CHAPTER 7

1984 and the Anti-Sikh Pogroms: Gauri Gill's Photo Narrativization of the (Continuing) "Horrors of Those Weeks"

Harveen Sachdeva Mann

1984: India's Orwellian Moment

In his 1995 essay entitled "The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi," novelist Amitav Ghosh writes somewhat belatedly about the November 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom following Indira Gandhi's assassination by her Sikh bodyguards that he was witness to in Delhi. Noting that "nowhere else in the world did 1984 fulfill its apocalyptic portents as it did in India," Ghosh points to the violence of the decades long Khalistan-based, separatist movement in Punjab; the resultant military attack on the Harmandir Sahib (the Golden Temple) in Amritsar; Indira Gandhi's "revenge" assassination by her two Sikh bodyguards; and the widespread retaliatory violence against Sikhs, as well as the Union Carbide Bhopal gas disaster, as evidence of the heinousness of that year.[1] Little wonder, then, that the government-led military assault on the Harmandir Sahib, the Sikhs' holiest shrine,

H. S. Mann (✉)
Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA
e-mail: Hmann@luc.edu

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in June 1984, codenamed Operation Blue Star, has been described as the third Sikh ghallughara (or holocaust) by some commentators, when more than 5,000 Sikhs, both Khalistani militants and innocent civilian pilgrims, were killed.[2] More recently, the November 1984 pogrom, when over 15,000 Sikhs were systematically murdered, has been dubbed the Sikhs' "Kristallnacht" by Parvinder Singh of the UK-based National Union of Journalists' 1984 Truth and Justice Campaign, among others.[3] So much so that in 2013, in the face of the contemporary continuing "conspiracy of silence"[4] among creative writers, political commentators, and the general citizenry alike, regarding the Sikh extrajudicial killings,[5] photographer Gauri Gill revived the metaphor of Orwell's 1984 to underscore yet again the lingering trauma among the Sikh community. Faced as they were—and still are—with the perennial disavowal of complicity in the massacres by the Central Government, the victim-survivors of the Sikh ghallughara have lived for decades with the forever-receding hope of commensurate justice for their families.[6]

To assess what she describes as the "ongoing impact of the 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom in New Delhi" and to "trigger a conversation" to offset the enduring silence around the events, Gill in 2013–2014, 2017, and 2019 published her photo-narrative "notebook" simply entitled *1984* with Kafila, a collaborative team blog of "radical political and media critique."[7] Like Amitav Ghosh, Gill too, in her epilogic frame essay entitled "Jis tann lage soee jane" ("Only she whose body is hurt, knows"), likens the deeply dystopian politics of India in 1984 to its Orwellian counterpart. Commenting on the relative limitations of public and digital media in the year 1984, Gill links the reality of thousands of "missing stories" and "absent justice" to the lack of "24-hour television channels, [the]internet [and] social media," with "only eyewitness accounts, notes and sparse photographs" to fill in the lacunae. But even here dangers abounded for, as in Orwell's totalitarian state, photographers who documented the actual massacre and its aftermath that fateful November were "terrified that their photographs would be made to disappear" from photo-labs by the "all-powerful State, which was itself implicated" in the pogroms,[8] just as witnesses were silenced through threats or hush money. And as Gill notes chillingly, "Images did disappear—and have never since been located. Those that survived may now be used as evidence; or to relive the emotion. At a street exhibition of photographs organized in 2012 by the activist H.S. Phoolka, many of the visitors were weeping involuntarily

even as they used their cell phone cameras to re-photograph the images on display."[9]

A teenager herself in 1984, and born into a Sikh family, Gill, now a prominent Delhi-based photographer, underscores the necessity of resistance against the continued suppression and silencing of the narrative of anti-Sikh atrocities,[10] for she believes deeply that "it is also for those of us who were not direct victims to try and articulate the history of our city, and, beyond that even of our universe."[11] All this because, as she cautions, "[a] world without individual stories, accounts, interpretations, opinions, secrets and photographs is indeed 1984 in the Orwellian sense."[12]

In this context, it is imperative to note that the Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress Party of the 1980s and the contemporary Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi enact what Achille Mbembe dubs a postcolonial "master fiction," which creates its own world of "truth" and "authentic" meaning against which all other forms of social meaning are judged, surveilled, and curtailed as well as punished. Thus, the locus of terror shifts to the postcolonial Indian state, which becomes the apparatus of trauma and violence against minorities, chief among them Sikhs and Muslims. Nationalist politics and religion collude, as terror is mediated by the official press and Hindu supremacist new media outlets, while constitutional democracy, federalism, the larger independent and liberal media, civil society organizations, and even the Indian Parliament are undermined and eroded.[13]

"We Will Keep Fighting, Our Children Will Fight Our Battle. We'll Never Forget": Gauri Gill's *1984*

"We will keep fighting, our children will fight our battle. We'll never forget." These words by one of the survivors of the pogroms living in Delhi's "Widow Colonies" serve as the prefatory quote on the handwritten cover page drawn from the accompanying reporter's notebook in 2009, of the 2014, not un-coincidentally 84-page long iteration of Gill's *1984* "notebook," expanded in each subsequent version.[14] Described as a "documentary text-photographic project" by Kafila, Gill's work is one of those exceptional and rare attempts[15] to re-present and re-memorialize the "memories of that dark time" and the festering wound of the tragic inheritance of the anti-Sikh atrocities of 1984 thirty years—and now in 2021, thirty seven years—on.[16] It is in this context of relative silence, both political and artistic, of national amnesia, and of justice denied,

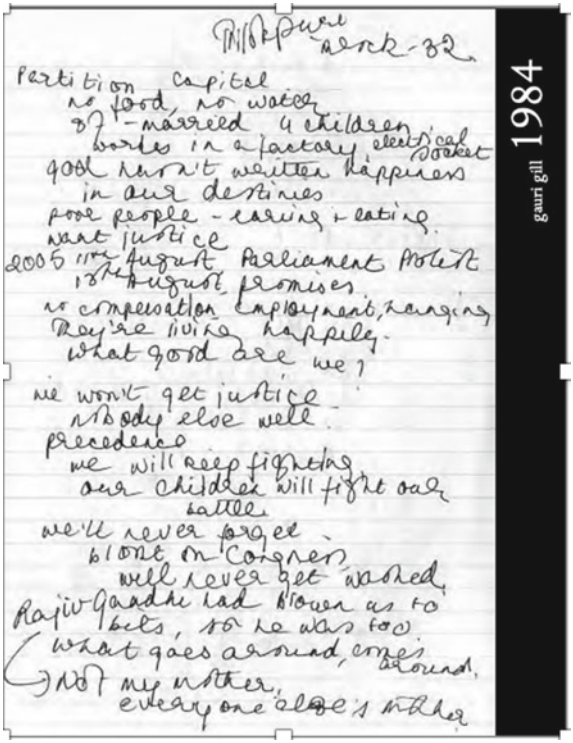

Fig. 7.1 "We will keep fighting, our children will fight our battle. We'll never forget," Gauri Gill, *1984* (Photograph/digital image copyright Gauri Gill, 2019. Courtesy of Gauri Gill, http://gaurigill.com/works.html)

that I examine Gill's work as the ethical counter to "the impossibility of the comprehension of the violence and the terrors of reliving it" which the artist rues.[17] Bringing her work into conversation with Veena Das' anthropological theorization of the "ordinary"/"everyday," Marianne Hirsch's postulation of the legacy of "postmemory" as a vehicle of "repair and redress," and Ariella Azoulay's proposition of spectatorship as "civic duty," I read Gill's photo notebook as such a civic discourse, at once an aesthetic as also profoundly political[18] as well as public act[19] that bears continuing witness for the silenced Sikh citizenry of 1984 (Fig. 7.1).

