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Introduction—Jurisprudence and Geography of Hindu Majoritarianism: Thinking with the 2019 Ayodhya Judgement

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Introduction—Jurisprudence and Geography of Hindu Majoritarianism: Thinking with the 2019 Ayodhya Judgement

In this introduction we first outline the background to the collection and recall some of the conversations that were its genesis, before introducing the questions we wish to address through it. We then situate the collection within scholarship on Hindu majoritarianism and suggest that a nuanced understanding needs to take into account both its institutional and everyday dimensions. To do so, we focus on both jurisprudence and geography which, we argue, are crucial sites for the making of contemporary Hinduism but have not previously been brought together analytically. Through the work of six scholars of diverse disciplinary backgrounds (Law, Anthropology, Indology and Religious Studies) the special issue theorises the spatial and legal dimensions of contemporary Hinduism as cross-fertilising, and as crucial sites for the formation and functioning of Hindu majoritarianism.

Keywords: Jurisprudence; geography; Hindu majoritarianism; Ayodhya; Hinduization.

Background of the special issue and questions raised

The story of this special issue begins in 2019, when Knut A. Jacobsen initiated a scholarly conversation around the concept of ‘Hinduization’ of space and then, (with Christopher Fleming) convened a panel ‘The Ayodhya judgement: The jurisprudence and geography of modern Hinduism’ at the 2020 (online) annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion (AAR). The 2020 panel was primarily concerned with the judgement pronounced in the Supreme Court of India on 9 November 2019 by Justice Ashok Bhushan, Justice SA Bobde, CJI Ranjan Gogoi, Justice DY Chandrachud, and Justice S Abdul Nazeer.¹

The case concerned the ownership of five acres of land in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, where the Babri mosque had once stood. As is well known, the 16th cen-

¹ The judgement is known as *M Siddiq (D) Thr Lrs v. Mahant Suresh Das & Ors.*

tury mosque was demolished in December 1992 by a mob of *kārsevak*s,² or volunteers, mobilised by Hindu nationalist forces—at the height of the Rāmjanmabhūmi movement to ‘liberate’ the place from the Muslim presence and build a grand Rāma temple. After decades of acrimonious legal battles and communal violence, the Supreme Court now awarded the entire property to the divine litigant Rāma Virajman (an infant form of the god that is worshipped at his alleged birth’s place) and ordered that the land be given to the central government to hold in trust for the construction of such a temple. Another five acres of land were to be assigned as compensation to the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board for the construction of a mosque at ‘another prominent site’ in Ayodhya. Construction of both places of worship is ongoing, but it has been announced that the Rāma temple will be inaugurated at the beginning of election year 2024.³

The panel at the AAR included earlier versions of some of the contributions to this special issue, namely those of Knut A. Jacobsen, Christopher Fleming and Jeremy Saul. Collectively, they addressed under-explored aspects of the legal and spatial history of Ayodhya and the campaigns for the construction of a grand Rāma temple, as well as the controversial Supreme Court judgement.

Later, Vera Lazzaretti became involved in discussions because of her work on the Kashi Vishvanath temple and Gyanvapi mosque compound in Banaras—a

² In the Introduction and the articles of this issue we use diacritics in words from South Asian languages such as concepts, names of gods, etc. but not in modern place names. So it is *rāṣṭra* and Rāma, but Ayodhya and Varanasi.

³ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/ram-temple-in-ayodhya-will-be-inaugurated-in-third-week-of-january/article67158914.ece>. [Accessed 18 September 2023].

next target, after the Babri mosque, of the Hindu majoritarian agenda for the ‘liberation’ of supposedly original Hindu places of worship from Muslim presence. Thinking with Banaras—a site affected by the Rāmjanmabhūmi movement in Ayodhya since its early stages—our gaze began to broaden to include other sites haunted by the spectre of the Ayodhya dispute, and we extended our spatial and temporal foci around and beyond the 2019 Ayodhya judgement. We were fortunate at this time to be able to include Ratna Kapur and Nick Tackes in the conversation, thus making it truly inter-disciplinary with contributions from legal scholars, anthropologists, Indologists and scholars of religious studies. The conversation led to the exchange of thoughts about the role of both jurisprudence and geography in the making of Hindu majoritarianism, especially in the light of the 2019 Ayodhya judgement, and what we saw as their possible cross-fertilisation.

