

Formations of the Corridor: A Border Christology

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Abstract On November 9, 2019, celebrating the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, Pakistan and India inaugurated the opening of a border corridor – the Kartarpur Corridor. This article traces the political rationality that undergirds the corridor by questioning state intervention and the exception – all of which rely upon the corporate institution that is Christianity. I then examine how the corridor is said to correspond with alternative cartographies thereby removing the instability of sovereign decision. I end by considering how celebration of the corridor signals a slippage between the concepts of “limit” and “border”.

“Thus, economic theology has everything to do with blood.”

—Gil Anidjar¹

I. Introduction

In November 2018, foundation stones were laid for a border corridor between Pakistan and India in both nation-states. A year later, on November 9, 2019, in celebration of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh tradition, both nation-states inaugurated the opening of the corridor. The corridor connects Kartarpur in Punjab province of Pakistan, a town established by Guru Nanak, to Dera Baba Nanak Sahib in Gurdaspur District of Punjab (India). Kartarpur holds historical importance for Sikhs as it is the site of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur which is built on the site where Guru Nanak Dev Ji passed away. Established through this history, the corridor was met with applause as Sikhs and other devotees could now visit Kartarpur without a visa and, ostensibly, state micro-management.

The opening of the corridor raises multiple questions. But, despite calls to decolonize knowledge formation in the academy, it seems that one cannot go without providing explanations of what have been turned into minority religious formations. Before one can consider the Sikh tradition, one has to provide it an epistemic place in the given order of things, even if it is a transgressive one.² So let me begin with a slightly digressive and, ultimately, inadequate explanation about the

Sikh tradition—even though explanations might have reached their limit. The Sikh tradition originated—the problem of origins notwithstanding—in the fifteenth century with an anti-foundational gesture by Guru Nanak, who declared “there is no Muslim and there is no Hindu.” Instead, he offered another path, which came to be known as *Sikhi* amongst his followers.³ After years of travel, Guru Nanak established a town, Kartarpur, in present-day Narowal District of Pakistan, where he lived for twenty years with his wife and children.⁴ Rather than spreading his teachings through continuous movement, Guru Nanak became a householder and built institutions, such as the common free kitchen (*langar*), initiation ritual (*charan pahul*), and the continuation of the guruship, central to the consolidation of the Sikh tradition, Guru Nanak’s teachings took hold, with their focus on rethinking the attachments of the self, producing self-loss. The Sikh tradition thrived as successive Gurus further expanded Guru Nanak’s institutions, ultimately leading to the creation of the military-spiritual order, the Khalsa, central to *Sikhi* today.⁵

Colonial rule, however, fundamentally altered the Sikh tradition, as the diagnosis by scholars of colonialism goes. Traditions became classified as “religions,” producing, in turn, communal identities. Against these communal identities, “fluid boundaries” took hold as a category of historical analysis, especially since history provided a balm of tolerance to what was seen as a violent present. But historicizing *Sikhi* meant reducing it to a context in order to produce a historical fact. This writing of history denied the possibility of Guru Nanak’s singularity and distinctive praxis since it was always already reduced to its historical parameters.⁶ Guru Nanak’s legacy as an institution builder was undone and he became one of many traveling saints in the subcontinent with a similar message, rendered by scholars and nationalists alike as *bhakti* (devotion)—providing a resource to integrate the nation and region.⁷ This integrated nation emerged materially through Partition, which further produced great violence as the Radcliffe line cut through Punjab. For Sikhs, Partition violently separated them from their institutions and places of worship, including Kartarpur Sahib, while denying them political autonomy.

The corridor attempts to undo these sharp borders by allowing Sikhs and devotees to visit Kartarpur Sahib. For many, this opportunity indicates the beginning of a possible fulfillment of Guru Nanak’s universal and syncretic message of religious harmony that undoes the stark boundaries between communities inaugurated by colonial rule and concretized by Partition. Is it possible to rethink this universal political affirmation grounded in the historical recovery of Guru Nanak by linking it to an impossibility rather than the permissibility of crossing? This article begins to rethink this affirmation by questioning

the political rationality that undergirds the opening and celebration of the Kartarpur Corridor. In this reading, following Nikolas Rose and David Scott, what is at stake is neither to applaud the opening of the corridor nor to condemn it as ideology.⁸ The goal, instead, is to consider how the rationalities of governance articulate themselves in the formation of the corridor.

Therefore, against locating a pristine originary moment without boundaries that incites a political project striving for its synchronization through historical recovery, this article considers how, as Scott writes, “claims about the presence or absence of boundaries are *made*, fought out, yielded, negotiated” in a particular conjuncture.⁹ I do not provide a historical tracing for instrumental purposes in the present nor do I commend recognition from two nation-states of a desirable past. Rather, I examine the location in which such claims take place, our own problem-space, which requires that we pause and consider what is being disseminated in the celebration of the corridor.

What is being disseminated is *religion* and, perhaps counterintuitively, Christianity. Though one might desire indigenous “religions” to make sense of the corridor, one cannot think about religion and its double, the secular, without first considering Christianity. As it spread, colonizing, civilizing, and converting the world since 1492, Christianity granted other communities and traditions it confronted “the name it had only ever attributed to itself, the very name of ‘religion,’” while it freed itself and reincarnated as the secular.¹⁰ Recall how one particular religion “turned against itself, as it were, emancipating itself as if by fiat, by renaming itself ‘religion’ rather than preserving the name it had long ago given itself as *vera religio*: Christianity.”¹¹ Against this elision, Talal Asad has importantly argued, “the entire phenomenon [of religion] is to be seen in large measure in the context of Christian attempts to achieve a coherence of doctrines and practices, rules and regulations.”¹² Christianity, therefore, as Gil Anidjar has it, must “be conceived as extending well beyond matters of doctrine and ideology.”¹³ Of course, Christianity is absolved in its *liquidation* – more Anidjar – but it is central for us to understand the postcolonial nation-state, especially since so many problems emerge with the question of “religion.”¹⁴ The concern then is not with Christian history and all its diversity and heterogeneity, but with the world Christianity makes possible, what it necessitates in its integrity as a corporate institution and how the terms of understanding are set by its liquidated theological requirements.¹⁵

I begin this exploration of Christianity and the corridor by examining how the nation-state functions in relation to exceptions – revealing both the nation-state’s reach and limit, resolution and irresolution, vigor and fragility.¹⁶ And yet thinking about the corridor as

exception, I examine how sovereign decision (political theology) and the rule *recede* (but do not disappear) as a central premise in the political rationality of the corridor as economic theology and an administrative praxis take hold. I then attend to the relationship between brotherhood, blood, and the state at the corridor. In the formation of the corridor, I argue, the receding of the sovereign creates a corridor that administers itself through the logic of fraternization, which, in turn, circumscribes the possibility of memory. And, significantly, by invoking the fraternal, the power and limitations embedded within sovereignty are absented by creating a consistency with the norm's coincidence with the fact and, because facts claim dominion over the past, memory. The corridor, therefore, is a site of veridiction, a truth, by which it is governed, rather than a site of jurisdiction.¹⁷

I end by considering how celebration of the corridor signals a slippage between the concepts of "limit" and "border" that further entrenches the posited consistency of sovereign decision. By advancing Guru Nanak's teachings as a provocation on boundaries and their crossings, this endless speech about Guru Nanak sutures the cut in sovereign power by creating allowances within an expanding state jurisdiction. By bridging the gap, rather than leaving Guru Nanak's teaching as a cut, the parasitical relation of memory and the corridor ties Guru Nanak's teachings to an unimpeded universality. I conclude not by reinstating meaning, reaffirming homogeneous mystical experience or the detailing of a history, but by thinking about limits and the experience of the impossible in hope of leaving open a crack in our map of the world.

