikhs. My analysis illustrates how, in tandem with imperialist politics, popular media is also directly responsible for creating and sustaining “anti-Muslim and xenophobic violence.”

IV.II. Turbaned Fortune Tellers, Mystics, and Wizards

⁴² For instance, take the “FAQ” section on the Sikh Coalition’s website. The webpage acts as a “Sikhi 101” service, asking and responding to common questions on the Sikh faith and people. A question regarding turbans asks, “‘HOW CAN I TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIKH TURBANS AND OTHER TURBANS?’” The response given is, “Ever [sic] Sikh ties his or her turban slightly differently. Remember that in America, 99% of the people you see wearing a turban will be Sikh. If you see someone wearing a turban and you are not sure if they are Sikh or not, ask them! The Sikh turban is thus an article of faith. People of many other cultures and religions wear turbans, but none are required to do so by their religion.

Sikhs tie their turbans anew each day. Sikh turbans become a part of a Sikh’s body and are usually removed only in the privacy of the house.”

“FAQ,” *Sikh Coalition* (blog), accessed July 13, 2019, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/about-sikhs/faq/>.

⁴³ “Sikhs in America,” *Sikh Coalition* (blog), accessed April 29, 2019, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/about-sikhs/sikhs-in-america/>.

Popular media has played a large role in concretizing Orientalist tropes. The nebulously collectivized “exotic” lands of North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia have been caricatured in American radio, film, and television from as early as the first quarter of the twentieth century.⁴⁴ The stereotypes arising from this racialization come from Orientalist tropes of the foreign and exotic, tropes in which turbans and beards, and domes and arches, are equated with Muslims and Islam. An overwhelming majority of these types of character tropes are of males, shown wearing turbans, having beards, appearing to be “backwards,” having thick “foreign” accents, and suppressing and oppressing women. While other scholars have traced and critiqued the misogyny, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism embedded in film and media, my focus is specifically on the representations of turbans in American film and media.⁴⁵

The earliest example I have traced is of Punjab, a wizard and a secondary character from *Little Orphan Annie* (Figure 1.1).⁴⁶ The latter debuted as a comic strip in 1924, then growing to radio, film, and stage shows of the same name after that. In the early volumes of the publication, Punjab is a clean-shaven man with a large, balloon-type of turban. Punjab, whose name is pronounced “Poon-job” in *Little Orphan Annie*, is a servant. His Brown-ness and position of

⁴⁴ Matthew Bernstein and Gaylyn Studlar, eds., *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film* (Rutgers University Press, 1997).

⁴⁵ Maytha Alhassen, “Haqq and Hollywood: Illuminating 100 Years of Muslim Tropes And How to Transform Them - Pop Culture Collaborative #HaqqAndHollywood” (Pop Culture Collaborative, October 2018), <https://popcollab.org/haqq-and-hollywood/>; Evelyn Alsultany, *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation After 9/11* (NYU Press, 2012); Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2005); Paul B. Rich, “Cinema, Drone Warfare and the Framing of Counter-Terrorism,” *Defense & Security Analysis* 34, no. 2 (April 3, 2018): 144–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14751798.2018.1478185>; Driss Ridouani, “The Representation of Arabs and Muslims in Western Media,” *RUTA Comunicaci3n*, no. 3 (2011), <https://www.raco.cat/index.php/Ruta/article/view/243531>; Jack G. Shaheen, “Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588 (2003): 171–93.

⁴⁶ My thanks to Baljinder Singh, Gurinder Wadhwa, Mandheer Singh, Paneet Singh, and Sunmit Singh for directing me to some of the film and media analyzed here.

servitude both contribute to why his character has little development.⁴⁷ His name is the same as the geographic region he is allegedly from. Punjab is a mere accessory.

In the 1930s, Cadillac printed an advertisement showing a Sikh man with a beard, replete with a World War I and II-style turban that Sikh male soldiers wore. The Sikh male's full face is in the advertisement, along with the profile of white male in a top hat (Figure 1.2). *Master of Men! The Spider*, a pulp magazine that started in 1933, contains the character of Ram Singh, a turbaned man who is a servant in the comic's stories. The comic books were eventually adapted into a film in 1938, titled, *The Spider's Web*, in which a bearded and turbaned Kenneth Duncan plays the role of Ram Singh (Figure 1.3).⁴⁸ Like Punjab, Ram Singh is also in a position of servitude. He dedicates his life to serving the spider, as the latter saved his life and because he (Ram Singh) has martial skills. Ram Singh's character is not only of subservience to a mythical figure but also one that connects him to the "martial race" narrative that British colonizers caricatured Sikhs in South Asia with to recruit them for military purposes.⁴⁹

The figure of Khan Noonien Singh in *Star Trek: The Original Series* from 1966 and *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* from 1982 is perhaps the most well-known and recognized of these examples. Khan, played by Ricardo Montalban, does not have a "foreign accent," but the "foreignness" of his character comes from his name, artificially-colored bronze skin, and long, dark hair. In a momentous scene in the 1982 film, Khan Noonien Singh (whose name, interestingly, is a combination of Muslim and Sikh names, and whose alleged barbarity is referenced in the subtitle of the film itself) makes his appearance in the film by unveiling his face

⁴⁷ My thanks to Paneet Singh for discussing *Little Orphan Annie* and *Master of Men! The Spider* with me.

⁴⁸ "Master of Men! The Spider," Dial B for Blog, accessed June 24, 2019, <http://www.dialbforblog.com/archives/224/>.

⁴⁹ Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), <https://www.manchesterhive.com/abstract/9781847793942/9781847793942.xml>.

of a helmet-like turban, eye mask, and veil (Figure 1.4). He speaks in a pseudo-“Indian” accent. In both films he is most typically seen with long hair but no facial hair or turban.

The Muslim and Sikh name confusion persists elsewhere, as evident in the cartoon and comic book character of Hadji Raheed Singh in *The Adventures of Jonny Quest* from 1964-65. In addition to the jeweled turban, Hadji hails from a royal family in Bangalore, India (depicted in some scenes as an “Arab” geography of domes and minarets), is a snake charmer and has mystical powers (Figure 1.5). He is the Orientalists’ complete package. Such tropes are used twice over in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* from 1984. The film shows two “Indian” cult members who appear as a chief guard and priest and are shown as barbaric, blood-thirsty men unfit to reside among civilized people (Figure 1.6). Beyond film and media, arcade games have also instrumentalized Orientalist tropes, such as the turbaned and bearded character of Zoltar, which originally appeared in the film *Big* in 1988 (Figure 1.7).⁵⁰

There are other examples of these types of stereotypical representations in older and contemporary film and television, as well as in new media (namely video games). My purpose here is to be illustrative, not exhaustive.⁵¹ I have tried to demonstrate the nearly century-long history of racist caricatures of Brown-ness in popular media in the United States.⁵² These

⁵⁰ Those in Orange County, California, can see a “Zoltar” fortune-teller arcade machine on the Huntington Beach pier. The machine is one of hundreds dotting the landscape of the United States and Europe. I felt a glimmer of home upon watching a YouTube upload, titled, “The Man Behind Your Favorite Fortune Telling Machine,” when its narrator says, “In real life, there are hundreds of Zoltars all over the country [United States].” However, as the narration progressed, I learned that reference to “hundreds of Zoltars” was not to actual, real turbaned and bearded “Zoltar-looking” Sikh men in the country, but simply a reference to hundreds of Zoltar machines across the country. The machines are the creation of Olaf Stanton, a Republican and owner of the multimillion dollar business, Characters Unlimited. Zoltar machines are one of the many character-driven arcade machines the company makes and sells. The Olaf Stantons of the world profit from Orientalist caricaturing of millions of people, for many of whom, the “Zoltar look” has cost them their precarious lives. <https://www.inc.com/leigh-buchanan/characters-unlimited-shows-fortune-telling-can-be-a-million-dollar-business.html>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iC0qsSSdbxg>

⁵¹ See Alhassen, “Haqq and Hollywood: Illuminating 100 Years of Muslim Tropes And How to Transform Them - Pop Culture Collaborative #HaqqAndHollywood.” for more titles.

⁵² Other scholars have written about this in detail. See Carl Boggs, *The Hollywood War Machine : U.S. Militarism and Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315086279>; Dianne Sachko Macleod,

appearance of these in American film and media did not develop organically. Rather, the examples I have listed above are a direct result of Orientalist depictions of people and places in world's fairs starting in the mid-nineteenth century in England.⁵³ Many world's fairs and expositions had live exhibits showing the labor and riches that were extracted from colonized places. These exhibits were curated as microcosms of the colonized world, and their audiences were white visitors living in metropolises. The fairs and expos brought the colonized world at the colonizers' fingertips.⁵⁴

IV.III. The Spectacle of Islamophobia

These seemingly innocuous popular media (mis)representations and caricatures had a more dangerous corollary in news media. The spectacle of the U.S.-led Persian Gulf War being broadcasted live on cable television in the United States starting in 1991 provided Islamophobic fodder to Orientalist imagery of "the east." No longer were turbans and beards only typecasts; they became live, real-life images through the war's incessant coverage on news networks like Cable News Network (CNN), American Broadcasting Company (ABC), and Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). The spectacle of broadcasting international warfare in action through the aid of satellite technology, and showing it in conjunction with images of the Iraqi

"The Politics of Vision: Disney, Aladdin, and the Gulf War," *The Emperor's Old Groove: Decolonizing Disney's Magic Kingdom*, 2003, 179–192; Scott Poynting and Victoria Mason, "The Resistible Rise of Islamophobia: Anti-Muslim Racism in the UK and Australia before 11 September 2001," *Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 61–86, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783307073935>.

⁵³ Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1992).

⁵⁴ Saloni Mathur, "Living Ethnological Exhibits: The Case of 1886," *Cultural Anthropology* 15, no. 4 (2000): 492–524.

An even older form of caricaturing cultures dates from colonial-era travel journals and illustrations by those visiting colonized places and reporting back on them to the metropole.

people and of other Arabs, not only further entrenched Islamophobia in the American home and headspace, but also made for record-breaking ratings and viewership for the news networks.⁵⁵ While television coverage by “the big three” networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) gave the Vietnam War the title of “living room war,” CNN’s live, 24-hours a day coverage made the Gulf War the war in “people’s face.”⁵⁶

American journalists on site and media analysts have reflected on what a technological feat it was to cover the war live, an unprecedented “achievement” in terms of media-related statistics. For instance, one analyst writes, “The timing of the attack saved both NBC and CBS from potential embarrassment. Both had planned to shift to some of their most popular entertainment shows tonight, with NBC intending to run its successful Thursday lineup of four situation comedies, including “The Cosby Show” and “Cheers.””⁵⁷ Tom Johnson, CNN’s erstwhile chairperson, shares, “The Gulf War was the most significant moment in CNN’s history—all possible because [Ted] Turner said, “Spend whatever you think it takes, pal.”⁵⁸

In another article on the broadcast of “Operation Desert Storm,” named as such by the U.S., CNN recalls its ability to televise the war due to technological preparedness (namely setting up phone lines) from “months in advance.”⁵⁹ This preparedness enabled CNN, the “only global 24-hour satellite news network,” to “make history” by showing avid viewers Iraq’s invasion as it was happening.⁶⁰ As American Studies and International Affairs scholar Melani

⁵⁵ Frazier Moore, “New Tools Showed Gulf War on TV,” *The Washington Post*, January 14, 2001, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/aponline/20010114/aponline131417_000.htm.

⁵⁶ Michael Mandelbaum, “Vietnam: The Television War,” *Daedalus* 111, no. 4 (1982): 157–69; Moore, “New Tools Showed Gulf War on TV”; Ronald Steinman, “The First Televised War,” *The New York Times*, April 7, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/07/opinion/the-first-televised-war.html>.

⁵⁷ Moore, “New Tools Showed Gulf War on TV.”

⁵⁸ Tom Johnson, “Desert Storm: The First War Televised Live around the World (and around the Clock),” *Atlanta Magazine* (blog), March 18, 2015, <https://www.atlantamagazine.com/90s/desert-storm-the-first-war-televised-live-around-the-world-and-around-the-clock/>.

⁵⁹ Ingrid Formanek, “Operation Desert Storm: 25 Years On,” CNN, accessed June 29, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2016/01/19/middleeast/operation-desert-storm-25-years-later/index.html>.

⁶⁰ Formanek.

McAlister analyzes, the Gulf War became an opportunity for the U.S. military and diplomacy to correct their failures from the Vietnam War.⁶¹ McAlister writes, “After Desert Storm, the specter of Vietnam would no longer haunt the halls of the Pentagon.”⁶²

For those of us desensitized to war and torture porn due to the proliferation of its images enabled by social media, (the Vietnam War and) the Gulf War being televised does not seem extraordinary. However, from period eyes, the Gulf War’s broadcast, particularly live coverage of its first night (in Eastern Standard Time) on January 17, 1991, “made television history and catapulted CNN into permanent news prominence. From that moment on, live news coverage is what audiences demanded and news organizations strived to achieve.”⁶³ For the purposes of my dissertation, what is more significant than this apparent “demand” of the war’s coverage is the trickle down effect of the war’s visual and sonic landscapes for Arabs, Muslims, and anyone suspected to be either.

I am purposely using words carefully here, as the excerpts cited above on CNN portray the network’s work during the Gulf War rather heroically. My critique is on the ethics (or lack thereof) of journalism surrounding Brown (and Black) people. Why is it acceptable to televise a city being bombed? What kind of viewer discretion rating should such a spectacle get? Did the journalists photo- and video-documenting the damage (physical and psychological) from the war have consent of the Iraqi people whose crumbled houses they were broadcasting?⁶⁴ The latter questions may well apply to the U.S.’ invasion of Iraq more than a decade later and of leaked

⁶¹ McAlister, *Epic Encounters*.

⁶² McAlister, 238.

⁶³ Formanek, “Operation Desert Storm.”

⁶⁴ I write this with mindfulness of recent journalistic and ethical blunders, such as the circulation of the image of the dead body of three-year old Alan Kurdi, a Syrian refugee child who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea in 2015. More recently, a similar issue of ethics has come up after an image of the bodies of migrants Oscar Alberto and Angie Valeria Martinez Ramirez, a father and his 23-month old daughter, went viral. The family drowned in June 2019 in the Rio Grande River while trying to get to the U.S. to seek asylum.

images from that time of detained and grotesquely abused Muslims men held in detention in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Cuba. The torture porn “CNN effect” that resulted from the network’s broadcast of the Gulf War has indeed forever changed the landscape of news media across the globe.⁶⁵ It has made news into *media*, putting it in the same category as film and television programs viewed for visual pleasure. The circulation of imagery, especially of people, has been done irresponsibly for reasons of lack of consent, as well as out of complete disregard (on the part of the photographers, broadcasters, and consumers) of the after-effect of the images. By “after-effect,” I mean the war of hate violence on Muslim and “Muslim-looking” bodies waged everywhere ABC, CBS, and CNN coverage was televised.

Some of the most iconic images circulated during the Gulf War broadcasts were of Arab men with beards, wearing traditional clothing, including some wearing *keffiyeh* and headwraps, protesting the U.S. invasion of Iraq, with some people in the photographs making the “peace sign” gesture with their fingers.⁶⁶ The U.S. public did not look favorably upon these images or gestures. Consuming war- and torture-porn in their living rooms gave American viewers (as well as viewers in other countries where broadcast from the war was being shown, such as the United Kingdom and Australia) political substance (however poorly or misleadingly learned from only watching biased news) to attach to Orientalist tropes that they were already “cultured” to seeing in advertisements, comic books, radio programs, television shows, and films.⁶⁷

This idea of acculturation to and cultivation of Islamophobia through the media is further evident in how the news of the 1995 bombing in Oklahoma City was reported. Just hours after the incident, news media took to its usual demonization of making Muslims and Arabs the

⁶⁵ Rian Dundon, “Operation Desert Storm Was a Practice Run in Press Manipulation,” Timeline, March 1, 2018, <https://timeline.com/photos-gulf-war-cnn-effect-press-manipulation-66680a20cf42>.

⁶⁶ Formanek, “Operation Desert Storm.”

⁶⁷ Poynting and Mason, “The Resistible Rise of Islamophobia.”

“social scapegoats” blamed for the attack, which, as became clear later, was carried out by a white terrorist.⁶⁸ Assumed white innocence rests on alleged (Black and) Brown criminality. The multiple layers and players of Islamophobia on television and phone screens have further intensified since 9/11, as news coverage on the latter repeatedly showed footage of men in turbans and beards who were believed to be responsible for the attacks. Similarly, since 9/11, war and torture-porn video games and Hollywood films (such as *Eye in the Sky* (2015)) have only exacerbated the spectacle of Islamophobia and the precarity Muslim and “Muslim-looking” people have learned to live with and die because of.⁶⁹

IV.IV. Real Turbans and Beards

Could “real” Sikhs on television and in film be the antidote to the poison of Orientalist and Islamophobic representations in the media? Seeing “real” Sikh faces on the big screen offered a sense of hope in the post-9/11 world; perhaps those who misidentified Sikhs (as Muslims, dangerous, suspect, and so forth) would change their opinions after seeing the likes of Sonny Caberwal, Guru Singh, and Waris Ahluwalia. Each of these Sikh American male actors and models have genuine turbans and beards, not ones they donned only for the roles they were selected to play. None of the men have “foreign” accents. They are the pinnacle of what Sikh advocacy has desired since 9/11: widely-visible representation of “real” Sikhs in mass media.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Ridouani, “The Representation of Arabs and Muslims in Western Media,” 11.

⁶⁹ Alsultany, *Arabs and Muslims in the Media*; Tim Blackmore, “Eyeless in America: Hollywood and Indiewood’s Iraq War on Film,” *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society* 32, no. 4 (August 1, 2012): 294–316, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0270467612459928>; Nadine Christine Naber, *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*, ed. Amaney A. Jamal and Nadine Naber (Syracuse University Press, 2008).

⁷⁰ This occurred to me in a dream.

Waris Ahluwalia is one of the earliest examples of “real” Sikhs in popular American media. He has appeared in several high-profile Hollywood productions, though the ones I am specifically analyzing are Wes Anderson’s *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) and Spike Lee’s *Inside Man* (2006).⁷¹ While the whole of *The Darjeeling Limited* is riddled with Orientalist tropes, further exacerbated by the film’s setting in India, I am analyzing particular moments from the film that focus specifically on Ahluwalia’s character. Unlike the other characters in the film, Ahluwalia has no name, only a title—“The Chief Steward” [of the Darjeeling Limited train]. In an interview he had with Rediff, a popular online news portal in India, Ahluwalia shared that he told his casting agents that, were he to be selected for any roles, he would neither remove his turban, nor trim or shave his beard.⁷² Ahluwalia added, “When I told them that the turban and beard will remain forever, they [the agents] were surprised. It was like that they had not seen someone like this before in the movies.”⁷³ When asked further about this, Ahluwalia said that he was told, “They were just like, 'Is he always like that?' And later they would say, 'We're afraid you're going to get typecast. And I would say, 'Well, me too.' But it hasn't happened.”⁷⁴

Unfortunately, in what seems like an ambush situation he was put in, Ahluwalia did become a typecast, not only in 2007 with this film but also a year earlier in *Inside Man*. At one point in *The Darjeeling Limited*, while on board the train, the three main characters (played by Owen Wilson, Adrien Brody, and Jason Schwartzman) lose a cobra that they had purchased at a

⁷¹ Beyond film, Waris Ahluwalia is most well-known for appearing in an ad campaign in 2014 by Gap Inc., the clothing retailer. A predecessor to “real” Sikhs in film and media is Sonny Caberal, another Sikh American male who appeared in an ad campaign by Kenneth Cole in 2008, titled “We All Walk in Different Shoes.” Another example of a “real” Sikh in *The Hopeful Years* is of Guru Singh, who played the character of Ajeet in NBC’s television sitcom, titled *Outsourced* (2010-2011). The sitcom was about an American company’s India-based tech support office, which was managed by a white American man with an all-Indian team (with pseudo-“Indian” accents). Throughout the duration of the show, Ajeet never once uttered a single word. He only made “eye contact” with the camera, which pans on him at some moments in each episode. Ajeet always has an expressionless face.

⁷² “The Sikh in *The Darjeeling Limited*,” accessed July 17, 2019, <https://www.rediff.com/movies/2007/oct/31waris.htm>.

⁷³ “The Sikh in *The Darjeeling Limited*.”

⁷⁴ “The Sikh in *The Darjeeling Limited*.”

Hindu temple. The Chief Steward (Ahluwalia) finds and confiscates the snake. In that moment, Ahluwalia's character informally but firmly falls into the Orientalist trope of turbaned Indian men being snake charmers, as portrayed through the character of Hadji in *Real Adventures of Jonny Quest*. When the Rediff interviewer asked him about the cobra scene, Ahluwalia responded that he did not remember reading the cobra part in the original script but that, while on set one day, Wes Anderson wanted to meet with him. According to the Rediff interview, It was in this meeting that Anderson's (who, as per the actor, was holding a cobra at the time of his meeting with Ahluwalia) cobra idea was made evident to Ahluwalia.⁷⁵

Waris Ahluwalia plays a minor role in *In Inside Man*. However, in two scenes totaling under three minutes in the 129-minute film, his character is curated in a manner and with words that bring out every Islamophobic stereotype and Orientalist trope I have critiqued in the previous sections. Through close analysis of these two scenes, I detail exactly how his character is (meant to be) seen. Ahluwalia plays the character of Vikram Walia, a bank clerk in New York City. In film's plot revolves around a bank heist. As NYPD cops surround the building, robbers hold Walia as hostage. Two armed robbers bring Walia out into the street. They have tied his mouth shut, covered his face with a white cloth, put a mask over his eyes, covered his (already turbaned) head with a hoodie, and hung a briefcase around his neck. With guns in their hands (one pointed at his back), the robbers lead Walia out of the bank, immediately upon which, NYPD cops tell the armed men to drop their weapons. In the next moment, the robbers run back inside, and five heavily armed NYPD cops surround Walia, yelling at him to put his hands on his head and to get down on his knees.

⁷⁵ "The Sikh in The Darjeeling Limited."

Meanwhile, due to his mouth being tied, Walia mumbles but cannot be heard clearly. Upon being instructed by another cop, one pats down Walia and then removes the pieces of cloth covering his face and tying his mouth. The cops ask Walia who he is, to which he replies with his name and his position at the bank. One cop, still with a gun pointing at Walia, asks him, “Vikram, is this a bomb?” and upon noticing his turban, says, “Oh shit, it’s a fucking Arab!” Walia replies, “I’m a Sikh!” The same cop repeats the question two more times, to which Walia emphatically replies, “No, fuck no!” Then two cops remove the briefcase hanging from Walia’s neck, another cop instructs two of his colleagues to “take him [Walia] down.” As other NYPD cops examine the contents of the briefcase, Walia is slammed to the ground and can be heard saying, “Easy! That’s my turban!” The cops aggressively remove Walia’s turban and the latter’s long hair unfurls. Walia asks, “What the fuck are you doing?” They tell him, “No, shut up! Relax!” Two cops take Walia away as his voice trails; he can be heard saying, “Give me my turban back!”

In a later scene, Vikram Walia is shown sitting in a diner with Detectives Bill Mitchell (Chiwetel Ejiofor) and Keith Frazier (Denzel Washington), and NYPD Captain John Darius (Willem Dafoe). Darius is the cop who called Walia “a fucking Arab” in the other scene. NYPD authorities have still not given Walia his turban back. Much to Walia (and Ahluwalia's and Sikh viewers’) chagrin and discomfort, he is sitting in a public space without having his turban on his head. The two-minute scene goes as such:

Vikram: “Protect and serve my ass. Where’s my turban? I’m not talking to anybody without a turban. It’s part of my religion to cover my head in respect to God. I’m a Sikh.”

Bill: Okay, we’ll find your turban.

Vikram: (Interrupting Mitchell and making eye contact with John Darius) Not an Arab, by the way, like your cops called me outside.

John: Now, no, I don’t think you heard that. There was a lot going on. You were probably disoriented. I didn’t hear that.

Vikram: I heard what I heard.

(Keith hands Vikram a bag of ice to relieve the would he has on his forehead from the cops slamming him to the ground in the other scene.)

Vikram: I'll give you all the information you want.

(Vikram rejects the bag of ice.)

I don't need this. I need my turban. It's part of my religion.

John: We'll give you your turban. We'll find it for you.

Vikram: No, no, no. Not "get me." I want my turban now.

Bill: You just gotta start thinking about the people inside the bank now. It's a dangerous situation. You gotta start telling us about what's going on inside the bank. We can talk about this later. We'll get an officer to come down, and you can write a formal complaint. But for now, we gotta deal with this situation.

Vikram: First you beat me, and now you want my help.

Bill: You need to start thinking about your coworkers. I could apologize on behalf of the NYPD, but that was not us. We are detectives. We're gonna try and find out...

(Vikram interrupts Bill)

Vikram: What do you want to know?

Keith: How many were there?

Vikram: I think there were about four.

Keith: How many hostages?

Vikram: (Icing his forehead, stammering) I, I don't know how many hostages; 20, 30. I'm fucking tired of this shit. What happened to my fucking civil rights? Why can't I go anywhere without being harassed? I get thrown out of a bank. I'm a hostage. I get harassed. I go to the airport. I can't go through security without a "random" selection. Fucking random, my ass. I nearly lost my job...

(Keith interrupting and pointing a finger at Vikram)

Keith: (Smiling) I bet you can get a cab, though.

Vikram: (Not smiling) I guess it's one of the perks.

Keith: (Chuckling) Put the ice on your face.

While an NYPD cop and detectives have a sit-down conversation with Vikram, a privilege not accorded to other people (especially Blacks) whom cops slam into the ground, the conversation does not provide Vikram any comfort. His turban is still confiscated, he has to appear in public without his turban, the white cop who racially slurred at him not only denies having done so but tells Vikram that he probably misheard due to being disoriented, one detective minimizes Vikram's pain and trauma, and the other further racializes Vikram through a "joke" about him (Vikram) being able to easily catch a cab. Vikram's patdown and turban removal by NYPD cops is eerily familiar to Sikh audiences of the film, as they (myself included) have received such humiliating treatment at airports and in other public spaces that have security

checks.⁷⁶ In these two scenes, the audiences are not merely witnessing a fictional character in the film's world being harassed; they are seeing Waris Ahluwalia himself being ridiculed. There is no difference between Vikram, the fictional character, and Waris, a real person.

Vikram/Waris, on the other hand, resists what he is being put through. He insists that his turban be given back to him immediately and recounts other types of harassment he has to face as a Sikh man. In essence, the conversation, including the part in which Vikram distances himself from Arabs, goes exactly as Sikh advocacy organizations focused on raising awareness on Sikhs would hope it does: it highlights Vikram's Sikh-ness, and in doing so, educates the film's viewers on who Sikhs are and on the hardships they face in the contemporary moment. Vikram not having a "foreign" accent is a bonus that adds to his Sikh *American*-ness.

There are two moments, however in which Vikram's words part ways from the way Sikh advocacy organizations have typically handled such cases of Sikhs being harassed. The first moment is in the initial words Vikram utters in his encounter with the NYPD: "Protect and serve my ass." Subtly, Vikram criticizes the NYPD for being hypocritical, as it did not protect and serve his civil rights and religious requirements. Vikram recognizes that law enforcement is not on his side, nor on that of other people it racializes. The second moment is when Vikram tells the men, "First you beat me, now you want my help." Here, Vikram firmly protests his mistreatment by the authorities, as well as their utilization of him as a means to an end. While he does answer the men's questions on the details of the hostage situation inside the bank, he does so only after subtly but sharply making it clear that he is *aware* of how he is being instrumentalized. I want to extend this critique out of the film's story world and apply it to work done by Sikh advocacy

⁷⁶ The turban removal is also haunting for Sikh viewers of the film, as it recalls eyewitness accounts and photographs of Sikhs in India in 1984 (discussed later in this dissertation) whose turbans were removed by mobs and used to tie their hands behind their backs, as well as of hate violence cases in the present day in which assailants knock off Sikh men's turbans.

organizations, particularly by the Sikh Coalition (discussed in detail in Chapter Two). Actors of hate and state violence, whether in the form of white supremacists or racist legislation, literally and metaphorically beat Sikhs on the daily. In spite of this, Sikh advocacy organizations in the U.S. align their constituents and faith with those very state factors. For the Sikh Coalition to endorse any of the nation's imperialist interests *is* to serve its Islamophobic, anti-Indigenous, and anti-Black politics.

IV.V. The War on Waris

The exchange between Waris Ahluwalia's character of Vikram Walia and the cops lasts just about one minute in the film, but the Islamophobic stereotypes and Orientalist tropes it elicits are, as I have illustrated earlier in this chapter, more than a century old. It is traumatizing for Sikh audiences like myself to watch the exchange. Though Waris Ahluwalia told his casting agents he will not remove physical markers of his Sikh identity to play any roles, the disrespect, horror, and trauma he wanted to avoid was nonetheless inflicted upon him and upon the films' Sikh viewers.

My analysis above is specifically on American film and media between in the eleven-year period between 9/11 (2001) and the Oak Creek *gurdwara* shootings (2012). I have termed this eleven-year time span as "The Hopeful Years," because seeing Sikhs in popular media offered its Sikh viewers a sense of hope: finally, after all the hate violence Sikhs had been facing since (and before) 9/11, seeing "positive" and "genuine" representation of who they truly are seemed promising. However, as my analysis reveals, these representations not only failed to

deliver the hope that was vested in them, but they also reproduced and further entrenched “classic” Orientalist and Islamophobic tropes.

There is no better example to illustrate this argument than to refer to an incident from Waris Ahluwalia’s life. It was not only Waris Ahluwalia’s *character* in *Invisible Man* whose turban was forcibly removed. The actor had a real-life encounter with exactly this kind of humiliation in 2016. Vikram and Waris really are one and the same: When traveling from Mexico City to New York City, Ahluwalia was denied entry on board his flight because he refused to remove his turban.⁷⁷ Ahluwalia’s protest of not removing his turban and waiting at the airport for twelve hours while lawyers from the Sikh Coalition and Aeroméxico worked on the case allowed him to challenge the stereotypes and typecasting he has received in the film industry.⁷⁸ The incident was picked up by multiple news sources across the world, each of whom focused mostly on Ahluwalia and his turban, not on Aeroméxico’s racist policies.⁷⁹

In a video interview with England’s Channel 4 News, the program’s host asks Ahluwalia about the incident and whether this incident was an exception or a “new normal” for him.⁸⁰ Ahluwalia answers the questions calmly but also adds that racist incidents “have been increasing ever since 9/11...This isn’t just about getting on an airplane...This is representative of a

⁷⁷ Christine Hauser, “Turban-Wearing Sikh American Actor Is Barred From Aeroméxico,” *The New York Times*, February 8, 2016, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/09/world/turban-wearing-american-actor-is-barred-from-aeromexico-flight.html>.

⁷⁸ Hauser.

⁷⁹ Nadya Agrawal, “Waris Ahluwalia Kicked Off Plane For His Turban,” *The Huffington Post*, February 8, 2016, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/actor-and-designer-waris-ahluwalia-kicked-off-plane-for-turban_n_56b8ad3ee4b04f9b57da4428; Stephany Bai, “Aeromexico Issues Apology After Keeping Designer Off Plane Over Turban,” *NBC News*, February 9, 2016, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/aeromexico-issues-apology-after-keeping-designer-plane-over-turban-n514931>; Channel 4 News, *Waris Ahluwalia on Turban Plane Incident*, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJ8KrOvO1gk>; Hauser, “Turban-Wearing Sikh American Actor Is Barred From Aeroméxico”; Tasneem Nashrulla, “AeroMexico Publicly Apologizes To Sikh Model For Refusing To Let Him Board Because Of His Turban,” *BuzzFeed News*, February 8, 2016, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/tasneemnashrulla/sikh-model-from-gap-campaign-wasnt-allowed-on-aeromexico-flt>.

⁸⁰ Channel 4 News, *Waris Ahluwalia on Turban Plane Incident*.

trend...My thoughts are, this isn't just about Sikhs, or it's not just about me. There is a concern of racism and concerning what's going on across the world. We have a campaign going on here in the United States, called Black Lives Matter, decades after the Civil Rights Movement. This isn't just about me not being able to get on a plane, this isn't about Sikhs, and you know, about the violence toward Sikhs.”⁸¹ At this point, the host interrupts Ahluwalia to ask him instead about a topic that will most certainly guarantee greater viewership and clicks. He makes Ahluwalia a spokesperson for global politics by asking the actor about the erstwhile U.S. presidential campaign, in which the current president had proposed the idea of the “Muslim Ban.”⁸² Ahluwalia responds on a broad statement on how fear breeds such sentiments and policies, and that love is the only way to overcome fear.⁸³ In the limited time Ahluwalia had during the interview (around three minutes of talk time), he attempted to make systemic critiques, only to have them cut short by a “hot topic” question.

I include this vignette to illustrate that *even Waris Ahluwalia*, an internationally-acclaimed actor and designer, is not immune to racist hate violence. “The Hopeful Years” of him being in high-profile films, including one that shows the violence and humiliation of removing turbans from Sikhs’ heads, came to no avail. Ahluwalia being in a 2013 Gap Inc. ad campaign titled, “Make Love” did not help either, as one of the posters featuring him was defiled with “Make Bombs” and “Please stop driving taxis.”⁸⁴ The taxi reference mimics the “joke” that the Keith Frazier (Denzel Washington) made to Vikram Walia (Waris Ahluwalia) in *Inside Man* about Sikh cab drivers.

⁸¹ Channel 4 News.

⁸² Channel 4 News.

⁸³ Channel 4 News.

⁸⁴ Yasmine Hafiz, “The Inspiring Way Gap Responded To Racist Graffiti,” *The Huffington Post*, November 26, 2013, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/gap-ad-sikh-waris-ahluwalia_n_4343586.

With the exception of the Gap Inc. ad campaign from 2013, I've chosen examples of "real" Sikhs in film and media from before the 2012 Oak Creek shootings to further illustrate my point. Even "real" Sikhs in film and media could not prevent the Oak Creek shootings and all other daily experiences of hate violence from happening. With this argument, I offer a heartfelt caution and warning to Sikh advocacy organizations that have continued to rely on the idea that only awareness campaigns and education, and hope in "real" Sikh representation in film and media, are viable solutions to combat hate violence and racialization. Educating others on who Sikhs are is a miniscule battle in the war against imperialism. The combat method ought to be anti-imperialism, and to be anti-imperialist means to staunchly resist and challenge how imperialism works (whether that's through assimilation, borders, walls, militarism, capitalism, ethnocentrism, and so forth). Advocacy work requires working in the very systems of governance that necessitate that advocacy work to begin with. Malcolm X critiqued this very idea of having to work in a system in hopes of overthrowing it. In his "The Ballot or the Bullet" speech in 1964, Malcolm X said, "As long as you fight it on the level of civil rights, you're under Uncle Sam's jurisdiction. You're going to his court expecting him to correct the problem. He created the problem. He's the criminal! You don't take your case to the criminal, you take your criminal to court."⁸⁵ Work by Sikh advocacy organization is deeply entrenched in Uncle Sam's jurisdiction, a positionality that constantly places the organizations' work on behalf of Sikhs in tension with Sikh ethos of sovereignty only to Guru Granth Sahib.

IV.V. Seeking Respite

⁸⁵ Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet," American Radio Works, accessed July 18, 2019, <http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/blackspeech/mx.html>.

The (after)effects of Orientalist, Islamophobia cannot be understated. Due to the fact that an overwhelming majority of people with turbans and beards in the United States (and elsewhere) are Sikhs, Orientalist tropes and Islamophobia in popular media (including news) has enabled irreversible damage and violence towards “suspect” bodies and buildings. How does a community like Sikhs address this damage? In essence, my dissertation is analysis and critique of how Sikh advocacy organizations have tried to address this question.

In their efforts to combat hate violence faced by Sikhs, Sikh advocacy organizations responding to such violence have done so by challenging and promoting changes in public policy and the law, and raising awareness on the community through Sikh awareness campaigns and events. Especially in the U.S., the underlying goal of these responses is usually to educate the unaware masses about the Sikh tradition and its adherents, particularly their history of settlement in the United States from over a century ago. The responses are curated by Sikh advocacy organizations and community leaders. Responses to hate violence that Sikhs face are messy and confusing, as the rationale behind these education- and awareness-centered responses is that hate violence against Sikhs will decrease if people know who Sikhs are. Throughout this dissertation, I critique this idea for its inherent Islamophobia. It is largely after 9/11 that Sikh advocacy organizations began projects explaining who Sikhs are. Prior to 9/11, though this desire was there, it was not enacted upon to the scale it is now. Further, such awareness campaigns fail to recognize and critique the complicated and systemic reasons of empire and militarization that racialize Muslims and “Muslim looking” people. I argue that Sikh advocacy will be more effective and more aligned with Sikh ethos if is more critical of the systemic reasons that communities of color become victims of hate violence.

My project provides analyses of how communities racialized due to Islamophobia and white supremacy respond and react to the hate violence that they endure. As a turban-wearing, Brown, immigrant woman of color living in the United States, my project goes with me everywhere I go. I am my research. Being seen by suspicious gazes as an outsider, foreigner, oppressed, and suspect is inescapable. Over the course of three chapters, I show how this inescapability has often meant violent death for those who look like me or are similarly racialized. In one sense, my dissertation is a book-length eulogy, page after page, remembering those who have been killed by white supremacist hate violence and how the communities that the killed belong to, including my own, respond to an ongoing slew of funerals.

In another sense, my dissertation is a document that will both age well and terribly. My own theoretical arguments and critiques of the violence of empire and imperialism, as well as critiques by scholars whom I reference, will remain relevant for as long as these two strongholds maintain power over the continents and those affected by the violence of these strongholds keep up resistance to them. With this consideration, my dissertation project will, unfortunately, always feel timely and relevant. On the other hand, this document is already obsolete and dated. In the months and years it has taken to write this dissertation, the cases of hate violence considered here are a miniscule amount compared to their cumulative number. The small number under analysis here has already been rendered outdated because of the ubiquity of white supremacist hate violence.

V. Chapter Summaries

Over the course of three lengthy chapters, I analyze community-oriented programs organized and spearheaded by Sikh organizations and leaders and how these programs present Sikhs through a narrative of victory and *charhdi kala* (“ever-rising spirits”) amidst white supremacist hate violence. After this introductory chapter, in Chapter One, titled “Thoughts and Prayers,” I write about hate violence, arguing that hate *is* violence, and that this violence has physical and psychological aspects. I discuss how, in addition to the ongoing “War on Terror” that is taking place “out there,” there is another war taking place within the continental United States. This war manifests in the current social atmosphere of emboldened and entitled white supremacists unleashing hatred toward anyone who falls outside their narrow white view. The two wars parallel one another and inflict terror in tandem: the “War on Terror” aims to protect the United States and the rest of the world from some perceived foreign threat, and the war at home becomes defense of a mythical (white) America and Americana on the homefront.

In Chapter One I write about three streams of violence. The first stream considers how the at-home war has historically been waged on Black bodies and buildings, particularly Black churches, and how the destruction of mosques, *gurdwaras*, and temples is a contemporary extension of such violence. The second stream of violence deals with so-called “anti-Sikh” hate violence, wherein I argue that for Sikh organizations and leaders to lobby for official recognition of hate violence experienced by Sikhs as unique and distinct is counterintuitive according to Sikh ethos and a disservice to Sikh organizations seeking to combat white supremacist hate violence in the nation. I argue that, in the present-day context of the United States, “anti-Sikh” hate violence is a misnomer, as those perpetrating the violence have little interest in accurately distinguishing between various shades, languages, faiths, and subgroups among Brown bodies. Further, seeking recognition of “anti-Sikh” hate violence in the U.S., an individualistic effort on

the part of Sikh advocacy organizations, goes against Sikh ethos of challenging *systemic* oppression, as the latter affects *all* non-white communities, not just Sikhs. In the last part of the chapter, I discuss the third and final stream of violence, that of translation. Here, I write about how distinctive “anti-Sikh” violence *does* have a specific register and lineage in the context of South Asia, and further, that much is lost in translation when Sikh ethos, particularly of *charhdi kalaa*, are applied to crude English approximations of “optimism.” My main point therein is that the invocation of or a psychological state of *charhdi kalaa* already assumes physical death; it is not a reaction to it. Understanding *charhdi kalaa* as such, I highlight how this radical concept has been watered down for easier consumption in liberal society in which the valence of violence always only implies physical destruction.

In Chapter Two, titled, “Resisting Domes, Resistant Domes: A Sikh American Hate-Love Story,” I examine four significant developments in Sikh American diaspora history since the 2012 shootings at the Oak Creek *gurdwara* in Wisconsin, United States. The first development I analyze is the “Charhdi Kala 6K Walk/Run,” an event organized and held annually between 2013 and 2017 by the Sikh community in Oak Creek. The second development I look at is the installation of domes atop the Oak Creek *gurdwara* building in 2017. Next, I analyze the Sikh Coalition’s “Gurdwara Security Toolkit,” a program it has made available for any *gurdwara* in the United States to adopt. The fourth and final development I write about is of *gurdwaras* becoming “total sites” during catastrophic events in their locales. Key arguments I make in this chapter are that Sikh communities and organizations advancing a triumphant narrative of “We are Sikhs” holds ground only because of what such a statement implies: “We are not Muslims.” This implicit distancing from and demonization of Muslims rests on Sikh advocacy organizations’ hesitance in explicitly announcing that that the Oak Creek *gurdwara* shootings

were a result of white supremacist, Islamophobic hate violence. This hesitance is further concretized in the Sikh Coalition's "Gurdwara Security Toolkit," a community program that it has developed in partnership with the Department of Homeland Security. I critique this partnership, arguing that though the Sikh Coalition outwardly portrays and proclaims its solidarity with Muslim advocacy organizations, its befriending the DHS equates to its demonizing of Muslims. I offer this critique because of the DHS' extreme profiling of Muslims in the United States after 9/11. Further, the Toolkit states that a DHS representative coming to a *gurdwara* due to the latter's decision to adopt this program does not guarantee that any information collected by the representative on undocumented people visiting the *gurdwara* will not be used against those individuals. It is utterly mind-boggling that the Sikh Coalition would choose to offer this DHS-partnered community program knowing well that Punjabi Sikhs make up one of the fastest-growing undocumented population groups in the United States.⁸⁶ Sikhs' high numbers of undocumented people need not be the only reason the Coalition's partnership with the DHS merits condemnation. The DHS' brutal tactics in the containment and dehumanization of undocumented people in immigrant detention centers ought to be enough for the Sikh Coalition to break away from its partnership with the DHS.⁸⁷

In Chapter Three I move to non-*gurdwara* sites. I examine three public parks in California: the Singh and Kaur Park in Sacramento, and two others, both named Shaheed Bhai Jaswant Singh Khalsa Park, in Bakersfield and Fresno. The fourth site I write about is Adenia Park in Perth, Western Australia. This instance marks the first time my dissertation looks at a site outside the United States. I present the argument that all of these sites are bound to one another

⁸⁶ Karan Deep Singh, "India Is the Fastest-Growing Source of New Illegal Immigrants to the U.S.," *WSJ* (blog), September 22, 2016, <https://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2016/09/22/india-is-the-fastest-growing-source-of-new-illegal-immigrants-to-the-u-s/>.

⁸⁷ I discuss immigrant detention in the Epilogue.

through the spread of empire, in which white supremacy is its stimulus and Islamophobia its response. The common stream between the narratives surrounding all four parks is death, whether through hate violence (as is the case of the Sacramento park) or state violence (as is the cases of the Bakersfield, Fresno, and Perth parks). I suture these narratives through discussion of “diasporic necropolitics,” a concept I have devised and defined as those factors that racialize the bodies and buildings of people and render them “naturally” prone to hate and state violence. I conclude this chapter by describing and discussing RAG HEAD, an Oak Creek-inspired one-woman live theater show that first debuted in Los Angeles in late 2018. I treat the show as a non-*gurdwara* “site,” as its medium (theater) enables collective gathering in ways similar to the parks. Having watched the show and interviewing its actor and producer, Sundeep Morrison, I write about how RAG HEAD is one of the few times that the reasons why Muslims *and* Sikhs keep becoming victims of white supremacist, Islamophobic hate violence are laid bare. For many Sikh audiences of the show, RAG HEAD is perhaps the first time that reasons why Sikhs are killed from hate violence is presented alongside reasons why Muslims are killed from the same. I argue that, as the story world of RAG HEAD shows, contextualizing “anti-Sikh” hate violence *vis-à-vis* anti-Muslim hate violence is both a grounding moment *and* an imperative call for Sikhs in the United States (and elsewhere) to more critically understand why their bodies and buildings are under attack.

Throughout the process of reading for, researing, and writing my dissertation, I have found few moments in which the content I am analyzing left me feeling hopeful toward a new, remodeled and restructured scaffolding for Sikh advocacy. It wasn’t until watching and then writing about RAG HEAD that this sense of hope emerged, and it did so after many months and years of agonizing over what I feel (and have written) is a problematic foundation and blueprint

for how Sikhs in the United States are seen and want to be seen. Even though the purpose of my dissertation is to microanalyze certain aspects of Sikh advocacy in the United States, I also want to acknowledge that I understand why I see cars of elderly Sikh immigrant uncles and aunties with a U.S. flag on the windshield. I understand why many Sikh youth wear a red, white, and blue turban. To have these insignias of empire *can* make the difference between a white supremacist beating and not beating a Sikh with a baseball bat while spewing “Get out of my country!” I also understand but obviously do not agree with why Sikh advocacy organizations choose to privilege the language and sentiments of U.S. nationalism over more radical expressions of Sikh sovereignty. I do not wish to conclude my dissertation with a sense of resentment, hopelessness, or despair over how the overall picture of Sikh politics in the United States as it stands today. To envision and offer something more generative necessitates presenting the current and prevalent narrative on Sikhs in the United States, followed by dissecting that narrative to point out its problematic nature, and finally, to rewrite one that takes into account the critiques presented in my dissertation. For this tripartite exercise, I use content from the Sikh Coalition, as it is the oldest, largest, and consistently active advocacy organization in the United States.

The Conclusion offers one alternative imagination of what Sikh(re)presentation in the United States looks like in text. Here I’ve taken the Sikh Coalition’s “Sikhs in America” summary. The entire text of this write-up presents Sikhs as model minorities in the country, citing extraordinary accomplishments by Sikh individuals and groups. The four-paragraph write-up concludes with a statement on hate violence faced by Sikhs in the contemporary period: “Sikh Americans have been particularly vulnerable to discrimination and hate in the post-9/11 context

that is rife with anti-Muslim sentiment and xenophobic violence.”⁸⁸ My intervention in this chapter is twofold: after citing the full original text, I provide commentary on each sentence of the write-up to point out why and how it is problematic. Then, I fully rewrite the text with the aim of presenting “Sikhs in America” vis-à-vis considering other ethnic minorities who have also been racialized and marginalized in the country. In the rewriting, I explicitly write and critique how U.S. imperialism, and the latter’s operatives of militarism and capitalism, are responsible for white supremacist hate violence, due to which, Sikhs are one community that is directly affected.

I point out at the beginning of the conclusion that it offers *one* radically reimagined alternative to how Sikhs in the U.S. are currently narrativized. I conclude the chapter with thoughts on how what I have presented therein and in the entire dissertation are a result of learning in its truest form □—a process. I offer this alternative as one solution, not *the* solution, to addressing the problems in presenting Sikhs as model minorities in the country and using that as a foundation on which Sikh advocacy stands. My conversations with friends in my Sikh community are what inspired me to structure the concluding chapter in this tripartite manner □—the original text of “Sikhs in America,” my critique of each sentence of the write-up, and my rewriting of it.

Upon being asked about and then summarizing the parts of my dissertation specifically on critically analyzing the way Sikhs are problematically (self-)represented by Sikh advocacy organizations, the individuals I had these disparate conversations with all asked similar, eager questions □—*So, what should we [Sikhs] do? How should we eliminate hate violence?* In these conversations and by keeping these questions close to heart, I was repeatedly reminded that I

⁸⁸ “Sikhs in America.”

began this dissertation path for the Sikh community. My work would be a disservice to myself and to my people if I only questioned and problematized. Community work requires answers; it needs results and deserves answers. Without a commitment to providing alternatives to problematized, the work only benefits the researcher and only advances her career. I sincerely hope my dissertation provokes and invokes.

Figures for the Introductory Chapter

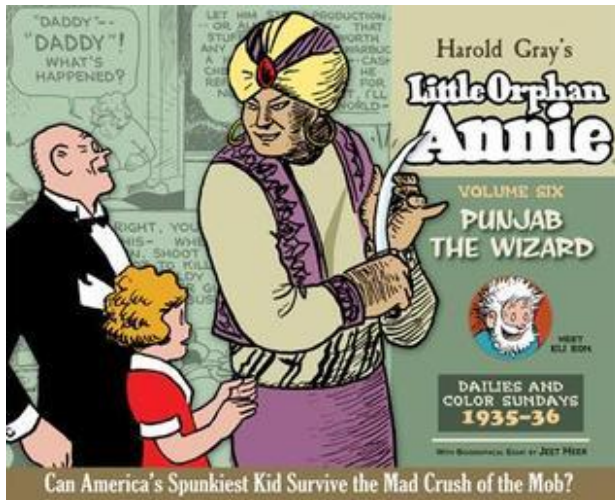


Figure 1.1 (above): Punjab, a wizard and secondary character in *Little Orphan Annie*. Image courtesy of IDW Publishing.

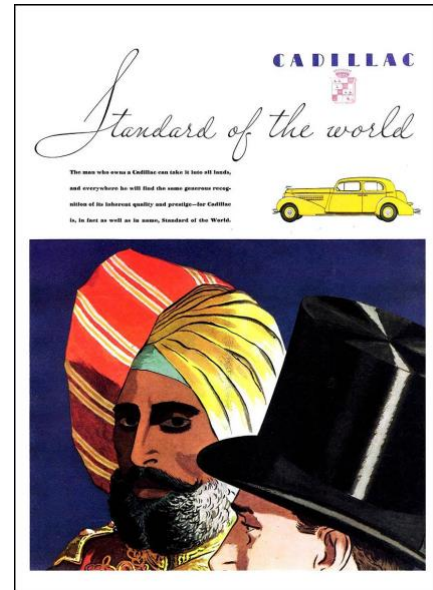


Figure 1.2 (above right): A 1930s poster advertisement by Cadillac. Image courtesy of Cadillac.

Figure 1.3 (right): Kenneth Duncan in 1938, dressed as a Sikh man, reading an issue of the comic book from 1933, *Master of Men! The Spider*. When they were adapted to a film (1938), Duncan starred as the books' character of Ram Singh. Image via www.ageofaces.net



Figure 1.4 (below right): Ricardo Montalban, dressed as Khan Noonien Singh, in the film *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* in 1982. Montalban also played the character in the original *Star Trek* television program from 1966. In this screengrab, he is shown wearing a loosely wrapped turban, eye mask, and has no facial hair (and no “foreign” accent). Image courtesy of Paramount Pictures.



Figure 1.5 (right): Hadji Raheed Singh and Jonny Quest from *The Adventures of Jonny Quest* in 1964. Image courtesy of Cartoon Network.



Figure 1.6 (right): The Thuggee cult Chief Guard character from *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* from 1984. Image courtesy of Lucasfilm Limited.



Figure 1.7 (right): Zoltar, the fortune-teller, in *Big* in 1988. Image courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.



Chapter One

Thoughts and Prayers

I. Introduction

This chapter is about war. Though the immediate connotation of war is of conflict taking place *out there*, this chapter looks to one of the wars taking place within the continental United States—hate violence.⁸⁹ More specifically, I examine hate violence faced by Sikhs in context with that faced by other minority faith groups. I present how this war of hate violence is taking place through three streams of violence. The first stream is of violence on and the destruction of the built environment of those racialized as the targets of this war. My main argument here is that attacks on the buildings of racialized people are proxies for attacks on the bodies of those people. An implicit argument here has to do with methodology: hate violence in the public sphere cannot be fully and holistically studied only through its effect on people. It must be studied in tandem with its effect on the built environment of those people. My project calls attention to how, alongside racialized communities, buildings that racialized people use also become frequent targets of hateful graffiti and arson. The phenomenon of attacks on bodies *and* buildings is neither recent, nor unnoticed. Yet, it is peculiar that Sikh advocacy organizations committed to creating a better social climate for precarious minorities to live in seldom use statistics on bodies *and* buildings to advance their advocacy work. What is further peculiar, rather, paradoxical, is the global Sikh community's vivid memory of the Indian state's attacks from 1984 on two of the most renowned, historical, and most frequently-visited *gurdwara* buildings, Darbar Sahib and Akal Takht Sahib, both in Amritsar, East Punjab, and also on over forty other *gurdwaras* spread

⁸⁹ By "wars," I mean the everyday violence of homelessness, food and water insecurity, and unaffordable health care, all in one of the wealthiest nations in the world.

out across India. The attacks were carried out in conjunction with targeted, extrajudicial killings of Sikhs throughout India well into the 1990s. On the one hand, there is an (inadvertent) disconnect in seeing white supremacist-led, present-day attacks on Sikhs bodies and buildings as interconnected and interrelated. On the other hand, there is an undying memory for Sikhs of the attacks on bodies and buildings in India from 1984. My purpose in bringing together hate crimes in the diaspora believed by Sikhs to be motivated by an explicitly “anti-Sikh” bias in present day and unequivocally anti-Sikh violence in India from the 1980s and 1990s is to illustrate the importance of examining violated bodies and buildings in conjunction with one another to more thoroughly understand how hate violence and its aftereffects operate.

The second stream of white supremacy that I dissect in this chapter builds atop the first one. Here, I analyze how counterintuitive it is for the largest Sikh American advocacy organization to use “anti-Sikh” hate crime statistics as leverage to persuade the state to address hate violence faced by the faith community. As is clear in almost all the cases of hate violence Sikh bodies and buildings face in the United States, the underlying motivation for the attacks is Islamophobia that the assailants absorb through the country’s political and social climate (including its media). The point here is that the most effective method for Sikh individuals, organizations, and communities trying to address “anti-Sikh” hate violence is to see such violence not as exceptional, “misplaced,” or “mistaken” (which implies that there is a “correct” target for Islamophobic hate violence, Muslims). Rather, identifying “anti-Sikh” hate violence as but one manifestation of the various violences enacted under and through the pursuit of imperialism enables coalition-building with other minoritized and racialized communities. This view also aligns with a foundational Sikh ethos of *sarbat da bhala* (wishing of well-being of all),

as not exceptionalizing “anti-Sikh” hate violence enables Sikhs to empathize with others who are also racialized and targeted with hate violence.

The final stream of violence under exploration here is that of translation. In this section of the chapter, I explore linguistic restrictions and parameters in discussing hate crimes, starting with the lack of a term for “hate crime,” as relevant to the lived experiences of Sikhs in the United States. My overarching argument in this section is that Sikhs have been experiencing hate violence both in their “homeland” of Punjab, as well as in various other locations that have become their homes due to immigration, migration, and transnationalism. While there are terms for “hate crime” and “hate violence” in Punjabi, these terms are specific to Sikhs’ experience with state violence in India (and to some degree, in Pakistan, particularly along the “Af-Pak border”). To use those terms in reference to hate violence they experience in the United States (and elsewhere in the western Sikh diaspora) makes for a bumpy linguistic transition. In the South Asian context, as I illustrate through the first stream of violence, there *is* such a reality as “anti-Sikh” hate violence, as Sikhs have been specifically targeted and persecuted in the subcontinent due to their faith. The context of “anti-Sikh” hate violence Sikhs face in America is Islamophobia, as utilized in the spread of empire. Understanding that anti-Sikh violence in the South Asian context is markedly different in origin and purpose than what is labeled “anti-Sikh” violence in the diaspora is crucial for two reasons: first, to understand how exactly violence in each context is used, and second, in analyzing the role of the state (in both contexts) in inciting and perpetuating violence. Despite these differences, the instrumentalization of buildings is common in anti-Sikh violence in South Asia, and “anti-Sikh” violence in the United States.

Each of these three streams presupposes racialization and creation of an Other. Throughout the history and present of the empire of the United States, this Other has been used

to justify colonization, settlement, military presence, and war. My argument through breaking down hate violence into these three streams is that the United States is and has always been in a constant state of war in the form of hate violence. This internal war is waged through systemic forms of control (most robustly through the police force, incarceration, and detention). This war sustains white supremacy by its demonization of Black people as criminal, Indigenous people as invisible, and Brown bodies as illegal and threatening to the state. Through the linguistic turn in the chapter, I discuss that Sikhs who experience hate violence in the U.S. grapple with an additional layer of violence of not being able to succinctly label the violence (in English and Punjabi) for what it is—anti-Muslim violence (resulting from the “War on Terror” and structural Islamophobia) in which Sikhs have become “collateral damage.”⁹⁰

II. Hate Violence Stream One: Bodies and Buildings Under Attack

II.I. Attacking the Built Environment Through Bureaucracy

Attacking the built environment of ethno-religious minorities is neither a new phenomenon, nor is it one only Sikhs face. The normative understanding of attacks on building denotes physical damage to structures. However, buildings are also “attacked” at the systemic level. These “attacks” are one form of the normalized, everyday discrimination that Sikhs, Muslims, and others perceived as suspect and dangerous face. By systemic “attacks” on the Sikh built environment, I mean the soft, indirect ways in which bigotry plays out at the systemic level, in this case through bureaucracy. In many cases, ethno-religious minorities have faced bigotry that is manifest as hurdles, bans, and protests when undergoing required processes of procuring building permits for a new *gurdwara*, mosque, or temple (or getting a permit for renovations to

⁹⁰ Sujay Kumar, “How American Sikhs Became Collateral Damage in the War on Terror,” Fusion, December 3, 2015, <http://fusion.net/story/240946/american-sikh-hate-crimes/>.

existing structures). Simply put, if a community does not want a *gurdwara*, temple, or mosque in their neighborhood, it can effectively sway city council to disallow the granting of building or renovation permits. This power comes through individuals or groups protesting building permit requests, citing that the addition of a new, esoteric structure in a neighborhood would mean more traffic and thus become a safety risk for children and pedestrians in the area, be a misfit in an area not zoned for such building typologies, decrease property values, clash the harmony of aesthetics and scale between existing buildings in the neighborhood and new ones proposed therein, raise environmental concerns, and argue that a new structure would contribute to noise pollution if the proposed building type has sound projecting outward (as the call to prayer might in the case of mosques).

On its own, each of the above is a valid concern and does not inherently point to bigotry. However, that distinction becomes blurred when, as in the case of the San Jose *gurdwara*, such concerns by neighboring individuals and residential communities continued to be expressed long *after* the city council had already granted a construction permit. Writing specifically on San Jose *gurdwara* construction issues, Ethnic Studies scholar Jaideep Singh discusses that resistance to the structure was particularly racialized, with some attendees of city council meetings shouting, “Put it in *your* neighborhood!...We don’t want it in *our* neighborhood!”⁹¹ Singh also points out the racialized nature of the protests as the language went from concerns voiced by well-meaning residents to ones who perceived Sikhs as gangs who would “loiter” in the building’s vicinities.⁹² The implication of such language harkens back to early twentieth century racialization of incoming Asian immigrants as the “Yellow Peril,” and of Punjabi Sikh ones in particular as the

⁹¹ Jaideep Singh, “No Sikh Jose: Sikh American Community Mobilization and Interracial Coalition Building in the Construction of a Sacred Site,” *UCLA Asian Pac. Am. LJ* 8 (2002): 181.

⁹² Singh, 182.

“tide of turbans.” Asian immigrants overall were perceived to be goons, diseased, unassimilable, perpetual foreigners, and uncultured.⁹³ Eventually, the *gurdwara* was passed for construction, with the caveat of only being open during certain hours of operation and having an attendee cap at 1500 people.⁹⁴ These conditions seem insensitive to both the timings of formalized Sikh prayer, the first of which begins before sunrise, and to the numerous holidays celebrated in the Sikh calendar, each of which draws thousands of attendees.

Concerns of traffic were also baseless, as the side roads leading up to the *gurdwara* parking areas in no way block the main street overlooking the structure. Also, due to ample parking built into the *gurdwara* property, there is never a need for visitors to park outside the structure’s premises. Further, in line with financial trends of east San Jose where the *gurdwara* is located, and of the Silicon Valley overall, not only have property values *not* decreased, but they have actually increased.⁹⁵ Lastly, the *gurdwara* has become a local cultural center of sorts, as it has served various civic purposes, such as being designated as a polling site during elections.⁹⁶

The protests against the San Jose *gurdwara* did not end there. When some members of the Sikh community proposed renaming the road the structure is on from its original name, Murillo Avenue, to Gurdwara Avenue, neighboring residents voiced their concern about the esoteric name, also citing that the proposition is anti-secularist, as it privileges Sikhi. The judge ruling on the matter ruled in favor of the name change, citing that protests against the name

⁹³ Rick Bonus, “Ethnicity,” in *Keywords for Asian American Studies*, ed. Linda Trinh Võ, Cathy J Schlund-Vials, and K. Scott Wong (New York: NYU Press, 2015), 81, <http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=3564347>.

⁹⁴ Singh, “No Sikh Jose,” 182.