Collectively we raised and began addressing a set of questions informed by our diverse disciplinary fields and field sites, which we hope will stimulate further research:

- How does the language of the courts contribute to recasting multi-religious and heterogeneous spaces, and India more broadly, as ‘Hindu’?
- In what ways are the contemporary geographies of Hinduism shaped by the language of law?

- Conversely, how do spatial practices and understandings of divine abodes and places of worship influence the ways in which the courts deal with religious disputes?
- To what extent do the legal and spatial dimensions cross-fertilise each other in the making of Hinduism as a religion suitable for an Indian majoritarian state?

We did not anticipate that our responses would see the light of the day at a time when crucial developments are taking place. Examples of how much is at stake in the courts and around sacred sites are the recent Supreme Court refusal to stay the ongoing Archaeological Survey of India investigation around the Gyanvapi mosque⁴ and statements by leaders of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) that, unlike the Babri mosque case, there is no need for a popular mobilisation around Gyanvapi because the courts will do the work.⁵ As well, we witness the escalation of debates around a long anticipated Supreme Court re-examination of the constitutional validity of the 1991 Places of Worship (Special Provision) Act after it was challenged by several petitions.⁶ The act seeks to maintain and protect the religious character of places of worship in India as they were

⁴ See below and Lazzaretti 2023 in this special issue.

⁵ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/no-gyanvapi-mass-campaign-well-win-in-court-says-vhp/articleshow/102218457.cms?from=mdr>.

⁶ See for instance: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/validity-of-places-of-worship-act-sc-gives-centre-time-to-clarify-stand-adjourns-case-to-october-31/article67066721.ece>; and <https://www.outlookindia.com/national/-sc-to-hear-pleas-challenging-validity-of-1991-law-on-religious-places-news-273605>. A reading of the Act that seems to be aligned with its opposers is found here: <https://www.barandbench.com/columns/is-the-places-of-worship-special-provisions-act-1991-constitutional>.

at the time of independence in 1947,⁷ and if it were to be revised, or declared ‘unconstitutional’ as petitioners claim, a new chapter in ‘liberation’ movements would begin—one that would use the courts as a primary strategy. In any case, our concerns are now in plain sight, with the courts and places of worship occupying a consolidated role in 2024 ‘new India’.

In the next section we introduce our approach to Hindu majoritarianism, and illustrate why it matters to look conjointly at judicial and spatial dimensions of religious practices.

Jurisprudence, geography and their cross-fertilisation: Our approach to Hindu majoritarianism

In the last decade India has witnessed the consolidation of muscular Hindu nationalist power with the successive electoral victories of Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Hindu majoritarianism, many commentators observe, is now not the future envisioned by supporters of Hindutva ideology, but the new normal: anti-minority (particularly anti-Muslim) rhetoric has become mainstream, while violence against projected internal and external enemies fuelled by discourses of ‘historical injury’ (Govindrajan, Joshi and Rizvi 2021) and ‘politics of fear’ (Anand 2011), is performed in the name of protection of the nation, routinely with impunity and in plain sight (Sarkar 2019, Chatterjee 2023).

Much has been written about the formation of the Hindu nationalist ideology and its effects on Indian democracy and people, particularly with regards to

⁷ <https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/PlaceWorshipAct1991.pdf>.

religious and ethnic minorities and oppressed castes. This scholarship cannot be summarised here but from it emerge two prominent avenues of research. The first and most extensive is focussed on state institutions and political discourse, mostly exploring how the growing influence of Hindu nationalism changes them from within, paving the way for a Hindu *rāṣṭra* (see for example, Hansen 1999; Ludden 2005; Anand 2011; Chatterji, Hansen and Jaffrelot 2019; Nilsen, Nielsen, and Vaidya 2019; Jaffrelot 2021; Sundar 2023). A second avenue of research focusses on the everyday dimensions of Hindu nationalism and the ‘cultural entrenchment’ of Hindutva in various domains and locations (Berti, Jaoul, and Kanugo 2011; c.f. Anderson and Longkumer 2018). This avenue seeks to understand how Hindu nationalism and the majoritarian ideology of Hindutva ‘stick, that is, how they acquire legitimacy and longevity through attaching themselves to the quotidian desires, aspirations, fears, and resentments of ordinary people in the region.’⁸