Trauma: The "Grammar of the Ordinary," Postmemory, and Public Culture

In her 2007 text entitled *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*," ethnographer-anthropologist Veena Das plumbs the far-reaching effects of the brutality of both the Indian Partition of 1947 and the anti-Sikh pogroms of 1984, as each of these two defining events in modern Indian history inserts itself forcibly and interminably "into everyday life…and…into the recesses of the ordinary."[20] Combining meticulous fieldwork, the "words" of her interlocutors and informants, the urban Punjabi refugees of 1947 and the survivors of the Sikh massacres of 1984, respectively, with her critical acumen, and drawing on the philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein and Stanley Cavell in particular, Das diverges from more extensive anthropological inquiry. Instead, she asks the simple and focused but monumental question: "What is it to pick up the pieces to live in this very place of devastation," to live an "everyday life" in the wake of cataclysmic events such as Partition and 1984 Punjab?[21]

Das rues in particular what she dubs "the failure of the grammar of the ordinary" in portrayals not of the actual "eventful" horror of 1984, but of "what happens to the subject and world when the memory of such events is folded into ongoing relations." And she advocates the fashioning of a "shared language," one without "secure [foundational] conventions," out of "such fragile and intimate moments."[22] It is such a "grammar" and "language," Das avers, that will enable the traumatized victims/survivors of Punjab 1984 to "hold hope for each other" in their "ordinary lives," existence that evidences "not some kind of ascent into the transcendent but a descent into everyday life."[23]

Elsewhere, Marianne Hirsch, a prominent Comparatist and leading scholar of memory studies and photography, writes about the concept of postmemory[24] in what is perhaps the ultimate holocaust of the twentieth century, that of Hitler's Nazi-era Europe. Focusing specifically on the function of narrative, including visual cultural reconstructions of these traumatic events, she uses the term "postmemory" to define the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before and to experiences they "remember" only by means of the "stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up." But these memories, Hirsch continues, "were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively so as to seem to constitute

memories in their own right." Thus, postmemory[25] is, according to her, a "structure of inter- and transgenerational return of traumatic knowledge and embodied experience…a consequence of traumatic recall…but at a generational remove."[26]

Even as she admits the challenges of representing horrors that "exceed comprehension," Hirsch considers the transmission of postmemory through visual media as an "activist and interventionist" cultural and political mode of transmission that offers a "form of repair and redress" as it "look[s] back at the past in order to move forward toward the future."[27] Writing about the invaluable role of photography, in particular, in the transmission of postmemory, Hirsch notes that "[m]ore than oral or written narratives, photographic images … enable us, in the present, not only to see and to touch [the] past, but also to try to reanimate it….[P]hotographs…diminish distance, bridge separation, and facilitate identification and affiliation."[28]

Mediating in a sense between Das and Hirsch, visual theorist Ariella Azoulay evinces a deep interest in visual media generally and photography specifically, as Hirsch does. At the same time, she combines her interest in photography as both aesthetical and political art to focus, in Das-ian fashion, on the "political use of photography." The latter, she holds, is undergirded by the "civic duty" of spectators toward the photographed persons, those "dispossessed citizens who, in turn, enable the rethinking of the concept and practice of citizenship."[29] Writing in the context of the Israeli Defense Force's victimization of Palestinians during the Second Intifada of 2000–2005, and deeply indebted to German philosopher Walter Benjamin, Azoulay triangulates the relationship between the camera and photographer, the photographed, and the spectator, to argue for the responsibility of the viewers to bear witness through the photographs to both catastrophe and the quotidian, to macrocosmic events as well as the microcosmic lives of marginalized people. It is thus, Azoulay holds, that spectators can engage ethically with the oppressed and restore a measure of citizenship to them, much as Das would advocate.

The Civil Contract of the Photographer and Her Subjects

Documenting the traumatic legacy of '84 as it inserts itself into the "ordinary life" of the survivors in the Delhi slums where the worst violence took place during those fateful November days, tracing its

"postmemorial" after-life as it were, Gill fulfills to the utmost the "civil contract" between her camera and photographer-self, the photographed subjects, and her audience/viewers. Thus it is that her images perform in understated but powerful, affective narratives the cultural work of re-membering, of establishing the "connection between familial and affiliative postmemory," between the victims' private and the Sikhs' (though not, unfortunately, the entire nation's) public archives to "reembody and to reindividualize [that] cultural/archival memory" that Hirsch theorizes.[30]

The 1984 "Notebooks," as Gill dubs them, include a series of photographs taken in 2005 and 2009 for *Tehelka* and *Outlook* magazines (as well as in 2014 and most recently in 2019 expressly for the Notebooks), in 2005 after the release of the controversial Nanavati Commission Report, which acquitted or otherwise exonerated key politicians and officials of the '84 massacre, and in 2009 to mark the 25th anniversary of the pogrom. But in 2013 and later, Gill also invited a host of other artists, among them writers, journalists, poets, painters, filmmakers, and artists, to provide comments and drawings to accompany her portraits and original captions, thus updating her texts, originally published in mainstream Indian political magazines, in multiple ways, generically, textually, and in terms of media and audience.

In contrast to contemporaneous photographs and video clips of the genocide as it took place, comes Gill's subsequent set of 45 haunting, black-and-white still images of survivors from the resettlement colonies of Trilokpuri, Tilak Vihar and Garhi in Delhi as well as of rallies to protest the Nanavati Commission Report. The accompanying drawings and texts, ranging from brief descriptive headers by the magazine editors to poetic, meditative, sometimes searing observations and essays by writer Arundhati Roy, novelist Jaspreet Singh, film director Anusha Rizvi, and lawyer and legal activist Lawrence Liang, among many others, remark upon the event and its aftermath, affectively, tellingly, and collaboratively but also contrastively in a multitude of genres.[31] As art critic and curator Deeksha Nath notes astutely, whereas the non-photographic texts contain "stories of horrific murder and of official apathy and injustice," Gill's photographs "seem almost romantic in comparison." Presenting "personal portraits" of their subjects in which there is "no violence on view," the photos contrast dichotomously with the written narratives and drawings to "magnify[y] the tragedy: for survivors, life carries on and their wounds are

often not visually present," mimicking here the Das-ian "everyday," the heart-rending "ordinary" that follows deep trauma and devastation.[32]

"Missing Stories," "Absent Justice"