⁹⁵ “Quimby Rd & Chaboya Rd San Jose, CA 95148, Neighborhood Profile - NeighborhoodScout,” accessed July 4, 2019, <https://www.neighborhoodscout.com/ca/san-jose/quimby-chaboya>.

⁹⁶ In Chapter Two I discuss in detail the idea of the built environment of ethno-religious minorities, particularly spaces of faith, becoming “total spaces” for civic purposes and during natural disasters.

change proposition made little sense coming from residents of a city named after a Christian saint.

The settler colonial history of America, and due to it, resistance to proposed changes in street names back to Indigenous names, or non-white, non-Christian ones shows the historic amnesia residents of this country suffer. Recent protests against movements to remove statues of Confederate leaders known to be white supremacists is another example of this amnesia. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the passing of time becomes a benevolence and an antidote to painful moments from history. This phenomenon was recently witnessed in the eulogizing and canonizing of former president George H.W. Bush after his passing in late 2018. While the dominant narrative praised Bush for his service to the country, activists blasted this narrative by pointing out that the former president's political reign and tactics make his legacy that of a war criminal, not a national hero.⁹⁷

Sikhs' struggle with being "misrecognized" as Muslims extends into the built environment, as white supremacists and Islamophobes "misread" *gurdwaras* as mosques. This "misreading" means that Sikh buildings (*gurdwaras*) also become targets of the racialized, Islamophobic hate violence that Sikh bodies face. A key argument in this chapter, and in my dissertation overall, is that these kinds of attacks, whether in the form of arson or vandalism, are stand-ins for attacks on people. While it is far easier for assailants to carry out arson or vandalism attacks than it is to inflict physical danger onto people, attacks on buildings still carry the same message that attacks on bodies do. Instances of attacks on buildings outnumber attacks on people for three reasons: first, the legal ramifications (if any at all) for arson or vandalism are much less stringent than of physical attacks on people, and, second, carrying out arson and

⁹⁷ Intercepted, "Intercepted Podcast: George H.W. Bush (1924-2018), American War Criminal," The Intercept, December 5, 2018, <https://theintercept.com/2018/12/05/george-h-w-bush-1924-2018-american-war-criminal/>.

vandalism give their assailants much greater chances of remaining anonymous and uncaught. Lastly, arson and vandalism become public spectacles that serve as warnings to the people they are aimed at.

II.II. Attacking the Built Environment via Islamophobia

In addition to executing bureaucratic attacks to prevent racialized communities from designing and constructing their spaces in their desired manner, another way that such communities are further violated is by physical violence exhibited onto their structures. Sikhs have experienced Islamophobic attacks on their *gurdwaras* across the the United States (and elsewhere). There are two ways through which Islamophobic attacks on Sikh buildings (and bodies) can be contextualized. The first is that, in their quest to avenge the violence of 9/11, white supremacists “miss the mark” and “mistakenly” identify Sikh bodies and buildings as Muslim. This issue of “mistaken identity” is inherently flawed, as it implies that, were white supremacists to “correctly” identify (and thus racially and ethnically stereotype people) Muslims, the hate violence would be justified.⁹⁸ The second way of understanding attacks on Sikh bodies and buildings is to contextualize the broader and longer history of racist hate violence in the United States, particularly as exhibited onto the bodies and buildings of Arabs, Muslims, and Blacks in the United States. This type of violence is part and parcel of the history (and present) of settler colonial America. After 9/11, as Sikhs began experiencing unprecedented levels of hate violence in the United States (as well as in Canada, Europe, and Pacifica).

⁹⁸ Many scholars have critiqued the idea of Sikhs becoming victims of “mistaken identity” as inherently Islamophobic. For instance, in “Queer Times, Queer Assemblages,” Jasbir Puar critiques the “mistaken idea” idea within the larger contexts of multiculturalism and acknowledgement of difference therein. She also discusses that males wearing turbans is an inherently queer affective performance, as donning one means to bear “the typically female burden of safeguarding and transmitting culture and of symbolizing the purity of nation. But this does not automatically or only feminize him; instead, the fusion of hair, oil, cloth, skin, the organic with the nonorganic, renders the turban a queer part of the body.” (Puar 134)

Balbir Singh Sodhi (1949-2001) became the first known casualty of post-9/11 hate violence directed against Muslims, Arabs, and anyone else suspected of being as such. Sodhi's murder on September 15, 2001 by Frank Roque in Mesa, Arizona jolted the Sikh community, as his death marked the first fatal hate crime to strike the Sikh community. Prior to September 15, 2001, Sikhs were no strangers to Islamophobic hate violence, though any instance of such was narrativized by the state and understood by the Sikh community as a lone, unfortunate incident. Though this point is obvious, it still necessitates stating explicitly: instant communication via social media has radically changed how information and news of attacks on bodies and buildings is shared. This has made it easier to perceive hate violence as a wide, pervasive consequence of Islamophobic hate speech and policies, rather than stand-alone cases of hate violence. That being said, it would be a mistake, however, to assume that hate violence being laid bare results in greater solidarity among affected communities or in the creation of governmental laws and policies that protect those communities.

Balbir Singh Sodhi's name and fate are well-known to Sikh people across their global diaspora. Far less Sikhs, however, recognize the names Anwar Khalil, the Sahak family, Waqar Hassan, and Adelal Karas. After killing Balbir Singh Sodhi at the latter's Chevron gas station in Mesa, Arizona, Frank Roque went on to shoot at Lebanese-American Anwar Khalil at his Mobil gas station.⁹⁹ Roque then continued his shooting spree that day when he shot at the home of the Sahak family, an Afghan American family living in the house Roque sold to them earlier on.¹⁰⁰ In the suburbs of Dallas, Texas, Mark Stroman went on a shooting spree on September 15, 2001,

⁹⁹ Simran Jeet Singh, "A Unique Perspective on Hate-Crimes: The Story of a Convicted Killer," *The Huffington Post*, September 19, 2012, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/simran-jeet-singh/a-unique-perspective-on-hate-crimes-the-story-of-a-convicted-killer_b_1685020.html.

¹⁰⁰ "Arizona Man Accused of Killing Sikh; 'I'm an American!,'" *Deseret News*, September 29, 2001, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/866396/Arizona-man-accused-of-killing-Sikh-Im-an-American.html>.

in which he injured Bangladeshi American Rais Bhuiyan, and killed Pakistani American Waqar Hassan. Stroman then shot and killed South Asian American Vasudev Patel on October 4, 2001.¹⁰¹ News reports mention that though Stroman was tried for the murder of Waqar Hassan, he was not charged for it. Killing Vasudev Patel is what got Stroman the death penalty. Rais Bhuiyan, one of Stroman's other victims, was left blinded in one eye from the attack. Still, Bhuiyan attempted to stop Stroman's execution, citing that his faith (Islam) has taught him to forgive the assailant.¹⁰² Bhuiyan's efforts were not successful, as Stroman was executed on July 20, 2011.

On September 19, 2001, four days after Stroman went on his killing spree, Egyptian American Adelal Karas was shot and killed at his corner store in the San Gabriel Valley of California. Karas' murderer remains unidentified.¹⁰³ I bring up these names to emphasize that these are four cases (of which, three are from the same day) resulting from the same hate violence that took Balbir Singh Sodhi's life. Sodhi's death was not a result of "anti-Sikh violence;" it was one among other killings of immigrant Americans by ignorant Americans. While a small segment of Sikhs in America (namely activists, and academics graduate students in the humanities and social sciences, myself included) firmly believe that the common denominator in the violence that Sikhs face is Islamophobic hate violence and hatred of immigrants, the reigning narrative among Sikhs in America is that such violence is a result of "anti-Sikh" hate crimes.

¹⁰¹ Bayoumi, Moustafa. *How Does it Feel to be a Problem?: Being young and Arab in America*. Penguin, 2009.

¹⁰² Dianne Solis, "Widow, Daughters of Man Slain in 9/11 Hate Crime in Dallas Become Americans," *Dallas News*, March 16, 2012, <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/news/2012/03/16/widow-daughters-of-man-slain-in-911-hate-crime-in-dallas-become-americans>.

¹⁰³ Joe Mozingo, "Slain Egyptian Was a Fixture in San Gabriel," *Los Angeles Times*, September 19, 2001, <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/sep/19/local/me-47275>.

A similar pattern of violence ensued around the time of the Oak Creek Shootings in 2012. The shootings at the Oak Creek gurdwara on August 5 of that year are well-known among Sikhs; lesser known, however, is what happened the following day, when white supremacist Jedediah Stout burned down the Islamic Society of Joplin, Missouri. That incident came about a month after the same mosque was set ablaze. Stout pleaded guilty to the August 6 incident and to two attempts to burn down a Planned Parenthood building in Joplin.¹⁰⁴ Of these incidents of hate violence, and of ten others in a span of eight days in late July and early August 2012, Oak Creek is the only one that received somewhat wide publicity on news media channels across the country.¹⁰⁵ Oak Creek jolted the global Sikh community, as most found it unfathomable that a community that contributes so much to America was in turn targeted on that very land. Model minority narratives aside, it is worth reflecting on how the Sikh community's response to the shootings would have looked, had Oak Creek been contextualized within the broader landscape of hate violence spanning North America. Had the latter been the case, would Sikh advocacy organizations and individuals still highlight Sikhs' American-ness rather than call attention to and hold accountable the systemic reasons that created a ripe environment for something like Oak Creek (and Joplin) to have happened in the first place?

II.III *Go Tell It on The Mountain*

Memory works in mysterious ways. In the process of writing this chapter, my mind has been repeating the words to *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, a song I learned in my middle school chorus class. As a twelve-year-old, I did not know how and where this song came about. I did

¹⁰⁴ "Man Who Burned down Joplin Mosque and Tried to Burn Planned Parenthood Clinic Pleads Guilty," The St. Louis Post Dispatch, April 19, 2016, https://www.stltoday.com/lifestyles/faith-and-values/man-who-burned-down-joplin-mosque-and-tried-to-burn/article_89fa2a12-e59a-5798-8391-017b0cb2bb3f.html.

¹⁰⁵ Uzma Kolsy, "Eight Attacks, 11 Days," *Salon*, August 14, 2012, https://www.salon.com/2012/08/14/eight_attacks_11_days/.

not know that it is also the name of James Baldwin's semi-autobiographical novel from 1953 (nor who James Baldwin was). I did not know that the song was actually a hymn dating back to the mid-to-late nineteenth century and that its original lyrics about the birth of Christ were reworked and added to for use during the Civil Rights Movement. The hymn's original words of "Let my people go" not only referred to Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt but also to the aims of the Civil Rights Movement.¹⁰⁶ The 1960s American folk music group of Peter, Paul, and Mary also sang a version of *Go Tell it on the Mountain* in 1964, though the trio replaced "Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born" to "Go tell it on the mountain to let my people go." As Kenneth Bielen writes in *The Lyrics of Civility: Biblical Images and Popular Music Lyrics in American Music*, "The folk trio fuse paraphrases of verses from the spiritual "Wade in the Water" with the chorus of "Go Tell it on the Mountain" to produce a proclamation of deliverance for African-Americans."¹⁰⁷ The hymn is still sung at churches today, as its spirit of liberation and emancipation resonates deeply in the contemporary moment. Suffice it to say that the song I learned in middle school and forgotten about for the next twenty years holds deep meaning for me today, as I connect that sonically vivid childhood memory to my dissertation as an adult.

The subconscious resurfacing of my pre-teen memory of learning and singing *Go Tell It on the Mountain* mentally prepared me to write this chapter, and in particular, this section of the chapter. The various contexts to the song that I've discussed above were not part of the curriculum in my chorus class at Charles. F. Carroll Middle School in Raleigh, North Carolina. In fact, it was not until writing this section that I researched the song's lyrics and learned of its contexts. Keeping in mind the importance of this hymn to Black churches, I segue into a brief

¹⁰⁶ "Go Tell It on the Mountain," accessed January 21, 2019, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~public/civilrights/a0030.html>.

¹⁰⁷ Bielen, Kenneth. *The Lyrics of Civility: Biblical Images & Popular Music Lyrics in American Culture*. Routledge, 2016, Chapter 2.

history of arson, vandalism, and burnings of Black churches by white supremacists individuals and groups. The point of this brief history is to demonstrate that attacks on religious and community spaces of minorities is a parallel development alongside a narrative of American nationhood and unity. Further, attacks on Sikh buildings must be contextualized as happening within this genealogy of hate violence not only to fully understand the expanse of white supremacy but also to avoid seeing “anti-Sikh” hate violence as exceptional to Sikhs.

II. IV. Who’s Burning Black Churches?

Since the campaign period of the last presidential election in 2016 and the months that have followed since, scholars and activists have been engaging with the idea of free speech at events that incite hate violence and promulgate hate speech. In the current political environment, hardly any conversation ensues without debates on the limits or guarantees of free speech. A notable example is the “Unite the Right” rally in Charleston, South Carolina from 2017. At least two decades prior to this, however, these very topics of the limits and guarantees of free speech were centers of political debates, academic discourses, and activist discussions. At that time, a pervasive manifestation of hate speech-turned-hate action was record numbers of Black churches being burned by white supremacist organizations and individuals.

As a nation America has a very short-term memory and suffers from historical amnesia. Instances of Black churches being burned seem like old, past history from the era of slavery and Jim Crow laws. In the following paragraphs, the referenced time period of attacks on churches is not, for instance, the 1960s. My reference is not to the September 15, 1963, the day when three KKK members bombed the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. The bombing resulted in the killing of four young Black girls, as well as injuries to 14 others. My reference is to the 2016 burning and spraypainting of “Vote Trump” of the Hopewell Missionary

Baptist Church in Greenville, Mississippi.¹⁰⁸ My reference is to the 2015 burning of the Mt. Zion Church in Greeleyville, South Carolina, an incident that was not only reminiscent of the KKK-induced fire that engulfed the same church twenty years prior, but also one of five Black churches that were set ablaze in 2015. These incidents took place in the week following Dylan Roof's shooting rampage at the Emanuel AME Church in South Carolina. The incident prompted a social media discussion which was "hashtagged" as #WhosBurningBlackChurches?

These waves of attacks on Black churches are neither isolated, nor new. Cases of Black church burnings continue in the present day, even after the surge in their cases in the early-to-mid 1990s prompted Congress to pass the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996. As reported by Public Radio International (PRI), the Church Arson Prevention Act was passed after 145 Black churches were burned just between 1995 and 1996. A parallel development to the passing of the Act was then-President Clinton's creation of the National Church Arson Task Force (NCATF).¹⁰⁹ In 1998, two years after the Church Arson Prevention Act was passed, the NCATF reported that it opened an investigation into 670 cases of attacks on houses of worship, which resulted in 308 arrests. These numbers only account for incidents that took place between

¹⁰⁸ Emma Green, "A Black Church Has Been Burned in the Name of Trump," *The Atlantic*, November 2, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/11/a-black-church-burned-in-the-name-of-trump/506246/>.

¹⁰⁹ Moira Lavelle, "The Fire Last Time: The 1990s Wave of 145 Church Burnings — Map," Public Radio International, Public Radio International, July 3, 2015, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2015-07-02/fire-last-time-1990s-wave-145-church-burnings-map>.

In a report from October 1998, Robert Rubin, the erstwhile Secretary of the Treasury, and Janet Reno, the erstwhile Attorney General, share that:

"Since June 1996, the National Church Arson Task Force ("NCATF" or "Task Force") has successfully coordinated the efforts of Federal, state and local law enforcement officials in the battle against church arsons. The Task Force has investigated arsons dating back to January 1995, in order fully to assess and address the problem. With the assistance of Congress, which provided additional resources and enacted the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996, the NCATF brought together the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Civil Rights Division and other Department of Justice prosecutors, United States Attorney's offices, local prosecutors, victim/witness coordinators, Community Relations Service (CRS) conciliators and other Federal, state and local law enforcement officials. This partnership continues to achieve considerable success."

"National Church Arson Task Force," The United States Department of Justice, October 2008, <https://www.justice.gov/crt/image-report-cover>.

January 1, 1995 and September 8, 1998.¹¹⁰ More recent statistics by the Pew Research Center show that 51% of the 4,705 cases of fires at houses of worship were intentionally started (the rest being electrical or other accidental causes).¹¹¹ Given these alarming statistics and the history of Black churches being burned by white supremacists groups and individuals, it is not difficult to piece together that anti-Black hatred is once again the cause of these church burnings.

The historical trajectory of present-day attacks on religious sites like *gurdwaras*, mosques, and temples is the burning of and attacks on Black churches, especially in the American south. Contextualizing attacks on Sikh bodies and buildings with the painful lineage of attacks on Black bodies and buildings not only shows that Sikhs are not alone in being inflicted with such violence but also that the root causes of such hate violence are the same across the affected ethno-religious communities. For the most part, Sikhs have yet to see anti-Sikh violence as arising from the same context of white supremacy that gives rise to anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and anti-Black violence. The common denominator in this violence is not the various ways in which these communities are othered but of who is doing the othering and why.

II.V. History Repeats Itself, Congress Doesn't

In the last two decades, incidents of hate violence against mosques and other community centers believed to be mosques (such as *gurdwaras* and temples) have surged in two particular periods: immediately after 9/11, and during the most recent presidential campaigning period and the time following that election. I am combining the campaigning and post-elections period as one, because while there was official turnover in presidencies, anti-Muslim (and inadvertently due to that, anti-Sikh) rhetoric and action remained the same.

¹¹⁰ "National Church Arson Task Force."

¹¹¹ Aleksandra Sandstrom, "Half of All Church Fires in Past 20 Years Were Arsons," *Pew Research Center*, October 26, 2015, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/10/26/half-of-all-church-fires-in-past-20-years-were-arsons/>.

In fact, under Obama, anti-Muslim and anti-Islam policies were enacted through drone warfare rather than today's context of Islamophobic hate speech from the highest rungs of power in this country. It was reported that just in 2016 alone, the U.S. dropped 26,717 bombs in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan—all of which are primarily-Muslim countries. These statistics average out to three bombs every hour in 2016.¹¹² Under the current presidency, while the war against primarily-Muslim countries continues, it is combined with emboldened anti-Muslim hate speech and action, as well as the Supreme Court-upheld Muslim Ban. Not surprisingly, of the countries listed above, four (Libya, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen) are part of the eight countries that account for the "Muslim Ban."

Given these realities, it is not surprising that anti-Muslim and anti-Islam sentiments and hate speech are ubiquitous in this country. In addition to criminalizing (Black,) Brown and Muslim bodies, the spaces these bodies occupy have also come under attack. Even though the full text of the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996 does not specify that it only protects Christian churches, it is seldom cited in investigations of arson and vandalism of mosques, gurdwaras, and temples.¹¹³ It is especially unlikely under the current, Islamo-racist administration that the Act will be amended, or that it will be used to open investigation into and prosecute perpetrators of violence against gurdwaras, mosques, and temples.¹¹⁴ A point that is at the core of each chapter in this dissertation is that the same state that creates a dangerous

¹¹² Medea Benjamin, "America Dropped 26,171 Bombs in 2016. What a Bloody End to Obama's Reign," *The Guardian*, January 9, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jan/09/america-dropped-26171-bombs-2016-obama-legacy>.

¹¹³ Henry J. Hyde, "H.R.3525 - 104th Congress (1995-1996): Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996," webpage, Congress, July 3, 1996, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/104th-congress/house-bill/3525>.

¹¹⁴ I thank Jaideep Singh for his articulation of Islamo-racism, the idea that the anti-Muslim biases and hate speech are not just out of some irrational fear—phobia—of Muslims, but that there is a deeply racist history to how anti-Muslim sentiments have retained their roots in America.

Jaideep Singh, "The Death of Islamophobia: The Rise of Islamo-Racism," Race Files, February 23, 2016, <https://www.racefiles.com/2016/02/23/the-death-of-islamophobia-the-rise-of-islamo-racism/>.

environment for its already marginalized communities cannot and will not take responsibility to protect those communities. Doing so would mean the state has to address the hypocrisies it is constantly balancing of creating a hostile environment for its minorities and then instating programs to curb that hostile environment. Recent cases of burnings of and attacks on places of faith may seem like history repeating itself. However, this repetition has not been enough to warrant an enforcement of or amendment to the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996.

III. Hate Violence Stream Two: The Legality of Hate

III. I. Defining “Anti-Sikh” Hate Crimes

Immediately after the Oak Creek shootings, Sikh activists, community organizers, and advocacy organizations began pushing the FBI to track anti-Sikh hate crimes. John Edwards, the Oak Creek police chief, was among the first to notice this gaping hole when filling out the Hate Crime Incident Report a month after the shootings. He is reported as saying, “There is no box for me to record the six homicides at the gurdwara down the street as anti-Sikh crimes...how can we combat a problem we are not even measuring?”¹¹⁵ Sikh activists mobilized around the cause of giving Sikh deaths from hate violence “the dignity of being a statistic.”¹¹⁶ The logic in this move is that if hate violence against Sikhs can be officially tracked and reported as being explicitly anti-Sikh, then perhaps law enforcement and the FBI will instate programs to curb and eventually eliminate the possibility of such violence. The push to give hate violence-affected

¹¹⁵ Valarie Kaur, “One Year after Oak Creek, Why the FBI Tracking Hate Crimes Is a Victory,” *MSNBC*, August 5, 2013, <http://www.msnbc.com/melissa-harris-perry/one-year-after-oak-creek-why-the-fbi>.

¹¹⁶ Valarie Kaur, “Sikhs Deserve the Dignity of Being a Statistic,” *The Washington Post*, *Valarie Kaur* (blog), August 16, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/guest-voices/post/sikhs-deserve-the-dignity-of-being-a-statistic/2012/08/16/1af99360-e7dc-11e1-8487-64e4b2a79ba8_blog.html.

Sikhs the “dignity of being a statistic” is underpinned by the idea that Sikh lives lost to hate violence should not be regarded as meaningless; *they did not die for nothing*.

The Sikh *panthic ardas* (communal remembrance) is full of explicit and painful references to various *shaheedis* (martyrdoms) from Sikh history, including brutal and gruesome killing of Sikh children under Mughal rule in the South Asian subcontinent in the eighteenth century. These events are recalled in the *panthic ardas* (communal recollection via a standardized prayer) several times each day at every *gurdwara* worldwide. The *panthic ardas* is at once an oral tradition containing collective memory and collective trauma. Arguably, the parts of the *panthic ardas* that list certain numbers and references specific historical figures who were martyred under the same regimes are, in essence, statistical data.¹¹⁷ However, the radical difference is that the *panthic ardas* offers this “data” to the Divine as a supplication, and as meditative remembrance and historical lesson to all those listening to the *ardas* while it is being recited. In the case of the *panthic ardas*, “dignity” does not come from requesting the state responsible for the killings to acknowledge them as culturally appropriate. For Sikhs collected as a *sangat* (community) at a *gurdwara*, power rests in two entities: Guru Granth and Guru Panth. Guru Granth Sahib is invoked to provide Sikh *sangat* with a *hukam* (edict) from its *ang* (limb)¹¹⁸ Guru Panth (the Sikh community at large) is bequeathed with the power to make consensus-based decisions on behalf of Sikhs worldwide. In this context, political power does not simply mean political in the contemporary sense of liberal secular governance and governmentality.

¹¹⁷ In particular, I am referencing parts of the *ardas* that mention *panj pyare*, *char sahibzade*, *chali mukte*, and reference to Sikhs from history who were martyred under Mughal regimes (Guru Arjan, Guru Tegh Bahadur, Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, Bhai Dayala, Bhai Mani Singh, Sikh women and infants in Mir Mannu’s jail, and those referenced in the parts of *ardas* on the Vaddha and the Chhotta Ghallughara).

¹¹⁸ The idea behind referencing the pages of Guru Granth Sahib as “ang” (limb) is that the Guru, containing writings of the previous ten Sikh Gurus and various Hindu and Muslim saints, is the governing “body” for Sikhs.

Rather, it comes from the Sikh concept of *miri piri*, which proposes an inseparable relationship between temporal power (*miri*) and spiritual development (*piri*).

Whereas there is a purported divide between the church and state in western liberal secularism, *miri piri* foregrounds the inseparable relationship between the two. To clarify, *miri* does not refer to state-centric governance on which rest contemporary notions of democracy. *Miri* resists social and political hierarchies that inherently encompass neoliberal systems of capital. Instead, within Sikhi, *Miri* divests power from so-called democracies and places it in the hands of the *Panth* (community), which in turn is guided by spiritual development and enrichment (*Piri*) through Guru Granth Sahib. Because *Miri Piri* is not bound by particular governments and geographies, the ideas it proposes can be exercised anywhere, regardless of borders. In the panthic *ardas*, *miri piri* is evoked within the context of various episodes from Sikh history in which Sikhs have been persecuted, profiled, and killed because of state violence, whether under the Mughal rule in precolonial India, or under contemporary political regimes in East Punjab. The *ardas* is a remembrance and reminder that Sikhs' allegiance is to the Guru Granth and Guru Panth, and to seek "dignity in statistics" from the very regime responsible for the killings in the first place is not only counterintuitive but also further endows the perpetrators (systemic and individual) with more power to kill and be pardoned.

III. II. God Bless America

The plea to the FBI to give Sikhs the "dignity of being a statistic," thus, sits very uncomfortably in the Sikh ethos of *miri piri*. How can the same systems of power that create an environment in which minorities like Sikhs (on account of being marked as Muslim in a deeply Islamophobic environment) are targeted and killed also become the entity from which Sikhs expect protection and reform? The *panthic ardas*, with its emphasis on *miri piri*, is a radical act

not only for implicitly critiquing state violence but also because of how the *ardas* concludes. After several stanzas recalling Sikh collective memory of resilience, the *ardas* concludes with a prayer for *sarbat da bhala* (well-being of all). This supplication, again, is markedly different than nativist and nationalist pleas of "God Bless America." Ironically, while Sikh *ardas* concludes with wishes of universal well-being, some segments of Sikh advocacy groups end up campaigning for causes that do not align with the spirit of *sarbat da bhala* (such as the #LetSikhsServe campaign, discussed at the end of this section).

Arguably, the underlying sentiment of wanting Islamophobic hate crimes against Sikhs to be explicitly tracked and reported to the FBI as anti-Sikh is well-intended. However, several points discredit the efficacy of this campaign. First, to whom is it not already obvious that anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and anti-immigrant racial slurs and epithets are, indeed, motivated by extreme hatred towards Muslims, Arabs, and other "suspect" immigrants? A key systemic reason leading to loopholes and limitations in how these hate crimes are reported, if at all, is the state's trivialization of these cases as stand-alone and "lonewolf" cases. So, the hesitance, delay, or total disregard for counting hate crimes efficiently and accurately is not due to insufficient categories with which to classify the hate crimes or insufficient knowledge of this stream of hate violence. Rather, the hesitance, delay, and total disregard of such hate violence is a result of the conscious decision via the state's keenly aware surveillance apparatuses *in spite of knowing about and being complicit in hate violence*.

Another reason why pushing for the FBI to track anti-Sikh hate violence is misguided is evident in the hate violence itself: to date, no case of hate violence on buildings has been explicitly anti-Sikh. Rather, as exemplified at the beginning of this section, all the instances of racist graffiti and acts of arson and vandalism have been anti-Muslim and anti-Arab, and anti-

ISIS. The cyclical and frequency of this anti-Muslim hate violence experienced by Sikhs do not necessarily mean these cases get officially classified as hate crimes, even if Sikh advocacy organizations desire such a classification.

Even when there is ample evidence supporting that such attacks are due to hate violence, law enforcement is hesitant to report them as such, opting instead to refer to them equivocally. For instance, in 2015, when a *gurdwara* in Buena Park, California was spray painted with the words “Fuck ISIS” and “Islahm” [sic], news media and law enforcement referred to the incident as a “possible hate crime.”¹¹⁹ Two separate incidents targeting Muslims and mosques in the Sacramento-area of California in 2017 were both timidly reported as “possible hate crimes.” In the first case, a passerby in their van ripped out pages of the Quran and threw them towards a mosque in Davis. In the second case, “a burned Quran stuffed with bacon was found handcuffed to a fence at Masjid An-Nur in South Sacramento, the largest mosque in the Sacramento area.”¹²⁰ Another case is from 2016, when letters sent to various mosques in California contained threats of anti-Muslim genocide. Even with explicit targeting of a specific religious community, this case did not “rise to the level of a hate crime.”¹²¹ A recent example from 2018 is when an incident by two men beating an elderly Sikh man was reported as a “possible hate crime.”¹²²

Though each of the above examples is from California, this phenomenon of timid reporting is widespread and spans across state and national borders. For example, there are

¹¹⁹ Greg Lee, “Sikh Temple in Buena Park Vandalized in Possible Hate Crime,” ABC7 Los Angeles, December 10, 2015, <https://abc7.com/1117539/>.

¹²⁰ “Authorities Investigate Possible Hate Crimes At Mosques in Sacramento And Davis,” *CBS Sacramento*, June 24, 2017, <https://sacramento.cbslocal.com/2017/06/24/possible-hate-crimes-at-mosques-in-sacramento-and-davis/>.

¹²¹ Hailey Branson-Potts and James Queally, “Threatening Letters Sent to Mosques Aren’t Hate Crimes, Authorities Say, but They’re Still Searching for the Authors,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 28, 2016, <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-mosque-letters-police-20161128-story.html>.

¹²² Dennis Romero, “2 Arrested in Possible Hate Crime Attack on Sikh Man,” *NBC News*, August 9, 2018, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/2-arrested-possible-hate-crime-attack-sikh-man-n899471>.

similarly-reported cases from elsewhere in the United States (in particular, Texas¹²³ and Washington),¹²⁴ Quebec, Canada,¹²⁵ and London, United Kingdom.¹²⁶ The FBI lists faith, race, ethnicity, physical and mental capacity, and sexual orientation as areas of bias from which hate crimes stem.¹²⁷ Each of these categories then has a list of specific biases. The category of religion lists bias against individuals who are Buddhist, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Hindu, Muslim, Jehovah's Witness, Jewish, Mormon, "Multiple Religions," "Other Christian," "Other Religion," Protestant, and Atheist or Agnostic.¹²⁸ This list does not explicitly mention Sikhs, the faith community that, alongside Muslims, has been the hardest hit by hate violence, especially after 9/11, as well as during and after the last presidential election. For Sikhs to be only implicitly included in the "Other Religion" category from this list by the FBI was especially problematic after the 2012 shootings at the Oak Creek gurdwara in Wisconsin.

There is also a skewed notion of nationalism and religiosity in this hate violence. God is invoked via graffiti and is called upon to bless America, *only America*. The universality of the belief in God is not part of this religiosity. It is a god with borders and a nationality—American. When invoked by white supremacists, this American god is made complicit in hate violence against Brown bodies. What kind of god is this? Often times racial epithets are paired with pro-America markings, implying that attacks on Muslims and Arabs are done in the service of the nation, blessed by a god with borders. Given that this very logic is deployed by the U.S.

¹²³ Fernando Ramirez, "Hate Crimes Are Rarely Prosecuted in Texas," *Houston Chronicle*, August 3, 2018, <https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/texas/article/Texas-hate-crimes-that-made-headlines-13130499.php>.

¹²⁴ Artemis Moshtaghian, Huizhong Wu, and Susannah Cullinane, "Sikh Man's Shooting in Washington Investigated as Hate Crime," *CNN*, March 6, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/05/us/washington-sikh-shooting/index.html>.

¹²⁵ "Ottawa Police Investigating Possible Hate Crime at West-End Mosque," *CTV News Ottawa*, January 30, 2018, <https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/ottawa-police-investigating-possible-hate-crime-at-west-end-mosque-1.3781289>.

¹²⁶ Zahra Ullah and Mitchell McCluskey, "London Muslim Center Collision Investigated as Possible Hate Crime," *CNN*, September 19, 2018, <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/09/19/uk/uk-muslim-center-collision-intl/index.html>.

¹²⁷ "2017 Hate Crime Statistics," FBI, accessed January 23, 2019, <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2017/topic-pages/incidents-and-offenses>.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

military to justify occupations in various (Muslim-majority) countries, it is hardly surprising that the logic trickles down and turns into white rage on Brown bodies in America. By emphasizing that the underlying reason for such hate violence is deeply rooted racialization of Muslims and Islam as threatening, the point here is not to discredit or disavow the fact that Sikh spaces become targets of this hate violence. The point is that not only do the hateful markings and attacks on Sikh spaces lack evidence that would suggest they are directed at Sikhs, but that the markings and attacks on Sikh spaces are, to quote Jaideep Singh again, markedly Islamo-racist.¹²⁹

A related point is on the direction of the discussion and national debate on hate violence. In typical manner of western liberal media, any case of hate violence by white men against Brown bodies is narrativized and remembered through emphasis on the victims. The emphasis is seldom on individual perpetrators and systemic forces that produce an environment of hate. For instance, most of the short-lived media coverage on the Oak Creek shootings focused on the peace-loving, model minority community of Sikhs, not on the fact that the shooter was radicalized while serving in the U.S. military. While in the military, Wade Michael Page was dishonorably discharged. The reason for his dishonorable discharge was not his extremist beliefs while at the military base in Fayetteville, North Carolina (which the Southern Poverty Law Center describes as “the home base for a brazen cadre of white supremacist soldiers”).¹³⁰ The reason for his dishonorable discharge was *excessive drinking*.¹³¹ These details on the shooter’s life are known not because news media channels discussed them at length; this information is

¹²⁹ Singh, “The Death of Islamophobia: The Rise of Islamo-Racism.”

¹³⁰ “Sikh Temple Killer Wade Michael Page Radicalized in Army,” Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed September 23, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2012/sikh-temple-killer-wade-michael-page-radicalized-army>.

¹³¹ Ibid.

known through post-Oak Creek investigative journalism and through reports by organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). The fact that someone like Page was not only permitted but thrived in a white supremacist environment in a federal agency is quite telling. These are not the focus points that media emphasized in its brief coverage on Oak Creek. The focus was simplified to the victimization of Sikhs, not on why and by whom they were victimized. This dynamic exists to this day, as Oak Creek's annual commemorative events organized by Sikhs across the country are centered on remembering the victims, not critiquing the reasons something like Oak Creek happened at all.

III.III. Indexing "Anti-Sikh"

To desire "the dignity of being a statistic" only further victimizes the victims. Again, the desire to be counted and represented in what is literally a matter of life and death is an understandable instinct, especially since lobbying for political change demands specific numbers. However, the ethical underpinnings of this desire go against fundamental Sikh teachings of the well-being of all (*sarbat da bhala*) and of not exceptionalizing difference as a qualifier for preferential treatment.¹³² What will come from hate crimes statistics in which "anti-Sikh" is a separate category? More importantly, how can seeking statistical recognition from the same entity that has spearheaded surveillance of Muslims in America be justified on moral grounds?¹³³ There seems to be little dignity in being turned into a statistic, as desiring so is essentially akin to desiring to be racially profiled. With such an eager willingness to become part of state regimes of control, critique of the underlying problem of racialization of (Black and) Brown bodies is evaded. This evasion is substituted by a false sense of membership of belonging in the nation.

¹³² Here I am thinking of the shabad from Guru Granth Sahib in which the Guru renounces identifiers of Hindu and Muslim, saying that he is neither. Guru Granth Sahib, 1136.

¹³³ Rana, Junaid, and Gilberto Rosas. "Managing Crisis: post-9/11 policing and empire." (2006): 219-234.

This membership is false because, were the state genuinely interested in protecting its most vulnerable citizens from violence such as of white supremacy, it would reform its policies and practices. Rather than sincerely protecting its most vulnerable members, the state awards those members' willingness to oblige in nation-building by offering programs, such as commemorative programs (for instance, November being designated in California as Sikh Awareness and Appreciation month)¹³⁴. Were the [nation] state sincerely vested in protecting Sikhs, it would do more than instate a commemorative month. Since such direct action is lacking, the Sikh awareness month seems to have done little, as hate crimes continue to target Sikhs in California.

The final critique here of the “dignity of being a statistic” is of statistics themselves. In 2011 the Sikh Coalition began a campaign to press the FBI to designate an “anti-Sikh” category in its annual statistical reports on violence in the country. The goal of the campaign was to remove the statistics on hate violence faced by Sikhs from being presented under the category of “anti-Other Religion,” and list Sikh-specific numbers from that category as explicitly “anti-Sikh.”¹³⁵ It took four years for this campaign to come to fruition, as the FBI added the “anti-Sikh” category starting in 2015. In its own words, the Sikh Coalition explains the importance of the campaign as such:

“The Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990 requires the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to collect hate crime data, including metrics on hate crimes based on religion. This information helps law enforcement officials identify at-risk communities and allows policymakers to dedicate resources more efficiently to support hate crime prevention programs. Even though Sikh Americans experienced a surge in hate violence following 9/11, the FBI did not maintain statistics on anti-Sikh hate crimes...Data drives policymaking, and it is not possible to prevent hate crime unless the full scope of the problem is measured. The

¹³⁴ Many other minority communities are also recognize via heritage months, such as African American Heritage Month (February), Women’s History Month (March), Arab American Heritage Month (April), Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (May), LGBTQ Pride Month (June), Hispanic Heritage Month (September), and Filipino American History Month (October). “Calendar of Events,” California Department of Education, accessed January 23, 2019, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fb/cdecalendar.asp>.

¹³⁵ “2014 Hate Crime Statistics,” FBI, accessed January 23, 2019, https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2014/topic-pages/incidentsandoffenses_final.

inclusion of Sikh Americans in federal statistics and training materials will ensure that Sikh Americans are no longer invisible to policymakers and help law enforcement officials take more proactive steps to prevent future hate attacks against our community.”¹³⁶

This statistical “victory” has its drawbacks. If the Coalition’s goal is to use FBI-reported numbers on “anti-Sikh” hate violence as a means to lobby for stricter hate crime legislation or to call greater attention to the phenomenon of hate violence overall, then the “anti-Sikh” designation is a disservice. At the time of this writing, the latest-available FBI report on annual statistics on hate violence is from 2017 (published in November 2018) reveals that there were 7,106 “single-bias incidents.”¹³⁷ This number represents hate violence that resulted from bias due to race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.¹³⁸ 8,126 offenses resulted from these 7,106 cases of single-bias incidents. Close to half of these offenses were anti-Black. Religious bias accounted for 1,679 offenses, with 58.1% (938 incidents, 976 offenses) being anti-Jewish, followed by 18.7% (273 incidents, 314 offenses) being anti-Muslim. “Anti-Sikh” appears in seventh place at 1.4% (20 incidents, 24 offenses). Appearing after “Anti-Sikh” were numbers less than 1% on anti-Mormon, anti-Hindu, anti-Jehovah's Witness, anti-Buddhist, and anti-Agnostic/Atheist.¹³⁹ On November 13, 2018, five days after the FBI published its 2017 report on hate crimes, the Sikh Coalition issued a press release capturing some of the limitations of the report:

“This morning, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) released another alarming, but still flawed annual report on hate crime in the United States.

The FBI report details hate crimes rising in 2017 for the third consecutive year with 8,437 hate crime offenses, including 24 anti-Sikh hate crimes. The 243%

¹³⁶ “FBI Hate Crime Tracking Campaign,” The Sikh Coalition, accessed January 23, 2019, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/legal-and-policy/fbi-hate-crime-tracking-campaign/>.

¹³⁷ The FBI defines “single-bias incident” as “an incident in which one or more offense types are motivated by the same bias.” This definition does not take into account intersectional hate violence. The latter is termed “multiple-bias incident.” “2014 Hate Crime Statistics.”

¹³⁸ “2017 Hate Crime Statistics.”

¹³⁹ “2017 Hate Crime Statistics.”

increase in anti-Sikh hate crimes and overall 16.7% increase since the 2016 report underscores that hate in America continues to surge. However, due to systemic underreporting, there remains a significant gap between FBI hate crime data and the reality on the ground for Sikhs and other minority communities across the United States. According to a Bureau of Justice Statistics 2017 report, Americans experienced an average of 250,000 hate crimes per year from 2004-2015.”¹⁴⁰

At first it is unclear where the impressive statistic of a 243% increase in anti-Sikh hate crimes comes from. However, the numbers make sense when comparing the seven anti-Sikh offenses listed in the 2016 report and the 24 listed in the 2017 one. The increase from seven to 24 amounts to a 243% increase. As a percentage, this number speaks much louder than what it is actually based on. Those in or close with the Sikh community know very well that the actual number of (reported and unreported) incidents of hate violence experienced by Sikhs in 2017 is well in the hundreds, not 24. The current president’s Islamophobic and anti-immigrant rhetoric has only made matters worse for minorities like Sikhs, casting them as perpetual foreigners. The Sikh Coalition’s critique of the report as “still flawed” and as being riddled with “systemic underreporting” is a continuation of the organization’s critiques in 2017 regarding the hate crimes report of 2016. Both in 2017 and 2018, the Coalition has urged [city and state] law enforcement agencies to have mandatory reporting of hate crimes to the FBI.¹⁴¹

The idea is that mandatory reporting of hate crimes to the FBI will result in a more accurate picture of the gravity of hate violence against Sikhs in America. While this makes logical sense, the number of hate crimes that victims do not report far outnumber these statistics. There are multiple reasons for why individuals affected by hate violence choose not to report their cases to their local law enforcement agencies. The ubiquity and normalization of racist hate

¹⁴⁰ “Sikhs Implore Action & Accountability In Response To New FBI Hate Crime Stats,” *Sikh Coalition* (blog), accessed July 3, 2019, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/press-release/sikhs-implore-action-accountability-response-new-fbi-hate-crime-stats/>.

¹⁴¹ “Rising Hate Crimes Require Better Reporting,” The Sikh Coalition, November 22, 2017, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/blog/2017/rising-hate-crimes-require-better-reporting/>.

speech are related phenomena in which the one enables the other. For racial and ethnic minorities, accepting and expecting racist hate speech is a daily reality. Cases of hate violence that are reported are ones that involve physical altercation and damage to property, as such incidents fall outside of the perimeter of ubiquitous, normalized violence (though not by much). A third consideration into why survivors of hate crimes may be hesitant to report hate violence is out of fear of backlash, whether from the perpetrators or from the legal apparatus to which they would be reporting. These factors become even more complicated for undocumented people, especially women in vulnerable situations of abuse and violence, as they fear that calling the police for help may result in deportation.¹⁴² In the Epilogue I discuss that Punjabi Sikh men form the fastest-growing community of undocumented people in the America. This reality, put together with the reality of Sikh men becoming victims of racial hate crimes, presents a bleak picture of the accuracy and reliability of hate crime statistics published by government agencies like the FBI. Despite these factors, organizations like the Sikh Coalition need to rely on statistics to lobby for equal rights and anti-discriminatory policies.

Data is the driving factor behind policymaking, and herein lies the irony. Since policy change depends on data, it seems antithetical to want a separate “anti-Sikh” hate crimes category. Now that the FBI has included this category in its annual report on hate crimes in the country, the resulting numbers seem to be backfiring against the desired result showing the gravity of hate violence faced by Sikhs. Three years of annual reports by the FBI on hate crimes consistently showing gravely underreported numbers of “anti-Sikh” hate crimes somewhat explains why the Sikh Coalition, based on the FBI’s reports, relied on the statistic of a 243% increase in “anti-Sikh” hate crimes between 2016 and 2017. As discussed above, the actual “official” numbers

¹⁴² Adams, Margaret E., and Jacquelyn Campbell. "Being undocumented & intimate partner violence (IPV): Multiple vulnerabilities through the lens of feminist intersectionality." (2012), 32.

behind this 243% increase are seven “anti-Sikh” hate crime offenses in 2016, and 24 in 2017.¹⁴³ It appears that having seen how inaccurately the annual reports present “anti-Sikh” hate crimes, the Sikh Coalition is both working with and against the FBI-provided data. The organization is using the data to speak back to the agency; this is where the statistic of a 243% increase in “anti-Sikh” hate crimes data is instrumentalized. The Coalition is also resisting the FBI’s “official” data by critiquing the underreporting by citing another statistic, that of the 2017 report by the Bureau of Justice, which gives the number of 250,000 hate crimes in total between 2004 and 2015.¹⁴⁴ This statistic averages out to 22,727 hate crimes per year, a number more than three times greater than that of the total number of hate crimes listed in the FBI’s report on hate crimes in 2017. My analysis here is only on the inaccuracies in the FBI’s numbers on “anti-Sikh” hate crimes. The reports’ statistical shortcomings and misrepresentations are even more problematic when combined with the skewed numbers of hate crimes against other minority ethnicities, races, faiths, genders, and sexualities. Why, then, do organizations like the Sikh Coalition, continue to put their faith in the very government agencies that are devaluing the lives of the people these organizations are advocating for? More importantly, why do these “official” FBI reports leave out who the perpetrators of these hate crimes are? Nowhere in the reports is there any indication of white supremacy being the reason for the hate crimes against the victims. There is a similar hesitance by Sikh advocacy organizations in explicitly naming white supremacy and white supremacists as the reasons for racialized hate crimes.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ The FBI’s report gives the statistic of 7,175 hate crime incidents in 2017. “2017 Hate Crime Statistics.”

¹⁴⁴ “Hate Crime Victimization, 2004-2015” (Bureau of Justice Statistics, June 2017), https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/hcv0415_sum.pdf.

¹⁴⁵ A quick keyword search on the Sikh Coalition and SALDEF’s websites reveals that neither Sikh advocacy organization has used “white supremacy” anywhere on their online presence. Both have used “white supremacist” in their content, though only in reference to incidents and shooters that news media has clearly labeled as “white supremacist,” such as the Oak Creek shootings and their perpetrator, Wade Michael Page. A third active Sikh media publicity organization, National Sikh Campaign, does not have a keyword search feature on its website.

The drive for “anti-Sikh” hate crime statistics seems even more counterintuitive due to two interrelated points: First, based on the entirely anti-Islam racial epithets white supremacists hurl at Sikhs, to classify the hate violence Sikhs face as “anti-Sikh” seems unjustifiable. Secondly, related to this latter point and to the idea that data drives policy change, it seems odd that a Sikh advocacy organization proposes counting “anti-Sikh” violence separate from anti-Muslim hate violence. Combining the numbers from “anti-Sikh” hate violence with the data on already existing category of anti-Muslim hate violence will obviously result in higher numbers for anti-Muslim. This strategy of combining data on anti-Muslim statistics with “anti-Sikh” ones may not be the statistical recognition the Sikh Coalition seeks. However, this strategy will accomplish what the Coalition desires—more data on hate violence.

Wanting “anti-Sikh” statistics separate from those on other communities, especially Muslim, misses that racialization is the underlying foundation of hate violence. As Kumarini Silva argues, in the contemporary moment, “Brown” is no longer solely an ethnic designation. Rather, “Brown” has become a politicized and racialized category that can be consumed for entertainment and pleasure as easily as it can be marked as a threat to be destroyed.¹⁴⁶ As a racially, religiously, and politically-loaded category, “Brown” has become the location of the unknown, different, perverse, backward, and dangerous. The racialization of Brown as a site through which these various paranoias are negotiated is fundamentally the same process as the racialization of Black and indigenous. Sikh bodies are part and parcel of this racialization not as racial others in contradistinction to Muslim bodies, but as an extension of them. Centuries of racialization of Brown means the term has become a large, nebulous categorization to mean available, uncultured, less than, and disposable. This nebulous categorization does not

¹⁴⁶ Silva, Kumarini. *Brown Threat: Identification in the security state*. University of Minnesota Press, 2016.

differentiate between the various shades, languages, dialects, cultures, traditions, and religions of Brown-ness. Simply put, wanting a designated category of “anti-Sikh” hate crimes seems futile when, at the systemic level of state violence and through the perspective of hate groups, Sikh is synonymous with Brown, Arab, Hindu, and Muslim.

III.IV. Hate is Violence

Amidst a cultural and political climate in which Sikh bodies keep becoming targets of racist hate violence, it is understandable that the Sikh Coalition, the largest Sikh advocacy organization in the country, is relied upon and aims to advocate for Sikhs in America. The Coalition has been successful in fighting numerous legal battles to support Sikhs who have been discriminated against in the workplace, at school, and in various other aspects of the public sphere.¹⁴⁷ For Sikhs in the country, it is now unimaginable not having the Sikh Coalition (or the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)) to call when facing workplace discrimination, bullying at schools, and encounters with hate violence. Winning legal battles has meant having to participate in assimilationist and model minority politics. With this regard, one of the most notable projects spearheaded by the Sikh Coalition is the #LetSikhsServe campaign. This goal of this campaign is to get the U.S. military to reverse its bans on religious headwear, as this rule prevents ethno-religious minorities like Sikhs from joining the U.S. military. The Coalition specifies that the army does permit religious headwear; other branches of the military do not.¹⁴⁸ Due to its enticing educational opportunities and career pathways, the military attracts many young people from the lower rungs of the class hierarchy. Without such incentives, higher

¹⁴⁷ “Sikh Coalition Wins Victory for Sukhbir Kaur NWL Settles Employment Discrimination Lawsuit,” The Sikh Coalition, September 27, 2011, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/blog/2011/sikh-coalition-wins-victory-for-sukhbir-kaur-nwl-settles-employment-discrimination-lawsuit/>.

¹⁴⁸ “Sikhs in the U.S. Armed Forces,” The Sikh Coalition, accessed January 23, 2019, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/ending-employment-discrimination/sikhs-in-the-u-s-armed-forces/>.

education and promising careers would otherwise be beyond reach for many that the military recruits.

Sikhs' racialization in the colonial period as a "martial race," and Sikhs' heavy presence as soldiers in both World Wars and in America's various wars frames the faith tradition as one that is, by default, pro-military, and thus, in support of imperialism. In this biologically-racialized framing, Sikhs are believed to be "naturally" fit for military service, an idea that appears to be a forerunner to #LetSikhsServe.¹⁴⁹ However, the capitalization of Sikh bodies in pursuit of empire sits oddly with Sikh ethos. The faith tradition's core philosophy of the inseparability of temporal power (*miri*) and spiritual development (*piri*), represented via a sword for each, can be easily misinterpreted as Sikhi also being "naturally" inclined to serve the nation state. However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, *miri* does not refer to governmentality in the contemporary sense. It refers to the sovereignty vested in each individual being, a sovereignty that is defined neither by borders, nor through the conception of the modern nation state. *Piri* is a twin development of *miri*, and vice versa. The cultivation of *piri* is what enables one to see *miri* in themselves and in all others. The two are interdependent. The utilization of twin swords to represent this idea delegitimizes the state as the sole proprietor of power. This delegitimization of statehood transfers power to people, an idea that helps maintain each individual's sovereignty and relegates the Divine as the ultimate commander in chief.

Though my focus in this chapter is not on the #LetSikhsServe campaign, it is important for me to include my critique of it here, as it is revealing of how the Sikh Coalition shapes its narrative on Sikhs in the United States. In a 2013 co-authored piece, Sikh American activist and

¹⁴⁹ Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), <https://www.manchesterhive.com/abstract/9781847793942/9781847793942.xml>.

public health professor Prabhjot Singh and scholar and activist Simran Jeet Singh (the latter being hired by the Sikh Coalition as its Senior Religion Fellow) argue that Sikhs being prohibited to “contribute to one of the most powerful forces that binds Americans as a people: shared sacrifice in an all-volunteer military that works tirelessly to defend and promote our common values as Americans” is a missed opportunity to challenge what America and Americans look like.¹⁵⁰

Arguments for “allowing” turbans (and hijabs) to serve in the military squarely makes Sikhs complicit in the military industrial complex (an extension of the latter being the border industrial complex, a formation, as discussed in the Epilogue, that is severely affecting Punjabi Sikhs in this very moment). Seeking permission to practice one’s faith is at odds with the idea of individual sovereignty, as represented by *piri*. From whom is the permission sought, and why? Why is the Sikh Coalition desiring government sanction for Sikhs to kill in Islamophobic regimes, especially as the people it (the Sikh Coalition) represents are themselves being killed due to Islamophobia? The answers to these questions further create friction between the Sikh ethos of *miri piri* on the one hand, and advocacy for Sikhs to serve in the military on the other. The challenges that Sikh advocacy organizations in the United States face are entirely understandable, though not pardonable from a critical perspective. For example, an organization like the Sikh Coalition cannot fight legal battles against workplace discrimination in support of Sikhs’ right to practice their faith *and* critique the country’s military industrial complex. Doing so would cast the organization as anti-patriotic and would thus severely jeopardize the organization's political lobbying efforts.

¹⁵⁰ Prabhjot Singh and Simran Jeet Singh, “Let Sikhs Serve in the U.S. Military,” *TheHill*, August 5, 2013, <https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/religious-rights/315357-let-sikhs-serve-in-the-us-military>.

Muslim advocacy organizations in America face exactly this dilemma, though their encounters with it are even more deeply entrenched in the complexity of it. It is for this reason that, in the days following 9/11, the Muslim ulama issued a fatwa with regard to Muslim American soldiers' allegiance in the U.S. military. As Muslim Studies scholar Basheer Nafi has explained, "the fatwa gave permission to American Muslim soldiers to participate in the American military efforts against the perpetrators of the attacks, even if that involved the declaration of war against a Muslim country."¹⁵¹ Nafi further explains that the fatwa's perspective is that the allegiance of Muslim American soldiers is to the United States.¹⁵² The fatwa's liberal position on Muslim Americans in the military does not represent the views of large communities of Muslims in the country, as their opinions on the issue are far more critical of the "War on Terror." The reason I make this connection between the conundrums faced by Muslims and Sikhs in the U.S. military is because of the ramifications of racialization that all Muslims, and therefore "Muslim-looking" people (i.e. Sikhs), are subjected to.

The foremost critique of the conflation of Islam, Brown skin, and turbans and hijabs as threats to national and global security is that it racializes Muslims and all others perceived to be Muslims. In a global society ordered by racial hierarchies, how one is seen means the difference between being white and thus being able to exist without scrutiny, versus being Black and Brown and being constantly surveilled and dehumanized. Implicit but seldom discussed in this critique of racialization is the space to dissent. A parallel effect of racialization is that it leaves little room for those who are racialized to dissent from popular and majoritarian views. Muslims and "Muslim-looking" people not in support of their community members being in the military and

¹⁵¹ Nafi, Basheer M. "Fatwā and war: On the allegiance of the American Muslim soldiers in the aftermath of September 11." *Islamic Law and Society* 11.1 (2004): 78.

¹⁵² Nafi, 78.

in the “War on Terror” are immediately cast as unpatriotic, and thus, undeserving of being American. For a nation founded on the disenfranchisement and genocide of Indigenous people and dehumanization of Black people, it is not surprising that Islamophobic, xenophobic, and misogynist views of white supremacist hate groups in the country do not cast their own members as unpatriotic and un-American.

The double bind of being an ethnic minority and thus having little room to dissent without consequences affects even for those who do *not* dissent. This is so because systems of racialization, whether through popular media or governmental policy, do not differentiate between the patriotic, non-dissenting “model minorities,” and their dissenting counterparts. Patriotic, pro-military, conservative Sikhs are not spared the gaze of racialization.¹⁵³ Further, Sikhs (and Muslims) who join the military and swear to protect the nation against threats are accorded no governmental protection from the violence of xenophobia and Islamophobia within the nation.

The possibility of building and living in a world devoid of hate violence seems impossible. Perhaps this is so because, amidst a society in which there are multiple types of violence in both the public and private spheres (domestic, gun, sexual, and colonial violence, to name a few), hate violence is categorized as another type of violence. However, what difference would it make if, rather than categorizing it as one of many types of violence, hate violence were looked upon as violence itself? In other words, how could hate violence be further unpacked and tackled if the argument becomes that hate *is* violence? In this reframing, hate is not simply a byproduct of fears and anxieties of various kinds; it is the cause behind them.

¹⁵³ In Chapter 3, I discuss the case of Surjit Singh Malhi, a turban-wearing Punjabi Sikh man whose body and property were attacked by white supremacists in August 2018. At the time of the attack, Malhi was putting up campaign signs in support of the GOP politicians of his locale in Stanislaus County, California.

IV. Hate Violence Stream Three: Translating Hate

IV. I. The Etymology of Hate

I turn to etymology to help illustrate my arguments on how hate *is* violence. In Punjabi, Hindi, and Urdu, the most commonly used words for “hate” and “hatred” are *nafrat*. *Nafrat* is derived from the Persio-Arabic root, *nafr*, meaning “to wound or pierce.”¹⁵⁴ I use this brief discussion of etymology to reinforce my proposition of seeing hate as violence. As the root *nafr* illustrates, hatred wounds and pierces. The perpetrators of hate violence wound their victims psychologically and physically. The hatred that fuels this violence also wounds and pierces its perpetrators. These perpetrators—angry, white supremacists—act on behalf of the state, attempting to save it from some notion of racial decadence. One bullet and one body at a time, they attempt to rid the country of a fabricated threat to national security. In *Saving the Security State*, Inderpal Grewal critiques what liberal news media calls him: the shooter. “Not called a killer, murderer, or criminal, this perpetrator is called a “shooter,” and he is an exceptional US citizen who belongs to the past and a future of the racial, imperial security state.”¹⁵⁵ Grewal compares how “shooter” is reserved by the media to refer to white, American, male killers, especially in cases of hate violence, whereas “terrorist” connotes Muslim.¹⁵⁶ She also compares the role of “the shooter” in video games, arguing that, “The advent of the “first-person shooter” video game is also part of the genealogy of the shooter, masking violence as a game.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ It is the same *nafr* from which the English word “nefarious” is derived. Latin etymology for “nefarious” is the combination of *ne*, meaning “not,” and *fas*, meaning “divine law.”

¹⁵⁵ Grewal, Inderpal. *Saving the Security State: Exceptional Citizens in Twenty-first-century America*. Duke University Press, 2017, 185.

¹⁵⁶ Grewal, 187

¹⁵⁷ Grewal, 186

Grewal's critiques that the narrativization process of "the shooter" (and less often, "guman") trivializes violence, "muddying the divide between sport or play, and killing."¹⁵⁸

The "shooter" is just as much a victim of the hate violence he unleashes on the bodies and buildings of his targets. This particular point is in no means a sympathization with the angry, white, American male who acts on behalf of the security state. Rather, it is a call for that figure to see how he is being utilized by the state through its fabrication of racialized fear and paranoia. While the "shooter" may seem his hateful acts as necessary, just, and noble, he is as much a victim of state violence as the Black and Brown bodies he targets. The security state awards the "shooter" with social impunity, labeling his acts of violence not as domestic terror, but as as those of a mentally unstable, lonewolf individual who was a victim of his own mental condition. To be utilized by the state as a gatekeeper of "security" is a crime itself, as those whom it entraps are wounded and pierced by the very hate violence they learn to espouse. This framing of the "shooter" as a vehicle of the state does not absolve the angry, white, American terrorist of the crimes he commits. It simply adds a new and different perspective in the operatives of hate violence.

IV. II. Loss for Words

This section furthers the above discussion on the language used to understand hate violence. In particular, I turn to a recent encounter with the limits of translating "hate crime" into Punjabi: In August 2017 I was asked to address a small gathering of Sikhs in a *gurdwara* workshop in a Detroit suburb. The goal of the workshop was to share academic research from the field of Sikh Studies being pursued by scholars within the Sikh community in the U.S. Having

¹⁵⁸ Grewal, 188

spent a few years in Detroit and making close ties with the Sikh community there, as well as in the Sikh Studies network at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, I was well aware of what the setting and context of the workshop would be. I presented my research on hate violence faced by Sikh bodies and buildings in the country. A few days prior to the workshop, I conducted an informal survey, asking my network of Sikh individuals to share Punjabi words or phrases for “hate crime.” I received close to forty responses regarding my question. While my question did not garner an exact phrase for “hate crime,” it did receive translations of combinations of words for “dislike,” “hate,” and “incident” with words for “crime,” “genocide,” “offence,” and “communal violence.”

The terms for “incident” and “communal violence” have very particular implicit meanings for Punjabi Sikhs. *Hadsa* (incident) and *firku hinsa* (communal violence) are most commonly associated with anti-Sikh violence by the government of India in the 1980s and 1990s, when the latter led bloody assaults on Sikh bodies and buildings throughout India. The mass “disappearances” and extrajudicial killings of Sikh men (and in some cases, women) by the Punjab Police in that period are crimes for which most of perpetrators enjoy impunity into the present day. Ensaaf, a nonprofit human rights organization, has documented 5,130 cases of such “disappearances” and extrajudicial killings.¹⁵⁹ *Firku hinsa* also has another implicit meaning that is specific to the sociopolitics of the South Asian subcontinent. In this context, “communal violence” refers to the violence during the Partition period of 1947, anti-Sikh violence from the 1980s and 1990s, and ongoing violence by right-wing Hindu organizations and politicians against religious minorities in India, namely Christians, Muslims, and Sikhs. Violence against so-called “lower caste” communities in India is also implicit in the term “communal violence.”

¹⁵⁹ “Key Statistics on Documented Cases of Enforced Disappearances & Extrajudicial Executions in Punjab, India” (Ensaaf, 2018), <https://data.ensaaf.org>.

So, while the respondents (all of whom are South Asian Sikhs) of my question on Punjabi terms for “hate crime” did provide *nafrati hadsa* (lit. incident of hate) and *firku hinsa* (communal violence), these terms are first and foremost specific to anti-Sikh violence in South Asia. Their use in reference to racial hate violence Sikhs face in the U.S. (and elsewhere in the west) is a linguistic act loaded with entirely different geographic and chronological connotations for Sikhs globally.