In this special issue, we propose a reading of Hindu majoritarianism that bridges these two avenues of research and considers its *combined functionings* in both institutions and the everyday dimension. To do so, we focus on the judiciary—an institution identified as a crucial site for the exercise and legitimation of authoritarian politics in general (Moustafa 2014; Scheppele 2018) and, in the case of India, one increasingly involved in the production of Hindu majoritarianism and the hollowing out of the constitution (Jaffrelot 2017; Kapur 2019; Sun-

⁸ Govindrajan, Joshi and Rizvi 2021.

dar 2023). We simultaneously also look at everyday geographies of religion, and more precisely on religious space and spatial practices such as rituals of place, devotion to place and pilgrimages. Geographies and spatial practices of the majority religion have a long history as means of establishing and cultivating religious, political and affective networks (Bhardwaj 1973; Fleming 2009; Eck 2012; Jacobsen 2013), but since the 1980s they have played a crucial role in the imagining and making of India as a Hindu nation, while appropriating the space of the religious Other (Assayag 1997; Brosius 2005; Anand 2018).

Scholars have thus dealt separately with jurisprudence and geography as crucial to the making of contemporary Hinduism as a religion for the majoritarian state, but the two have not to date been brought together analytically. On the one hand, productive attempts to connect the two domains are found in scholarship that demonstrate the role of the courts in influencing and shaping religious practices while continuously defining the boundaries of religion itself, rationalising Hinduism and promoting a text-based Sanskrit version of it (Fuller 1988; Galanter 1971; Sen 2010). On the other, though, if Berti, Tarabout and Voix (2016) rightly observe that legal actions and court decisions ‘have a far-reaching impact on rituals and on religious specialists, and contribute to (re)define religious categories and practices’ (Ibid. xv), we suggest that the opposite might also be true: religious understanding of place and practices around places of worship play a role in legal discourses and court decisions. Indeed, as exemplified by the 2019 Ayodhya judgement, evidence of the continuity of religious practices

around places of worship has proven to be crucial in legal disputes, particularly those concerning land possession. To what extent, then, do jurisprudence and geography fertilise each other?

Our endeavour revolves around and, at the same time, provincializes, what is perhaps the most politically charged and controversial Supreme Court judgement in the history of post-colonial India—the 2019 Ayodhya judgement. Either praised as vindication of longstanding claims about the birthplace of Rāma or identified as a worrying validation of the violent dispossession of India's minority Muslims and a crucial step in India's 'majoritarian march',⁹ the 2019 Ayodhya judgement is an effective entry-point into the ways in which jurisprudence and geography intersect in, and contribute to, Hindu majoritarianism. It is certainly an 'event' to be understood as one of social anthropologist Bruce Kapferer's 'generative moments'—those created by and condensing larger-scale societal structures and, at the same time, critical sparks for the emergence of outcomes that had not been necessarily foreseen and are irreducible to the processes of the past (Kapferer 2010).¹⁰ Our collection thus looks at, around and beyond the 2019 to attend to both the long-term historical (judicial and geographical) developments that accompany it, as well as to the repercussions it continues to generate across time and space—particularly in the contested compounds in Mathura and

⁹ <https://frontline.thehindu.com/cover-story/article30015471.ece>.

¹⁰ Vera Lazzaretti would like to thank Kathinka Frøystad for having directed her to the work of Kapferer on events as generative moments.

Banaras (Varanasi), and more broadly in the production of Hindu majoritarian India.

The contributions

Two articles focused on our ‘event’ begin the collection and provide analysis of under-explored aspects of the 2019 Ayodhya judgement. The first article, ‘The Ayodhya case, freedom of religion, and the making of modernist Hinduism’ by Ratna Kapur looks into the mobilisation of the constitutional idea of ‘freedom of religion’ in this and previous judgements to show how Hindu nationalist forces make use of, and work within, the framework of Indian secularism to establish, in her view ‘a monolithic and homogenous Hindu state’. Although ‘religious freedom’ in the Indian constitution was intended primarily to protect religious minorities, the courts and juridical discourses are identified as central sites for the formation of a Hindu majoritarian version of religious freedom that is to their detriment.