The 45 photographs collated in Gill's *1984* are clustered around the following four dates: August 2005, October 2009, September 2014, and August 2019, with the majority of them taken in 2005 and 2009. But the photographic texts are arranged non-chronologically, as if to signal the breakdown of clock time and quotidian order for the survivors, their lives forever fragmented, shattered, scattered, thereby underlining the deep and lingering trauma of this particular holocaust. Tellingly, one of the earlier iterations of the "Notebooks" opened in exhibition under the title "The 1984 Anti-Sikh Pogroms Remembered" in October 2014 at the Weiner Library for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide, in London. Dubbing the events in November 1984 "genocidal pogroms against the Sikh people in India," the Weiner website notes that "[t]hirty years on …. the silence is slowly breaking. Not just about the damage caused to the justice system, memory and language in India, but also about the individual and collective trauma that exists within Sikh communities across the world."[33]

But even as Gill's photos can be read as testaments to the lingering horror of the '84 Sikh pogroms, paradoxically, the images in their quietude also underline the necessity and return of what Das terms "the everyday," "the ongoing," the "ordinary," as the survivors "pick up the pieces and live in this very place of devastation."[34] It is particularly in the images of women and girl children that we see the "gender-determined division of the work of mourning the results of violence," as Das puts it, as they attend fatefully to "the details of everyday life…that allow life to knit itself back into some viable rhythm"[35] (Fig. 7.2).

The second of the October 2009 photographs in the series, the frame above—if it is regarded devoid of context—appears to be about Punjabi domesticity, lower-middle class existence, and the gendering of "home." The intimate visual text of a young woman picking out vegetables from a vendor's cart draws the spectator into the imagined, mundane life of the woman, as if through the darkened doorway. But the print narrative, both the frame reference of *1984* and Gill's caption as well as brief accompanying essay, disturbs us as it is meant to do, and challenges us to link this "local," "everyday" story of "the ordinary" to national history,

Fig. 7.2 "'Jis tann lãgé soee jãné'…Only she whose body is hurt, knows," Gauri Gill, *1984* (Photograph/digital image copyright Gauri Gill, 2019. Courtesy of Gauri Gill, http://gaurigill.com/works.html)

and to interweave (post)memory into contemporary political thought and action. Gill's caption succinctly tells Nirpreet Kaur's story. On November 2, 1984, Kaur saw

> her father being burned alive … even as the same mob hit her with iron rods. Intent on revenge, she joined the Khalistan movement, and married a militant. Her husband was picked up twelve days after their marriage, never to return; her mother was arrested on charges of 'sheltering a terrorist'; she herself was arrested in 1988 and released in 1996. She has testified repeatedly against Sajjan Kumar, whom she saw inciting a mob to violence.[36]

While the caption maintains a degree of objectivity, it is in her accompanying essay, "'*Jis tann lãgé soee jãné*'…Only she whose body is hurt, knows," appended near the end of *1984*, that Gill evinces deep affect. Writing that when Nirpreet Kaur related her "devastating story to us, she had to have a psychologist present in the room," Gill acknowledges her

own emotional involvement: "I myself felt like leaving the room several times during the two hour-long narration. It was too much to absorb, and all I could do at the end of it was take a photograph. We urged her to write a book, I hope she does someday."[37] It is to fill in such gaps that Gill offers her own efforts, even as she confesses self-critically that her photographs "in themselves are now a kind of artifact, since they were mediated by the mainstream media and had a certain valence in that context. I wondered how they might be viewed removed from it."[38] And so she gives us *1984*, a platform that has evolved over the years, its most recent version, that of 2020, currently archived and available free for distribution on her website gaurigill.com (Fig. 7.3).

Of her photograph above, another one from October 2009, that the Indian-Canadian writer Jaspreet Singh has reproduced in his 2013 novel *Helium*, Gill's caption reads: "Taranjeet Kaur's grandfather Jeevan Singh was killed on Nov 1, 1984. 'A mob of 400-500 people followed my husband and before he could reach a safe house in Pandav Nagar, they knifed him and left him to die on the rail tracks,' recounts Taranjeet's grandmother Surjit, crying uncontrollably. It hasn't been easy since. 'I have spent my life struggling, but I want my granddaughter to study hard,' says Surjit." And whereas Singh reproduces the image acontextually in his novel, in his collaborative inter-generic note to Gill's *1984*, he writes emotionally, autobiographically:

> Does she usually read this way? Always in the same room? […] Why exactly am I moved by this image?/…. Layers of cold ash. In 1984 the two cabinets in the room would have failed to hide the victims. The phone, too, would have been equally helpless (because the cops in Delhi were extremely busy facilitating acts of cruelty). She was not born yet. When I first saw the photograph I felt its silence. Silence filled the whole space. But, soon a detail broke the silence. Her ear. It made me pause, and I heard the hum of painful stories she must have heard over and over. The same ear, I felt, would have preserved the shape of her grandmother's voice. Post-memory — that messy archive of trauma and its transference. Outside the house, ironically, the same ear must have detected ongoing shamelessness and injustice. Collective amnesia.…What book is she reading? Hope it is not a prescribed text of 'history.' "Why should young people know about an event best buried and forgotten"…But this is not the exact reason why the picture wounds me. Something within its space -and accumulated time -is broken and will always remain so.[39]

Fig. 7.3 "Postmemory—that messy archive of trauma and its transference." Gauri Gill, *1984* (Photograph/digital image copyright Gauri Gill, 2019. Courtesy of Gauri Gill, http://gaurigill.com/works.html)

Had Taranjeet Kaur been alive and a teenager in 1984, her *kara* (the steel bracelet on her wrist), her dress (the salwar kameez), and her long, braided hair would have marked her as an observant Sikh, made her vulnerable to assault and rape at the hands of those same murderous Hindu nationalist mobs who killed her grandfather. But now, the progeny in a sense of the pogroms, and the inheritor of the memory of 1984, she

sits studying, head bent, acquiescent to her fate and the majoritarian politics of indifference (at best) and latent violence (at worst) swirling around her outside on the streets. Protected by her broken grandmother, but also hemmed in, bereft of real possibilities in her lower middle-class home, she epitomizes that harrowing, compulsory "descent into everyday life" that Das so emotively points out as the lot of the "refugees-in-place" of the Indian nation-state[40] (Fig. 7.4).

Fig. 7.4 Taranjeet's living quarters, Gauri Gill, *1984* (Photograph/digital image copyright Gauri Gill, 2019. Courtesy of Gauri Gill, http://gaurigill.com/works.html)

Pages later in *1984*, we come upon another angle of Taranjeet's living quarters in the image above, this time with a memorial photo of her grandfather placed on a raised beam among humble objects, hung clothes, a sewing machine (which her mother or grandmother works at to eke out a living for the family), the trappings, literally and symbolically, of unmourned, unremembered, "dispossessed citizen" lives, as Azoulay would describe them.[41] It is through drawing our attention to such intimate details of fragile lives, by "localizing" the "eventful," as Das would put it, by making visible "things that were invisible to us," by articulating the "grammar of the ordinary" in her photographs that Gill offers that "second [essential] narrative" to the official story of 1984.[42]

In the concluding pages of her work, Gill writes of the chasm between the victims and perpetrators of the crime of 1984. "'*Jis tann lãgé soee jãné*'…Only she whose body is hurt, knows." And she ends on a note of hope but also of warning and terror:

> But perhaps it is also for those of us individuals who were not direct victims to try and articulate the history of our city – and universe. A world without personal interpretations, opinions, thoughts, secrets and photographs is indeed 1984 in the Orwellian sense. "We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness"; that place turned out to be a cell in a building where the lights were never turned off, one that was under surveillance both by day and night, and where imagination was outlawed.[43]

As she bears witness to the trauma of the survivors and creates photographic narrative testimonials of the "reinhabiting [of] the space of devastation," both by the victims themselves and partially through her repeat visits to the "spaces" of the Widow Colonies over the years herself, Gill fulfills that "civil contract of photography" and that "civic duty towards the photographed person" that author and photographer Arielle Azoulay holds to be the mark of the ethically engaged participant citizen.[44]

Postmemory in/and the Sikh Diaspora

In this segment of my essay, I focus on a more recent moment, from Vancouver, April 2008, as well as list several other sites of the transmission of 1984 memory to underline the postmemorial presentness and multimodal mediation of the horror-laden past.