Given this linguistic limitation, as well as the frequency with which Sikhs become targets of racial hate violence, the issue of which words Punjabi Sikhs can use to discuss and describe incidents of racial hate violence cannot be overstated. How does one begin to discuss what they and their community are facing when their tongue is tied from the limitations of language and from the trauma of violence? Which words can Sikhs in the U.S. use to discuss race-based hatred, a kind of hatred much different in ideology than the caste, class, and faith-based violence they know from South Asia?¹⁶⁰

A colloquial term in Punjabi for the “elderly” is *siane*, which translates to “wise” or “learned.” Assuming they are open to conversing about it, how could I have a conversation with my *siane* to ask them about their encounters with racism? How would we discuss that the roots of the hate violence they have seen, heard about, or experienced themselves are based on centuries of demonizing and dehumanizing their non-white bodies and non-Judeo-Christian traditions as backwards, barbaric, and in need of “salvation?” Because of the limitations of language and because of the fear of retraumatizing individuals when asking them to discuss their encounters, these are difficult conversations to engage in. This trauma also transmits onto others through circulation of photographs of attacked bodies. In the case of the attack on the 71-year-

¹⁶⁰ By this, I mean that violence Sikhs face(d) in South Asia is rooted in systems of caste, class, and faith. Violence on the basis of race

old Sahib Singh Natt in Manteca, California, the trauma transmitted through circulation of happenstance footage captured by security cameras installed outside the home Natt happened to be walking by at the time of the attack.¹⁶¹ Nearly every news outlet that reported the attack on Natt used the footage as part of the coverage. Now, nearly three months since the August 2018 incident, the video footage survives via an internet archive, resurfacing in web results for hate violence against Sikhs in California.

IV.III. The Violence of Translation

The brief discussion above on terminology and its context serves as a reminder on the limits of linguistics: “hate crime” implies something very different for Sikhs in the United States than for those in India. A related reminder is on the violence of translation itself. As language theoretician Lawrence Venuti argues, beyond using translation as a tool to obtain foreign knowledge, it has become a powerful tool in pursuit of empire (the necessity of “native informants” and translators during war, for instance).¹⁶² The location of translation as violence is not only with regard to imperialism. Even in mundane contexts, translation is always reductive. Due to this reason, there can be no exact translations. There is no one-for-one act of translation, especially as such an equation does not exist due to varying structures of grammar, pronouns, (un)gendering, and so forth among different languages. For instance, translations of Gurbani into English mistranslate, gender, and misgender the Divine always as a male God. In their original Gurbani form, the many terms used for “God” play with gender fluidly, sometimes referring to

¹⁶¹ Matthew Haag, “Police Chief’s Son Charged in Attack on Sikh Man in California,” *The New York Times*, August 11, 2018, sec. U.S., <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/09/us/sikh-man-attacked-california.html>.

¹⁶² Lawrence Venuti, “Translation as cultural politics: Regimes of domestication in English.” *Textual Practice* 7.2 (1993): 208-223.

the Divine using the male pronoun, sometimes the female pronoun, and many times, with no gender specification.¹⁶³

The violence of translating “hate crime” becomes doubly violent. In addition to translation being inherently violent, the actual words needed to translate the term are *about* violence. As discussed above, “hate crime” means something very different for Sikhs in East Punjab than for those in the U.S.. In one location, the context of the term is exclusively about communal violence, and in another location, it is about racial violence. What words can Sikhs in the U.S. use in both Punjabi and English to discuss their experiences of racial hate violence? This question is not simply an intellectual exercise that stretches the limits of translation to and from either language. How this question is answered has severe consequences for Sikhs in the U.S. As discussed in the previous section, Sikh American advocacy is being driven on the basis of having statistics on hate crimes faced by Sikhs. For this advocacy to gain traction among those populations of Sikhs in the U.S. for whom Punjabi is the primary and preferred language, the gravity of “hate crime[s]” needs to be related linguistically. Beyond just the term “hate crime,” racialized violence needs to be understood in Punjabi for Punjabis. Sikhs in India are no strangers to anti-Sikh violence from fellow Brown individuals and political agencies in the country. Whether in or outside India, Islamophobia-based “anti-Sikh” violence is challenging to articulate in Punjabi. This is especially so because of India’s fraught relationship with Muslims within its borders and with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan neighboring its western border. To further complicate matters, brute violence against Sikhs in South Asia by Islamic rulers of the Mughal Empire, which reigned between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, makes the explanation of hate violence faced by Sikhs even more challenging. In the British diaspora

¹⁶³ Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, "Translating Sikh scripture into English." *Sikh Formations* 3.1 (2007): 33-49.

context, “Paki” (short for Pakistani) has long been a racial slur used by whites and non-Muslims of all races and ethnicities to express Islamophobia and xenophobia. In some ways, “Paki” is in Britain what “terrorist” is in America: definitely Brown, maybe Muslim, maybe not.

Within this complex web of anti-Sikh violence historically by Islam-practicing political leaders of the Mughal Empire in precolonial India, anti-Sikh violence from Muslims during the Partition of India and Pakistan (in which there was much anti-Muslim violence by Hindus and Sikhs), and contemporary British society’s (whether that’s British Sikhs, British Hindus, or white Brits) hatred of Muslims and Islam, explaining to Sikhs in the U.S. that the race-based hate violence they are facing is because they are being “mistaken” for Muslims is no easy task. Proposing that hate violence faced by Sikhs in the U.S. and other western nations is rooted in Islamophobia is a troubling idea for those Sikhs to accept who are Islamophobic themselves. For those Sikhs in America, the desire to explicitly count hate violence they face (even if it is blatantly anti-Muslim) as anti-*Sikh* may seem like the only form of retribution from white supremacy.

IV. IV. Symbolic Accessory

Part of the reason this rationale for wanting specific data on “anti-Sikh” hate crimes seems justifiable is the underlying hope the community feels in its desire for numbers. The hope is that if there is specific data on how Sikhs become victims of hate violence, then perhaps there will be some recourse in curbing that violence. This hope, however, has been betraying the Sikh community ever since its first immigrants landed in this country. A panoramic picture of Sikhs’ history and present in the United States shows that the country is just as inhospitable towards them today as it was over a century ago. During the latter context, Sikh laborers forged

community alliances with fellow ethnic minorities not only as a survival mechanism but for reasons of kinship and belonging.¹⁶⁴ Early twentieth century history of South Asian immigrants in North America is full of cases of violent riots (as the anti-Asian riots in Bellingham, Washington in 1907) and protests against their Brown bodies in a world that was (and is) viewed as white space. Fearing that a “tide of turbans” would sweeping the nation and forever change its white social fabric, restrictions on the movement of Brown bodies continued well into the twentieth century via anti-immigrant policies geared specifically at Asian countries.¹⁶⁵

The rest of the twentieth century and all of the twenty-first century are riddled with an anti-immigrant climate as well. This climate has been manifest via institutional racism and discrimination in virtually every aspect of the public sphere (race-based housing discrimination, anti-headcovering laws in companies, humiliating secondary and tertiary security checks airports, and bureaucratic battles preventing construction of faith-based buildings, to name a few). When has this nation *not* been anti-immigrant, and within that sphere, anti-Sikh? How can a community like Sikhs still place its faith and hope in the very system that has, for more than a century, actively worked to limit its social mobility? Somehow, much of the community does still place its hopes in the state, and does so with much vigor of the model-minority syndrome. For instance, hope that the FBI will begin to track anti-Sikh hate crimes is an uncomfortable desire, because such a state agency is widely known to disproportionately target Muslim

¹⁶⁴ Here I am thinking of Nayan Shah’s *Stranger Intimacy*. Shah provides historicized arguments on how immigrants, particularly South Asians, formed intimate ties with fellow immigrant laborers, even though all such nonwhite bodies cast as illicit, perverse, and dangerous. My invocation is also to Karen Leonard’s work on the Punjabi-Mexican community in California’s Imperial Valley. Leonard discusses how Punjabi (mostly Sikh) men in the early to mid 20th century married Mexican American women to bypass laws prohibiting non-white immigrants from owning property and thus laying down permanent roots in America.

Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy - Contesting Race, Sexuality and the Law in the North American West*. University of California Press, 2012. Print.

Karen Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans*. Temple University Press, 2010. Print.

¹⁶⁵ “Tide of turbans” refers to a racist cartoon published in

Americans after 9/11 and Blacks in the 1950s through the 1970s. Wanting the FBI to work with Sikhs, then, is another layer in the critiques of the model-minority idea. It implies that Sikhs in America are model-minorities, thus meriting special accommodations and protections from the state. This formation implies that those groups who fall outside the parameters of model minority citizenry are not deserving of state protection; it implies that their lives matter less. The hope for the FBI to track anti-Sikh hate crimes persists because this hope disregards or is unaware of the systemic [intergenerational] inequalities that keep many communities from accessing amenities and privileges that enable model minorities' successes.

Perhaps Sikhs seeking official recognition in the form of data collected and presented by the FBI is an act of self-preservation. Perhaps this desire is one deemed best out of having weighed other options in pursuit of respite from hate violence. Perhaps Sikh spokespersons advocating for “anti-Sikh” hate crime data collection know very well that between the two options—the FBI collecting “anti-Sikh” hate violence data, and the state holding itself accountable and addressing the overarching, systematized problem of white supremacy—the former is much more likely to happen. This is the point at which hope in the system prevails, because the logic is *some* progress is better than no progress. The logic is that having official statistics on “anti-Sikh” hate violence will denote progress in advocacy for Sikhs in the U.S. The act of a federal agency “lobbying” for Sikhs in this way may even be viewed by Sikhs across the political spectrum as a sign that the state genuinely cares about this minority group. This symbolic appeasement, however, is symptomatic of the modern liberal state. This kind of state is able to both appeal to some of its constituents (such as Sikhs) *and* continue disenfranchising others (such as Blacks and Muslims). How can a community avoid becoming a symbolic accessory for the modern liberal state? The following section turns to this question.

V. Conclusion

The enduring force of white supremacy as the actual culprit of violence against non-white bodies will seldom be seen as the disease it is if the focus by groups like Sikhs is solely based on statistics pertaining to them. Statistical details are an important component a community has at its disposal for matters of (self-)representation. However, if it is a game of numbers that communities like Sikhs wish to partake in, collective data on how various communities are affected by the same issue speaks louder than sectarian groupings of those numbers. How would the power dynamic shift in contemporary society if the statistics collected, reported, and circulated were hinged less on the victims of hate violence but more so on its perpetrators? An immediate consequence of this shift will be seen in how hate violence is narrativized. It would mean, for instance, that prominent news outlets would change their headlines from *Church Shooting Kills 9* to *White Supremacist Youth Kills 9 Black Worshipers*, and *Gunman Kills 6 at a Sikh Temple Near Milwaukee* to *White Supremacist Hate Group Member Kills 6 Sikhs at Their Temple Near Milwaukee*.¹⁶⁶

These proposed changes in how hate violence is reported and narrativized may seem unnecessarily nuanced. However, if accountability of hate violence is not explicitly made present in how the beatings and killings are discussed and remembered, the disease of white supremacist

¹⁶⁶ The first headline is how Charleston's *The Post and Courier* reported the shootings by Dylan Roof in August 2015. That headline dates to a day after the shooting and was above the fold on the day's newspaper. *The Post and Courier* was criticized for permitting an advertisement by a gun shop and shooting range on the same page and day. The advertisement was in sticker form, placed immediately above the headline about the Charleston shootings. The gun shop and shooting range business issued an apology for the poorly-timed advertisement. This incident begs the question, when is there a good time to advertise a gun shop and shooting range in a nation unable and unwilling to control its gun laws? Elliot Hannon, "Charleston Newspaper's Morning After Church Shooting Headline Blocked by Gun Shop Ad," *Slate Magazine*, June 19, 2015, <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2015/06/charleston-post-and-courier-church-shooting-headline-blocked-by-gun-shop-ad.html>. Steven Yaccino, Michael Schwartz, and Marc Santora, "Gunman Kills 6 at Sikh Temple in Wisconsin," *The New York Times*, August 5, 2012, sec. U.S., <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/06/us/shooting-reported-at-temple-in-wisconsin.html>.

hate violence will continue to be presented and perceived as singular incidents, not as the systemic and widespread disease that it is.

Further, rather than only numerating how many Sikhs are affected by hate violence over a period of a year, the accompanying data ought to include details on how many hate groups had been active within that time, where they lived, how many members they had, and so forth. Perhaps the cycle of double victimization (first from the incidents, and secondly of having to verbalize them) of hate violence-affected communities would cease if news and law enforcement branches presented a more holistic and realistic picture of cases of hate violence. Though this simple shift has the power to make profound changes in how hate violence is narrativized and from whose perspective, it is unlikely that such a change will take place. This unlikelihood can be credited to systems of powers, such as law enforcement and media, both of whom control how statistics curate narratives, especially on the war of hate violence.

When members of my Sikh community have asked me to explain my dissertation project to them, the response I receive is generally supportive of my research, along with genuine concern on how to move forward as a community. Through these conversations, I have learned that, overall, the community understands why knee-jerk reactions to “misidentification” as Muslim are problematic. However, there are general sentiments of confusion and helplessness beyond acknowledging how *we’re all in this together*. In short, my dissertation, and in particular, this chapter, is a response to those sentiments of confusion and helplessness. This chapter is a reminder to Sikhs that not only are we intimately familiar with the twin attacks on our bodies *and* buildings, but also that the improvement we seek and institute in the social conditions that birth and enable these attacks will make the difference between only surviving hate violence versus thriving in spite of it. In other words, while seeking symbolic retribution for “anti-Sikh”

hate crimes in the United States brings some immediate comfort to our bruised bodies and busted buildings, that comfort is short-lived if it means that other ethno-religious minorities, particularly Muslims, are perpetually relegated to “random searches,” and thoughts and prayers.

A significant component of coming to terms with the lasting psyche-logical violence of hate violence is *literally* coming to terms. Which terms can the Punjabi Sikh community use to understand hate violence? As I argue in this chapter, at present, there is no particular term or phrase that captures the lived experience of hate violence, as explicable in Punjabi. There are numerous terms in English that capture the essence of hate violence, as exhibited onto Brown bodies today: empire, Islamophobia, Islamo-racism, racial profiling, othering, and so forth. Though each of these encompasses white supremacist hate violence faced by Sikhs, none of them connotes an exclusively “anti-Sikh” experience with that violence. I have argued that there *is* a reawakening or emerging social consciousness among Sikhs in the United States on why they keep becoming targets of hate violence.

To manifest that consciousness into effective and long-term coalition-building with other communities affected by hate violence, then, would mean organizations like the Sikh Coalition fight legal battles as a united front of various groups of ethno-religious minorities against systemic discrimination, xenophobia, and Islamophobia. Although the Sikh Coalition and SALDEF have been including narratives of Muslim Americans’ struggles with many of the same issues as Sikh Americans’, the road to radical-coalition building is long and treacherous. Given the xenophobic, Islamophobic, exploitative, and impunitively socio-political climate in which minorities of all kinds live in precarity, coalition-building demands a position that is simultaneously intersectional, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and anti-hate. To quote Angela Davis, “In a racist society it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist.” In this racist

society, our anti-racist debates may begin with discussion on how damaging hate violence is, but they must evolve with the view that hate *is* violence. Advocacy that perpetuates systems of oppression (like the military industrial complex and Sikh advocacy's being complicit in it via the #LetSikhsServe campaign) is short-lived and misguided. In this vein, for instance, seeking Islamophobic "anti-Sikh" hate crime statistics as a separate category from anti-Muslim ones would be a disservice to advocacy that is otherwise desirous of coalition-building across various communities.

To emphasize how hate violence and hate-as-violence is a disgusting phenomenon that affects *all* racially, sexually, ethnically, and religiously non-normative communities, I conclude this section with a pop culture reference. In their 2016 song titled "T5," the British and American South Asian hip hop group Swet Shop boys poignantly critiques racial profiling and ill treatment of Brown bodies, especially at airports (the "T" refers to "terminal," as at airports, and hints at the idea of "terminal" as in disease, something that leads to death). I cite the concluding verse of T5, because it speaks to a more poignant understanding of the lived experience of bodies of color than "thoughts and prayers." In just a few short lines, the verse vividly captures everyday experiences that Black and Brown bodies have with racialization, pathologization, "slacktivism," and social and physical death. T5 ends with,

*We can't flee when they treat us like dogs with the fleas
 We say please, but they beat us like dogs with disease
 Do I aspire to a hashtag of my memory?
 How many likes will the hate crime receive?
 How does my accent sound when I'm crying?
 How does my accent sound when I'm dying?*

Chapter Two
Resisting Domes, Resistant Domes: A Sikh American Hate-Love Story

Paramjit Kaur
Prakash Singh
Ranjit Singh
Sita Singh
Suveg Singh Khattra
Satwant Singh Kaleka

I. Introduction

These names listed above are of those who were killed in 2012 during a mass shooting at the *gurdwara* in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. A name not listed above is Punjab Singh, an elderly man who survived the shootings, though with critical injuries that have required constant medical care. Along with the words “Never Forget,” the six names listed above appear on the backs of t-shirts worn by the attendees and participants of the “Charhdi Kala 6K,” a memorial walk/run event organized by the Oak Creek Sikh community. How did the memory of a mass shooting at a place of faith transform from tragic remembrance into triumphant commemoration of those killed? What exactly are the triumphs for Sikhs in post-Oak Creek America? Now, more than five years since that August day, “Oak Creek” does not only connote the event of the shootings but also everything that has formed its aftermath, the “post-” period. Oak Creek is a seminal point in Sikh American life, especially for the generation of South Asian Sikhs for whom the event marks a sense of betrayal in and by a country in which they (and in many cases, their parents) were born. Oak Creek has proven that, despite being a “model minority” community, Sikhs are not immune to the violence white supremacy inflicts upon Muslims, Arabs, Blacks,

Indigenous, Latinx, and other racial and ethnic minorities in the country.¹⁶⁷ Because of this bitter realization, the Oak Creek shootings mark a crucial departure from and a renewed starting point in how Sikhs in the U.S. view themselves and represent their community to the broader context of the nation.

In line with other scholars' critiques of the "model minority" myth, I, too, view this idea as problematic. This idea does not take into account how Sikhs have benefited greatly from the workings of racial triangulation of Whites, Blacks, and Asians. As South Asians, Punjabi Sikhs benefit from the triangulated relationships between these three broad communities. Located below the racial superiority of Whites and above that of Blacks, Asians continuously enjoy the benefits of proximity to Whiteness and distance from Blackness. In this triangulation however, rarely is the positioning of Asians as mimicking whiteness seen as problematic by individuals and advocacy organizations. Each time Sikhs in America [feel obligated to] express how "American" they and their faith are is an instance of desiring proximity to Whiteness. In this desire, "America" and "American" are associated with Whiteness. Associating America and American as White[ness] upholds white supremacy, as any conception of the two as non-White is seen as incongruent to Americana. Within this conception, Sikhs are not only outside the parameters of acceptable "American-ness," but often end up placing themselves as such when non-model minority realities (such as of class, legal status, education, and gender) within their community are overlooked or ignored.

¹⁶⁷ Claire Jean Kim, "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans," *Politics and Society* 27, no. 1 (1999): 105–38; Lisa Sun-Hee Park, "Assimilation," in *Keywords for Asian American Studies*, ed. Linda Trinh Võ, Cathy J Schlund-Vials, and K. Scott Wong (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 14–17, <http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=3564347>; Harbans Singh, "Vadda Ghallughara," in *The Sikh Encyclopedia*, accessed December 14, 2018, <https://www.thesikhencyclopedia.com/sikh-struggle-against-mughal-empire-1708-1799/vadda-ghallughara>.

A slow but long forthcoming outcome of this departure has been Sikh Americans vocalizing that the discrimination, hate violence, and xenophobia they have been facing (and continue to face) are due to systemic issues deeply embedded into the fabric of America. The new starting (or reorientation) point for Sikh American activism has thus risen out of the consciousness from the departure discussed above.¹⁶⁸ Before Oak Creek, Sikh American activism had been largely inward-looking, focused mostly on how to secure civil rights and liberties in America. This inward stance can be credited to the state of emergency from which Sikh advocacy emerged in the early 2000s. In the minutes after 9/11, news media channels circulated images of the suspects of the attacks: members of terrorist organizations in the nebulous region of the “Middle East,” the latter (generally erroneously) suggesting the members were Muslim. The most visible register of recognition in these images was the men’s brown skin, beards, turbans. To this day, this visual register, combined with perceived look and sound of Muslims, has concretized and synonymized “terrorist,” making life unlivable for anyone who fits into this mythological conception of “threat.” In the minutes after this visual rhetoric was making

¹⁶⁸ In a satirical skit from 2016 on The Daily Show with Trevor Noah, Hasan Minhaj (who was then a correspondent for the show), a small group of prominent Sikh Americans, some of whom are the founders and board members of the Sikh Coalition, articulate key elements of their faith. In the segment, Minhaj is in the streets of New York City, holding a poster on which are four images (a bird, binoculars, a Sikh man with a turban and beard, and a child playing hide-and-go-seek). He asks random people (all white males, teenaged and older) to identify the Sikh on the poster. In the two exchanges the segment shows, none of the randomly-selected people pulled aside by Minhaj know who or what “Sikh” is, and none correctly answer the question. These exchanges are purposely dramatic, as the purpose is to educate the audience of the show on who Sikhs are. Back in the studio, Minhaj satirically asks the small group of Sikhs brought together for the segment why, upon being mistakenly identified as Muslims, they (the Sikhs) don’t correct them. Simran Jeet Singh, a Sikh activist and scholar, responds, “It’s just not an option for us to throw another community under the bus. Even if it means things are harder for us, we believe it’s the right thing to do.” Immediately before this part of the segment, Minhaj narrates just how ordinary Sikhs are, including emphatic expressions and visuals of them doing mundane things (getting gas, walking on a street, etc.). When one of the Sikh men on the segment is shown eating a hot dog from a street stand, with dramatic shock and surprise, Minhaj’s omniscient voice is heard saying, “Some even eat pork!” The emphasis on pork-eating is itself a distancing from Muslims and Islam, though this point is not explicitly mentioned. Later in this chapter, I critique that while vocalizing that Sikhs “don’t throw another community under the bus,” the Sikh Coalition’s programs endorsing the U.S. military and partnering with the Department of Homeland Security are deeply Islamophobic and undoubtedly put “another community” (i.e. Muslims) under the bus over and over again. *Confused Islamophobes Target American Sikhs*, The Daily Show (Comedy Central, 2016), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RskvZgc_s9g.

the rounds (which have yet to cease) in news media, Sikh men, particularly ones observing their faith requirements of having beards and wearing turbans, became immediate targets of hate violence from angry, patriotic Americans. It was in this state of emergency that the Sikh Coalition emerged and eventually became the largest Sikh advocacy organization in the U.S. To this day that state of emergency remains in effect for all those deemed a “threat” to this country.

I paint the picture above as a reminder of how and why U.S. Sikh advocacy, at least pre-Oak Creek, was inward-looking. In the Introduction, I briefly discuss that 9/11 was a catalyst to this inward turn, as events preceding it, namely the Persian Gulf War, prepared the ground for this advocacy to emerge and take the orientation that it did. In these complicated contexts of racial profiling, when entire communities are deemed a contagion and thus requiring elimination, an inward turn is not only understandable but is a survival mechanism. In these early days of formalized Sikh advocacy, some aspects of the work was broad enough that it was of benefit to other minority groups as well. For instance, Sikhs’ legal battles of overturning bans on headcoverings in certain workplaces and industries also benefit other faith communities for whom headcoverings are essential. Similarly, advocacy work by organizations of other faith has also benefited Sikhs.¹⁶⁹

Since the Oak Creek *gurdwara* shootings in 2012, and especially since the last presidential election in 2016 and its consequential spike in hate-based incidents, Sikh advocacy

¹⁶⁹ For instance, Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJ), Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF), and the Sikh Coalition co-sponsored AB 2845, School Safety: Safe Place to Learn. The bill was passed in California in September 2016 and addresses religion-based bullying in the state’s schools. Cair Webmaster 23sc on October 03 and 2016, “CAIR-CA: Civil Rights Organizations to Celebrate Passage of Landmark Legislation Addressing Bullying and Harassment of Muslim and Sikh Students,” CAIR, accessed July 11, 2019, https://www.cair.com/cair_ca_civil_rights_organizations_to_celebrate_passage_of_landmark_legislation_addressing_bullying_and_harassment_of_muslim_and_sikh_students. October 03 and 2016. <https://ca.cair.com/losangeles/updates/cair-ca-muslim-sikh-groups-file-discrimination-complaints-against-boomers/>.

organizations' allyship with other (non-Sikh) advocacy groups has been more pronounced than ever before.¹⁷⁰ For instance, especially since 2012, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the Sikh Coalition, and South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) have collaborated on press releases following cases discrimination and hate violence in the U.S. The three organizations have also collaborated on advocacy countering bans on headcoverings like hijabs and turbans.¹⁷¹ However, this allyship quickly reaches its limit: the Sikh Coalition cannot effectively partner CAIR while also partnering with the Department of Homeland Security and endorsing the U.S. military, as both of these are deeply Islamophobic (discussed later in this chapter). Until the Sikh Coalition's solidarity with other racialized faith groups and communities is explicitly anti-imperialist, its allyship with them will fall short of change it (the Sikh Coalition) advocates for.

In theory, the decades of work in which Sikh individuals, communities, and advocacy organizations have projected themselves to be "model minorities" should have been enough to protect them from something like white supremacist hate violence. Reality, however, has shown that no amount of patriotism and model minority narratives are enough to safeguard a non-white community from the violence that upholds American and America as white. At this crossroads Sikh advocacy and voice can go in one of two ways: it can continue in the same stream it has been for the last two decades, though with even greater amplification of educating the masses about who Sikhs are (and, thus, who they are not). The other option is to radically reorient the starting point of advocating for Sikhs' rights in the U.S. This option requires deeply critical reflection on the larger systemic reasons the Sikhs keeps becoming the victim of racialized hate

¹⁷⁰"Partnerships," *CAIR California Los Angeles* (blog), accessed July 10, 2019, <https://ca.cair.com/losangeles/what-we-do/outreach-education/partnerships/>.

¹⁷¹ "CAIR-CA: Muslim, Sikh Groups File Discrimination Complaints Against Boomers!"

violence. Such a critique necessitates advocating for and with similarly racialized communities, not in contrast to them. Since the Oak Creek *gurdwara* shootings in 2012, Sikhs' [self-]representation has been a combination of the two options discussed above.

In this chapter I delve into four examples of post-Oak Creek advocacy: the Charhdi Kala 6K walk/run event in Oak Creek; the symbolic meaning and political subtext of the installation of domes at the Oak Creek *gurdwara*; the “Gurdwara Security Toolkit,” a community resource put together by the Sikh Coalition; and the transformation of *gurdwaras* into “total spaces” in times of climatic emergencies. I analyze each of these four forms of mainstream Sikh American advocacy, showing the variety of the ways Sikhs, at an institutional level, see themselves and are seen. Each of these examples shows where Sikh [self-]representation currently stands and with whom it aligns.¹⁷² These examples tackle the question of how the horrific event of the mass shooting at a place of faith has transformed from tragedy to triumph through narrativization and commemoration.

My analysis shows that *seva* (selfless service) efforts initiated by local communities independently of advocacy organizations are not as tethered to model minority and assimilation narratives. Because all *gurdwaras* are designed with large, open spaces and a *langar* (kitchen) facility that serves everyone, these spaces quickly transform into community service and shelter institutions when needed, providing essential provisions to people when local governmental institutions are ill-equipped to. These forms of community service are offered because *seva* is an intrinsic part of the Sikh tradition's ethos, not because community service presents Sikhs as model citizens. For *gurdwaras* to provide these provisions requires little overseeing from, or

¹⁷² I specify that this chapter (and dissertation overall) looks at the most publicly visible and audible segments Sikh American activity. As I explain in the first chapter, my work does not represent or speak for marginalized communities of Sikhs in America, such as Dalit (Ravidassia) Sikhs, and minority Sikh communities, such as 3HO (Sikh Dharma) convert Sikhs.

reliance on, Sikh advocacy organizations. On the other hand, in its advocacy initiatives, the Sikh Coalition represents Sikhs through model minority and assimilatory politics. Because these initiatives lobby to advance the constitutional rights of Sikhs in the U.S., they are obligated to work strategically and closely with both houses of Congress. Understandably, this work requires a fine balance between staying in the confines of political advocacy work and projecting liberties of Sikhs as a sovereign group unbound to structures of governability and freedom. By looking at four examples from the contemporary moment, I demonstrate how hate violence affects Sikhs on a daily basis. The centralizing theme among the examples is how, after the horrific event of a mass shooting by a white supremacist at the *gurdwara* in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, the Sikh community has turned tragedy into triumph. I analyze the meanings and implications of this narrative of resilience, gauging how beneficial some of the “triumphs” actually are. These “triumphs” necessitate that the community align itself with the state in determining how best to practice *Sikhi* in the public sphere. My analysis shows that this alignment benefits the state more than it does Sikhs, as the latter become further shaped as docile subjects by the same imperialist forces that deem Sikhs’ fellow minority communities, particularly Muslims, as suspect. I argue that much of “triumph” in contemporary Sikh advocacy comes at the cost of demonizing Muslims. Following incidents of hate violence that strikes Sikhs in America, every iteration of “We are Sikh” insinuates “We are not Muslim.” In the face of crises, this distancing sits uneasily in the schema of Sikh advocacy, as it goes against Sikh ethos of oneness and self-sacrifice for the well-being of others. Some of the “triumphs” in post-Oak Creek Sikh life may only be so ostensibly.

II. *Charhdi Kala*

Loosely translated, *charhdi kala* means “ever-rising spirits.” *Charhdi Kala* has been a vital concept for the Sikh community since the beginning of the faith tradition in the mid-fifteenth century in South Asia. *Charhdi Kala* (often spelled as *Chardi Kala*) became especially significant in the eighteenth century when the community’s very existence was under threat due to religious persecution. Sikh oral traditions (such as *dhadi var*, “ballads” and *sakhis*, oral history) exemplify how the idea of *charhdi kala* has been used as a method of resilience in the face of *ghallughare* (genocides) during the Mughal Empire. The power behind *charhdi kala* is most clearly evident in how it is used to subvert language, such that the sovereignty of the speaker is maintained, unaffected by surrounding physical conditions (such as *ghallughare*).

For instance, even in extreme conditions in which there was bounty placed on the heads of Sikhs during the first (1746) and second (1762) *ghallughara*, the death toll of which is placed between 37,000, subverting language became a necessary means of survival against all odds.¹⁷³ In such subversion, broadly termed *Khalsa Boli* (“language of the Khalsa,” the latter being the term used to signify Sikhs who choose to be formally initiated into Sikhi), is called upon to carry the spirit of *charhdi kala*.¹⁷⁴ Some examples of this linguistic subversion are using the word for ocean (*samundar*) for milk (*dudh*), implying that this readily-available food contains the depth and richness like that of the ocean. Another example is referring to chickpeas (*chholay*), a basic and affordable food that is commonly fed to horses, as almonds (*badam*), a costly luxury. One more example is of using “palace of mirrors” (*shish mahal*) for hut (*kulli, jhompri, or chhapri*), implying that the Khalsa is as content living in meager conditions as they are in lavish ones.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Singh, “Vadda Ghallughara.”

¹⁷⁴ “Thundering Words: The Martial Language of Nihangs,” *SikhChic*, October 21, 2010, http://sikhchic.com/history/thundering_words_the_martial_language_of_nihangs.

¹⁷⁵ These examples come from oral traditions I have learned growing up in the Sikh community. More examples are listed on an article on SikhChic.com, an online magazine on contemporary Sikh culture: “Thundering Words: The Martial Language of Nihangs.”

I cover this history not as a tangent but to illustrate how the concept of *charhdi kala*, a subversive system of language and power once used by Khalsa Sikhs in the eighteenth century, has made its way into common parlance of diaspora Sikhs in the twenty-first century. Especially after the Oak Creek shootings, the idea of *charhdi kala* has been a necessary survival mechanism. It has helped connect the violence and bloodshed from Oak Creek to the long lineage of struggle and resilience of Sikhs across the world. Recent examples of Sikh struggle are the systemic killing of Sikhs in the Islamic State in Afghanistan and targeting of Dalit Sikhs in Shillong in the Indian state of Meghalaya.¹⁷⁶ Both these cases are from 2018 alone.¹⁷⁷ The Indian state's systemic attacks on Sikh people and places from 1984 and the regime of terror Sikhs faced through the early 1990s in East Punjab still has reverberations today. Many of the identified perpetrators of the attacks roam free, with some even occupying positions of power in the Indian government. Official statistics grossly underreport how many people the Indian military and police force killed in 1984 onward, placing the number of civilians killed at 493. Eyewitness accounts and a BBC report placed the number close to 4,000.¹⁷⁸

The above are harrowing examples from modern Sikh history alone. When put together with early Sikh history, a period full of persecutions and killings, the trauma of this violence necessitates a communal coping mechanism. The idea of *charhdi kala* is one such mechanism, as it allows Sikhs to connect past struggles with present-day ones and offers *dilasra* (“heart

¹⁷⁶ Rajeev Khanna, “Dalit Sikhs Attacked in Shillong: Punjab Govt and SGPC Step in to Help,” *CatchNews*, June 4, 2018, <http://www.catchnews.com/india-news/dalit-sikhs-attacked-in-shillong-punjab-govt-and-sgpc-step-in-to-help-116291.html>; “Suicide Blast Targets Sikhs in Afghan City,” July 1, 2018, sec. Asia, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44677823>.

¹⁷⁷ Although I have only cited very recent cases, there are multiple other cases of state and hate violence that Sikhs have faced prior to this period, such as in Chattisinghpura, India in 2000. “Chattisinghpura Massacre: Sikh Body Dismayed Over Delay In Justice,” *Kashmir Observer*, March 20, 2019, <https://kashmirobsobserver.net/2019/city-news/chattisinghpura-massacre-sikh-body-dismayed-over-delay-justice-41453>.

¹⁷⁸ Harinder Singh, “June 1984 Ghallughara Lies List Light,” *Sikh Research Institute*, June 16, 2017, https://www.sikhri.org/june_1984_ghallughara_lies_list_light.

support”) in challenging times. Though “charhdi kala” is now perceived as a stand-alone phrase with its own context and meaning, it comes from a longer phrase: *Nanak naam charhdi kala, tere bhane sarbat da bhala*. Loosely translated, it means means, “Nanank [the first Sikh Guru] proclaims, rising spirits come through naam [Divine awareness or “meditation”]; Through Your [the Divine’s] will, there is well being of all.” Though in parlance only two words of the whole phrase are used, the meaning of the whole phrase is inferred even when only the words “charhdi kala” are uttered.

II. I. Oak Creek & *Charhdi Kala*

Although for Sikhs *charhdi kala* is a historically significant and socially familiar framework to rely upon when working through individual and collective trauma, its instrumentalization during and after the Oak Creek shootings oversimplifies the radical idea behind it. Overall, with regard to memorial events at Oak Creek, the idea of *charhdi kala* seems to be used by Sikh community leaders and advocacy organizations as that of “rising spirits” or “eternal optimism.”¹⁷⁹ According to this “glass half-full” type of idea, the implication is that *even though* something like the Oak Creek shootings happened, the Sikh community remains positive and hopeful. The critique here is not of the kind of sentiments just listed; rather, the critique is of how the idea of *charhdi kala* is underutilized and slightly misrepresented. When analyzed in the context of significant events from Sikh history and collective memory, the idea is not of whether the metaphorical glass is half-empty or half-full. Rather, the idea is *even if there were no glass*, an individual Sikh and the Sikh community at large would be content, living under *raza* or *hukam* (Divine Will). Whereas optimism denotes the opposite of pessimism, the idea of being

¹⁷⁹ “National Day of Seva Building Groundswell of Momentum,” *Sikh Coalition* (blog), July 2, 2018, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/blog/2018/national-day-seva-building-groundswell-momentum/>.

and living in *charhdi kala* is not the opposite of something; it simply is, independent of and unaffected by either pessimism or optimism. Due to the impossibility of precise translation from Punjabi to English, *charhdi kala* has been fitted into English catchphrases of “eternal optimism” or “rising spirits.” It is not until *charhdi kala* is understood through the contexts of its original form in the Gurmukhi language and through oral traditions of Sikh history that the concept’s utilization for Oak Creek makes sense. The application of *charhdi kala* for Oak Creek marks the shootings as a chapter in the history book on Sikhs, placing it in the trajectory of hate violence Sikhs have suffered before. *Charhdi Kala* binds Oak Creek to other moments from Sikh history.

A key perspective through which the idea of *charhdi kala* arises is that of complete self-annihilation: to live in and call upon *charhdi kala* as a state of mind means to know very well that being of *seva* to others may come at the cost of loss of one’s physical and metaphorical self. It is only when one acknowledges this symbolic and literal death that the radical potential of *charhdi kala* can be actualized. Sikh historian Dr. Harbans Singh poignantly captures the spirit behind *charhdi kala*: “It is that everlasting spirit of bravery which makes light of all hardships and handicaps[,] a spirit that will prompt one who had nothing better to eat than a mouthful of gram [i.e. chickpeas] to say that he was eating almonds, and spirit which would lead one to describe death as an expedition to the next world, a man with an empty stomach declaring himself to have gone mad with prosperity.”¹⁸⁰ With this logic and outlook, the invocation of *charhdi kala* at Oak Creek would elicit statements that question the Sikh community’s sanity—
How can Sikhs say they are prospering after having lost six lives?

Hypothetically assuming that “rising spirits” and “eternal optimism” are satisfactory translations of *charhdi kala*, how high, then, can an individual or community’s spirit rise before

¹⁸⁰ Harbans Singh, “Charhdi Kala,” in *The Sikh Encyclopedia*, accessed December 14, 2018, <https://www.thesikhencyclopedia.com/philosophy/charhdi-kala>.

collapsing under the weight of state-fueled hate violence, whether it's the *ghallughare* Sikhs in the eighteenth century were subjected to, or Islamophobic violence they face in the contemporary period? How can optimism be eternal in the face of daily struggles against caste, class, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality? Delving into the above questions and arguments is an important precursor to analyzing how the idea of *charhdi kala* has been used with regard to Oak Creek. What does *charhdi kala* mean, as used at Oak Creek? One answer to this question can be found in the Oak Creek Sikh community's "Charhdi Kala 6K" event. The 6K's website defines *charhdi kala* as "the spirit of relentless optimism: a philosophy that empowers us to persevere and grow from hardship."¹⁸¹

Harbans Singh's explanation of *charhdi kala* recalls the subversive power of language and of the ultimate sacrifice of one's sense of self. His explanation also covers other ideas revered in the Sikh tradition, such as of being ever-prepared (*tiar-bar-tiar*) for any physical or psychological challenges one encounters. Singh also covers that the word "kala" means "game," as in the game in which truth ever overpowers falsehood.¹⁸² The spirit that embodies *charhdi kala* is thus a playful game of Divine Will (*hukam*) with all of Creation as its players. It is important to clarify that such radical readings of *charhdi kala* do not imply a state of denial of a horrific event. A radical invocation of *charhdi kala* at Oak Creek would not mean there is a refusal to understand the gravity of what happened. Rather, it would mean that the killing of six people would not be any different as Divine Will than the birth of six would be. Both are moves in the cosmic game of life; both are different sides of the same coin.¹⁸³ So, while simple and

¹⁸¹ "Chardhi Kala 6K," accessed December 14, 2018, <http://www.chardhikala6kwi.org/>.

¹⁸² Singh, "Charhdi Kala."

¹⁸³ Sikh Studies scholar Arvind Mandair interprets *hukam* (commonly translated as "Divine Will") as meaning "the law of impermanence." When understood as such, this concept sheds more light on how all the world's seemingly opposite happenings are but one, collectively: good and bad, happy and sad, angry and content, rich and poor, cold and hot, light and dark, and so forth, are not opposite states of being; they are one and the same. This idea is

convenient translations of *charhdi kala* are phrases like “eternal optimism” or “ever-rising high spirits,” its deeper meaning begins where the limits of these loose translations end.

It is with these limitations of translation that interdisciplinary Sikh Studies scholar, Balbir K. Singh, argues for the idea of *charhdi kala* to also mean “critical mourning.”¹⁸⁴ Singh also critiques the effect of the hasty application of *charhdi kala* as community evolution without space for grieving. Alongside acknowledging the historical significance of *charhdi kala*, she proposes pairing resilience with understanding that they (we) are marked in the public sphere as not only Sikh-others but as racialized-Others. Sikhs are doubly marked as others based on faith and race. Singh argues that being cognizant of this dual othering will enable the Sikh community to “see themselves as part of a broader network of communities of color, apprehending the ways in which their bodies are read as brown, as turbaned, as easily targeted and easily profiled.”¹⁸⁵

The desire for not only recognition as Sikhs, but recognition as Sikhs *in contradistinction to misidentification as Muslims* has come to occupy the public image of Sikh American advocacy. Since before Singh’s article was published, the Sikh American community has been pursuing this desire for recognition in different ways □—through open houses at *gurdwaras*, participating in or hosting interfaith events, fighting workplace discrimination against Sikhs with turbans and beards (such as the Workplace Religious Freedom Act (WRFA)), cultural competency trainings at workplaces, and anti-bullying campaigns at schools.¹⁸⁶ However, in

repeatedly and thoroughly presented in Guru Granth Sahib. Arvind-pal Singh Mandair, *Sikhism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 140.

¹⁸⁴ Balbir K. Singh, “On the Limits of Charhdi Kala: Oak Creek and Sikh Philosophy in an Age of Terror,” *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory* 9, no. 2 (2013): 254.

¹⁸⁵ Singh, 255.

¹⁸⁶ “Preventing and Ending School Bullying,” Sikh Coalition, accessed December 13, 2018, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/creating-safe-schools/preventing-and-ending-school-bullying/>; “Sikh Cultural Awareness Training Video Now on Justice Department Web Site | SALDEF,” accessed December 13, 2018, <http://saldef.org/news/sikh-cultural-awareness-training-video-now-on-justice-department-web-site/#.XBKRuid7lz0>; “Workplace Religious Freedom Act (WRFA),” Sikh Coalition, accessed December 13, 2018, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/ending-employment-discrimination/workplace-religious-freedom-act-wrfa/>.

some cases, what begins as programming for interethnic, interfaith, and interracial solidarity ends up closing more doors than it opens.

II.II *From Tragedy to Triumph with Charhdi Kala*

The above discussion highlights how the concept of *charhdi kala* subverts language to empower survivors of tragic events and enable them to have autonomy over the narrative of those events. This concept of subversion for the sake of survival is at play in the invocation of *charhdi kala* after the Oak Creek gurdwara shootings and after incidents of racist hate violence faced by Sikhs in America (and elsewhere in the global Sikh diaspora). Though the specific contexts of religious persecution of Sikhs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in South Asia, anti-Sikh extrajudicial state violence in the 1980s and 1990s East Punjab, and post-9/11 xenophobia and hate violence are different, the reasons for invoking *charhdi kala* are the same. In all these instances, *charhdi kala* has been relied upon to keep up morale. In theory, the subversive power of the language and methodology of *charhdi kala* does not hide or gloss over the gravity of the tragedies during which the concept is invoked. The subversion of language may appear as delusional exaggeration or denial of the realities of tragedies. However, the mechanism of subversion in *charhdi kala* fully encapsulates the gravity of the tragedies the concept is invoked in. Referring to worn out cloth as *hazar mekhi* (“[made of] a thousand nails or cotter pins,” implying sturdiness) does not, for instance, deny the dire condition of the cloth.¹⁸⁷ Instead, its linguistic subversion in *Khalsa Boli* from a tattered object to one of unimaginable sturdiness only highlights the direness of its actual condition.

¹⁸⁷ “Thundering Words: The Martial Language of Nihangs.”

In addition to being a mechanism for survival and emotional well-being, viewing tragic events from the lens of *charhdi kala* is also a form of resistance to state violence. This has been the case with each of the three time periods of Punjabi Sikh history mentioned earlier in this section. For Sikhs to refer to their state of being as *charhdi kala*, even in the midst of mass, state-sponsored killings in their *qaum* (community), is a direct challenge to the regimes executing the violence and a critique of state violence itself. An example from Sikh oral tradition is a proverb in which the brutal killings of Sikhs, including the gruesome, limb-by-limb dismemberment of children, in the *ghallughare* of the eighteenth century are described as planting seeds.¹⁸⁸ The proverb translates to, “Mannu [the Mughal governor of Lahore who ordered the executions] is our sickle, we are planted by Mannu. As he cuts [us], so do we grow two- and fourfold.”¹⁸⁹ Rather than being defined as *qaum* defeated by the two *ghallughare* of the eighteenth century, this narrative presents the victims and survivors as invincible and resilient. It is through this collective, inherited memory of such historical narratives and oral traditions that the mass shootings from 2012 at the Oak Creek, Wisconsin *gurdwara* are remembered in hindsight. The post-Oak Creek moment for Sikhs in America centers on *charhdi kala*, so much so, that a major community event held annually in the shootings’ memory contains the phrase in its title: “Charhdi Kala 6K” walk/run. *Charhdi kala* invoked with regard to Oak Creek, however, differs in implication than the above analysis on the concept.

¹⁸⁸ In Sikh collective memory, a daily *ardas* (prayer) remembers these *shaheedis* (martyrdoms). The *ardas* specifically memorializes this episode of Sikh women, referring explicitly to the hard manual labor they were forced into and to the incidents in which they were made to wear garlands made out of limbs of their executed children. The remembrance of this period from Sikh history is done so through the spirit of *charhdi kala*. This section of the prayer concludes with asking those listening to it to lovingly repeat *Vaheguru* (“The Divine is great!”) as acknowledgement of the women and children’s steadfast commitment to their faith, as renouncing their faith and committing to Islam of the Mughal Empire would have spared them their lives.

¹⁸⁹ ਮੱਠੂ ਸਾਡੀ ਦਾਤੜੀ ਅੱਸੀ ਮੱਠੂ ਦੇ ਸੋਇ | ਜਿਓਂ ਜਿਓਂ ਸਾਹਨੂੰ ਵਢਦਾ ਅਸੀਂ ਦੂਣ ਚਵਾਣੇ ਹੋਇ ||

As conceptualized through memorial events planned by the Sikh Coalition and the latter's collaboration with some Sikh activists in Wisconsin, *charhdi kala* at Oak Creek implies resilience in the face of tragedy. However, this resilience shies away from critiquing how Islamophobic and xenophobic hate speech and policies are state violence, and how that state violence is responsible for creating the conditions for the shootings in the first place.¹⁹⁰ Instead, Sikh advocacy in the wake of Oak Creek has been centered on working with law enforcement agencies to safeguard Sikh spaces. Though this approach does not deny the role of the state in creating a socio-political environment that enables hate violence, it does not explicitly critique and hold accountable systemic factors that birthed the hate groups Wade Michael Page was part of (as well as other hate groups). Without critiquing the causes and effects of hate violence, the invocation of *charhdi kala* at Oak Creek (and elsewhere) cannot evoke the concept's radical meaning. Keeping in mind the complete subversion of power and language that is at the heart of the concept of *charhdi kala*, its invocation in reference to Oak Creek would mean understanding the shootings as not having killed six individuals but giving birth to 650,000.¹⁹¹ Such a statement follows the seemingly delusional exaggeration discussed above. If *charhdi kala* is invoked at Oak Creek, its subversive potential necessitates it to be fully utilized; otherwise, its use runs the risk of essentializing and misconstruing the radical concept, making it easy to co-opt in its neoliberal framing as "eternal optimism."

II.III *Charhdi Kala* 6K

¹⁹⁰ In Chapter Two I discuss in detail how and why hate violence is state violence.

¹⁹¹ This idea comes from Sikh oral tradition, in which each individual Sikh's power and potential is explained as that of *sava lakh* (125,000) people combined.

The *Charhdi Kala* 6K event at Oak Creek is modeled after traditional five kilometer (5K) walking or running events organized by (non-Sikh) companies or nonprofits to raise funds and awareness about issues, particularly in healthcare. As a way to pay tribute to the six victims of the Oak Creek *gurdwara* shootings, the event's organizers modified the 5K model to make it a 6K walk/run instead. In addition to the more traditional *kirtan* (devotional singing) memorial programs that take place inside the *gurdwara* and are thus aimed at the Punjabi Sikh community, the 6K brings together a wider community of Sikhs and non-Sikhs. Because of the diversity of crowds the 6K attracts, the event also serves as a pedagogical tool with which to spread awareness on the Sikh faith.

As with a typical 5K, the organizers of the *Charhdi Kala* 6K seek donations from individuals and companies to cover the expenses of hosting the event.¹⁹² The organizers also recruit local community members, both Sikh and otherwise, to participate in the event. Each year between 2013 and 2017, the 6K has taken place in the track and field area of a local high school.¹⁹³ The 6K can be analyzed as serving three main purposes. The first and foremost purpose is to honor the lives of the victims of the shootings. The second purpose is that the event helps in “celebrating the renewed sense of purpose of the Oak Creek community in the aftermath of the tragic events of August 5th.”¹⁹⁴ A third purpose the 6K serves is for its participants to stand in solidarity with others who have been affected by hate and other forms of violence, as well as to learn about Sikhs. My analysis will focus on this third purpose of the 6K event, as it

¹⁹² At the end of this section, I discuss in greater detail the ethical and theoretical implications of corporations sponsoring nonprofit events.

¹⁹³ 2018 was the first year since the start of this walk/run in 2013 that there was no 6K; in 2018, the Sikh Coalition shared that, “Every year, in the Sikh spirit of eternal optimism, the Oak Creek sangat has organized a Chardi Kala 6K Memorial Walk and Run. Moving forward, the sangat has made the decision to host the Chardi Kala 6K every five years so the Oak Creek event will not happen this year. The next event is scheduled to take place in 2022.” 2022 will mark the tenth anniversary of the shootings. “Honor Oak Creek through National Day of Seva,” Sikh Coalition, June 13, 2018, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/blog/2018/honor-oak-creek-national-day-seva/>.

¹⁹⁴ “Chardhi Kala 6K.”

gets to the heart of the discussion in the previous section on Sikh American advocacy being centered on educating non-Sikhs on who Sikhs are (and are not: Muslims).

Before getting into detailed analysis of the 6K, it is important to see how its organizers, a group of individuals intimately connected with their Oak Creek Sikh community, envision the event. In reference to the 2017 6K, the event's website states that,

The Chardhi Kala 6K will be a community event honoring those we lost on August 5, 2012, as well as celebrating all that we have done to bring the community closer together.

In the years following the tragic events of August 5, 2012 the Oak Creek community has undergone some incredibly positive growth. Despite the horrific nature of this tragedy, the events of August 5th propelled many into action, resulting in numerous service events and the coming together of diverse communities. Members of the Sikh community played a highly visible, integral role in the community and were embraced by the greater Oak Creek community.¹⁹⁵

The “positive growth” that the above excerpt mentions is discussed in this chapter as that idea of tragedy to triumph. The tragedy is losing seven individuals: the six people that the shooter killed, and the seventh being his own self, as his final act of destruction was turning the gun to himself. An eighth individual lives life in limbo, as the shootings have left him paralyzed and constantly reliant on life support. Another individual whose life changed that day is Lieutenant Brian Murphy. Murphy has fully recovered from the multiple shots the shooter took at him. The triumphs, both individual and collective, have been ever-growing since the shootings. Brian Murphy's recovery is an individual triumph. The emergence of *seva* (selfless service) projects is a collective triumph.

Another “triumph” of sorts is the birth of Serve 2 Unite, a service organization established by Pardeep Singh Kaleka (son of one of the victims, Satwant Singh Kaleka) and

¹⁹⁵ “Chardhi Kala 6K.”

Arno Michaelis, a former white supremacist, in the wake of Oak Creek.¹⁹⁶ The organization is a prime example of “positive growth” to have come out of the horrific event. Serve 2 Unite is the parent organization through which the 6K event took place for each of the five years that walk/run event took place annually. In addition to Serve 2 Unite, again on the individual level, there have been numerous other personal, positive growths that have emerged from Oak Creek.¹⁹⁷ I take these growths into account in my analysis. Thus, I want to begin my critique of the post-Oak Creek moment, and of the 6K in particular, with a disclaimer: *my critique is not of the 6K event itself*. Rather, what I am critiquing is the simplification of the idea of *charhdi kala*, and more importantly, the systemic reasons that *require* something like the 6K to have to be organized in the first place. Why should, for instance, a community that is victimized by hate violence on a daily basis with racial slurs and racial profiling, have to explain who and what it is? Instead, why isn’t the focus on the rampant hate speech and hate violence in the United States?¹⁹⁸ After being victimized by hate violence, media channels expecting Sikhs to explain who they are, so as to justify their existence, is a second iteration of the violence. Why did the media focus on the Oak Creek Sikh community and not on the nearby organized group of neo-Nazis that the Oak Creek shooter belonged to? Why did the Oak Creek Sikh community turn to a walk/run event as a form of commemoration? Who is the target audience for an event like the 6K? It is unlikely that Sikhs are the 6K’s target audience, as Sikh Americans are well aware of

¹⁹⁶ “Chardhi Kala 6K.”

¹⁹⁷ I am thankful to two Sikh contacts from Oak Creek who shared some of these developments with me during my phone calls in which I interviewed them. Due to the deeply personal and private nature of these developments, I will not be discussing the details of these developments.

¹⁹⁸ As of August 2018, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) reports there are 954 hate groups in the United States. The “hate map” by the ACLU shows the locations of hate groups by state. The comprehensive list of hate group types is anti-immigrant, anti-LGBT, anti-Muslim, Black Nationalist, Christian Identity, General Hate*, Hate Music, Holocaust Denial, Ku Klux Klan, Male Supremacy, Neo-Confederate, Neo-Nazi, Neo-Volkisch, Racist Skinhead, Radical Traditional Catholicism, and White Nationalist.

* The SPLC defines the “General Hate” category as “groups [that] espouse a variety of rather unique hateful doctrines and beliefs that are not easily categorized. Many of the groups are vendors that sell a miscellany of hate materials from several different sectors of the white supremacist movement (“General Hate”).”

what happened on August 5, 2012. Perhaps empirically and theoretically, the most important question to ask and answer is about what difference an event like the 6K makes in curbing hate violence.¹⁹⁹

It is understandable and noteworthy that the Sikh community, whether the specific one at Oak Creek, or in the Sikh American diaspora at large, wants to emerge from the shootings as resilient, stronger, and more united than ever before. However, much is jeopardized in pursuit of these goals. First, the revolutionary potential of *charhdi kala* is diluted to mean “eternal optimism” or “rising spirits.” Secondly, the space needed to urgently call attention to the widespread network of hate violence quickly closes up because of the continued focus on victims, not on the problem of hate violence and its perpetrators. Lastly, the very idea of Sikh-specific action on a social justice issue that affects others (in this case, Muslims) equally as much is counterintuitive to the Sikh ethos of justice for all.²⁰⁰ The latter is something that Sikh advocacy organizations and the Oak Creek *sangat* (community) have tried to address by designing programming that is for everyone, regardless of faith.

Resilience, perseverance, growth—three words that appear often on the 6K’s website and in reference to the Oak Creek shootings.²⁰¹ These ideas fit extremely well with an event commemorating lost lives and hopeful futures. However, what is Sikh about these sentiments? By using a unique and historically-specific idea of *charhdi kala*, who is being empowered, and how? What and whom is the perseverance against? What kind of growth is happening, and for

¹⁹⁹ While there is no data on how effective the 6K events have been in curbing hate violence against Sikhs, the National Sikh Campaign (est. 2014), a media-focused organization, has shared some data on how wide-scale publicity via its “We Are Sikhs” ad campaign changed the general American population’s attitude toward Sikhs. This is discussed in detail later in this chapter.

²⁰⁰ In Sikh scripture, this is the foundational idea of *nirvair*, living without enmity toward anyone, and of *dharam*, upholding righteousness, especially when the personhood and humanity of others is in jeopardy (Guru Granth Sahib, 547).

²⁰¹ “Chardhi Kala 6K.”

whom? Unarguably, the 6K has given the Oak Creek Sikh community something to rally around and bring others together after the shootings. Because the 6K is an event open to the public, non-Sikhs have also consistently participated in the walk/run for a number of reasons. For instance, a photograph from one 6K captures a non-Sikh, caucasian attendee running while holding a sign with a photo and name of Emilie Parker, a 6-year-old who was killed in 2012 during the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut. In this way, the 6K has become a unifying moment for many. For Sikhs the 6K is most immediately about taking a stand against racist hate violence. For others (not excluding Sikhs), gun violence is the rallying point that brings them together at the 6K.

The flyer for the 2017 6K (Figure 2.1) is further testament to the diversity of attendees and programming at the event. The flyer shows walkers/runners from a previous year's 6K. In the foreground is a young Black girl. To her right is a South Asian man, and to her left is a Black man. Other walkers/runners visible in the background are a diverse group—Punjabi Sikhs, other South Asians, and whites. This strategically-chosen picture used to make the flyer captures a racially diverse community running together for a cause, accentuating the event's "we are all one" message [discussed on the next page].

At the top right of the flyer is a sun-like yellow circle set against the cloudless blue sky captured in the photograph that serves as the background of the flyer. The yellow circle contains a white "5," with "five years of relentless optimism" written underneath the shape. The flyer also lists four other programs that are part of the 6K event: "Food and Clothing Drive for Veterans Outreach of Wisconsin," "Blood Drive for Blood Center of Wisconsin," "Punjabi Martial Arts Performance," and an "Interfaith Exchange." The flyer also lists names and logos of sponsors, including some corporate names, such as Walgreens, ESPN Milwaukee, and Landmark Credit

Union (LCU). The mixture of corporate and non-profit sponsors is noteworthy, especially because on the “Our Sponsors” section of the 6K’s website, the LCU logo accompanies the banking institution’s tagline of “You’re worth more here” in translated (albeit inaccurately) Punjabi, written in Romanized form. The tagline, “You’re worth more here,” appears as “Tuhadi hazri sade laee labhdaik hai.”²⁰² (Figure 2.2). These words translate to “Your presence is beneficial for us.” It is unclear whom the “us” is in reference to. Regardless, the conglomeration of non-profit and corporate sponsors mimics fundraising and advertising conventions of 5K events. Being the main entity under whose name the 6K is organized, Serve 2 Unite is also listed on the flyer.

What is distinctly and radically *charhdi kala* about the 6K remains difficult to pinpoint. Does “relentless optimism” even require commemorative events? What is this event commemorating that hasn’t been happening to racialized communities on a daily basis in the U.S. since before and after the Oak Creek shootings? Can the deeper and radical meaning of *charhdi kala*, as discussed at the beginning of this section, be captured on a flyer or in a commemorative event? *Charhdi kala* understood as “rising spirits” and “eternal optimism” has a limit. This limit is evident in the internal (i.e. Sikhs’) change in the narrative on hate crimes against Sikhs. Before the Oak Creek shootings, hate crimes elicited largely introspective responses: *Why is it happening to us?* The “model minority” myth is constantly reproduced in this introspective view. In this narrative, Sikhs are the preferred and desirable “model minority” community. Their worthy and desirability in and for the nation is based on anti-Blackness and

²⁰² “Our Sponsors,” accessed December 20, 2018, <http://www.chardhikala6kwi.org/our-sponsors/>. <http://www.chardhikala6kwi.org/our-sponsors/>.

A more accurate translation of LCU’s tagline of “You’re worth more here” would be “Tuhadi kimat ethe ziada hai.” Both “translations” read awkwardly for Punjabi speakers, as the word “hazri” (presence) is seldom used with “labhdaik” (beneficial), and “kimat” (worth) is reserved for reference to objects, not people.

puts them against Black communities. It was only a century ago that Sikhs, now (self-)lauded as model minorities, were deemed a menace to America. Their arrival to America in the early twentieth century was seen as a menace and was termed the “tide of turbans” and “Hindoo invasion.”²⁰³ As Jim Crow and immigration bans on non-whites became sources of global embarrassment for 1960s America invested in empire on land and in space, the terms of citizenship and belonging changed. These changes reconfigured (only highly educated, elite) Sikhs and other Asians as model minorities welcome in America, though only technically, not culturally. These conceptions of model minority communities reinforced anti-Blackness, this time, not only from whites but ingrained in Asian immigrants as well. The idea that hard work and professional degrees alone guarantee a promising and financially-stable future is problematic for three reasons: first, this idea erases the history and lasting legacy of slavery and other anti-Black laws that continue to prevent Blacks from having equal access to educational and professional opportunities. Second, it also glosses over how financial success, especially in the business sector, is enabled by labor exploitation in a capitalist system. Lastly, the idea only hard work and education in service of the national make one worthy of belonging therein implies that all others who cannot access such privileges are worthless and thus undeserving of protection and liberties the nation offers. Guyanese scholar, anticolonial revolutionary, and political activist Walter Rodney’s critique of capitalism and its racist structure poignantly summarize what I have critiqued above: “It is a common myth within capitalist thought that the individual through drive and hard work can become a capitalist...The acquisition of wealth is not due to hard work alone, or the Africans working as slaves in America and the West Indies would

²⁰³ Franklin Ng, *The History and Immigration of Asian Americans* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1998), 111.

have been the wealthiest group in the world. The individualism of the capitalist must be seen against the hard and unrewarded work of the masses.”²⁰⁴

In this skewed conception of worthiness, it seemed unfathomable that “model minority” Sikhs, a people who have contributed socially, technologically, financially, and agriculturally to the national fabric of the United States for over a century, were being subjected to xenophobia and hate.²⁰⁵ In the contemporary moment, Sikhs having to see themselves as they are seen (i.e. as a twenty-first-century “tide of turbans”) has been punctured with bitter truths about their (our) community: trying to maintain a community image of Sikh Americans as “model minorities” is completely antithetical to the current picture of Sikh Americans. In this picture, Indians, in particular Punjabi-Sikh men, are the fastest-growing population of undocumented people coming to the United States.²⁰⁶ Countering the caricatured image of Sikhs in the U.S. as highly educated and wealthy, a significant number of Sikh families in the United States are lower middle class, are not college-educated, work blue collar jobs, and are affected by a host of other issues just as any other community (domestic violence, and drug and alcohol abuse, to name a few).