II. Exceptions

Let me begin, however, with the exception and the nation-state. The nation and state are two concepts in a trinity—joined by capital—that have become "available, sustainable, and readable in their multifarious structure and historical development," Anidjar writes, "by the way of blood, Christian blood."¹⁸ The exception emerges from this bloody history in which the "salvific activity for government of the world [*oikonomia*] acquires the meaning of exception"; it signals, to simplify, God's influence in administering the immanent world, in a complex but undeniably Christian history that Giorgio Agamben has detailed.¹⁹ The ability to declare an exception, however, is not a sign of juridical reach, the transcendent fullness of sovereign power (political theology), nor does it demonstrate the consistency of a prior rule of law that has been suspended. Instead, the exception is "defined as a decision that does not apply law strictly, but 'makes use of the economy' [*oikonomia*],"²⁰ which, "generically designates divine activity and government."²¹

God recedes and lets the world govern itself through his administrators. Theological economy, *oikonomia*, in this sense, is “the very praxis by means of which God arranges divine life, articulating it into a Trinity, and the world of creatures, conferring a hidden meaning upon every event.”²² There is the promise of salvation through the Trinity and incarnation, which creates a spontaneous government in cooperation. As Devin Singh explains, “incarnation reveals the cooperative wisdom of the heavenly sovereign and the divine administrator” as the Son and Holy Ghost administer the world toward redemption as the sovereign recedes.²³ This coordination between Father and Son, the transcendent and immanent, undoes the stark tension of sovereignty and government since it is overcome through an adaptive administrative praxis [*potestates*] irreducible to pre-established norms of the law while still tied to the exalted sovereign [*auctoritas*].²⁴ Christ is necessary as he signals an intervention, incarnation, to create a harmonious, noninterventional, exchange between God and world.²⁵ Christ, Mark C. Taylor argues, is “something like a token of exchange, which restores the balance of payments between the divine and the human.”²⁶

This exchange becomes redemptive through the activity of the Holy Spirit, most notably in the Eucharist.²⁷ As Taylor continues, no longer confined to intradivine relations, Spirit “spreads to incorporate believers in the economy”; the wafer is but one example.²⁸ Or, Anidjar elaborates succinctly, “Blood, which is to say, money, is the site of anthropophagy (or theophagy) turned economic theology.”²⁹ The exception, *oikonomia*, then becomes essential in government as law and life, transcendence and immanence, collide, rather than being separated, while premised on a deferred salvific and glorified self-regulation.³⁰ In short, the circular exchange between the rule and exception promises a harmonious Christian and ontologically secure world except, recall, for those who are outside this community of blood.³¹

Put differently, what should be a harmonious exchange between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit generates blameworthiness within the population when the debt produced by this economy is not balanced through confession, or partaking in the Eucharist, for example. This is so since the exchange is premised on freedom, not necessity. Structured by an order of moral entrapment parceling blame on to the individual, the promise of salvation and its accordant context beckons as balm to what now has become an injury of being. To follow Adam Kotsko, in this logic, sinful humans begin “in a state of moral dereliction from the very first moment of their existence” but “have the opportunity to benefit from the divine economy of salvation.”³²

In this functioning of economy, which crafts an immanent order correlated to transcendence, the question arises, following Anidjar, “For what after all is the rule” from which the exception is character-

ized as a “separating cut or decision”?³³ Rather than a neat separation, the exception is already embedded within the norm and articulated in the mystery of economy in the world. To repeat: against consistency and sovereign decision, the exception, economic theology, produces an administrative praxis, which is itself, as Judith Butler calls it, “a paralegal universe that goes by the name of the law.”³⁴

Decidability, not mystery, however, is crucial to borders. Ananya Kabir claims, though “the postcolonial subject sought to restore stability by collectively investing in the outward signifiers of achieved nationhood,” such as national maps and the sanctity of political borders, they remain marred by contradictions irreducible to the political imaginings of nationhood.³⁵ These contradictions and anxieties, thus, make borders a continual site of administrative decision even in the everyday practice of entry and security since, to expand, there is no possibility of a secured rule from which a sovereign can decide, as Mark Salter has it.³⁶ In this space of the everyday decision, irresolution comes to the fore. This is particularly so in a borderland, such as the border between India and Pakistan, since it is, Kabir continues, “a ghostly space of alternative cartographies” which “reveals the epistemic uncertainty of the Indo-Pak border *and* the nationalisms it precipitates.”³⁷

This indeterminacy is masked in the cartographic and juridical order through various strategies, including the insistence upon cartographic resolution through the sovereign decision of two autonomous nation-states; the militarization of borders is but one example since the sovereign recedes, but does not disappear. Though the corridor as an exception to allow free movement against the securitized border opens through a sovereign decision and an extension of the daily task of administrative border adjudication, it is presented as one that crucially coincides with memory and counter-memory. The exception of the corridor within the border jurisdiction between India and Pakistan is said to correspond with glorious alternative cartographies, thereby removing both the power and failure of sovereign decision, rendering it inoperative.

This rendering inoperative of the sovereign reveals how the exception in the postcolonial nation state is not merely a continuation of the colonial state’s logic. I am not proclaiming historical ruptures, but only that the colonial template is not all-encompassing, since a different set of questions emerge in the postcolonial nation-state.³⁸ In other words, today, the legal exception is not only an intervention that strives to maintain the ideal of the norm while separating it from the fact of (post)colonial violence.³⁹ If instead, following Samera Esmeir, the colonial state used the strategy of nonintervention-inviting-intervention in order to keep its ideals pristine, in the postcolonial state there is

also intervention-signaling-non-intervention—a recession of the state enacted through the law’s very interference, its final manifestation in the world.⁴⁰ This recession, in turn, promises a redemptive correspondence between, rather than necessitated separation of, ideal and fact, norm and life. It offers the fulfillment of liberalism’s promise of the negative state in its postcolonial becoming.⁴¹

To expand, Esmeir has noted how interventions of British authorities in Egyptian government and their hybrid action strengthened the distinctions between the idealized element of the law centered on the human and the fact of colonial violence. Such a split produced a perpetual “metamorphosing crisis, not a failure” of the rule of law that legitimated the violent intervention that extends into the postcolonial situation.⁴² The power of colonial strategy is precisely this: it is “a strategy that succeeded in releasing ideals from facts and continues to seduce us into desiring more purified ideals.”⁴³ Therefore, Esmeir contends, “so-called exceptional legalities should be examined less for the exclusion they engender from the general order and more for the idealized element of the law that they strengthen” since the very separation distinguishing ideals from the facts of violence is a false one.⁴⁴

The postcolonial Indian nation-state also claims to uphold purified ideals, but, importantly, claims to solder the gap between the ideal and fact in which fact corresponds with the ideal. If nonintervention was marked by the colony’s temporal lag and led to gaps and crises between ideal and fact, the postcolonial state promises that this gap can be immediately eliminated, thereby fulfilling the promise of decolonization with the inauguration of the Hindu Rashtra.⁴⁵ Most notably, this rejection of the initial nonintervention, the creation of the exception in colonial law, is visible in relation to a uniform civil code and Muslim personal law as well as Kashmir.⁴⁶ Today, the goal is to eliminate these exceptions within the nation in order to redeem society itself. The key, for example, becomes to interfere in the law in order to correct the mistakes of earlier colonial regimes. This intervention signals the possibility for nonintervention in a harmonious national space in which ideal and fact accord.⁴⁷

Or, put differently, there is a promise of a closed and secure economic theology. To repeat, economic theology, *oikonomia*, is, Agamben argues, “an immanent ordering—domestic and not political in a strict sense—of both divine and human life.”⁴⁸ Rather than marking the transcendence of a sovereign power (political theology), *oikonomia* reveals the “triumph of economy and government over every other aspect of social life.”⁴⁹ This triumph occurs because God does not miraculously interrupt the world. Instead, as Tim Christiaens explains, “God only authorizes an immanent government that does not need the imposition of commands from above.”⁵⁰ Interventions are suspended

and God lets things govern themselves.⁵¹ Tracing the advent of democracy in the completion of the project of *oikonomia*, Agamben notes how the logic converts to “God has created the world to work as if it is without him, and govern it as if it would be able to govern itself.”⁵² And, in India, once secured, economic theology guarantees the elimination of impediments and gaps between the norm and fact. It would eliminate the public sector and its developmental contaminants within a salvific exchange in market society, between state and society, and, for Hindutva, in time, between past and present.

Yet conjoining the ideal and fact, political and social, past and present, in an immanent ordering requires an initial intervention to undo colonial sins and, therefore, requires state power. Or, to consider Franz Neumann’s explanation, in liberal society, “harmony and equilibrium are not, at any given moment, automatically restored. Measures of the sovereign and ‘general principles’ are, at all stages, indispensable” in allowing for the state’s discretionary intervention.⁵³ But how does this state power manifest itself? What are these general principles?