The 2019 Ayodhya judgement as well endorses and promotes a version of modernist Hinduism that emerged in the 19th century through the British codification of Hindu law and privileged one god, one site and one text against notions of fluidity, plurality and diversity. This modernist Hinduism, with its apparent clarity, is conducive to Hindu majoritarianism and aspired to by its promoters. Indeed, Kapur reminds us that the Hindu nationalist struggle for the construction of a grand Rāma temple in Ayodhya had long been identified by the VHP as even more important than Indian independence; and the same struggle has been crucial

in the foregrounding of Rāma as the central deity in this version of Hinduism. Her article shows that the majoritarian co-option of freedom of religion and the shaping of Hinduism are in fact two sides of the same coin: Indian secularism is equated with Hinduism, which is presented as the only truly tolerant, and thus secular, religion. In this the Supreme Court, and particularly the the 2019 Ayodhya judgement, play a crucial role.

While Kapur's article introduces us to the long term and ongoing process of appropriation of secular institutions through judicial discourses in the making of Hindu majoritarianism, the second article unpacks more closely legal understandings of deities and places of worship in the legal history of the Ayodhya dispute. What counts as a Hindu deity according to the courts? Can a piece of land or a place of worship be a Hindu deity? 'Dharmaśāstra and the legal personality of deities in the Ayodhya judgement (2019)' by Christopher Fleming looks at ways in which Hindu deities and places of worship are understood as, and translated into, legal persons in two crucial judgements of the Ayodhya: the one by the Supreme Court of India (2019) and that by the Allahabad High Court (2014). Fleming notes that those justices who expanded or constrained Hindu majoritarian claims did so largely through discussions of divine legal personality which, in turn, entailed debates concerning the legal implications of Dharmaśāstric statements. In framing Rāma's personality, the courts evaluated two related—and sometimes contradictory—strands of jurisprudence: 1) the Anglo-Hindu law of Equity and Trusts (which established the doctrine and details of the legal person-

ality of Hindu deities); and 2) post-colonial constitutional law concerning freedom of religion (cf. Kapur 2023 in this issue). Fleming examines who (or what) are the two divine litigants in the suits—Rām Virajman (the infant form of Rāma worshipped at the Babri Masjid/Rām Janmabhūmi site) and Asthan Rām Janmabhūmi (the actual site *itself*)—and what proprietary rights the deities and their fiduciary guardians enjoy according to the judgements of the Allahabad High Court and the Supreme Court of India. The courts’ interpretations of a specific Sanskrit maxim attributed to the 16th century jurist, Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya, the author argues, underpin the distinction between the juridical personality of Rām Lalla Virajman and the deification of the contested site itself, as well as the Supreme Court rejection of the legal personality of Asthan Rām Janmabhūmi. While the Allahabad High Court invoked Raghunandana to justify a faith-based application of Sanskrit jurisprudence (Dharmaśāstra) and expand the Hindu community’s rights to freedom of religion into a legal weapon with which to assert control over India’s contested geography, the Supreme Court rejected that interpretation by reframing Raghunandana’s maxim to support the legal personality of Rām Virajman merely as the pious purpose of worship at Ayodhya. Fleming concludes that legal debates about the juristic personality of Hindu deities are inseparable from determinations about the ownership of some hotly-contested religious sites in India. It is faith-based applications of Sanskrit jurisprudence and understanding of divine abodes that lies at the heart of lawsuits filed in the name of deities in Mathura and Banaras (Varanasi).

With the third article we zoom out from legal debates and are provided with a broader perspective that helps us contextualise the pre and post 2019 Ayodhya judgement, vis-à-vis spatial and devotional practices on the ground. ‘The Ayodhya decision and Marwari mercantile patronage: Materializing a devotional geography for Rāma through Hanumān’ by R. Jeremy Saul draws on longitudinal ethnographic research to shed light on Marwari pan-Indian patronage of temples and pilgrimage infrastructure for Hanumān and other Vaiṣṇava deities throughout the Rāmjanmabhūmi movement. Marwaris make up a pan-Indian urban diaspora (tracing their descent from Rajasthan). From the 1980s these merchants coalesced in devotional organisations dedicated to Vaiṣṇava deities that were coeval with the escalating Rāmjanmabhūmi movement. After the destruction of the Babri mosque in 1992, Marwaris funded numerous new temples for Hanumān, in which Rāma was also revered. Although many Marwaris do not identify themselves as *hindutvavadis*, many others openly supported the cause and assumed advisory roles in mainstream Hindutva associations. In any case, Saul argues that Marwari devotion and sponsorship provide a material foundation for exalting Rāma through the worship of Hanumān, thus materially contributing to constituting to the identification of the nation with a devotional geography for Rāma. Intentionally or otherwise, their devotional practices and pious construction activities contributed not only to the reification of an ever growing Hanumān and Rāma geography, but also reinforced the idea of a threatened Hindu nation, eroded by centuries of foreign rule and modern caste politics and now in need of