Time and time again, Sikh scriptures reinforce the ideas of social equity, fighting oppression, and approaching life from a place of love, not fear or anger.²⁰⁷ In order for an event like the 6K to embody *charhdi kala* in its truest, most radical form of privileging the well-being

²⁰⁴ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Verso Books, 2018), 85.

²⁰⁵ To clarify again, my reference here to the Sikh community here is to the conception of Sikhs as narrativized by the Sikh Coalition. “Sikhs in America,” *Sikh Coalition* (blog), accessed April 29, 2019, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/about-sikhs/sikhs-in-america/>.

²⁰⁶ Karan Deep Singh, “India Is the Fastest-Growing Source of New Illegal Immigrants to the U.S.,” *WSJ* (blog), September 22, 2016, <https://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2016/09/22/india-is-the-fastest-growing-source-of-new-illegal-immigrants-to-the-u-s/>. I discuss this topic in detail in Chapter 4.

At the moment, only news reports have covered this phenomenon. There has yet to be an extensive academic study on why so many Indians, and of those, predominantly Punjabi Sikh men, are migrating to the United States undocumented. Based on my own experience of volunteering for faith-based services at a few Southern California detention centers, I can verify that more than half of populations in the largest immigration detention centers in this region are Punjabi Sikh men. These are detention facilities that hold over 700 individuals each.

²⁰⁷ Such as *shabad* (hymns) on page 887, 1375, and 1427 from Guru Granth Sahib, respectively.

of others, even at the cost of one's own metaphorical or literal being, it is imperative for Sikh Americans to see their suffering as part of a larger system of hate violence against racial, ethnic, and faith-based minorities. In this worldview, it makes little sense to translate *charhdi kala* as “rising spirits” and “eternal optimism” if and when activism and support by Sikhs does not extend to *all* disenfranchised, discriminated, and othered people.

Hypothetically assuming that “rising spirits” and “eternal optimism” are satisfactory translations of *charhdi kala*, how high, then, can an individual or community's spirit rise before collapsing under the weight of state-fueled hate violence? How can optimism be eternal in the face of daily struggles against caste, class, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality? Delving into the above questions and arguments is an important precursor to analyzing how the idea of *charhdi kala* has been used with regard to Oak Creek. What does *charhdi kala* mean, as used at Oak Creek?

Through various examples of *shahadat* (martyrdom) in defense of others and of upholding *dharam* (righteousness), Sikh history clearly reflects this idea of *sarbat*. For contemporary Sikh Americans to align themselves outside of this view of *sarbat* is to misuse the idea of *charhdi kala*. So, until and unless the Punjabi Sikh community at large challenges its culturally ingrained homophobia, anti-Blackness, casteism, and classism, the instrumentalization of *charhdi kala* risks falling short of being *sarbat*—in service of all.

Rather than sharply critiquing the rhetoric and policies of the multicultural neoliberal state that leaves minority groups like Sikhs in a state of constant precarity and pressure to perform belonging and citizenship, these projects end up reifying those very systems of oppression. Advocacy projects that require Sikhs in America to ally with the state defeat the purpose of the advocacy, as such allyship means asking for protection from the same agencies

that fail to protect the well-being and human liberties of Sikhs (and Muslims). I mention “human liberties” rather than “civil liberties,” because here I take inspiration from Malcolm X’s “Ballot or the bullet” speech from 1964, in which he urges Black voters to shift the narrative from the fight for civil rights to that of human rights. He spoke, “As long as you’re fighting on the level of civil rights, you’re under Uncle Sam’s jurisdiction. You’re going to his court expecting him to correct the problem. He created the problem. He’s the criminal. You don’t take your case to the criminal; you take your criminal to court.”²⁰⁸ The court that Malcolm X urges Black voters to take the criminal to is the International Court of Justice. I use this excerpt from “Ballot or the bullet” to emphasize that, until Sikh advocacy disentangles itself from serving the state, appeals made to the latter to “allow” Sikhs to live their faith will fall on deaf ears. The crucial factor in this argument is of considering that the permission to practice Sikhi is being sought from the state, not from the twin entities of *Guru Granth* (Sikh scripture) and *Guru Panth* (global Sikh community) that reign over individual Sikh sovereignty.

In the power dynamic of the state deciding the acceptable kinds or levels of Sikh practice permissible in the public sphere, certain aspects of Sikhi are allowed (such as wearing turbans), while others are not (such as *kirpans*, small blades baptized Sikhs carry as part of five external articles of faith). These permissions are granted with conditions, making the existence of Sikhs more of an inconvenience for the state than a boon.²⁰⁹ As a result, minority groups like Sikhs find themselves in a cyclical cat-and-mouse game with the state, as after each new hate crime incident, Sikh Americans advocacy begins anew. In this cycle of advocacy, the case is not so

²⁰⁸ Marissa Jackson, “Crossing the Bridge: African-Americans and the Necessity of a 21st Century Human Rights Movement,” *Human Rights and Globalization Law Review* V (Fall - Spring 2015 2013): 56.

²⁰⁹ For instance, turban-wearing Sikhs are almost always pulled aside for extra security checks at airports. Sikhs in incarceration or immigrant detention are not permitted to wear turbans, though immigration attorneys have been able to secure this liberty on a case-by-case basis. The state’s allowance to Sikhs to wear turbans to observe their faith, then, comes with terms and conditions.

much that the needle measuring it advances towards ultimate success, but more so a case of the units of the scale being renamed accordingly from one “triumph” to another. Within this false sense of progress, Sikhs repeatedly find themselves as discarded “model minorities” who, despite their contributions to the state, still cannot live without repeatedly becoming targets of racist hate violence. Sikhs call upon publicity campaigns to carry the burden of educating others on who they are (with the subtle, implicit message being Sikhs are not Muslims, though this distinction hardly makes a difference in the eyes of white supremacists, as the latter view all brown bodies with beards and turbans as the enemy).

Advocacy pursued from a coalitional perspective could help fight the risk that comes with Sikh-only advocacy. Through a collective stance, the communities involved share the financial and emotional cost of advocacy, and through strength in numbers, present stronger cases for the advocacy. For Sikhs this means viewing collective advocacy as exemplifying the faith’s foundational ethos of *sarbat da bhala* (well-being of all). Finding common cause in what and who creates inequalities also enables a more holistic perspective. The words of Black American novelist and playwright James Baldwin (1924-87) capture the importance of learning about and empathizing with others’ pain: “You think your pain and heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was Dostoevsky and Dickens who taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, or whoever had been alive.”²¹⁰ While minorities like Sikhs may at times feel isolated after incidents of hate violence, a parallel development to that sentiment is the slow, collective realization that, in spite of being a nation of immigrants, white America is not a nation *for* immigrants. Though hearing about each new incident of a Sikh’s *dastar* (turban) being

²¹⁰ “The Negro’s Push For Equality,” *TIME*, May 17, 1963, 89.

knocked to the ground (and worse) in a hate crime encounter will never get easier, there is strength in knowing that Sikhs are far from alone in having to bear the brunt of systemic, ubiquitous racism.

Memorial events organized by the Oak Creek Sikh community enable individuals and communities affected by hate and gun violence to stand in solidarity with one another. There is typically another purpose to Sikhs' presence in these events like the Charhdi Kala 6K.²¹¹ In addition to being a memorial to the six lives lost at Oak Creek, the Charhdi Kala 6K has had to serve as a pedagogical tool for teaching non-Sikhs. In fact, it's formally designed to serve that function. Commemorating the shootings through an event that caters to non-Punjabi speaking and non-Sikh audiences is effective for two key reasons. First, it encourages and enables non-Sikh audiences to partake in an event that not only commemorates the shootings at the Oak Creek *gurdwara* but serves as a memorial to all other instances of hate violence. Second, by getting participants to engage in physical activity that ultimately positively affects their own mental and physical health, the 6K attracts participants, thus making the 6K beneficial for them and its organizers.

There is growing literature that analyzes the marriage between fitness events and philanthropy, particularly corporate sponsorship of 5K events (such as the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure 5K event for breast cancer awareness and fundraising). Susan King, a scholar of curriculum and pedagogy, critiques mass fundraising of the Race for the Cure events, stating that, "the belief that raising large sums of money for high-stakes research should be the primary weapon in the fight against the disease relies on the displacement of knowledges that suggest that

²¹¹ Note that there are varying spellings of the phrase in romanized form. Its most common spelling is "chardi kala." The Oak Creek 6K is spelled as "chardhi kala." For the sake of consistency and the closest romanization form to the original phrase in Punjabi, I am spelling it as "charhdi kala" throughout this dissertation.

universal healthcare or tighter regulations on pesticide use, for example, might be effective ways of decreasing incidence rates.”²¹² While the purpose of the Charhdi Kala 6K is not to raise large sums of money for the Oak Creek Sikh community or to fund policy change that will curb hate violence like the kind that struck the community, King’s critique of what is weaponized through philanthropy of this kind is still relevant. Organizing and participating in the 6K may instill a sense of civic duty and citizenship in the face of hate violence; however, that sense alone cannot counter the structural and systemic factors that enable and sustain gun violence, hate violence, and racism. In another essay on the politics of contemporary philanthropy through fitness, King writes about how a 5K event with mass appeal (such as Race for the Cure), enables participants to feel that they are making a difference in support of the cause. King adds that participants’ accomplishments are validated when there are research breakthroughs in the cause they are supporting through fitness events.²¹³ King’s analysis of these factors of fitness through philanthropy maps onto the Oak Creek 6K almost perfectly: the event enables participants and organizers to partake in a political stance against gun and hate violence, and its participants are instilled with a sense of accomplishment in personal fitness. Additionally, the 6K becomes an opportunity to raise awareness on the Sikh faith and the Sikh American community. These factors seem like positive goals and outcomes of the 6K event. However, King’s critique that philanthropic causes (inadvertently) provide immunity to the state to ignore or delay political action addressing the reasons those causes emerge in the first place is also relevant to the 6K. Over the course of annual 6Ks between 2013 and 2017, there has been little political action from

²¹² Samantha King, “Pink Ribbons Inc: Breast Cancer Activism and the Politics of Philanthropy,” *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 17, no. 4 (2004): 489.

²¹³ Samantha J. King, “Doing Good by Running Well. Breast Cancer, the Race for the Cure, and New Technologies of Ethical Citizenship,” in *Foucault, Cultural Studies, and Governmentality*, ed. Jack Z Bratich, Jeremy Packer, and Cameron McCarthy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 307, <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=3408583>.

the state in regard to racist hate violence. Daily occurrences of Islamophobic and xenophobic hate crimes attest to this complacency by the state.

Although the move from the inward reflection of *Why is this happening to us?* to a wider understanding of *It is happening to us, too*, is slow and not universal across the Sikh diaspora in America, it is safe to say that the Oak Creek shootings, as well as all the faith-based hate violence incidents since then, triggered this orientation.²¹⁴ As the next section illustrates, a profound example of this reorientation comes from no place other than Oak Creek, this time through the built environment.

III. *Domed if You Do, Domed if You Don't*

On the fifth year since the shootings, the Sikh community in Oak Creek did something that is both conventional and remarkable. To mark the momentous occasion, the Oak Creek Sikh community received a donation in the form of seven domes that were to be installed atop the *gurdwara* building. The donation came from the Kalekas, a family that lost a member in the shootings.²¹⁵ Had the shootings not been part of this picture, the installation of these domes would have been a fairly routine diasporic development of Sikh communities saving and raising funds to install domes atop their *gurdwaras*. The visual vocabulary of gold-colored domes atop *gurdwaras* is inspired by the gold-plated domes on Harimandir Sahib in Amritsar, India, one of the most iconic and most frequently-visited Sikh spaces in the world. A recent example of installation of domes comes from the Dshmesh Darbar Sikh Temple of Lodi in California in

²¹⁴ The 2015 shootings at Charleston's Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, a historically Black church in South Carolina, is one incident. White supremacist Dylan Roof opened fire and killed nine people and injured another. The 2017 shootings at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City in which white supremacist Alexandre Bissonnette is another example; the shooter killed six people and injured 19 others. These examples from the U.S. and Canada demonstrate that white supremacist-led violence is not solely an issue in America. Minority communities in both countries have been subject to hate violence by white supremacists.

²¹⁵ I am thankful to Mandeep Kaur and Kanwardeep Singh Kaleka for sharing this information with me.

2017.²¹⁶ Given that there is no painful or historic memory attached to the site of the Lodi *gurdwara*, the installation of domes on its building is purely aesthetic. However, local news media's coverage of the domes' installation turned into opportunities for the local Sikh community to spread awareness on their faith, a measure Sikhs in America have had to take in hopes of avoiding becoming victims of hate violence and xenophobia.²¹⁷

A news article covering the installation of domes at the Lodi *gurdwara* references the institution's president as saying that the "domes symbolize the unity and brotherhood of all people under one God, explains Amarjit Singh, the temple's preacher for the past 10 years."²¹⁸ In this instance, the domes take on a symbolic meaning in addition to an aesthetic one. The article does not mention more on why Amarjit Singh views the domes in particular as symbols of peaceful coexistence. However, domes at Oak Creek are viewed with a similar purpose that goes beyond their purely aesthetic purposes. News reports mention that six of the seven Oak Creek *gurdwara*'s domes are in memory of each of the victims of the shootings, and the seventh dome is an homage to other communities who have been victims of gun and hate violence.²¹⁹

Now, six years since the shootings, the Oak Creek *gurdwara* is one of hundreds in the United States to have domes on top of its structure. In the historical trajectory of *gurdwara* development and growth in the global Sikh diaspora, the installation of domes has become a marker of status for the community that installs them. The start of the trajectory is Sikh community members renting a space in which to set up a *gurdwara*, then eventually saving and raising enough funds to construct a building from the ground up, and lastly, adding domes, the

²¹⁶ John Bays, "Lodi's Sikh Temple Gets New Domes," *Lodi News Sentinel*, August 3, 2017, https://www.lodinews.com/news/article_0c77b924-781a-11e7-83ac-6b2a2ee3da4e.html.

²¹⁷ Bays.

²¹⁸ Bays.

²¹⁹ Jason Newton, "Seven Gold Domes Now Decorate Sikh Temple," *WISN 12 News*, August 7, 2013, <https://www.wisn.com/article/seven-gold-domes-now-decorate-sikh-temple-1/6316855>.

latter being a development that sometimes comes years after a *gurdwara* building is finished.²²⁰ Regardless of when domes are added on *gurdwaras* in the U.S. Sikh diaspora, they have become integral components of Sikh architecture. The fabricated, fiberglass and concrete domes that rest on top of contemporary *gurdwaras* in and outside of the Sikh homeland of India serve little utilitarian purpose. Their predecessors, dating to the nineteenth century and earlier, were essential to the buildings' overall air flow and acoustic quality. Whereas earlier domes were built as integrated parts of the structures they were on, contemporary domes are add-ons that can be installed at any time. For this reason, contemporary domes' purpose is purely aesthetic and symbolic. Despite this reason there continues to be a desire to give diaspora *gurdwaras* the visual rhetoric of Punjab ones.

From a market perspective, the desire for domes is evident by the growth of various companies that supply custom-order domes and other architectural embellishments to *gurdwaras* worldwide.²²¹ There is a mutually dependent relationship between *gurdwaras* seeking domes and companies supplying them: the companies have thrived due to the growing demand for domes at *gurdwaras*, and oftentimes, installation of domes and embellishments at one *gurdwara* starts a chain reaction of sorts, resulting in neighboring *gurdwaras* also wanting to install domes.²²²

III.I *Turbans are Cephalodomes*

²²⁰ There are, of course, exceptions to this trajectory. Some Sikh communities intentionally design their *gurdwara* buildings such that adding domes is not structurally sensible or feasible. The *gurdwara* in Charlotte, North Carolina is an example of this exception.

²²¹ Two such companies are Rana Handicrafts International and Vikalmp Impex, both based in East Punjab.

²²² My thanks to Arvinder Singh for sharing with me details on how domes were installed at a *gurdwara* in Edmonton, Calgary shortly after they were installed at another nearby *gurdwara*. Because *gurdwara* committee discussions and decisions are not always made transparent to the communities they serve, and because of inter-*gurdwara* politics, it is only from hearsay that such details become public. In the Edmonton case, the *gurdwara* getting domes long after its construction was completed and the timing of the installation of domes being right after another *gurdwara* in the area got domes are not coincidental.

Elsewhere in this dissertation, I make connections between hate violence on buildings being a proxy for hate violence on the bodies associated with those buildings. I make this argument based on the similarities between hateful graffiti painted onto temples, mosques, and *gurdwaras*, and hateful words hurled at Muslims and “Muslim-looking people.” Just as domes on mosques and *gurdwaras* make the structures conspicuous from afar, thus increasing the likelihood of those buildings becoming subjected to hate violence, so do hijabs and turbans make Muslims and Sikhs hypervisible, increasing the likelihood of attacks on them as well. In spite of these normalized risks Sikhs have to endure, and despite the lack of utilitarian purpose of contemporary domes, Sikhs continue to don turbans, and *gurdwaras* continue to have domes. In some ways, this is *charhdi kala* itself, as the risks of hate violence that come with standing out due to turbans and domes are well-known.

The material connection between turbans and domes, and the emotional connection between Sikhs and their *gurdwaras*, needs to be understood as the deeply intimate relationships that they are. Domes are like “turbans” atop the body-structures of *gurdwaras*, and turbans are “cephalodomes” (“head-like domes”) atop the bodies of Sikhs. I also explore this relationship by analyzing domes as “architectural turbans,” since wrapping a long turban cloth as distinct layers is a rhythmic and precise process, akin to the rhythm of patterns in design and the technical precision required to construct a building.²²³ These relationships also go in line with metaphors in Sikh scripture on the human body being a temple structure. These metaphors that speaks to the sanctity of the body and to the importance of taking physical and spiritual care of it, as one would of a temple building.

²²³ Here I am referring to the technique of observing the pattern of recurring elements in a facade or floor plan. For instance, if a facade on the same floor utilizes two types of window sizes with alternating frequency, the pattern would be a,b,a,b,a,b. My nod is also to an iconic essay in architectural theory by Louis Hammer, titled, “Architecture and the Poetry of Space” (Hammer).

To those unfamiliar with the nuances between Islamic and Sikh architecture, the two typologies may not look distinct. Though both typologies have them, the “onion dome” form of mosques, and the “lotus bud dome” of *gurdwaras* are distinctive enough to set apart mosques from *gurdwaras*. Onion domes tend to have a much more round base, as opposed to lotus bud domes, which are not as high and typically have a flatter base leaflike details along the bottom. These nuanced observations typically escape the eye, even among Muslims and Sikhs, and more so by those outside of these two faiths. Given that much *parchar* (propagation) dialogue by Sikh individuals and advocacy organizations is on highlighting who Sikhs are (thereby implying who Sikhs are *not*: Muslim), it seems counterintuitive for Sikh communities to want to utilize an architectural language that is highly visible in Islamic architecture. Because two key features of Islamic architecture—domes and arches—are significant components of Sikh architecture as well (though with nuanced differences, as briefly discussed above), *gurdwara* committees’ desires for domed structures seems to betray Sikhs’ desire for contradistinction in beliefs and traditions from other faiths, like Islam. Unsurprisingly, the effects of Islamophobic hate speech at the institutional level in America has emboldened and given rise to hate violence against Muslim people and places (and ones that “look” Muslim).

A recent example is of anti-Muslim and anti-ISIS graffiti spray painted at a *gurdwara* in Buena Park, California on December 4, 2015.²²⁴ This particular case of vandalism happened just two days after the San Bernadino shootings, whose perpetrators, a Muslim couple, are believed to be radicalized online. Days after the graffiti incident, the management committee at the *gurdwara* temporarily hung two banners on the side of the structure, one read “SIKH TEMPLE,”

²²⁴ Matt Coker, “Brodie Durazo, 20, Busted for Alleged Anti-Muslim Vandalism at Sikh Temple,” *OC Weekly*, December 9, 2015, <https://ocweekly.com/brodie-durazo-20-busted-for-alleged-anti-muslim-vandalism-at-sikh-temple-6825855/>.

and the other read “We Are American Sikhs. We Pray for the Victims of San Bernadino” (Figure 2.3). The latter banner also included a U.S. flag after the word “Sikhs.” The “SIKH TEMPLE” banner was the only signage that stated the structure was associated with Sikhs, as the permanent street sign outside the building does not explicitly mention “Sikh” anywhere in its official verbiage. The street sign only states “Gurdwara Singh Sabha Buena Park” in Punjabi and English. Since before the time of the 2015 vandalism incident, the *gurdwara* building has a large central dome atop the structure that is clearly visible once in the vicinity of the building. Though the vandal’s exact motivation was not fully investigated, the sentiment behind his spray painted words of “ISLAHM FUCK ISIS” [sic] gives some clues to what motivated his actions. It is likely that him having seen turbaned brown men on the structure’s premises and the large dome on the building played a role in his decision of vandalizing the *gurdwara*. The Buena Park example is one of many incidents of reported racist hate violence cases from the last few years. Statistics show a sharp increase in hate-based incidents against Muslims and other minorities since the last presidential election. South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) reports,

During the first year following the 2016 presidential election (November 7, 2016 to November 7, 2017)—we documented 302 incidents of hate violence and xenophobic political rhetoric aimed at our communities, an **over 45% increase** from our previous analysis in just one year. An astounding **eighty-two percent** of incidents were motivated by anti-Muslim sentiment. Additionally, **One out of every five** perpetrators of hate violence incidents referenced President Trump, a Trump administration policy (“Muslim Ban”), or Trump campaign slogan (“Make America Great Again”) while committing the attack. [original emphases].²²⁵

Just within the last three between late July and early August 2018, there were three hate crime incidents against Sikhs, one of which was fatal. Two of these three incidents were in California’s Central Valley, and the third was in New Jersey. In the first of these two California

²²⁵ “This Week in Hate: Hate Continues to Rise, Our Communities Continue to Suffer,” Sout Asian Americans Leading Together, accessed April 20, 2018, <http://saalt.org/category/blog/hate-crimes/>.

incidents, 50-year-old Surjit Singh Malhi was attacked in Stanislaus by two white men who threw sand in his eyes, shouting “Go back to your country!” The men spray painted his white truck with the same words, along with another symbol of white power. Malhi reported that his turban, the very object on his body that likely triggered the attacks from his assailants, helped soften the blows he received on his head.²²⁶ Despite the obvious hate bias motivating the incident, evident by the slurs and the spray painting, news reports and articles mention that law enforcement are further investigating this *possible* hate crime.²²⁷ Further, none of the headlines reporting the incident stated anything about white supremacists. This nuance makes the difference between holding the perpetrators accountable versus doubly victimizing the attacked person or community. Perhaps what is most remarkable and ironic about this particular incident is that immediately before the attack, Malhi was putting up campaign signs in support of the GOP politicians of his local Stanislaus County.²²⁸ For the small but vocal minority of Republican Sikhs in the country, Malhi’s case serves as a reminder that supporting conservative political views does not shield them from hate violence. *Damned if you do, damned if you don’t*: Malhi’s case demonstrates that Sikhs, even those supporting politically conservative views, are in a lose-lose game against the forces of racialization and white nationalists.

In the second incident of the three cited above, two teens violently attacked Sahib Singh Natt on August 7, 2018 in Manteca, California. The entire incident was captured by the home security cameras of the house outside which the attack happened. The footage shows the assailants beating and spitting on the 71-year-old Sikh man who has disabilities. The 16- and 18-

²²⁶ “Sikh Man Attacked, Told To ‘Go Back To Your Country’ In Stanislaus County,” August 6, 2018, <https://sacramento.cbslocal.com/2018/08/06/sikh-man-attacked-told-to-go-back-to-your-country-in-stanislaus-county/>.

²²⁷ Anne Branigin, “Sikh Man, Surjit Malhi, Attacked in Possible Hate Crime in California,” *The Root*, August 7, 2018, <https://www.theroot.com/sikh-man-attacked-in-alleged-hate-crime-says-his-turban-1828156179>.

²²⁸ “Sikh Man Attacked, Told To ‘Go Back To Your Country’ In Stanislaus County.”

year olds were arrested and now face charges for beating up Natt.²²⁹ Tyrone McAllister, the older of the two teens, happens to be the son of police chief of Union City, California. Darryl McAllister, the teen's father, issued a lengthy apology and acknowledgement of his estranged son's behavior.²³⁰ Because the McAllister family is Black, Darryl McAllister's apology surfaced anti-Black sentiments as more details on the case emerged and were circulated on social media. Many equated Tyrone McAllister's criminality based on his race, not his actions. Darryl McAllister being the police chief in a profession that is deeply anti-Black also added to the complexity. The McAllister men were hyper-scrutinized because of their race; Darryl being the police chief elicited bias that his son should have known better, and Tyrone being estranged from the family further elicited anti-Black comments on the breakdown of normative family structure among Black families.²³¹

As this country continues to struggle with the powerful and oppressive relationship its law enforcement has with civilians, especially with Blacks, and as the national fabric is stitched with more and more hate crimes and police killings (to say nothing of military occupations abroad, unaffordable healthcare, and no access to clean water in places like Flint), this particular incident weaves together many social complexities. Some Sikh community activists apprehensively urged fellow Sikhs to steer clear of anti-Black sentiments and statements, expressing that the issue of hate violence is greater than and beyond any one particular perpetrator.

²²⁹ Carlos Correa, "Police Chief's Son Arrested In Attack On Sikh Man « CBS Sacramento," CBS Sacramento, August 8, 2018, <https://sacramento.cbslocal.com/2018/08/08/sikh-man-attacked/>.

²³⁰ "California Police Chief Darryl McAllister Said He Was 'Disgusted' to Find out His 18-Year-Old Son Tyrone McAllister Was Arrested and Charged in the Attack on Sahib Singh, a 71-Year-Old Sikh Man Who Was Beaten While Taking a Morning Walk through the Park.," Facebook, August 9, 2018, https://www.facebook.com/TheHill/posts/10156268412834087?comment_id=10156268469514087&reply_comment_id=10156268508604087&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R%22%7D..

²³¹ Two especially pernicious comments were, "We learn to hate at home," and, "Given that he is the offspring of a law enforcement officer and public servant, his sentence should be doubled." Ibid.

Lastly, the third incident in the recent three-week period was of fatal stabbing of Terlok Singh. Singh was killed on August 16, 2018 while working at the deli he owned in East Orange, New Jersey. As of yet, Singh's killer and the latter's motive have not been identified. Compared to the other two incidents, though this one was the most extreme, it is the one we know least about. Regardless, the overall dialogue following Singh's demise was of the necessity of educating others about Sikhism. The logic here is that more people knowing about who Sikhs are (and who they are not: Muslims) will automatically result in fewer hate crimes. This logic is critiqued in detail in Chapter Two, however, one major point warrants repetition: Sikh advocacy organizations and many Sikh individuals are reluctant to critique the larger, systemic reasons that enable hate speech and hate crimes, such as institutionalized hate speech, discriminatory and hypocritical policies, and imperialist interests that manifest as war and military presence across the world. Until and unless Sikh voices in American can unflinchingly criticize at the systemic level, advocacy work in the form of education and awareness on Sikhs will keep running in the cycle it has been for almost two decades: after each hate crime incident, Sikhs are back at square one, beginning anew the cycle of answering who Sikhs are and what they believe in.

III.II *Domes are Architectural Turbans*

While Sikh advocacy organizations and individuals undoubtedly have much to be proud of about their accomplishments in and contributions to the country, the greater point that is usually missing in this dialogue is that these accomplishments and contributions not only happened in tandem with fellow ethnic minorities' but would have been impossible without them.²³² Various ethnic minorities' shared struggles against racism and discrimination in the late

²³² A key example is the lifting of immigration quotas from Asian countries in the mid-1960s. This move came as direct impact from the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have now become singular, distinct struggles unique only to Muslims, Arabs, or Sikhs. Severing histories and actions of solidarity among minority communities to re-present them as individual model minorities has been detrimental to each community.

Taking the Sikh community as a case study reveals how exactly a self-centered model to representation has been detrimental. In the contemporary moment, for instance, Sikhs' struggles against hate crimes and discriminatory policies are rooted in the same problems of institutional racism and racialization that Muslims and Arabs are subject to. By not capitalizing on how largely these struggles are similar, each community ends up fighting such injustices individually. The overbearing burden of fighting individually means to find oneself and one's community in a cyclical pattern of having to justify its existence as a peaceful, American, democracy-loving people. In a highly noticeable yet overlooked way, shared elements of architectural design, such as domes, binds these distinct communities together. This binding does not imply some sense of false equivalence among the two distinct communities. Rather, the point is that their shared design element of domes is a sign of resistance to the reasons that *gurdwaras* and mosques become viewed as foreign and threatening spaces created and used by people also viewed as such. Evident by the numbers of Islamophobic hate crimes exhibited onto *gurdwaras* in America (and elsewhere in the Western world), Sikh architecture cannot individualize what is a shared struggle against hate violence. Where there are domes, there will be hate violence. Where there are non-English words on a building's sign, there will be hate violence. The nature and pattern of hate violence is so vile and widespread that these occurrences can be predicted. Even as hate crimes are on the rise, there have been no cases of Muslim and Sikh communities in America *removing* domes from mosques and *gurdwaras* as a way to make the buildings and their

respective communities inconspicuous. Instead, from a purely architectural perspective, the break in design that domes create in the otherwise monotony of cubic, “cookie cutter” buildings in suburbia carries much significance.

The Oak Creek *gurdwara* (and the Lodi one, for that matter) installing domes amidst an environment of extreme Islamophobia against Muslim and “Muslim-looking” bodies and buildings is a form of *charhdi kala*. Knowing well that the domes would immediately mark the building as *other* and make it stand out amidst a flat, agro-suburban landscape (such as in California’s Central Valley and Imperial Valley), and still going ahead and installing the domes, embodies the radical spirit of *charhdi kala* discussed earlier in this chapter. Rather than trying to make the building inconspicuous, so as to avoid calling further attention to a structure in which a white supremacist went on a shooting rampage, making the structure hypervisible also aligns the visual vocabulary of the *gurdwara* building with that of mosques in America (and elsewhere in the Muslim diaspora). For all the ways Sikh advocacy has distanced itself from Islam, the installation of domes on *gurdwaras* does exactly the opposite. Many Sikh community leaders may not equate domes atop a *gurdwara* as aligning with or showing solidarity with Muslims and Islamic architecture, and vice versa. However, the architectural history of both faith traditions shows that domes are an integral component of each, as well as much fluidity between architectural elements of Islamic, Rajput, and Sikh architecture. For *gurdwaras*, then, to install domes atop their structures means to inadvertently mark themselves as “Muslim-looking,” a move that is opposite of Sikh advocacy organizations’ push for Sikh awareness and education.

The parallels between “Muslim-looking” architecture of mosques and Sikh architecture of *gurdwaras* are demonstrated in a faux pas by the National Sikh Campaign. Around the Fourth of July in 2017, the organization shared a graphic design image via its social media that created

much confusion (Figure 2.4). The text on the image reads, “Proud to be Sikh. Proud to be American.”²³³ The words Sikh and American are in much larger font and therefore stand out. The image has three exploding fireworks in monochrome in the background, and its foreground is dominated by the silhouette of the section view of a two-story structure with one central dome and two smaller ones flanking on the sides, and four minarets, one around each of the structure’s corners. There is a finial rising from the large central dome. The top of the finial is embellished with a trident, a symbol Indo-Islamic architecture borrows from the Hindu tradition.²³⁴ A typical Punjabi Sikh male-style turban floats above the structure. The left half of the turban is blue with white stars, and the right half of the turban is red. All together the turban represents the American flag and correlates with the text on the picture.

The sentiments of Sikh patriotism that the image tries to transmit are betrayed by its actual visuals. The four minarets, bulbous domes, and the finial detail clearly represent a mosque structure. The National Sikh Campaign took this image off its social media upon observant Sikh viewers pointing out that the structure on the image is indeed a mosque, not a *gurdwara*. The reason I include this anecdote is not to point out a mistake the NSC’s graphic designer(s) made, but to show that on an average, mosques and *gurdwaras* are conflated as being the same. This conflation explains two phenomena: first, that this conflation is the reason that *gurdwaras* become targets of Islamophobic hate violence. Second, in spite of knowing that mosques and *gurdwaras* both continue to be targeted with hate violence, the Oak Creek (and Lodi) Sikh community’s decision to install domes, thus making its structure stand out, is a direct challenge

²³³ The proof is in the pudding.

²³⁴ The finial on the dome in this graphic design piece by the National Sikh Campaign is almost identical to the finial on the central dome of the Taj Mahal. Historians believe the latter comes as architectural influence from ancient Hindu temple architecture. Bhat, P. S., and A. L. Athawale. "The Question of the Taj Mahal." *Itihas Patrika* 5 (1985): 98-111. Havell, Ernest Binfield. *Indian Architecture: its psychology, structure, and history from the first Muhammadan invasion to the present day*. J. Murray, 1913, 24.

to hate violence. Rather than altering the *gurdwara* building to make it less conspicuous, the domes help distinguish the structure from others in its vicinity. Although the Oak Creek *gurdwara* domes do not have a utilitarian purpose, they have taken on a deeply symbolic meaning as markers of *charhdi kala*.

IV. *Gurdwara* Open House Programs

Sikhs across the country and beyond felt the impact of the Oak Creek shootings. While still trying to grasp what had happened, *gurdwaras* nationwide mobilized within days of the shootings to hold vigils for the victims. Even though *gurdwaras* (and mosques) are open for anyone to visit, many *gurdwaras* organized formal open houses to spread awareness on Sikh people and their spaces. Mosques around the country have also held open houses following episodes of hate violence exhibited onto them or as precautionary measures to prevent future cases of arson and vandalism.²³⁵ The idea was that if Sikhs could demystify *gurdwaras* for their surrounding communities, Muslims could do the same about mosques, both faith groups could thwart another Oak Creek from happening elsewhere in the country. It is difficult to gauge exactly how effective such open houses were in preventing other Oak Creeks from happening. Though one cannot fairly expect open house events at some *gurdwaras* in country to deflect hate violence against Sikhs and *gurdwaras* nationwide, it is fair and important to question how effectively such events can combat systemic and institutionalized Islamophobia. Hate being the requirement for entry into white power groups, it is unlikely that neo-Nazis like the Oak Creek shooter would be interested in going to open house events whose aim is to foster unity and love.

²³⁵ There are many examples of similar events at mosques. For example, after the building was vandalized with hate violence, the Islamic Center of Mantea hosted an open house event (2014). Another example is of Oklahoma mosques hosting a statewide open house day (2018) (Rodriguez-Moore and 2014; “Statewide Open Mosque Day Is Planned”).

So, while a community may host an open house in which a few dozen people may attend, such a kind gesture has limited potential to combat systemic hate violence that is deeply-rooted in the very fabric of a modern nation. When a federal government uses Islamophobia to justify its longest-running foreign war for securing oil, stopping immigration and limiting refugee entry from Muslim-majority countries, and does little to curb hate groups that thrive on Islamophobia, open houses at places of faith that bear the brunt of that Islamophobic hate violence have a limited positive effect.

IV.I. *Seeking Sikhurity*

A parallel development to open houses at *gurdwaras* is the Sikh Coalition’s “Gurdwara Security Toolkit,” a program that the organization debuted in April 2017. As described by the organization itself, the toolkit “includes information on resources and trainings provided by federal and state government agencies to help places of worship, including Gurdwaras, minimize the risk of attacks.”²³⁶ The toolkit contains two key official guidelines— one by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), titled, “Protecting Houses of Worship Against Arson,” and the other by the Department of Homeland Security, titled, “How to Respond When An Active Shooter is in Your Vicinity.”²³⁷

While it is unfortunate that such a toolkit had to be put together in the first place, the resources found in it are even more troublesome due to their origin. The first page in the toolkit states that due to the rise in hate crimes, *gurdwara* security has become the Sikh Coalition’s “top

²³⁶ “Gurdwara Security Toolkit,” Sikh Coalition, accessed December 20, 2018, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/resources/gurdwara-security-toolkit/>.

²³⁷ “Preventing Attacks on Gurdwaras” (Sikh Coalition, 2017), 2, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/gurdwara-security-toolkit-april-2017.pdf>.

priority in 2017.”²³⁸ In addition to hate crimes forcing Sikhs to be hyper-aware of their surroundings and having to be vigilant at all times, many *gurdwaras* have installed closed-circuit television (CCTV) security cameras. I firmly believe the Sikh Coalition intends to keep the Sikh community’s best interests at heart with this toolkit and all its other programming. However, a critical look at the kinds of partnerships this toolkit shows not just how misguided this type of advocacy is, but also that those partnerships have the organization partaking in a political game of multiculturalism executed by the neoliberal state. In this political game, an organization like the Sikh Coalition, and an immigrant minority community like Sikhs, merely serve the state, in return for which, the state provides them with a false sense of security while securing for itself an obedient group of model minority citizens. In this case, the sense of security the Sikh community is receiving is quite literal:

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) also offers free security consulting through its Protective Service Advisor Program. Consultants can visit your Gurdwara and provide advice for improving security, such as installing alarm systems and video cameras, improving locks and lighting, and creating an emergency response plan. Some Gurdwaras may also be eligible for federal grants to improve their physical security. Before contacting DHS about this program, please note that this agency is responsible for immigration enforcement. *Although government officials have assured us that their security consultants do not collect or share information that could lead to immigration raids and deportation orders, we cannot know for certain whether this is true.* We encourage you to keep this mind when considering whether this program is right for *your sangat* [religious community] (emphasis added).²³⁹

The above-cited excerpt may not ring alarm bells for many, but the deeply troublesome history and present of the DHS renders this relationship between Sikhs and the state as superficial and dubious. Why and how can a Sikh advocacy organization partner with the exact

²³⁸ “Preventing Attacks on Gurdwaras,” 2.

²³⁹ “Preventing Attacks on Gurdwaras,” 2.

branch of government that is known for its inhumane treatment of and total disregard of the lives of immigrants and extreme bias towards Muslims? How can the DHS, on the one hand, offer a program protective of religious spaces, and on the other hand, not only surveil an entire faith-based community (i.e. Muslims) simply based on racial bias, but actively prevent migration (including of asylees and refugees) from *and* continue to devastate certain regions of the world with unspeakable tactics of war?²⁴⁰ It is unthinkable that Muslim communities in the country would *invite* into their spaces the very structures of power whose various apparatuses are constantly working *against* them. Given that the Sikh Coalition tries to be mindful of not throwing “other communities under the bus,” the organization’s partnership with DHS is troubling.²⁴¹

The “Protecting Houses of Worship Against Arson” pamphlet by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that is included in the Toolkit contains, unsurprisingly, common sense tips. These are tips like ensuring fire alarms and sprinklers are functioning, clearly designating emergency exit plans and paths, making sure windows and doors stay locked when the space is not in use, clearing obstructions (such as overgrown shrubs and trees) so that the view out from the structure is clear, and having well-placed and functioning lighting around the property.²⁴² Each of these items of safety is not only common sense, but are also points covered

²⁴⁰ The references here, of course, are to the surveillance of mosques and Muslim bodies after 9/11, the so-called “Travel Bans” under the current regime, and the ongoing “War on Terror.”

²⁴¹ The quoted part of this sentence comes from a video segment by Hasan Minhaj from when he was a correspondent on The Daily Show with Trevor Noah. In the satirical segment, titled “Confused Islamophobes Target American Sikhs,” Minhaj satirically asks a group of Sikhs in a panel specifically curated for the segment why they [the Sikh community] “Don’t just go, “Hey, I’m not Muslim” to avoid becoming victims of Islamophobic hate violence. A Sikh man, who serves as the Senior Religion Fellow for the Sikh Coalition, responds with, “It’s just not an option for us to throw another community under the bus, even if it means things are harder for us. We believe it’s the right thing to do.” The Executive Chairman of the Coalition, who is also among the five panelists, chimes in immediately after, with, “Like, we need to be better than that as Americans, and that’s what our Sikh values teach as well”

Confused Islamophobes Target American Sikhs.

²⁴² “Preventing Attacks on Gurdwaras,” 3–4.

by property inspectors. Other than for avoiding liability, it is unclear why a federal organization like FEMA would need to be especially invited to a *gurdwara* to inspect what is already common sense. Moreover, the security tips that the pamphlet provides can be easily applied without partnering with DHS.

Similar to the FEMA pamphlet, the material provided by the DHS and included in the Sikh Coalition's Gurdwara Security Toolkit contains information that is of no surprise to communities who are frequently affected by hate violence. This part of the Toolkit does include much more in-depth information on types of attacks that can be inflicted on a space, as well as basic statistics on hate violence on buildings. The handouts include four recent examples (ranging between 2012 and 2015) of hate violence against religious minorities. Although for three of these four cited cases (two Black churches, one mosque, and one *gurdwara*), the perpetrators have been white supremacists, the handouts do not specify that information, referring to each of the perpetrators as simply "gunman." The handouts also include information on damage caused to structures by natural disasters.²⁴³ Under a section titled "Common Vulnerabilities," the DHS handouts also cites the fixed and predictable schedules of houses of faith as one reason that makes these spaces susceptible to hate violence.²⁴⁴ The final few pages of the handouts are of a lengthy table, titled, "Potential Baseline Protective Measures."²⁴⁵ The table delineates potential reasons house of worship are targeted and gives measures communities can take to ensure the safety of their spaces. Once again, similar to the pamphlet by FEMA, items listed in the table are common sense matters, such as making sure the property has back-up power, doors and windows with functioning locking mechanisms, emergency response plans,

²⁴³ "Preventing Attacks on Gurdwaras," 6–8.

²⁴⁴ "Preventing Attacks on Gurdwaras," 9.

²⁴⁵ "Preventing Attacks on Gurdwaras," 12–15.

and so forth.²⁴⁶ The final two pages are in English and Punjabi and list “how to” instructions for safety and protection in the event an active shooter on site and on how to respond responding to law enforcement.²⁴⁷ The last section of these pages in English and Punjabi lists “signs of potential workplace violence.” According to this list, a current or former employee showing signs of substance abuse, emotional instability, and alarming comments on weapons and crimes may be indicative of “potentially violent behavior.”²⁴⁸

IV.II. The DHS *Can* Have its Cake and Eat it, Too

Although the materials provided by the DHS that are included in the Gurdwara Security Toolkit list some signs to help identify potential violence, they do not, however, include the foremost reason contributing to hate violence in the country. What the DHS materials strategically omit is, however, thoroughly reported by other social service organizations in the country. For instance, upon analyzing hate violence data spanning 25 years (1993-2017), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reports that a majority of the cases of hate violence that took place in this time were committed by white supremacists.²⁴⁹ A recent exposé reports that a former policy analyst of the DHS had close ties with white nationalist groups.²⁵⁰ Hate speech and Islamophobia by the highest echelons of government in this country only further embolden and sanction hate violence on minority communities.

²⁴⁶ “Preventing Attacks on Gurdwaras,” 12–15.

²⁴⁷ It is unclear from the Toolkit whether the Punjabi translation has been provided by the Sikh Coalition or was courtesy of the DHS.

²⁴⁸ “Preventing Attacks on Gurdwaras,” 12–15.

²⁴⁹ “A Dark and Constant Rage: 25 Years of Right-Wing Terrorism in the United States,” Anti-Defamation League, accessed December 20, 2018, <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/dark-constant-rage-25-years-of-right-wing-terrorism-in-united-states>.

²⁵⁰ Rosie Gray, “Emails Link Ex-DHS Policy Analyst to White Nationalists,” *The Atlantic*, August 28, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/08/emails-link-former-dhs-policy-analyst-to-white-nationalists/568843/>.

Officials employed by the DHS' branch of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are frequently reported as treating undocumented immigrants and others seeking asylum in the country with extreme bias, inhumane treatment, and various other types of transgressions of basic human rights and dignity.²⁵¹ Further, current statistics reveal that the fastest-growing population of undocumented people in the United States is coming from Asia. India is one of the two Asian countries from which the highest numbers of people are migrating (the other country being China).²⁵² My own observations at various detention centers in Southern California confirm that the largest group of detained people is Punjabi Sikh men.²⁵³ For this reason alone, it is troubling that the Sikh Coalition offers programs to *gurdwaras* that require partnering with the DHS to any degree. The Coalition does issue a disclaimer as part of its Gurdwara Security Toolkit, instructing that, "Although government officials have assured us that their security consultants do not collect or share information that could lead to immigration raids and deportation orders, we cannot know for certain whether this is true. We encourage you to keep this [in] mind when considering whether this program is right for your *sangat* [religious community]."²⁵⁴ The only "winner" in this partnership between the state and the Sikh Coalition is the former. Despite assurance [for now] from the DHS that it will not collect community data to use for immigration raids and deportations, recent misuse by law enforcement agencies of

²⁵¹ Journalists across the country have written about how ICE immigration detention centers are kept cool beyond what is normatively acceptable so that immigrants therein submit to being deported. Other reports disclose ICE officials sexually assaulting and harassing young children in detention, detained pregnant women having miscarriages, cases of detainees committing suicide, unsanitary conditions at detention centers, leading to serious diseases, mass abuses of labor (ex: detainees can choose work at the detention facility they are in for work up to 8 hours per day, for which, compensation is \$1 per day), and the current regime's most infamous and cruel tactic—separating undocumented children from their parents when both cross from the southern border. The most recent statistic shows 497 children remain separated from parents, with no information on if and when these families will be reunited (Kopan).

²⁵² "One out of Every 7 Asian Immigrants Is Undocumented," *AAPI Data* (blog), September 8, 2017, <http://aapidata.com/blog/asian-undoc-1in7/>.

²⁵³ See the epilogue at the end of my dissertation.

²⁵⁴ "Preventing Attacks on Gurdwaras," 2.

sensitive data leaves little feeling of assurance for undocumented people.²⁵⁵ The risks associated with the partnership between DHS and Sikh communities far outweigh the purported benefits. Rather than the Sikh community, the DHS itself seems to be the beneficiary of this program designed to protect *gurdwaras*. Until and unless those directly responsible for spewing hate speech and hate violence are held accountable, there is very little that padlock checks and open houses at *gurdwaras* can prevent from happening.

V. Gurdwaras as “Total Spaces”

My dissertation is centered on what centers Sikhs: *gurdwaras*. They are spaces in which Sikhs’ lives as members of the *Panth* (community) begin, grow, and conclude. Newborns are taken to *gurdwaras* to be named according to the Sikh naming ceremony, Sikhs’ weddings are performed at *gurdwaras*, and Sikhs’ last rites *ardas* (prayer) are also done at *gurdwaras*.²⁵⁶ Each *gurdwara* is a community building, as in the physical structure that fosters community life, and it is also a site of community-building, as in the process of nurturing an institution. *Gurdwaras* have historically always been associated with being sites of refuge, evident first and foremost through each site’s *nishan sahib*—literal place marker meant to be located from afar.²⁵⁷ Further, their open floor plans enable mass gathering. This lineage of space and custom enables

²⁵⁵ For instance, one of the largest real estate companies in California, The Irvine Company, recently clarified that car and license plate information automatically collected at three large malls in Orange County will be shared with the police, not ICE. However, concerns still loom large of potential misuse of this data, as the some private companies do share sensitive data with ICE.

“The statement came after a [report](#) published Tuesday by the Electronic Frontier Foundation raised privacy concerns about how the database is used, since it is operated by Vigilant Solutions, a Livermore, Calif., business that collects information from license plate readers for private entities and law enforcement, including ICE” (Tchekmedyian).

²⁵⁶ “Rehat Maryada,” Sikhs.org, accessed December 20, 2018, <https://www.sikhs.org/rehit.htm>.

²⁵⁷ Here I am thinking of a *gurdwara* in Multan, West Punjab at which the famed seventeenth century Punjabi poet Bulleh Shah stayed upon being labeled a heretic and consequently banished from his community. Iqbal Qaiser, *Historical Sikh Shrines in Pakistan* (Lahore: Punjabi History Board, 1998), 94, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/51177528.html>.

gurdwaras to transform into “total spaces” for community use by all. Given their multifarious purposes, *gurdwaras* are “total spaces” for Sikhs, as they are a microcosm of Sikh life.

Sikh architectural history reveals that the predecessor to “gurdwara” was the term “dharamshal,” *a site of dharam* (righteousness).²⁵⁸ Regardless of which term is used, the larger point is that a *dharamshal* or *gurdwara* serves as a community building and for community-building. This dual process is no more visible than it has been in the last several years. The idea of *gurdwara* institutions as community buildings has taken on various meanings since Oak Creek. Sikh communities nationwide have (re)designed *gurdwara* architectonics to host various types of community events. Examples just from within California include *langar* (cafeteria) halls being used as polling sites during elections, as the *gurdwara* in San Jose, *gurdwaras* instated as designated safe spaces in the event of natural disasters, as at the *gurdwara* in Rio Linda after major flooding in early 2017, and as at the Sikh Institute of Fresno in the event of an earthquake.²⁵⁹

V.I. *Langar for Lunch*

The air in the Sacramento area of Central Valley, California whispers in Punjabi. It is the area in which Punjabi Sikhs have laid down roots since their arrival from the South Asian subcontinent in the early twentieth century. Amidst a political environment in which to have Brown skin means to become suspect, including in the Central Valley itself, great-grandchildren of Punjabi Sikh pioneers roam the hallways of the Sacramento Valley Charter School (SVCS)

²⁵⁸ I am thankful to the Sikh Research Institute for video-sharing a lecture from November 2011, in which Harinder Singh discussed the history of the term “gurduara” [sic]. Harinder Singh, *Reviving the Gurduara* (Sikh Research Institute, 2011), <https://vimeo.com/32447966>.

²⁵⁹ “Notice of Designated Polling Places in the June 5, 2018 Statewide Direct Primary Election” (The County of Santa Clara, May 7, 2018), <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Voting/observers/Documents/Notice%20of%20Designated%20Polling%20Places%20-%20Statewide%20Direct%20Primary%20-%20English.pdf>.

without fear of being racialized due to their headcoverings. The SVCS is a K-8 school and is the first school in the country to offer Punjabi language as a designated subject.²⁶⁰ The school, which was established in 2011, is located beside the Sacramento Sikh Temple. Its proximity to the *gurdwara* means that the latter's *langar* hall serves as the school's cafeteria, providing free meals (i.e. *langar*) to nearly 70% of its student body.²⁶¹

Sacramento Sikh Temple's large *langar* hall is perfectly conducive for repurposing as a cafeteria for the school. *Langar* is a community-sustained Sikh tradition of radical redistribution of food and dates back to the inception of Sikhi by Guru Nanak in the fifteenth century. This redistribution is actively anti-capitalist, as it requires all able-bodied people to sit together on the floor to eat *langar*, thereby eliminating any hierarchies of caste or class that would otherwise divide people in how and where they sit. In the context of the Sacramento Valley Charter School, *langar* combats food insecurity for nearly 70% of the school's student body. The lunch menu is made according to the *gurdwara*'s strictly vegetarian policy (one that is common across all *gurdwaras* worldwide), as well as with consideration toward the school's Punjabi Sikh student body, many of whom are likely also vegetarian. The monthly-updated lunch menu even has Punjabi foods on the menu, prepared by designated cooks in the *gurdwara*'s *langar* preparation area.²⁶²

V.II. *Langar for Rights*

²⁶⁰ "Our Vision," Sacramento Valley Charter School, accessed December 20, 2018, <https://www.sacvalleycharter.org/>.

²⁶¹ The school has 229 students enrolled in its K-8 classes. "School Profile: Sacramento Valley Charter," California Department of Education, accessed December 20, 2018, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sdprofile/details.aspx?cds=57726940124875>.

I am thankful to Manjot Singh for sharing with me basic information on the SVCS.

²⁶² For instance, the August 2018 lunch menu lists a variety of vegetarian food options. These include items like veggie burgers, pasta, Punjabi-style *parathas* (flatbread), *mattar paneer* (peas and paneer cheese made according to Punjabi cuisine), pizza, tostadas, and subs. "Lunch Menu," Sacramento Valley Charter School, accessed December 20, 2018, <http://www.sacvalleycharter.org/lunch-menu.html>.

The Sacramento Sikh Temple's langar hall transforming into a school cafeteria not only provides food for students but also serves as an example of a *gurdwara* turning into a "total space" in service of others. To reiterate, from a logistical perspective, it is not extraordinary for *gurdwaras* to transform into shelters and cafeterias, as historically and in the present day, they are designed for community. What is remarkable and extraordinary, however, is the Sikh custom of keeping *gurdwara* doors open for anyone in need, even after something like Oak Creek.

The Sikh tradition of having doors in each of the four cardinal directions is not only an architectural detail that enables easy entry and exit, and airflow in all directions. As explained in Sikh oral tradition, the idea of entryways in each of the four directions is to signify that the *gurdwara* space is open to everyone at all times. The term itself—*gurdwara*—literally means "doorway to the Guru," with "duar" and "door" sharing an etymological history. In cases like the Sacramento Sikh Temple, the idea behind "gurdwara" (literally) extends outward to offer as much community support as logistically and physically possible through the Sacramento Valley Charter School. The *gurdwara* offering meals free of cost to students in need, as well as an institutional learning space, are different in spirit when contrasted with other programs in America in which the Sikh community offers *langar*. For instance, the Sikh American Legal Aid and Education Fund (SALDEF), another advocacy organization, has an annual event, titled, "Langar on the Hill."²⁶³ Since 2014, the event has been taking place annually on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

The historical tradition of Sikh *langar* has been to feed those facing food insecurity. At events like "Langar on the Hill," the narrative changes from feeding those in need to feeding with the motive of getting favorable results to Sikh advocacy efforts. The event takes place in a

²⁶³ "Support SALDEF's 5th Annual Langar on the Hill!," SALDEF, July 5, 2018, http://saldef.org/news/support-saldef-5th-annual-langar-hill/#.XCKn_vx7lz0.

room in one of the buildings of the House of Representatives. By setting up long carpet runners on the floor for attendees to sit on, the room transforms into a *langar* hall for the duration of the event. Food typically served in *gurdwara langars* (lentils, traditional South Asian unleavened bread, yogurt, etc.) is catered in. There seems to be a formal transaction at “Langar on the Hill.” The event is an exchange, of sorts, in which Sikhs offer *langar* to the attendees, in return for which, they are “rewarded” by members of Congress who join them in a meal and reflect on the contributions of Sikh Americans and offer to serve the civic interests of Sikhs in America. The event also becomes an opportunity for the Sikh youth organizers of “Langar on the Hill” to raise awareness on the faith tradition.

There are a number of differences between traditional *langar* being done as *seva* (selfless service) and “Langar on the Hill” being done with certain incentives in mind. While in a context like *langar* at the Sacramento Valley Charter School, which serves free food to children, many of whom come from low-income families, “Langar the Hill” is not necessarily aimed at relieving food insecurity. The program of the Capitol Hill event becoming an avenue through which to highlight the accomplishments of Sikh Americans over the last century becomes another instance of (self-re)presenting Sikhs as a “model minority” community. It is interesting to ponder what such an event would highlight and whether it would even be taking place if Sikh Americans did not have a social history that deems them a “model minority” community. So, even at seemingly beneficial events graced by liberal politicians, the narrative on (and oftentimes, by) the Sikh community is of a historically heroic minority community in the U.S. that has, as of the last couple decades, become victim to hate violence, a community that exhibits all the signs of model minority-ness nonetheless. As with the *Charhdi Kala* 6K, here, too, the Sikh concept of *langar* is

stripped of its radical potential and reduced to fit a narrative of heroicism, all the while the larger, systemic issues of institutional racism are left untouched.

VI. Conclusion

In this chapter, I critique the deradicalization of Sikh ethos and its representation as watered down narratives of Sikh life in order to conform to social anxieties produced in U.S. media. I look specifically at various moments in the lives of Sikhs in the United States from the post-Oak Creek *gurdwara* shootings of 2012. Certain populations of Sikhs in the country, as well as advocacy organizations like the Sikh Coalition and the National Sikh Campaign describe their belonging in the country with the tagline, “Sikh values are American values.”²⁶⁴ The conflation of Sikh ethos with those of “American values” not only presents Sikhs as an assimilationist community but also places Sikhs as “winners” in the problematic “model minority” narrative. “Sikh values” as equal to “American values” is also problematic, as it assumes “American values” and “American” to be static and ideal. American exceptionalism and imperialism are erased out of this equation.

Through certain case studies from contemporary Sikh activism, this chapter demonstrates some ways in which Sikhs are (self-)represented as a subset of “model minority” Americana, as well as other ways in which such an assimilationist stance becomes impossible due to distinctive Sikh identity and ethos. Since I look at how bodies and buildings of Sikhs become victims of hate violence, and because this dual victimization happens frequently in contemporary U.S., the bulk of my sources are news articles that report cases of attacks on Sikh people and *gurdwaras*. There are two key reasons for my reliance on popular media as sources. First, because racist

²⁶⁴ “About,” National Sikh Campaign, accessed July 9, 2019, <http://www.sikhcampaign.org/about>. National Sikh Campaign.

graffiti painted on the properties of *gurdwaras* is quickly washed off by Sikhs, the archive of this violence on architecture only remains in news articles discussing the cases. Second, I treat the archive of news reports on hate violence on bodies and buildings as a starting point, following up their use with thorough analysis based on Sikh ethos and academic critique. Unlike popular media, I refrain from using images of bruised and beaten Sikh bodies resulting from hate violence, as doing so would mean to relive the violence, and be revictimized and retraumatized in the process. A large portion of this chapter, and of my dissertation more broadly, foregrounds racial bias founded on hate violence and hate groups, due to which minority communities like Arabs, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and virtually all with Brown skin are terrorized. Focusing on hate violence squarely places this chapter in the discipline of Hate Studies (discussed in detail in the Introduction).

For the sake of mental health and community empowerment, I flip the narrative from Hate Studies to Love Studies.²⁶⁵ It is through this reversal, which itself is based on Sikh ethos, that I analyze what it means to be in and to live *charhdi kala*. I also take inspiration from the continuation of *Parkash* (“radiance,” “illumination,” “mental or spiritual awakening”) in Sikh history, even as recent as 2012. Similar to 1984 when, after the Indian government-sanctioned attacks on the Akal Takht *gurdwara* in Amritsar, Punjab, leaving the iconic and historically significant building in shambles, the daily *parkash* (“opening ceremony”) of Guru Granth Sahib continued on, as though nothing had happened. This same principle of continuity guided the Oak

²⁶⁵ Here I am also thinking of bell hooks’ All About Love. I come to Love Studies, however, through the frameworks of Sikh Gurbani and devotional Sufi singing (qawwali). In both these traditions, love means ultimately sacrificing one’s self (in bodily form) or one’s *sense* of self (one’s ego) for the Beloved (whether human or Divine). A famous composition from Gurbani that centers this idea of ego-loss translates to “If you desire to play the game of Love, come to Me (the Beloved) with your head placed on your palm.”
Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 1412.

Creek Sikh community to carry on with *parkash* on August 6, 2012, a day after the shootings, even as the *gurdwara* building was sealed off by the police.

I want to end this chapter on this note of love, not by glossing over the very real and pervasive hatred the case studies in this chapter discuss and allude to, but by imagining what a radical form of love looks like. “Hamsuffer” is a Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu word, and it translates to “our (*ham*) journey (*safar*)” The conventional transliteration of the word is “hamsafar.” However, I intentionally transliterate it as “hamsuffer” to signify that the hate violence the Sikh community is and has been living through is a shared pain, *co-suffered* by all others who are also racialized and victimized because of white supremacy.

In the pages above, I have repeatedly questioned the efficacy of the Sikh Coalition’s efforts around federal recognition of hate violence faced by Sikhs as discernibly “anti-Sikh.” My analysis of the rhetoric and visuals of hate crimes on Sikh bodies and buildings reveals their motivation as being Islamophobia, not Sikhobic.²⁶⁶ The reason behind hate crimes is racist violence, not the fear that turbans and beards elicit. Former white supremacist and co-founder of the hate group that the Oak Creek shooter was part of, Arno Michaelis himself states that white supremacist groups are “anti-foreigner, anti-black, anti-gay, anti-Semitic, anti-anyone-who-didn’t-fit-into-our-crude-worldview.”²⁶⁷ Sikhs, I argue, are one of the many ethnic, racial, faith, and linguistic minorities that hate groups see as enemies. Much of this hate is based on Islamophobia and the consequential racialization of Muslims as “the enemy,” and thus of anyone that “looks” Muslim. I’ve tried to demonstrate that the “anti-” that Sikh advocacy groups are trying to counter is less about white supremacists’ personal vendetta against Sikhs than it is their

²⁶⁶ See Chapter Two for my analysis of specific cases of hate violence.