There are changes in the postcolonial state as well from the developmental state to the promised noninterventional state. One transformation is, Rosalind Morris argues, “in the shifting lexicons of political-economic commentary” where the language of corruption, contagion, and, thus, failure, not crisis, takes hold.⁵⁴ She writes, “Like ‘corruption’ or ‘contagion,’ failure suggests the existence of a normative ideal that can be recognized and in relation to which acts can be adjudicated.”⁵⁵ The difference between an earlier postcolonial developmental model is that, now, the normative ideal can and should be realized instantaneously, but cannot because of immediately discernable impediments within society; a population worthy of blame. There is overlap, certainly.⁵⁶ But corruptions and contagions that produce failure become distinguishable and, consequently, extinguishable in what is an identifiable and anticipated *imminent* ideal in a harmonious present.⁵⁷

The strategy of intervention-inviting-non-intervention, exception-inviting-salvation, is central to the political rationality undergirding the corridor. The promise is that once the two states intervene to produce the corridor, there will be an economic functioning and circulation across the border as the ideal of movement is reached. Laying the foundation stone for the corridor in 2018, Imran Khan argued that this intervention into the border jurisdiction would eventually lead to developmental flows throughout the entirety of the region. The agreement to have hotels, gift shops, and restaurants at the site is but one example of the unfettered circulation that was promised. Presenting France and Germany as ideal counterpoints, Khan argued: “Imagine,

once trade begins, once our relationship is improved, how much both nations could benefit...Both countries can get ahead."⁵⁸ In the inauguration, once again, Imran Khan tied the opening of the corridor to the opening of borders to facilitate trade. He noted that "when Navjot Sidhu [the Indian Punjab Minister of Local Government, Tourism, Cultural Affairs, and Museums] asked me to open the border...when I became prime minister, the first thing I did was to tell Narendra Modi was that our mutual and largest problem is poverty. And poverty we can end quickly and improve ourselves, by opening borders for trade, helping everyone."⁵⁹ It is Kartarpur which signals the beginning of such a harmonious economic exchange that would lead to salvation.

This strategy of intervention-inviting-non-intervention, circularly, incites intervention once again as harmony, as ever, remains elusive — as the rhetoric around internal and external contagions and dangers demonstrates vividly.⁶⁰ Boundaries, as the manifest margins, require continual surveillance and, as Salter contends, "governmental procedures of examination at the border institutionalize a continual state of exception at the frontier that in turn performs the spatio-legal fiction of territorial sovereign and the sovereign subject in each admission/exclusion decision."⁶¹ This is especially so at the corridor, where being granted access remains tied to an esoteric process in which India and Pakistan continue to shift the parameters of acceptable documentation as well as financial obligations. That is, at the corridor, the exception and rule blend as administrative praxis becomes central, in order to create a harmony between life and a providential sovereign.

III. Brotherhood

But with the corridor the exception to the border regime also signals non-intervention, already acknowledging the absence of the sovereign rather than the continual iteration of the sovereign decision. The corridor is not miraculous. This acknowledgment of the non-decision alongside its continual enunciation in the regulatory apparatus of the state occurs because it is premised upon fraternization — a true filiation of brothers by an eternal father, a consanguineous affinity signaled in a Holy Umbilical Cord.⁶² Brotherhood signals salvation and eliminates the very impossibility of the law by naturalizing a pure community. In so doing, it undoes the possibility of the exception, revealing crisis, and instead produces an economic-theological exception that signals a purified exchange between Father and Son, a settling of accounts.⁶³ Therefore, the possibility of a crisis of juridical reach marked by the corridor, because of the undoing of legalized border regimes, is precluded by fraternization, a homogenous tracing of memory itself in blood. The corridor opens not because it expresses hospitality, an

impossibility and, thus, a censuring of sovereignty, but brotherhood and its attendant consanguinity – reinvigorating the flow of blood in the form of the state.

The corridor, then, is managed not through the power of two sovereign nation-states, but through a history: the neat tying together of past and present through a genealogical continuity measured through brotherhood.⁶⁴ This circulation between past and present, between two brothers, promises the fulfillment of a harmonious national space, of a salvific exchange. That is, the sovereign (political theology) coordinates with administration, with *oikonomia* (economic theology) and it is this coordination that removes the sovereign altogether while promising to eliminate the very gaps the corridor also promises to cement: between ideal and fact, state and society, and, transcendence and immanence. To reiterate, power is not only located in state sovereignty and its decisions around borders; rather it is economy that provides managerial stability to the corridor. And this management appears in the circulation of blood and history in which sovereign law retreats, rather than reinstating itself. Much of the insight one can glean from the formation of the corridor is lost when it becomes an attempt to shore up sovereignty or discipline, rather than thinking about *oikonomia*, exchange, and Christianity.

Though a community of friends is necessarily unstable – anyone can be a friend, but it paradoxically remains circumscribed – it is naturalized in brotherhood and its exclusions, in the circulation of blood that sustains the state.⁶⁵ We learn this from Derrida, who noted how “In keeping this word to designate a fraternity beyond fraternity, a fraternity without fraternity (literal, strict, genealogical, masculine, etc.), one never renounces that which one claims to renounce – and which returns in myriad ways, through symptoms and disavowals whose rhetoric we must learn to decipher and whose strategy to outwit.”⁶⁶ Brotherhood, it appears, might not be the renunciation of borders and sovereign power that it signals. Indeed, if Partition is, as we are told incessantly, a site of unbearable trauma, in this traumatic event, the lost object – Punjab – is decahcted but also hypercahcted through brotherhood, which is, in its homogenous unity, a narcissistic attachment.

Famously, Michel Foucault teaches there is “a new physics of family space: the elimination of all intermediaries”⁶⁷ central to kinship-turned-bloody relations through the distribution of the nuclear family.⁶⁸ But one must also remember, as Anidjar notes, that “we have yet to denaturalize blood.”⁶⁹ Kinship, needless to say, has been a central organizing feature in societies, including Punjab. One need only recall *biradari*.⁷⁰ But “community,” expressed as *biradari*, took hold in colonial Punjab in a contradictory form, David Gilmartin contends, tying

together freedom and constraint.⁷¹ That is, the Punjabi village became a site where men were both bearers of rights (autonomous producers) as property relations shifted, while also being “shaped by ‘blood’ relationships” “ (culturally-bound villagers) due to “the reification of a language of kinship, or ‘blood’” under colonial rule.⁷² Importantly, the prior elastic and context-dependent understanding of *biradari* shifted and, as Gilmartin notes, “the diagnostic marker of these changes was the critical rise of *biradari*, or brotherhood of extended kin, as the preeminent form of social organization in the new, settled agricultural society of the Punjab,” in which blood became the property of community.⁷³

So though blood is, Anidjar explains, “only one name among many in an economy of terms and symbols—‘natural’ or not—that have appealed to the collective imagination,” we keep speaking of kinship, now ethnicity or, perhaps, culture, as a blood relation.⁷⁴ But then why the invocation of brotherhood (or is it still *biradari*?) in the corridor? The force of *biradari*, now blood, lay in conjuring, to quote Gilmartin again, “indigenous foundations” through genealogy as though they existed “prior to the political structure of the colonial regime.”⁷⁵ To rephrase, in this conjuration, it appeared as though blood existed prior to the colonial state, prior to the modern state.

Here it would do well to recall the state and its vampiric qualities, to recall “the bloodless body of the vampire state” and its relation to blood.⁷⁶ This bloodless body needs to feed, which is why it lives with a community of blood—a more or less bloody dependence between *biradari* and the state, for example. This dependence can be traced to the very emergence of the vampire state. As Anidjar writes:

The vampire state comes into existence with the naturalized institution of a number of plausible and implausible communities of blood: the sexual community of blood, which is also a legal and economic community of blood (kinship and the family; inheritance and property); the social community of blood (the nobility, later the nation); the racial community of blood (the white race, the dark races); and of course the theological community of blood.⁷⁷

Or, to return to Gilmartin, *biradari* turns bloody with the emergence of the colonial state and in turn, invigorates that very state.

Christianity, it appears, is central again, a theme that flows throughout. This is especially so since it allows for the distinguishing between bloods in which Christian blood became pure and wonderful blood, distinct and good blood, against “a different and lesser blood.”⁷⁸ This process of the state feeding on an exceptional blood was intertwined with the Eucharist, in which the community of blood, the *corpus mysticum* (mystical body), came to “designate the *visible* body of the Church, instead of the ritualized, direct and mysterious action

of the sacrament."⁷⁹ Anidjar follows Ernst Kantorowicz, who also makes clear how "the expression 'mystical body,' [*corpus mysticum*] which originally had a liturgical or sacramental meaning, took on a connotation of sociological content" in which *corpus mysticum* became a singular body with the head of Christ.⁸⁰ To draw out all these connections is beyond the purview of this article, but the emergence of this ecclesiastical administration created a collective body politic separate from the individual natural body.⁸¹ Christ's Two Bodies, eventually, began to lose their transcendental meaning from which the King's Two Bodies emerged, as Kantorowicz has demonstrated. More bluntly, if one asks: "What changed then?" as Anidjar does, to answer, "The exception became the rule, and a different rule it was."⁸² It was a rule in which, Marc Shell observes, species was conflated with family, which flowed into the state and an immanent order.⁸³ In this praxis, one body, the bloodless vampire state, feeds vigorously on blood; of this there is no doubt. It feeds so well that blood flows seamlessly as the bloodless state absents itself⁸⁴ in a culture demarcated through the right kind of blood, pure blood (even though, recall, there are other forms of community, which by no means does one need to uphold as ideals or dismiss in order to examine these consanguineous relations).

