THE CANADIAN FACE OF ISLAM: MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN TORONTO

by

Amir Hussain

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Centre for the Study of Religion
University of Toronto

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0-612-63783-2
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Amir Hussain

Graduate Centre for the Study of Religion

University of Toronto

ABSTRACT:

This dissertation is the first to examine the various Muslim communities of Toronto. Toronto has a Muslim population of some 200,000 of the over 500,000 Muslims in Canada. This dissertation provides a description of many of the Muslim organizations in Toronto. The description and analysis of those organizations are based on reading texts, conducting interviews, participation and long-term participant observation. Muslims in Toronto struggle with being members of a minority tradition in a city that is the most cosmopolitan in the world. They are also forced to deal with the issues that arise from living in the modern North American world. It is the interplay of these factors, being a minority, being multicultural, being North American, speaking English, having internal diversity and being modern that creates Canadian ways of being Muslim. Canadian Islam offers an important window through which to view a future role for Islam to play in the world. Muslims in Toronto are engaged in creating distinct religious lives for themselves. This thesis argues that Islam in Toronto is not simply a collection of diaspora Islams, but instead is its own local manifestation of Canadian Islam.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

To the memory of my greatest teacher, my wife, with much love and respect:

Shannon L. Hamm  
September 13, 1963 — July 7, 1992

I began work on the writing of this dissertation in June of 1992, almost exactly one month before Shannon died. For the longest time afterwards, I was unable to write. Every letter that I wrote was another reminder that Shannon was gone. Slowly, very slowly, I came to realize that through finishing this work, I had an opportunity to remind people of the incredible person that she was, and the enormous impact that she had on all of us that were privileged to know her.

Baby where’s that place where time stands still  
I remember like a lover can  
But I forget it like a leaver will  
It’s no place you can get to by yourself  
You’ve got to love someone and they love you  
Time will stop for nothing else

And memory plays tricks on us, the more we cling, the less we trust  
And the less we trust the more we hurt  
And as time goes on it just gets worse  
So baby where’s that place where time stood still  
Is it under glass inside a frame  
Was it over when you had your fill

And here we are with nothing  
But this emptiness inside of us  
Your smile a fitting, final gesture  
Wish I could have loved you better

Baby where’s that place where time stands still  
I remember like a lover can  
But I forget it like a leaver will  
It’s the first time that you held my hand  
It’s the smell and the taste and the fear and the thrill  
It’s everything I understand  
And all the things I never will

—Mary Chapin Carpenter, “Where Time Stands Still”, from Stones in the Road, 1994
PREFACE AND A NOTE TO MUSLIM READERS:

*Al-salaamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu.* With the traditional Muslim greeting, "peace be upon you and the mercy and blessings of God", I welcome the reader. With the greeting, I identify myself as a member of the Muslim community. I feel it is important that at the beginning I identify the community to which I belong. This work is based on nearly a decade of field work and participant observation with the Muslim communities in Toronto. For some Muslims, the phrase "Muslim communities" is immediately problematic. They may insist on the singular, that there is one and only one community, and not "communities" in the plural. With this statement, I must respectfully disagree. The present work describes something of what it means to be a Muslim in the largest city in Canada at the end of the twentieth century. As I argue, there is no one way to be "Muslim".

Methodologically this work is grounded in the teachings of Wilfred and Muriel Smith. From them I learned the distinction between "faith" and the "cumulative tradition". There is certainly a cumulative tradition from which individual Muslims draw the narratives of their lives. But it is those lives in connection with their individual communities that are of interest to me, those narratives that must be allowed to exist in the plural. In the epigraph to his magnificent novel about Toronto, *In the Skin of a Lion*, Michael Ondaatje uses the words of John Berger: "Never again will a single story be told as though it were the only one".1

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From the Smiths, I also learned the important idea that "religion" is best understood as the vital, living faith of individual persons. This is how I understand the contested term, "religion", and what I attempt to describe will be the different ways in which the faith of Muslims in Toronto finds its voice. This is not a "quantitative" study, in the sense that the reader will not find lists of statistics about how many Muslims understand their tradition in certain ways. That type of study, unless it is extremely limited in its scope, is outside the realm of this doctoral dissertation as I conceive it. Instead, this will be a "qualitative" study, concerned more with meaning than measurement. As articulated by one group of researchers: "Questions relating to life experience within a dynamic and changing environment, which are usually concerned with multiple meanings, patterns, and complex human relationships, call for a different form of inquiry".

Too often, we who are academics fail to appreciate the poetry of ordinary lives. Too much of our emphasis is on the "movers and the shakers". Instead, our emphasis can be on the "moved and the shaken"; the people that make up the majority of the traditions that we study. This work will be an attempt to gain some insight into the basic question described above: what has it meant to be a Muslim in the largest city in Canada in the last years of the

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3 Of the many tributes to Wilfred Cantwell Smith following his death, one of the most powerful was by William Graham of Harvard University. In that tribute, published in the *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, 29:2 (Summer, 2000), pp. 6-7, Graham wrote: "Wilfred was no friend of the growing academic focus on the strictly theoretical aspects of the study of religion, literature, or history: he always maintained that one should in the first instance study subjects, not 'methods,' 'theories,' or 'disciplines.'"


twentieth century? More specifically, it highlights the religious communities which form, and in turn are formed by, individual Muslims. This study necessarily will not be comprehensive. I describe the communities that I was able to study, and of course there are so many other communities that I was unable to observe. So this is a beginning, in the hope that this work can be revised and expanded upon by myself and others.

To those readers who are Muslim, and to those who express solidarity with the broader Muslim community, I need to make a few things explicit. First, this is not a work of piety. It is, I think, a pious work, in that my own understanding of what it means to be a Muslim was certainly influenced over the decade that I worked on this project. I began, wrote, and finished this work as a self-described Muslim. However, this work is not intended to be used for "pious purposes" by other Muslims. As such, the usual Muslim formulas of blessings and praise will usually (but not always) be avoided.

Second, this work attempts to make no judgements as to who should or should not be considered a Muslim. As a Muslim, I believe that that judgement is reserved for God alone. As a scholar of religion deeply influenced by Wilfred Cantwell Smith, my orientation eschews essences and embraces people in the process of change. In this study, I will describe various individuals and groups who refer to themselves as Muslim. I make no judgement about their Islam, but I understand that others may be all too willing to do this. Where there are tensions between groups and individuals, I will attempt to describe the points of difference, but I will not say that they belong outside of the House of Islam. For the purposes of this study, I consider a Muslim to be any person who self-identifies as a Muslim, even if that description is contested by other Muslims.

Third, this is a work of participant observation. I have been an observer of the Muslim
communities in Toronto for the decade that I have researched this dissertation. During that time of observation, I was also a participant in much of what I observed. From 1983 to 1991, prior to the time that I began to work on this dissertation, I was also a participant in the Muslim communities in Toronto.

This work would not have been possible without the influence of those who have taught me, and helped to make me the person that I am. To all of my teachers, I am indebted. I am grateful to my supervisor, Willard G. Oxtoby, and to the members of my committee, Jane D. McAuliffe and Michael E. Marmura for their advice and support. In addition, I am thankful to Pamela Klassen and Judith Nagata, respectively the internal and external examiners of this dissertation, for their help. I also need to give thanks to those individuals and groups who allowed me into their lives, and allowed those lives to be discussed in this work. I do not think it merely a coincidence that I finished writing this work during Ramadan 1421, and made the final revisions during Lent 2001. To God alone belongs the praise.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"Make no mistake," he said in that court, "we are here to change things. I concede at once that we shall ourselves be changed; African, Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Cypriot, Chinese, we are other than what we would have been if we had not crossed the oceans, if our mothers and fathers had not crossed the skies in search of work and dignity and a better life for their children. We have been made again: but I say that we shall also be the ones to remake this society, to shape it from the bottom to the top. We shall be the hewers of the dead wood and the gardeners of the new. It is our turn now."

In this dissertation, when I write of "the Canadian face of Islam", I mean at least three different things: the ways in which Muslims live out their individual and collective Islam in the Greater Toronto Area; how Islam, Muslims, and Muslim communities are studied and discussed in the academic community; and the interaction of these two factors. To set the stage, my introductory chapter has three sections. The first section, "A History of Recent Islamic Studies in Canada", outlines the neglected state of research into contemporary Muslim societies, including some of the problems with that research. In closing that section, I discuss some of the consequences of that research, including the misconceptions that occur about Islam and Muslims in Canada. The second section, "Who Are Muslims in Canada?", offers a brief overview of the Muslim presence in Canada, then discuss the specifics of the situation in Toronto, where I locate the majority of my research. The third and most detailed section, "Towards a New Understanding", introduces my thesis: that Islam has become a Canadian religious phenomenon, and not just a collection of diaspora religions.

This thesis is supported by the remainder of the dissertation. The next two chapters...
directly extend the discussion of the introductory chapter. The second chapter is a literature review of the issues relevant to the study of contemporary Muslim societies. The third chapter is a discussion of the relevant methodological issues in my own research that come from the scholarship on contemporary Islam, as well as from other academic disciplines. The fourth chapter provides a brief history of the Muslim communities in Toronto. The fifth chapter describes the various Muslim communities that I studied. In the sixth chapter, I discuss reactions to Salman Rushdie’s 1988 novel, The Satanic Verses. The seventh chapter contains a description of key issues for understanding Islam in Toronto. I conclude my analysis of the Muslim communities in Toronto in the eighth chapter.