²⁶⁷ Arno Michaelis and Pardeep Singh Kaleka, *The Gift of Our Wounds: A Sikh and a Former White Supremacist Find Forgiveness After Hate* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2018), 14.

(white supremacists’) hatred of everyone falling outside a narrow worldview. Although various types of programs and rhetoric after the Oak Creek shootings have tried to situate Sikhs as triumphant in the face of hatred, I argue that it is not until we (Sikhs) eliminate our anti-Black, anti-immigrant, anti-caste, anti-class, anti-queer biases that we (Sikhs) can truly be triumphant in face of tragedy that is hatred. Eliminating these biases is not enough; if we are going to be “anti-” anything, we ought to be anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, anti-war, anti-racist, and anti-hierarchy.

In the days following the Oak Creek shootings, a Sikh blogger and activist beautifully expressed what many Sikhs, including myself, were feeling but could not quite put into words. R.P. Singh wrote, “It’s strange the way the Sikh psyche works. Even though a shooting was in progress at a gurdwara, for some reason, in hearing this tragic news...a gurdwara was still the only place I wanted to be.”²⁶⁸ As it was before August 5, 2012, the building standing at 7512 S. Howell Avenue, Oak Creek, Wisconsin is first and foremost what every *gurdwara* is: the heart of the Sikh community around it. There is a human tendency to conflate places into events. “Vietnam,” as Linda Vo expressed in a conversation, is first and foremost a living place, not a war.²⁶⁹ Similarly, “Oak Creek” is a place, not an event. Prior to August 5, 2012, “Oak Creek” only resonated as the name of a small town of just about 34,000 people. The shootings have transformed the place. Words that were unknown before August 5, 2012 now invoke a flood of memories for Sikhs.

While there is much to critique about the more popular streams of Sikh advocacy and awareness, I conclude with reminders on how contemporary moment, *gurdwaras* continue to be

²⁶⁸ R. P. Singh, “How Unique It Is,” *Spirit Of The Sikh* (blog), August 9, 2012, <https://spiritofthesikh.com/2012/08/09/how-unique-it-is/>.

²⁶⁹ I am thankful to Linda Vo for expressing this powerful statement during a lecture in 2017 at UCI.

sites of resistance against (state) oppression. Only a few miles away from here at UC Irvine is a site at which, once a week, undocumented Punjabi Sikh minors come to see, smell, taste, and speak the familiar. These individuals' weekly visits to this site—a *gurdwara*—enables them to experience this familiarity. When not bowing in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib (*matha tekna*), eating *langar*, and conversing in Punjabi, these individuals are essentially under house arrest, as they are in custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for entering into the country without documentation.²⁷⁰ This *gurdwara* is far from the only one at which state oppression in the form of immigration incarceration comes face to face with the forces of community-building that actively and openly defy, resist, and challenge that oppression. So, while in some cases, *gurdwara* sites mark locations at which hate violence forces its way upon the structures' walls and the communities' hearts, they also mark locations at which radical love (i.e. *charhdi kala*) is aplenty.

Without erasing the history and memory of the shootings, how could one re-establish the site at 7512 S. Howell Avenue as what it was: a *gurdwara*? The same question is relevant to the thousands of bodies who have been made targets of hate violence. How does an individual (and community) who has been shot at, spat on, knocked down, and walked upon move on, not move past? The answer to this subjective question will differ from person to person, of course. But looking again at *gurdwaras* provides a resilient, sustainable answer. Listed below are a few anecdotes specific to Oak Creek. These anecdotes are a glimpse into the workings of the spirit of *charhdi kala* and a commitment to being forward-looking with foresight.²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ Due to legal constraints, I am unable to ask the individuals about reasons why they left India only to embark upon dangerous, potentially life-threatening journeys across various borders between South Asia and North America.

²⁷¹ Here I am thinking of a *shabad* ("word," "hymns") that stresses the importance of being forward-looking and warns against looking back with resentment, and another *shabad* that encourages looking ahead with foresight. Guru Granth Sahib, 474.

It's *charhdi kala*...

...when a Sikh goes to Oak Creek gurdwara the day after the Sunday shootings to matha tek ("bow in reverence") and eat the karah parshaad (pudding-like food offered to all who come to gurdwara) left therein from the day of the shootings. The cold, stiff karah parshaad warms his soul as he commemorates a lineage of resilience.

...when, for an entire year, the daily formal ardas ("supplication") at Oak Creek included blessings for the victims and the shooter, because that is the way of sarbat da bhala ("well-being of all")

...when Oak Creek Sikhs could not bear the thought of not being at gurdwara to do seva ("selfless service") and looked for ways to sneak into the closed-off building.

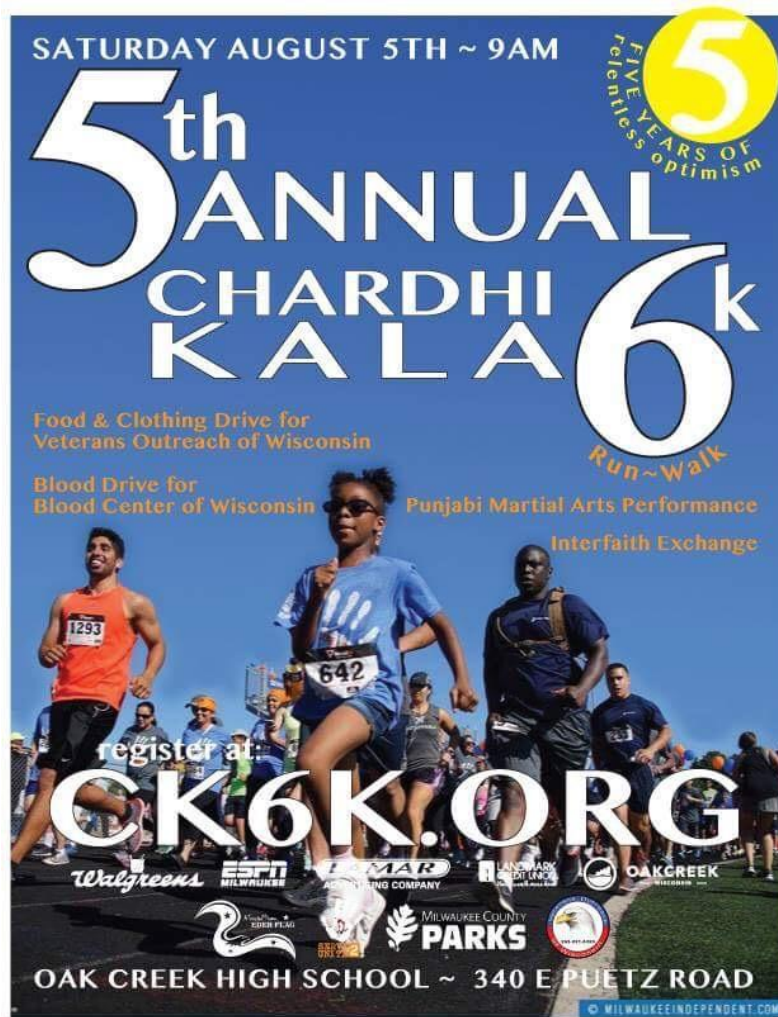


Figure 2.1: The flyer for the 2017 *Charhdi Kala 6K*. Image via www.chardhikala6kwi.org

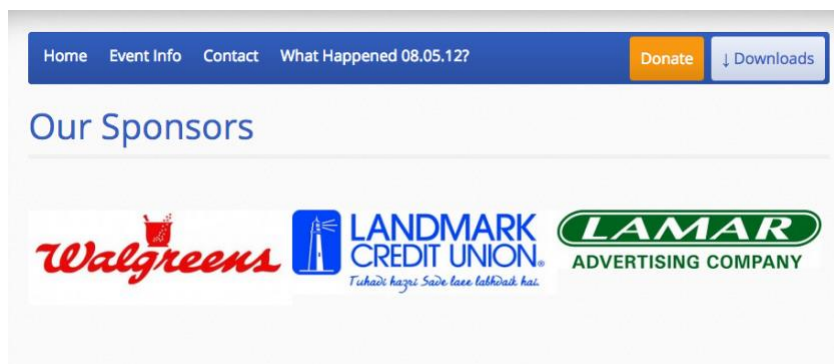


Figure 2.2: This screengrab shows three of the main sponsors of the 2017 *Charhdi Kala 6K*. This image shows the Landmark Credit Union’s tagline of “You’re worth more here.” translated into Punjabi, written in Romanized form. Taken from www.chardhikala6kwi.org



Figure 2.3: Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Buena Park, California, photographed in late 2015. Image courtesy of The Washington Post.



Figure 2.4: An image that the National Sikh Campaign shared in celebration of the Fourth of July in 2017. Image courtesy of National Sikh Campaign.

Chapter Three What's in a Name?

I. Introduction

This chapter is my respite in the grueling process of writing a dissertation on hate violence. In the previous chapters, I critique the ways in which post-9/11, post-Oak Creek, and post-2016 Presidential election Sikh advocacy in the United States reproduces narratives of model minority citizenship while also aligning with state forces that produce an environment of hate in the country, such as the military and the state department at large. The previous chapter covers how *gurdwaras* become “total sites,” offering food, shelter, and services to those in need. In that chapter I present the idea that *gurdwaras* are political statements and monuments of resistance against white supremacy in the public sphere. In this chapter, I continue with this theme of resistance, though the focus here is not *gurdwaras*. Rather, here I examine four public parks commemorating Sikh history and figures, and a Sikh-themed live theater show. Each of these sites falls outside of the *gurdwara* typology yet still serves the spatial purposes that a typical *gurdwara* does: a community space open to all in which to gather and mobilize. Though none of these sites is a *gurdwara*, the conception of space therein is derived from the experiences of Sikhs in those locales.

Three of the parks I look at are in California cities of Bakersfield, Fresno, and Sacramento, and the fourth is in Perth, Western Australia. The live theater show is titled RAG HEAD and is written and produced by Sundeep Morrison of Los Angeles. These sites represent an expansion beyond the *gurdwara* typology of how the Sikh community makes itself visible. *Gurdwaras*, by far, are still the main type of space through which Sikhs connect with their faith and culture. However, these non-*gurdwara* sites capture experiences of life and death among Sikh diaspora populations. In this chapter I centralize the Sikh community's historical and

contemporary experiences with death and how death becomes the catalyst for disrupting narratives of settling in various “hostlands.” Each of these four non-*gurdwara* sites exists because of its specific link to death—the parks in California are each named after or designed in memory of Sikhs who have been killed due to hate or state violence, the park in Western Australia commemorates an anti-establishment lineage of “illegal” cremations by early Sikh settlers, and the RAG HEAD show is directly inspired by the 2012 shootings by a white supremacist at the Oak Creek, Wisconsin *gurdwara*. These sites’ link to death is what has enabled me to make the arguments contained in this chapter—that it is through narratives surrounding tragic death by hate and state violence that Sikh advocacy looks outward to other, similarly-affected communities. This parallel is largely lacking in other forms of Sikh-only advocacy and awareness campaigns, some of which I have discussed in previous chapters. Another argument that follows is that Sikh advocacy and awareness hinged on everyday, unremarkable, regular lives of ordinary, working class Sikhs results in not only a more realistic picture of who Sikhs are as a complex and heterogeneous community, but that these humble representations counter the image of elite Sikhs as a “model minority” group with members who have achieved extraordinary entrepreneurial, professional, and technological feats.

I present these arguments by first challenging the “model minority” conception of Sikhs by focusing on them as the “unmodel majority.” Each of the sites I examine in this chapter counters victorious, linear narratives on and among diaspora and immigrant communities of having “made it” in life, both individually and collectively. These normative narratives are largely based on settlement. How we conceptualize “firsts” in diasporic history is testament to this impulse of linearity, as information on historic firsts rolls off our tongues, ready to be recalled whenever there’s a need to (be) historicize(d): the first *gurdwara* in America (Stockton,

CA), the first Punjabi Sikh member of Congress (Dalip Singh Saund), the first Sikh American female, turban-wearing pilot (Arpinder Kaur), the first Sikh soldier in the U.S. army (Bhagat Singh Thind), and so forth. Diaspora communities have to and often choose to anchor themselves in their various homelands through these types of “firsts.”

There is another “first” in the Sikh diasporic community, that of the first Sikh life lost to racialized hate violence in the contemporary period—the murder of Balbir Singh Sodhi four days after 9/11. My focus in this chapter is on that kind of a “first,” the kind that does not celebrate settling in the “hostland.” Rather, this is a “first” that *unsettles*.²⁷² Various “firsts” under analysis here are of how early Sikh settlers coped with life in racist and restrictive lands when the first death among their networks happened, and how contemporary Sikhs have planned, designed, and curated an unprecedented number of non-*gurdwara* sites for the first time in their diasporic histories.²⁷³ All of these instances foreground unsettling, a perspective that enables an alternative storytelling approach to “model minority” stories of Sikhs. This alternative method creates space for immigrant and diaspora Sikhs to tell their stories with the rawness and precarity that encompass their (our) lives: death due to hate and state violence.²⁷⁴ Rather than listing all the

²⁷² My thanks to Prof. Judy Wu for encouraging exploring this connection to Eric Tang’s *Unsettled: Cambodian Refugees in the NYC Superghetto* (2015), in which he writes about the experiences of Ra Pronh, a genocide and refugee camp survivor, of moving and resettling in the Bronx. Tang argues that in these circumstances, relocated migrants, refugees, and asylees’ experience is of being subject to poverty and further abjection due to the violence of neoliberalism, rather than the of the myth of prosperity in the “supposed land of salvation” (Tang, *Unsettled*; Tang, “Unsettled”).

²⁷³ There are other types of non-*gurdwara* sites that Sikh communities across the globe has utilized in the last two to three decades. Many *gurdwaras* in India have created gallery spaces on their premises to display Sikh history through large paintings. There have also been art exhibits in the U.S., Canada, and U.K. on historical and contemporary Sikh-themed art. However, Sikh spaces especially curated to commemorate death from hate violence in the diaspora are a new typology, emerging after 9/11.

²⁷⁴ The separation of hate violence from state violence in this chapter is simply for the purposes of keeping the various physical sites presented here distinctive. Some of the sites commemorate people who were killed due to white supremacist hate violence, and others due to state violence in the form of extrajudicial killings. Throughout this dissertation, however, a key argument I present is that hate violence *is* state violence, in that the state creates and enables an environment for hate to thrive.

ways in which Sikhs in the global diaspora are extraordinary for all that they have achieved, this approach presents Sikhs as ordinary people.²⁷⁵

I.I. Diasporic Necropolitics: The Inevitability of Death

In this chapter I discuss unsettlement through the framework of “diasporic necropolitics,” arguing that the violence faced by early Punjabi Sikh immigrant settlers (and us in the contemporary period) is specific to racial formations in the diaspora, and that particular features of this violence are shaped by Islamophobia and imperialism. By “diasporic necropolitics,” then, I mean those factors that predispose certain diaspora and minority communities to violence and death, both resulting from the terrors of heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, and various streams of racist hate violence embedded therein. I patch together Achille Mbembe’s ideas on necropolitics, particularly that “the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die,” and Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s definition of racism as “the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death.”²⁷⁶ By bringing Mbembe and Gilmore’s definitions together, I illustrate how, for instance, Brown bodies are made susceptible to “premature death,” and that the process involving this production equates to diasporic necropolitics. My purpose here is not to simply borrow from theorization of death in works on Afro-pessimism. Rather, my goal is to more specifically understand the onslaught of death from imperialist politics in the present day, inclusive in which is global Islamophobia. “Hate crime” is

²⁷⁵ In the last part of this dissertation, I discuss that the “model minority” and “mistaken identity” narratives that Sikh advocacy organizations in the U.S. (and beyond) are firmly entrenched in prevents those organizations to offer lasting support for those large masses of Sikhs who are ordinary people.

²⁷⁶ Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 261, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10779285>; Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” trans. Libby Meintjes, *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11.

an insufficient term for understanding the phenomenon of white supremacist hate violence, not only because it implies that such a formation is an individual problem, not a strategically fabricated and systemic one. Further, the term does not capture the depth and expanse of Islamophobia, especially as violence from the latter contours to the demands of imperialist yearning. Diasporic necropolitics goes beyond just the matter of “hate crimes,” illustrating how the tactical alignment of media, the political climate, and imperialism produce an environment in which Muslim and “Muslim-looking” Brown bodies are rendered suspect and dangerous. This rendering not only normalizes Islamophobia but enables its legal sanction as imperative for global security. When cast as a global threat, subjugating “the Muslim problem” to symbolic and violent death wherever it is visible (in film, on the streets, at the airport, or in State of the Union addresses) is presented as the only viable option for global security.²⁷⁷

A case in point is the murder of Balbir Singh Sodhi of Mesa, Arizona by a white supremacist on September 15, 2001. Sodhi was shot to death when he was planting flowers outside the gas station he owned. Frank Roque, Sodhi’s assailant, saw his (Sodhi’s) turban and beard as markers of “the enemy” he had seen on television news starting on 9/11. Sodhi was murdered for reasons of Islamophobic racialization that have specific histories in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Pacifica, as Muslims and “Muslim-looking” people in all of these places have been subject to such violence. Sodhi and others who, since 9/11, have suffered a similar fate, have been killed due to being seen as threats to national security and thus deserving

²⁷⁷ Junaid Rana has written extensively on this idea of the villainization of Muslims as the U.S.’ method of gatekeeping global security. I am also referencing Sohail Daultzai’s work here, exploring how, after 9/11, U.S. politics conflated Black bodies from the “War on Crime” and Muslim ones from the “War on Terror.” Building atop work by both of these scholars, my focus via “diasporic necropolitics” is on how the Sikh community grapples with and commemorates death resulting from post-9/11 hate violence.

Sohail Daultzai, *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom Beyond America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Junaid Rana, *Terrifying Muslims: Race and Labor in the South Asian Diaspora* (Duke University Press, 2011); Junaid Rana, “The Story of Islamophobia,” *Souls* 9, no. 2 (June 6, 2007): 148–61, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10999940701382607>.

of violence.²⁷⁸ Diasporic necropolitics refers to the reasons why and where, for instance, Sodhi was killed.

I.II. Die-aspora

Dunn v. Ray, a recent Supreme Court case from February 2019, also encapsulates what I mean by “diasporic necropolitics.” The case involved Domineque Ray, a Black Muslim man in Alabama who, in 1995, killed fifteen year-old Tiffany Harville after robbing and raping her. Ray was sentenced to death for what he did, and it was in his time in incarceration that he converted to Islam. His execution date was set for February 7, 2019, weeks before which, Ray requested that Imam Yusef Maisonet be by his side during the execution. Imam Maisonet often visits the Holman Correctional Facility in Atmore, Alabama to meet with Muslim inmates therein. Given that Imam Maisonet was already cleared to enter the facility for his routine visits, Ray’s request was not logistically difficult to honor. Further, it is common for people on death row to make such requests, as prisons do offer and facilitate bringing in priests and rabbis for those who request them. Ray’s request, however, was denied by the prison on January 23, 2019, “stating that under prison policy the only spiritual adviser that could be present in the execution room was the prison chaplain. Ray brought suit in federal court five days later seeking to vindicate his religious rights. The case quickly moved through the judicial system, reaching the Supreme

²⁷⁸ My reference here is only to those killed due to Islamophobia in the United States, Canada, Pacifica, and parts of Europe, not to the countless who have been killed in the “War on Terror” in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. I also want to acknowledge Asia-specific Islamophobia in the present day, where Indian Muslims are being violently killed under statecraft of the far-right and detained en masse concentration camps in China. “India: Hate crimes against Muslims and rising Islamophobia must be condemned,” Amnesty International, accessed July 6, 2019, <https://www.amnesty.nl/actueel/india-hate-crimes-against-muslims-and-rising-islamophobia-must-be-condemned>; “Up to One Million Detained in China’s Mass ‘Re-Education’ Drive,” accessed July 6, 2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/09/china-up-to-one-million-detained/>.

Court on February 7,” the day of Ray’s scheduled execution.²⁷⁹ The Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in favor of Jefferson S. Dunn, Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Corrections. The ruling resulted in the lifting of the stay on the execution, leaving Domineque Ray to be executed without his last wish being honored. The violation of his request was itself a violation of the constitutional right of freedom of religion in the United States. I invoke freedom of religion cautiously, as the division between state and religion is not only thinly veiled theocracy, but done so in a manner demanding all non-Judeo Christian faith traditions to conform to the *making* of religion as an -ism (something I discuss in previous chapters, especially via citing Arvind Mandair’s work on this topic²⁸⁰). Arjun Sethi, an activist, author, and professor of law at Georgetown and Vanderbilt Universities’ Schools of Law, wrote a response to the *Dunn v. Ray* case, titling his piece, “Even in Death, Muslim Rights Are Violated.” Sethi, along with other activists speaking out on the violations Ray suffered, clearly expresses that it was due to Domineque Ray being Muslim that such a grave violation of human rights took place. Sethi connects the Supreme Court’s Islamophobic ruling to its upholding of the “Muslim Bans” proposed by the White Supremacist in Chief in 2017, writing that, “The Supreme Court’s decision shows first and foremost the bias and bigotry that has become commonplace in SCOTUS reasoning, in particular towards Muslim communities. Just last year, in a 5–4 opinion, a divided Court upheld President Trump’s travel ban, finding that it was a lawful exercise of executive power. It didn’t matter to the Court that Trump had made hateful and derogatory comments about Muslims on the campaign trail.”²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ Arjun Singh Sethi, “Even in Death, Muslim Rights Are Violated,” Oxford Islamic Studies Online, accessed March 23, 2019, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/focus.html>.

²⁸⁰ Markus Dressler and Arvind-pal Singh Mandair, *Secularism and Religion-Making* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=389355>; Arvind-pal Singh Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West. Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality, and the Politics of Translation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

²⁸¹ Sethi.

Arjun Sethi rightfully ties in the blatant violation of the freedom of religion to the concretizing of Islamophobia through institutional measures, such as Executive Orders. It should be noted that the five conservative Supreme Court justices who voted against Domineque Ray in 2019 were the same ones who voted in support of upholding the “Muslim Ban” in *Trump v. Hawai’i* in 2018.²⁸² In the latter case, Sonia Sotomayor delivered one of the dissenting opinions, stating that the Muslim Bans were “motivated by hostility and animus toward the Muslim faith.”²⁸³ These dissenting words shy away from calling the Muslim Ban what it is—brazen racial discrimination based on Islamophobia. What are racialized communities to do when the foundations of a nation’s “justice” system see racism embedded in it as merely “animus,” defined in the dictionary as “hostility or ill feeling?” By “diasporic necropolitics,” then, I mean the impossibility of even liberal secular societies to do more than pay lip service to justice and equality. Angela Davis’ words serve as a perfect reminder here—“In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be antiracist.” As the above anecdotes demonstrate, those in the highest positions in systems of power in the United States are yet unwilling to commit from being merely non-racist to antiracist. Until and unless those with institutional power to create change make this commitment, racialized communities will continue to be exposed to the violence of empire.

I.III. Historicizing Diasporic Necropolitics in the United States

²⁸² These five Supreme Court justices are Samuel Alito, Neil Gorsuch, Anthony Kennedy, Clarence Thomas, and John Roberts. The dissent in both cases was by Stephen Breyer, Elena Kagan, Sonia Sotomayor, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

²⁸³ Catie Edmondson, “Sonia Sotomayor Delivers Sharp Dissent in Travel Ban Case,” *The New York Times*, June 26, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/26/us/sonia-sotomayor-dissent-travel-ban.html>.

In the context of this chapter, diasporic necropolitics is hinged on both the past and present. Historical formations of Islamophobic and anti-“Hindoo” hate violence from the nineteenth century have shaped current experiences of this hate violence by bodies racialized through these formations. Though the forms and shapes of anti-immigrant and anti-Brown sentiments and laws have changed since the nineteenth century, the motivations underlying them have not: What was seen as “the Hindu problem” in Bellingham, Washington in 1907, forcing South Asian immigrants working there to disperse elsewhere, turned into “the Muslim problem” exactly a century later with Executive Orders banning Muslims from certain countries to enter the United States. The “Asian invasion” prompting “eternal vigilance” in 1902 at the northern and southern borders of the U.S. grew to become Border Patrol in 1924, a growth pattern that has turned the country’s southern border to be one of the most heavily policed and militarized borders in the world.²⁸⁴ The detainment starting in 1910 of Asian immigrants at Angel Island due to racialization began the country’s obsessive and ongoing love affair with immigrant detention, a highly profitable business that, as of March 2019, had a record-high number of people (over 50,000 people, including pregnant women and weeks-old infants separated from their parents) in detention.²⁸⁵ Whether its forced expulsion of people from the United States, banning them from entering the country at all, or containing their bodies in abhorrent conditions, at the end of the immigrant trail for racialized people is death, social and physical. The inevitability of death because of the reasons outlined above is foregrounded through the framework of diasporic necropolitics.

²⁸⁴ Erika Lee, *The Making of Asian America: A History* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015), 124.

²⁸⁵ The statistic of 50,000 people refers to the number of people in immigrant detention as of March 2019. This number does not represent the total number of people who are forced to pass through the detention system each year. The latest available statistics for the total number of people in detention over a one-year period are from 2017, in which 323,591 people were in immigrant detention .
Spencer Ackerman, “ICE Is Detaining 50,000 People, an All-Time High,” March 8, 2019, sec. us-news, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/ice-is-detaining-50000-people-a-new-all-time-high>.

My construction and utilization of the framework of diasporic necropolitics is out of choice. For those who have experienced hate and state violence first hand, however, diasporic necropolitics is an inescapable reality of life. The precarity with which racialized bodies have to live means always expecting and often accepting the possibility of violence at every turn in their lives. For them, life in diaspora has become necropolitic by default. Keeping this in mind, in this chapter, I illustrate how, unlike traditional *gurdwaras* built in the United States and elsewhere in the western diaspora, non-*gurdwara* sites therein privilege formations specific to Sikh *diasporic* history. I illustrate how this privileging of a diaspora-specific history tells the story of Sikhs in the United States and beyond through a different angle. In this angle, discussion of hate violence Sikhs face is not an added feature; *it is an immanent part of the narrative*. In this configuration, Sikhs are portrayed as a crucial part of contemporary society just as much as the hate violence they face is. At these non-*gurdwara* sites, viewers likely arrive at the sites already knowing about (and possibly even having experienced) hate violence and its impacts on Sikh communities over multiple generations. Through four distinct examples of non-*gurdwara* Sikh sites, this chapter demonstrates how the Sikh community carries forth the same project of raising awareness on Sikhi that traditional *gurdwara* sites (and educational programs therein) and Sikh advocacy organizations aspire to. A point scaffolding this chapter is for Sikh advocacy organizations and community leaders to consider not only alternative methods of raising awareness on Sikhs in the United States, but to do so through narratives other than ones of Sikhs as “model minorities.” The question, then, is of how (and if) advocacy organizations will present Punjabi Sikhs in the United States not as successful entrepreneurs and a community rising well above the average annual household income in the country. How could Sikh advocacy organizations advocate for their constituents if the narrative on their constituents is closer to

reality—that Punjabi Sikhs, not unlike other ethnic minority groups, are regular people who work hard labor jobs, do not speak English (fluently), do not have higher education degrees, and now constitute the fastest-growing population of undocumented people in the country?²⁸⁶ Because Sikh American advocacy organizations have constructed Sikhs as a model minority community, these counternarratives are difficult for those organizations to address. Framing their constituents through these counternarratives of non-model minority Sikhs, or, in other words, through the lens of diasporic necropolitics, would mean the organizations go against their foundational ethos. This schism does not exist in diasporic necropolitics, as the argument therein is that racialized hate violence cannot be addressed or ameliorated through model minority narratives, and that hate violence affects *all* racialized people, regardless of where they land on the model minority scale.

In order to understand and present diasporic necropolitics as holistically as possible, in this chapter, my analysis of a non-*gurdwara* site in Western Australia marks the first time my dissertation looks outside the United States. I have chosen to include a public park in Perth as one of the sites under analysis here to demonstrate that there are parallels in diasporic necropolitics across and beyond borders. Australia’s own history of colonization and racial segregation gives way to parallels with recent history of settler colonialism and racial segregation in the United States. By using an anecdote from early twentieth century Australia, I also briefly reference a similar anecdote from Canadian history from the same time period.

Because both areas were British protectorate states at the time, the shaping and changes of laws

²⁸⁶ Data collected by the Center for Migration Studies reflects that, as of 2017, people originating from India constitute the largest group of undocumented Asians in the United States. In terms of number, this means 26% (458,663 people) of the total 1.7 million undocumented AAPI people in the United States come from India Karthick Ramakrishnan and Sono Shah, “One out of Every 7 Asian Immigrants Is Undocumented,” *Data Bits* (blog), September 8, 2017, <http://aapidata.com/blog/asian-undoc-1in7/>. Among this group, Punjabi Sikhs form some of the highest numbers, something I can attest to from my own volunteer service at several immigrant detention centers in Southern California.

therein often happened in tandem. This means that though the two areas are geographically unconnected, Punjabi Sikhs were leaving colonial India to migrate to these two British protectorates roughly around the same time period. A further implication of this parallel is of the anti-immigrant laws these communities encountered in these locales. Contemporary Punjabi Sikh diasporic politics is heavily informed and shaped according to how and which legal precedents were formed in this period in the early twentieth century. Though the United States was never a British protectorate as Australia and Canada were, it modified and adopted some of the British Empire's white supremacist policies in its fold, such as racial segregation, legitimate and illegitimate bases of citizenship, and the creation of race as a hierarchical construct.²⁸⁷ The social and political connections between these transnational contexts become evident through the following four case studies.

II. Afternoon Strolls, Turbans, Cremations, and Parks: Four Case Studies

The connection between evening strolls (*sair* in Punjab), turbans, cremations, and parks are not self-evident, not least because these words bring together leisure and death. For Sikh communities across the United States, however, the connections are easy to make, along with specific cases of violence that these words string together. In this section, I present three instances of how Sikh communities in and outside the United States have made peace with the violence of white supremacy, nationalism, colonialism, and empire. These four instances are the Singh and Kaur Park in Elk Grove, Northern California, Shaheed Bhai Jaswant Singh Khalra Parks in Bakersfield and Fresno, Central California, and Adenia Park in Perth, Western

²⁸⁷ Bob Carter, Marci Green, and Rick Halpern, "Immigration Policy and the Racialization of Migrant Labour: The Construction of National Identities in the USA and Britain," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 19, no. 1 (January 1, 1996): 135–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.1996.9993902>.

Australia. The Elk Grove park will be purpose-built and is now under construction, the Fresno park pre-existed and was renamed to its current name, and the Perth park also pre-existed but has been renovated.

I've decided to include a slice of Sikh diaspora history from Australia in my dissertation because, in addition to the evident connections to empire, the Perth example fits well among the other two, U.S.-based examples of parks. Each of these three examples of public parks is exemplary of alternate ways that Sikh communities have grappled with violence from being racialized, as well as violence of transnationalism, of being caught between worlds. On the one hand, there is the violence of having to leave behind familiar worlds, and on the other hand, there is the consequential, ongoing violence [of having to make] homes in new worlds due to the [after]effects of [post]colonialism and empire. Sikh pasts and presents commemorated through these parks span over 150 years. The Perth park highlights the over 150-year-old Sikh diaspora in Australia, and Sikhs' struggles in the racially segregated country, the Fresno park commemorates a Sikh human rights activist who was abducted and killed in East Punjab in 1995, and the Elk Grove park commemorates an incident of hate violence from 2011 in which two elderly Sikhs were killed.

Each of these parks takes painful pasts and transforms them into generative and rejuvenating presents. Each site is extraordinary due to what it represents, but the Adenia Park is extraordinary, in that it is the first instance in the built environment that Sikhs settled on lands of indigenous peoples have publicly recognized their own position as a settler colonial community of Brown immigrants. In particular, Adenia Park brings together the histories of the Whadjuk Noongar people of present-day Perth along with those of Sikh immigrants to the area.

This chapter of my dissertation reveals new directions Sikh advocacy has taken in the public sphere in a manner that foregrounds Sikhs' struggles with being racialized. This new direction reflects what Sikh advocacy outside of the "model minority" narrative looks like. When this new direction foregrounds real, painful experiences, it generates a greater understanding with fellow racialized communities. The four parks and a live theater show under analysis here firmly acknowledge the reality of diasporic necropolitics, the idea that Sikhs' experience in the United States (as well as in Canada and Australia, among other locations where Sikhs have settled outside of South Asia) is intimately connected to social and physical death, the price racialized bodies have to pay just to exist.

II.I. Case Study One: Singh and Kaur Park. Elk Grove, California

Afternoon strolls, turbans, cremations, and park are words that point to a specific incident in Elk Grove, California. Despite many other cases of hate violence, Sikh residents of the area will be able to pinpoint exactly which incident these words recall. Collectively, these words refer to yet another violent, fatal hate crime in which two elderly Sikh men in Elk Grove, California, were shot and killed in 2011 while out on their usual afternoon *sair*. Surinder Singh, 65, and Gurmej Singh Atwal, 78, were on their customary afternoon stroll near their homes in the Sacramento suburb of Elk Grove when a drive-by shooter aimed at the men on March 4, 2011, killing Atwal on the spot, and leaving Singh with chest wounds, to which he succumbed six weeks later. To this day, the shooter(s) remains unidentified. As per Sikh customs of last rites, Singh and Atwal were cremated.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁸ In the following section on the Perth park, I discuss the now-forgotten efforts of early Sikh settlers in Canada and Australia in acquiring cremation as a right, as this particular last rite act was initially deemed illegal under both of these British Commonwealth nations.

Members of the Elk Grove Sikh community who named the park know that the shootings there did not occur in a vacuum, as both from the time before and after March 4, 2011, there exists a long history of hate violence. Thus, the name of the park is purposely broad, as Singh and Kaur are popular Sikh middle or last names. The park's name enables commemoration of all others who have become victims of hate violence. Sikh visitors to the Singh and Kaur Park will, unfortunately, have multiple cases of hate violence that they can identify as being commemorated at the site. Despite this broad name, however, the park specifically honors the lives of Gurmej Singh Atwal and Surinder Singh, and is a gesture of support for their wives, Balvir Kaur Atwal and Amarjit Kaur, hence "Kaur" also being part of the park's official name. For someone like myself, a Sikh woman with the last name of Kaur, I, too, find myself linked to the park. The park will include a memorial plaque that will list the names and brief biographies of Gurmej Singh Atwal and Surinder Singh. One of the volunteers spearheading the initiative shared with me that, though the park is named after an incident and names pertaining to Sikhs, the space is meant to truly be a public site in service of all communities and individuals.

Since before the proposition of this park, the Sikh community in and outside of California has taken various approaches to commemorate the lives of those killed due to hate violence. In previous chapters, I've discussed some of these approaches, namely the Charhdi Kalaa 6K, National Day of Seva, and vigils. The Elk Grove Sikh community has also organized and participated in similar measures, namely a commemorative vigil, a rally at the California State Capitol, a commemoration program at the Sacramento City Hall, neighborhood walks to put up flyers regarding gathering more information about the shooter, and a media campaign.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁹ I would like to thank Amar Singh Shergill for sharing details about the park. I am using his name with his consent.

The various meanings and memories linked to the park will come together in the proposed design for the site. Though there are many *bagh* (garden or park) named after Sikh historical figures and commemorating moments from Sikh history in South Asia, the Singh and Kaur Park marks the first time that Sikh diasporic history in the United States is being commemorated through such a public and permanent medium. Its permanence is also meant to keep the memory of the shootings alive in the minds of Elk Grove residents, as the perpetrator(s) of the hate crime has yet to be identified. The ultimate hope is that somewhere and somehow, a witness will come through to give testimony on the perpetrator(s), thereby providing some closure to the families of Gurmej Singh Atwal and Surinder Singh.

With strong support from the Sikh community and the Elk Grove City Council, the design plan for the Singh and Kaur Park was approved in 2017. Under construction as of early 2019, the park is expected to open by 2020. The D-shaped, 5.1-acre park site is located on Atrio Circle in the Laguna Ridge area in the southern part of Elk Grove. It is one of six new parks planned for construction all around Elk Grove.²⁹⁰ Because the Singh and Kaur Park has been proposed by the Sikh community members, its volunteers have been intimately involved in the design process. The park will have standard elements, such as separate play areas for children between two to five years old, and ones between six and twelve years old, a walking trail around its perimeter, sports courts, picnic areas, open, grassy spaces, and climate-appropriate shrubs and trees. The planners, designers, and volunteers have ensured the park will also have several small facilities specifically made for the elderly, as well as two meditation or memorial areas.

There are other parks in Elk Grove with themed designs, such as Constellation Park, which has solar system-themed play areas and an asteroid climber, and George Park, whose

²⁹⁰ "Future Parks," Cosumnes Community Services District, accessed February 21, 2019, <https://www.youresd.com/363/Future-Parks>.

theme is the Prehistoric era and features dinosaur climbers. Given the variety of park designs and themes in the city of Elk Grove, designing one with a Punjabi theme did not prove to be a bureaucratic hurdle, especially given what and whom the park commemorates. The city's Punjabi Sikh community's input in the design is most visible in the proposed design of the children's play area equipment. Sikh volunteers working with city council researched and recommended using visual motifs commonly associated with Punjab, Sikhs, and the architecture of the two. Over a phone call interview, the lead volunteer shared that the purpose of using these motifs is to honor the traditions of the Atwal and Singh families. The volunteer credited much of the design motif research to his wife, also adding that the city of Elk Grove has gone out of its way to ensure these motifs will be incorporated in the park's design.²⁹¹ One of these motifs in the "aesthetic theming" plan for the park is the figure of a lion. Since "Singh" is most commonly translated as lion, lions are a common motif found in Punjabi spaces in South Asia and in the diaspora. The motif's integration into the Singh and Kaur Park comes in the form of lion-shaped climbers that will be placed in the children's play areas (Figure 3.1). Though not specified in the design plans, the precast concrete lions will likely adorn the play places in pairs, as they typically appear in Punjabi spaces.

Specifically with regard to architectural design, the Singh and Kaur park volunteers have proposed using traditional South Asian canopy designs for the picnic shelters that will be installed in the park, particularly ones found in East and West Punjab (Figure 3.2). Traditionally, these canopy designs were handcrafted from wood and had intricate patterns in the vertical panels, broadly referred to as *jali* (net), that served as daylight filters. Though commonly found in historic architecture in East and West Punjab, *jali* design is strongly linked to Islamic

²⁹¹ My thanks again to Amar Singh Shergill for sharing details of the motif-research process, as well as for sharing with me the PowerPoint presentation prepared by the Cosumnes Services District of Elk Grove.

architecture in the South Asia subcontinent at large. Hints of Islamic design and shared elements from it in traditional Sikh architecture of Punjab are also reflected in the roofs of both of the play areas proposed for the park (Figures 3.3 and 3.4). The proposed design for play equipment for two to five year old children has arched tops to the areas that form bridges connecting the equipment. Two miniature minarets flank each arch. Because the arches do not have crenellations, they are more reflective of Islamic architecture than Sikh architecture. Architectural elements are also incorporated in the design for the play equipment of five to twelve year-old children. In this iteration, the areas forming bridges are adorned with golden domes, likely made of plastic or fiberglass. Unlike the design of the arches proposed in the other play area, these domes are more recognizably Sikh due to their drum base and more rounded shape than found in Islamic architecture.

My discussion here on the nuances of design elements relates to what I've written in Chapter Two on misreadings of Islamic architecture as Sikh architecture, and vice versa, an identification challenge that a Sikh advocacy organization, ironically, has also struggled with.²⁹² These differences are subtle and will likely not register as significant or even be distinguishable to the average visitor to the park. However, this blurred distinction between architectural designs of multiple faith communities actually represents the pre-Partition built environment of both East and West Punjab. The built environment of remaining buildings from this period consists of densely-packed urban horizons coexisting, at least in brick and mortar, with bulbous domes of mosques, rounded domes of *gurdwaras*, and conical domes of Hindu and Jain *mandirs* (temples). When asked whether the proposed designs for arched and domed play places at the Singh and Kaur Park were purposely designed to reflect blurred distinctions between Muslim and Sikh

²⁹² Here I am referencing the National Sikh Campaign's use of a mosque silhouette in its digital poster for a Fourth of July celebration social media post. See Figure 2.4 in Chapter Two.

architecture, my interviewee shared that the volunteers' goal was never to create distinctions in the first place. Rather, him and his fellow volunteers studied architecture in Punjab, took note of motifs and forms of interest, and proposed them into the designs for the park's play places.

Outside of the context of the park, the very shapes and forms proposed for designs of the space's play areas have grave implications for the people and communities they represent. As discussed in Chapter Two, the boundaries between Muslim and Sikh architecture are blurry, and this blurriness continues into how practitioners of the two faiths are perceived as being the same in the public sphere. The perceived similarities between the bodies and buildings of both communities has devastating effects for their places and people, evident by the everising cases of racist graffiti, vandalism, arson, and physical hate violence enacted by white supremacists on Muslim and "Muslim-looking" people and places. When asked whether vandalism of or backlash to the Singh and Kaur Park are likely threats, the volunteer I interviewed said no, citing the city council's uniformly positive responses to the park proposal and design.

Though the reason for the park's proposal is the painful memory of two lost lives in an unsolved hate crime, the incident has a more positive afterlife. This particular method of commemoration via a park offers something back to the entire community of Elk Grove. In this way the idea of the Singh and Kaur park follows an honest commitment to *charhdi kalaa* as the idea of remaining unaffected by the ebbs and flows of life by annihilating normative understandings of good and bad. Even after being at a deep loss to itself and with no closure from the shootings, the Elk Grove Sikh community has offered something back, and done so in a way that the community's various identities are reflected in the design of the park.

II. II. Case Study Two: Shaheed Bhai Jaswant Singh Khalra Park. Fresno, California

Turbans, cremations, and parks has another deep, chilling resonance for the Sikh community across the world, particularly with regard to Jaswant Singh Khalra. Khalra was a human rights activist in East Punjab. He is most well known in the public record from a surviving video recording of his last speech, which he gave in 1995 at a *gurdwara* in a suburb of Toronto, Canada, one of the largest Sikh diasporas.²⁹³ Khalra is extremely specific in the speech, recounting the experiences of going to offices of cremation grounds, conversations with the employees there, and through those conversations, finding cremation records of thousands of Sikhs who were “disappeared” by the Punjab Police in the 1980s and 1990s. Through conversations with cremation ground office employees and by going through found records of the cremations, Khalra explicitly mentions exactly how many Sikhs’ bodies were cremated in that district of Punjab (6,017), the age and demographic of those killed (aged 15-35 for most, including some women, and a small number of elderly), and written evidence of which police officers were responsible for whose killings. He speaks about cremation ground office employees saying that, some days, they would receive six to eight bodies to cremate, other days, there would be truckloads of bodies. He shares that he learned that the bodies were provided by the Punjab Police, and the materials needed for each cremation were provided by a municipal committee. It is by going through records found at the office of the latter that Khalra presented specific, undeniable evidence of extrajudicial killings at the hands of the Punjab Police.

Khalra’s thirty nine-minute speech recalls enough names and location of evidence to unequivocally prosecute hundreds of members of the police regime responsible for the killing of

²⁹³ The video of the full speech can be found at the link below, listed in the Bibliography under *Jaswant Singh Khalra: Human Rights Activist*. The original source of the video is unknown; it was likely recorded by a Sikh person in attendance at the *gurdwara* that day. It is common practice in the Sikh community to make audio and video recordings of devotional singing programs, speeches, and other events taking place inside a *gurdwara*. In this section of my chapter, all specific details from Khalra’s speech come from this recording. *Jaswant Singh Khalra: Human Rights Activist*, 1995, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktfuGXpi5qw&t=1036s>.

over six thousand innocent Sikhs. Khalra's findings unearth multiple ways that the Punjabi state has not only facilitated but concealed its extrajudicial killings and cremations. A regime that had no refrain in killing over six thousand Sikhs had no qualms taking the life of one more, Jaswant Singh Khalra's. Upon publicly sharing his discoveries, Khalra himself became the target of exactly what he exposed. On September 6, 1995 Punjab Police abducted Khalra from outside his house in Amritsar and took him to a nearby police station. Despite eyewitness accounts, Punjab Police has denied any involvement in his abduction, and his torture murder that followed.²⁹⁴ Khalra's life, and in particular, this thirty nine-minute speech, have mobilized a whole generation of Sikh activists, one of the most visible manifestations of which is the founding of Ensaaf ("justice"), a human rights organization specifically working on cases of impunity from anti-Sikh violence from East Punjab in the 1980s and 1990s. Khalra's memory lives on through his wife and two children.

Sikh families in the Central Valley of California recognize *Shaheed* (martyr) *Bhai* (brother) Jaswant Singh Khalra as the figure after whom a public park in Fresno was renamed in 2017.²⁹⁵ Navkiran Kaur Khalra, the human rights activist's daughter, pursued graduate school in Fresno in the late 2000s. Her personal connection to the city made the renaming of a park in the city that much more memorable. The Khalra family's activist roots go further back into the early twentieth century. Harnam Singh Khalra, Jaswant Singh Khalra's grandfather, was one of the passengers of the Komagata Maru, a ship chartered by Gurdit Singh to take hundreds of passengers, mostly Punjabi Sikh, immigrating from South and Southeast Asia to Western Canada in 1914. The arrival of the ship met with extreme racism, keeping the ship and its passengers at

²⁹⁴ "The Murder of Human Rights Defender Jaswant Singh Khalra," Ensaaf, accessed February 18, 2019, <https://ensaaf.org/jaswant-singh-khalra/>.

²⁹⁵ The park's former name was Victoria West Community Park, "Victoria" being a broad reference, not to a particular person.

bay for four months, preventing the passengers from stepping foot into Canada, and eventually forcing their return to Calcutta, the origin point of the ship's unfortunate journey. Shortly after this Harnam Singh Khalra, along with several others members of the Ghadar Party, a transnational anti-colonial resistance organization, including Gurdit Singh, were arrested in present-day West Punjab for their anti-colonial resistance. This incident of resistance is the infamous "Lahore Conspiracy Case."²⁹⁶

Though the Shaheed Bhai Jaswant Singh Khalra Park bears one particular individual's name, it encompasses all of these histories of resistance to white supremacy, anti-colonial resistance, and state impunity. California was the epicenter of the Ghadarites' organization of anti-colonial resistance in the early twentieth century. The Khalra family's personal connection to California, and specifically to the city of Fresno, then, makes the park's location that much more geographically and culturally significant. The park's renaming was spearheaded by Jakara Movement, a Sikh youth empowerment and development non-profit organization based in California. In an interview, one of the main volunteers leading the park renaming project shared that Jakara's goal has been for the City of Fresno to more accurately represent its ethnic makeup. As opposed to a broad name, such as the Singh and Kaur Park, the decision to name the park after a specific individual is Jakara's push for the idea that the city ought to represent its ethnic constituencies more accurately and robustly. Though Punjabi Sikhs account for the fourth-largest ethnic community in Fresno, the Shaheed Bhai Jaswant Singh Khalra Park is the first instance in the city's history where its public sphere reflects its demographic makeup.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁶ Ram Narayan Kumar et al., *Reduced to Ashes: The Insurgency and Human Rights in Punjab : Final Report* (Nepal: Jagadamba Press, 2003), 12–14.

²⁹⁷ Agnes Constante, "California City Names Park after Sikh Human Rights Advocate," NBC News, September 6, 2017, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/california-city-renames-park-after-sikh-human-rights-advocate-n799261>.

At the moment, the only physical change to the park's site has been the name change from Victoria West Community Park to Shaheed Bhai Jaswant Singh Khalra Park. An official sign bearing the new name was installed shortly after the City of Fresno unanimously passed the resolution to change the park's name in September 2017 (Figure 3.5). On September 6 of that year, the day that marks Shaheed Bhai Jaswant Singh Khalra's abduction by the Punjab Police in 1995, Jakara sent a newsletter through its listserv, writing that the day "is both a somber day and celebratory day for the Sikh Qaum [community] and human rights defenders worldwide."²⁹⁸ Acknowledging that Khalra's abduction by the Punjab Police marks a dark day in modern Sikh history, the newsletter also mentions Ensaaf's work in continuing Khalra's work in unmasking impunity in India and Jakara's work in commemorating Khalra's life through the renaming of the park in Fresno. The newsletter states,

After organizing the Sikh youth and Fresno-area community, the Jakara Movement served to immortalize Shaheed Jaswant Singh Khalra's legacy in the United States with the naming of a park in his honor. While the Indian State attempts to remove the memory of Shaheed Jaswant Singh Khalra, the city of Fresno has now memorialized his name for all with this local landmark.²⁹⁹

This memorialization work continues today, nearly a year and a half after the official renaming of the park. Since then, Jakara has held a tree-planting drive at the Fresno park and plans on having a mural painted at the park. In the words of my interviewee, the mural will "celebrate all freedom fighters," Sikh and non-Sikh alike. My interviewee specifically mentioned Father Oscar Romero of El Salvador, a human rights advocate who was killed on March 24, 1980. Romero was killed for speaking out on human rights abuses during the country's period of civil war at the time. U.S. intervention in El Salvador to prevent a Communist takeover left, and

²⁹⁸ Naindeep Singh, "Ensaaf and Jakara Movement Remember Jaswant Singh Khalra," September 6, 2017.

²⁹⁹ Singh.

more specifically, U.S.-trained and supported counterinsurgency, left more than 75,000 dead, devastating the country and destabilizing its communities and economies.³⁰⁰ Much like Khalra's killers, Romero's continue to enjoy impunity.³⁰¹ Father Romero is one of the individuals the Khalra Park's proposed mural will commemorate, as well as honoring indigenous land of the Yokuts people on which residents of Fresno are settled. My interviewee also mentioned that him and the rest of the Jakara team are sensitive to the gender imbalance in these initiatives, as the Khalra Park commemorates a male and that the freedom fighters' mural will also likely have a notable female presence.

II. III. Case Study Three: Shaheed Bhai Jaswant Singh Khalra Park. Bakersfield, California

Though the Fresno park itself is already a victory for the Sikh community and for Jakara Movement, negotiating the bureaucratic details following the official resolution passing its renaming are also significant. After the renaming of the Fresno park, Jakara mobilized efforts to do the same around two hours south in Bakersfield, another Central Valley city with a heavy Sikh population. Jakara's reasons for pursuing a park renaming in Bakersfield is due to the same reasons it pursued this project in Fresno—wanting the city to more accurately represent its demographic makeup through its public sphere. Punjabi Sikhs account for ten percent (i.e. about 35,000 people) of the population of Bakersfield. In an online public statement, Jakara Movement

³⁰⁰ Raymond Bonner, "America's Role in El Salvador's Deterioration," *The Atlantic*, January 20, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/01/trump-and-el-salvador/550955/>.

³⁰¹ Coincidentally, earlier on the very day I spoke with my Jakara interviewee over the phone, Representative Ilhan Omar (D-Minnesota) had questioned U.S. diplomat Elliott Abrams on his role in the U.S.-trained and backed Salvadoran military killing of close to 1,000 civilians in 1981. Omar questioned Abrams on whether he still considered the mission a "fabulous achievement," Abram's own words in reference to the Reagan administration's diplomatic blunders Niraj Chokshi and Matthew Haag, "Why Ilhan Omar and Elliott Abrams Tangled Over U.S. Foreign Policy," *The New York Times*, February 15, 2019, sec. U.S., <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/14/us/politics/ilhan-omar-elliott-abrams.html>.

shares, “Southwest Bakersfield is a hub for many old and new residents. Stonecreek Park is a neighborhood hub bringing together diverse populations of the city, especially residents of both Ward 1 and Ward 7. Named after an early housing development, the “Stonecreek Park” name is not in sync with the changing demographics of the city.”³⁰² By invoking that the area is made up of diverse populations, Jakara is able to justify the drive to change the park’s name to one relevant to Sikh communities in the area. My interviewee shared that conversations and meetings with Bakersfield Sikhs on renaming the park became intimate, as long-time residents of the area shared their own histories of having migrated to California after turmoil in Punjab in the 1980s and 1990s, the same turmoil that Jaswant Singh Khalra brought to the forefront and became a victim of himself for doing so.

Jakara’s public statement on the Bakersfield renaming explicitly mentions that, in September 2016, the City of Bakersfield passed a resolution recognizing massacres of Sikhs in India from 1984 as genocide.³⁰³ The resolution was spearheaded by another Sikh organization, Sikhs For Justice (SFJ), which has mobilized various cities with sizable Sikh communities to get their respective city councils to pass the genocide. Fresno is one such city, where the Sikh community’s overwhelming support for the passing of the resolution is evident by the large number of them showing up to City Council chambers. The crowd of over 500 Sikhs, double the number of people the chambers’ space is equipped to fit, included people who came via chartered buses to show support for the resolution, making that particular meeting the largest that the Fresno City Council had ever seen.³⁰⁴ The resolution passed with unanimous support from

³⁰² “Rename Stonecreek Park to Jaswant Singh Khalra Park,” Jakara Movement, accessed March 4, 2019, <https://www.jakara.org/bakersfieldpark>.

³⁰³ “Rename Stonecreek Park to Jaswant Singh Khalra Park.”

³⁰⁴ Andrea Castillo, “Fresno City Council Approves Sikh Genocide Resolution,” *Fresno Bee*, September 1, 2016, <https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/article99461577.html>.

five of seven council members (two were absent), despite members of the Indian Consulate of San Francisco stepping in during June 2016, arguing that the resolution was “inaccurate and one-sided.”³⁰⁵ The Indian government’s undermining of Sikh advocacy taking place in and outside of East Punjab is well-known among Sikhs, and it is partly due to this undermining in the case of Bakersfield that the Sikh community mobilized in unprecedented numbers and ways at the municipal level.³⁰⁶

Though Punjabi Sikh adults and elders are to be credited for offering support for initiatives like the park renamings, the leadership, programming, and planning is entirely done by Sikh youth involved with Jakara. In fact, most of Jakara Movement’s community engagement and development programs are designed for grade school and college-aged youth. Most of these youth were born after 1984, and in many cases, they have close relatives who were directly affected from the anti-Sikh violence in 1984. Though the youth’s connection to 1984 is slightly distant and indirect, their commitment to resisting past and present state violence in India only gains more momentum upon news of cases like Jagtar Singh Johal (see previous footnote). My interviewee specified that, unlike the Singh and Kaur Park in Elk Grove, the Khalra Parks in

³⁰⁵ Castillo.

³⁰⁶ One of the most well-known cases of this undermining is of Jagtar (Jaggi) Singh Johal, a British-born Sikh man, who has been detained by the East Punjab government since his visit to India in November 2017. Jaggi had gone to India for his wedding with a Sikh woman from East Punjab; days after the wedding, he was abducted in a shopping area by Punjab policemen. Jaggi has been held there due to allegations of inciting violence in India, motivated by retaliation from the anti-Sikh violence in 1984. It is to be noted that Jaggi was born after 1984. No evidence linking Jaggi to allegations against him has been found, though he remains detained in India to this day. Jaggi’s case prompted an international online campaign, #FreeJaggiNow, which also exposed that the East Punjab government has similarly detained multiple other young Sikh men from India. The latest iteration of this is life sentences in prison for Arwinder Singh of Nawanshahr, Punjab, Surjit Singh of Gurdaspur, Punjab, and Ranjit Singh of Kaithal, Haryana. All three Sikh youth have been charged with “waging war against the state” due to flyers allegedly in their possession that had the word “Khalistan” on them, the word for a Sikh separatist state demanded by some from Sikh communities worldwide. Legal experts and activists fighting the case have argued that such literature is widely available online and from independent publishers in and outside of India, making the rationale for the life sentences totally baseless. In the epilogue of my dissertation, I briefly discuss how well-known persecution of this type becomes grounds for “credible fear interviews” for thousands of Punjabi Sikhs entering the United States every year without documentation, seeking asylum or refugee status.

Bakersfield and Fresno are named after a particular figure because “we [Jakara] don’t want representation, we want politics”³⁰⁷ By naming the parks after Shaheed Bhai Jaswant Singh Khalra, Jakara’s politics is clear, as the organization sees itself in alignment with the Sikh human rights’ activist hero and condemns India’s mistreatment of minorities like Sikhs.

Reclaiming Public Space

Both the Bakersfield and Fresno parks reflect how Sikh youth in the United States, particularly in California, choose to self-represent and politicize. This self-representation and politicization goes beyond whom the parks are named after. As my interviewee from Jakara stated, the broader reason for these renamings is for the geographies of where large numbers of Sikhs reside to more accurately represent those municipalities. These renamings from 2017 and 2018 coincide with a growing leftist movement in the United States to remove statues of Confederate leaders, as well as renaming places whose current names are insulting to Indigenous people and their lands. The white supremacist “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017 “brought renewed attention to dozens of Confederate monuments around the country.”³⁰⁸ Unsurprisingly, the current President and white supremacist in chief spoke in support of the Confederate monuments, sparking outrage and further investigative journalism into the deep history of Confederate monuments.³⁰⁹ Though the Civil War ended in 1865, many of these nearly 700 monuments were erected in the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries in highly visible

³⁰⁷ Personal interview with Jakara, February 25, 2019.

³⁰⁸ Jess Bidgood et al., “Confederate Monuments Are Coming Down Across the United States. Here’s a List.,” *The New York Times*, August 16, 2017, sec. U.S., <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/16/us/confederate-monuments-removed.html>, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/16/us/confederate-monuments-removed.html>.

³⁰⁹ Miles Parks, “Confederate Statues Were Built To Further A ‘White Supremacist Future,’” NPR, August 20, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/08/20/544266880/confederate-statues-were-built-to-further-a-white-supremacist-future>.

public areas (such as outside courthouses, public squares, and government buildings) in 31 states (as well as Washington D.C.), nearly three times the number of states that comprised the eleven Confederate states.³¹⁰

Not coincidentally, the the monuments' installation in the late nineteenth century coincided with the Supreme Court case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) that upheld “separate but equal” discrimination as legal, and their installation in the mid-twentieth century coincided with the Civil Rights Movement. Combined with the large numbers in which they were made, strategic locations in which they were installed, and vast geographic expanse over which they were put up supports the argument that they were erected to further white supremacy through the public sphere.³¹¹ The monuments were erected to be reminders of the dead while yet alive white supremacist ideology, an ideology that was symbolically killed in the Civil War but has not only survived but thrived well into the present day.

Though the Fresno and Bakersfield Parks were not previously named after contentious figures from U.S. history, their names not reflecting the demographic makeup of their communities is violent in another sense. Considering that demographic settlement patterns change over time, the parks' original, generic names, Victoria West Community Park (Fresno) and Stonecreek Park (Bakersfield), do not reflect the respective areas' history either. Sikh communities in the United States have actively sought to make *gurdwaras*' architecture stand as statements on who Sikhs are. In the over one hundred years that they have been residing in the United States, the Bakersfield, Elk Grove, and Fresno parks present a new turn in how and where diaspora Sikhs want to see themselves represented. As the above discussion on controversies

³¹⁰ Becky Little, “How The U.S. Got So Many Confederate Monuments,” History, August 17, 2017, <https://www.history.com/news/how-the-u-s-got-so-many-confederate-monuments>.

³¹¹ Parks, “Confederate Statues Were Built To Further A ‘White Supremacist Future.’”

surrounding [proposed] removal of Confederate monuments reflects, public space is always political. In the case of Sikhs in the United States, lack of non-*gurdwara* public spaces is also political, as this lacuna symbolizes what Sikh communities and advocacy organizations overall do and don't invest their time and resources in.³¹² On the other hand, there is an unavoidable violence done to the indigeneity of the land on which these parks are built or renamed. While the significance renaming the Bakersfield and Fresno parks after a globally-recognized human rights activist is unprecedented in Sikh diasporic history, any measures pushing for recognition via particular names in the geographic terrain of North America ultimately further erase the histories and lineages of Indigenous communities' rightful ownership of and claims to this land.³¹³ Jakara Movement is not blind to this erasure, as the organization plans on honoring human rights' defenders from multiple ethnic communities, including Indigenous ones. However, as a settler colonial community itself, Sikhs in North America will continue to be in the challenging position of wanting to secure their rights and privileges, while negotiating how they are complicit in the erasure of Indigenous presence. Jakara Movement's cognizance of these erasures and actively planning of meaningful gestures to express solidarity with Indigenous communities is a political

³¹² Over the last half decade, most of the funds donated by Sikh individuals to Sikh advocacy organizations have been put toward mass publicity campaigns. These measures include the National Sikh Campaign's \$1.3 million project of short advertisements, titled "We Are Sikhs," which were played on CNN and Fox News for one month in early 2017. The advertisements portray multiethnic Sikhs engaged various "American" activities (such as being "PTA moms," playing baseball and monopoly) and making patriotic and nationalist remarks (such as "Sikh values are American values") "We Are Sikhs," National Sikh Campaign, accessed March 14, 2019, <http://www.sikhcampaign.org/wearesikhs>. Another publicity project from a small segment of the Sikh community in the United States has been the United Sikh Mission's annual (since 2014) Sikh float in the Rose Parade in Pasadena, California. This project uses funds donated by Sikh community members, most of whom reside in California. The float costs nearly half a million dollars each year, and with the Parade averaging 44 million viewers each year, marks the largest viewership of a Sikh-themed advocacy initiative "Pasadena Tournament of Roses" (Tournament of Roses, n.d.). Through the ad campaign and the Sikh float, the National Sikh Campaign and the United Sikh Mission, respectively, have in common their goal of educating the general public in the United States on who Sikhs are. Unfortunately, these costly advocacy methods have not yielded results in the form of a decrease in hate violence against Sikh bodies and buildings.