Christian blood or, perhaps, Indic blood (the two are, let us not forget, united together as Aryan blood), is central to the circulation, to this feeding. This blood, Indic blood commensurable with Christian blood, a common Aryan *biradari*, is central to making sense of the corridor as the exceptionality of a community of brothers binds together what are no longer different state bodies under a singular blood type. They were placed under a singular blood type even as party politics abounded, as different politicians jockeyed for position claiming responsibility for the opening-cum-transfusion. The examples are varied. For example, while addressing a press conference at the Lahore Press Club announcing the corridor, the aforementioned Sidhu "expressed hope that the corridor would bring peace and prosperity for citizens of both countries and prove to be 'a foundation stone for brotherhood.'"⁸⁵

Because it determines the form from which negotiations can take place, religion becomes central to the corridor. But what does it mean to be for or against religion in the context of the corridor? To be for Guru Nanak's *religious* message? To locate and uphold an exceptional religious brotherhood? And, once this exceptionality is located, what does it mean to wield "religion" as a universal form that becomes translatable across time and space while dissipating fractures in favor of a harmonious economy? In short, what does it mean to employ "religion" to *confront* difference in order to overcome the very problem that Christianity names – religion – rather than Christianity and all that the Holy Trinity entails – the Nation, Capital, State?

The claim—“we are brothers because this exceptional religious landscape translates across divides”—obfuscates more than it clarifies by locating commensurability between what are now deemed “good” religions against those still trapped within “dark theological ages,” to use Anidjar’s terms.⁸⁶ Rephrasing Mahmood Mamdani, one could call it “Good Blood, Bad Blood.”⁸⁷ Or, one could consider how blameworthiness is generated when ideal and fact are supposed to coincide, but do not.⁸⁸ Or, one could remember how Islam was excluded early on as the enemy of Christendom, an enemy that itself lacked integrity, “becoming-plural” instead.⁸⁹ In other words, even if one is “for religion,” even a heterogenous one that we desire, one must still interrogate, to return to Asad, how this heterogeneity, this brotherhood, is “celebrated as a singular ‘vision’ attributed to a collective subject: Who extends the umbrella, in what situation, and for what purposes?” This is especially important since, Asad continues, “The game of defining religion in this context is a highly political one.”⁹⁰ In extending umbrellas to their brothers, the corridor and its alleged commensurability reveal the depths within which “religion” (and one mask, “secularism,” and, therefore, Christianity) continues to uphold inequality, namely, the nation-state-capital, while absenting their form.⁹¹

Imran Khan sought to locate such commensurability between religions, extending the umbrella to brothers (to continue with that metaphor). For example, Khan stated, “If I were to explain to my fellow Pakistanis and Muslims, I would say imagine that you can see Medina four, five, kilometers away, but cannot go in. How much would Muslims suffer that you could see Medina, but cannot go in. This is the Sikh *biradari*’s Medina. And I am happy to see your happiness.”⁹² Medina is translatable to Kartarpur because there is a universal term that allows for such mediation—religion—which then can map a “religious” desire for access to what is now strictly a pilgrimage site. Kartarpur and its foundation of a new political ethic and community is reduced to a pilgrimage site in which religion functions to determine commensurability with other religions. To open the corridor displays this circulation of commensurable blood, the surgical repair of a heart partitioned. The corridor, as an extracorporeal blood pump between sovereigns, allows equivalent blood to circulate through both states as their form vanishes, and the corridor makes sense because of blood itself, measured under a singular category of “religion.” Sidhu acknowledged the importance of the tie between blood and state; the state’s initial interference is what allows for the blood to circulate seamlessly once again. Noting as much, he said, “While there is blood in my veins, I will continue to thank both governments.”⁹³

In this circulation, Guru Nanak signals a traceable history—a history of blood. Guru Nanak offers a past that removes sovereign

decision in the present, naturalizing the very community the state adjudicates between. To return to Sidhu, he stated that Guru Nanak is both “the Guru of the Hindus and Pir of the Muslims.”⁹⁴ He went on to argue that whereas “India’s Constitution says there will be no discrimination on the basis of caste, color, or creed. Baba Guru Nanak said this 549 years ago,”⁹⁵ Guru Nanak, signaling the exceptionality of brotherhood, functions to strategically obfuscate the exceptionality of the law and its administration, to obfuscate the blood that flows into community. There is obfuscation or, perhaps, regularization because Guru Nanak becomes an archive, placed under house arrest, who serves to unify, identify, and classify the very category of “religion” in Punjab.⁹⁶

There is consignment, which, as Derrida writes “aims to coordinate a single corpus, in a system or a synchrony in which all the elements articulate the unity of an ideal configuration.”⁹⁷ The corridor concretizes this very history, providing a concrete place to memory. It offers an external place to the correct memory, now properly interpreted, which in turn settles *religion*, and assures the possibility of memorization, repetition, reproduction, and reimpression. Here, the sovereign disappears as the archive administers the past, domesticating irresolution in memory – a singular unity under the sign “religion.” Though compulsion, repetition and nostalgia structure the archive and create “an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement,” this drive is continually satiated as the corridor invites its own crossing to return to an elusive, but now placed history that sates those urges – come see what you desire, enjoy your transgression, enjoy your *biradari*.⁹⁸

In these crossings, the past is buried and settled while dangerously producing allowances for desire for a now entombed past – further concretizing the corridor and its exceptions by proclaiming dominion over Guru Nanak’s memory as a normalized transgression in the very crossing of sovereign-sanctioned boundaries. Guru Nanak is simultaneously dead and buried, but also continually resurrected. In this resurrection, he offers redemption in the very praxis of the corridor articulated by the state(s) while corresponding to an exceptional archive. The corridor then becomes the perfect circulatory economy, a harmonious space with the right history. This is precisely what Haroon Khalid celebrated, writing “it is therefore apt that it is Guru Nanak and his final resting place that has today emerged as a symbol of some sort of normalization on the Pakistan-India border, one of the most dangerous borders in the world.”⁹⁹ Guru Nanak, finalized and known, bridging death and life, past and present, becomes the normalized archive.

Rather than search for a preoriginary unity in history to make sense, let me indulge with a detour into the administrative practi-

cality of how blood flows in the present—one could call this a reflection that attempts to provide “rich ethnographic evidence” for the functioning of the state.¹⁰⁰ After obtaining a research grant for a fairly innocuous project on anti-colonial nationalism and Sikhs in Punjab, a friend, Amarjit, applied for a research visa in order to travel to India in March 2016. Borders, remember, are regulated to allow for movement as well. He received no response. Amarjit waited. Still, there was no response on the status of his application, which was especially troublesome since he had to leave for London in early June. He needed his passport with the appropriate documentation, a reminder that he was the right type—transfusable, if you will. A week before he left for London, Amarjit and his brother decided to drive to the nearest Indian Consulate in the area. This was a last ditch—and he assumed mostly futile—move. But at the very least, he thought, he could get his passport back somehow and work out the visa situation some other way.

When he arrived at the embassy, there was security outside—there is not a stream that flows in and out. There was, however, someone there speaking to the security guard. The visitors showed their United States Department of Homeland Security ID and said they had an appointment with Mr. R, and the security guard let them in. Feeling a bit brave, Amarjit, too, went to the security guard, flashed his university ID card as professionally as possible, and told the guard he had an appointment with Mr. R as well. Incredibly, the guard let Amarjit and his brother in. They waited in a small room for about an hour as a conversation about gender identity and a name-change drifted into the room. As Mr. R escorted DHS out, Amarjit stood up. When Mr. R turned around, Amarjit approached him and explained his situation. He asked Amarjit to come into his office to speak.

Mr. R had Amarjit’s passport and visa application, which he pulled out with ease, expectant. Amarjit explained he looked down on his desk and noted multiple printouts of Sikh militancy on Mr. R’s desk, printouts from *Sikh Siyasat*, recently banned in India. “It says resistance in the title,” Mr. R queried. “What do you mean by resistance?” As I mentioned, Amarjit’s project at the time was on emergent anti-colonial nationalism and its relation to Sikhs. Fairly harmless, Amarjit thought, so he explained it as such. Mr. R listened, bored, and told him that Sikhs remained much too angry against the Indian State, especially in the diaspora. Mr. R gave a long-winded lecture. He recounted a story about bees before reaching the crux of his rambling. Brothers fight, he said. But that is an internal fight. There is no need to broadcast it to others, non-brothers; we have to keep the bickering within, to discuss it amongst each other, within our ancestral home.