On April 28, 2008, 15 Sikh teenagers came to Princess Margaret Secondary School in Surrey, BC, a heavily South Asian city, where 25% of the population are Sikhs, wearing black t-shirts inscribed with a Republic of Khalistan seal, and a quote from Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the leader of the separatist group who was killed in the 1984 attack on the Golden Temple. Whereas school officials banned the students from wearing the shirts on school grounds, others "brushed off the T-shirts as youthful rebellion or dismissed the students as naïve and uninformed" about their history, noted *The Canadian Press*. But the students claimed that they "know the history" of Punjab '84, of the Khalistan movement, of Sikh marginalization and trauma in dominant Indian politics, that they "wanted to make a statement that would be heard," and that they were unambiguously "advocating for an independent Sikh state" and for "freedom in Punjab."[45]

In her timely essay "Making Meaning of 1984 in Cyberspace: Youth answering back to reclaim Sikh identity and nationhood," Professor of Education and human and immigrant rights and peace studies specialist, Rita Verma examines the role of collective political memory—or postmemory as I would dub it, following Marianne Hirsch—for diasporic Sikh youth in particular, who "experience an anger and sense of revolt within their lives and communities." Since few opportunities exist for them to "explore their histories within the school settings," whether in the US, Canada, or UK—the sites of the largest Sikh immigrant populations—or elsewhere, and since they remain marginalized within the host communities, these youngsters seek a "sense of collective identity…nurtured in cyberspace outlets" (44).

That the Surrey incident is not an isolated one but exists within a larger diasporic, postmemorial Sikh context becomes clear very quickly if one looks at the plethora of websites, YouTube videos, blogs, Facebook pages, martyrology art in gurudwara halls, radio talk shows, and even international conferences either dedicated to or heavily focused on 1984 Punjab that have proliferated outside of India, especially around the 10th, 20th, 25th, and 30th anniversaries of the events.[46] While some of the social media sites have been short-lived and become inactive over the years, although they continue to have a long half-life and spectral presence in cyberspace, others, many run professionally, have flourished and accomplished important activist and political work on behalf of the victims of 1984.[47] Such sites have mobilized a sizable segment of the Sikh diaspora (estimated at 3.5 million, of 25–27 million Sikhs worldwide, including

in India), collaborated with human rights organizations, raised funds, or otherwise educated their audiences about the history and culture as well as political demands of the Sikhs, whether in India or in their oftentimes fragile and fraught existence in diaspora.[48]

As a larger cognate to the invaluable work of individual artists like Gauri Gill are the efforts of a non-governmental organization like California-based Ensaaf (Justice), which has labored long and hard to "end impunity and achieve justice" for the victims and survivors of the 1984 Sikh programs. Created in 2004 and registered as a 501©(3) outfit, Ensaaf has battled Indian national and even international amnesia about 1984 by "documenting abuses, bringing perpetrators to justice, and organizing survivors" as they claim in their Mission statement.[49] Started by US-trained attorneys Jaskaran Kaur and Sukhman Dhami, Ensaaf has partnered with Supreme Court and High Court attorneys in India and with such prominent international organizations as Human Rights Watch, Physicians for Human Rights, Harvard Law's Human Rights Program, and the International Center for Transitional Justice. By authoring reports to international agencies, launching social media campaigns like the 2011 "Challenge the Darkness," releasing documentaries and short films showcased globally, leading local marches like the annual Appear for the Disappeared, and most recently, creating a digital record entitled "Mapping Crimes Against Humanity: Enforced Disappearances & Extrajudicial Executions in Punjab, India," based on data collected from primary source interviews, Ensaaf has endeavored to keep not just the memory of 1984 alive in the West as well as in the Indian social imaginary but also to bring very practical results to the survivors through their support for legal cases.

The Belatedness of Public Memorialization in Delhi

Even as the memory of 1984 has increasingly been articulated and preserved by survivor-victims, activists, and artists alike, although sometimes also exploited by politicians for electoral and personal gains, it has become the basis of the socialization of an entire second generation of Sikhs in diaspora. But in India, the pressure to "forget and move on," to repress, erase, and erode the remembrance and the memory of the tragedy has been overwhelming. Whereas one of Indira Gandhi's Sikh assassins was shot dead in 1984 and the other as well as a co-conspirator hanged

in 1989, the major architects of the Sikh pogroms—H. K. L. Bhagat, Jagdish Tytler, Lalit Maken, Dharam Lal Shastri, and others, Members of Parliament all, but also among them Rajiv Gandhi, who instigated and then turned a blind eye to the massacres, and subsequently went on to become the Prime Minister—have not been prosecuted 36 years on (Sajjan Kumar, finally convicted in December 2018, is the sole exception here). Instead, Bhagat, in whose constituency the largest number of Sikhs was killed, was rewarded with the Ministry for Information and Broadcasting in Rajiv Gandhi's new cabinet; Jagdish Tytler was made Civil Aviation Minster; and both Kumar and Tytler were given party nominations to fight the 2004 and 2009 elections by Congress President, Sonia Gandhi. The feeble apology offered in 2005 by the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, himself a Sikh but a "Party man," failed to acknowledge or confront the horror of the organized carnage and refused to concede that the Congress Party was involved.

Unsurprisingly, then, there has been no public monument or memorial built in India to mark the horrific events, not, that is, until January 2017.[50] Suffering many setbacks, exploited by politicians seeking office in Punjab, criticized for its potential to weaken the ostensibly "unified national fabric" of India, the current memorial faced resistance at the hands of the Congress Party as well as the Chief Minister of Delhi, Sheila Dikshit. It was only after Sajjan Kumar's brazen acquittal, at first in 2013, of his role in the 1984 massacre that the building of the memorial got off the ground. Funded notably *not* by the Indian government—which in fact put up as many obstacles as it could, legal and otherwise—or even the Punjab state government, but by the Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee, the 1984 memorial, built on the grounds of Rakabgunj Gurudwara near Parliament House in Central Delhi in plain sight of the halls of power, was finally inaugurated by the widows of five of the victims in January 2017 (Fig. 7.5).