³¹³ "India: Fear of Disappearance / Fear of Torture: Jaswant Singh Khalra, Human Rights Activist," Amnesty International, November 6, 1995, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/document/?indexNumber=asa20%2f026%2f1995&language=en>.

statement on the part of the organization. Having two public parks named after Shaheed Bhai Jaswant Singh Khalra and one broadly named Singh and Kaur Park in memory of lives lost to hate violence are also political statements. The Khalra Parks represent resistance to state impunity in India and diaspora Sikhs' ever-awake consciousness of it, and the Singh and Kaur Park represents resistance to hate violence (and impunity therein) in the United States. This catalyst to these iterations of resistance is death—the murders of Jaswant Singh Khalra, Surinder Singh, Gurmej Singh Atwal, and all others whose names do not appear on park signs but whose memories remain alive among Sikhs. In the next section, the story of Adenia Park in Perth, Western Australia, brings together the histories of Indigenous and Sikh settler communities in a manner unlike elsewhere in the global Sikh diaspora.

II. IV. Case Study Four: Adenia Park

A third link between cremations and turbans may not be as apparent to Sikh communities in the United States as to those in Australia. This particular instance is the first moment when my dissertation explicitly steps outside of the United States. Colonization and empire connect the United States and Australia. Sikh presence in Australia predates that in the United States by several decades, with the first Sikhs in Australia arriving in the 1860s to work as cameleers. In that early settlement period, atop facing social, cultural, and bureaucratic hurdles due to being among the first immigrants to these areas, Sikhs in Australia faced another hurdle. This hurdle was the illegality of death among their community. In other words, these early settlers were on the wrong side of “the law” for wanting to perform cremation for their dead, as doing so was considered illegal. It was not until 1929 that cremations were legally permitted. In this section, after briefly tracing the history of complexities of death in the diaspora, I discuss how this

particular period from Australian Sikh heritage is memorialized through the redesigning of Adenia Park in Perth, Western Australia. The park is on a site that was formerly used as cremation grounds among these early Sikh settlers.

The history predating the 1929 legalization of cremations in Western Australia goes as such: Brown immigrants began arriving in Western Australia shortly past the mid-nineteenth century, an institutionally racially segregated time marked by the “White Australia” policy (which lasted until 1973). At this time, “Afghan” was used as a collective, flattening reference to all men from present-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and parts of North Africa. North America has its own lineage of this kind of flattening in the early twentieth century through the term “Hindoo,” which was used to refer to all South Asian men. The first known cremation to have taken place among the early Punjabi Sikh community in Western Australia dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1903 an ill Sikh man near the end of his life immolated himself out of fear that, upon passing, he would be buried rather than cremated, the latter being the cultural tradition for last rites of Sikhs, Hindus, and other South Asian communities.³¹⁴ Following this incident, two Sikh men in Western Australia, Buttan (misspelling of Bhola) Singh and Massa Singh, petitioned for the state to allot a small piece of land near the Canning River in Western Australia for cremation ceremonies for the community. The parcel of land was officially

³¹⁴ “Fmr Sikh Cemetery,” Heritage Council. State Heritage Office, accessed February 25, 2019, <http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/7ca2b88e-8584-43d1-8e96-f7e27c31b668>; “Sikhs in Australia,” accessed February 25, 2019, <http://www.sikhinterfaithvic.org.au/sikhsinoz.html>.

This case did not mark the first instance of a cremation in Australia at large, as there is historical record of a Chinese settler, Foo Choo, who was cremated in 1890 due to a public health fear that his leprosy would create danger for others if his body weren’t disposed of via cremation. Four years later, Boota Singh, a Sikh settler, was cremated in Victoria (*First Cremations in Australia*).

vested to the two men in 1923.³¹⁵ Six years later, the Western Australian government passed the Cremation Act of 1929, officially permitting cremations under the law.

A similar case appears from Vancouver, Canada, where early Punjabi Sikh immigrant settlers were not permitted to perform a cremation when one of their fellow community members died in 1907. These *baghis* (rebels) took the deceased male's body to a nearby forest in the middle of the night and performed the cremation ceremony.³¹⁶ By 1915, cremation ceremonies were being performed more overtly, evident by the highly public funerary ceremony of Bhai Mewa Singh. Bhai Mewa Singh was executed for surrendering himself upon assassinating William Hopkinson, Komagata Maru's inspection official and surveillance officer among early South Asians in Vancouver. Immediately post-execution, Bhai Mewa Singh's body was received by hundreds of Punjabi Sikhs, who created a formal procession and took his body for cremation at Fraser Mills, where many early South Asian settlers, primarily Punjabi Sikh, were employed. Bhai Mewa Singh's execution itself was a public event, tickets for which were sold by the court.³¹⁷

These instances showcase moments of *unsettlement* from Punjabi Sikh diaspora histories. At a time when land ownership and claims to territoriality were far outside the bounds of liberties accorded to immigrants and ethnic minorities, these two instances from Canada and Western Australia demonstrate how these early settlers challenged and resisted state authority. The state's control over the *living* bodies of early immigrant settlers and ethnic minorities is well known, such as through segregation laws, anti-miscegenation laws, political disenfranchisement,

³¹⁵ Michelle Vercoe, "Massa Singh: Cameleer and Resident of 123 Richmond Street, Leederville," City of Vincent Library, accessed February 26, 2019, <https://library.vincent.wa.gov.au/local-history-centre/stories-from-our-past/massa-singh-cameleer-and-resident-of-123-richmond-street-leederville.aspx>.

³¹⁶ "Pioneer Sikh East Indian Immigration to the Pacific Coast," Sikh Pioneers, accessed February 26, 2019, http://legacy.sikhpioneers.org/t_canphot.html.

³¹⁷ "History of South Asians in Canada: Timeline," South Asian Canadian Heritage, accessed February 26, 2019, <https://www.southasiancanadianheritage.ca/history-of-south-asians-in-canada/>.

and laws prohibiting property ownership. However, the state's control over the *dead* bodies of these same communities has remained largely unexplored as another avenue to study how settlement on new homelands is negotiated, particularly through the links between *death* and territoriality. Long-standing prohibitions against non-burial funerary traditions and lengthy texts of Western Australia and British Columbia's respective cremation laws both reflect the state's investment in necropolitics as well.

Prior to their legalization, cremations were perceived to be backwards and troublesome as the people they were done by. In 1907 A.F. Fowler, editor of *The White Magazine*, claimed "weird orgies" took place among "Hindu" immigrants and argued that California's land would be contaminated due to funerary rituals of Sikhs, using this logic to further argue for preventing immigration.³¹⁸ Sexual perversion, homophobia, and perceived and fabricated public health scares were routinely and effectively used to rally support for anti-immigrant sentiments. In the contemporary period, though cremations have become common among South Asian communities and otherwise, the idea of perversion, disease, and moral panic due to growing populations of immigrants has remained, morphing into various forms of Islamophobia. Today, Islamophobia projects itself as productive and destructive, productive due to its missions to "rescue" and "save" women and Muslim society, and destructive due to its racialization of Muslims and "Muslim-looking" people as suspect, dangerous, and thus deserving of surveillance and violence.³¹⁹ The built environment of those who are perceived as needing protection and deserving destruction is as much a factor in diasporic necropolitics as their culture, tradition, language, and religion. The power dynamic present in this outward-in approach of offering

³¹⁸ Sarah Isabel Wallace, *Not Fit to Stay: Public Health Panics and South Asian Exclusion* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2017), 92.

³¹⁹ Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

unsolicited help to “rescue” and “save” is challenged when diasporas, through necropolitics, are the ones in control of their narrative. Adenia Park in Perth, Western Australia is an example of this phenomenon.

Re-developing Adenia Park

After this particular cremation site was vested in 1935 to Bootan Singh and and Massa Singh, it was listed on the State Register of Heritage Places in 1995 as a site of historic significance. In the “Statement of Significance,” which details why a site ought to be nationally recognized by the Historic Council State Heritage Office in Western Australia, the cremation site is described as,

The site is important for historic reasons because of its association with the religious rituals of the small Sikh communiyt [sic] of Western Australia. Cremation was not generally permitted in Western Australia until the passing of the Cremations Act 1929, although some cremations of people of 'Asiatic race', took place in country areas and at Woodman's Point Quarantine Station before that date and before the building of crematorium facilities at Karrakatta Cemetary [sic] in the late 1930's.

The site therefore has importance as part of the broader history of cemeteries [sic] and religious pracitses [sic] associated with the disposal if the dead in Western Australia and is closely associated with the passing of the Cremations Act 1929 and the acceptance of cremation in the wider community.

The site has social value for the Sikh community because of its religious associations and because it contributes to a recognition of the Sikh communiyt [sic] as a part of thr [sic] history of the state.³²⁰

The last section of the above statement is particularly intriguing, as contextualizes Sikhs in Western Australia as a distinct part of the area’s history. These sentiments are perhaps easier

³²⁰ “Fmr Sikh Cemetery.”

to align with in retrospect, because if Sikhs were actually considered a “part” of the state, cremations would not have been seen as illegal to begin with. A related critique is that it is listed on the State Register as a “cemetery,” thus defeating the purpose of the site as historically significant for cremations performed thereon. Further, the symbolic inclusion of minorities into Australia’s own history of white settler colonialism seems hollow when considered alongside the country’s history of racial segregation. The “White Australia” policy was instituted at the beginning of the twentieth century (as Immigration Restriction of 1901) and formally stayed in place until 1973, shamefully late on the geopolitical scale when considering that decolonization and desegregation movements that were taking place from the mid-twentieth century onward.

An immediate interpretation of the enlistment of the cremation site on the State Register of Historic Places may be one of a pleasant surprise, falling in line with a host of other accomplishments that are celebrated by diasporic people. In one sense, having a historically significant site be officially recognized is a matter of pride for Sikh people living in the area. When the site is contextualized more broadly, however, other readings emerge. The cremation site (now known as Adenia Park) is situated within the Canning River Regional Park, a site that is also listed on the State Register of Historic Places, though there it’s listed as “Landing Reserve.”³²¹ Both sites were added to the list on the same date, August 8, 1995.³²²

Landing Reserve, Adenia Park’s parent site, is broadly described in the “Statement of Significance,” containing no specific names of communities. For instance, the site is described as, “Important for historic values because of its association with the pioneering phase of settlement in the district in the late 19th century, and for its association with the firefood and

³²¹ “Landing Reserve,” Heritage Council. State Heritage Office, accessed March 19, 2019, <http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/PrintSingleRecord/2e46ab91-d61f-4006-8ec2-470f52d6a960>.

³²² “Fmr Sikh Cemetery”; “Landing Reserve.”

brickmaking industries which were typical of the area in the colonial period.”³²³ The statement also mentions the Canning River, which runs through the reserve and was used by Sikhs performing cremations. As per tradition of dispersing ashes into a body of water, the Canning River became resourceful for Sikh settlers in the area. The statement completely erases presence of and original ownership this land belonging to the Whadjuk Noongar people of present-day Perth. A final critique necessary of the idea of symbolic recognition of specific communities through gestures like State Registers the latter’s connection to urban planning. As urban geographer and planner Libby Porter specially argues with regard to Australia and New Zealand in *Unlearning the Colonial Cultures of Planning*, the entire idea of spatial organization and parceling through urban planning was a colonial-era construct used to gain systemized control of land.³²⁴ Urban planning’s “successes” are hinged on the dispossession of Indigenous people’s lands, a violence whose blueprint contemporary urban planning in all settler colonial societies thrive on. The “Statement of Significance” provides a perfect example of this erasure and dispossession.

The reason I include Adenia Park in my analysis is because it offers an alternative to these colonial legacies of erasure. When the Sikh community in Perth decided to honor the memories of their ancestors, it did so by keeping in mind Indigenous traditions and land ownership. The park’s redesigning and opening ceremonies have both foregrounded Indigenous voices and perspectives. This foregrounding is visible in how and by whom the park was redesigned in 2018.

In 1971 the Sikh community in Western Australia petitioned to change the vesting of the site. The petition called for releasing Bootan Singh and Massar Singh as individuals to whom the

³²³ “Landing Reserve.”

³²⁴ Libby Porter, *Unlearning the Colonial Cultures of Planning* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2010).

site was vested in 1935, as both the men had passed away well before then, leaving no identifiable friend or relative to take care of the site after them. As a result of this petition, the status of the site was changed in 1977 from being a reserve to public space. Following this change, the Canning Regional Park, the parent site of Adenia Park, received basic landscaping and groundworks from the City of Canning.³²⁵ Plans of redesigning and renovating Adenia Park are a fairly recent component in the history of the site, as it was only starting in 2015 that the new plans were proposed.³²⁶ The redesign project has been funded in half by a lottery that the City of Canning received specifically for the park, with the other half coming from money raised from within the Sikh community of Western Australia. The full budget for the project amounts to \$350,000.³²⁷

The renovation has consisted of the installation of walking trails that connect to the Canning River situated in the larger context of the site, as well as especially-designed benches and information boards. It is through components that Adenia Park stands out in how it memorializes Sikh diasporic history while foregrounding Indigenous communities on whose land this history took place. Much like the three California parks discussed earlier in this chapter, Adenia Park also has a playground and walking trails. The similarities between these parks goes further, in that the signage at Adenia Park uses the same language as at the Elk Grove park in California. The benches at Adenia Park are designed in a contemporary style using concrete and wood have Punjabi phrases written in the Gurmukhi language. The phrases are carved into the concrete blocks that form the bases of the benches. Examples of this are the phrases “charhdi

³²⁵ “Adenia Reserve,” Australian Sikh Heritage, accessed March 20, 2019, <http://www.australiansikhheritage.com/wasikhcremationsite>.

³²⁶ “Enhancement Project,” accessed March 20, 2019, <http://www.australiansikhheritage.com/adenia-park-redevelopment>.

³²⁷ I would like to thank my interviewee, a core volunteer from Australian Sikh Heritage, for sharing these project details with me.

kalaa vich raho” (“remain in *charhdi kalaa*,” the idea of resilience that I have discussed at length in Chapter Two), “Singh atey Kaur” (“Singh and Kaur”), and “Sarbat da bhala” ([Prayers for the] Well-being of all) (Figures 3.6-3.8). Seeing these words and phrases in Sikh-themed spaces in various geographies is unsurprising, as Singh and Kaur are last names prescribed by the Sikh tradition, and “*charhdi kalaa*” and “*sarbat da bhala*” are phrases referred in congregational Sikh prayer multiple times a day at every *gurdwara* in the world.

The signage at Adenia Park has some elements that are unlike those at the other parks discussed in this chapter. Designed by Publik, a local design firm in Perth, the information signs look like metallic origami, with text and images with information on Western Australia’s Indigenous communities, the Australian Sikh community’s link to the site, and basic information on the Sikh traditional and Punjab. The best example of this is the welcome sign, which states “Wandju Wandju Nidja Whadjuk Boodja” (Figure 3.9). These phrases come from Noongar, the language of the Indigenous people of Western Australia, and it roughly translates to, “Welcome to Noongar country”³²⁸ Below this phrase is the phrase “*Sat Sri Akaal*,” written in the Gurmukhi language. The phrase is commonly used by Sikhs as a welcome greeting, and loosely translated, it means “The Timeless One is True” (Figure 3.9). The connection with Indigenous communities also exists in another meaningful way: the benches were designed by Carey MC, an Indigenous-run design firm in Perth. Australian Sikh Heritage, the organization that led the Adenia Park redevelopment project, worked closely with Perth’s Department of Biodiversity. The latter’s business contract with Carey MC enabled an Indigenous perspective and voice to be centered at Adenia Park. One unique aspect of Carey MC getting the park redesign project was its goal to certify fifteen Indigenous youth in building and construction, thus making skillshare and training

³²⁸ “Language,” Kaartijin Noongar - Noongar Knowledge, n.d., accessed March 18, 2019.

for young people in the marginalized community a crucial part of the project.³²⁹ Indigenous voices were also foregrounded at the opening ceremony of the park, as an elder from the Whadjuk Noongar community gave an official welcome to the site (and to the country at large).³³⁰

When asked what the future plans are for the site, my interviewee shared that a mobile app will accompany the site and its history. Further development of the site entails adding a parking area, amphitheater, barbeque facilities, and public restrooms. Following a major overarching theme in my dissertation, I asked my interviewee whether he or others in the Sikh community fear backlash to the site, such as graffiti or arson. He shared that the City of Canning did fear backlash, and the only known case of this at the site has been a five to seven centimeter tag on a trail sign post. This particular marking was done in pen and was a tag in nature, bearing the vandal's initials. My interviewee added that the tag easily came off with water. He further added that the park is located in an area whose demographic is mostly white Australians who frequently use the site and have appreciated the renovations and redesign. A final point I want to emphasize is my interviewee sharing that the park renovation plans purposely did not include more conventional ways of memorialization, such as through statues. My interviewee shared that the underlying desire among the Sikh volunteers working on the project was to propose a renovation plan that would serve a greater purpose than a statue could.

In recent Sikh diasporic history, statues in Italy and England have been erected that commemorate Sikh soldiers' (nearly all of whom all male) sacrifices in the World Wars. These types of commemorations have received sharp criticism from Sikh activists from around the

³²⁹ I would like to thank my interviewee, a core volunteer from Australian Sikh Heritage, for sharing these project details with me.

³³⁰ I would like to thank my interviewee, a core volunteer from Australian Sikh Heritage, for sharing these project details with me.

globe, who see these measures not as tales of heroic individuals, but as presenting Sikhs as complicit in war, empire, and violence from both. Due to being tuned into these critiques, as well as due to privileging more utilitarian ways of commemorating the past in a public space, Australian Sikh Heritage volunteers chose alternate ways to commemorate Sikhs' settlement in Australia. To date, Adenia Park is a unique example of diasporic necropolitics not only due to the Sikh-specific history of cremation at the site but for two other key reasons as well: It foregrounds Indigenous connections and living heritage of the Whadjuk Noongar people, and in doing so, it resists narratives employed elsewhere in the Sikh diaspora that align Sikhs with uncritical consumption of and participation in empire. Simply put, if the global Sikh community's concern is regarding how best to commemorate its bygone people (i.e. necropolitics), Adenia Park serves as an example that does so by ensuring the power to engage in the narrative is vested in the people (Indigenous and Sikh), not the state. Further, Adenia Park illustrates how this can be done *while working with the state* but not submitting to its terms.

III. RAG HEAD

“Since 9/11, there has been an alarming increase in hate crimes committed against Sikhs, Muslims and other immigrant communities. With their turbans and long beards, Sikhs are often labeled as terrorists and have become targets in the United States. According to the Sikh Coalition, there are roughly 500,000 Sikhs in the US, many of whom have been subject to xenophobic harassment or violence. Inspired by actual events, Sundeep Morrison's one woman show, RAG HEAD, addresses hate, hope and American identity.”³³¹

In late September 2018, I came across the above description via social media on RAG HEAD, a one-woman show on the post-9/11 experiences of racialized minorities in the United States. Immediately upon seeing the advertisement, I looked for more information on the show, curious about its producer, director, actor, and description. It was then that I came across

³³¹ “Sundeep Morrison,” Sundeep Morrison, accessed July 6, 2019, <http://sundeepmorrison.com/>.

Sundeep Morrison’s website, the writer, performer, and director of the show. The website contains the excerpt quoted above. RAG HEAD, especially in all caps, as it appears on Sundeep’s website and on the show’s advertisement, is such a loud phrase. As an individual from the Sikh community, and on top of that, as a turban-wearing Brown woman, the phrase hits hard, as it reminds me of the countless times I’ve heard and read about people from my community being called this derogatory slur.

In Punjabi Sikh culture, the turban holds deep significance, so much so, that there’s even a *dastar bandi* (“turban tying”) ceremony for boys.³³² The ceremony marks their official ascent into adulthood, a time when they go from wearing a *patka* (a quickly-tieable head scarf) to a *pagri* (turban).³³³ Sikh elders even advise their younger relatives and community members to never let a *pagri* fabric touch or fall to the floor, as that would be a transgression of the respect a *pagri* is given, on or off the head. The symbolic, colloquial meaning of the phrase *pagri lathni* (disrobing or disrobed turban) is used to refer to [some]one’s social honor being lost.³³⁴ When a notable Sikh figure is publicly recognized for their service, *gurdwara* committee members give *pagri* cloth (called a *siropa* (“robe of honor”) in that context) to the individual to honor their achievements. There are also turban-tying competitions in East Punjab, with special accolades going individuals with the most neatly and stylishly-tied turbans. In another colloquial context, a round-shaped turban is called *dastar* (as in *dastar bandi*), and the act of tying a *dastar* is phrased

³³² Although wearing a turban is only required by Sikh men, some women also choose to cover their heads (either with scarves or turbans). Given that the turban is overwhelmingly worn only by males, the *dastar bandi* ceremony is usually reserved for boys and young men. I do know of a few cases where Sikh families had a *dastar bandi* ceremonies for their daughters when the latter decided to don a turban.

³³³ Since an overwhelming majority of turbaned individuals in the Sikh community are men, there is seldom a *dastar bandi* for women, though I do know of cases when parents have held such a ceremony for their turban-wearing daughters. It is also not a compulsory ceremony, and many families do choose not to have an official *dastar bandi*.

³³⁴ The term often has misogynistic connotations, as a female’s father may use that term to mean that his daughter has done something “dishonorable”, itself a euphemism for transgressing the house or community’s rules of dating, intimacy, and so forth.

differently than tying a typical pointy-styled one. Rather than *pagri banni* (“tying a turban”), tying a *dastar* is referred to as *dastar sajauni* (“adorning a [round] turban”).³³⁵ The implication of *sajauni* is that the turban not only adorns one’s head but also adds to their overall presence. So, when a Sikh is racially slurred at with “raghead”, the insult carries multiple layers of offenses and pain, as a turban is not just a piece of cloth worn on one’s head.

Having only read about RAG HEAD, I was initially weary of what kind of message the show would put forth, a perception only made worse due to the show’s name, and that, too, in all caps. I attended a performance of the show in October 2018, and all of my apprehensions, biases, and misconceptions were proven wrong. Watching RAG HEAD has been one of the few times I have left a *gurdwara* or non-*gurdwara* Sikh space seeing that hate violence has been contextualized as something that affects Sikhs *and* non-Sikhs. RAG HEAD also presents racialized hate violence in the literal, physical sense, as well as the symbolic, metaphorical sense. The show presents racialized hate violence both from the perspective of those inflicting it, and of those affected by it. It lays bare how racialized hate violence is ubiquitous and manifests in every aspect of daily life in the public sphere—at work, in the streets, in common parlance, systemically, implicitly, and explicitly. While one can expect to see scenes of the explicit, “in your face” kind of racialized hate violence in a show titled RAG HEAD, it is the normalized, everyday, “soft” racism that resonates even deeper than racial slurs and gunshot wounds. This spectrum of representations in the show is what makes it so remarkable. It captures the lived experience of those bodies to whom “raghead” applies most closely, as well as to the lived experience of those on the outside of this sphere of racialization—the ones who witness it or

³³⁵ *Sajauni* is the transitive verb form of the word, which comes from the imperative form of *sajni* (for females) or *sajna* (for males), a word used in reference to ornamentation, decoration, adornment, and wearing jewelry.

exhibit it on a daily basis, not realizing how racial bias colors their encounters with Brown, turbaned, hijabi, and accented bodies.

Sundeep describes the time of the show as “post-9/11 America.”³³⁶ I analyze the broadness of the time context to be intentional, as the show captures what racialized bodies’ life experience has been like since 9/11.³³⁷ Oak Creek and other mass shootings targeting Brown bodies in the country are products of the demonization of the Brown Other. The events of Oak Creek are heavily present in the story world of RAG HEAD, also evident through the setting of the show, which Sundeep phrases as a “small American town.”³³⁸ Though the show is set in this Oak Creek-resembling setting, the layers of social life it presents are present throughout the country. This point is clearly understood by the show’s Brown audiences who have likely heard and seen first-hand the language and mindframe of the show’s white characters as resonant across the landscape of the country. There are two other factors that support this argument that the “small America town” RAG HEAD is set in is actually a microcosm of the whole of the country. First, although as of early 2019, the show has only played in Los Angeles and Orange County, both being major urban locations, the experiences of racialized bodies portrayed in RAG HEAD corresponds to the lived experience of Brown audiences of the show in these two large metropolises.³³⁹ Second, the tropes of racialized hate violence in the public sphere of the “small American town” that the show presents (discussed in detail below) map onto the overall

³³⁶ My sincere thanks to Sundeep Morrison for providing me with these details on each of the characters.

³³⁷ In the introductory chapter of my dissertation, I write about how this racialization predates 9/11, particularly to the Iran Hostage Crisis and the Persian Gulf War. During this ten year time period between 1981 and 1991, state apparatuses further cemented the conflation of Brown, terrorist, beard, turban, threat, villain, Arab, Muslim, Middle East[ern] that popular culture and media in the United States and Western Europe have been doing since the time of World’s Fairs and Exhibitions and film in the nineteenth century.

³³⁸ My thanks, again, to Sundeep for sharing this with me via email correspondence in February 2019.

³³⁹ I saw the show twice in 2018, the first time in Los Angeles, where the audience was mostly white, and a second time at the annual SikhLens film festival in Santa Ana in Orange County, where the audience was entirely Punjabi Sikh. The emotional response to the raw and powerful show was nearly identical between the two shows, with many viewers in tears throughout the show, because they saw happening on the stage was (and is) Brown viewers’ own lives.

geographic expanse of this violence in real life. Throughout this dissertation, I discuss incidents of hate violence that span vast geographies, ranging from small towns to large cities, and in areas with small Sikh communities to ones where their numbers are in the six digits. Sundeep presents this spectrum of oppressor and oppressed through seven characters, each of whom she plays herself. She is literally a woman and actor of many hats.

III. I. Characters

Baljeet Singh, a Punjabi Sikh man with a turban and beard; he's in his 50s and works at the gas station he owns. He has a Punjabi accent when he speaks English. He is married to Simi, and Dr. Singh and Preeti are his children.

Dale, a white male veteran in his 50s. He served in Afghanistan and Iraq, due to which he has PTSD. Chrissy, his daughter, is dating Dr. Singh.

Simi, a Punjabi Sikh woman in her 50s; she has been living in America for the past 35 years. She has a Punjabi accent when she speaks English. She is married to Baljeet, and Dr. Singh and Preeti are her children.

Dr. Singh: a Punjabi Sikh doctor in his 30s. He has a turban and a beard. He is dating Chrissy, Dale's daughter. His accent implies he is born and bred in America. He's the son of Baljeet and Simi, and the brother of Preeti. He is hoping to get a promotion at the medical clinic Gwen works at.

Gwen: A white American woman in her 30s. She's a corporate executive at a medical clinic that Dr. Singh is up for a promotion in.

Fatima: A hijabi Arab Muslim woman in her 30s. Her accent implies she is born and bred in America.

Preeti: A Punjabi Sikh woman in her 30s; she's a poet. Her accent implies she is born and bred in America. Baljeet and Simi are her parents, and Dr. Singh is her brother.

III. II. Scene Analysis

The show begins with Baljeet Singh working at his gas station, where he is watching the broadcast of a cricket game. Baljeet stops watching the game to engage in conversation with one of the customers that has come in, a white man who sees Baljeet's turban and beard as symbols

of “the enemy.” The customer asks Baljeet whether he’s Muslim, to which Baljeet responds that he is a Sikh from India. He adds that he belongs to the faith community whose temple (*gurdwara*) is located nearby. He invites the customer to visit the *gurdwara*, highlighting that there will be delicious food in the *langar* (“free meal”; community kitchen) as well. The scene comes to close at this point. Throughout the encounter, Baljeet refers to the customer as “my friend,” smiling throughout the entire conversation. Owning and running gas stations is a prominent business arena among South Asians. Unfortunately, due to this reason, gas stations are one of the most common spaces in which Brown bodies are attacked in vicious, often fatal, attacks by white supremacists. The dynamic of the encounter has chilling resonances for Brown bodies, as Balbir Singh Sodhi, the first casualty of hate crimes immediately after 9/11, was shot to death by a white supremacist outside his (Sodhi’s) gas station in Mesa, Arizona. Fifteen years later, in 2016, Davinder Singh of Newark, New Jersey, was killed outside his gas station, an incident also suspected to be a hate crime. A year after that, Simranjit Singh of Sacramento was shot dead outside the gas station he worked at. In 2018 Terlok Singh, also from Newark, died of chest wounds from being stabbed in his convenience store. Each of these men wore turbans and had beards. Baljeet Singh’s conversation and life experiences shown and implied deeply resonate with Sikh audiences of RAG HEAD, especially during the show’s final scene.

The second scene shows Dale having a conversation with a friend. Dale’s PTSD is evident in how he recalls the time he spent deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq. Within a couple minutes, the complex characteristics that Dale espouses becomes clear: he seems to be from a working class background, feels that “they” are taking over America’s jobs, and due to being radicalized in the army, like the Oak Creek shooter was, Dale sees “them” as a threat to be

destroyed, whether abroad or within the country.³⁴⁰ Dale essentially represents the poor, working class white communities in rural America that the current president built a significant support base around. Not coincidentally, Dale wears a plain red hat, meant to make a direct connection with the iconic red hats with white embroidery text saying “Make America Great Again” that the current president’s supporters wear. The slogan has become a rallying point for the current president to garner support for xenophobic political and economic policies, and attempt to “return” America to its glory, now faded because of immigrants. Dale makes racially derogatory remarks about his daughter’s partner, Dr. Singh.

As Sundeep describes it, the anger that Dale projects is him recreating the environment he was in while at war. Dale represents those veterans who, with unresolved PTSD, find or seek employment in law enforcement, as TSA or border patrol agents, and other security jobs. Dale is and represents, as Sundeep explains, both the aggressor and the oppressor.³⁴¹ Brown bodies are victims of racialized hate violence that people like Dale [are taught to] espouse as a service to the country: to be patriotic means to destroy perceived Brown threat by any means necessary. In this skewed worldview, in addition to Brown bodies paying the cost of racism, people like Dale are victims in themselves. They are victims of becoming accessories of empire, whether through military service or through other forms of employment in service of empire’s military-, prison-, and detention-industrial complex. They are victims of mental health illnesses, some types of which, such as PTSD, have extreme social implications not only for themselves but also for people around them. Dale represents a type of broken and cyclical social order afflicting citizens of empire who, despite having “served” it, are left in shambles from inflicting pain onto others

³⁴⁰ “Sikh Temple Killer Wade Michael Page Radicalized in Army,” Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed September 23, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2012/sikh-temple-killer-wade-michael-page-radicalized-army>.

³⁴¹ My thanks to Sundeep Morrison for sharing details on Dale’s character.

and themselves. Dale's hatred, racism, and xenophobia take birth partly from the anxiety, loss, and stress he has suffered. These fire from these tensions is further fueled when the current president uses immigrants as scapegoats, on whom he blames white Americans' current fate of unemployment or underemployment. Combined with already-existing systemic racism, Dale sees Brown bodies as inhibiting his and his compadres' goal of "returning" America to its past, faded glory.

In one of the scenes, Sundeep takes on the character of Fatima, an American-born Arab Muslim hijabi woman who is driven off the road by an aggressive driver in the lane beside the one she is in. Because of this aggression, she ends up hitting a light pole with her car. In this scene, she describes the incident to a police officer, who, in turn, downplays the incident and ignores that it was a racial bias-motivated act. When asked to accurately describe the driver, Fatima mentions that she didn't get a good look at the driver, as everything happened so fast. She is sure, however, that the incident was racially-motivated. There is also an element of victim-blaming at play here, as the police officer uses Fatima not being able to phenotypically describe the aggressive driver as a way to dismiss her concerns. Fatima encounters one iteration of a "soft" kind of racism that has become ubiquitous and normalized in the lives of Brown people. So what that she was harassed based on her appearance? *At least she is still alive*, the rationale downplaying such acts goes. As I write this, news media is covering the mass shootings at two mosques in New Zealand from earlier today, March 15, 2019, where a white supremacist has claimed the lives of forty nine Muslims and hospitalized forty eight others with serious injuries, doing so while live streaming the violence he unleashed. This is the nature of hate violence. It is never-ending. The dead bodies of its victims from one shooting are still warm when another shooting happens. As Shaheen Pasha, a journalism instructor, writes, to be Muslim in America

means “to be constantly expected to apologize for the actions of people and ideologies that the vast majority of us do not abide by. It gets exhausting.”³⁴²

Fatima is similarly exhausted. Her character on stage resonates with the audience members whose experiences with racist hate violence have been brushed off as insignificant or inconsequential. Fatima being one of the characters played in RAG HEAD is especially significant because, for the first time in such a blatant and visible manner for Sikh audiences, Islamophobia has been contextualized as something Muslims *and* Sikhs face. In this context, for Sikhs audiences, there is no escaping the reality that for people like the man who drove Fatima off the road, Dale, Wade Michael Page (Oak Creek shooter), and Frank Roque (Balbir Singh Sodhi’s killer), Brown skin, turbans, beards, hijabs, and “foreign” names and accents have all become legitimate grounds on which to beat, shoot, and kill. Inferring “I’m not Muslim, I’m Sikh,” or any variation thereof, not only offers little protection against racialized hate violence and Islamophobia but also perpetuates the idea that Muslims are the “correct” target of such violence. This kind of othering by Sikhs is vehemently against Sikh ethos of seeing all as one. Sikh audiences of RAG HEAD have to confront this reality, possibly for the first time.

“Soft” racism makes an appearance in a different scene as well. In this scene, the audiences see Gwen, a white American woman who works as a corporate executive at the medical clinic where Dr. Singh is one of two contenders for a promotion. Gwen’s supervisor calls to let her know that Dr. Singh didn’t get the promotion, even though he is the more qualified of the two contenders. Gwen tries to resist the decision, arguing that Dr. Singh is the better-qualified contender. She is told that one factor affecting the decision is that one of Dr.

³⁴² Shaheen Pasha, “Columnist Shaheen Pasha: The Exhaustion of Being Muslim in America,” *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, March 14, 2019, <https://www.gazettenet.com/Shahen-Pasha-The-exhaustion-of-being-Muslim-in-America-24105674>.

Singh's patients, an elderly white woman, is uncomfortable with his appearance of a turban and beard. This patient happens to be a significant donor to the clinic. A known racist, the patient's racism trumps Dr. Singh's merit. Dr. Singh's character is a mirror depiction of all the Sikh men whose merit is meaningless in the face of bureaucracy, philanthropy, and "soft", systemic racism. Dr. Singh's character connects with racial profiling and "random" security checks of people with turbans, beards, and Brown skin at airports and other public spaces. His turban always silences him, speaking on his behalf before he utters a single word. If or when he does get to speak, if he speaks anything less than perfect English and does not have an "American" accent, he is scrutinized further. If he does speak in the desired and preferred manner, he is showered with "soft" white supremacist remarks on how flawless his English is, and he is questioned on where he is *really* from.

Knowing well that his appearance may cost him the promotion, Simi, Dr. Singh's mother, discusses the matter with a friend, a fellow Punjabi woman. In this scene, Simi says she has told her son that it would be understandable if he wants to shun his physical identity of his turban and beard if it means less ridicule and bias at work. He chooses otherwise, a decision that ultimately subjected Dr. Singh to what his mother was afraid of all along. Simi is every Punjabi Sikh parent who has to juggle looking out for their children's best interests, faith identities, and the realities of racism in America. In the back of their minds, the Simis of America are constantly hyper-aware and concerned about their partners' well-being at their workplaces, like Baljeet, Balbir, Davinder, Simranjit, and Terlok at their gas stations.

In another scene, Preeti, Dr. Singh's sister, shares a spoken word piece that she presents at a poetry slam. Sundeep said she wrote this piece while writing RAG HEAD. In a powerful voice, Preeti, a Punjabi Sikh woman with shoulder-length hair, begins the performance singing

the last line of the national anthem, "...*the land of the free and the home of the...*" When she gets to the word "brave," the performance switches from song to spoken word. The words of the powerful piece, titled "Patriot," are:

(Singing the last line of the national anthem) The land of the free and the home of the-
(suddenly speaking) Brave is what I have to be.
 It's not because I jump out of planes, climb mountains or dodge trains.
 It's because I exist.
 If you're born into a black or Brown body, then your simple existence is an act of resistance.
 In this land of Red, White and Blue, the color of your skin affects how they treat you.
 The white hold the power, the blue run the streets and the red is the blood we all bleed.
 Perhaps this is what inspired Betsy Ross and Francis Scott Key.
 When you were little you were told that you could be anything that you wanted to be.
 I was told that I had to Brave, because there were no guarantees for people like me.
 Little black and Brown children are sent out into the world like soldiers deployed.
 We're taught to sustain and maintain, endure pain, we can't stutter or mutter, we must refrain, even if being Brave is what we must feign,
 Like the mother of the little boy who's topknot is covered by his *patka*, before school he asks her, "Mummy, what if they beat me, what if they call me names?"
 She is filled with fear, but tells him *puth*, son, be Brave.
 To have the audacity to live in your truth, speak the language of your people, eat your native fruit, to wear the cloth of your people and your articles of faith, to live like this, you have to be Brave?
 We can't be weak, meek, frail or feeble, no time to be fragile or fearful.
 We are taught to swallow that lump in our throat, our voices can't crack or quiver, we musn't choke.
 Walking home, taking the bus, or speaking on the phone in public it's fine as long as you look like everyone else and your English is perfect.
 White skin guarantees that you'll walk out of situations alive, you don't anticipate danger, or feel the shift in the vibe, no gazes upon your skin tone when you arrive.
 You're greeted and seated, your order repeated, you're spared the stares, the quips, and your ID is rarely needed.
 That little boy is now a man with his top knot tucked into his turban.
 He's a father who's passed down a love for his culture and faith to his children.
 He tells them what his mother told him in his early days,
 Stand tall in the face of hate, be Brave.
 But what if he could tell them they could be anything they wanted to be?
 What if he could tell them to be you, be free?
 What about you? You have a choice.

When you see injustice against people like me, will you raise your voice?
 Will you use your privilege in the decisions you make?
 You could change the world if you decided to be Brave.

“Patriot” captures all the characters of RAG HEAD. The boy with the topknot growing into a man with a turban is Dr. Singh, encouraged by his mother, Simi, and father, Baljeet Singh, to be brave. Preeti speaks of all the hurdles she, and other minorities like her, have to face just to exist. Preeti is speaking to the non-Brown audiences, as well as to the other characters in the show, namely Dale and Gwen. She speaks as Preeti, Dr. Singh, Fatima, Baljeet Singh, and Simi. She switches the poles of bravery by concluding the spoken word piece by asking whether you, the ones with privileges of skin color, accent, name, ethnicity, faith, and class, will step up and be brave enough to bear the burden that Black and Brown folks feel for existing. Preeti implores why one has to choose between being brave and free; she sets the stage by showing that she and her people have to choose one or the other. To choose to be brave means to have to face a cruel world that pathologizes their existence. To choose to be free means to live unapologetically with a turban, *kirpan*, beard, hijab, or yarmulke, knowing well that such freedom necessitates bearing the brunt of hate violence.

The final scene comes after Preeti’s stirring words. Between the scene shifts, the audiences hear gunshot sounds, followed by snippets of actual audio footage of the 911 call from someone at the Oak Creek *gurdwara* who survived the shootings. No other context is needed. Sikh members of the audience know exactly what has happened and where the soundbite is taken from. For many, like myself, this was our first encounter with the audio footage, as we had been purposely avoiding listening to it when it first appeared on social media after the 2012 shootings. Having to see news headlines about shootings at a *gurdwara* were traumatic enough. There is no escaping from the audio footage in that moment in RAG HEAD. Just as the woman heard speaking with the 911 operator, one feels helpless, sharing in the horror one has (re)heard. The

woman says she is hiding with others in the pantry in the *gurdwara* kitchen. The show's soundbite is only a few seconds long, but the memories it leaves are everlasting.

The final scene follows the soundbite. Here, Baljeet Singh is sitting behind a table, on which is there is a small carry-on-sized handbag. He has a worried look on his face. This facial expression is starkly in contrast to how the audiences saw Baljeet in the opening scene, in which he is cheerful and has an ever-present smile. In the conversation that Baljeet Singh is made to engage in, the audiences learn that he has been pulled aside by security at the airport, where a TSA agent has taken Baljeet Singh into a separate screening room. Baljeet is instructed to open the bag, which he does slowly. In terms of pace, this is the slowest scene in the show. The slowness of the pace is further emphasized, as just before this scene, the audiences have seen Preeti perform a fast-paced spoken word piece. Still with a look of concern and pain on his face, Baljeet Singh slowly unzips the bag and takes out a cloth-wrapped item. In his Punjabi accent, he puts out both of his hands, saying “okay, okay,” as if to gesture that he seeks a bit more patience and humanity from the TSA agent. As Baljeet Singh unwraps the cloth off of the object, the TSA agent and the audiences see three urns. Within moments, there is a chilling connection and realization that the gun shots we heard in the soundbite were of a shooting that took the lives of Baljeet Singh's family—Simi, Dr. Singh, and Preeti.

Baljeet Singh does not speak much in this exchange. What is there left to say? He mentions that he feels it is his fault that his Beloveds' lives were taken, as he recognized the shooter as the same man who had come into the gas station store. Baljeet Singh says that in that initial encounter, he invited the man to *gurdwara* to learn more about the Sikh faith and to share a meal in *langar*. Baljeet Singh interprets the invitation to the man as the reason he has lost his family. Baljeet Singh tells the TSA agent that he is leaving America to go back to India, and that

he is taking the urns with him to perform the last parts of the cremation ceremony when ashes are dispersed in culturally-significant rivers. His whole life is reduced to a carry-on bag containing three urns full of ashes. The blood, flesh, muscles, and bones of a devoted partner and strong mother, a caring son and an accomplished doctor, and a passionate woman and a powerful poet, all reduced to ashes. *Reduced to ashes*, not coincidentally, the name of an official report on the state-executed disappearances and extrajudicial killings of multiple generations of Punjabi Sikh men in India between 1984 and the 1990s, including of Jaswant Singh Khalra.³⁴³ The meaning of Baljeet's name, *powerful victor*, seems to betray what he is feeling at that moment. Preeti's name, *lovely*, captures her lovely spirit, whose glimpse the audiences get through her recitation of "Patriot."

III. III. Sound Montages

I'm going to tell it like it is. I hope you can take it like it is. These words come from Malcolm X from June 29, 1964 during his address at the opening rally of the Organization for Afro-African Unity (OAAU). I invoke Malcolm X here not to create a false equivalence implying that the reasons the OAAU was founded and the reasons Malcolm used those specific words in his address to it are the same as, or even close to, the reasons something like RAG HEAD came about in the first place. Rather, my invocation here is a nod to the show's unapologetic and blunt telling it like it is of how and where hate takes birth, and whom it hurts. In addition to the story Sundeep Morrison writes to and through each character, it is the sound montages used as transitions between scenes that do the telling it like it is. Curated by sound design artist and editor Liza Stegall, the sound montages act as a quilt that stitches various words

³⁴³ Committee for Coordination on Disappearances in Punjab, *Reduced to Ashes: The Insurgency and Human Rights in Punjab : Final Report* (Sikh Students Federation, 2003).

together through songs and audio footage of actual life events. Though RAG HEAD's story and characters are fictional, they are based on a reality that is more true than one wishes it were, as that reality is much too painful. The sound montages further blur the show's story world from reality, as they include snippets of audio footage of real-life events. Some of the sound montages are multilingual, containing snippets of old and contemporary songs in Punjabi and English.

I am examining two sound montages in particular. The first is the one used to transition into the scene in which the audiences learn that Dr. Singh did not get the promotion he was well-qualified for, and the second is the one that transitions into the final scene in which Baljeet Singh is being further searched in a private room at the airport. In the first of these compilations, the sound montage presents layering and overlapping of music and speech. The first layer of speech consists of racist speech of "an everyday American's" Islamophobic words, second layer is the current president's racist, hateful words against Muslims, and enmeshed into these two is the third layer of speech, containing parts of an interview exchange in which two radio show hosts from New Jersey ridicule Gurbir Grewal, the state's attorney general, a Sikh, as "turban man." The snippet begins with the "everyday American" loudly spewing, "Every Muslim is a terrorist. Period. Shut your mouth!" Then the snippet layers the president's words in his iconic fourth-grade level vocabulary, "They're sending people that have lots of problems. They're bringing drugs, they're bringing crime. They're rapists...I want surveillance of certain mosques, because they're recruiting by the thousands."³⁴⁴ The source for the president having said this comes from Birmingham, Alabama, during his campaigning period in 2015.³⁴⁵ Following such hate speech,

³⁴⁴ I want to thank Sundeep Morrison and Amrita Dhaliwal for sharing the show's sound montages.

³⁴⁵ David Mark and Jeremy Diamond, "Donald Trump: 'I Want Surveillance of Certain Mosques,'" CNN, November 21, 2015, <https://www.cnn.com/2015/11/21/politics/trump-muslims-surveillance/index.html>.

one of the first drastic measures the president took when he stepped into office in January 2016 was instating the “Muslim Ban.”

In full context of the audio snippet regarding Gurbir Grewal is radio show host Dennis Malloy saying, “I’m never going to know his name. I’m just going to say turban man.” In the audio snippet in RAG HEAD, we hear the next part of this real-life exchange, in which Malloy ask the other host, Judi Franco, whether saying “turban man” is offensive, to which Franco replies, “It’s not to me.” The sound montage repeats “turban man” four times, giving the snippet the texture of sound mixing by a DJ. The part we don’t hear in the sound montage, but a part of this real-life exchange that Sikh audiences are well-aware of, is Malloy saying, “Listen, if that offends you, then don't wear the turban, man, and I'll remember your name.”³⁴⁶ This incident incited outrage among Sikh Americans, as it happened around the time they were celebrating an unprecedented moment in the community’s political history: the appointment of two Sikh American men in public service positions: Gurbir Grewal as New Jersey’s attorney general and Ravi Singh Bhalla as the mayor of Hoboken, New Jersey. A third figure being celebrated was Amardeep Singh, Bhalla’s older brother and co-founder of the Sikh Coalition. The three men, all of whom have beards and wear turbans, have known each other since childhood. The trio’s achievements and successes were being praised by Sikhs across the country, making the racist exchange during the radio show that much more offensive. The two radio show hosts were suspended shortly after the incident.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁶ Paul Murphy and Evan Simko-Bednarski, “Two Radio Hosts Suspended after They Refer to America’s First Sikh Attorney General as ‘Turban Man,’” CNN, June 31, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/26/us/radio-hosts-nj-sikh-attorney-general-trnd/index.html>.

Murphy and Simko-Bednarski.

³⁴⁷ Murphy and Simko-Bednarski, “Two Radio Hosts Suspended after They Refer to America’s First Sikh Attorney General as ‘Turban Man.’”

Just as the characters in RAG HEAD resonate with Sikh and Muslim audiences of the show, the sound montages further amplify that connection. Though the whole show presents common ground between Sikhs and Muslims both becoming victims of Islamophobia, it is through this snippet that this connection is further laid bare. The sound montage begins with Islamophobic hate speech and transitions into snippets of the exchange between the radio show hosts whose target of ridicule was a Sikh man. This is one of the moments that RAG HEAD tells it like it is. As I argue in Chapter Two, in the current U.S. context, due to Islamophobic hate violence, there is no such thing as “anti-Sikh” hate crime, as the assailants’ only and primary concern is inflicting pain to Muslims. Anyone who happens to “look” Muslim becomes part of this environment of hate violence. The sound montage concludes with the beginning of Gandhi Blues, a song by electronic music artist Kiran Gandhi (Madame Gandhi). The song opens with “My voice is tired, and I feel broken.” This part of the sound montage leaves the audiences with a sense of ambivalence, as the song’s lyrics apply to Sikhs and Muslims just as much as they do to the radio show hosts who lost their jobs over their ignorant remarks, to Dale, who suffers from PTSD from being in war and internalizing hatred, and to the audiences who are tired and broken from feeling personal resonances with the show.

The second sound montage I’m analyzing is the one that plays as the show transitions into the last scene. At beginning of this sound montage, the audiences hear a snippet of Sikh devotional singing. In particular, it’s of a famous *kirtania* (devotional singer), Bhai Harjinder Singh of Srinagar, singing a composition from Guru Granth Sahib. We hear the first chorus line, *ram ham satgur laale kaande* (“God, I’m a servant of the Beloved Guru [Guru Granth Sahib]”) for forty one seconds. What begins as a peaceful few seconds of devotional singing abruptly changes to gunshot sounds, nine, to be exact, and then immediately goes to sound footage of the

actual 911 call from the Oak Creek *gurdwara* and its neighbors As I mentioned earlier, this was my first encounter with listening to the call, as I had purposely avoided listening to it when it became publicly available and was circulated online. There is no way to avoid listening to it in the sound montage during RAG HEAD. Sikh audiences can quickly identify the source of the footage, as the rawness of the call needs no further geographic or time context. The 911 call footage is itself a montage of six different calls made by eyewitnesses to the shootings. The call footage montage is as follows:

[Call One]

911 Operator 1, a woman: He's in a church with a gun??

Gurdwara neighbor 1, a man: [speaking rapidly] Yeah, yeah, he's shooting, he's still shooting, I can hear it in there, he's in there shooting people.

911 Operator 1: He's in there *shooting* people?

Gurdwara neighbor 1: Yeah, That's my guess. He had a gun, he was shooting on the outside, and then we see him run in there.

911 Operator 1: Ok, is he inside of the temple, or outside?

[Sound of emergency vehicle honking]

[Call Two]

Sikh man 1 speaking in a *desi* accent: They come and see inside the temple, they fire, and we, I am hiding in the basement.

911 Operator 2, a woman: You're hiding. Ok, we do have officers attempting to locate the...the shooter; keep yourself safe, ok? Keep hiding.

Sikh man 1: Yes, I am safe.

[Call Three]

Gurdwara passerby/neighbor 2: Some guy's shooting a gun; uh, some temple or something. We've seen him go in there.

[Call Four]

911 Operator 2, a woman: Hello? Can I help you?

Sikh man 2 speaking in a *desi* accent: [trembling voice] This is Harbans calling from 7512 S. Howell Ave. There is shooting...

911 Operator 2: Did anybody get hurt?

[Call Five]

911 Operator 3, a woman: Did you see the shooter?

Sikh woman in a *desi* accent: [whispering] I don't know, we are just hiding now.

[Call Six]

Gurdwara neighbor 3: [unintelligible; speaking extremely rapidly]...this guy came to my house; he's laying in my front yard, bleeding...

[Sound montage concludes with a chilling vibration sound that plays over the next nine seconds, then the final scene begins.]

The last call is by Jim Haase. One of the victims of the shootings, an elderly Sikh man, who went to Haase's front door and pounded on it. Haase, who happens to be a veteran, knew how to provide first aid care for a gunshot wound, helped the man while medical help was on its way.³⁴⁸ The rush and shock of the moments following the Oak Creek shootings are captured in this sound montage, replete with various ways the callers' bodies and minds reacted to what they had just seen, heard, or experienced: the trembling voice of the Sikh man whose thick Punjabi accents shines through as he says "Howell Avenue." the whispering, barely audible voice of the Sikh woman responding to the 911 operator's question, and the rapidly-speaking neighbors. Just as the sound montage ends, the final scene begins, where the audiences see Baljeet Singh with a look of both pain and defeat on his face.

The lives of the Sikh community in Oak Creek changed as abruptly as the ambience of this particular sound montage. There is no return to equilibrium after the sound montage, the final scene, and the shootings from August 5, 2012. There is no resolution in the story world of RAG HEAD and the real world of the communities it portrays. Though the show concludes after the final scene, the reality of hate violence that it portrays has no ending. The tireless timelessness of hate violence is made worse, as the passing of time only means more hate violence incidents become part of the statistics of attacks on bodies and buildings. RAG HEAD presents both the physical and symbolic forms of this violence, and does so by presenting perspectives of both the oppressed and the oppressors.

³⁴⁸ Rick Romell, "7 Killed, Including Shooter, at Sikh Temple in Oak Creek," *Journal Sentinel*, August 6, 2012, <http://www.jsonline.com/news/crime/reports-of-people-shot-at-sikh-temple-in-oak-creek-qc6cgc0-165059506.html>.

The question of intended audience is a challenging one to address with regard to RAG HEAD, as the show is just as fitting for a Sikh audience as a non-Sikh one. Even for the most politically aware viewers, there is something gripping about RAG HEAD that cannot be gleaned from reading news articles on hate violence, or from knowing or being a victim of it. The intended audience, I would argue, is anyone and everyone who is even vaguely aware of the country's socio-political environment. This is so because the resistance to hate violence has to come from the oppressor and the oppressed; the oppressor, that is, the Dales and Gwens of the world, and the oppressed, the Baljeets, Simis, Preetis, and Dr. Singhs of the world, are both at a loss. The oppressors become jesters of the state's show of empire, who, on the surface, feel they are part of the state through citizenship. Beneath the surface, however, they rot under the effects of state violence, which manifests as being in a state of constant paranoia of having "lost" America, serious mental illnesses resulting from the effects of war and militarization (as afflicting Dale), and feeling powerless while being in a position of power (as experienced by Gwen). The oppressed have yet more hate violence to make sense of upon realizing that the common denominator among the violence they and their societal neighbors face all boils down to white supremacy enacted through the state and its empire[s]. Empire, however, is a zero-sum game with no winners, though it thrives under the chimera that its foot soldiers—the patriot, the veteran, the shooter, the border patrol agent, the TSA agent—are doing God's work. RAG HEAD is for all those foot soldiers, as it breaks through that chimera, shedding light on the darkness that is hate violence. To return to words of Malcolm X that this section began with, RAG HEAD tells it like it is. Even if initially, the audiences are not ready to take it as it is, they will have been persuaded by the end of the show.

IV. Conclusion

In this chapter I have used the framework of diasporic necropolitics to focus on memorialization of death from hate and state violence. Though this memorialization is manifest in the public sphere through various means, I have looked at four public parks and a live theater show. Like traditional *gurdwaras*, each of these non-*gurdwara* sites also enables community gathering and mobilization in its space. Further, just as *gurdwara* buildings represent Sikh bodies due to both being recognizable from their distinct physical features (domes and turbans, respectively), these non-*gurdwara* sites represent Sikh communities through what they commemorate. As discussed in previous chapters, the Sikh community at large is heavily invested in creating awareness for the general public on who its constituents are (and are not, namely Muslims). These awareness campaigns are hinged on portraying Sikhs as model minorities, highlighting various “rags to riches” stories of notable individuals, as well as extraordinarily successful Sikh entrepreneurs, scientists, politicians, and so forth. Non-*gurdwara* sites also raise awareness on Sikhs, though the stories they detail do not present Sikhs as a “model minority.” Instead, these sites foreground ordinary Sikhs, the kind whose class backgrounds are more closely representative of average Sikh families and individuals, the “unmodel majority.” What is extraordinary about these sites, however, is that the narratives they present are centered on death brought on by hate and state violence.

The centering of these narratives around death is not so much due to the Sikh communities’ fascination with death but because of the inescapability from death by state and hate violence: the Singh and Kaur Park in Elk Grove, California commemorates the lives of Gurmej Singh Atwal and Surinder Singh, both of whom were killed in a drive-by shooting in 2011. The perpetrator(s) of the shootings remains unidentified to this day. The Shaheed Bhai

Jaswant Singh Khalra Parks in Bakersfield and Fresno, California celebrate the life of the figure they are named after, a human rights hero from East Punjab who was abducted and killed in 1995 by police for not only for exposing the state's extra judicial killings of Sikhs in the 1980s and 1990s but himself killed in the same manner by them. Adenia Park in Western Australia commemorates the site for its history of erstwhile-deemed illegal cremations by early twentieth century Sikh settlers in the area. It was because of these settlers' efforts, often done clandestinely, that cremation became legalized in the region in 1929. RAG HEAD is a one-woman live theater show by Sundeep Morrison that first debuted in Southern California in 2018. The show's storyline takes after the 2012 shootings at the Oak Creek *gurdwara* in Wisconsin that took the lives of six Sikhs, excluding the white supremacist shooter who turned the gun on himself after killing others. RAG HEAD shows various ways that Brown bodies, especially of turbaned Sikh men and hijabi Muslim women, are racialized, policed, and killed.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon writes about the Black figure as being a “phobogenic object, a stimulus to anxiety.”³⁴⁹ Relying on my framework of diasporic necropolitics, I argue that Brown bodies have been made “necrogenic” objects—a stimulus giving birth to the desire to kill—because of their Islamophobic racialization, especially in the last several decades. A related argument here is that the pursuit of empire is founded on necrogenia, the impulse to socially or physically kill Brown bodies, whether through drones, immigration bans, or a state of perpetual war waged on their bodies, buildings, and territories. I do not mean to polarize Fanon's idea of Black bodies as phobogenic, and my own conception, through Fanon, of Brown bodies as necrogenic. I am cautious of this polarization, because the two types of violence often converge through intersections of faith, such as in the case of

³⁴⁹ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Markmann (Pluto Press, 1986).

Domineque Ray (discussed earlier in this chapter), and because such a polarization runs the risk of buttressing Brown necrogenia upon Black phobogenia. I also do not mean to suggest that Black bodies are not subject to phobogenia *and* necrogenia, because recent and older histories of the United States repeatedly prove otherwise. However, using the lens of diasporic necropolitics, and through it, idea of Brown bodies as necrogenic, I mean those aspects of Brown-ness that are symbols of dignity in their original social contexts and markers of threat in another.³⁵⁰ As RAG HEAD and the contemporary political climate show, turbans and hijabs are emblematic of diasporic necropolitics and necrogenia.

The section subheadings to case studies of the public parks I have discussed in this chapter have a recurring set of words and ideas, namely strolls, turbans, and cremations. The implied interconnections between them and the words' placement together as subheadings are intentional. Those familiar with the history of Sikh death in the United States and in various global Sikh diasporas will immediately know the connections between them. For those unfamiliar with these contexts, this chapter lays out how strolls, turbans, and cremations are interlinked. Strolls, turbans, and cremations indicate the exact moment or reason of death of the people memorialized through the parks. Gurmej Singh Atwal and Surinder Singh were killed when they were out on their daily afternoon stroll in Elk Grove, California. As per Sikh funerary tradition, the two were cremated. Jaswant Singh Khalra was abducted from outside his home in Amritsar, East Punjab and then extra judicially killed and cremated. His body was never returned to his family. The state performed his torturous killing and private cremation. A Western Australian Sikh settler, whose name has not survived the historical record, immolated himself in 1903 due to fear of being buried. Adenia Park marks the site of this act, as well as of other

³⁵⁰ I am cautious that Sikhs' turbans representing dignity, and further in Punjab, strength and trustworthiness, is itself a stream of "model minority" behavior, even in the context of Sikhs in South Asia.

cremations among the Sikh community that followed after. As a result of the now-anonymous Sikh man's act of resistance of performing his own cremation, Western Australia legalized cremations in 1929. Australia's institutionalized racial segregation at the time was evident in its investment in controlling the movement of the live bodies of non-white bodies. Its initial outlawing of cremations as a legally-permitted funerary method reflects the state's investment in controlling non-white bodies even after their death. When, how, and where can empire's subject be sovereign, unbound by institutionalized racism, extrajudicial killing, unjust wars, and perpetual gazes of suspicion?

Months after I began writing this chapter and subheading some of its sections as strolls, turbans, and cremations, I was led to a *shabad* ("hymn") written by Bhagat Ravi Das (b. fourteenth century). The *shabad* author's compositions fall in what has retroactively been termed the Bhakti Movement in South Asia. Some of Bhagat Ravi Das' poetry is included in Guru Granth Sahib, which is how I stumbled upon it. A translation of that particular *shabad* is as follows:

Begampura is the name of the town,
 Where there is no pain or anxiety,
 [Where] there is no tension, nor taxes on goods,
 [Where] there is no fear and mistake, nor decline in mercy. 1
 Now, I have obtained this excellent country,
 There is everlasting kindness, which appeals to me. Reflect [on this]. 1
 [Where] the kingdom [remains] always established,
 [Where] there is no second or third status, [where] all are equal,
 [Which] flourishes and is always famous,
 The residents there are filled with affluence (/blessings). 2
 [Whose residents] stroll as they please, [emphasis added]
 [Where the] place of [one's] confidant is not blocked,
 Says Ravi Das, the emancipated cobbler,
 Whoever is from this city is my (our) friend. 3.2

I have come across this *shabad* several times before. However, in relation to the discussion and arguments in this chapter, this *shabad* offers special meaning to me. As he indicates in the second to last line of the composition, Bhagat Ravi Das hails from the lowest

social order of the caste system in South Asia, a system that orders society to this day in India. He imagines an alternate future for himself and for anyone reading his words. In this vision, he lifts himself out of the social condition he was in because of being born into the lowest class—abject poverty, extreme marginalization, and dehumanization from the upper castes. He names this alternate reality *Begampura*, which literally translates to “the city without sorrow.” He imagines the city in what we would call utopian terms, but his own psychological state ever remains in Begampura, something those who are familiar with his other writings will know. Bhagat Ravi Das’ psychological presence in Begampura is also indicated through his affirmative language—that he has *found* this city, not that he is looking for it.