1. A History of Recent Islamic Studies in Canada

When compared with other fields in the academic study of religion, the study of Islam is a small one, and within that field the study of contemporary Islam is considerably smaller still. One reason for this has to do with the limited number of places for studying Islam in Canada. With the collapsing of the University of Toronto’s Department of Middle East and Islamic Studies into its Department of Near Eastern Studies, the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University became the only autonomous Canadian unit for the study of Islam. Given the large and ever-growing number of Muslims in Canada—Islam is already the third-largest religion in North America,7 and it is estimated that in the next decade it will be the second-largest—I find this lack of representation in our universities to be curious at best. This lack of representation has a rather lengthy history, and I take a perverse pleasure in remembering that

Wilfred Cantwell Smith, the greatest Islamicist that this country has produced, and the founder of the Institute at McGill, had his dissertation, which would later become Modern Islam in India, rejected by Cambridge "on the grounds of its tendentiousness".

As an example of the academic neglect of Islam, let us consider a text published by Macmillan in 1976, entitled Religion in Canadian Society. In an essay in this volume entitled "Religious Composition of the Canadian Population", the words "Muslim" and "Islam" are never used. In a table listing religious denominations based on the 1971 Census, 27 specific denominations are named. Of these 27 denominations, 24 are Christian. The three non-Christian denominations are Buddhist, Confucian and Jewish. There is a category of "others", which is explained in a footnote as consisting of "124 different entries among which were such groups as the Amana Society, Anglo-Israelites, Druids, Evening Lights, Johannites,

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6 I am indebted to Professor and Mrs. Smith for their many kind reminiscences of their time in India. I am also grateful to Professor G. E. Bentley, Jr. for his equally kind reminiscences of Srinagar and his time at Aligarh University, which was founded by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan as the Anglo-Muhammadan Oriental College at Aligarh.

7 Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Modern Islam in India (Lahore: Minerva Book Shop, 1943).


11 There are unfortunately many examples from which one can choose. For instance, I am indebted to Willard Oxtoby for referring me to the following introduction to the world's religions which never mentions Islam: John A. Hutchison and James Alfred Martin, Jr., Ways of Faith; An Introduction to Religion (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1953).


Rosicrucians, Round Church, and Theosophists". Again, the words "Muslim" and "Islam" are never used, even though in 1970, the Muslim population in Canada was estimated to be some 33,370. It is perhaps unfair to harp on this neglect, but this was an important volume in its time.

Among the first works to discuss the issue of Islam in Canada was a volume entitled *Religion and Ethnicity*, which consisted of the proceedings of a workshop held in 1977, sponsored by the Calgary Institute for the Humanities. This volume included two essays of interest here. The first one was by Yvonne Haddad, written while she was a graduate student at the McGill Institute of Islamic Studies, entitled "Muslims in Canada: A Preliminary Study". At the time of her writing, she estimated the Muslim population in Canada to be about 100,000. Her essay, true to its title, presents an effective preliminary account of Muslim experience in Canada, with an emphasis on the Arab community of Muslims.

The second essay in the volume was by Harold Barclay, written while he was the acting chair of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Alberta, entitled "The Muslim Experience in Canada". In contrast with Yvonne Haddad's essay, this one was underpinned by some troubling assumptions. In his opening paragraph, Barclay wrote: "it might be argued that Muslims in Canada should experience more difficulties than other

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15 This estimate is given in Zohra Husaini, *Muslims in the Canadian Mosaic: Socio-Cultural and Economic Links With Their Countries of Origin* (Edmonton: Muslim Research Foundation, 1990), p. 107. Given Haddad's study a few years later (see below), the figure of 33,370 may be an underestimate.


17 Haddad, in *Religion and Ethnicity*, p. 73.
immigrants in adapting to a new and non-Muslim socio-cultural milieu since Islam is a highly rigid and legalistic religious system which imposes such specific requirements on its adherents as to allow for little flexibility or adjustment to varying cultural conditions. Aside from the obvious bias of describing Islam as “highly rigid and legalistic”, “imposing”, and allowing for “little flexibility”, Barclay assumed that a discrete entity called “Islam” must be brought into Canada from without. This idea of Islam as homogeneous and radically “other” is discussed later in the essay, when Barclay wrote:

Muslim immigration into Canada is like depositing so many Islamic droplets into a sea of unbelief. It is extremely difficult to perpetuate one’s religious tradition especially when most of the immigrants themselves are not that well versed in the tradition, and when so many can be said to be marginally religious. Further, so much of Islamic tradition is perpetuated by reliance on the force of shame, that is, by an atmosphere of communal participation which is certainly difficult to generate when one’s group is both few in number and scattered.

Again, forgetting Barclay’s use of problematic language, or his claim of Muslim “scatteredness”, which is disputed by Haddad when she described 55% of the Muslim community as living in either Toronto or Montréal, it is clear that Barclay envisioned Islam as something “out there”, which is only incompletely brought into Canada. The idea of a complementary Canadian Islam, or a Canadian Islamic tradition (or traditions), is foreign to him. There is evidence for this claim, however, in his penultimate paragraph, where he wrote: “the question arises as to what extent this ‘watered down’ Islam is in fact Islam and this indeed


19 Barclay, p. 109.

20 Haddad, p. 73.
is the whole question of the adaptation of Islam to a changing world".21

While to Barclay’s credit, he did mention that Islam can adapt to the world, he concluded with the following sentence: “The balance of evidence supports the thesis that Islam as a religious system inhibits its members from full assimilation to the Canadian context, but this is as it should be since the Canadian context is, after all probably best described as ‘secular Christian’; it is not the multicultural community taken in any literal sense”.22 This raises another possibility of which Barclay seems to be unaware: perhaps rather than being changed by its environment, Canadian Islam (or, more properly, Canadian Muslims) might instead be able to change its (their) environment. It is to this possibility that I will return during the final section of this introduction.

It might seem unfair to spend so much effort in critiquing an article that was published 23 years ago, but it was written by the chair of a department who had authored other works on Muslims,23 and in my opinion accurately reflects the temper of its times. Moreover, in the intervening years, there has been little work done on Islam in Canada, and there certainly has been no growth in academics interested in such questions. Yvonne Haddad has published extensively, but the great majority of her work has focussed on Islam in the United States. Some important work on Muslims in Montréal has been done by Sheila McDonough of

21 Ibid., p. 112.
22 Ibid.
Concordia University, but she is now retired. Earle Waugh of the University of Alberta co-edited two volumes in the 1980s on Muslims in North America, but has since changed his research interests, and no longer publishes in this field.

Aside from the paucity of Canadian scholarship on contemporary Islam, there are methodological problems with the work that exists. One of these problems concerns language, which is really two problems: People not sufficiently trained in languages are doing research, or else they are specialists in language, who focus overwhelmingly on philology. This is to say that the study of Islam needs to include but be more than the mastery of languages.

Another problem concerns methodological assumptions. It has been over 20 years since Edward Said published Orientalism, his study of the relationships between scholarship on Islam and political power. While I am not claiming a link between scholarship and Canadian foreign policy, I am concerned about the Orientalist assumptions of some scholars. The language of Orientalism was evident in the essay by Barclay, and is also found in other works. As an example, in a long article published by the Ecumenical Research Institute in Jerusalem, Earle Waugh without any justification described the Prophet Muhammad as "a bellicose empire builder". Muhammad may well have been this, but without substantiating evidence or argument, the statement is simply opinion, which perhaps unintentionally reveals more about Waugh than about Muhammad.

Of more concern than these obvious biases are the assumptions that are never explicitly stated. I am thinking here of a scholar such as Andrew Rippin, who, while at the

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25 Earle Waugh, Peace as Seen in the Qur'an, Occasional Papers No. 3 (Jerusalem: Ecumenical Institute, 1986), p. 46.
University of Calgary, did some very important work on the history of Qur’anic exegesis, including the *asbab al-nuzul*, or the “occasions of revelation” of Qur’anic verses. While I admire his scholarship in these areas, his work on contemporary Islam is sometimes troubling. I use his book, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices. Volume 2: The Contemporary Period* in my course on Islam in the Modern World. In this textbook, Rippin uses a categorization of Islamic approaches to modernity first proposed by William Shepard. One of these categories is “Islamic Traditionalism”, which includes “the elite, Sufis and the lower classes”, along with those in “the Saudi Arabian context”. In a review of this book by Khalid Blankinship of Temple University in the August 1996 issue of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, an objection is raised to this “catchall category”, and the fact that it is “never treated as intellectually serious”. Blankinship writes:

> conservative Islam, including that represented by the Muslim ulama [religious scholars], is viewed as simply repeating the past. This view overlooks the fact that the ulama actually live in the present and have ideas, mechanisms, and modalities of thought for dealing with it as much as anyone else, including modern Western scholars. To say that others “live in the past” amounts to a self-justifying and self-legitimating construct on the part of the sayer. This finds confirmation in such statements here as, “How, then is one to retrieve the Qur’an both from the mountains of learned philological knowledge and from the literalist tendencies of many modern Islamic movements, and to discover something which speaks to the modern, intelligent individual?”. Such sentiments seem to take for granted a materialistic-progressivist ideological commitment reflecting modernism. Such an ideology could hardly be expected to explain how some of the most literalist and conservative interpretations of Islam are seriously taking root in modern Western cities, not only among immigrants, but also among natives, including well-educated ones.27

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These assumptions are not confined only to Canadian scholars. As an example, consider the words of Clifford Geertz, who wrote in the preface to Dale Eickelman’s *Knowledge and Power in Morocco* about the ways in which Islam is often misunderstood: “A simple opposition of an oral tradition and a written one, the first mindless and habitual, the second self-conscious and critical, can hardly survive a man who first reduces texts to memory—the Quran, a rhymed grammar, a legal handbook—and then starts to employ Arabic as a spoken language [italics are his].” Geertz implies that there are some who think of oral traditions—an integral part of many Muslim societies—as mindless, and lesser than written ones.