The Sikh Genocide Memorial bears an official plaque of dedication first in Punjabi, then in English, entitled, "Navambar 1984 Sikh Katlayam Yaadgar" and "November 1984 Sikh Genocide Memorial," respectively.[51] Called the Wall of Truth, the site pays tribute not only to those Sikhs who died in that murderous year of 1984, both in June and again in October-November, but also to those non-Sikhs who lost their lives trying to protect their Sikh neighbors, friends, fellow citizens. There are four sculptures—dedicated to the Sikh values of humanity, equality, humility, and tolerance; a wall with the names of the dead etched in; another wall

Fig. 7.5 "'84 De Shaheedan Nu Samarpit" ("Dedicated to the Martyrs of '84"), Gauri Gill, *1984* (Photograph/digital image copyright Gauri Gill, 2019. Courtesy of Gauri Gill, http://gaurigill.com/works.html)

dedicated to those who died but remained unidentified, not just because of the gravity of their wounds and/or because their bodies were charred beyond recognition, but also out of fear of further violence to their families; and a fountain with laser lights rising skyward to mark the journey of their souls (Fig. 7.6).

Fig. 7.6 The wall of truth, Gauri Gill, *1984* (Photograph/digital image copyright Gauri Gill, 2019. Courtesy of Gauri Gill, http://gaurigill.com/works.html)

But some of the victims' families also asked for Indira Gandhi's and Rajiv Gandhi's names to be engraved as "killers" on another plaque alongside this one, so deep is their hurt and so keen their sense of justice denied and of their continued victimization. The plaque reads, in Punjabi and in English, as follows:

> Dastaan-E Indira Gandhi ("The Tale of Indira Gandhi")
>
> Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India in a self-styled dictatorial manner ordered …Operation Blue Star thereby attacking Sri Harmandir Sahib, Sri Akal Takhat Sahib, Sri Amritsar Sahib, where [the] Sikh Sangat [worshippers] had gathered to commemorate [the] Martyrdom day of Sahib Sri Guru Arjun Dev Ji Maharaj, [the] fifth Sikh Guru. While executing this so-called Military Operation, [Indira Gandhi] killed thousands of innocent Sikhs, [and] committed [a] huge sin causing sacrilege to [the] sanctum sanctorum of Sri Darbar Sahib and razing Sri Akal Takhat Sahib to the ground. Hundreds of Sikh Military personnel falsely implicated in sedition cases, were brutally killed after dragging them

> out of their barracks. [The] Sikh Sangat coming from villages was tortured with virtual [siege] laid to prevent Sikhs [from reaching] Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar.
>
> —1984 Sikh Genocide Victims' Families

To ensure justice for these traumatized legions, it is necessary to remember, to memorialize and, like the speaker in Sarah Kofman's poem "Shoah" (Dis-grace) which Jaspreet Singh quotes in his Punjab 1984 related essay "Carbon," to "not forget this Event."[52] It is such an ongoing unforgetting that Gauri Gill performed as she visited the Genocide Memorial in September 2019 and extended her text yet again to include these contemporary scripts of the "horrors of 1984." In her attempt to honor the memory of the victims and survivors of the Sikh genocide, Gill continues to revisit the social and literal spaces occupied by what Veena Das and Arthur Kleinman call "scarred populations," thereby "enabl[ing] stories to break through routine cultural codes to express counterdiscourse that assaults and perhaps undermines the taken-for-granted meaning of things as they are." It is, Das and Kleinman maintain, "[o]ut of such desperate and defeated experiences [that] stories may emerge [which] call for and at times may bring about change that alters utterly the commonplace—both at the level of collective experience and at the level of individual subjectivity."[53] And like Marianne Hirsch, Veena Das, and Ariella Azoulay, Gill shares the anguished "postmemories" of "ordinary lives" through her open-ended "Notebook" and Bibliography of 1984, thereby creating a triadic, crucial relationship between the photographed, the photographer, and viewers/spectators that impels the latter to perform their essential "civic duty" toward "the photographed persons…[those] dispossessed citizens who enable the rethinking of the concept and practice of citizenship."[54]

Coda I: 2020: "The Fourth Crisis of the Republic"[55]

It is the very concept of Indian citizenship that was, tragically, at stake once more in 2020. Writing on January 26, 2020, on the 72nd anniversary of the formation of the Republic of India and the adoption of the Indian Constitution, historian Ramachandra Guha enumerated four key moments of crisis that India has or is passing through, including the wars with China and Pakistan in the early 1960s; Indira Gandhi's declaration of Emergency in the mid 1970s which threatened the very

fabric of Indian democracy; the deadly Hindu-Muslim and caste conflicts of the early1990s; and the (then) current upheaval surrounding the Modi government's passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA),[56] while ignoring the major structural problems of rising unemployment, agricultural distress, public institutional stagnation, and environmental degradation.[57] But even as he rues the self-destructive policies that (have) led to the four "dark phases" above, Guha notes pointedly that "the worst year in the history of the Republic," standing apart from the eras above, "was, *of course* 1984, which saw (among other things) the Indian Army's storming of the Golden Temple, the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the pogrom against the Sikhs, and the Bhopal tragedy."[58]

As justice still remains elusive for the Sikhs whose lives were brutally interrupted, uprooted, or deeply affected in 1984, the Indian government mounted yet another brazen attack, once again on a minority group, this time the Muslims, by passing the CAA and instituting the National Register of Citizens (NRC) requirement.[59] As if the recent Abolition of Article 370, with the resultant reduction of India's only Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir to a Union Territory, governed directly by the Central Government, and the Supreme Court's verdict allowing the building of a massive, new Hindu temple on the site of the demolished Muslim Babri Masjid was not discriminatory and repressive enough, the CAA and NRC combined threaten to disenfranchise large swathes of Muslims even further or, worse still, to render them entirely stateless. On the one hand, these draconian acts pit one set of minorities—this time displaced Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, and even Sikhs—against another set, the Muslims, in a classic case of "divide and rule" that encourages horizontal discrimination and violence against another vulnerable group. On the other hand, such acts further minoritize and demonize India's largest minority group as they consolidate the untrammeled power of the Hindu nationalist BJP and the ruling Narendra Modi government, and decimate India's record on human rights.

Categorically dubbing the CAA "manifestly immoral, in that it singles out…Islam for particularly spiteful treatment," and decrying "this wanton humiliation heaped upon [Indian Muslims] by their own government," Guha wrote at the dawn of 2020 that the key reason for the hasty passage of the CAA through Parliament was "bigotry, the ideological compulsion to rub it in even further to the Muslim citizens of the Republic that they live here on the grace or mercy of the Hindu majority." And yet hope remains for the future of Muslims as fully constitutional and equal citizens

of India, lying not only with those millions of secularist Muslims, but also, and more importantly, with non-Muslim Indians who took to the streets of India in massive numbers in opposition to the Hindu nationalists, to unequivocally reject "the new Act for what it really is—a body blow to the founding ideals of the Republic."[60]