My dissertation looks at some aspects of life today that are unimaginably far from Begampura state (psychological and physical). It is for this reason especially that I feel compelled to cite Bhagat Ravi Das in the closing of this chapter. Bhagat Ravi Das writes that the residents of Begampura *stroll as they please*, just as Gurmej Singh Atwal and Surinder Singh were on Friday, March 4, 2011, As per their social tradition, Punjabi Sikh elders go on such *sair* (strolls) every day, often walking to their neighborhood *gurdwara*. In the time preceding and following Friday, March 4, 2011, I have lost count of how many Brown bodies have been subject to hate and state violence while on their *sair*, at their mosques, *gurdwaras*, and temples, in their driveways, driving their taxis, and working at their gas stations. I can only hope that we, too, will find our state of Begampura.

Figures for Chapter Three



Figure 3.1 Lion motifs proposed for the children's play area at Singh and Kaur Park in Elk Grove, California. Image courtesy of Cosumnes CSD.

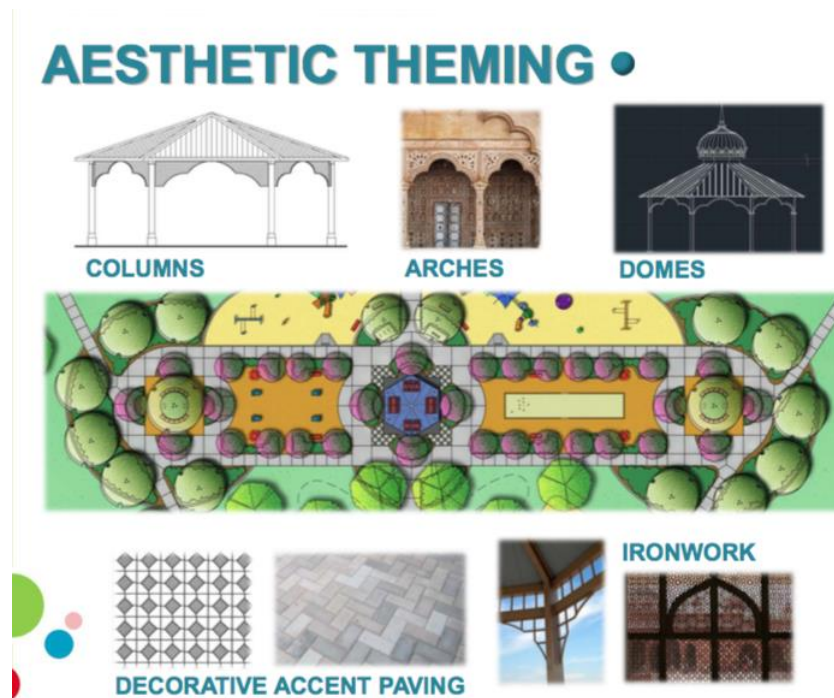


Figure 3.2: Some traditional design elements from South Asian architecture that are proposed for inclusion in the Singh and Kaur Park's picnic shelters. Image courtesy of Cosumnes CSD.

EMING ●



5-12 PLAY EQUIPMENT

Figures 3.3 (left) and 3.4 (right): Islamic, Hindu, and Sikh architectural elements proposed for the designs for two play areas at the Singh and Kaur Park. Image courtesy of Cosumnes CSD.



Figure 3.5: The author at the Shaheed Bhai Jaswant Singh Khalra Neighborhood Park in Fresno, California, photographed in May 2018.



Figure 3.6: A bench at Adenia Park with the text “*charhdi kala vich raho.*” Image courtesy of Be Still Studio.



Figure 3.7: A bench at Adenia Park with the text “*Singh atey Kaur.*” Image courtesy of Be Still Studio.



Figure 3.8: A bench at Adenia Park with the text “*sarbat da bhala.*” Image courtesy of Be Still Studio.



Figure 3.9: A bench and welcome sign at Adenia Park. The bench has text saying “*Aao ji. Ji aya nu.*” The sign has text saying “*Wandju Wandju Nidja Whadjuk Boodja*” and “*Sat Sri Akal.*” Image courtesy of Be Still Studio.

Conclusion

In Search of *Sudh*

I. Introduction

Balbir Singh Sodhi
Ankwar Khalil
Adelal Karas
The Sahak Family
Vasudev Patel
Waqar Hassan

From the above names, if only Balbir Singh Sodhi's is familiar to Sikh readers, then this dissertation is for us/you. On September 15, 2001, after killing Balbir Singh Sodhi, Frank Roque went on to shoot Lebanese American Ankwar Khalil and the Sahaks, an Afghan American family, all in Arizona. On that same day, in Texas, Mark Stroman shot and injured Bangladeshi American Rais Bhuiyan and Pakistani American Waqar Hassan. Stroman later also killed South Asian American Vasudev Patel. Those killed by white supremacist hate violence have gone on to Rest in Power, but those of us who bear witness to and even become victim to this violence everyday cannot Rest in Peace.

I list the six names above not only as a commemoration but also as an appeal. In this chapter, and throughout this dissertation at large, my appeal is to Sikh individuals and advocacy organizations to broaden the optics through which we (Sikhs) view the Sikh community in the United States (and beyond) in relation to other ethnic, religious, and racial minorities. Such a broadening means critical consideration of who falls in the peripheral field of these optics, and even more importantly, examining why. I present my appeal in three parts. In the first part, I present, verbatim, the Sikh Coalition's "Sikhs in America" statement. In the second part, I represent the statement, this time with the original text in bold format, and my critique of each sentence in italicized format. I present the Sikh Coalition's words in bold format not only

because doing so makes it easier to spot and distinguish the original text from my critique of it in italicized form, but also because I want to illustrate how boldly the Sikh Coalition makes assimilationist, anti-Black, and anti-Indigenous claims. In the third and final part of this appeal, I completely rewrite the original text of the statement, titling it after a composition from Guru Granth Sahib which poetically and playfully questions and subverts perceived social difference. In this rewriting, I make sure to contextualize Sikhs' historical and contemporary realities of racialization in the United States with those of other ethno-minorities.

II. Community Building and Community-Building

In this chapter I literally rewrite the prevailing narrative on Sikhs in the United States. My goal through this rewriting is to present a reimagination of how we (Sikhs) view ourselves as a minority community in the country. I take inspiration from the Internationalists, from among whom, Malcolm X urged Black people in the United States to see their struggles as interconnected with those of other Black people across the globe.³⁵¹ In this outlook, the power and numbers of a collective outweigh and outnumber those of the regionalized. Through this collective view, the Internationalists rhetorically ask where in the world non-white people are a minority. I echo their calling, urging Sikhs in the United States to see the pain and violence they/we witness on our bodies and buildings as connected to pain and violence Arabs, Muslims, and other “Muslim-looking” people are subject to under the workings of this white supremacist world.

Actively seeking (*Sikh-ing*, in essence) this kind of interconnectivity, the kind that conjoins while still acknowledging differences in histories and struggles, is of crucial importance

³⁵¹ Sohail Daulatzai, *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom Beyond America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 110.

for two reasons. One, it protects from becoming overwhelmed and paralyzed from seeing (and writing about) white supremacist hate violence, and two, it strengthens advocacy work by making it genuinely coalitional. White supremacist hate violence, whether based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or sexuality, is the disease, and community-building is the antidote and immunity. My dissertation's focus on bodies and building culminates here, as I argue that just as *gurdwaras* are community buildings, seeing the interconnectivity of struggles with hate violence is true community-building.

III. From Revolution to Assimilation

Since the first known hate crime faced by Sikhs in the United States after 9/11, Sikh advocacy has shaped itself as a champion of raising awareness on Sikhs. All the years of work of educating non-Sikhs about Sikhs, including policy work and lawsuits to battle workplace- and school-based discrimination, culminated to the moments immediately after the shootings at a *gurdwara* in Wisconsin. A white supremacist had killed six Sikhs on Sunday, August 5, 2012 at the Oak Creek *gurdwara*. As soon as breaking news of the event broke, the whole of the (Brown) Sikh community was on hold; *how could this happen*, especially after all the work Sikh advocacy organizations had been doing since 9/11? Why were *Sikhs* targeted in this mass shooting? Who was responsible for this horror? Why did the shooter target Sikhs, a model minority community whose most prominent (Sikh) advocates describe their community as a people who are *peace-loving, hardworking, patriotic, educated, inventors and politicians, and have served in U.S. wars?*³⁵²

³⁵² "Sikhs in America," *Sikh Coalition* (blog), accessed April 29, 2019, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/about-sikhs/sikhs-in-america/>.

I critique how, in the United States, Sikh leaders, activists, and advocacy organizations responded to the violence that Sikh people and their spaces were facing after 9/11 and after Oak Creek. How would they explain to their own people why Oak Creek happened? Following that, how would they respond to media outlets asking them to say a few words on Oak Creek and Sikhs? My analysis reveals that the first of these questions, the one of Sikh advocacy organizations explaining the reasons for Oak Creek to their own community, *was never explicitly addressed*. My analysis also reveals that Sikh advocacy organizations and community leaders have responded to hate violence faced by Sikhs as a phenomenon whose history dates to the time of the arrival of the first Sikhs in the country in the early twentieth century. While organizations like the Sikh Coalition are not wrong in pointing out that Sikhs have been discriminated against since white Americans first saw Brown Skin and turbans on this (stolen) land, the organizations' explanations falls severely short of addressing and critiquing the *main* reasons why Sikh bodies and buildings were and continue to be targeted by hate violence. Take, for instance, the Sikh Coalition's assimilationist write-up, titled "Sikhs in America:"

III.I. "Sikhs in America"

"From the time of their arrival in the late 1800s, Sikh men and women have been making notable contributions to American society. Early immigrants settled in the western frontier, where they played a major role in building America's railroads. Sikh Americans like Bhagat Singh Thind served in the U.S. military during the World Wars, and the first Asian American Congressman was a Sikh American elected to office in 1957.

The inventor of fiber optics is a Sikh American, as is the country's largest peach grower, the mayor of Charlottesville, Virginia, and Morgan Freeman's personal physician. Sikh American women continue to make diverse contributions, such as Grammy-winning artist Snatam Kaur, commercial airline pilot Arpinder Kaur, and Columbia University professor Supreet Kaur.

Despite their immense contributions to society, Sikhs continue to experience an immense amount of discrimination and hate in modern

America. The United States is unique in this regard—in most other countries around the world, people tend to be far more familiar with the Sikh tradition. Cultural and religious illiteracy, coupled with a distinct visible identity, has led to xenophobic violence against Sikhs since their arrival in America more than a century ago. Sikh Americans have been particularly vulnerable to discrimination and hate in the post-9/11 context that is rife with anti-Muslim sentiment and xenophobic violence.”³⁵³

The whole of my dissertation is a critique of the kinds of sentiments implied in the excerpt quoted above. The excerpt shows the foundation on which contemporary Sikh advocacy is based, and surely, on which future Sikh advocacy will rest. My contribution in this dissertation is to (1) present why this existing foundation is of limited service to Sikhs overall, as it goes against Sikh ethos, is anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, and Islamophobic, (2) critically analyze Sikh community development and awareness-raising programs that stem from this existing foundation, and (3) present why and how to restructure this foundation such that it is more aligned with Sikh ethos and at least cognizant of the racial order structured on anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity that Sikhs benefit from.

III.II. The Boldness of “Sikhs in America”

I’ve illustrated the above three points throughout the dissertation. Therefore, here, in this concluding chapter, rather than merely repeating those arguments, I present them between and betwixt the original text of how the most prominent Sikh advocacy organization in the U.S. presents Sikhs. The reason for my methodology here is to demonstrate the impossibility of presenting Sikhs in a positive light *without implicit Islamophobia, anti-Blackness, and anti-Indigeneity*. I’ve presented the original text in bold and my injections to it in italics in parentheses. My interjections, often mid-sentence, appear as interruptions to the original text.

³⁵³ “Sikhs in America,” *Sikh Coalition* (blog), accessed April 29, 2019, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/about-sikhs/sikhs-in-america/>.

Their appearance as interruptions is intentional, as the point here is to symbolize stopping anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, and Islamophobia *in the very moment* it is typed, read, or uttered.

The boldness of the text is symbolic as well, as it shows boldness through which these anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, and Islamophobic sentiments are made and sustained.

From the time of their arrival in the late 1800s, Sikh men and women have been making notable contributions to American society (*“American society” is not a pre-existing default; it is a construct of the obliteration of Indigenous peoples and lands*). **Early immigrants settled in the western frontier, where they played a major role in building America’s railroads** (*“Frontier” is further erasure of 20,000 years of Indigenous presence. Further, Sikh laborers in the railroad industry worked after and alongside other communities. They came after Mexican laborers in the industry in the mid-nineteenth century and worked alongside Asian ones in the early twentieth century³⁵⁴*). **Sikh Americans like Bhagat Singh Thind served in the U.S. military during the World Wars** (*Bhagat Singh Thind, who, understandably but not excusably, argued he should be considered “white” due to his “Aryan” ancestry, creating distance from Blacks and the abjection they were (and are) subject to. The U.S. military, an entity currently occupying greater than 150 countries globally, is single-handedly the greatest contributor to global environmental degradation, and an entity to whom more than 50% of the country’s annual budget is allotted, compared to around 6% each for education and healthcare. What did Thind and all others who’ve “served” through the military gain, other than post-traumatic stress disorder?*) **and the first Asian American Congressman was a Sikh American elected to office in 1957** (*Dalip Singh Saund, whose claim to this impressive accomplishment and accolade must be contextualized with the U.S.’ ban on “aliens ineligible for citizenship” up until five years prior; Asians’ ability to become citizens of the U.S. is conversely related to the country’s denial of not only citizenship but basic humanity to Blacks. Saund’s political rise owes to the continuation of the anti-Black formation of the model minority myth and amends to Civil Rights that the U.S. had to make during the Cold War, though these amends happened only on paper³⁵⁵*).

The inventor of fiber optics is a Sikh American, as is the country’s largest peach grower, the mayor of Charlottesville, Virginia, and Morgan Freeman’s personal physician (*Should Sikhs be spared being made victims of hate violence because of Narinder Singh Kapany, the “father of fiber optics,” Didar Singh Bains, California’s “peach king,”*

³⁵⁴ “Traqueros: Mexican Railroad Workers In The United States, 1870-1930,” accessed April 29, 2019, <https://www.american-rails.com/traqueros.html>.

³⁵⁵ Madeline Y. Hsu and Ellen D. Wu, “‘Smoke and Mirrors’: Conditional Inclusion, Model Minorities, and the Pre-1965 Dismantling of Asian Exclusion,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 34, no. 4 (Summer 2015): 46, <https://doi.org/10.5406/jamerethnhist.34.4.0043>.

Satyendra Singh Huja, the mayor of Charlottesville from 2008-2015, Soram Singh Khalsa, a white convert to the Sikh faith and physician to pre-sexual harassment allegations Morgan Freeman? What would Sikhs lobby around if names and accomplishments of these Sikhs did not exist or were not known?). Sikh American women continue to make diverse contributions, such as Grammy-winning artist Snatam Kaur, commercial airline pilot Arpinder Kaur, and Columbia University professor Supreet Kaur (Not unlike Sikh men's, why is there no recognition of the factors of access to higher education, fluency in English, proximity to whiteness, and upper class situation and mobility in what defines Sikh men in the United States?)

Despite their immense contributions to society, Sikhs continue to experience an immense amount of discrimination and hate in modern America *(Is the argument here that more Sikhs need to make internationally-recognized "contributions to society" in order to eliminate the "discrimination and hate" they face? Do we need more model minority Sikhs? Will there be recognition or cognizance of communities on the backs of whom Sikhs have been able to advance and excel? Is hate only a factor of "modern America?" Would there be even more hate crimes faced by Sikhs if Sikhs didn't have the likes of Bains, Kapany, Kaur, Khalsa, and Saund? Is it a criminal for Sikhs to come from a working class background? Will there be widespread reassessment on Sikh advocacy's part upon publicly acknowledging that the current fastest-growing population of undocumented people in the United States is of Indians, and in particularly, Punjabi Sikhs?³⁵⁶)* **The United States is unique in this regard — in most other countries around the world, people tend to be far more familiar with the Sikh tradition** *(Is "unique" a euphemism for racist? What does "familiarity with the Sikh tradition" guarantee? Impunity, as is the case in India after genocide of Sikhs in the 1980s and 1990s? Does "familiarity" guarantee fewer Sikh bodies and buildings being attacked, because the assailant knows who Sikhs are, and more importantly, who Sikhs are not: Muslim?)*

Cultural and religious illiteracy, coupled with a distinct visible identity, has led to xenophobic violence against Sikhs since their arrival in America more than a century ago *(Where does empire and its structures of anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, and Islamophobia fit in the implication that greater cultural cognizance of and religious literacy on Sikhs will lead to fewer attacks on Sikh bodies and buildings? With this logic, is police brutality and mass incarceration of Blacks simply a product of the legal system and its branches not having cultural and religious literacy of Blacks? Against the complete abjection of whom was anti-Asian racism of the early twentieth century based, an abjection so deeply rooted and vile that Asians were simply unfit for citizenship due to "cultural difference," not racial inferiority, as was believed to be of Blacks?)* **Sikh Americans have been particularly vulnerable to**

³⁵⁶ "India Is the Fastest-Growing Source of New Illegal Immigrants to the U.S. - India Real Time - WSJ," accessed April 29, 2019, <https://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2016/09/22/india-is-the-fastest-growing-source-of-new-illegal-immigrants-to-the-u-s/>.

discrimination and hate in the post-9/11 context that is rife with anti-Muslim sentiment and xenophobic violence (*“Anti-Muslim sentiment and xenophobic violence” do not even begin to capture the anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity on which the United States (and Canada) is founded and the Islamophobia on which the expanse of the U.S. empire is hinged. These “sentiments” existed long before 9/11. The ubiquity and the speed at which hate violence spread immediately after 9/11 speaks to how readily armed and groomed U.S. society is to harbor such sentiments.*)

No part of this summary of “Sikhs in America” sufficiently captures why Sikhs keep becoming victims of hate violence. Once the inherent and structural anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, and Islamophobia are factored out, what is left for Sikh advocacy to stand on, and on what basis? To clarify, my argument here is not that Sikh advocacy should not exist, as arguing so would mean to erase the very real struggles Sikhs do face, whether with being bullied at school, discriminated in the workplace, or beaten in the streets. Rather, my argument and my appeal for Sikh advocacy is to transform and reposition itself as advocacy for all and to fight for the rights of all people, regardless of their legal status, gender, faith, ethnicity, race, and other factors. No one organization or community of people can right all of societal wrongdoings; however, to silo interests and struggles of one’s own community as unique and distinctive is an unsustainable model. Sometimes this type of siloed advocacy happens to align with interests and struggles of others, such as Sikh advocacy on challenging bans on headcoverings coincidentally being of benefit to Muslims as well. These parallels in advocacy must be intentional, not coincidental; Sikh advocacy ought to fight for reversal of bans on headcoverings not because such bans disproportionately affect Sikhs but because such bans are deeply problematic due to their root causes being West-centric and Islamophobic.

My repetitive insistence that existing model of Sikh advocacy are unsustainable is a critique based on ethics, not finances. Sikh organizations and community leaders must be unapologetically vocal and honest not only about the *effects* of contemporary hate violence but of

its historically-founded root *causes* as well. Until and unless both the causes and effects of racist hate violence in the United States are addressed, advocacy of any kind will fall short of lasting change. This is what I mean by unsustainable, as there is only so much a community can lobby without making its appeals with and among other communities. The unsustainability of Sikh awareness-rooted advocacy is already evident: Special programs aimed at raising awareness for the general American public on who Sikhs are have two markers along the journey: 9/11 and Oak Creek. The creation and spread of Sikh awareness projects after 9/11 should have meant that something like Oak Creek would not have happened. Yet, eleven years later, Oak Creek happened, making it the second marker along the journey of Sikh awareness. The methods of raising awareness have grown between these eleven years and counting, but the language used for them has not. Does all this awareness-centered advocacy mean that Sikhs will never be subject to the kind of violence as we faced at Oak Creek? What was Sikh advocacy missing between 9/11 and Oak Creek, and what has it been missing since Oak Creek and now? What efforts and programs can Sikh organizations and community leaders execute to put an end to hate violence? Moreover, who should be tasked with curbing hate violence? Answering these questions means returning to the “Sikhs in America” text quoted earlier and reimagining and rewriting it such that it does not have implicit in it erasure of Indigenous people and Brown communities benefiting from the abjection of Blacks. I will consider this dissertation a useful contribution to the Sikh community when Sikh advocacy organizations and community leaders re-present their mission statements after self-realization of the current model’s unsustainability and problematic rationale. This re-presentation requires a much more critical look at and explicitly voicing the histories of the racial order that the United States has been historically founded on and racial terror that it sustains itself on into the present day. An effective starting

point into the work required for this re-presentation or reorientation is asking why and for whom Sikhs should feel the burden of creating awareness of their existence. The following “mission statement” is a retake on the normative and conventional narrative on “Sikhs in [North] America.” I am calling this rewriting and reimagination *Tohi Mohi, Mohi Tohi*. These four words come from a composition in Guru Granth Sahib, originally written by Bhagat Ravidas (c. 1450 - c. 1520), and they translate to “You are Me. I am You.”³⁵⁷ I take inspiration from these words because they capture what I try to illustrate earlier in this chapter (and throughout this dissertation) on the interconnectivity of both love and struggle among different peoples.

III.III. *Tohi Mohi, Mohi Tohi*

With hopes of better lives than they had as British colonial subjects in their native pre-Partition India, Sikhs began their journeys in North America towards the end of the nineteenth century as outsiders in an already racially segregated society. Ironically, while pursuing more hopeful futures in the United States and Canada, Sikhs also became complicit in the colonization of Indigenous lands that both the countries have been founded on. The Ghadar Party, a revolutionary, radical, and anti-colonial collective of South Asian immigrants based in California with chapters elsewhere in the U.S., Canada, and colonial South and Southeast Asia, vehemently agitated and fought against their social subjugation as colonial subjects in the homeland. Many Sikh immigrants also recognized their in-between placement in the racial order of the United States in which they were seen as below whites but above Blacks.

The United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind Supreme Court case from (1923) is evident of this liminal social placement and desired proximity to whiteness, as Thind unsuccessfully argued for U.S. citizenship due to him hailing from an upper caste and “aryan” background. Thind being a U.S. veteran from World War I did not help his case. Four years after Thind’s case came *Gong Lum v. Rice*, in which the plaintiff, a Chinese immigrant with a U.S.-born daughter argued she was a U.S. citizen and that she be allowed to go to the all-white school rather than the segregated one with Black children. Like Thind, Lum’s proposed

³⁵⁷ The following words in the composition pose a question, *antar kaisa?* (“What difference is there?”), followed by the line, *kanik kattik jal tarang jaisa* (“it [the difference] is like that [nonexistent one] between gold and a bracelet made of it, or of water and the waves contained in it.”) Bhagat Ravi Daas Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 93.

proximity to whiteness rested on distancing from Blackness, and the Mississippi court did not rule in his favor. We pledge to look at such cases of Asian immigrants' desire for association with whiteness both with sympathy and critique: while it is understandable that immigrant communities wanted to share in the social privileges that came with whiteness, we also remember that the system on which these privileges rest is thoroughly anti-Black. This is so because Asian immigrants' desire for proximity to whiteness implies their distancing from Blackness. Thind, after all, sought to be seen as "aryan," rather than as a person of color like his Asian, Black, and Indigenous contemporaries.

While it is true that many Sikh immigrants in the United States are recognized for their contributions in the fields like agriculture, engineering, medicine, and public service, to use them as poster children of how Sikhs overall are a "model minority" is problematic for a number of reasons: doing so is anti-Black, as the "model minority" narrative does not account for structural inequalities that keep Blacks from having the same access to educational and professional opportunities as others have. Further, the narrative of Sikhs as "model minorities" not only erases poor, working class, and undocumented Sikhs out of the picture, but denies their existence altogether. We demand immediate termination of Sikhs' (self-) association as a model minority community and urge Sikhs who do identify with this label to critically analyze how their success is made possible through the abjection of others.

While "model minority" Sikhs may often be in the limelight for their professional accomplishments, we are far more often in the news for another reason: white supremacist Islamophobic hate violence. Sikhs become victims of such violence for the same reasons that our Arab, Hindu, and Muslim siblings do—anti-Muslim rhetoric in the public sphere and anti-Muslim legislation in the political sphere; the ongoing, inexplicable, reasonless, and catastrophic U.S. military occupation in countries with significant Muslim populations, and the consequential atmosphere within the military of extreme hate for Muslims and Islam. Contemporary Sikh advocacy organizations have tried to address hate violence in the United States through initiatives that raise awareness on Sikhs. We see that as misguided work, as simply raising awareness on who Sikhs are presents hate violence as merely an individual problem rather than a systemic one. Further, we vehemently disagree with the kind of advocacy that only advances Sikh interests, as Sikhs are one of the multiple communities affected by white supremacist Islamophobic hate violence.

Based on Sikh ethos found in Gurbani and Sikh history, we encourage Sikh individuals, leaders, and organizations to view struggles they face in the United States (and in other parts of the world of colonized Indigenous lands) through a shared, collective lens. For instance, concerns of Sikh children, particularly boys, bullied in schools due to their headcoverings ought to be addressed with and in relation to cases of Indigenous boys being bullied and forced to cut their long hair. The small but extremely vocal segment of nationalist Sikhs who believe in having a Sikh

homeland ought to identify their struggles and motivations with other populations across the globe who have lost their territories to land grab by colonization, capitalism, and imperialism. Sikhs targeted with Islamophobic hate violence ought to be contextualized with such violence as experienced by other communities, particularly Muslims. Sikh demands for more fair treatment in the public sphere, such as of not being secondarily scrutinized in airport security lines and of facing real estate racism, ought not only to see these as shared struggles but also ought to show up for and support public demonstrations, protests, and political demands by other ethnic groups disproportionately affected by these kinds of systemically and institutionally discriminatory policies. In conclusion, keeping in mind the power relations ingrained in society due to (neo)colonization and imperialism, we strive to see the challenges we face not as “Sikh struggles,” but as struggles, period. We strongly feel that this intimacy of shared struggle is essential to being and living as *Ik Oankar*.

The above is an exercise of a radical reimagination of the “Sikhs in America” write-up by the Sikh Coalition. By no means is this reimagination perfect, as fellow Sikhs reading the above will have much more to add. At the same time, this reimagination is not impossible, either. I conclude my dissertation with the hope that Sikhs in the United States engage with radical reimaginings of their own. In reality, the above is not really a radical reimagination; it is a reworking of the current, perverse order. This reimagination is more so a reawakening, as it brings to surface in English the radical spirit and revolutionary calling already part of Sikh thought in the form of Gurbani. Through the latter, I have merely re-presented in *Tohi Mohi, Mohi Tohi* what is amiss in “Sikhs in America.”

IV. Conclusion: In Search of *Sudh*

Readers will notice that I am much more vocal about anti-Blackness (and anti-Indigeneity) in this concluding chapter than I am in previous ones. This vocalization may even come across as a late awakening, and that’s because it is. I was privileged enough to be a Teaching Assistant for my last quarter as a student at the University of California, Irvine, for Professor Claire Jean Kim’s class, *Asian Americans and Race*. Though I came in to the class

with more general knowledge of the topics on the class' syllabus, much of the specific content of the class has been as much a learning curve as it has been for undergraduate students in the class. In the weekly discussion section for the class, some of the students in my class asked why the professor spends so much time talking about African Americans in a class on *Asian Americans*. As the weeks unfolded, the answer to this question became self-evident: *because society is structured on anti-Blackness*, and regardless of how “woke” one is, being non-Black means to benefit from a racial order that constantly abjects Blackness.

Though this is the concluding chapter of my dissertation, it is not the end of the development of ideas therein. I have much left to learn from Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies, Black Studies, Critical Race Studies, Indigenous Studies, and Sikh Studies. To honor this idea of learning being an ongoing journey, I take inspiration from *sudh* (alternate spelling of *shudh*), a historical textual tradition from South Asia and a word with multiple meanings in Gurbani. As an adjective, the word means “perfect,” or “pure” and as a verb, “to perfect.” In literary tradition, while editing, the author or editor would write *sudh* at the end of a section in a manuscripts to indicate that the work has been revised. In the context of Gurbani, the word also means awareness. My interpretation of these two meanings of *sudh* in Gurbani is that the process of transforming thoughts into writing is a matter of ever-growing and ever-changing awareness.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁸ Further, the word *sudhar* comes from *sudh*, and it means reform or improvement. *Sudhar* also has particular valence in Sikh history during the time of British colonization of South Asia. Between 1920 and 1925, Sikhs in South Asia, as well as ones who had, on demands of the British empire, migrated to Southeast Asia and Eastern Africa, began the *Gurdwara Sudhar Lehar* (“Gurdwara reform wave”), known in English as the Gurdwara Reform Movement. A key motive of the *Lehar* was for reasserting control of *gurdwara* properties in present-day India and Pakistan in Sikh hands rather than those of colonial officers and upper caste and exploitative Hindu priests. The *Lehar* was changed the literal form and structure of *gurdwaras* in the subcontinent. Contemporary *gurdwaras* come from the lineage of the *sudhar* of the 1920s. Though I am not focusing on the *Lehar* in this project, I want to acknowledge that contemporary *gurdwaras* across the world come from the lineage of changes instituted by Sikhs in the 1920s.

While my dissertation is coming to an end, the thought exercises it has provoked will outlast these pages. By no means is this project finished: I have much yet to read, learn and unlearn, including within this dissertation. I have much yet to consider, because the social hierarchies of the world mean there will be more hate violence on bodies and buildings, and that means there will be more memorial 6Ks, parks, museums, awareness campaigns, and so forth. Therefore, I wish to conclude by acknowledging *sudh* in three senses. In a communal sense, the programs and content by Sikh organizations (especially the Sikh Coalition) that I have critiqued are undergoing change and transformation, *sudh*, by the organizations themselves. In an institutional sense, my dissertation has come to a finish. Lastly, in a personal sense, my thinking is also under transformation as I learn more; it is in search of *sudh*.

Epilogue

Ungovernable and Inviolable: Acts of Resistance In and Against Immigrant Detention

I. Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have critiqued how and why Sikhs in the United States become targets of hate violence and how, as a possible solution to curbing this violence, Sikh advocacy organizations present Sikhs as model minorities who are thus undeserving of the hate they receive. This Epilogue is about *unmodel minorities*—Sikhs who, due to their cultural, political, and social circumstances, are not only the opposite of elite model minority Sikhs, but ones whose circumstances put them off the chart of “Sikhs in America.”³⁵⁹

Research on immigration trends in the United States shows that Asians are the fastest-growing group of undocumented people.³⁶⁰ The research also shows that between 1990-2015, India was the topmost country from which undocumented people were coming to the U.S., with China, the Philippines, and Korea following respectively.³⁶¹ Sikh advocacy organizations quantify socioeconomic differences of Sikhs in the United States and present certain statistics as proof of Sikhs being model minorities.³⁶² However, they do not present statistics on how many

³⁵⁹ “Sikhs in America,” *Sikh Coalition* (blog), accessed April 29, 2019, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/about-sikhs/sikhs-in-america/>.

³⁶⁰ Soo Mee Kim and Aggie J. Yellow Horse, “Undocumented Asians, Left in the Shadows,” *Contexts* 17, no. 4 (November 1, 2018): 70, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504218812875>.

³⁶¹ Kim and Yellow Horse, 71.

³⁶² For instance, in February 2019, the National Sikh Campaign (NSC) sent an email announcement on the release of its work on “the first demographic research report on Sikh Americans in history.” The NSC explains in the email that this report “...is the first of its kind and is imperative to better understand the lives of Sikh Americans and the challenges they may face with discrimination, bias and hate. The announcement aggressively presents Sikhs as ultra-model minorities. Without revealing details on “the sample population” based on whom the NSC gathered this data, the email presents that, “The sample population had higher levels of educational attainment than the average American with a majority (53%) having received a college degree, compared to 40% of the general public” and that “74% of individuals in our research earned more than \$50,000 per year.” Interestingly, while the report emphasizes how much more educated the sample population of Sikhs is in contrast to the “the general public,” there is no such contextualization for the report’s numbers on the average number for individual income. More than likely, the reason for the NSC omitting that contextualization is because its sample population’s individual income is more than \$11,000 below the national average of \$61,372.

Sikhs are undocumented or how many are on the long paths to citizenship, as these data points hinder the organizations' representations of Sikhs as model minorities.

The reason I write this Epilogue is twofold. It is a personal reflection on my volunteer work with Sikhs in immigrant detention, and it is a community appeal (to Sikhs and non-Sikhs) to not take the “Detention Industrial Complex” as a given but to see it as a strategically-constructed structure of power that, when microanalyzed and understood, *can* be challenged. In fact, the stories I share below demonstrate not only that the structure of immigrant detention *can* be challenged but that *it is* being challenged.

I have organized this Epilogue into three parts: the first part is on my analysis and critique of formal structures of control that structure immigrant detention centers. I examine statistical data on detention and microanalyze it to deconstruct what sustains the Detention Industrial Complex. The second part is on resistance work done from outside of immigrant detention. Here I present details of volunteer work that my friends and I have done to provide material resources to detained individuals. In this third part, I present some stories that detained individuals shared with my volunteer group and myself. These stories partly capture how those in detention have found ways to challenge and resist the dehumanizing conditions they are forced to be in.

I juxtapose the two parts—formal structures of control and informal structures of resistance—with the goal of showing how, on the one hand, the walls, both literal and metaphorical, of the Detention Industrial Complex (DIC) may seem impermeable, and on the

National Sikh Campaign, “The First Demographic Profile on Sikh Americans,” February 12, 2019; Lorie Konish, “US Median Household Income Climbs to New High of \$61,372,” *CNBC*, September 12, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/09/12/median-household-income-climbs-to-new-high-of-61372.html>.

other hand, individuals within and outside those walls and ones on the outside fighting to tear down the structures (again, literal and metaphorical), *have* found ways to resist.³⁶³

My dissertation and activism beyond it is inspired by and dedicated to all those who do the resisting, including to those for whom simply existing is resisting. As my friend who is training to be an immigrant rights lawyer says, those of us doing the work of calling out the state for its inhumane acts and policies know very well that we are under surveillance. Our resistance, she says, is us telling the state, *we are watching you back*.³⁶⁴ The material I am presenting here is a stern gaze back at the state.

II. Formal Structures of Control

My argument regarding the formal structures of control under which spaces like immigrant detention are created. Understanding the Detention Industrial Complex (DIC) means to microanalyze every material aspect of its existence; in other words, microanalysis of those connections and webs that enable these spaces to be built and function. Here I present only provocations of one aspect of this microanalysis: their built environment. I also illustrate how, once spaces of confinement are stripped of the material and logistical details that enable them to operate, all that is left of the DIC is capitalist greed. Immigrant detention centers *exist* because of

³⁶³ As I write this, prison and detention abolition activists mourn the death of Will Van Spronsen, an anarchist man who, around 4 A.M. on July 14, 2019, attempted to release detained immigrants at a detention center in Olympia, Washington. News reports describe that “...Will attempted to set fire to several vehicles, outbuildings and a propane tank outside the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma which houses hundreds of immigrants awaiting hearings or deportations. He successfully set one vehicle on fire and then exchanged gunfire with Tacoma police officers who fatally shot him. He was pronounced dead on the scene...The vehicles outside the detention facility are used to forcibly remove people from their homes and deport them, often to situations where they will face severe danger or death.” “We Are The Fire That Will Melt ICE – Rest in Power, Will Van Spronsen,” *Anarchist News*, July 14, 2019, <https://anarchistnews.org/content/we-are-fire-will-melt-ice-%E2%80%93-rest-power-will-van-spronsen-olympia-wa>. <https://anarchistnews.org/content/we-are-fire-will-melt-ice-%E2%80%93-rest-power-will-van-spronsen-olympia-wa>

³⁶⁴ My thanks to “Renegade Kaur,” who shared this idea on a conference panel she organized on activist work surrounding immigrant detention.

the state's desire to control and curb so-called influxes of migrants, but they *thrive* because detained bodies fulfill the business contracts between their host states and private corporations.³⁶⁵

II.I. First Visit to an Immigrant Detention Center

Upon my first visit at an immigrant detention center in 2017, I was immediately struck by how tightly controlled every inch of the facility was. There were multiple doors to get through to enter the corridor leading to the dormitories where detained individuals were (and continue to be) caged; the locking and unlocking of each of these doors required pressing a button (while being under surveillance by cameras above) and waiting a few seconds until, out of our sight, someone in the control room viewing the camera footage permitted or denied entry. My fellow volunteers and I were chaperoned by the facility's guards, even for bathroom trips.

The small group of us who were at the facility had to submit forms to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), who performed background checks on us before permitting us to go to the facility. While those of us on the "outside" were subject to security and surveillance prior to even arriving at the facility for the four hours of clearance we had, detained individuals therein are subject to much more rigorous security and surveillance. My first sense of this was upon seeing a long, single file row of mostly South Asian men walking down the corridor, being led by security to the outside sports area of the facility. I learned later in the day that of the over 700 bodies that facility can contain, more than half were South Asian Men, of whom, most were East Punjabi. All the men had been instructed to keep their arms above their heads. Each of the

³⁶⁵ Lara Witt, "These Are The Companies Profiting From Detaining Migrants At Border Concentration Camps," *Wear Your Voice. Intersectional Feminist Media*, June 26, 2019, <https://wearyourvoicemag.com/news-politics/companies-profit-migrants-detention>.

detained men was in uniform, most in dark blue, some in orange. The uniform colors they were wearing indicated the level of perceived offense they were in detention for—blue for being undocumented, orange for being undocumented and having committed petty crimes. We later learned there's a third uniform color: red, reserved for undocumented serious criminals.

It was upon seeing the roboticized row of people that my mind became hyperaware and went into microanalysis of the space I was in. I noticed the uniformity of the uniforms: the men were wearing identical slip-on shoes, identical socks, and identical white undershirts. This was deliberately and strategically organized uniformity, implying what became unavoidably obvious—that there are formal connections and contracts between ICE, private corporation running the detention facility, the city in which that detention center is located, and the suppliers of these uniform items. Someone (an individual or business entity), somewhere, at some point, consciously *agreed* to create a business contract with the private corporation. Given my background in the study of built environments, I found myself silently wondering and questioning matters of brick and mortar of the space we were in. Who *agreed* to supply the concrete blocks, barbed wire fence, paint, doors, windows, and flooring? Who, in good conscience, *agreed* to supply and install cages and tents in which migrant children are contained? Who is benefitting from supplying and equipping these brick and mortar, and canvas structures with surveillance gear? Who supplies and manages workers in these spaces? Which commercial and private airlines and ground services transport migrants between detention centers and for deportations?

All of the above questions seem obvious and perhaps even redundant to ask. However, the reason I raise them explicitly is to remind ourselves that the DIC is neither self-reliant, no pre-existing; its existence depends largely on an *identifiable* number of facilitators—contractors,

builders, staffing agencies, banks, and a host of other business service providers. Without the consolidation of these factors, the DIC as a construct is virtually powerless. Thus, when we resist and protest immigrant detention, we must also pay heed to the other tangible details that sustain detention centers: the uniform suppliers, construction material suppliers and builders, surveillance providers, and staffing agencies (I discuss the latter in some more detail later in this epilogue).

II.II. Capitalizing by Dehumanizing

Other scholars and activists have already done groundbreaking work on the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) and its “carceral geographies.”³⁶⁶ Work produced on the PIC shows the deep connections between the surge in prisons and detention centers, capitalist gain being foundational to them both, with racialized Black and Brown bodies being caught in the crossfire. Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s words are fitting here: “Capitalism requires inequality, and racism enshrines it,” who further argues that “four surpluses” enabled the expansion of the PIC in California in particular.³⁶⁷ These surpluses are land, labor, capital, and the state’s organization of these three into prisons.³⁶⁸ This idea carries over to the DIC as well, as these four surpluses are also at the foundation of detention centers.

In terms of capital, the numbers are astounding: two corporations that run a majority of the detention centers, made \$985 million through contracts with ICE in 2017.³⁶⁹ “ICE and the

³⁶⁶ Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2017); Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10779285>. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10779285>Hernández, *City of Inmates*

³⁶⁷ Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, 57.

³⁶⁸ Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*.

³⁶⁹ Livia Luan, “Profiting from Enforcement: The Role of Private Prisons in U.S. Immigration Detention,” [migrationpolicy.org](https://www.migrationpolicy.org), April 30, 2018, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/profitting-enforcement-role-private-prisons-us-immigration-detention>.

U.S. Marshals Service pay GEO \$32 million a year to house, feed and provide medical care for a thousand detainees.”³⁷⁰ This breaks down to about \$145 per detained individual, per day.³⁷¹ Migrants who choose to work in detention facilities earn \$1 per day for a full day’s worth of work (in food prep, housekeeping, etc.). In 2018, ICE detained an average of 39,322 people every day; by the end of 2018, this figure was at its highest at 44,000 people per day.³⁷² These figures correlate to contracts between ICE and corporations that mandate (“detention bed mandate”) that, on any given day, 34,000 beds over about 250 facilities must be filled every day.³⁷³ ICE refers to such statistics based on numbers of beds, not people.³⁷⁴ This creates further dehumanization and abjection of migrants and detained individuals, relegating the prevailing sentiment being of the “migration to detention” pipeline.

II.III. Exceptions to International Standards

There is yet another type of statistic I want to focus on. According to the International Building Code (IBC), a set of mandates that builders must abide by, a window in a home or work space must be at least twenty inches wide for it to be considered safe and humane. The IBC details minimum standards for sizes of all the parts that make up the built environment of residential and commercial buildings. What I observed during a protest outside a large detention center in an urban area, however, was that this purportedly universal code does not apply to

³⁷⁰ “Big Money As Private Immigrant Jails Boom,” NPR.org, accessed April 20, 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2017/11/21/565318778/big-money-as-private-immigrant-jails-boom>

³⁷¹ “Detention Map & Statistics,” Freedom for Immigrants, accessed July 15, 2019, <https://www.freedomforimmigrants.org/detention-statistics>

³⁷² “ICE Released Its Most Comprehensive Immigration Detention Data yet. It’s Alarming.,” National Immigrant Justice Center, accessed April 20, 2019, <https://immigrantjustice.org/staff/blog/ice-released-its-most-comprehensive-immigration-detention-data-yet>; “ICE Is Imprisoning a Record 44,000 People,” accessed April 20, 2019, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/ice-is-imprisoning-a-record-44000-people>.

³⁷³ “Little-Known Immigration Mandate Keeps Detention Beds Full,” NPR.org, accessed April 20, 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2013/11/19/245968601/little-known-immigration-mandate-keeps-detention-beds-full>.

³⁷⁴ “ICE Is Imprisoning a Record 44,000 People.”

spaces of confinement. The windows at that particular building appeared to be no more than twelve inches wide and three feet high, secured with metal bars on the exterior, a measure of control over the incarcerated and detained people therein. In these spaces, the purported universality of humanity and well-being does not appear to apply to detained and incarcerated people.

This double standard in building code requirements calls into question other double standards in how spaces of confinement are built and operate. For instance, from visits to several immigrant detention centers, I learned that individuals caged therein only have three to four hours of outdoors time per day, weather-permitting. They also have a number of bodily checks for contraband (including upon leaving outdoor activity time to go back inside). During my first visit, when I noticed the long row of uniformed men, I also noticed an overflowing container filled with mistreatment complaint forms; the container was installed outside one of the offices located in that hallway. I also noticed that *none* of the over 300 detained individuals we saw during the *kirtan darbar* were overweight, signaling the overall undernourishment at the detention facility. Three daily meals are given at fixed times, with breakfast beginning at six A.M.

Somehow, there appears to be a strong sense of community among many detained individuals. This unity is further surprising given the host of issues at detention centers that activists, journalists, and immigration lawyers have been highlighting: medical malpractice and medical neglect or under-treatment under ICE.³⁷⁵ A major resistance by detained individuals to this type of treatment has been hunger strikes; fearing severe medical issues or even death, staff

³⁷⁵ “The War On Immigrants: Shocking Medical Conditions In Immigration Detention,” New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, January 24, 2019, <https://nylpi.org/the-war-on-immigrants-shocking-medical-conditions-in-immigration-detention/>.

at some detention centers have nonconsensually and painfully fed the individuals by force.³⁷⁶ There are also reports of pregnant detained women not receiving medical attention, especially when they have asked for it, leading to many having miscarriages, as well as suicide and suicide attempts by some detained individuals.³⁷⁷ These types of horrors make up the everyday world of immigrant detention centers. While news media has already highlighted the above incidents, what is often missing from such reports are details on how people caged in these spaces try to survive day by day through small acts of resistance and hope. This is a key reason why I juxtapose discussion on formal structures of control with informal structures of resistance. This juxtaposition is a looking back at the state.

III. Project Ghar Baahar

My research on immigrant detention is not limited to only reading about it. While in the midst of writing my dissertation, I had the chance to take an active part in helping detained individuals secure material resources. In early 2017 I learned about volunteer work my friend Naam (pseudonym) had been doing in California to provide material resources to Sikhs in immigrant detention. Upon hearing about the mistreatment of detained individuals, Naam decided to visit the detention center close to his house to inquire if there were any Sikhs detained therein, and if so, whether he could offer any help.³⁷⁸ Naam learned that there were, indeed,

³⁷⁶ Margaret Brown Vega and Nathan Craig, "'A New Horror': Sikh Men Go on Hunger Strike in ICE Custody," *The Nation*, March 7, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/ice-hunger-strike-el-paso/>.

³⁷⁷ Scott Bixby, "Immigrant Miscarriages in ICE Detention Have Nearly Doubled Under Trump," *The Daily Beast*, March 1, 2019, sec. politics, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/immigrant-miscarriages-in-ice-detention-have-nearly-doubled-under-trump>; Lea Ceasrine, "Dozens of ICE Detainees Have Been Placed on Suicide Watch in a New Jersey Facility," Documented. Immigration as it Matters to New Yorkers, April 17, 2019, <https://documentedny.com/2019/04/17/dozens-of-ice-detainees-placed-on-suicide-watch-in-a-new-jersey-facility/>.

³⁷⁸ I insist on writing "detained individuals," rather than "detainees," as this small gesture attempts to preserve some individuality for the people. As I discuss further in this epilogue, detained people's sense of individuality is stripped from them through mandatory uniforms, assignment of their asylum or refugee cases first by numbers and only then names, and hyperstructured living according to set daily schedules in spaces of confinement.

several Sikhs at that detention center. He was informed by the Chaplain at that detention center that Sikh detained individuals had requested items like *karas* (metal bangles), turban fabric, *gutkas* (Sikh prayerbooks), and print materials (books and newspapers in particular) in Punjabi. At that time, that detention center confiscated incoming Sikh detained individuals' *karas*, and other centers confiscated *karas* and turbans. Administration at some detention centers feared turbans might be misused for asphyxiation or other forms of (self-) harm.

Naam mobilized as rapidly as possible, and within a few days, he secured donations by Sikhs of all requested materials by the detained individuals, including clothing donations for all detained individuals (Sikh and non-Sikh) to have upon release. Now, nearly two years since Naam's initial inquiry at his local detention center, he has made weekly trips to take material resources to that particular location, as well as organized multiple trips with other Sikh volunteers who visit the larger detention centers on a quarterly basis. These quarterly trips consist of hundreds of units of turban material, meditation beads (in lieu of *karas*, as the latter are prohibited at those detention centers), *gutkas*, printed material in Punjabi and other languages requested by detained individuals, and a *kirtan divan* (devotional singing program) put on by the volunteers.

To more systematically raise funds for purchasing materials requested by detained individuals, as well as to educate Sikhs in the United States on the struggles of *unmodel minorities*, our volunteer group created a crowdfunding page on Dasvandh Network (DVN), a Sikh-run online fundraising platform. We titled the initiative Project Ghar Baahar, *ghar baahar* being reference to a composition in Guru Granth Sahib on the idea of the Divine being present among and protective of all at "home" (*ghar*) and "outside" (*baahar*).³⁷⁹ As we explain in the

³⁷⁹ Guru Granth Sahib, 677; "Project Ghar Baahar," Dasvandh Network, accessed July 15, 2019, <https://www.dvnetwork.org/projects/project-ghar-baahar>.

project description of the crowdfunding page, we see the idea of *ghar baahar* as comforting and generative, being mindful of the long and dangerous journeys migrants take when they leave their homes to find newer ones outside.³⁸⁰

IV. Informal Structures of Resistance

In the following paragraphs, I present stories that some of the detained individuals shared with our volunteer group. I also present my experiences of co-organizing and volunteering for several *seva* (selfless service) trips that Naam initiated between 2017 and 2019.³⁸¹ I am sharing the stories of detained individuals anonymously, with their consent, and by omitting identifiable information. As per legal advice from attorneys who are part of our volunteer group, we did not solicit information on why the Punjabi Sikh detained individuals we met with left their homes in India to embark on dangerous journeys to reach the U.S. However, some of the detained individuals unsolicitedly shared that they were escaping political persecution, while others shared that they left India for better socioeconomic prospects.³⁸²

³⁸⁰ “Project Ghar Baahar.”

³⁸¹ Due to the politically and legally sensitive nature of this work, I am not sharing names of detained individuals I had a chance to speak with, nor of the exact locations I volunteered at.

³⁸² Though my purpose in this epilogue is not to explain why East Punjabis (Sikh and otherwise) are leaving their homes to migrate to the U.S., it is important to mention that American imperialism a major factor contributing to this phenomenon. U.S. imperialism, in the form of agro-capitalism, in East Punjab (and elsewhere in India) is directly responsible for creating adverse conditions that have affected multiple generations. The history of the spread of American imperialism into Punjab is long and complicated. In short, since the 1950s, American corporations like Monsanto and DuPont have been using East Punjab’s largely agrarian environment by selling genetically modified, foreign seeds to farmers. The ongoing effects of this “Green Revolution” have been devastating, as these seeds require large amounts of water, an already scarce resource in Punjab due to its government diverting river water into neighboring states. The foreign seeds also require extensive use of pesticides, chemicals from which damage farmland and groundwater. The foreign seeds demand higher volumes of water to harvest, a demand which can only be met if farmers install new irrigation methods, which themselves are not only an added cost but also deplete groundwater. When these factors are put together, the Green Revolution means farms accumulate to extensive debt that burdens their families over multiple generations. With governmental mismanagement in dictating much harvest is worth and where it goes (and where it does not), farmers are left with insurmountable stress, the financial aspect of which has led to thousands of farmers in Punjab (and elsewhere in India where the Green Revolution was proposed) to take their own lives. The high cost of education, substance abuse and addiction, caste hierarchy, and collapse of traditional forms of small-scale businesses being replaced with franchise ownership as per the U.S.

As per my own experience, the stress and helplessness the detained individuals express also inadvertently ends up transferring as “vicarious trauma” to those listening to, reading, and writing about these stories. In this epilogue, I share stories that provide some respite, if only momentarily, to that feeling of stress and helplessness. I structure the content of this epilogue into two parts: formal structures of control in immigrant detention centers, and some anecdotes of informal structures of resistance from three immigrant detention centers on the west coast of the United States.

I share the below anecdotes from inside detention centers with an assumption and hope. The assumption is that I trust that those reading or hearing this material will not misuse this information in a way that will compromise the ability of detained individuals to create these small moments of joy for themselves and for their fellow detained individuals. The hope is that these anecdotes will provide some psychological respite for us who are suffering from vicarious trauma of working, organizing, protesting, and writing in support of migrants. My hope is that these anecdotes will serve as an antidote to the chimera of the omnipotence of the (Prison and)

capitalist model are also serious factors that leave poor, working class Punjabis with few options but to “get out” any way they can.

For the sake of brevity and to remain focused on immigrant detention, I have summarized the above very broadly and briefly. By placing the above information in a footnote rather than in the main text, I do not mean to minimize the seriousness of these various interrelated factors plaguing Punjab right now.

Francine R. Frankel, *India's Green Revolution: Economic Gains and Political Costs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); Sucha S Gill, “Economic Distress and Farmer Suicides in Rural Punjab,” *Journal of Punjab Studies* 12, no. 2 (2005): 219–37; Shveta Pathak, “Harvest of Debt,” *Tribune India*, August 6, 2006, <https://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20060806/spectrum/main1.htm>; Vandana Shiva, *The Violence of Green Revolution: Third World Agriculture, Ecology and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Vandana Shiva, *Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution and Profit* (London: Pluto Press, 2002); Vandana Shiva and Kunwar Jalees, *Seeds of Suicide: The Ecological and Human Costs of Seed Monopolies and Globalisation of Agriculture* (New Delhi: Navdanya, 2006).

My thanks to the individuals in detention who shared with me personal stories and more details on these factors. The individuals I had a chance to speak with used the Punjabi phrase *bahar jana*, which translates to “going out [abroad].”

Detention Industrial Complex. Formal structures of power will force have us believing that the horrors of the PIC and the DIC are here to stay; informal of resistance are compelling us to see that spirit of being ungovernable, inviolable, and sovereign in action. It is precisely this spirit that, in the past, has led to effective labor unions, abolition of slavery (on paper), cross-cultural and cross-racial coalitions, intersectional solidarity, and anti-war movements and protests. I invite you to, if only briefly, inhabit the little-known world of resistance *in* contemporary migration and immigrant detention and to *dil halka karna* (“lightening the [weight felt in one’s] heart”). I am intentionally presenting some of these moments in prose.

IV.I. *“Detention centers and prisons are sites of such bad vibes.”*

These were my words and feelings upon driving back from a visit to a detention center. I was in the car with a fellow volunteer, a woman of faith, who countered my view with the most hope I had felt in months. She said, *“No. Detention centers, prisons, and even hospitals, are sites of intense prayer and faith. Imagine how much bhagti (devotion) happens in these spaces.”* She is right. This spirit was evident in the feel and flow flow of the *kirtan darbars* we had with the detained individuals. These *darbars* were less religious than they were spiritual; over the three or four times we’ve organized these *darbars*, each time, detained individuals have not only joined but *led* the *darbars* (through devotional singing, playing harmonium and *tabla* (drums), including by non-Sikh detained individuals, especially the donning of cloth material we took in as turbans but was wrapped by some detained women from Africa in the manner of *their* traditions of headcoverings.

IV.II. *Rakhi*

The Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu term literally translates to “protection” and refers to a holiday celebrated in various parts of South Asia. Sisters or female cousins tie *rakhis* (special bracelets made of thread and beads, made or purchased specifically for the holiday) on their brothers’ and male cousins’ wrists and in turn receive gifts, usually money, from the males. This exchange symbolizes that the brothers and male cousins will always look after their sisters and female cousins. During a visit to a detention center in, one of the hundreds of young Punjabi men held therein asked me to tie a *rakhi* on his wrist. He referred to me as *didi* (older sister), and took a thread strand from the turban cloth he was picked from the turban donations we took in. Due to ethical reasons and legal constraints, I did not ask the young man his name. My new younger brother and I celebrated a bond of siblinghood established within mere seconds. After that point, it became difficult to spot him, as he merged among the crowd of hundreds of other Punjabi Sikh detained individuals, all of whom were in uniform and were being instructed to line up to head back to their detention dorm rooms. Given the unpredictable fate of detained individuals, it is unlikely that that my new younger brother I will ever cross paths again. Even in such a tightly controlled environment, the young man found a way to celebrate and find meaning.

IV.III. *Jaikarey* (“war cries”)

In the Sikh tradition, singing or shouting *jaikarey* is a way to express solidarity with and embodiment with whatever is being honored and celebrated. The idea comes from martial traditions within Sikh culture, particularly from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries in South Asia. Today, *jaikarey* are commonly heard at *gurdwaras* (Sikh places of faith) and at special events. The typical *jaikara* consists of one person shouting [*Jo*] *bolay so nihai*, with

people responding with, *Sat Sri Akaal* (all together, the *jaikara* roughly translates to, [Whoever] speaks/says [this *jaikara*] is exalted; the Supreme Timeless Being is True). Raising and responding to a *jaikara* means to affirm one's individual and community-collective presence, especially in tough times and circumstances. To use today's parlance, *jaikarey* are a form of self-care through community. A formerly detained individual I had a chance to speak with shared that, whenever a fellow Punjabi Sikh man had received news of being released due to winning an asylum case, the whole of the dormitory (which housed over 70 people) broke out into *jaikarey* to celebrate the long-awaited news. Though the victory was individual, its effect was collective.

As artist, architect, and activist Tings Chak discusses and illustrates in her book, *Undocumented: The Architecture of Migrant Detention*, there is no concept of time for those in detention.³⁸³ The men released from detention whom I had conversations with expressed the same sentiments, adding that minutes seem like hours, and the hours seem like days. Time is still somewhat predictable for those with legal representation and pending cases of asylum, as they have scheduled dates for court appearances and attorney visits. For others who have no legal representation, time is meaningless, as they live in limbo, not knowing what the next day or the next year holds for them. The man I had a chance to speak with shared that, every victory, big and small, becomes a shared experience when in detention. He added that, whenever the much-awaited news of a detained individual being released on bond came, everyone in that dormitory of detained individuals celebrated, while wondering when it will be *time* for their turn. Through these ways of informal resistance and celebration therein, these detained individuals became one another's sanctuary.

³⁸³ Tings Chak, *Undocumented: The Architecture of Migrant Detention* (Architecture Observer, 2014).

IV.IV. Birthdays

Keeping track of time while in detention is itself torturous. The same man as from the previous anecdote shared that since him and his friends signed up to work in food preparation and clean up in the kitchen at the facility, they had access to cooking materials and kitchen tools. Baking a cake was out of the question, especially since doing so inconspicuously was close to impossible. The fear of reprimand for making something not part of the official menu was likely another factor in the decision to not bake a cake. So, him and his friends celebrated a fellow detained individual's birthday by creating a makeshift cake. He said that the cake's consistency was like that of *karah parshad* ("pudding" distributed to all those who visit a *gurdwara*). The "cake" was made of crackers or cookies, mixed into melted butter, milk, and sugar. The man who was sharing this anecdote with me had been released from detention just the day prior. He had spent several months being shuffled from one detention center to another. These memories were fresh in his mind, and he shared a sense of joy when recalling these memories. By the time this conversation was coming to an end, the young man looked up at the night sky and said, *Didi, kinna chir ho geya taarey ni dekhey* (roughly translated, "Sister, it has been so long since I have seen stars").

IV.V. *Haunsla Rakho* ("keep perseverance/strength/courage")

After a conversation with a released detained individual, one of the men from our small group of volunteers shared this anecdote with the rest of us: The man said that during his journey of migration from East Punjab to the U.S.-Mexico border, he crossed over six or so countries through various means (via air, on foot, and on water). Along the treacherous routes, likely some of the same routes used for human trafficking, he met with fellow migrants and others who are paid facilitators in this particular migration pipeline. Through these paid informants, he learned

of what to say and what not to say when encountering border checkpoints throughout his journey. He also said that some of the soldiers in the block of countries he traveled through helped him along his journey. This man mentioned that, in the prison cells in Mexico, where him and many migrants like himself are temporarily held, he found encouraging messages that were etched into the walls by those who were previously contained in the cells. These messages, he said, were written in Punjabi and Hindi. The messages encouraged those who were reading them to stay hopeful. The messages said things like, *Haunsla rakho* and other messages saying to not worry, and that “you will be released soon.” These messages are reminiscent of the wall etchings found at Angel Island by Chinese immigrants detained therein in the early twentieth century.³⁸⁴ The latter marks the early beginnings of the Detention Industrial Complex in the United States. Contemporary immigrant detention centers come from this direct lineage of the DIC.

V. Conclusion

In this epilogue I bring together formal structures of control and informal structures of resistance at immigrant detention centers. Whereas formal structures provide guidelines and logistics on how such spaces of confinement are built and function, informal structures of resistance are breaks within and from the *strictures* of control. I’ve shared only a handful of examples that are a part of the growing number of various types of resistance to immigrant detention and its ideologies. This resistance happens both inside and outside the walls of immigrant detention centers. As of late, I’ve heard many political activists, scholars, and faith leaders urging people to imagine alternate futures, as what we are consigned to need not be what

³⁸⁴ Connie Young Yu, “Rediscovered Voices: Chinese Immigrants and Angel Island,” *Amerasia Journal* 4, no. 2 (January 1, 1977): 123–39, <https://doi.org/10.17953/amer.4.2.085p252p10142316>.

we are confined to. The anecdotes shared in this Epilogue *are* the alternate futures that are not only imagined but executed by some people in immigrant detention.