Finally, there is the issue of why Muslims themselves were sometimes not asked or given the opportunity to comment on their own religious traditions. I am thinking here of the panel on “Teaching Muslim-Christian Relations” at the 1996 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion (AAR). The two presiders, as well as the five panellists, were all Christian, with three of them teaching either at seminaries or at institutions founded by the Catholic Church. The respondent was Mahmoud Ayoub, a Muslim from Temple University, who spoke about being treated as “a guest and a token” in the world of Islamic Studies. Incidentally, Ayoub was given ten minutes of the two-and-a-half-hour panel to respond to the five panellists, and was stopped from speaking after his time had expired. More recently, Gisela Webb has edited a collection of essays by Muslim women in North America that

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29 I am not claiming that Geertz himself downplays the orality that is present in Islam, only that the “simple opposition” that he describes is sometimes evoked in scholarship by those who privilege texts.
includes her own introduction, subtitled “May Muslim Women Speak for Themselves, Please?” [italics are hers]. That Webb has to pose her question indicates the historical issue, but the fact that she does pose it and offers insight from ten Muslim women scholar-activists in North America indicates the changing situation.

There are powerful consequences from the ways in which contemporary Islam is studied in Canada, and the misconceptions about Islam and Canadian Muslims that result. I offer two examples. First, I once had a conversation with a woman who teaches media studies at a major Canadian university, and has published several books on writing and the media. She asked me, “What do you think of the violence committed in the name of Islam?” I tried to answer her question using the words of Mahmoud Ayoub, mentioning how Muslims often have to act as apologists for their tradition in a way that members of other religious traditions do not usually have to act. She replied, “So it’s not something inherent in the religion?” At the heart of this exchange is how one deals with a question like this. The questioner truly believes that there is a violence inherent in Islam, so a sarcastic answer will not be the appropriate one. Moreover, when I explained that Islam is no more nor less violent than Judaism or Christianity (or most “world” religions, or “democracy”, for that matter), she asked me, “What about the passage in the Qur’an that says kill all the Jews?” And I am at a loss. Clearly, she heard somewhere that such a passage exists in the Qur’an, when it does not. A second

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31 Unfortunately, mishearing, inventing or misrepresenting verses from the Qur’an is not uncommon. Ziauddin Sardar has described British reactions to the “Rushdie Affair” of 1989 in “A Postmodern War of the Worlds: Putting Rushdie and his Defenders Through Their Paces”, in *Muslim World Book Review*, 10:3 (1990), pp. 3-117. He discusses the words of one commentator, Fay Weldon: “And she then produces this 'verse' from the Qur’an: ‘When the unbeliever holds out his hand, take it. But when he turns his back, slay him. You have my
illustration of the way in which Islam is misunderstood comes from an interfaith event in
Beausejour, Manitoba. The speaker was a Muslim woman, and she began by asking the
audience if any of them knew anything about Islam. The response was no. After the speaker
made her short presentation on the basics of Islam, there were a number of questions. Most of
the questions reflected some prior misunderstanding of Islam. For example, “I thought women
had no rights under Islam, and I hear from you that they do!” The speaker accurately pointed
out that her audience did “know” many things about Islam, but what they knew was a mix of
fact and innuendo.

Unfortunately, there is a suggestion in these two examples of a more disturbing
possibility than simple misunderstandings. In describing the situation of White people refusing
to believe the accounts given by Black people of police brutality in the United Kingdom,
Michael Dummett has written of “the will not to know — a chosen ignorance, not the
ignorance of innocence.”12 Perhaps “the will not to know” is also present when it comes to
understanding Islam.

authority’. This ‘verse’, of course, is total fabrication” (p. 8). Granted, there are passages in the
Qur’an such as 5:51 or 60:1, which advise against taking “non-believers” as friends. There is
also 5:82, which reads “You will find among the people the Jews and the Polytheists to be the
strongest in enmity to the Believers”. However, Muslims are never urged in the Qur’an to kill
Jews or Christians. Admittedly, the situation is different for the case of polytheists, as
exemplified by 9:5: “But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the
Polytheists wherever you find them”. On this verse as it relates to the question of abrogation
of verses from the Qur’an, see Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Qur’anic Christians: An Analysis of
the question of abrogation, see David S. Powers, “The Exegetical Genre nūṣkh al-Qur‘ān wa
mansūkhuhu”, in Andrew Rippin, editor, Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the

12 Quoted in an essay by Salman Rushdie, “The New Empire Within Britain”, in
134.
2. Who Are Muslims in Canada?

a) History:

There has been a Muslim presence in Canada since very early times, with the first national census for 1871 showing 13 Muslims. Indeed, it has been speculated by some that Muslims were among the first explorers to arrive in North America, either predating or perhaps even guiding Columbus. Of the early migration of Muslims to North America (whether forced or voluntary), Gutbi Ahmed wrote the following:

These immigrants were often characterized as adventurers attracted to the New World for its economic opportunities. Unlike many of their contemporary European counterparts, they did not come to make America their home. Their intention was to make as much money as possible quickly and then return to their homeland.

This characterization of swashbuckling Muslims deserves to be qualified. Still, it was not until the twentieth century that Islamic institutions became established in North America. The first mosque in the United States was built in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1931, with the second being completed in Ross, North Dakota, in 1937. The first mosque in Canada was the Al-Rashid Mosque in Edmonton, Alberta, built in 1938. June 28, 1952, saw the first national Muslim conference in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with four hundred Muslims from Canada and the United States.

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States in attendance. A second conference was organized the following year in Toledo, Ohio. In July, 1954, the Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada (FIA) was formed. The first conference of the FIA was held in London, Ontario, in 1955.

With the growth of the Muslim community in North America, and the migration of Muslim students from other countries (particularly the Arab world, but also Iran, India, Pakistan, and Turkey) to study in North America, the Muslim Students Association (MSA) was formed in 1963. Today, there are active chapters of the MSA in most major colleges and universities in North America. As the MSA began to grow, "it became clear that a student, campus-oriented structure was no longer appropriate for this new situation." In 1981, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) was created. It is the largest Islamic organization in North America, with its headquarters (including a large new mosque) in Plainfield, Indiana. ISNA has encouraged Muslims in North America to develop more extensive links with their communities, including a 1986 "call on all Muslims to become more involved in the American and Canadian political processes". There are of course many other Muslim communities in North America, representing such groups as the Shi'a (both Twelver and Ismaili) and Sufi societies, the Nation of Islam (and all of its splinter groups such as the Five Percenters), the Dar ul-Islam and others.

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16 Ibid., p. 12.
17 Ibid., p. 13.
18 Ibid., p. 15.
20 For a good introduction to these communities, see Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane Idleman Smith, editors, Muslim Communities in North America (Albany: SUNY Press,
b) Populations:

There is no accurate count of the Muslim population in Canada or the United States. The Canadian census does ask the question of religious affiliation. The data for the last major census (1991) indicate a Muslim population in Canada of 253,260.\(^{41}\) Interestingly, “Islam” in the Canadian census data exists as one of the 11 sub-groups of “Eastern Non-Christian”. The seven major religious groups listed are: Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, Eastern Non-Christian, Para-religious Group, and No Religious Affiliation.\(^{42}\) This estimate, however, seems low. The main reason is that most Muslims are recent immigrants, who are reticent to self-identify as members of a minority religious group, for reasons ranging from personal privacy, to a perception of discrimination, to a desire to fit in. This is particularly true with the recent immigration of refugees into Canada from countries such as Somalia, Bosnia and Albania. P. J. O'Rourke, with his usual wit, points out the problem with certain “opinion” polls:

That is —I blush to admit this— I accepted the results of an opinion poll taken in a country where it was illegal to hold certain opinions. You can imagine the poll-taking process: “Hello, Mr. Peasant, I'm an inquisitive and frightening stranger. God knows who I work for. Would you care to ostensibly support the dictatorship which controls every facet of your existence, or shall we put you down as in favor of the UNO opposition and just tear up your ration card right here and now?”\(^{43}\)

I have seen estimates of the actual Muslim population in Canada ranging from 200,000


to over 600,000.\textsuperscript{44} Estimates of population numbers, one must remember, are often linked with self-worth, i.e. minorities will tend to prefer higher estimates for their own group and lower estimates for others. My own best guess, based on extrapolations from the data of ethnic populations, is somewhere around 500,000 Muslims in Canada. The results of the 2001 census should prove to be most interesting.