restoration. All this, the author argues, paved the way to the 2019 Ayodhya judgement (and perhaps to the majority welcoming reaction to it). Saul's article puts the Ayodhya dispute into new perspective by showing that Marwaris, as longtime pan-Indian philanthropists for Hindu causes, were already ahead of the trajectory that has the Ayodhya 2019 judgement as its acme.

The next article takes us back to Ayodhya to look closely at its ritual geographies and the interpretations of rituals of place in the legal dispute. 'The ritual of *parikramā*, Hinduization of space and the case of Ayodhyā' by Knut A. Jacobsen discusses the function of *parikramās* in the 2019 Ayodhya judgement and in subsequent urban policies implemented for Ayodhya by the Uttar Pradesh Government. It shows how a traditional and well-established ritual practice of circumambulating a sacred centre is being refashioned into a tool for the 'Hinduization of space'—an expression used by the author to frame the historical and contemporary expansion of Hindu geographies and spatial practices as a source of political and social control of the religious Other. More specifically, Jacobsen shows that the performance of the *parikramā* in Ayodhya was identified by the lawyer K. Parasaran (who successfully argued the case for the divine litigant Rāma Virajman and Hindu nationalist organisations) as a proof of faith and thus of the fact that the site itself was a legal personality. In this reading, *parikramā* marks the boundaries of the site. In framing the refashioning of *parikramās* in majoritarian terms, Jacobsen suggests that Hinduization of space is thus a crucial historical process to be taken into account in understanding developments both in

the legal history of Ayodhya and in the contemporary city, as well as in other disputed sites, such as Banaras and Mathura. While the existence of the ritual of circumambulation of the site was successfully mobilised in the judgement, subsequent demands by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the decision of the Uttar Pradesh government to allot land for the construction of the new mosque only *outside* the *parikramā* area further strengthen the function of *parikramā* as a boundary-making device and a defense against intrusions of others. *Parikramā* has been used in Ayodhyā to legitimise claims and appropriation, not only of the ‘disputed site’ but of the whole city as an exclusively Hindu sacred space. The making of Hindu majoritarianism also unfolds through the relentless replacement of a pluralistic religious Indian geography with a homogenized sacred Hindu geography, exemplified here by the codified versions of *parikramās* being promoted by the UP government. The article points to the cross-fertilisation of rituals of place and legal discourses as they affect places of worship and, in conclusion, suggests that in the aftermath of the 2019 judgement more attention should be paid to the role of *parikramās* in ongoing majoritarian redefinition, expansion and control of urban space.

The cross-fertilisation of Hindu geographies and judicial discourses is as well at the core of the following article. ‘Ayodhya 2.0 in Banaras? Judicial discourses and rituals of place in the making of Hindu majoritarianism’ by Vera Lazzaretti moves us again beyond Ayodhya to look at another prominent target of Hindu nationalist ‘liberation’ campaigns. Drawing on analysis of legal proceed-

ings and material collected through longitudinal ethnographic research in Banaras over the past decade, Lazzaretti complicates understandings of the Gyanvapi mosque as the next Ayodhya, or Ayodhya 2.0. While it is undeniable that, as in the case of Ayodhya, the courts are being used to pursue the Hinduization of Banaras and advance claims for the 'restitution' of the Gyanvapi mosque to Hindus, the author shows that spatial negotiations and developments too have been crucial in paving the way for the current 'unmaking' of Gyanvapi as mosque. The recent construction of the Kashi Vishvanath Corridor next to the mosque and the 2019 Supreme Court judgement have prompted an escalation of the conflict in Varanasi, but Lazzaretti's concerns are more with the longterm cross-fertilisation of judicial discourses and rituals of place. Fine-grain ethnographic evidence collected among ritual authorities and residents of the neighbourhood around the Kashi Vishvanath temple and Gyanvapi mosque compound illuminates how petty disputes over situated religious authority there were not in the past necessarily communal but had more to do with struggle for recognition of specific religious authorities; however, they have been progressively co-opted in the pursuit of a Hindu majoritarian agenda for 'liberating' the Gyanvapi mosque. The article expands scholarship on the entrenchment of Hindutva by drawing attention to the ways in which everyday understandings of places of worship and localised struggles may finish up informing, intentionally or unintentionally, the reasoning of the courts, and nurturing Hindu majoritarianism.