For Mr. R, Guru Nanak provided this home. He turned to Guru Nanak’s teachings. He pointed up. “Look,” he said, “We all point at the moon. We fight because we do not look up to the moon we are all

gesturing at, but instead we quarrel about how we are signaling to the moon and names we have given to the same object we all continue to point toward." Guru Nanak's message, he continued, was a universal message — *we* are all one. He gave Amarjit his phone number and asked that Amarjit organize speeches for him at local gurudwaras when Amarjit came back from his research trip. Amarjit nodded slightly. Noting his acquiescence, Mr. R asked for how long Amarjit would like a visa. Amarjit said a year was fine and he told me to come back at 3pm. He picked up my passport which allowed him to flow in and out of the nation. Once Amarjit ensured Mr. R's own circulation into a singular consanguineous community, then his research posed no problems. Once they were brothers, commensurable, situated in a community of blood, state exclusions and bureaucratic delays disappeared and circulation across continents, across nations, were mysteriously guaranteed within an administrative praxis — a symmetric exchange which, one could say, was a harmonious economy, though by no means do I mean to allude that Mr. R was representative of Christ.

IV. Borders and Limits

Monetary circulation, Guru Nanak as Eucharist, is central to the congruous exchange within the corridor. Michel Foucault noted that commerce and monetary circulation were superimposed onto sovereignty — the superimposition of, as Foucault writes, "the state of sovereignty, the territorial state, and the commercial state."¹⁰¹ In this rationality of government based in equilibrium and balance between states, there is a "military-diplomatic technology" that secures and develops the state's forces through alliances and an armed apparatus — the assemblage of policing that brings the internal growth of state forces. At the intersection of these two technologies, there is a common instrument, which Foucault argues, is commerce and monetary circulation.¹⁰² This circulation extends the nation-state's own boundaries as it too flows across borders to build techniques of government to secure the population. As Aihwa Ong explains, "transnationality induced by accelerated flows of capital, people, cultures, and knowledge does not simply reduce state power, as many have claimed, but also stimulates a new, more flexible and complex relationship between citizens and governments."¹⁰³

As one newly-minted flexible Indian, Guru Nanak, too, flows across borders in this economic exchange beyond the corridor. Recently, it was announced that two chairs dedicated to Guru Nanak were to be set up at foreign universities: University of Birmingham (UK) and talks ongoing at Concordia University. At an event in Cardiff, India's High Commissioner Ruchi Ghanshyam argued that Guru Nanak's message,

“transcending time, countries, castes, creed and gender is relevant today” and necessary to extol across the world. Alongside the Chairs, she too mentioned the development of the Kartarpur Corridor, and the circulation of commemorative stamps and coins.¹⁰⁴ This is a common sentiment that structures understandings even amongst academics – as attested to by articles proclaiming they are walking with, running with, and doing everything with Guru Nanak.¹⁰⁵

Much like fraternization, the emphasis on Guru Nanak’s teachings as an endless incorporative movement, justified historically, absents and solidifies state power by naturalizing the very movements of the nation-state also predicated on flows and circulations.¹⁰⁶ There is legitimation for the state to go beyond its own boundaries, to build corridors, and endow university chairs under the sign Guru Nanak. The Indian state’s jurisdiction must extend to the University of Birmingham, for example, because only then can the state accurately uphold Guru Nanak’s transnational message and take it across borders. In this circulation, what could signal a limit of the Indian state’s jurisdiction – diasporic Sikhs, for example – becomes incorporated within its very logic through the movement of capital in the name of Guru Nanak.¹⁰⁷

Is the problem restricted to allowance and disallowance across reified national borders, if the nation-state flows so easily across borders? We must recall that the problem is not necessarily as such, but, as Slavoj Žižek writes, “actually a necessary constituent of the very unproblematic, normal, state of things we are striving for.”¹⁰⁸ There is no innocent state prior to the problems themselves to which we can return. Turning to neoliberalism, for example, Žižek notes, that “what it tends to overlook is the degree to which, in today’s complex economies, the very ‘normal’ functioning of the market can be secured only by way of the state actively intervening in social security, ecology, law enforcement, etc.”¹⁰⁹ Without state intervention, the market would simply destroy itself. The conclusion then cannot be that the solution of transgressing borders is also part of the problem, but rather that the very problem of borders can provide the solution.¹¹⁰

Again, Christ emerges or, rather, dies. Christ’s death should be a problem for the divine economy, since it was his person that secured together the transcendent and immanent in the reconciliation of man and God. Christ’s death, as Žižek continues, “cannot but appear as a renewed split, causing sadness and lamentation among believers.”¹¹¹ But, for Hegel, Žižek argues, in Christ’s death we see a dialectical shift and the problem itself becomes the solution: in the very lamentation over Christ’s death performed by the community of believers, God is here qua Spirit; reconciliation is realized in its ‘mediated,’ true form”; recall, again, Taylor and the Holy Spirit.¹¹² This mediated form is transactional, a crossing of borders by currency and blood.

This economic paradox, however, is not only secured, but remains marred by its own excesses, the condition of impossibility, which are precisely also the conditions of possibility.¹¹³ The problem is also the solution. Every economy is constituted by its own failure. Said differently, for Žižek, this economy cannot be reconciled since it remains constituted by a gap, an abyss, that refuses attempts to settle it in its place, refuses consistency and resolution. Therefore, Žižek continues, Hegel's dialectics are not so much ones that arrive at a true reconciliation, which Christ could signal, but "demonstrate how every phenomenon, everything that happens, fails in its own way, implies a crack, antagonism, imbalance in its very heart."¹¹⁴ There is never a time of nonintervention, to return to our earlier reasoning, for it is constitutively irreparable.

Here, following Mladen Dolar, I would like to reconsider the problem of the border through a distinction he makes between border (*die Schranke*), and limit (*die Grenze*). Though Dolar goes against the grain of *Grenze's* common usage, Dolar is drawing on Wittgenstein's famous sentence, "The limits of my language..." which is, in the German, "*Die Grenzen meiner Sprache.*"¹¹⁵ Explicating Hegel with Wittgenstein, Dolar tells us that in determining something as a border, one has already passed it. Limit, on the other hand, "forbids us to pass it, we can only stay on this side, and what is beyond is unfathomable or unreachable" (68). To put it differently, once partition constructed a border, it had already produced a corridor. Within the conceptual logic of a border, a crossing is implied. In this sense, for Hegel, reason is "the very capacity to conceive every limit as a border—every alterity is the inner alterity of reason, not its outer beyond."¹¹⁶ Once the conceptual frame of borders is in place, the question is one of interpretation and the faith in reason, in its paranoid hermeneutic delirium, to cross borders, to intervene in order to funnel through their corridors ceaselessly in a secure exchange. Crossing borders then centers a fantasy of wholeness in the transgression it offers, much as Christ enters the world, compelling us to cross while the very institution that draws such borders disappears. The descriptive and normative bleed into each other.

But what about limits? To be clear, I am not saying Guru Nanak should be localized, to draw tight borders around communities—a dangerous nativist fantasy. But that is precisely what interpretation of the corridor and Guru Nanak does. It provides an end; it contains, localizes, and historicizes. It finds hidden historical meaning to settle Guru Nanak as, for example, a religious sign in a common brotherhood. Against this delirium, the imperative of meaning, what I am trying to argue is that there is no innocent pre-border economy that can be recovered through interpretations of Guru Nanak, and neither is the landscape condemned to failure because of the problem of "religious"

communalism. Both the desire to cross borders and interpret Guru Nanak correctly to fortify a perfected heterogenous or fundamentalist economy in which blood circulates, invigorating the Holy Trinity of Nation-State-Capital. Perhaps, instead of celebrating this circulation, it might be necessary to ask: is it possible to keep the cracks open, rather than simply look to transcend or cross them to another space located, in the case of the corridor, temporally (or, in the case of communalism, a state of nature)?¹¹⁷

Stated differently, following Ananya Kabir, if there is a melancholic relation to borders that creates irresolution, what happens when this loss, this gap, is filled and settled?¹¹⁸ Particularly since bridging this gap is precisely the cause for celebration. As Navjot Singh Sidhu argued, “it will build bridges, burn animosity and will act like a soothing balm for two neighboring countries.”¹¹⁹ In contrast, what would it mean if Partition and the creation of India and Pakistan signaled a limit to our thinking rather than offering a border to be crossed; what if there was no need for a balm? To answer the question theoretically, it would mean understanding that it is precisely the conditions of impossibility of the border, not the movement beyond it, that offer a possibility – the possibility of taking a leap beyond dialectic by first grasping at the limits, that which prevents rather than allows.¹²⁰