The United States census does not ask the question of religious affiliation. However, there has been a move to count “under-represented” groups in the total American population. I am a member of the Muslim subcommittee of the complete census count committee of the city of Los Angeles for Census 2000. Following Census 2000, there should be much better information about the numbers of Muslims in the United States. Using data from the 1980 census, Carol Stone has estimated a Muslim population in America of some 3.3 million people in 1980, rising to 4 million in 1986.\textsuperscript{45} My own sense of the best estimate of the current Muslim population in America is some 6 million. This would make Islam the third largest religion in North America, behind Christianity and Judaism. With the Jewish population in North America being usually estimated at about 7 million,\textsuperscript{46} it will not be long before Islam becomes the second largest religion in North America.

\textsuperscript{44} For an article on the estimates of the Canadian Muslim population, see Daood Hassan Hamdani, “Canadian Muslims on the eve of the Twenty-First Century”, in Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, 19:2 (1999), pp. 197–209. Hamdani estimated the population at 450,000 in 1996, and projected a population of 650,000 in 2001. The Muslim Guide to Canada, published in October, 2000 by the Canadian Office of the Muslim World League, estimates (p. 19) a Muslim population of 680,000 in Canada and 300,000 in Ontario.

\textsuperscript{45} Carol L. Stone, “Estimates of Muslims Living in America”, in The Muslims of America, p. 27.

c) Ethnic Make-up:

In North America, Islam is an "immigrant" phenomenon, with the great majority of Muslims being immigrants, or the children of immigrants. There is also conversion to Islam, most notably in the African American populations (see below). In Canada, the largest ethnic make-up is South Asian (Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan and through migration, East African), but there are also significant populations from the Middle East and North Africa, and more recently from places like Somalia and the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. The Canadian Muslim population is mostly concentrated in the major cities of Toronto, Ottawa, Montréal and Vancouver, with smaller populations in cities like Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Windsor and Halifax. As in the rest of the Muslim world, the majority of Canadian Muslims are Sunni, but there are significant communities of Shi'i Muslims, both Twelver and Ismaili. Also present is Ahmadiyya, a modernizing movement that emerged in late nineteenth-century India, and was officially declared un-Islamic by the Government of Pakistan in 1974, leading to oppression and repression of its members. In addition there are Sufi groups, and reform movements such as the Tablighi Jamaat ("community of informing or notifying"), a movement of spiritual renewal and proselytizing founded in India by Muhammad Ilyas. There even has been some activity from across the US border, most notably in New York, by the Nation of Islam in an attempt to reach Black Canadians.

In the United States, one of the largest Muslim groups are African Americans. As described in Chapter Five, there is some dispute as to the size of this community. I estimate in Chapter Five that African Americans comprise some 25 percent of the Muslim population in the United States. There has been a great deal of adult conversion in this community. This
process of "conversion" is often self-described as being one of "reversion", with the understanding that people were Muslim when they came as slaves from West Africa, that "Christianity is the religion of the slave-master" imposed on slaves, and so you "revert" to your original religion instead of "converting" to it. The African American populations help to make American Islam distinct from Canadian Islam. After the African American populations (30.2% of American Muslims according to 1980 data), the next largest ethnic groups were Middle Eastern/North African (28.4%), Eastern European (26.6%), and Asian (11.5%).

California is the state with the greatest number of Muslims, including the largest concentration of Iranians. The Muslim population in Los Angeles is estimated at some 500,000.

d) Reasons for Research in Toronto—Data for Greater Toronto Area (GTA):

Eight reasons make the Greater Toronto Area a fertile ground for analysis. First, the GTA is home to the largest Muslim community in Canada: ISNA (Canada) estimates a Sunni population of about 150,000 in the GTA. Combined with the numbers of Shi'a and Ahmadiyya Muslims, there are approximately 200,000 Muslims in the GTA. Second, all of the large organizations are found here: The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), the Council of the Muslim Community of Canada (CMCC), the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW) and the Muslim Students

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47 Carol L. Stone, p. 28.
48 Ibid., p. 29.
49 Ron Kelley, "Muslims in Los Angeles", in Muslim Communities in North America, p. 136.
Association (MSA) which is active at the three universities in Toronto (the University of Toronto, York University and Ryerson Polytechnic University) and many of the community colleges (e.g., George Brown College). Third, the GTA is home to over 30 Sunni Mosques, including a Tablighi mosque, and a Croatian Islamic Centre active since 1974. Fourth, there are a large number of full-time Islamic schools, and the largest mosque in Canada is in Maple (about 45 minutes north of Toronto), the Bait-ul-Islam (House of Islam) mosque of the Ahmadi community. Fifth, there is a large Shi'i community, which maintains the Ja'ffari Islamic Centre, the largest Shi'i centre in Canada. Sixth, there are 17 Ismaili jamaat khanas (places of meeting and worship) in the GTA, with another 13 in the rest of Ontario (comprising half of the 60 in Canada). Seventh, Toronto has been described by the United Nations as the most cosmopolitan city in the world. As such, the GTA has representation from almost all of the ethnic communities found in Canada. There is the exception of French-speaking North Africans (who are found mainly in Ottawa and Montréal), but some of them are to be found in the college and university populations. Eighth, Toronto attracts a large numbers of refugees, most recently including Afghans, Somalis, Bosnians, Albanians and Chechens.

3. Towards a New Understanding

a) Relevant Issues From Other Disciplines:

Before beginning the discussion on relevant issues from other disciplines, I should note that for some Muslim scholars, such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Islam is understood as “non-Western”, and so cannot and should not be described by the categories and methodologies of “Western” research. Indeed, scholars such as Akbar Ahmed in his book Toward Islamic
Anthropology argue for the creation of an "Islamic" anthropology. I do not share these opinions. I do understand, however, how Islamic culture could be conceived as "non-Western", even though for some time now scholars of religion have recognized Islam as a "Western" religion (i.e., with similarities to Judaism and Christianity). Moreover, I would argue that wherever one puts "Islam" on the Western-Eastern continuum, Western modes of research can be applied, with the understanding that no methodology is complete or value-free.

The study of contemporary Islam has benefited from the advances in research of many disciplines, most notably cultural anthropology, where there have been a number of significant changes in methodology in the past decade. I group one set of methodological issues under the rubric "politics of representation: rethinking the assumptions of transparency of meaning and immediacy of experience". Under this title, I include three issues. The first is the need to recognize the historical and political conditions and constraints of both the acts of researching and writing about that research. The second issue is the awareness of the colonial context of anthropology and other research in the human sciences. This includes rethinking the "West's" ability to speak about and speak for those in the "non-West", the idea of giving voice to the voiceless, or writing history for people without history. This also involves theorizing about the limits of representation itself. I am here thinking of the essay "Partial Truths" by James Clifford, found in the important volume that he co-edited with George Marcus, Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography. Clifford writes that


51 In this regard, Clifford Geertz's foreword to Knowledge and Power in Morocco, mentioned earlier in this chapter, again makes some excellent points.
“ethnographic truths are thus inherently partial [italics are his]—committed and incomplete”.32 Third, there is a general questioning of the assumption that the researcher can take an “accurate sample” of a religious tradition, and portray immediate experience which can then be displayed to other academics. These three issues are discussed in greater detail in the section on “cultural anthropology and participant observation” in Chapter Three.

These issues of representation are captured eloquently by Salman Rushdie in a conversation between two characters in The Satanic Verses (p. 168): “‘They describe us,’ the other whispered solemnly. ‘That’s all. They have the power of description, and we succumb to the pictures they construct’”.

Another important idea is that of the “positioned subject”, articulated by Renato Rosaldo in his book Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis.33 In Rosaldo’s work, “position” is a broad term, referring to (among other things) the expectations, experience, gender, cultural background, economic resources, and education of the researcher. “Position” also means that different researchers are differently positioned, and that subjects of research also have their own positions. Thus, there are two implications of “position”: both the subjects and researchers are heterogeneous. Let us explore further these two implications.

In the essay “Grief and a Headhunter’s Rage”, Rosaldo describes how the death of his wife altered his understanding of funerary rituals of Ilongot headhunters in the Philippines.34


34 Ibid., pp. 1–21.
Her death led him to question the traditional anthropological assumptions about the nature of ritual (does ritual in its performance always reveal the culture in its depth and totality?). He rethinks ritual as a "busy intersection" where diverse groups of positioned individuals meet. He thereby underlines the diversity of "the other", and the relevance of his own personal experience to the research process. Of course, this is not to say that since he is a widower only he can describe grief, nor that there is a universal experience of grief. Nor does it mean that since I am a Muslim, only I can describe Islam, or that Islam is a homogeneous entity to be described. It does mean that my descriptions are other than what they would have been if I were a non-Muslim.

In case there is any uncertainty about the implications of what I have just written, I should be explicit: I do not mean to say that only Muslims can or should describe Islam.

Perhaps the best book on the Nation of Islam published in recent years was In the Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam, written by a young Scandinavian scholar named Mattias Gardell, who teaches at Uppsala in Sweden. Here you have a privileged White European Christian, teaching in a faculty of theology, writing about underprivileged Black American Muslims. And yet he understands and describes the experience of members of the Nation of Islam better than anyone I have ever read. In discussing his research with him in 1995, Gardell said that as a European he was able to see the racism and discrimination in American society that an American colleague might have overlooked.