Linking the contemporary horror of supremacist Hindutva policies to the murderous politics of anti-Sikh sentiment in 1984, Hemant Sareen writes perceptively and ominously that, even as "slowly and patchily the moral and ethical contours of that abyss," that "holocaust-in-denial" of 1984, "are coming into relief in our collective consciousness," the "lessons…gleaned…are [chillingly] those imbibed by its most diligent students who have not just surpassed the new normal of 1984 but have harvested it with impunity for political power."[61] Armed with the hubris born of 1984, of crimes against humanity not only unpunished but also rewarded with high political office, Hindu majoritarian ideology has once again stoked the fires of zealotry, a conflagration that can yet be tamped down by adopting the ethical principles contained in the following verse from the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs: "Awal Allah noor upaya kudrat ke sab bande/Ek noor te sab jag upjeya kaun bhalo ko mande." Or, "First, Allah created the light; then, by his Creative Power, he made all mortal beings/From the One Light, the entire universe welled up. So, who is good, and who is bad?" As the first Sikh guru, Guru Nanak, said on attaining enlightenment: "Na koi Hindu, na koi Musalman," "There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim." We are all one.[62]

Coda II: The 2020–2021 Farmers' Protest Movement and "Terrorists"[63]

Since the writing of Coda I above in mid-2020, the hopes of any ethical action on the part of the Modi-led BJP government vis-à-vis minorities generally, and Sikhs in particular, has faded almost completely from view. In February 2021, the hegemonic proclivities of Hindutva nationalism have accelerated, with the government doubling down on its attempts to establish an authoritarian, one-party state, as the *Economist* points out.[64] The most recent evidence of this is the autocratic manner in which three key ordinances relating to the deregulation and privatization of the agricultural sector were passed without parliamentary discussion by the Union Government in June 2020. These "reforms," which would

"break the backbone of the farm sector and give control to the corporates," as Arundhati Roy notes ("New Laws"), impact about half of India's workforce and about 15% of its economy, and disproportionately affect Sikh farmers, as Punjab remains a predominantly agrarian state. The massive farmer protests that have followed—with a peak of 250 million protesters joining the cause nationwide[65]—and that are ongoing even today, have, however, had a very particular sort of fallout for the Sikh farmers of Punjab. Immediately dubbed "anti-national," "seditious," and "terrorist," the Sikhs, many of whom are subsistence farmers and own 2–3 acres of land apiece, have borne the brunt of the government's brutal crackdown. The Haryana police, from the state abutting Delhi, directed by the BJP Chief Minister Majohar Lal Khattar and a Modi supporter, has attacked the protesters with tear gas and water cannons to prevent them from reaching Delhi; their water and food supplies have been cut off; they have suffered from inadequate facilities and medical care; and well over 100 farmers have died either by suicide, from excessive cold, or because some have "vanished," in what are stark human rights violations by the Central and (some) State governments.

And on Republic Day again this year, January 26, 2021, the horrors multiplied. Planting their own man, Deep Singh, among the legitimate, peaceful protestors, the government turned a blind eye while a group of "farmers" breached security at the Lal Qila, the site of the national celebrations. Once inside, they wielded weapons and raised the Nishan Sahib, a Sikh emblematic flag, in an attempt to discredit Sikhs as fundamentalists, Khalistani separatists, terrorists…shades of 1984 all over again, 40 years on. Prime Minister Modi went so far as to complain about this BJP-engineered charade that the Indian national flag had been "insulted" by these planted "protestors," knowing full well that such a comment could ignite a murderous rampage by his followers. And in reporting these scenes, the largely complicit, government-controlled mainstream media, dubbed the "godi media" (a lap(godi)dog media), aided by the strategic shutdown and slowdown of internet servers to block private communications and activist sites, likewise brought Delhi to the brink of yet another ghallugara for Sikhs. As journalist and commentator Sunny Hundal notes in *openDemocracy*,

> Many Sikhs now worry that a second massacre is on the way. They have good reason. "Repeat 1984" has become the rallying cry of some Hindu nationalist social media users who support Modi's government.

> [And] some …'Hindutva' [activists] … have already started holding menacing rallies outside Sikh places of worship…[with] implicit sanction from the top. ("Why Indian Farmers' Protests have Sikhs Fearing Violent Attacks.")[66]

Thus, as the 2021 BJP- and Hindutva-led government continues to use the rhetoric of "enemies within and without," labeling peaceable Sikhs who dare to question governmental policies and legal mandates that would end their very (way of) being, "terrorists," Khalistani separatists, and Pakistani agents, they brazenly sponsor the very acts of terrorism they claim to be battling. The discourse of terrorism emanating out of 1984 Punjab continues to be (ab)used by the contemporary Indian state in a demonstration of the "gross distortion in reality [that] completely obscure[s] what is much worse: the official…evil that has been visited so deliberately and so methodically"[67] on Sikhs and other minorities, first in '84 and now in only somewhat smaller measure in 2020–2021.

Notes

1. Amitav Ghosh, "The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi," *Incendiary Circumstances: A Chronicle of the Turmoil of Our Times* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 187. For details about the Bhopal disaster, see, for example, Ingrid Eckerman, *The Bhopal Saga: Causes and Consequences of the World's Largest Industrial Disaster* (Hyderabad, India: Universities Press, 2005). https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B0FqO8XKy9NRZDNzTkZQeVJQbE0/edit?pli=1.
2. For details about the first two ghallugharas, see Darshan Singh Tatla, "The Morning After: Trauma, Memory, and the Sikh Predicament Since 1984," *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory* 2, no. 1 (2006), 57–88. https://doi.org/10.1080/17448720600779869.
3. Others too have used this term, as noted by Parvinder Singh in his 2009 pamphlet-cum-report published under the eponymous title "1984 Sikhs' Kristallnacht" by Ensaaf, a nonprofit organization working to "*end impunity* and *achieve justice* for mass state crimes in India, with a focus on Punjab" (http://www.ensaaf.org/pdf/reports/kristallnacht.pdf).
4. Ashis Nandy, qtd. in Pranay Sharma, "Our Selective Archive," *Outlook India*, October 17, 2011.
5. This is an issue I consider in some detail in my article, "Our Periodic Table of Hate': The Archive of 1984 Punjab in Jaspreet Singh's *Helium*," *Sikh Formations* 14, no. 1 (2018), 26–54.

6. Victims' families and survivors were given limited monetary compensation by the Central Government. Most perpetrators of the pogroms still roam free, some of them in ministerial and other senior government appointments. Sajjan Kumar was the only one of them finally convicted for his crimes in December 2018, although a re-appeal of his prison sentence is in the works.
7. Gauri Gill, "*Jis Tann Laage Soye Jaane*—Delhi November 1984, 30 Years Later," https://kafila.online/2014/11/01/jis-tann-lage-soee-jane-delhi-november-1984-30-years-after-gauri-gill/. The most recent, fuller version of *1984*, "re-released" in November 2019, and now comprising 116 pages, including 45 black and white photographs by Gill, is available on Gill's website at http://gaurigill.com/works.html. Currently, the text/project of 1984 is dated in Gill's accompanying 1984 Bibliography as "2014-ongoing." The copyright note reads as below:

> **1984** This notebook about the anti-Sikh pogrom that occurred in New Delhi in 1984 contains photographs taken by Gill in 2005, 2009, 2014 and 2019 alongside captions from the Indian print media in which they first appeared and text responses by 41 artists - including writers, poets and film makers. The photographs from 2005 appeared in *Tehelka* (with Hartosh Bal); and from 2009 in *Outlook* (with Shreevatsa Nevatia). The corresponding captions are roughly as they were inscribed in the published reports. Text responses are by Amitabha Bagchi, Jeebesh Bagchi, Meenal Baghel, Sarnath Bannerjee, Hartosh Bal, Amarjit Chandan, Arpana Caur, Rana Dasgupta, Manmeet Devgun, Anita Dube, Mahmood Farouqui, Iram Ghufran, Ruchir Joshi, Rashmi Kaleka, Ranbir Kaleka, Sonia Khurana, Saleem Kidwai, Pradip Kishen, Subasri Krishnan, Lawrence Liang, Zarina Muhammed, Veer Munshi, Vivek Narayanan, Monica Narula, Teenaa Kaur Pasricha, Ajmer Rode, Arundhati Roy, Anusha Rizvi, Nilanjana Roy, Inder Salim, Hemant Sareen, Priya Sen, Shuddhabrata Sengupta, Ghulam Mohammed Sheikh, Nilima Sheikh, Gurvinder Singh, Jaspreet Singh, Madan Gopal Singh, Paromita Vohra.
>
> Suite of drawings by Gagan Singh. Endpiece drawings by Venkat Singh Shyam.
>
> Released on Kafila.org in April 2013, re-released in November 2014, November 2017, November 2019; 22.86 × 17.78 cms; 116 pages, 45 black and white photographs; 24 drawings; free to download, print out, staple and distribute.

8. Gill "Jis Tann Laage."

9. Gill, "Jis Tann Laage."
10. As Arundhati Roy recounts in her recent publication *The End of Imagination* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016), 10. "There have been pogroms in India before (the 2002 Gujarat massacre of Muslims), equally heinous, equally unpardonable…the massacre of Muslims in Nellie, Assam, in 1983, under a Congress state government," "the massacre of…Sikhs following the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984, by Congress-led mobs in Delhi," the "massacre, in 1993, of…Muslims by the Shiv Sena in Mumbai, following the demolition of the Babri Masjid. In these pogroms too, the killers were protected and given complete impunity". In addition, she points to a chilling fact about the continuing and very real threats to Indian *citizens* by its own government: "soldiers are not just deployed on the Siachen Glacier or on the borders of India….there has not been a single day since Independence in 1947 when the Indian Army and other security forces have not been deployed *within* India's borders against what are meant to be their 'own' people—in Kashmir, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Assam, Junagadh, Hyderabad, Goa, Punjab, Telengana, West Bengal, and now Chhattisgarh, Orissa, and Jharkhand" (28).
11. Gill "Jis Tann Laage."
12. Gill "Jis Tann Laage."
13. For additional information about the role of the official press in "mediating" Hindutva terror in India, see especially Rohit Chopra, *The Virtual Hindu Rashtra: Saffron Nationalism and New Media* (Harper Collins, 2019); Anustup Basu, *Hindutva as Political Monotheism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020); *Cultural Entrenchment of Hindutva: Local Mediations and Forms of Convergence*, eds. Daniela Berti et al. (Routledge, 2011); and Maya Mirchandani, "Digital Hatred, Real Violence: Majoritarian Radicalisation and Social Media in India" (Observer Research Foundation Occasional Paper 167, August 2018), among others.
14. The most recent version, consulted on February 8, 2021, runs 116 pages.
15. For a listing of works dealing with the 1984 Sikh pogroms, see Gauri Gill, "1984 Bibliography," http://www.gaurigill.com/works.html.
16. Gill "Jis Tann Laage."
17. Gill "Jis Tann Laage."
18. Even though Gill denies that her work is politically motivated, she notes about another one of her photographic projects, the collaborative series in 2015 entitled *Fields of Sight*, that she attempted to convey the "terror" of the Worli, the Advisi, indigenous inhabitants of Ganjad village, by adopting a "monochromatic palette to make the encounter more intense and precise." Further, she draws attention to the "histories, politics and world views embedded within the expression of…forms" and notes that her "own language" of camera and negative "reflect[s] what is apparent in

[her] mind." Quoted in Michael Collins, "Another Way of Seeing: Gauri Gill and Rajesh Vangad," *Granta*, March 7, 2015.

19. It is worth noting that the text of *1984* and the "1984 Bibliography" are available for free download, printing, and distribution at Gill's website, http://gaurigill.com/works.html.
20. Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 1.
21. Das, 7.
22. Das, 7–8.
23. Das, 15.
24. Hirsch first used the term in an article on Art Spiegelman's *Maus* in 1992–1993, entitled "Family Pictures: Maus, Memory, and Post-memory." Since then, she has theorized and written about the experience of postmemory extensively, most recently in *The Generation of Postmemory*: *Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaus*t (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).
25. The concept of prosthetic memory, articulated by Alison Landsberg, has relevance here as well. Landsberg writes: "[M]odernity makes possible and necessary a new form of public cultural memory. This new form of memory, which I call prosthetic memory, emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past, at an experiential site such as a movie theater or museum. In this moment of contact, an experience occurs through which the person sutures himself or herself into a larger history.... In the process that I am describing, the person does not simply apprehend a historical narrative but takes on a more personal, deeply felt memory of a past event through which he or she did not live. The resulting prosthetic memory has the ability to shape that person's subjectivity and politics." *Prosthetic Memory* (Columbia UP, 2010), 2.
26. Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 5–6.
27. Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 6.
28. Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 215–216.
29. Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008), 20, 16–17.
30. Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," reprinted in Liliane Weissberg and Karen Beckman (eds.), *On Writing with Photography* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013). Hirsch continues, "More than oral or written narratives, photographic images…range from the indexical to the symbolic…to diminish distance, bridge separation, and facilitate identification and affiliation. When we look at photographic images…we look not only for information or confirmation, but for an intimate material and affective connection. We look to be shocked (Benjamin), touched, wounded, and pricked (Barthes's punctum) and torn apart (Didi-Huberman)....Small, two-dimensional,

delimited by their frame, photographs minimize the disaster they depict and screen their viewers from it. But in seeming to open a window to the past, and materializing the viewer's relationship to it, they also give a glimpse of its enormity and its powers. They can tell us about our own needs and desires (as readers and spectators) as they can about the past world they presumably depict," 215–216.