Immigrant detention (and mass incarceration overall) is environmentally, fiscally, and socially unsustainable. Once its web of logistics and materiality can be identified, it can be challenged and demolished. People past and present have done the exhausting and traumatizing work of looking back at the state and dismantling it, work that we refer to in hindsight as *revolution*. The stories shared in this Epilogue highlight nothing short of small revolutions that make big differences for people in immigrant detention; *haunsla rakho*, they write.

Bibliography

- “2014 Hate Crime Statistics.” FBI. Accessed January 23, 2019. https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2014/topic-pages/incidentsandoffenses_final.
- “2017 Hate Crime Statistics.” FBI. Accessed January 23, 2019. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2017/topic-pages/incidents-and-offenses>.
- “A Dark and Constant Rage: 25 Years of Right-Wing Terrorism in the United States.” Anti-Defamation League. Accessed December 20, 2018. <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/dark-constant-rage-25-years-of-right-wing-terrorism-in-united-states>.
- “About.” National Sikh Campaign. Accessed July 9, 2019. <http://www.sikhcampaign.org/about>.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila. *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013.
- Ackerman, Spencer. “ICE Is Detaining 50,000 People, an All-Time High,” March 8, 2019, sec. us-news. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/ice-is-detaining-50000-people-a-new-all-time-high>.
- “Adenia Park.” Parks and Wildlife Service. Accessed March 14, 2019. <https://parks.dpaw.wa.gov.au/site/adenia-park>.
- “Adenia Reserve.” Australian Sikh Heritage. Accessed March 20, 2019. <http://www.australiansikhheritage.com/wasikhcremationsite>.
- Agrawal, Nadya. “Waris Ahluwalia Kicked Off Plane For His Turban.” *The Huffington Post*, February 8, 2016. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/actor-and-designer-waris-ahluwalia-kicked-off-plane-for-turban_n_56b8ad3ee4b04f9b57da4428.
- Albert, Victoria. “‘Completely Disgusted’: Police Chief Reveals Son Is Suspect in Brutal Attack on Elderly Sikh Man,” August 9, 2018, sec. us-news. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/completely-disgusted-police-chief-reveals-son-is-suspect-in-brutal-attack-on-elderly-sikh-man>.
- Alhassen, Maytha. “Haqq and Hollywood: Illuminating 100 Years of Muslim Tropes And How to Transform Them - Pop Culture Collaborative #HaqqAndHollywood.” Pop Culture Collaborative, October 2018. <https://popcollab.org/haqq-and-hollywood/>.
- Alsultany, Evelyn. *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation After 9/11*. NYU Press, 2012.

- Andone, Dakin, Jason Hanna, Joe Sterling, and Paul Murphy. "Hate Crime Charges Filed in Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooting That Left 11 Dead," October 29, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/10/27/us/pittsburgh-synagogue-active-shooter/index.html>.
- "Arizona Man Accused of Killing Sikh; 'I'm an American!'" Deseret News, September 29, 2001. <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/866396/Arizona-man-accused-of-killing-Sikh-Im-an-American.html>.
- "Authorities Investigate Possible Hate Crimes At Mosques in Sacramento And Davis." *CBS Sacramento*, June 24, 2017. <https://sacramento.cbslocal.com/2017/06/24/possible-hate-crimes-at-mosques-in-sacramento-and-davis/>.
- Bai, Stephany. "Aeromexico Issues Apology After Keeping Designer Off Plane Over Turban." *NBC News*, February 9, 2016. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/aeromexico-issues-apology-after-keeping-designer-plane-over-turban-n514931>.
- Baldacci, Marlana, and Eric Levenson. "Kroger Shooting in Kentucky Is Being Investigated as a Hate Crime." *CNN*, October 29, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/10/29/us/kroger-shooting-hate-crime/index.html>.
- Baldas, Tresa. "How 2 Immigrant Babies Landed in Michigan and How Their Fates Were Different." *Detroit Free Press*. Accessed June 21, 2019. <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2018/06/23/immigrant-babies-michigan-zero-tolerance/725448002/>.
- Bayoumi, Moustafa. *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?: Being Young and Arab in America*. New York: Penguin Books, 2009.
- Bays, John. "Lodi's Sikh Temple Gets New Domes." *Lodi News Sentinel*, August 3, 2017. https://www.lodinews.com/news/article_0c77b924-781a-11e7-83ac-6b2a2ee3da4e.html.
- Benjamin, Medea. "America Dropped 26,171 Bombs in 2016. What a Bloody End to Obama's Reign." *The Guardian*, January 9, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jan/09/america-dropped-26171-bombs-2016-obama-legacy>.
- Bernstein, Matthew, and Gaylyn Studlar, eds. *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film*. Rutgers University Press, 1997.
- Best, Stephen, and Saidiya Hartman. "Fugitive Justice." *Representations* 92, no. 1 (2005): 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1525/rep.2005.92.1.1>.
- Bhagal, Balbinder. "Monopolizing Violence Before and After 1984: Governmental Law and the People's Passion." *Sikh Formations* 7, no. 1 (2011): 57–82.

- . “On the Hermeneutics of Sikh Thought and Praxis.” In *Sikh Religion, Culture and Ethnicity*, 82–106. Routledge, 2013.
- Bhugal, Balbinder Singh. “Text as Sword.” *Religion and Violence in South Asia: Theory and Practice*, 2007, 101.
- . “The Animal Sublime: Rethinking the Sikh Mystical Body.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80, no. 4 (2012): 856–908.
- Bidgood, Jess, Matthew Bloch, Morrigan McCarthy, Liam Stack, and Wilson Andrews. “Confederate Monuments Are Coming Down Across the United States. Here’s a List.” *The New York Times*, August 16, 2017, sec. U.S.
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/16/us/confederate-monuments-removed.html>, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/16/us/confederate-monuments-removed.html>.
- Bielen, Kenneth. *The Lyrics of Civility: Biblical Images & Popular Music Lyrics in American Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2016.
- “Big Money As Private Immigrant Jails Boom.” NPR.org. Accessed April 20, 2019.
<https://www.npr.org/2017/11/21/565318778/big-money-as-private-immigrant-jails-boom>.
- Bilefsky, Dan. “Quebec Mosque Shooter Was Consumed by Refugees, Trump and Far Right.” *The New York Times*, January 10, 2019, sec. World.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/05/world/canada/quebec-mosque-attack-alexandre-bissonnette.html>.
- Bixby, Scott. “Immigrant Miscarriages in ICE Detention Have Nearly Doubled Under Trump.” *The Daily Beast*, March 1, 2019, sec. politics.
<https://www.thedailybeast.com/immigrant-miscarriages-in-ice-detention-have-nearly-doubled-under-trump>.
- Blackmore, Tim. “Eyeless in America: Hollywood and Indiewood’s Iraq War on Film.” *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society* 32, no. 4 (August 1, 2012): 294–316.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0270467612459928>.
- Boggs, Carl. *The Hollywood War Machine : U.S. Militarism and Popular Culture*. London: Routledge, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315086279>.
- Bois, W. E. B. Du. *Black Reconstruction in America (The Oxford W. E. B. Du Bois): An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*. Oxford University Press, 2014.

- Bonner, Raymond. "America's Role in El Salvador's Deterioration." *The Atlantic*, January 20, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/01/trump-and-el-salvador/550955/>.
- Bonus, Rick. "Ethnicity." In *Keywords for Asian American Studies*, edited by Linda Trinh Võ, Cathy J Schlund-Vials, and K. Scott Wong, 78–81. New York: NYU Press, 2015. <http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=3564347>.
- Boot, Max. "Not All Terrorism Is Treated Equally." *Washington Post*, March 15, 2019, sec. Opinions. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/03/15/not-all-terrorism-is-treated-equally/>.
- Branigin, Anne. "Sikh Man, Surjit Malhi, Attacked in Possible Hate Crime in California." *The Root*, August 7, 2018. <https://www.theroot.com/sikh-man-attacked-in-alleged-hate-crime-says-his-turban-1828156179>.
- Branson-Potts, Hailey, and James Queally. "Threatening Letters Sent to Mosques Aren't Hate Crimes, Authorities Say, but They're Still Searching for the Authors." *Los Angeles Times*, November 28, 2016. <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-mosque-letters-police-20161128-story.html>.
- Brown Vega, Margaret, and Nathan Craig. "'A New Horror': Sikh Men Go on Hunger Strike in ICE Custody." *The Nation*, March 7, 2019. <https://www.thenation.com/article/ice-hunger-strike-el-paso/>.
- Buncombe, Andrew. "Sikh Taxi Driver Accused of Being a Terrorist and Badly Beaten in Chicago 'Hate Crime.'" *The Independent*, September 10, 2015. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/sikh-taxi-driver-accused-of-being-a-terrorist-and-badly-beaten-in-chicago-hate-crime-10494944.html>.
- Butler, Judith. "Endangered/Endangering: Schematic Racism and White Paranoia." In *Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising*, First., 15–22. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- "CAIR-CA: Muslim, Sikh Groups File Discrimination Complaints Against Boomers!" *CAIR California Los Angeles* (blog). Accessed July 10, 2019. <https://ca.cair.com/losangeles/updates/cair-ca-muslim-sikh-groups-file-discrimination-complaints-against-boomers/>.
- "Calendar of Events." California Department of Education. Accessed January 23, 2019. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fb/cdecalendar.asp>.
- "California Police Chief Darryl McAllister Said He Was 'Disgusted' to Find out His 18-Year-Old Son Tyrone McAllister Was Arrested and Charged in the Attack on Sahib Singh, a 71-Year-Old Sikh Man Who Was Beaten While Taking a Morning Walk

through the Park.” Facebook, August 9, 2018.

https://www.facebook.com/TheHill/posts/10156268412834087?comment_id=10156268469514087&reply_comment_id=10156268508604087&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R%22%7D.

Cameron, Macdonald. “Design Plans Approved for Singh and Kaur Park.” *Elk Grove Citizen*. September 20, 2017. http://www.egcitizen.com/news/design-plans-approved-for-singh-and-kaur-park/article_3540c964-9e5c-11e7-9e32-07272b06fe88.html.

Carter, Bill. “WAR IN THE GULF: The Networks; GIANT TV AUDIENCE FOR BUSH’S SPEECH.” *The New York Times*, January 18, 1991, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/01/18/us/war-in-the-gulf-the-networks-giant-tv-audience-for-bush-s-speech.html>.

Carter, Bob, Marci Green, and Rick Halpern. “Immigration Policy and the Racialization of Migrant Labour: The Construction of National Identities in the USA and Britain.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 19, no. 1 (January 1, 1996): 135–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.1996.9993902>.

Casiano, Louis. “Sikh Temple Parking Lot in Buena Park Vandalized in ‘Case of Mistaken Identity.’” *Orange County Register*, December 8, 2015. <https://www.ocregister.com/2015/12/08/sikh-temple-parking-lot-in-buena-park-vandalized-in-case-of-mistaken-identity/>.

Castillo, Andrea. “Fresno City Council Approves Sikh Genocide Resolution.” *Fresno Bee*, September 1, 2016. <https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/article99461577.html>.

Ceasrine, Lea. “Dozens of ICE Detainees Have Been Placed on Suicide Watch in a New Jersey Facility.” Documented. Immigration as it Matters to New Yorkers, April 17, 2019. <https://documentedny.com/2019/04/17/dozens-of-ice-detainees-placed-on-suicide-watch-in-a-new-jersey-facility/>.

Çelik, Zeynep. *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World’s Fairs*. Oakland: University of California Press, 1992.

Chak, Tings. *Undocumented: The Architecture of Migrant Detention*. Architecture Observer, 9/14.

Chandrashekar, Santhosh. “Engendering Threat in the Guise of Protection: Orientalism and Sikh Vulnerability.” *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 12, no. 4 (October 2, 2017): 366–81. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2017.1371183>.

Chang, Tracy FH, and Douglas E. Thompkins. “Corporations Go to Prisons: The Expansion of Corporate Power in the Correctional Industry.” *Labor Studies Journal* 27, no. 1 (2002): 45–69.

- Channel 4 News. *Waris Ahluwalia on Turban Plane Incident*, 2016.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJ8KrOvO1gk>.
- “Chardhi Kala 6K.” Accessed December 14, 2018. <http://www.chardhikala6kwi.org/>.
Chardhi Kala 6K Live from Oak Creek, Wisconsin. #RememberOakCreek. Oak Creek, Wisc., 2017.
<https://www.facebook.com/thesikhcoalition/videos/10154530199692003/?q=oak%20creek%206k>.
- “Chattisinghpora Massacre: Sikh Body Dismayed Over Delay In Justice.” Kashmir Observer, March 20, 2019. <https://kashmirobsrver.net/2019/city-news/chattisinghpora-massacre-sikh-body-dismayed-over-delay-justice-41453>.
- Chokshi, Niraj, and Matthew Haag. “Why Ilhan Omar and Elliott Abrams Tangled Over U.S. Foreign Policy.” *The New York Times*, February 15, 2019, sec. U.S.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/14/us/politics/ilhan-omar-elliott-abrams.html>.
- CNN, Geneva Sands. “This Year Saw the Most People in Immigration Detention since 2001.” CNN. Accessed April 20, 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/12/politics/ice-detention/index.html>.
- Coker, Matt. “Brodie Durazo, 20, Busted for Alleged Anti-Muslim Vandalism at Sikh Temple.” *OC Weekly*, December 9, 2015. <https://ocweekly.com/brodie-durazo-20-busted-for-alleged-anti-muslim-vandalism-at-sikh-temple-6825855/>.
- Confused Islamophobes Target American Sikhs - The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*, 2016.
<http://www.cc.com/video-clips/mf8g36/the-daily-show-with-trevor-noah-confused-islamophobes-target-american-sikhs>.
- Constante, Agnes. “California City Names Park after Sikh Human Rights Advocate.” *NBC News*, September 6, 2017. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/california-city-renames-park-after-sikh-human-rights-advocate-n799261>.
- Correa, Carlos. “Police Chief’s Son Arrested In Attack On Sikh Man « CBS Sacramento.” CBS Sacramento, August 8, 2018. <https://sacramento.cbslocal.com/2018/08/08/sikh-man-attacked/>.
- Daulatzai, Sohail. *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom Beyond America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.
- Daulatzai, Sohail, and Junaid Rana. “Left.” *Critical Ethnic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2015): 39–42.
<https://doi.org/10.5749/jcritethnstud.1.1.0039>.
- , eds. *With Stones in Our Hands: Writings on Muslims, Racism, and Empire*. Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 2018.

- Dayen, David. "Below the Surface of ICE: The Corporations Profiting From Immigrant Detention." Accessed April 20, 2019. <http://inthesetimes.com/features/ice-abolish-immigration-child-detention-private-prison-profiting.html>.
- Derrida, Jacques. "Above All, No Journalists!" In *Religion and Media*, edited by Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber, 56–93. 56-93: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- "Detention Map & Statistics." Freedom for Immigrants. Accessed July 15, 2019. <https://www.freedomforimmigrants.org/detention-statistics>.
- Dressler, Markus, and Arvind-pal Singh Mandair. *Secularism and Religion-Making*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=389355>.
- Dundon, Rian. "Operation Desert Storm Was a Practice Run in Press Manipulation." Timeline, March 1, 2018. <https://timeline.com/photos-gulf-war-cnn-effect-press-manipulation-66680a20cf42>.
- Edmondson, Catie. "Sonia Sotomayor Delivers Sharp Dissent in Travel Ban Case." *The New York Times*, June 26, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/26/us/sonia-sotomayor-dissent-travel-ban.html>.
- Eligon, John. "Hate Crimes Increase for the Third Consecutive Year, F.B.I. Reports." *The New York Times*, November 14, 2018, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/13/us/hate-crimes-fbi-2017.html>.
- "Enhancement Project." Accessed March 20, 2019. <http://www.australiansikhheritage.com/adenia-park-redevelopment>.
- Evans-Cowley, Jennifer S., and Kenneth Pearlman. "Six Flags over Jesus: RLUIPA, Megachurches, and Zoning." *Tulane Environmental Law Journal* 21 (2008 2007): 203–32.
- Ezrahi, Yaron. *Imagined Democracies: Necessary Political Fictions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- "Fact Sheet on Post-9/11 Discrimination and Violence against Sikh Americans." The Sikh Coalition. Accessed July 13, 2019. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/images/documents/fact%20sheet%20on%20hate%20against%20sikhs%20in%20america%20post%209-11%201.pdf>.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Markmann. Pluto Press, 1986.
- "FAQ." *Sikh Coalition* (blog). Accessed December 26, 2018. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/about-sikhs/faq/>.

- “FBI Hate Crime Tracking Campaign.” The Sikh Coalition. Accessed January 23, 2019. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/legal-and-policy/fbi-hate-crime-tracking-campaign/>.
- “Fmr Sikh Cemetery.” Heritage Council. State Heritage Office. Accessed February 25, 2019. <http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/7ca2b88e-8584-43d1-8e96-f7e27c31b668>.
- Formanek, Ingrid. “Operation Desert Storm: 25 Years On.” CNN. Accessed June 29, 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/2016/01/19/middleeast/operation-desert-storm-25-years-later/index.html>.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things*. London: Routledge, 1975. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203996645>.
- Frankel, Francine R. *India’s Green Revolution: Economic Gains and Political Costs*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- “Future Parks.” Consumnes Community Services District. Accessed February 21, 2019. <https://www.yourcsd.com/363/Future-Parks>.
- Gaura, Maria Alicia, and Chronicle Staff Writer. “Sikh Temple Plans Run Afoul of Neighbors / Many Call Huge Edifice Overwhelming.” *SFGate*, December 25, 1997. <https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Sikh-Temple-Plans-Run-Afoul-of-Neighbors-Many-2815999.php>.
- “General Hate.” Southern Poverty Law Center. Accessed December 20, 2018. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/general-hate>.
- “Gift of Our Wounds | SERVE 2 UNITE.” The Gift Of Our Wounds Magazine: Stories of Healing Through Feeling. Accessed December 13, 2018. <https://www.giftofourwounds.com/serve2unite>.
- Gill, Sucha S. “Economic Distress and Farmer Suicides in Rural Punjab.” *Journal of Punjab Studies* 12, no. 2 (2005): 219–37.
- Gilligan, Thomas. “Inside Message in Inside Man.” *Spike Lee’s Joints 4* (blog), March 12, 2016. <https://sljoints4blog.wordpress.com/2016/03/12/inside-message-in-inside-man/>.
- Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10779285>.
- “Go Tell It on the Mountain.” Accessed January 21, 2019. <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~public/civilrights/a0030.html>.
- González, Jerry. *In Search of the Mexican Beverly Hills: Latino Suburbanization in Postwar Lost Angeles*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, n.d. Accessed July 13, 2019.

- Gooding-Williams, Robert. *Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising*. Routledge, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203699997>.
- Goodman, Sophie. "Desert Storm: The First War Televised Live Around the World (and Around the Clock)." *Atlanta Magazine* (blog), March 18, 2015. <https://www.atlantamagazine.com/90s/desert-storm-the-first-war-televised-live-around-the-world-and-around-the-clock/>.
- Goodstein, Laurie, and Tamar Lewin. "A NATION CHALLENGED: VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT; Victims of Mistaken Identity, Sikhs Pay a Price for Turbans." *The New York Times*, September 19, 2001, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/19/us/nation-challenged-violence-harassment-victims-mistaken-identity-sikhs-pay-price.html>.
- Gray, Rosie. "Emails Link Ex-DHS Policy Analyst to White Nationalists." *The Atlantic*, August 28, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/08/emails-link-former-dhs-policy-analyst-to-white-nationalists/568843/>.
- Green, Emma. "A Black Church Has Been Burned in the Name of Trump." *The Atlantic*, November 2, 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/11/a-black-church-burned-in-the-name-of-trump/506246/>.
- Grewal, Inderpal. *Saving the Security State: Exceptional Citizens in Twenty-First-Century America*. Next Wave (Duke University Press). Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.
- Grewal, J. S. *The Khalsa: Sikh and Non-Sikh Perspectives*. Manohar, 2004.
- Grewal, Preetinder. "Heritage Park to Highlight Australia's Sikh History." *Special Broadcasting Service*. April 18, 2018. <https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/punjabi/en/article/2018/03/15/heritage-park-highlight-australias-sikh-history>.
- Grinberg, Emanuella, and Janet DiGiacomo. "The Kroger Shooting Suspect Was Not Charged with a Hate Crime. Here's Why." *CNN*, October 31, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/10/31/us/kroger-shooting/index.html>.
- Gstalter, Morgan. "Police Chief 'Disgusted' after His Son Charged in Attack of 71-Year-Old Sikh Man." Text. *TheHill*, August 9, 2018. <https://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/401031-police-chief-disgusted-after-his-son-arrested-for-beating-71>.
- "Gurdwara Security Toolkit." Sikh Coalition. Accessed December 20, 2018. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/resources/gurdwara-security-toolkit/>.
- Haag, Matthew. "Police Chief's Son Charged in Attack on Sikh Man in California." *The New York Times*, August 11, 2018, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/09/us/sikh-man-attacked-california.html>.

- Hafiz, Yasmine. "The Inspiring Way Gap Responded To Racist Graffiti." *The Huffington Post*, November 26, 2013. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/gap-ad-sikh-waris-ahluwalia_n_4343586.
- Hammer, Louis. "Architecture and the Poetry of Space." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 39, no. 4 (1981): 381–88. <https://doi.org/10.2307/430237>.
- Hannon, Elliot. "Charleston Newspaper's Morning After Church Shooting Headline Blocked by Gun Shop Ad." *Slate Magazine*, June 19, 2015. <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2015/06/charleston-post-and-courier-church-shooting-headline-blocked-by-gun-shop-ad.html>.
- "Hate Crime Victimization, 2004-2015." Bureau of Justice Statistics, June 2017. https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/hcv0415_sum.pdf.
- Hauser, Christine. "Turban-Wearing Sikh American Actor Is Barred From Aeroméxico." *The New York Times*, February 8, 2016, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/09/world/turban-wearing-american-actor-is-barred-from-aeromexico-flight.html>.
- Hernández, Kelly Lytle. *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2017.
- Hirji, Faiza. "Through the Looking Glass: Muslim Women on Television—An Analysis of 24, Lost, and Little Mosque on the Prairie." *Global Media Journal: Canadian Edition* 4, no. 2 (2011): 33–47.
- "History." The Sikh Coalition. Accessed January 23, 2019. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/about-us/history/>.
- "History." *Sikh Coalition* (blog). Accessed July 1, 2019. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/about-us/history/>.
- "History of South Asians in Canada: Timeline." South Asian Canadian Heritage. Accessed February 26, 2019. <https://www.southasiancanadianheritage.ca/history-of-south-asians-in-canada/>.
- Höglund, Johan. "Electronic Empire: Orientalism Revisited in the Military Shooter." *Game Studies* 8, no. 1 (September 2008). <http://gamestudies.org/0801/articles/hoeglund>.
- "Honor Oak Creek through National Day of Seva." Sikh Coalition, June 13, 2018. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/blog/2018/honor-oak-creek-national-day-seva/>.
- hooks, bell. *All About Love: New Visions*. New York: William Morrow, 2000.
- "House Resolution No. 1160." Pennsylvania General Assembly, n.d.
- Hsu, Madeline Y., and Ellen D. Wu. "'Smoke and Mirrors': Conditional Inclusion, Model Minorities, and the Pre-1965 Dismantling of Asian Exclusion." *Journal of American*

- Ethnic History* 34, no. 4 (Summer 2015): 43–65.
<https://doi.org/10.5406/jamerethnhist.34.4.0043>.
- Hundle, Anneeth Kaur. “After Wisconsin: Registers of Sikh Precarity in the Alien-Nation.” *Sikh Formations* 8, no. 3 (2012): 287–291.
- . “Sikh Diasporic Feminisms: Provocation 1.” *Sikh Formations* 13, no. 4 (2017): 237–240.
- Hyde, Henry J. “H.R.3525 - 104th Congress (1995-1996): Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996.” Webpage. Congress, July 3, 1996. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/104th-congress/house-bill/3525>.
- “ICE Is Imprisoning a Record 44,000 People.” Accessed April 20, 2019.
<https://www.thedailybeast.com/ice-is-imprisoning-a-record-44000-people>.
- “ICE Released Its Most Comprehensive Immigration Detention Data yet. It’s Alarming.” National Immigrant Justice Center. Accessed April 20, 2019.
<https://immigrantjustice.org/staff/blog/ice-released-its-most-comprehensive-immigration-detention-data-yet>.
- “India: Fear of Disappearance / Fear of Torture: Jaswant Singh Khalra, Human Rights Activist.” Amnesty International, November 6, 1995.
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/document/?indexNumber=asa20%2f026%2f1995&language=en>.
- “India: Hate crimes against Muslims and rising Islamophobia must be condemned.” Amnesty International. Accessed July 6, 2019. <https://www.amnesty.nl/actueel/india-hate-crimes-against-muslims-and-rising-islamophobia-must-be-condemned>.
- Intercepted. “Intercepted Podcast: George H.W. Bush (1924-2018), American War Criminal.” The Intercept, December 5, 2018.
<https://theintercept.com/2018/12/05/george-h-w-bush-1924-2018-american-war-criminal/>.
- Jackson, Marissa. “Crossing the Bridge: African-Americans and the Necessity of a 21st Century Human Rights Movement.” *Human Rights and Globalization Law Review* V (Fall - Spring 2015 2013): 56–87.
- Jaswant Singh Khalra: *Human Rights Activist*, 1995.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktfuGXpi5qw&t=1036s>.
- Kaur, Valarie. “One Year after Oak Creek, Why the FBI Tracking Hate Crimes Is a Victory.” *MSNBC*, August 5, 2013. <http://www.msnbc.com/melissa-harris-perry/one-year-after-oak-creek-why-the-fbi>.

- . “Sikhs Deserve the Dignity of Being a Statistic.” *The Washington Post*. *Valarie Kaur* (blog), August 16, 2012. http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/guest-voices/post/sikhs-deserve-the-dignity-of-being-a-statistic/2012/08/16/1af99360-e7dc-11e1-8487-64e4b2a79ba8_blog.html.
- . “Watch Night Speech: Breathe and Push.” *Valarie Kaur* (blog), January 8, 2017. <http://valariekaur.com/2017/01/watch-night-speech-breathe-push/>.
- Kaur, Valarie, and Simran Jeet Singh. “Two Sikh American Activists: Let’s Retire ‘Mistaken Identity.’” *Washington Post* (blog), August 10, 2012. https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/guest-voices/post/two-sikh-american-activists-lets-retire-mistaken-identity/2012/08/10/776ab9d8-e329-11e1-a25e-15067bb31849_blog.html.
- “Key Statistics on Documented Cases of Enforced Disappearances & Extrajudicial Executions in Punjab, India.” Ensaaf, 2018. <https://data.ensaaf.org>.
- Khalsa, Nirinjan Kaur. “Provocation 3: The Ecology of Sikh Diasporic Feminisms: Interconnected Ethics of Seva and Sovereignty.” *Sikh Formations* 13, no. 4 (2017): 245–249.
- Khanna, Rajeev. “Dalit Sikhs Attacked in Shillong: Punjab Govt and SGPC Step in to Help.” *CatchNews*, June 4, 2018. <http://www.catchnews.com/india-news/dalit-sikhs-attacked-in-shillong-punjab-govt-and-sgpc-step-in-to-help-116291.html>.
- Kim, Claire Jean. “The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans.” *Politics and Society* 27, no. 1 (1999): 105–38.
- Kim, Soo Mee, and Aggie J. Yellow Horse. “Undocumented Asians, Left in the Shadows.” *Contexts* 17, no. 4 (November 1, 2018): 70–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504218812875>.
- King, Ryan S., Marc Mauer, and Tracy Huling. “Big Prisons, Small Towns: Prison Economics in Rural America.” *The Sentencing Project*, 2003.
- King, Samantha. “Pink Ribbons Inc: Breast Cancer Activism and the Politics of Philanthropy.” *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 17, no. 4 (2004): 473–92.
- King, Samantha J. “Doing Good by Running Well. Breast Cancer, the Race for the Cure, and New Technologies of Ethical Citizenship.” In *Foucault, Cultural Studies, and Governmentality*, edited by Jack Z Bratich, Jeremy Packer, and Cameron McCarthy, 295–316. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003. <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=3408583>.

- Kolsy, Uzma. "Eight Attacks, 11 Days." *Salon*, August 14, 2012. https://www.salon.com/2012/08/14/eight_attacks_11_days/.
- Konish, Lorie. "US Median Household Income Climbs to New High of \$61,372." *CNBC*, September 12, 2018. <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/09/12/median-household-income-climbs-to-new-high-of-61372.html>.
- Kopan, Tal. "Hundreds of Immigrant Kids Remain Separated from Parents." *CNN*, August 30, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/30/politics/family-separations-hundreds-children-separated/index.html>.
- Kumar, Ram Narayan, Amrik Singh, Ashok Agrwaal, and Jaskaran Kaur. *Reduced to Ashes: The Insurgency and Human Rights in Punjab : Final Report*. Nepal: Jagadamba Press, 2003.
- Kumar, Sujay. "How American Sikhs Became Collateral Damage in the War on Terror." *Fusion*, December 3, 2015. <http://fusion.net/story/240946/american-sikh-hate-crimes/>.
- "Landing Reserve." Heritage Council. State Heritage Office. Accessed March 19, 2019. <http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/PrintSingleRecord/2e46ab91-d61f-4006-8ec2-470f52d6a960>.
- "Language." Kaartijin Noongar - Noongar Knowledge, n.d. Accessed March 18, 2019.
- Lavelle, Moira. "The Fire Last Time: The 1990s Wave of 145 Church Burnings — Map." *Public Radio International*. Public Radio International, July 3, 2015. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2015-07-02/fire-last-time-1990s-wave-145-church-burnings-map>.
- Lee, Erika. *The Making of Asian America: A History*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015.
- Lee, Greg. "Buena Park Man Gets Community Service for Vandalizing Sikh Temple." *ABC7 Los Angeles*, April 19, 2016. <https://abc7.com/1299550/>.
- . "Sikh Temple in Buena Park Vandalized in Possible Hate Crime." *ABC7 Los Angeles*, December 10, 2015. <https://abc7.com/1117539/>.
- Leonard, Karen. *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010.
- Little, Becky. "How The U.S. Got So Many Confederate Monuments." *History*, August 17, 2017. <https://www.history.com/news/how-the-u-s-got-so-many-confederate-monuments>.
- "Little-Known Immigration Mandate Keeps Detention Beds Full." *NPR.org*. Accessed April 20, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2013/11/19/245968601/little-known-immigration-mandate-keeps-detention-beds-full>.

- Luan, Livia. "Profiting from Enforcement: The Role of Private Prisons in U.S. Immigration Detention." migrationpolicy.org, April 30, 2018.
<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/profitting-enforcement-role-private-prisons-us-immigration-detention>.
- "Lunch Menu." Sacramento Valley Charter School. Accessed December 20, 2018.
<http://www.sacvalleycharter.org/lunch-menu.html>.
- Lush, Tamara. "Post-9/11, Sikhs Say They Are Mistaken Targets." msnbc.com, July 11, 2011. http://www.nbcnews.com/id/43715106/ns/us_news-life/t/post-sikhs-say-they-are-mistaken-targets/.
- Macleod, Dianne Sachko. "The Politics of Vision: Disney, Aladdin, and the Gulf War." *The Emperor's Old Groove: Decolonizing Disney's Magic Kingdom*, 2003, 179–192.
- Maira, Sunaina. "Islamophobia and the War on Terror: Youth, Citizenship, and Dissent." In *Islamophobia: The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century*, edited by John L. Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin, 109–26. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- . "Youth Culture, Citizenship and Globalization: South Asian Muslim Youth in the United States after September 11th." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24, no. 1 (2004): 219–31.
- "Man Who Burned down Joplin Mosque and Tried to Burn Planned Parenthood Clinic Pleads Guilty." The St. Louis Post Dispatch, April 19, 2016.
https://www.stltoday.com/lifestyles/faith-and-values/man-who-burned-down-joplin-mosque-and-tried-to-burn/article_89fa2a12-e59a-5798-8391-017b0cb2bb3f.html.
- Mandair, Arvind. "Sikhs, Sovereignty and Modern Government." In *Religion as a Category of Governance and Sovereignty*, edited by T Stack, N Goldenberg, and T Fitzgerald, 115–42. Boston: Brill Publishers, 2015.
- . "The Politics of Nonduality: Reassessing the Work of Transcendence in Modern Sikh Theology." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 74, no. 3 (September 1, 2006): 646–73. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfj002>.
- Mandair, Arvind-pal Singh. *Religion and the Specter of the West. Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality, and the Politics of Translation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
- . *Sikhism: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.
- Mandair, Navdeep S. "Colonial Formations of Sikhism." In *The Oxford Handbook of Sikh Studies*, edited by Pashaura Singh and Louis Fenech. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

<https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199699308.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199699308-e-042>.

Mandelbaum, Michael. "Vietnam: The Television War." *Daedalus* 111, no. 4 (1982): 157–69.

"March, a Month of Environmental Action by Sikhs." EcoSikh. Accessed December 14, 2018. <http://www.ecosikh.org/march-a-month-of-environmental-action-by-sikhs/>.

Mark, David, and Jeremy Diamond. "Donald Trump: 'I Want Surveillance of Certain Mosques.'" CNN, November 21, 2015.

<https://www.cnn.com/2015/11/21/politics/trump-muslims-surveillance/index.html>.

"Mass Shootings in 2018." Gun Violence Archive. Accessed December 1, 2018.

<https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/reports/mass-shooting>.

"Master of Men! The Spider." Dial B for Blog. Accessed June 24, 2019.

<http://www.dialbforblog.com/archives/224/>.

Matas, Caroline. "U.S. Army to Permit Religious Turbans, Beards, and Hijabs." Harvard Divinity School Religious Literacy Project, January 15, 2017.

<https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/news/us-army-now-permits-religious-turbans-beards-and-hijabs>.

Mathur, Saloni. "Living Ethnological Exhibits: The Case of 1886." *Cultural Anthropology* 15, no. 4 (2000): 492–524.

Max Arthur Macauliffe. *The Sikh Religion Vol II*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1909.

<http://archive.org/details/sikhreligionvoli015800mbp>.

Mbembe, Achille. "Necropolitics." Translated by Libby Meintjes. *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11–40.

McAlister, Melani. *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2005.

Mcgee, Kristin. "Orientalism and Erotic Multiculturalism in Popular Culture." *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 6, no. 2 (January 1, 2012): 209–38.

<https://doi.org/10.3828/msmi.2012.14>.

"Memorial Run & Walk Oak Creek, WI. Run 2 Unite." Accessed December 13, 2018.

<http://www.chardhikala6kwi.org/>.

Michaelis, Arno, and Pardeep Singh Kaleka. *The Gift of Our Wounds: A Sikh and a Former White Supremacist Find Forgiveness After Hate*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2018.

Mishan, Ligaya. "In Six Compartments, All the Flavors of Home." *The New York Times*, January 19, 2016, sec. Food. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/20/dining/bond-sonny-caberwal-spice-tin-rajma.html>.

- Moore, Frazier. "New Tools Showed Gulf War on TV." *The Washington Post*, January 14, 2001. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/aponline/20010114/aponline131417_000.htm.
- Morin, Aysel. "Framing Terror: The Strategies Newspapers Use to Frame an Act as Terror or Crime." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 93, no. 4 (December 1, 2016): 986–1005. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699016660720>.
- Moshtaghian, Artemis, Huizhong Wu, and Susannah Cullinane. "Sikh Man's Shooting in Washington Investigated as Hate Crime." *CNN*, March 6, 2017. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/05/us/washington-sikh-shooting/>.
- Mozingo, Joe. "Slain Egyptian Was a Fixture in San Gabriel." *Los Angeles Times*, September 19, 2001. <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/sep/19/local/me-47275>.
- Murphy, Paul, and Evan Simko-Bednarski. "Two Radio Hosts Suspended after They Refer to America's First Sikh Attorney General as 'Turban Man.'" *CNN*, June 31, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/26/us/radio-hosts-nj-sikh-attorney-general-trnd/index.html>.
- Naber, Nadine Christine. *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*. Edited by Amaney A. Jamal and Nadine Naber. Syracuse University Press, 2008.
- Nafi, Basheer M. "Fatwā and War: On the Allegiance of the American Muslim Soldiers in the Aftermath of September 11." *Islamic Law and Society* 11, no. 1 (2004): 78–116.
- Nashrulla, Tasneem. "AeroMexico Publicly Apologizes To Sikh Model For Refusing To Let Him Board Because Of His Turban." *BuzzFeed News*, February 8, 2016. <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/tasneemnashrulla/sikh-model-from-gap-campaign-wasnt-allowed-on-aeromexico-fli>.
- "National Church Arson Task Force." The United States Department of Justice, October 2008. <https://www.justice.gov/crt/image-report-cover>.
- "National Day of Seva Building Groundswell of Momentum." *Sikh Coalition* (blog), July 2, 2018. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/blog/2018/national-day-seva-building-groundswell-momentum/>.
- National Sikh Campaign. "The First Demographic Profile on Sikh Americans," February 12, 2019.
- Newton, Jason. "Seven Gold Domes Now Decorate Sikh Temple." *WISN 12 News*, August 7, 2013. <https://www.wisn.com/article/seven-gold-domes-now-decorate-sikh-temple-1/6316855>.

- Ng, Franklin. *The History and Immigration of Asian Americans*. London: Taylor & Francis, 1998.
- “No Place of Same Sex Marriages in Sikhism: Jathedar.” *The Times of India*, December 14, 2013. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/No-place-of-same-sex-marriages-in-Sikhism-Jathedar/articleshow/27318171.cms>.
- “Notice of Designated Polling Places in the June 5, 2018 Statewide Direct Primary Election.” The County of Santa Clara, May 7, 2018. <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Voting/observers/Documents/Notice%20of%20Designated%20Polling%20Places%20-%20Statewide%20Direct%20Primary%20-%20English.pdf>.
- Oberoi, Harjot. *The Construction of Religious Boundaries. Culture, Identity, and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*. Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- October 03, Cair Webmaster 23sc on, and 2016. “CAIR-CA: Civil Rights Organizations to Celebrate Passage of Landmark Legislation Addressing Bullying and Harassment of Muslim and Sikh Students.” CAIR. Accessed July 11, 2019. https://www.cair.com/cair_ca_civil_rights_organizations_to_celebrate_passage_of_landmark_legislation_addressing_bullying_and_harassment_of_muslim_and_sikh_students.
- “Ottawa Police Investigating Possible Hate Crime at West-End Mosque.” *CTV News Ottawa*, January 30, 2018. <https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/ottawa-police-investigating-possible-hate-crime-at-west-end-mosque-1.3781289>.
- “Our Sponsors.” Accessed December 20, 2018. <http://www.chardhikala6kwi.org/our-sponsors/>.
- “Our Values.” National Sikh Campaign. We Are Sikhs. Accessed December 26, 2018. <http://www.wearesikhs.org/values>.
- “Our Vision.” Sacramento Valley Charter School. Accessed December 20, 2018. <https://www.sacvalleycharter.org/>.
- Park, Lisa Sun-Hee. “Assimilation.” In *Keywords for Asian American Studies*, edited by Linda Trinh Võ, Cathy J Schlund-Vials, and K. Scott Wong, 14–17. New York: New York University Press, 2015. <http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=3564347>.
- Parks, Miles. “Confederate Statues Were Built To Further A ‘White Supremacist Future.’” NPR, August 20, 2017. <https://www.npr.org/2017/08/20/544266880/confederate-statues-were-built-to-further-a-white-supremacist-future>.
- “Partnerships.” *CAIR California Los Angeles* (blog). Accessed July 10, 2019. <https://ca.cair.com/losangeles/what-we-do/outreach-education/partnerships/>.

- “Pasadena Tournament of Roses.” Tournament of Roses, n.d.
- Pasha, Shaheen. “Columnist Shaheen Pasha: The Exhaustion of Being Muslim in America.” *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, March 14, 2019. <https://www.gazettenet.com/Shahen-Pasha-The-exhaustion-of-being-Muslim-in-America-24105674>.
- Pathak, Shveta. “Harvest of Debt.” *Tribune India*, August 6, 2006. <https://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20060806/spectrum/main1.htm>.
- Personal interview with Jakara, February 25, 2019.
- “Pioneer Sikh East Indian Immigration to the Pacific Coast.” Sikh Pioneers. Accessed February 26, 2019. http://legacy.sikhpioneers.org/t_canphot.html.
- Porter, Libby. *Unlearning the Colonial Cultures of Planning*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2010.
- Powell, Kimberly A. “Framing Islam: An Analysis of U.S. Media Coverage of Terrorism Since 9/11.” *Communication Studies* 62, no. 1 (January 31, 2011): 90–112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2011.533599>.
- Poynting, Scott, and Victoria Mason. “The Resistible Rise of Islamophobia: Anti-Muslim Racism in the UK and Australia before 11 September 2001.” *Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 61–86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783307073935>.
- “Preventing and Ending School Bullying.” Sikh Coalition. Accessed December 13, 2018. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/creating-safe-schools/preventing-and-ending-school-bullying/>.
- “Preventing and Ending School Bullying.” *Sikh Coalition* (blog). Accessed December 14, 2018. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/creating-safe-schools/preventing-and-ending-school-bullying/>.
- “Preventing Attacks on Gurdwaras.” Sikh Coalition, 2017. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/gurdwara-security-toolkit-april-2017.pdf>.
- “Project Ghar Baahar.” Dasvandh Network. Accessed July 15, 2019. <https://www.dvnetwork.org/projects/project-ghar-baahar>.
- Puar, Jasbir K. “Queer Times, Queer Assemblages.” *Social Text* 23, no. 3-4 (84-85) (December 1, 2005): 121–39. https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-23-3-4_84-85-121.
- Qaiser, Iqbal. *Historical Sikh Shrines in Pakistan*. Lahore: Punjabi History Board, 1998. <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/51177528.html>.
- “Quimby Rd & Chaboya Rd San Jose, CA 95148, Neighborhood Profile - NeighborhoodScout.” Accessed July 4, 2019. <https://www.neighborhoodscout.com/ca/san-jose/quimby-chaboya>.

- Ramakrishnan, Karthick, and Sono Shah. "One out of Every 7 Asian Immigrants Is Undocumented." *Data Bits* (blog), September 8, 2017. <http://aapidata.com/blog/asian-undoc-1in7/>.
- Ramirez, Fernando. "Hate Crimes Are Rarely Prosecuted in Texas." *Houston Chronicle*, August 3, 2018. <https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/texas/article/Texas-hate-crimes-that-made-headlines-13130499.php>.
- Rana, Junaid. *Terrifying Muslims: Race and Labor in the South Asian Diaspora*. Duke University Press, 2011.
- . "The Story of Islamophobia." *Souls* 9, no. 2 (June 6, 2007): 148–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10999940701382607>.
- Rana, Junaid, and Gilberto Rosas. "Managing Crisis: Post-9/11 Policing and Empire." *Cultural Dynamics* 18, no. 3 (2006): 219–34.
- Rawnsley, Spencer Ackerman|Adam. "\$800 Million in Taxpayer Money Went to Private Prisons Where Migrants Work for Pennies," December 27, 2018, sec. us-news. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/dollar800-million-in-taxpayer-money-went-to-private-prisons-where-migrants-work-for-pennies>.
- Reagon, Bernice Johnson. "Let the Church Sing 'Freedom.'" *Black Music Research Journal* 7 (1987): 105–18. <https://doi.org/10.2307/779452>.
- "Rehat Maryada." Sikhs.org. Accessed December 20, 2018. <https://www.sikhs.org/rehit.htm>.
- "Rename Stonecreek Park to Jaswant Singh Khalra Park." Jakara Movement. Accessed March 4, 2019. <https://www.jakara.org/bakersfieldpark>.
- Rich, Paul B. "Cinema, Drone Warfare and the Framing of Counter-Terrorism." *Defense & Security Analysis* 34, no. 2 (April 3, 2018): 144–60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14751798.2018.1478185>.
- Ridouani, Driss. "The Representation of Arabs and Muslims in Western Media." *RUTA Comunicaci3n*, no. 3 (2011). <https://www.raco.cat/index.php/Ruta/article/view/243531>.
- "Rising Hate Crimes Require Better Reporting." The Sikh Coalition, November 22, 2017. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/blog/2017/rising-hate-crimes-require-better-reporting/>.
- Rodney, Walter. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Verso Books, 2018.
- Rodriguez-Moore, Jennie, and 2014. "Mosque Open House Seeks to Open Minds." Council on American-Islamic Relations. Accessed December 20, 2018. https://www.cair.com/mosque_open_house_seeks_to_open_minds.

- Romell, Rick. "7 Killed, Including Shooter, at Sikh Temple in Oak Creek." *Journal Sentinel*. August 6, 2012. <http://www.jsonline.com/news/crime/reports-of-people-shot-at-sikh-temple-in-oak-creek-qc6cgc0-165059506.html>.
- Romero, Dennis. "2 Arrested in Possible Hate Crime Attack on Sikh Man." *NBC News*, August 9, 2018. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/2-arrested-possible-hate-crime-attack-sikh-man-n899471>.
- Salaita, Steven. "Beyond Orientalism and Islamophobia: 9/11, Anti-Arab Racism, and the Mythos of National Pride." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 6, no. 2 (2006): 245–66.
- "SALDEF Applauds Hate Crime Conviction in Attack of Sikh American Cab Driver." SALDEF, March 8, 2011. <http://saldef.org/pr/saldef-applauds-hate-crime-conviction-in-attack-of-sikh-american-cab-driver/#.XGW9U9F7lz0>.
- Sandstrom, Aleksandra. "Half of All Church Fires in Past 20 Years Were Arsons." *Pew Research Center*, October 26, 2015. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/10/26/half-of-all-church-fires-in-past-20-years-were-arsons/>.
- "School Profile: Sacramento Valley Charter." California Department of Education. Accessed December 20, 2018. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sdprofile/details.aspx?cds=57726940124875>.
- Sethi, Arjun Singh. "Even in Death, Muslim Rights Are Violated." Oxford Islamic Studies Online. Accessed March 23, 2019. <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/focus.html>.
- Shah, Nayan. *Stranger Intimacy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012. <http://www.ucpress.edu/book.php?isbn=9780520270879>.
- Shaheen, Jack G. "Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588, no. 1 (July 1, 2003): 171–93. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716203588001011>.
- Shiva, Vandana. *The Violence of Green Revolution: Third World Agriculture, Ecology and Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- . *Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution and Profit*. London: Pluto Press, 2002.
- Shiva, Vandana, and Kunwar Jalees. *Seeds of Suicide: The Ecological and Human Costs of Seed Monopolies and Globalisation of Agriculture*. New Delhi: Navdanya, 2006.
- Sian, Katy. "Understanding Inter-Brasian Conflict Sikhs and Muslims in the Diaspora." *Sikh Form Relig. Cult. Theory Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory* 7, no. 2 (2011): 111–30.
- Sian, Katy Pal. "Gurdwaras, Guns and Grudges in 'Post-Racial' America." *Sikh Formations* 8, no. 3 (December 1, 2012): 293–97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17448727.2012.752676>.

- “Sikh Awareness Is Easy This April!” *Sikh Coalition* (blog), January 17, 2019. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/blog/2019/sikh-awareness-easy-april/>.
- “Sikh Coalition Wins Victory for Sukhbir Kaur NWL Settles Employment Discrimination Lawsuit.” The Sikh Coalition, September 27, 2011. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/blog/2011/sikh-coalition-wins-victory-for-sukhbir-kaur-nwl-settles-employment-discrimination-lawsuit/>.
- “Sikh Cultural Awareness Training Video Now on Justice Department Web Site | SALDEF.” Accessed December 13, 2018. <http://saldef.org/news/sikh-cultural-awareness-training-video-now-on-justice-department-web-site/#.XBKRuid7lz0>.
- “Sikh Man Attacked, Told To ‘Go Back To Your Country’ In Stanislaus County,” August 6, 2018. <https://sacramento.cbslocal.com/2018/08/06/sikh-man-attacked-told-to-go-back-to-your-country-in-stanislaus-county/>.
- “Sikh Temple Killer Wade Michael Page Radicalized in Army.” Southern Poverty Law Center. Accessed September 23, 2017. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2012/sikh-temple-killer-wade-michael-page-radicalized-army>.
- SikhNet. *Sonny Caberwal - We All Walk in Different Shoes*, 2008. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r60pjTdsmj0>.
- “Sikhs Implore Action & Accountability In Response To New FBI Hate Crime Stats.” *Sikh Coalition* (blog). Accessed July 3, 2019. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/press-release/sikhs-implore-action-accountability-response-new-fbi-hate-crime-stats/>.
- “Sikhs in America.” *Sikh Coalition* (blog). Accessed April 29, 2019. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/about-sikhs/sikhs-in-america/>.
- “Sikhs in Australia.” Accessed February 25, 2019. <http://www.sikhinterfaithvic.org.au/sikhsinoz.html>.
- “Sikhs in the U.S. Armed Forces.” The Sikh Coalition. Accessed January 23, 2019. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/ending-employment-discrimination/sikhs-in-the-u-s-armed-forces/>.
- Silva, Kumarini. *Brown Threat. Identification in the Security State*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016. <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/48132>.
- Singh, Balbir K. “On the Limits of Charhdi Kala: Oak Creek and Sikh Philosophy in an Age of Terror.” *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory* 9, no. 2 (2013): 253–58.
- Singh, Gopal, trans. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Vol. 1*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1960.
- Singh, Gurpreet. “Surrey Vaisakhi Parade Organizers Make History by Recognizing Indigenous Lands.” *The Georgia Straight*, April 28, 2018.

<https://www.straight.com/news/1067461/gurpreet-singh-surrey-vaisakhi-parade-organizers-make-history-recognizing-indigenous>.

Singh, Harbans. "Charhdi Kala." In *The Sikh Encyclopedia*. Accessed December 14, 2018.

<https://www.thesikhencyclopedia.com/philosophy/charhdi-kala>.

———. "Vadda Ghallughara." In *The Sikh Encyclopedia*. Accessed December 14, 2018.

<https://www.thesikhencyclopedia.com/sikh-struggle-against-mughal-empire-1708-1799/vadda-ghallughara>.

Singh, Harinder. "June 1984 Ghallughara Lies List Light." Sikh Research Institute, June 16, 2017. https://www.sikhri.org/june_1984_ghallughara_lies_list_light.

———. *Reviving the Gurdwara*. Sikh Research Institute, 2011.

<https://vimeo.com/32447966>.

Singh, Jaideep. "A New American Apartheid. Racialized, Religious Minorities in the Post-9/11 Era." *Sikh Formations* 9, no. 2 (August 2013): 115–44.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17448727.2013.822138>.

———. "Memory, Invisibility, and the Oak Creek Gurdwara Massacre." *Sikh Formations* 9, no. 2 (August 1, 2013): 215–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17448727.2013.828861>.

———. "No Sikh Jose: Sikh American Community Mobilization and Interracial Coalition Building in the Construction of a Sacred Site." *UCLA Asian Pac. Am. LJ* 8 (2002): 173.

———. "The Death of Islamophobia: The Rise of Islamo-Racism." *Race Files*, February 23, 2016. <https://www.racefiles.com/2016/02/23/the-death-of-islamophobia-the-rise-of-islamo-racism/>.

———. "The Racialization of Minoritized Religious Identity: Constructing Sacred Sites at the Intersection of White and Christian Supremacy." In *Revealing the Sacred in Asian and Pacific America*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&q=the+racialization+of+minoritized+religiou+s+identity%2Bjaideep+&btnG=&as_sdt=1%2C5&as_sctp=.

Singh, Karan Deep. "India Is the Fastest-Growing Source of New Illegal Immigrants to the U.S." *WSJ* (blog), September 22, 2016.

<https://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2016/09/22/india-is-the-fastest-growing-source-of-new-illegal-immigrants-to-the-u-s/>.

Singh, Naindeep. "Ensaaf and Jakara Movement Remember Jaswant Singh Khalra," September 6, 2017.

Singh, Nikky-Guninder Kaur. *Birth of the Khalsa, The: A Feminist Re-Memory of Sikh Identity*. SUNY Press, 2012.

- . “Translating Sikh Scripture Into English.” *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory* 3, no. 1 (June 18, 2007): 33–49.
- Singh, Prabhjot, and Simran Jeet Singh. “Let Sikhs Serve in the U.S. Military.” *The Hill*, August 5, 2013. <https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/religious-rights/315357-let-sikhs-serve-in-the-us-military>.
- Singh, R. P. “How Unique It Is.” *Spirit Of The Sikh* (blog), August 9, 2012. <https://spiritofthesikh.com/2012/08/09/how-unique-it-is/>.
- Singh, Simran Jeet. “A Unique Perspective on Hate-Crimes: The Story of a Convicted Killer.” *The Huffington Post*, September 19, 2012. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/simran-jeet-singh/a-unique-perspective-on-hate-crimes-the-story-of-a-convicted-killer_b_1685020.html.
- Sohi, Seema. “The Ghadar Party.” Text. South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA), May 8, 2018. <https://www.saada.org/tides/article/the-ghadar-party>.
- Solis, Dianne. “Widow, Daughters of Man Slain in 9/11 Hate Crime in Dallas Become Americans.” *Dallas News*, March 16, 2012. <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/news/2012/03/16/widow-daughters-of-man-slain-in-911-hate-crime-in-dallas-become-americans>.
- “Sonny Caberwal.” LinkedIn. Accessed July 17, 2019. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/caberwal>.
- Stack, Liam. “Hate Crime Inquiry Opened Into Vandalism of Sikh Temple in California.” *The New York Times*, December 21, 2017, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/10/us/hate-crime-inquiry-opened-into-vandalism-of-sikh-temple-in-california.html>.
- “Statewide Open Mosque Day Is Planned.” CAIR Oklahoma, March 31, 2018. <https://www.cairoklahoma.com/blog/statewide-open-mosque-day-is-planned/>.
- Steinman, Ronald. “The First Televised War.” *The New York Times*, April 7, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/07/opinion/the-first-televised-war.html>.
- Streets, Heather. *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857–1914*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017. <https://www.manchesterhive.com/abstract/9781847793942/9781847793942.xml>.
- “Suicide Blast Targets Sikhs in Afghan City,” July 1, 2018, sec. Asia. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44677823>.
- “Sundeep Morrison.” Sundeep Morrison. Accessed July 6, 2019. <http://sundeepmorrison.com/>.

- “Support SALDEF’s 5th Annual Langar on the Hill!” SALDEF, July 5, 2018. http://saldef.org/news/support-saldefs-5th-annual-langar-hill/#.XCKn_vx7lz0.
- Tchekmedyan, Alene. “These Three Orange County Malls Share Shoppers’ License Plate Data with Local Police, but Not ICE.” *Los Angeles Times*, July 12, 2018. <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-irvine-company-license-plates-20180711-story.html>.
- “The Murder of Human Rights Defender Jaswant Singh Khalra.” Ensaaf. Accessed February 18, 2019. <https://ensaaf.org/jaswant-singh-khalra/>.
- “The Negro’s Push For Equality.” *TIME*, May 17, 1963.
- “The Sikh in The Darjeeling Limited.” Accessed July 17, 2019. <https://www.rediff.com/movies/2007/oct/31waris.htm>.
- “The War On Immigrants: Shocking Medical Conditions In Immigration Detention.” New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, January 24, 2019. <https://nylpi.org/the-war-on-immigrants-shocking-medical-conditions-in-immigration-detention/>.
- “This Week in Hate: Hate Continues to Rise, Our Communities Continue to Suffer.” Sout Asian Americans Leading Together. Accessed April 20, 2018. <http://saalt.org/category/blog/hate-crimes/>.
- “Three Friends and the Rise of Sikh Political Power | WNYC | New York Public Radio, Podcasts, Live Streaming Radio, News.” *New York Public Radio*. Accessed February 11, 2019. <https://www.wnyc.org/story/long-persecuted-sikh-americans-are-acquiring-power/>.
- “Thundering Words: The Martial Language of Nihangs.” *SikhChic*, October 21, 2010. http://sikhchic.com/history/thundering_words_the_martial_language_of_nihangs.
- “Toronto Suspect Praised ‘incel’ Killer.” *BBC*, April 25, 2018, sec. US & Canada. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-43883052>.
- “Traqueros: Mexican Railroad Workers In The United States, 1870-1930.” Accessed April 29, 2019. <https://www.american-rails.com/traqueros.html>.
- Trumpp, Ernest. *Adi Granth Or The Holy Scriptures Of The Sikhs*. London: W.H. Aleen & Co. and N. Trubner & Co., 1877. <http://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.69690>.
- Ullah, Zahra, and Mitchell McCluskey. “London Muslim Center Collision Investigated as Possible Hate Crime.” *CNN*, September 19, 2018. <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/09/19/uk/uk-muslim-center-collision-intl/index.html>.
- “Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program’s Hate Crime Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).” FBI, April 2018.

- “United States Immigration Detention Profile.” Global Detention Project. Accessed March 12, 2019. <https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries>.
- “Up to One Million Detained in China’s Mass ‘Re-Education’ Drive.” Accessed July 6, 2019. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/09/china-up-to-one-million-detained/>.
- “U.S. Military Is World’s Biggest Polluter.” EcoWatch, May 15, 2017. <https://www.ecowatch.com/military-largest-polluter-2408760609.html>.
- Venuti, Lawrence. “Translation as Cultural Politics: Regimes of Domestication in English.” *Textual Practice* 7, no. 2 (n.d.): 208–23.
- Vercoe, Michelle. “Massa Singh: Cameleer and Resident of 123 Richmond Street, Leederville.” City of Vincent Library. Accessed February 26, 2019. <https://library.vincent.wa.gov.au/local-history-centre/stories-from-our-past/massa-singh-cameleer-and-resident-of-123-richmond-street-leederville.aspx>.
- Vielmetti, Bruce, and Don Walker. “Obama, Romney, Walker Condemn Shooting, Offer Prayers.” *Journal Sentinel*. August 6, 2012. <http://www.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/groups-condemn-shooting-offer-prayers-qc6cgst-165068526.html>.
- Vries, Hent de, and Samuel Weber. *Religion and Media*. Stanford University Press, 2001.
- Wallace, Sarah Isabel. *Not Fit to Stay: Public Health Panics and South Asian Exclusion*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2017.
- Watkins, Eli. “These Republicans Have Criticized Trump’s ‘zero Tolerance’ Immigration Policy.” CNN. Accessed June 21, 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/18/politics/republican-party-family-separation/index.html>.
- Watts, Tim. “Khalsa Diwan Society.” In *Asian American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Allan Austin and Huping Ling. London: Routledge, 2015.
- “We All Walk In Different Shoes.” Kenneth Cole. Accessed July 17, 2019. <http://archive.kennethcole.com/backstory/we-all-walk-in-different-shoes-campaign-fall-2008/>.
- “We Are Sikhs.” National Sikh Campaign. Accessed March 14, 2019. <http://www.sikhcampaign.org/wearesikhs>.
- “We Are The Fire That Will Melt ICE – Rest in Power, Will Van Spronsen.” *Anarchist News*, July 14, 2019. <https://anarchistnews.org/content/we-are-fire-will-melt-ice-%E2%80%93-rest-power-will-van-spronsen-olympia-wa>.

- Wilderson, Frank B. "The Prison Slave as Hegemony's (Silent) Scandal." *Social Justice* 30, no. 2 (92) (2003): 18–27.
- Witt, Lara. "These Are The Companies Profiting From Detaining Migrants At Border Concentration Camps." *Wear Your Voice. Intersectional Feminist Media*, June 26, 2019. <https://wearyourvoicemag.com/news-politics/companies-profit-migrants-detention>.
- "Workplace Religious Freedom Act (WRFA)." Sikh Coalition. Accessed December 13, 2018. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/ending-employment-discrimination/workplace-religious-freedom-act-wrfa/>.
- X, Malcolm. "The Ballot or the Bullet." American Radio Works. Accessed July 18, 2019. <http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/blackspeech/mx.html>.
- Yaccino, Steven, Michael Schwartz, and Marc Santora. "Gunman Kills 6 at Sikh Temple in Wisconsin." *The New York Times*, August 5, 2012, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/06/us/shooting-reported-at-temple-in-wisconsin.html>.
- Young, Adriana Valdez. "Honorary Whiteness." *Asian Ethnicity* 10, no. 2 (June 1, 2009): 177–85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14631360902906862>.
- Yu, Connie Young. "Rediscovered Voices: Chinese Immigrants and Angel Island." *Amerasia Journal* 4, no. 2 (January 1, 1977): 123–39. <https://doi.org/10.17953/amer.4.2.085p252p10142316>.
- Zapotosky, Matt. "Kroger Shooting: Gregory Bush Charged with Hate Crimes in Shooting of Black Customers." *The Washington Post*, November 15, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/justice-dept-brings-hate-crime-charges-against-man-accused-of-shooting-black-customers-at-kentucky-kroger/2018/11/15/ce01bf66-e91d-11e8-b8dc-66cca409c180_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.84ca35ddc51e.