Another relevant issue is the question of gender, and the representations of women that are found in scholarship. I am here thinking of the feminist argument that collective

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identities are androcentric. In an important work in this area, *Arab Women in the Field: Studying Your Own Society*, edited by Soraya Altorki and Camilia Fawzi El-Solh, gender bias is shown to have at least three dimensions: “the selective perception of those studied; limitations on access to specific information; and the possibility that the researcher may overlook important variations in gender roles in different situational contexts”.

An important work in this area is *Women Writing Culture*, edited by Ruth Behar and Deborah Gordon, which in part is a response to the deliberate exclusion of women in the earlier volume, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. In the words of the introduction, written by Ruth Behar:

> Many of the contributors to this book are themselves women of color or immigrants or people of hybrid identity who know what it is like to be othered and so bring to anthropology a rebellious undoing of the classical boundary between observer and observed. Many are the first generation of women in their families to have attained a university education and so bring to anthropology a sharp sense of unease with the hierarchies embedded in educational institutions.

In researching and writing this dissertation, I was sensitive to questions of gender and “hybridity”. These questions are mentioned in Chapter Three, in the sections “cultural anthropology and participant observation” and “groups whose stories are not told”.

**b) Relevant Issues From Work on Contemporary Islam:**

There is a small but growing body of work on contemporary Muslim societies in North America. For example, Michael Fischer and Mehdi Abedi’s *Debating Muslims* is


concerned with the Iranian Twelver Shi'a communities in the USA, Yvonne Haddad's *The Muslims of America* deals with various American communities, while Aminah McCloud's *African American Islam* and Steven Barboza's *American Jihad* are concerned with the African American communities. Yvonne Haddad and Jane Smith's *Mission to America* examines five sectarian Muslim groups, of which only the Ahmadis are found in Canada, while Barbara Daly Metcalf has edited a volume entitled *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe*. The important work of Dale Eickelman, "The Study of Islam in Local Contexts," and Eickelman and James Piscatori, "Social Theory in the Study of Muslim Societies," must also be mentioned as important methodological starting points.

Six main issues arise from the work on contemporary Islam that are of particular relevance to the study of Islam in Canada and the United States. The first is the question of whether Islam in North America is a collection of diaspora religions. I understand the word "diaspora" as it is usually defined by scholars of religion, "members of any religious body living as a minority, whether in or outside their homeland, and maintaining contact with the central authorities of that body." There is some argument for this understanding, particularly in the work of Barbara Metcalf. She writes:


Many Muslim migrants came originally as industrial workers, beginning in the 1950s; by the early 1970s, many began to settle with their families. Since then, not only have many Muslims been attempting to sustain and reproduce distinctive cultural values in a non-Muslim setting, they have also, in many cases, been doing so in the company of fellow Muslims whose practices originated in homelands different from theirs. These diaspora Muslims now find themselves in countries that vary demographically, economically, and juridically.\textsuperscript{42}

To be sure, for many North American Muslims who are part of immigrant cultures, there is a sense of being in a “diaspora”. However, I argue that Canadian Islam is not simply a collection of diaspora traditions, but can in fact be seen as a Canadian religious phenomenon as well (with important differences, to be sure, between the United States and Canada). Karen Leonard has argued a similar case for American Muslims, writing that “American Muslims cannot be viewed as an immigrant or diasporic community, since the indigenous population is so large (at least a third of the whole) and the national-origin groups differ so greatly”:\textsuperscript{43} I do think that Canada is a “site of creative cultural production”, to use the words of Renato Rosaldo.\textsuperscript{44}

Based on my research, my understanding is that many Muslims in Canada are trying to create a distinct religious life for themselves in North America. And the best way that I can give a sense of that is to remember the words of William Blake’s poem “Milton”:

\begin{quote}
And did those feet in ancient time
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{43} Karen Leonard, introduction to her forthcoming edited collection, \textit{American Muslim Identities}. Leonard has also argued this same point in her article “State, Culture, and Religion: Political Action and Representation Among South Asians in North America”, in \textit{Diaspora}, 9:2 (Spring, 2000), pp. 21–38. I am grateful to Karen Leonard for providing me with copies of her work prior to their publication.

Walk upon Englands mountains green:
And was the holy Lamb of God
On Englands pleasant pastures seen!

And did the Countenance Divine,
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my Bow of burning gold:
Bring me my Arrows of desire:
Bring me my Spear: O clouds unfold!
Bring me my Chariot of fire!

I will not cease from Mental Fight,
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand:
Till we have built Jerusalem,
In Englands green & pleasant Land. 65

The second issue concerns language, and the idea of English as an Islamic language. English is being used and has been used as a language to express Islam, a tendency which reinforces the move from diasporic identities to Canadian Muslim ones. So I think that it is entirely appropriate to use Blake’s English, in a way that it would not be relevant to the study of Islam in other countries or cultures. For example, at a conference on Islam in America at DePaul University in 1995, Sulayman Nyang of Howard University spoke on translating Shakespeare into Wolof, an African Islamic language. When it came to Lady Macbeth’s line, “Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower, But be the serpent under’t”, Nyang remarked about the knowledge of biblical allusions necessary to understand this passage. And then he remarked, “We Africans do not have the same fascination with flowers that Europeans do”.

The issue of a post-colonial people, immigrants who have a long history of dealing

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with European (mostly English and French) colonialism is the third one to consider. As mentioned earlier, the majority of Muslims in Canada are immigrants from such places as the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia. As such, they have a history with the colonial world. The history and culture of English Canada is not a foreign one to many Canadian Muslims. They may well have read the above-mentioned words of Blake or Shakespeare in colonial schools in countries such as Egypt, Kenya or Pakistan.

The fourth issue concerns Islam as a minority religion. In the North American and European contexts, Islam has to define itself as a minority tradition. How is Islam expressed when Muslims cannot dictate the discourse, as they can do in countries where Islam is the dominant tradition (though, to be sure, even there variations within Islam lead to tensions)?

The fifth issue concerns Islamic theological activity in North America. This is discussed by Frederick Denny66 and includes both how Muslim theological thinking is being done in North America, and the issues involved with bringing in religious scholars from other parts of the world.

The issue of pluralism and interfaith dialogue, mostly with Christianity and Judaism, is the sixth notable one. Muslims are in contact with people of other faiths, and this has an impact on their Islam. In other parts of the world, it is unfortunately easy to be prejudicial against Christians when one has little or no contact with them. The situation is very different in Canada and the USA. The work of Farid Esack, particularly Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism,67 captures many of the above issues in the South African context.


c) The Current Work:

Taking into account the six issues that I have outlined, I am interested in the ways in which Islam is lived and practised in the Toronto area. I have identified several different Muslim groups that I describe in Chapter Five. Three are umbrella organisations which represent various communities: The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW) and the Council of the Muslim Community of Canada (CMCC). I also mention the Shi’i presence in Toronto, both in its Twelver and Ismaili forms. I describe the numerous Sufi groups in Toronto. The final two groups that I discuss are the Nation of Islam, who are beginning to be very active among young Black Canadians, and the Ahmadis, who are actively involved in proselytizing, and have built the largest mosque in Canada.

The primary materials for my research are the written materials that have been produced by the various organizations in Toronto, both for their own internal use and for external, or proselytizing, use. All three of the umbrella groups mentioned (ISNA, CCMW and CMCC) have extensive archival material, and it is for this reason that they are included in my study. This material ranges from publications such as pamphlets and magazines, reports, directories and membership lists, to meeting minutes, criteria for membership and yearly reports. At the time that I did my research, the archives for both CCMW and CMCC were stored together (see the first section of the bibliography for more information). These archives were stored in some 48 medium-sized boxes (about 25 x 30 x 60 cm) in a room of approximately 20 square metres. Many of the boxes contained multiple copies of magazines or pamphlets. I was able to take away with me original material and photocopies that filled one 25 x 30 x 60 cm box. From ISNA, I was given copies of archival material (original issues of
magazines, booklets, etc., and photocopies of other material), but was not allowed
unsupervised access to their archives (as I was with CCMW and CMCC). The material from
ISNA that I was able to take away with me also filled one 25 x 30 x 60 cm box. Beginning in
Chapter Four, I make reference to this archival material, and have transcribed some of it in
the appendices. These written materials are the first type of data that I use.

The second type of data utilized is interviews with as representative a selection of
various Muslim leaders in the Toronto area as it was possible to arrange. I interviewed twenty-
five leaders in total, and these interviews are described in greater detail in the section on
“Yvonne Haddad and Islam in America” in Chapter Three. In some cases, these interviews
serve to explain in greater detail materials that the leaders themselves have written. These
interviews are also used to gain an understanding of the practices and beliefs that the leaders
consider to be important.

The third type of data is also interviews, but this time with sixteen members of the
various communities, instead of with the leaders. This is done to gain an understanding of
what community members consider to be important about their communities. These
interviews also serve to provide an alternative to the version of Islam given by community
leaders.

The fourth type of data that I use is my own participant observation. I lived in
Toronto from 1983 to 1997. From 1983 to 1991, I was a participant in some of the Muslim
communities. In 1991, I began to do the research for this dissertation and continued that
research until 1997, when I left Toronto. I describe my participant observation in greater
detail in the section “this observer as a participant” in Chapter Three.