The final article of our special issue sheds further light on the making of Hindu majoritarianism beyond Ayodhya. ‘The view from Mathura: Nationalist projections in local perspective’ by Nick Tackes analyses Hinduization efforts around the Shahi Idgah in Mathura—a 17th century Islamic place of worship that shares a boundary wall with a temple complex associated with the birth site (*janmabhūmi* or *janmasthān*) of the god Kṛṣṇa. Mathura is a third site in Uttar Pradesh to have been targeted by Hindu nationalist forces since the 1980s and, following the 2019 judgement, renewed pressure for its ‘liberation’ has been applied in the courts and on the ground. Tackes surveys judicial and legislative attempts led by largely non-local activists to code Mathura as a Hindu city and notes that between 2019 and 2023 at least nine court cases were filed seeking to remove the Shahi Idgah, claiming that the plot of land on which it stands belongs to Kṛṣṇa and that Kṛṣṇa’s actual birth site lies beneath the current Shahi Idgah. Subsequent to the 2019 Ayodhya judgement, Hindutva projects are thus seen to be pursued through judicial means rather than through popular mobilisation. Concomitantly with surveying the various court cases, Tackes outlines top-down efforts to refashion Mathura as a distinctively Hindu city and their impact on the ground. The official designation of Mathura as a Hindu pilgrimage site by the Yogi Adityanath government in UP privileges the Hindu religious character of the city, despite its diverse demographics; however, these policies solicit diverse and contradictory responses from local Hindus. While detailing strategies of Hindu nationalists to pave the way for a repetition of Ayodhya in Mathura, Tack-

es' article also provides important ethnographic evidence about the contradictory and unstable positions of local Hindus towards top-down Hindu majoritarian projects. Within a currently contested religious environment, even the threats to remove the Shahi Idgah are consequential. Tackes draws attention to the spatial and conceptual loss of sacred space for Mathura's Muslim community due to the heavy surveillance surrounding the Shahi Idgah. In resonance with what occurs in Ayodhya and Banaras, Tackes argues that the courts serve as a dynamic link between top-down and bottom-up efforts to transform these cities into spaces that cater specifically to Hindus.

Composing Hindu majoritarianism

Collectively, the articles in this special issue theorise the spatial and legal dimensions of contemporary Hinduism as cross-fertilising and as crucial sites for the formation and functioning of Hindu majoritarianism. They do so, however, without assuming that the judicial sphere and rituals of place are always and solely straightforwardly co-opted and used to advance majoritarian projects by Hindu nationalist organisations and politicians. Our contributions, on the other hand, highlight the complexity of practices and actors involved in the subtle but relentless advance of Hindu majoritarianism through both spheres, and in their cross-fertilisation. We are as well conscious that the entrenchment of Hindutva is by now plainly visible in almost every corner of society and does not need to be exposed; though we show it may still occur in unexpected ways and locations. Like the compositional approach proposed by Chatterjee (2023) to address the after-

lives of the 2002 violence in Gujarat—according to which composing (rather than exposing) violence means assembling ways in which violence continues within, and nurtures, both state institutions (the police and the courts) and the sites where resistance against it is practiced (the archive and activism), ultimately to interrogate the role of violence in the ‘minoritisation’ of Muslims—we could say that our contributions, then, *compose* Hindu majoritarianism by thinking with, and around, the 2019 Ayodhya judgement and bringing together institutional and everyday realms. They assess and document how Hindu majoritarianism unfolds within, feeds, and nurtures itself in the judicial realm and everyday geographies of Hinduism. We hope that this collection stimulates further research on the cross-fertilisation of these dimensions and contributes to testing a compositional approach that documents and understands the complex fabric of Hindu majoritarianism, both in institutions and everyday life.

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