But the incessant demand to cross borders mirrors the endless interpretive speech on Guru Nanak, signaling how Guru Nanak is a sign to be deciphered; we are exhorted to recognize meaning in Guru Nanak as he becomes a message to be interpreted, revealing, for example, a common brotherhood. Guru Nanak becomes a sign, a border, awaiting to be crossed into universality. But Guru Nanak and his teachings are not representations, signs to be decrypted and translated with ease.¹²¹ This is problematic, as Saba Mahmood famously demonstrated. She argues that the primary function of images and signs is understood to communicate meaning. In this Christian semiotic ideology, object and subject, substance and meaning, form and essence are divided and then brought together through representation.¹²² For Mahmood, such an understanding offers a “rather impoverished understanding of images, icons, and signs” since it “not only naturalizes a certain concept of religious subject but also fails to attend to the affective and embodied practices through which a subject comes to relate to a particular sign—a relation founded not only on representation but also on what I will call attachment and cohabitation.”¹²³ Mahmood, therefore, reorients the questions away from choosing a correct reading practice centered on unearthing meaning, to questions about “how one conducts oneself in this world,” which is necessarily a process that requires learning within institutions (for the lack of a better term), though not modern disciplinary ones.¹²⁴

Is it possible to turn to the Sikh tradition and the institutions Guru Nanak built in relation to conduct, instead of unearthing meaning? This is precisely what Guru Nanak did at Kartarpur. Here, let us ask: Whereas Kabir elsewhere eschews “religious” tradition in favor of a higher mediating community such as “Punjabi” to locate subversive potential against national mapping, is it possible to center how Sikh memory and practice reveals a noncongruence of the border regimes in the present without recuperation or circulation, without a messianic redemption?¹²⁵ For example, the Sikh *ardās*, a request made prior to undertaking a task, is a continuously shifting ritual prayer that traces the generations of Sikh pasts—a prayer as memory. Since partition, the *ardās* demands that the *panth* [Sikh path, collective] be given “*khuleh darshan*” [open opportunity to experience] at Nankana Sahib [the birthplace of Guru Nanak] as well as other temples in Pakistan. That is, *ardās* communicates in memory an unfinished narrative, a cartographic irresolution irreducible to weaving together a sense of secured place in a historical end since, then, *ardās* would be rendered unnecessary—a memory without a task transformed into simple snobbery. The *ardās*, that is, does not historicize or unearth meaning about Guru Nanak, but continuously translates memory into an unmoored and unsecured present.

V. Conclusion

The question perhaps is not to secure an inheritance from Guru Nanak, another crossing from present to past. To rethink inheritance, to refuse the demarcation of Guru Nanak as a sign, is an especially important task, since much of *Sikhi* ask us to consider the limits of signs and representations—to undo the self—not borders to be crossed.¹²⁶ The question, therefore, is not about representation, to return to Mahmood, but about practices and embodiments. And, to consider limits, perhaps Sikh ethical practice can be of note, especially since limit and loss are crucial there. As the Sikh tradition teaches us, ethical practice is this limit, an elsewhere that ties together the concrete self and that which remains unsignifiable, *naam*. For *maryada*, loosely translated as “ethical conduct,” etymologically also connotes a shore to the flows one can desire, a limit to both the alluring symbolic richness of our life in all its colonial inflections, and the engulfing abyss that awaits, requiring one to continually hesitate at the precipice of our ruined world and its destruction, longing, without a self-satisfying closure in exploratory and cosmopolitan travels. Here *maryada* does not provide universality, but a limit—eroding the self as the tides rise. It is in this prescriptive space, one perhaps of archaic ideals, where struggle and intervention occurs—opening, one can pray, a crack within historicity and quieting the destructive unity of our Christian cross-border circulations.

Notes

1. Gil Anidjar, *Blood: A Critique of Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 142–143.
2. This is especially embarrassing when one sends one's articles to Punjab, for example, they find the continual reiteration of basic grade school information in publications (1) humorous and (2) insulting.
3. Arvind-Pal Mandair, *Sikhism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 18 and 21. Also see Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs: Volume 1: 1469–1839*, Second Edition (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 43–44.
4. Major Gurmukh Singh, "Kartarpur," in *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, ed. Harbans Singh (Patiala: Punjabi University, Patiala, 2011), 448.
5. For self-loss, see Mandair, 65.
6. For example, see Rajbir Singh Judge, "There is No Colonial Relationship: Antagonism, Sikhism, and South Asian Studies," *History and Theory* 57, no. 2 (June 2018): 195–217.
7. John Stratton Hawley, *A Storm of Songs: India and the Idea of the Bhakti Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 19.
8. Nikolas Rose, "Governing 'Advanced' Liberal Democracies," in *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism and Rationalities of Government*, Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne, and Nikolas Rose, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 61–62 and David Scott, *Refashioning Futures: Criticism After Postcoloniality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1999), 84.
9. Scott, *Refashioning Futures*, xviii.
10. Scott, *Refashioning Futures*, 46.
11. Anidjar, *Semites*, 45.
12. Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 29.
13. Anidjar, *Blood*, 147.
14. Anidjar, *Blood*, viii and 258.
15. Gil Anidjar, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Christianity," *Interventions* 11, no. 3 (2009), 378. Also see Gil Anidjar, *Semites: Race, Religion, Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007). Anidjar writes, "Much more than an idea, Christianity is a massive institution" (44).
16. For the exception, see Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). Importantly, Agamben revises Schmitt on the exception, see endnote 21. For resolution and irresolution, see Ananya Jahanara Kabir, "Cartographic Irresolution and the Line of Control," *Social Text*, 27 no. 4 (2009): 45–66. For fragility, see Das, "The Signature of the State: The Paradox of Illegibility," in *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*, Veena Das and Deborah Poole, eds. (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 2004), 225–252.

17. I borrow "site of veridiction" from Michel Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Bruchell (New York: Picador, 2004), 32.
18. Anidjar, *Blood*, viii.
19. Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, trans. Lorenzo Chiesa with Matteo Mandarini (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).
20. Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 49.
21. Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 32.
22. Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 50.
23. Singh, *Divine Currency*, 56. Devin Singh challenges Agamben, however, by pointing to how government, too, was marked by glory. He writes, "The grounding of government in the deity of the Son means that government is invested with divine glory as well, just as the Father conveys such glory to the pole of sovereignty (62). Also see Tim Christiaens, "Agamben's Theories of the State of Exception: From Political to Economic Theology," *Cultural Critique* 110 (2021): 49–74.
24. Against Agamben, for Dotan Leshem, this praxis is precisely why each modern governmentality, such as the police state, classical liberalism, and neoliberalism has an orthodoxy of its own since each "has its own peculiar way of generating growth by accommodating itself to the ways of the governed, who are not fully subjected to the law" (147). Leshem, *The Origins of Neoliberalism*.
25. Mark C. Taylor, *About Religion: Economies of Faith in Virtual Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 152. More specifically, whereas an immanent Trinity refers to relations within the Godhead, a providential paradigm, "the economic Trinity specifies the relations between God and human beings in the process of salvation" (150). Also see, Leshem, who notes "Following the purification of Christ's (human) body by its inclusion in the economy of the incarnation and his ascension, the Church became the purified body that serves as the space of appearance of the economy of the Holy Spirit (128). See Dotan Leshem, *The Origins of Neoliberalism: Modeling the Economy from Jesus to Foucault* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).
26. Taylor, *About Religion*, 152. Or, as Devin Singh writes, "Monetary overtones emerge noticeable in Christian discourse about the Son as a type of currency in the divine exchange that takes place due to the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ (131). "Christ as the coin of God," therefore, as Singh continues, "comes to the fore as the crucial means of payment in a redemptive exchange" (131). See Devin Singh, *Divine Currency: The Theological Power of Money in the West* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018).
27. Taylor, *About Religion*, 154. Dotan Leshem notes how Tertullian and Hippolytus add "the persona of the Holy Spirit to that of God the Father and God the Son" in order to "persuade the lay believer...that God's unity and plurality are reconcilable" (40). Incarnation, rather than just the providential paradigm, is crucial. Leshem writes, "In the economy of the

incarnation humans witness a perichoresis between a divine nature and a human nature" (69). This produces infinite growth, not strictly a static harmony.