From my research on the Muslim communities in Toronto, I make some observations
on the differences between Muslim communities in Canada and Muslim communities in Southern California, specifically in Los Angeles. Ron Kelley has written an excellent introductory article to the communities in Los Angeles, and Kambiz GhaneaBassiri has done a preliminary study of some of these communities. Many of the issues faced by Muslims in Toronto and Los Angeles are similar to each other. However, there are some differences, due to the fact that the populations are very different in country of origin (in Toronto, the largest ethnic group is South Asian, while in Los Angeles the largest groups are African American, Iranian and Middle Eastern). Also, there are the usual differences between Canada and the United States, which include such things as the Canadian policy of multiculturalism in distinction to the American notions of assimilation.

I have identified fourteen issues that are important to a new understanding of Islam in Canada. These are sorted into three categories: Issues regarding the creation of distinct Muslim groups in reaction to the minority status of Muslims in Canada; internal issues with which each of the various Muslim groups has to concern itself; and issues regarding cultural trends in the society at large that concern, but are not particular to, these Muslim groups.

(i) Muslim Groups:

1) Minorities within a minority: the Twelver Shi'a, Ismaili, Ahmadiyya, etc. The dominant Islamic tradition in North America is Sunni Islam, but there are substantial "minority" communities, who seek to practice their own form of Islam. In Canada, the largest

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68 Ron Kelley, "Muslims in Los Angeles", in Muslim Communities in North America, pp. 135–167.

mosque is an Ahmadi mosque, the Bait-ul-Islam (House of Islam) Mosque in Maple, Ontario.

2) The role of subordinate groups, such as the Tablighi Jamaat or youth groups, those that normally do not have their histories told. There is a growing concern among Muslims about Muslim youth, and how they will or will not be guided in their Islam once they leave their parents' home, typically to attend college or university. This outreach to youth will be the most important item on the agenda of many Muslim groups.

3) The issue of sexual orientation. Traditional Islam recognizes the validity of only the heterosexual relationship. What does one do if one is gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered and a Muslim? There are some support groups such as Salaam ("peace") and Min al-Alaq ("from the same clot"), but these groups have to operate covertly due to discrimination. In traditional Muslim societies these tensions do exist, but they are exacerbated in North America, where the imams may preach homosexuality as a sin, but it is taught as an alternative lifestyle in the schools, and protected under the law.

4) The role of mission (making da'wa) in North America. Currently, there are many information centres that exist for the propagation of Islam. At one of the busiest street corners in Canada (Dundas and Yonge Street in Toronto, near the Eaton's Centre), one heard the playing of the adhan (call to prayer) over loudspeakers, and saw young men handing out pamphlets.

(ii) Internal Issues:

1) A consideration of the community life that Regula Qureshi has described as "deeply meaningful and quite private". Islam is not just that which is practised in the mosque or

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79 Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, "Transcending Space", in *Making Muslim Space*, p. 47.
other public settings, but in the home as well. How do the communities organize themselves, and how do Muslims worship, both corporately and privately?

2) The issue of gender in the performance of rituals and worship. What customs should be followed for the participation of women? Some Muslim events are open only to men, while others are exclusively for women. I have been to Islamic conferences where men and women sat beside each other, and conferences where men and women were segregated. Sometimes there may be links made with race, but not with gender. I remember a conference at DePaul University in Chicago in 1995, watching a number of Black men get upset at a Black woman, Amina Wadud, for her pioneering work on how women hear and understand the Qur’an. They, who had been discriminated against on the basis of their race, could turn around and, without thinking about it, discriminate against someone on the basis of her gender.

3) The question of mosques. This includes such issues as: construction, renovation or conservation, ownership, and use (mosques as community centres, schools, locus of political activity). When it comes to the construction of new mosques, someone or some group has to own the mosque and the land on which it is built. For example, in Canada, the Canadian Islamic Trust (CIT) was created to satisfy Canadian legal requirements. However, there have at times been tensions between those who have been members of the CIT for decades and the actual users of particular mosques, who may have very different ideas about how the mosque is to be run. Another issue with the construction of new mosques is that non-Muslim neighbours may not want a mosque to be built in their neighbourhoods, due to a fear of Islam or Muslims. For example, in Southern California there was opposition to the building of the Islamic Center of Granada Hills. In the end, it was built but it was not allowed to look like a
traditional mosque (no dome or minarets), due to neighbourhood opposition.\(^1\)

4) The marking off of particular spaces as being "Muslim". Aminah McCloud has discussed this in the African-American communities, where one can see signs saying: "This is a Muslim Home/Please Remove Your Shoes".\(^2\) More and more, one sees Muslims marking off their homes with "Islamic" decorations.

5) The issue of accommodation to "the West". Some Muslim groups are trying to shut out "the West", for example by refusing to use banks or bank products which charge or give interest. Other groups try to accommodate, and so one can find several "Muslim" mutual funds.

(iii) Cultural Trends in Canadian Society:

1) The issue raised by the interfaith dimension of Canadian society. Muslims are involved in interfaith work, particularly in dialogue with Christians. But this is not in and of itself new, as Christianity has had long associations with Islam. For examples of the interactions between Christians and Muslims in history and in the contemporary period, see

\(^1\) In the Los Angeles Times' religion section, Margaret Ramirez wrote about the anniversary of the King Fahd Mosque in Culver City, California, which faced similar opposition. Of the mosque in Granada Hills, she wrote that: "A building permit was granted, but with 44 restrictions, the most conditions ever placed on a house of worship in the San Fernando Valley. In addition to neighborhood concerns about traffic and parking, city officials pressured the Islamic Center to build the mosque without the traditional Islamic dome and insisted on a Spanish-style structure to fit the Granada Hills neighborhood. That design was publicly lamented by then-mayor Tom Bradley, who accused the City Council of religious intolerance", in "Removing Obstacles to Religious Buildings", Los Angeles Times, August 5, 2000, p. B2.

\(^2\) Aminah Beverly McCloud, "This is a Muslim Home': Signs of Difference in the African-American Row House", in Making Muslim Space, pp. 65–73.
the essays collected in *Christian-Muslim Encounters.* This interfaith work also involves the attendance of non-Muslims at Muslim rituals and celebrations, and the attendance of Muslims at non-Muslim religious ceremonies. The result is an “Islam” that influences and in turn is influenced by the other traditions with which it comes into contact. Interfaith work also involves Muslim connections to other communities, such as First Nations in Canada. For example, there has been a connection made in the Shi’i community between the historical suffering at Karbala and the 1990 Mohawk uprising at Oka.

2) Islam in Prison. There has been a history of Islam’s spreading via prisons. This is particularly relevant in the African American community, where so many young men are affected by the criminal justice system. There is visiting and concern for Muslim prisoners in major jails and prisons throughout North America, and the development of training for Muslim prison chaplains.

3) Racism and how it affects Muslims, and their understandings of Islam. Unfortunately, racism is a problem for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Some mosques are segregated by ethnic groups, and one only has to ask for the “Pakistani” mosque, or the “Egyptian” mosque to discover this. On the positive side, “ethnic” mosques do add to the richness and diversity of the Muslim communities in North America. For example, the

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Croatian Islamic Centre, founded in Toronto in 1974, was able to be a very effective resource in the 1990s for the influx of Croatian and Bosnian refugees after the breakup of Yugoslavia.

4) Economic issues, dealing with existing financial considerations which may conflict with Shari'a law. Increasingly, there has been the development of institutions such as “trusts” or “co-operatives” to allow Muslims an alternative to interest-based banking systems. In this way, for example, Muslims may be able to purchase a home from a co-op without having to use a mortgage.

5) The teaching of Islam in colleges and universities. Jane McAuliffe, Dean of Georgetown College, has often talked about how she, who is not a Muslim, teaches Islam to Muslims. What happens when the only places where many Muslims learn about Islam is in a university classroom, sometimes from non-Muslim teachers? There really is only one Islamic “seminary” in North America, the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Virginia. The issues raised in “teaching” Islam are very important, and I address them at some length in the section “The Two Sons of Adam”.

4. Conclusion

This introductory chapter has been an overview of some of the issues that are important to both Muslims and non-Muslims, and to the study of Islam in North America. I have highlighted some of these issues to be discussed in greater detail throughout this dissertation. I am convinced that there are Canadian and American “Islams”, distinct from diaspora “Islams”. It will not be long before Islam overtakes Judaism to become the second most popular religion in North America (behind Christianity). A proper and thorough
understanding of North American Islam is important therefore, not just to Muslims, but to anyone living in North America. This is all the more relevant due to the negative stereotyping of Muslims that occurs in North America.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is an overview of the literature relevant to the study of Muslim communities in Toronto. I begin with a review of some of the early studies of Muslims in Canada. Much of this early literature was concerned more with the communities as ethnic communities (particularly Arab and Pakistani) than as religious communities. This literature is used to chronicle the development of the Muslim communities in Canada. I then examine the small amount of contemporary literature on Islam in Canada, concentrating on the works of Earle Waugh, Zohra Husaini, Ahmad Yousif, Sheila McDonough and Yvonne Haddad. Then, I move to an examination of the larger body of work on Islam in North America (which is in effect the study of Islam in the USA). I discuss a few texts that I consider representative of the available literature. The next section examines the literature on Muslim communities outside of North America, specifically those in Great Britain and South Africa. I do this to show in my final chapters how Islam in Canada is different from and similar to Islam in other countries that are modern and “Western”, where Muslims also form the minority of a population which is largely Christian. Finally, I discuss an example of the growing literature on interfaith dialogue, which addresses the question of how Muslims rethink their Islam as a result of exposure to other religious traditions.