31. As with Jaspreet Singh's novel *Helium*, Gill has over the years reconstructed her original photographs into a multi-generic "archive" of the horrors of 1984. What I have written elsewhere about Singh's novel is applicable to Gill's work as well: "*Helium*…articulates the lingering trauma of the Sikhs and challenges the image of a unified, multiculturalist, secular-humanist postcolonial Indian state….*Helium* is a hybrid of fiction, survivor and relief worker testimonials, photographs, drawings, documentary, thriller, and intertextual narrative—because the horror of 1984 cannot be recounted through a single medium or genre or voice." Mann, "Our periodic table of hate," 26.
32. Deeksha Nath, "Violence and Resistance," *Frontline*, March 19, 2014.
33. "The 1984 Anti-Sikh Pogroms Remembered," http://www.wienerlibrary.co.uk/Whats-On?item=154.
34. Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*, 6.
35. Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*, xiii–xiv.
36. Gill, *1984*.
37. Whereas the comment here is taken from an earlier version of *1984*, the most recent text is updated as follows: "For us, it was too much to fully absorb. I did not know what to do with the weight of her words." Gill, *1984*, re-released November 2019. Similarly, the detail that for a while, Nirpreet Kaur ran an NGO, Justice for Victims, is omitted from the latest version, probably because the NGO is now defunct and the hoped-for book by Kaur has not materialized.
38. Gill, *1984*.
39. Gill, *1984*.
40. Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*, 15.
41. Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 17.
42. Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*, 12, 141, 142.
43. As quoted in Gill, *1984*.
44. Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 17.
45. Rita Verma, "Making Meaning of 1984 in Cyperspace," 44.
46. It is important to note here that even though such "terrorist" organizations as the International Sikh Youth Federation, the Babbar Khalsa, and the Council of Khalistan emerged in diaspora, only a minority of the diasporic new media sites are dedicated to the Khalistan separatist movement. For details about Sikh nationalism, identity, Khalistan, and the

post-militancy era, see, for example, Harnik Deol, *Religion and Nationalism in India: The Case of the Punjab*, London: Routledge, 2000, and Gurharpal Singh, *Ethnic Conflict in India: A Case-Study of Punjab* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

47. Here is a brief selection of such sites: Ensaaf at https://ensaaf.org/ and https://data.ensaaf.org/; Witness84 at http://witness84.com/site/; and Sikhs for Justice at http://www.sikhsforjustice.org/, among others.
48. Especially in post-9/11 and recently Trump-era USA, turbaned, observant Sikhs have borne the brunt of anti-Muslim sentiment at the hands of the uninformed, "ignorant" bigots, racists, racialists, ethno-nationalists, supremecists, lumpens, who equate a turban, any turban, and brown skin with Islam, whereas Eastern European or Turkish Muslims, for example, pass as "white" and therefore go unharmed. Not that any member of a collectivity should be harmed because of the violence of a few, of course, but tragically such race and religion-based discrimination and violence—whether in the workplace or at home, on the streets or in schools, at airport security checkpoints or in policy decisions—has only accelerated since the 2016 presidential election. A September 2018 *Guardian* report says that the Trump presidency is to blame for a 17% spike specifically in anti-Sikh violence, with at least one-fifth of the perpetrators mentioning Trump, or a Trump policy, or a Trump campaign slogan. Lawyer, civil rights activist, and faith leader Valarie Kaur concurs, pointing out that "[t]he current surge is the most dangerous we have seen, because it is fueled by an administration that has mainstreamed profiling and bigotry in words and actions….We [Sikh-Americans] are five times more likely today to be targets of hate than before 9/11." As quoted in Andrew Gumbel, "The violence is always there."
49. Ensaaf, "Mission," https://ensaaf.org/mission.
50. The Tilak Vihar Sikh survivors, in what is infamously dubbed the "Widow Colony," have had a very modest, privately maintained Shaheedi (Martyrs') Memorial for some years, in which they have housed photographs and lists of the dead and disappeared. Gauri Gill photographed some of the Colony residents and the Memorial in 2014 and included these images in her text *1984*.
51. The work of Ann Rigney, a memory studies scholar, who has written widely about monuments and cultural memory, about the material(ized) presence of the past in the physical environment is of relevance here.
52. Jaspreet Singh, "Carbon." Here is the full quote from Kofman: "Shoah! this word full of tenderness,/Now terrible,/Compels us to silence/Scha, still,/one says in Yiddish,/Shh! shh! one says in French./Shoah makes all voices stop speaking,/Open mouth screaming in anguish…this mute cry that no word/Could soothe,/that bears

witness, while suffocating,/To the unnamable, to the ignoble immensity/Of this even without precedent…/This happened…/It must be said….Dis-grace that the Nazis [or Hindu nationalists]/Believing themselves gods/In their insane will to power/Thought they had the power to grant:/Extermination…elimination without trace/Of these dregs, these lice…We will not pardon [faire grace] …for this crime,/Render it null, make it un-happened,/Nullify it in forgiveness and forgetting….So that those who died…May not be the last …/that their memory may not be murdered/Let us not forget this Event!" Sarah Kofman, *Selected Writings*, Translated by Georgia Albert (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 245–246.

53. Veena Das and Arthur Kleinman, "Introduction," Veena Das et al. (eds.), *Remaking a World: Violence, Social Suffering, and Recovery* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2001), quoted in Das, *Life and Words*, 217.
54. Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 16–17.
55. Ramachandra Guha, "The Fourth Crisis of the Republic," *Hindustan Times*, January 26, 2020.
56. In brief, the CAA, passed by the Indian Parliament in December 2019 and marking the first time that religion has been used as a criterion for citizenship under the Indian nationality law, provides a path to legal citizenship for illegal Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, but Muslims are expressly excluded from eligibility.
57. Guha, "The Fourth Crisis of the Republic."
58. Emphasis added. Guha, "The Fourth Crisis of the Republic."
59. The NRC, which ostensibly seeks to deport illegal migrants, demands complex legal documents as valid proofs of citizenship. Poor Muslims who have no access to such documents can be rendered stateless under these stringent requirements, whereas other religious groups in similar circumstances can then apply for expedited citizenship under the CAA.
60. Ramachandra Guha, "Why the CAA Is Illogical." For international coverage of the pitfalls of the CAA, see *The Economist*, "Intolerant India: Narendra Modi Stokes Division in the World's Biggest Democracy," January 23, 2020, https://www.economist.com/leaders/2020/01/23/narendra-modi-stokes-divisions-in-the-worlds-biggest-democracy.
61. Gill, *1984*.
62. It is important to note that Nanak was born a Hindu, and that even though Sikhism, the new religion he preached, is quite distinct from both Hinduism and Islam, it incorporates beliefs and vocabulary from both these antecedent faiths. In fact, Sikh scriptures, in their respect for all world religions and faith traditions, sometimes even label the Universal Creator "Allah," as in the verse quoted above, and include the teachings of two Sufi Muslim poets and thirteen Hindu sant (saint) poets.

63. For background and details of the current farmer protests, see the following India-based publications: *The Caravan, Wire, Scroll* and *The Indian Express*. Since print media and the internet is controlled and/or censored by the Central government, liberal social media sites and Instagram hashtags like Kisan Ekta Morcha and Farmbill Protests are invaluable sources of information.
64. "India's diminishing democracy: Narendra Modi threatens to turn India into a one-party state," *The Economist, November 28, 2020.*
65. Iris Kim. "Opinion," *Business Insider*, January 2, 2021, 2.
66. Gill herself likens the events of late 2020 to Punjab 1984 as well as *Orwell's 1984* in the latest update to the Notebooks: "Among the tragic events of recent days in India, 1984 has been invoked repeatedly in various contexts—state complicity against minorities; using violence to mobilise majoritarian populations electorally; breakdown of institutions including the police and administration; false equivalences that convert one-sided pogroms into two-sided riots; justice denied…. A world…in which the narrative is entirely subsumed and controlled by the all-powerful State and its willing henchmen, or by a dominant majority, would indeed form 1984 in the Orwellian sense" ("Jis tann lage").
67. Here I am borrowing from and altering the references in Edward Said's 2002 essay entitled "Punishment by Detail," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, August 8–14, 2002.

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