28. Taylor, *About Religion*, 154.
29. Anidjar, *Blood*, 141.
30. As Agamben writes, "Providence (the government) is that through which theology and philosophy try to come to terms with the splitting of classical ontology into two separate realities: being and praxis, transcendent and immanent good, theology and *oikonomia*. Providence presents itself as a machine aimed at joining back together the two fragments in the *gubernatio dei*, the divine government of the world" (140). See Agamben, *Kingdom and Glory*.
31. Economic theology, therefore, if it is still unclear, "is the history of a concealed trinity: the translation, transubstantiation, and tranvaluation, whereby Christianity became, in fact, 'religion,' blood became money, and money – faith and works, pace Weber – became what it is all about" (143). See Anidjar, *Blood*.
32. Adam Kotsko, *Neoliberalism's Demons: On the Political Theology of Late Capital* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018), 85.
33. Anidjar, *Blood*, 44. As Kirk Wetters notes, this is one of Agamben's challenges to Schmitt. "The relation of exception to norm is not, as it was in Schmitt, one of sheer revelation, realization, representation, or manifestation [e.g. miracle]. Instead the state of exception is a deficient revelation, a revelation of "the norm" in its deficiency, the revelation of the norm as a norm, the revelation of the norm in its own limited exceptionality. What is thus revealed, represented, or realized in the state of exception? Nothing other than the norm itself in its own absence." See Kirk Wetters, "The Rule of the Norm and the Political Theology of 'Real life' in Carl Schmitt and Giorgio Agamben," *Diacritics* 36, No. 1 (2006): 31–47. In relation to the state, also see, Veena Das and Deborah Poole, who note "margins are necessary entailment of the state, much as the exception is a necessary component of the rule" (4). See Veena Das and Deborah Poole, "State and Its Margins: Comparative Ethnographies." On the crisis of the rule in relation to the law, see Samera Esmeir, *Juridical Humanity: A Colonial History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012).
34. Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004), 61.
35. Kabir, "Cartographic Irresolution and the Line of Control," 51. William Connolly points to this irresolution coupled with the norm as that which propels the continuation of the nation. He argues: "It is this constant combination of indispensability and uncertainty within the image of the nation that sets it up to be a condition to be remembered but never known, pursued but never present, absent but never eliminable as an end. Any regulative ideal, surely, is impossible to realize fully. But the image of the nation seems to be marked by a sense that the density at its very center is both always indispensable to it and always insufficiently available" (81). See William Connolly, *Why I Am Not a Secularist* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

36. Salter, "When the Exception Becomes the Rule," 370. Moreover, this surveillance and decision does not simply emanate from the state, but also the populace. As Farhana Ibrahim argues, "discourses of securitization are contested and emergent, sites of strategic maneuvers between different agents rather than mere impositions from the state" (427). See Farhana Ibrahim, "Policing in Practice: Security, Surveillance, and Everyday Peacekeeping on a South Asian Border," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 39, No. 3 (2019), 425–438.
37. Kabir, "Cartographic Irresolution and the Line of Control," 52. For more on transgressions on the Indo-Pak border, see Navtej Purewal, "The Indo-Pak Border: Displacements, Aggressions and Transgressions," *Contemporary South Asia*, 12 no. 4 (2003): 539–556. Purewal notes, "Interactions and exchanges coming out of transgressive acts can build upon the cultural connections divided by borders, and potentially present alternative visions of belonging or even nationhood from the borderland" (553).
38. John Reynolds, *Empire, Emergency and International Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 11 fn. 14.
39. The question of the norm and exception in colonial rule is debated. For Partha Chatterjee, "The most reliable definition of an imperial practice remains that of the privilege to declare the exception to the norm" (337). On the other hand, Samera Esmeir argues that locating the failure of the norm upholds modern law's narrative about itself (20). See Partha Chatterjee, *The Black Hole of Empire: History of a Global Practice of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) and Samera Esmeir, "On the Coloniality of Modern Law," *Critical Analysis of Law* 2 no. 1 (2015): 21–41. Also see, Nasser Hussein, *The Jurisprudence of Emergency: Colonialism and the Rule of Law* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2003)
40. Samera Esmeir, *Juridical Humanity: A Colonial History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 271.
41. As Franz Neumann notes, liberalism "regards its nonexistence as the highest virtue of the state." Nonexistence, the negative state, is not marked by weakness, but strength—visible in the liberal state's penchant for "warfare and crushed strikes" (22). Force, therefore, remains central even when sovereignty is constituted through a competitive process (23). See Franz Neumann, *The Democratic and Authoritarian State* (New York: Free Press, 1957).
42. Esmeir, *Juridical Humanity*, 271.
43. Esmeir, *Juridical Humanity*, 271.
44. Esmeir, *Juridical Humanity*, 271.
45. As Arvind Rajgopal elaborates, "Arguing that post-independence government was in many ways a continuation of a colonial legacy of suppressing indigenous culture, Hindu nationalists identified Hindu rule with the achievement of genuine independence" (147). See *Politics After Television: Hindu Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Public in India* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
46. For example, see Rina Verma Williams, *Postcolonial Politics and Personal Laws: Colonial Legal Legacies and the Indian State* (New Delhi: Oxford University, 2006), 172. On Kashmir, see Hafsa Kanjwal, "The Violence on

- Kashmir Is Epistemological as It Is Physical," *Jadaliyya*. December 11th, 2019.
47. This is precisely the project of modern law. As Esmeir notes, modern law "stretches to govern as many domains of the social as possible, through positivist and pervasive legalities, with the aspiration to produce a gapless terrain" (22). See Esmeir, "On the Coloniality of Modern Law."
 48. Agamben, *The Kingdom and The Glory*, 1. Also see, Mitchell Dean, "What is Economic Theology? A New Governmental-Political Paradigm?" *Theory, Culture & Society* 36 no.3 (2019) 3–26.
 49. Agamben, *The Kingdom and The Glory*, 1.
 50. Christiaens, "Agamben's Theories," 62.
 51. Christiaens, "Agamben's Theories," 62.
 52. Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 286.
 53. Neumann, *The Democratic and Authoritarian State*, 41. General principles are not, Neumann explains, "genuine legal norms" but depend on "extra-legal order of values they negate formal rationality, give an intense amount of discretionary power to the judge, and eliminate the line of division between judiciary and administrative decisions – e.g., political decisions – take on the form of decisions of the ordinary civil courts" (54–55).
 54. Rosalind C. Morris, "Failures of Domestication: Speculations on Globality, Economy, and the Sex of Excess in Thailand," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 13, no. 1 (2002): 46.
 55. Rosalind C. Morris, "Failures of Domestication," 46.
 56. For one brilliant analysis that highlights such overlap, see Pinky Hota, "Money, Value, and Indigenous Citizenship: Notes from the Indian Development State," *Modern Asian Studies* 52, no. 1 (2020): 251–285.
 57. One example would be the destruction of the Babri Masjid. As Narendra Modi proclaimed when laying the foundation to the new Hindu temple: "The wait of centuries is coming to an end." [nytimes.com/2020/08/05/world/asia/modi-temple-ayodhya.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/05/world/asia/modi-temple-ayodhya.html)
 58. "'We want civilised ties with India': PM Khan lays foundation stone for long-awaited Kartarpur corridor," *Dawn*, November 28th, 2018. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1448172>
 59. Translation is mine. Speech is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-GFhGA65T3A>.
 60. For example, as David Scott points out, the elusiveness of such harmony for Jeremy Bentham. For Bentham, the arrival at that "identity of interests requisite for a harmonious society could not be left to the spontaneous working of Adam Smith's hidden hand, but rather depended upon a calculus of pleasures and pains artificially established by the legislator and magistrate" (48). See Scott, *Refashioning Futures*.
 61. Salter, "When the Exception Becomes the Rule," 365.
 62. Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (New York: Verso, 1997), 285. For holy Umbilical Cord, see Marc Shell, *Children of the Earth: Literature, Politics and Nationhood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 6.

63. Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, 99.
64. For history as eliminating a gap between past and present, see Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. by Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). The nation, too, provides such a unity to the state through particular constituencies. Again, to return to Connolly, it is the “distinctive combination in the regulative ideal of the nation makes the state particularly vulnerable to takeover attempts by constituencies who claim to embody in themselves the unity that is necessary to the nation but so far absent from it” (81). Connolly, *Why I Am Not a Secularist*.
65. Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, 99. Also see Anidjar, *Blood*, 67. As Anidjar writes, “As it becomes the marker, ultimately the substance, of the community, blood redefines and internally refashions community – and the difference between communities. It bounds and defines and inside as if autonomously, independently (67).
66. Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, 237.
67. Michel Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974–1975*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 1999), 245. The ideal is, “the infant alone in a sexual aseptic family space” (245).
68. Foucault argues, “From the mid-nineteenth century onward, the family engaged in searching out the slightest traces of sexuality in its midst, wrenching from itself the most difficult confessions, solicits an audience with everyone who might know something about the matter, and opening itself unreservedly to endless examination” (111). Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990).
69. Anidjar, *Blood*, 106.
70. The literature of *biradari* is vast. For example, see Zekiye Eglar, *A Punjabi Village in Pakistan: Perspectives on Community, Land, and Economy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 90–94.
71. For freedom and constraint, also see Elizabeth Povinelli, *Empire of Love: Toward A Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).
72. David Gilmartin, *Blood and Water: The Indus River Basin in Modern History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 9. Gilmartin, *Blood and Water*, 79. *Biradari* thus became the term that captured these tensions in community, between, as Gilmartin writes, “a vision of ‘natural community’ rooted in a logic of ‘interior’ genealogical connection, located outside the frame of production, and the reality of a village world increasing defined by competing individual and family productive interests that defined the structure of the colonial system” (80).
73. David Gilmartin, “Environmental History, *Biradari*, and the Making of Pakistani Punjab” in *Punjab Reconsidered: History, Culture, and Practice*, eds. Anshu Malhotra and Farina Mir (New Delhi, India : Oxford University Press, 2012), 295. We would do well to recall that kinship – even if elastic – was not all there was. As Purnima Dhavan argues the Khalsa challenged kinship networks, creating a new form of community. Dhavan writes, “By prioritizing the ties of faith over those of caste and kinship, Sainapati

proclaims the spiritual power of the Guru and the *sangat* to grant boons, bring peace and happiness, and aid Sikhs in their spiritual journey toward freedom from the cycle of rebirth" (43). See Purnima Dhavan, *When Sparrows Became Hawks: The Making of the Sikh Warrior Tradition, 1699–1799* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). And, blood, too, cannot be reduced a property of community, for example, see Anidjar fn 45, 284.

74. Anidjar, *Blood*, 96. Indeed, Anidjar writes, "the practices of kinship far exceed the matter of blood; but also because all this was not always understood as, much less called, 'consanguinity' or 'Blood.' We nonetheless persist in naming, referring to, kinship and family relations as 'blood'" (96). Anidjar also provides a different reading of community through a brilliant reading of *Moby Dick*, Queequeg, and Ismael in which, though "there is still blood," it "no longer governs—and certainly not rhetorically—the imagined and embodied community" (230).
75. Gilmartin, "Environmental History, Biradari, and the Making of Pakistani Punjab," 298.
76. Anidjar, *Blood*, 128.
77. Anidjar, *Blood*, 117.
78. Anidjar, *Blood*, 135.
79. Anidjar, *Blood*, 90.
80. Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016 [1957]), 196.
81. Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, 198. There was as Kantorowicz explains "a sociological distinction between an individual body and a collective body," a dichotomy that Kantorowicz traces.
82. Anidjar, *Blood*, 132.
83. Shell, *Children of the Earth*, 37.
84. Kantorowicz, therefore, undoes the verticality of sovereign decision central to Carl Schmitt. For an insightful analysis on the problems that arise, see Jennifer Rust, "Political Theologies of the Corpus Mysticum: Schmitt, Kantorowicz and de Lubac," in *Political Theology and Early Modernity*, ed. Graham Hammill and Julia Reinhard Lupton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 147–176.
85. "'We want civilised ties with India': PM Khan lays foundation stone for long-awaited Kartarpur corridor," *Dawn*, November 28, 2018. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1448172>
86. Anidjar, *Semites*, 50.
87. Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Doubleday, 2005).
88. Adam Kotsko, *Neoliberalism's Demons: On the Political Theology of Late Capital* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018), 85.
89. For example, see Gil Anidjar, *The Jew, The Arab: A History of the Enemy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 30. Also see Anidjar, *Semites*; Kathleen Biddick, "Dead Neighbor Archives: Jews, Muslims, and the Enemy's Two Bodies" in *Political Theology and Early Modernity*,

- ed. Graham Hammill and Julia Reinhard Lupton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 125–138; Tomaz Mastnak, *Crusading Peace: Christendom, the Muslim World, and Western Political Order* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). The exception is key here, too, since as Anidjar notes, the state of exception itself is a reaction to danger. See Gil Anidjar, “You Stand Within His Danger” *Foundry*. July 2020. <https://uchri.org/foundry/you-stand-within-his-danger/>
90. Talal Asad, “Reading a Modern Classic: W. C. Smith’s “The Meaning and End of Religion,” *History of Religions* 40, no. 3 (2001): 210.
91. Anidjar, *Semites*, 51.
92. Translation is mine. Speech is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-GFhGA65T3A>.
93. “Sidhu calls for restoring peace between India and Pakistan.” *The Tribune*. November 28th, 2018. tribuneindia.com/news/archive/sidhu-calls-for-restoring-peace-between-india-and-pakistan-690302.
94. Translation is mine. [youtube.com/watch?v=7PRrxqUIPPk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PRrxqUIPPk).
95. ““We want civilised ties with India’: PM Khan lays foundation stone for long-awaited Kartarpur corridor,” *Dawn*, November 28th, 2018. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1448172>.
96. Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 2.
97. Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 3.
98. Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 91.
99. Haroon Khalid, “The Kartarpur Corridor is more than a symbol of new peace.” *Dawn*. December 03, 2018. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1449180>.
100. Gupta, *Red Tape*, 78.
101. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France*, 15.
102. *Ibid.*, 365.
103. Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 21. Also see 215.
104. Prasun Sonwalkar, “India to set up Guru Nanak chair in UK university,” *Hindustan Times*, May 22, 2019. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/india-to-set-up-guru-nanak-chair-in-uk-university/story-WW1qmfEbi4eRmCw5cRZtiP.html>. Also see Guru Nanak Chair to be hosted at the University of Birmingham, November 04, 2019. <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2019/11/guru-nanak-chair.aspx>
105. For example, see Haroon Khalid, *Walking with Nanak* (Chennai: Westland, 2016).
106. As Ong notes, “Civilization discourse that directly engages globalization processes also aids in the articulation of an enlightened set of Asian values that is friendly to economic liberalism” (230). See Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*.
107. On the possibilities of diaspora in this sense, see Gurharpal Singh & Giorgio Shani, “Rethinking Sikh Nationalism in the Twenty-First Century,” *Sikh Formations*, 11 no. 3 (2015): 271–282.

108. Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 93.
109. Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative*, 93.
110. Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative*, 93.
111. Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative*, 93.
112. Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative*, 94 and 171.
113. Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative*, 171.
114. For more on questions of economy, Žižek, and the limitations of Žižek's work, see Marika Rose, *A Theology of Failure: Žižek Against Christian Innocence* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019).
115. Mladen Dolar, "Voice and Topology: The Tiny Lag," in *Psychoanalysis: Topological Perspectives New Conceptions of Geometry and Space in Freud and Lacan*, eds. Michael Friedman and Samo Tomšič, (Bielefeld, Germany: transcript verlag, 2016), 63–94.
116. Dolar, "Tiny Lag," 68. For Dolar, the key is to consider how limits themselves can never be spelled out—hence his astute attention to Wittgenstein's later work against the early claim in the *Tractatus* about the limits of language. For Dolar, "Language games form an inconsistent whole, actually not a whole at all, it is rather a non-whole, a not-all (pas-tout, to use the Lacanian parlance) whose limits can never be spelled out" (70)
117. Dolar, "Tiny Lag," 72.
118. Kabir, "Cartographic Irresolution and the Line of Control," 49.
119. Sidhu Welcomes Centre's Nod, Tweets to Imran. *Times of India*. November 22, 2018. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/sidhu-welcomes-centres-nod-tweets-to-imran/articleshow/66757871.cms>
120. I draw on David Marriott, *Whither Fanon?: Studies in the Blackness of Being* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018), 275–276.
121. Saba Mahmood, "Religious Reason and Secular Affect: An Incommensurable Divide?" in *Is Critique Secular?* Talal Asad, Wendy Brown, Judith Butler, Saba Mahmood, eds. (Berkeley, CA: Townsend Center, UC Berkeley 2009), 70.
122. Mahmood, "Religious Reason and Secular Affect," 72.
123. Mahmood, "Religious Reason and Secular Affect," 70.
124. Mahmood, "Religious Reason and Secular Affect," 74.
125. Ananya Jahanara Kabir, "Musical Recall: Postmemory and the Punjabi Diaspora," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 24 (2004), 172–189.
126. By limit, I do not mean to institute a field beyond, but to consider the inherent deadlock within a symbolic order that continually effaces itself.