Historically, there has not been a lot of work done on the Muslim communities in Toronto. Some of the early work focussed more on ethnic issues than issues that were

And where it has been done, the work is usually of an introductory nature, serving more as a general introduction to Islam than as a specific introduction to the Muslims of Toronto. For example, see the short chapter by Camel Xerri and Abdullah Idris, “Islam —A Dynamic Stability”, in Margaret Lindsay Holton, editor, Spirit of Toronto: 1834–1984 (Toronto: Image Publishing, 1983), pp. 282–293. In this twelve-page chapter, only three pages
specifically religious. For example, Baha Abu-Laban did an excellent study on the Arab communities in Canada: *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada.* Among the points he made are the following. He notes that the first recorded Arab immigrant into Canada arrived in Montreal in 1882. However, many of these early immigrants were Christian. Significant numbers of Arab Muslims did not immigrate into Canada until after World War II, and Abu-Laban estimated that, up to 1974, only 30% of Arabs in Canada were Muslim. Of interest here is the discussion of policies on immigration into Canada. In 1913 there was an official Canadian policy “against Hindoos but also Arabians, Turks, Syrians and Persians”. Despite this racism, the Muslim community continued to grow, albeit slowly. By 1931 there were some 645 Muslims in Canada. In 1938, the first mosque was built in Canada, the al-Rashid mosque in Edmonton, Alberta. This mosque was built by some 20 Lebanese families in Edmonton, who worked very quickly. The permit was granted to them in May of 1938, and the mosque was completed by November. Abu-Laban’s work, then, is important for giving us information about the history of Arab immigration to Canada, as well as

contain specific information about Islam in Canada, with only two paragraphs on Islam in Toronto. For another example, see the following article: Marcia Hermansen, “Hybrid Identity Formations in Muslim America: The Case of American Sufi Movements”, in *The Muslim World*, 90:1-2 (Spring, 2000), pp. 158–197. In this excellent article, two pages are given exclusively to “Sufism in Canada”, with one paragraph on Sufism in Toronto.

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78 Ibid., p. 1.

79 Ibid., pp. 2–5.

80 Ibid., p. 86.

81 Ibid., p. 138.

82 Ibid., p. 139.
information about how the community reacted to life in Canada.

There has also been some work done on the Pakistani community in Canada. Sadiq Awan's work is the earliest and most influential in this regard.\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Inter alia}, he touches on several distinctive issues. The first known Indo-Pakistani immigrant, Amanat Ali Khan, arrived in Vancouver in 1912.\textsuperscript{14} Again, it was changes to immigration laws that facilitated Pakistani immigration to Canada. A 1951 agreement between Canada and Pakistan allowed for 100 Pakistanis to immigrate each year.\textsuperscript{15} With the end of the quota system for immigration in 1967, Pakistani immigration increased dramatically.\textsuperscript{16} In 1971, a survey was done of the Pakistani community in Canada, and the data were analysed by Awan and published in 1976 as \textit{The People of Pakistani Origin in Canada: The First Quarter Century}.\textsuperscript{17} Awan made three major points in this book about the behaviour of Pakistani-Canadians when it came to religion. First, Awan claimed that although "Pakistani immigrants wish to preserve their identity as a people with their own language, culture and special traditions, still they show a greater desire to be known as a religious community than an ethnic, political entity".\textsuperscript{18} Second,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}, p. vi.
\item \textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 35.
\end{itemize}
he claimed that "Muslims regard themselves as one cultural community in Canada". While this claim may have been true in 1976, it is contested in the year 2001. Third, Awan was accurate in his conclusions that the "Islam" of Pakistanis in Canada had been changed by their presence in Canada: "It has been observed that modification by contact with Western society has taken place. Now women attend Mosques and meeting halls. The veil has been abandoned by Muslim women in Canada. Muslim men appear in Western suits on religious occasions. They use English most of the time in religious matters". In Chapters Five and Seven of this dissertation, I discuss the changes over the 25 years since Awan wrote his work. Interestingly, there have been some "reversions", such as a return to the veil by some women, and a return to "traditional" dress by some men.

In an updated version of his work (1989), Awan also discussed the problem in teaching Islam: "Islamic centres in Canada, according to a significant number of Pakistani Muslim parents, have not developed in the direction desired by the programme of Islamic studies. The quality of Islamic religious studies in all Islamic centres suffers from lack of properly trained religious teachers". These concerns of who teaches Islam and how Islam is taught are even more relevant today, and are discussed in Chapter Seven of this dissertation in the section "The two sons of Adam".

In May of 1980, the University of Alberta held a symposium on "Islam in North America". The papers first presented at that symposium were edited into a book by Earle H.

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19 Ibid., p. 36.

90 Ibid.

91 Awan, People of the Indus Valley, p. 178.
Waugh, Baha Abu-Laban and Regula B. Qureshi, who described it as “the first of its kind”. In the introduction to that volume, they wrote:

But we have settled for the descriptive term “North American” because immigrants themselves have traditionally made little distinction between the two countries [Canada and the United States] in terms of social characteristics and values, and because the total cultural position of North America is one of official secularism. Doubtless further studies will flesh out several important differences in adaptation between American and Canadian Muslims, but this level of analysis would require much additional background research.

In this study, I will flesh out some of the differences, and argue that at times there is a distinctly Canadian Islam. As the first collection of papers on Islam in North America, the content of the book was varied. According to its editors, “even within disciplines, researchers differed upon interpretation. . . . Hence what you have before you reflects not only disciplinary diversity, but attitudinal and valuational divergence. By incorporating them all here, we have attempted to convey the multidimensional character of the inquiry”. For my research, among the important papers in The Muslim Community in North America are those by Earle H. Waugh.

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93 Ibid., p. 2.

94 I am here reminded of the comment: “There are no differences between Americans and Canadians. The only difference is in making that observation to a Canadian”.

95 The Muslim Community in North America, pp. 1–2.

96 “Muslim Leadership and the Shaping of the Umma: Classical Tradition and Religious Tension in the North American Setting”.
Baha Abu Laban, Murray Hogben, Regula and Saleem Qureshi, Azim Nanji, and Charles J. Adams. They provide a good preliminary background to various topics concerning Muslim communities in North America. The relevant sections of these papers will be cited in Chapters Four and Five of this dissertation.

In 1991, Earle Waugh edited a second volume on Islam in North America, this time with Sharon McIrvin Abu-Laban and Regula Burckhardt Qureshi. With this collection, the editors noted that “today, Muslim academics are adding new dimensions to scholarship and providing the beginnings of a growing discourse across the disciplines among students of contemporary Islam. Some of these are represented here.” With a focus on notions of

97 “The Canadian Muslim Community: The Need for a New Survival Strategy”.

98 “Socio-Religious Behavior of Muslims in Canada: An Overview”.

99 “Pakistani Canadians: The Making of a Muslim Community”.

100 “The Nizari Ismaili Muslim Community in North America: Background and Development”.

101 “The Development of Islamic Studies in Canada”.


104 Ibid., p. xii.
family, the book was divided into four sections: "Muslim Normative Traditions and the North American Environment", "From Generation to Generation: Transmitting the Tradition", "The Dynamics of Family Formation and Process" and "Muslim Women: Gender in Socio-Religious Context".

In his contribution to this volume, "North America and the Adaptation of the Muslim Tradition: Religion, Ethnicity, and the Family", Waugh acknowledged the "differences between Canada and the United States relevant to Muslim adaptation", although he still maintained that "Muslim immigrants may make little distinction between Canada and the United States".105 The other papers in this volume that are relevant to my research were by Sharon Abu-Laban,106 Fariyal Ross-Sheriff and Azim Nanji,107 Vernon Schubel,108 Nimat Hafez Barazangi,109 Murray Hogben,110 Illyas Ba-Yunus,111 and Marilyn Robinson Waldman.112

The 1981 Census of Canada was the first one to recognize Islam as a separate, distinct religious category.113 This census was analysed by Asma Rashid in a 1985 publication by

105 Waugh, in Muslim Families in North America, p. 80.
106 "Family and Religion Among Muslim Immigrants and Their Descendants".
107 "Islamic Identity, Family, and Community: The Case of the Nizari Ismaili Community".
108 "The Muharram Majlis: The Role of a Ritual in the Preservation of Shi’a Identity".
109 "Parents and Youth: Perceiving and Practicing Islam in North America".
110 "Marriage and Divorce Among Muslims in Canada".
111 "Muslims in North America: Mate Selection as an Indicator of Change".
112 "Reflections on Islamic Tradition, Women, and Family".
According to the 1981 census, there were 98,165 Muslims in Canada.\footnote{114} This means that the Muslim population in Canada almost tripled from the 33,370 recorded in 1970. The overwhelming majority (77\%) of Canadian Muslims were foreign-born, with only 23\% being born in Canada.\footnote{116} Of particular interest to this dissertation is that in 1981 over half (53.1\%) of Canadian Muslims lived in Ontario.\footnote{117} The figures from the 1991 census show 253,260 Muslims in Canada, an increase of over 2.5 times the number from 1981.\footnote{118} In 1991, the percentage of Canadian Muslims living in Ontario increased slightly from the 53.1\% of 1981 to 57.4\%.\footnote{119}

In the past decade, important work on Muslims in Canada was done by Zohra Husaini, and published by the Muslim Research Foundation in Edmonton, Alberta.\footnote{120} In the forward to Husaini's book, Baha Abu-Laban wrote the following about the diversity that is found among Canada's Muslims: "they represent different national, linguistic and cultural origins. They are indeed a mosaic within the larger Canadian mosaic. While they share the same religious designation, Canadian Muslims face numerous challenges in the new

\footnote{114}{A\[sma\] Rashid, \textit{The Muslim Canadians, A Profile} (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1985).

\footnote{116}{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 15.

\footnote{117}{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 17.

\footnote{118}{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 19.


\footnote{120}{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 15.}
environment, not the least of which is coherence as a multiethnic community."  

This diversity among Canadian Muslims must be examined alongside the official Canadian policies on multiculturalism. Husaini writes that "Canadian multiculturalism legitimizes the rights of each ethno-cultural group and community to maintain its distinctiveness." It is this official policy on multiculturalism, introduced into the House of Commons in 1988 as the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, that "recognizes the right of each individual to choose to retain his or her ethnic ties and to participate in Canadian institutions as a member of an ethnic group or independent of ethnic classification." As I argue later in this dissertation, it is precisely this policy of official multiculturalism that helps to create distinctly Canadian Islamic traditions, different from those in other countries (e.g., the United States of America, Great Britain or France) where Muslims are in a minority, but do not have the same protection that multiculturalism brings.

Although Husaini does write about Muslims in Canada, her study focuses on the communities in Alberta, and specifically examines how these diaspora communities are linked through trade with their communities in home countries. Her methodology involved a combination of studying literary sources, conducting interviews and administering questionnaires. Unfortunately, she encountered the usual problem of the low return rate of a questionnaire. She mailed 500 questionnaires to the 57 Muslim organizations that she

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121 Ibid., p. iv.
122 Ibid., p. 13.
123 Ibid.
identified in Alberta, and received 115 usable responses.124

The only other dissertation on Muslim communities in Canada of which I am aware was written by Ahmad Yousif in 1992.125 His work was an analysis of the Muslim community in the Ottawa area, designed to be “a sociological study of the religious identification and adaptation of the Muslim community in the Canadian National Capital Region.”126 Yousif used a combination of questionnaires, participant observation and unstructured interviews as his methodology. He concluded that (italics are his): “the preservation of religious belief is central to the maintenance of Islamic identity in non-Islamic society”.127 In June of 1993, Yousif presented his work at the annual meeting of the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion as “Psycho-social Problems of the Muslim Community in the Canadian National Capital Region”. Also in 1993, his dissertation was published as a book.128 In the book, he concluded that the (italics are his): “Muslim community in the Canadian National Capital Region has been capable of maintaining its Islamic identity while adapting to Canadian society”,129 and that the community “maintains its identity through the preservation of religious rituals, experiences

124 Ibid., p. 3. As discussed in Chapter Three, I do not use questionnaires in this dissertation.

125 Ahmad F. Yousif, PhD Dissertation, The Maintenance of Islamic Identity in Canadian Society: Religious Observance, Psychosocial Influences, and Institutional Completeness of the Muslim Community in the Canadian National Capital Region (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1992). Shaheen Azmi has written a dissertation on welfare and wife abuse among Muslims in Toronto, while Rima Berns McGown has written about Somalis in Toronto. These two works, along with Janice Boddy’s work on Sudanese and Somali Muslims, are mentioned in Chapter Seven.

126 Ibid., p. 22.

127 Ibid., p. 25.

128 Ibid., p. 128.

129 Ahmad F. Yousif, Muslims in Canada: A Question of Identity (Ottawa: Legas, 1993).
psychosocial influences, enjoys a degree of institutional completeness, and accepts the political situation in Canada".\textsuperscript{130} My dissertation is an extension of Yousif’s work, showing that not only have Muslims in Toronto been able to maintain their Islamic identity, they also have created their own “Canadian” Islam in the process.

There has also been some work done on the Muslim communities in Montréal by Sheila McDonough. In 1994, her paper on “Muslims of Montreal” was published in a volume edited by Yvonne Haddad and Jane Smith.\textsuperscript{131} Indeed, it was the only paper in that volume, Muslim Communities in North America, to deal exclusively with Canada. McDonough gave an excellent, succinct description of the various Muslim communities in Montréal. Among her conclusions was: “In a great variety of ways, then, the Muslims of Montreal are adapting to life in the Canadian environment”.\textsuperscript{132} In this dissertation, I extend McDonough’s work to the Muslims of Toronto, and show how those communities adapt and create Canadian versions of Islam.

In a recent reference work, The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World, there is a short entry on Canada.\textsuperscript{133} This article, written by the Abu-Labans, provides an excellent summary of statistics (population, immigration, etc.) relevant to the Muslims of Canada. It also mentions some of the major Muslim organizations in Canada (including CMCC and

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., p. 130.


\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., p. 330.

CCM\textsuperscript{W}), as well as newer relief organizations such as the International Development and Refugee Foundation (IDRF). The Abu-Labans also write about the problems of racism, prejudice and stereotyping that Muslims face in Canada. Other recent reference works may\textsuperscript{134} or may not\textsuperscript{135} have specific entries on Canada.

There is much more work on Islam in the United States than on Islam in Canada. The scholar who has been most productive in this area is Yvonne Haddad, who was written, edited, or co-edited numerous volumes on Islam in North America.\textsuperscript{136} From her first work as a graduate student writing about Muslim communities in Canada (see Chapter One for a discussion of "Muslims in Canada: A Preliminary Study"), to her later work about Muslims in America, Haddad has maintained a consistent level of excellence in her writing and analysis. Since her work lays much of the methodological foundation for this dissertation, I will discuss it in my next chapter on methodology.

Two important edited volumes on Islam in North America are \textit{Making Muslim Space}

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  \item \textsuperscript{134} Steve Lewis, "Canada", in Farzana Shaikh, editor, \textit{Islam and Islamic Groups} (Essex: Longman Group UK Limited, 1992), pp. 45-46.
  \item \textsuperscript{135} For example, see Richard V. Weekes, editor, \textit{Muslim Peoples: A World Ethnographic Survey}, second edition, revised and expanded (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984). In this two-volume set, the only entry specific to North America is "American Blacks".
\end{itemize}
in North America and Europe\textsuperscript{137} and Family and Gender Among American Muslims,\textsuperscript{138} both published in 1996. Regula Qureshi has a paper in the first volume that is relevant to Islam in Canada: "Transcending Space: Recitation and Community among South Asian Muslims in Canada." It is the only paper in that volume to deal exclusively with the situation of Muslims in Canada. There are no papers in the second volume that deal exclusively with Muslims in Canada.

In her paper, Qureshi examines four types of recitation practised by South Asian Muslims in Canada: "milad, hymns and homilies in praise of the Prophet; zikr, Sufi invocational phrases and hymns; Qur'an, one or more complete recitations of the Qur'an; and ayat-e-karima, 125,000 reiterations of a Qur'anic verse."\textsuperscript{139} One of her main observations is that "Islamic praxis transcends local space primarily by aural, not visual, communication".\textsuperscript{140} She argues that "what expresses Muslim identity—or experience, or faith—is process, at the core of which are words [italics are hers]."\textsuperscript{141} To be sure, Muslims do express themselves visually, but often the visual symbols incorporate the words of the Qur'an. I discuss the use of images to create Muslim space in Chapter Seven.

\textsuperscript{137} Barbara Daly Metcalf, editor, Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).


\textsuperscript{139} Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, "Transcending Space: Recitation and Community among South Asian Muslims in Canada", in Barbara Metcalf, editor, Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 46.

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., p. 48.

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
The recitations that Qureshi describes take place primarily in the home. She argues that "Home-based affairs are always in the hands of women, who also, of course, produce the repasts provided for social or religious ‘functions’ outside the home". I also discuss the issue of gender in Chapter Seven. The fact that so many of these rituals take place in private is also important. Increasingly, Islam in Canada is expressed in the private sphere rather than in corporate worship. The "interiorization" of Islamic practice is discussed later in this chapter, and in greater detail in Chapters Five and Seven.

Frederick Denny has an excellent paper on North American Islam in the memorial volume for Fazlur Rahman. In that paper, he contends that it is inappropriate to take models or typologies of religious organizations that emerged from an examination of various Christian groups and apply them to Muslim groups in North America. He concludes with the following sentence:

The separations and differences among Muslims are based on complex and varying factors, but the attempts of Islamic organizations like ISNA to bring Muslims together in North America are well worth the attention of sociologists of religion as well as students of religion and culture, for emerging Islamic collectivities may help us better understand the domestication process of Islam here as well as the models—old, like church-sect theory—and yet to be developed, which enable us to understand our new religious neighbors as well as ourselves.

In this dissertation, I describe some of the “separations and differences” among Muslim groups in Toronto. I support Denny’s idea that one cannot accurately use church-sect theory to

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142 Ibid., p. 52.


144 Ibid., p. 241.
describe Muslims in Toronto.

Jane Smith has a recent book on Islam in America.145 That work comments on the Islamic reality in the United States and mentions one Canadian group, the Canadian Council of Muslim Women. Her book is divided into eight chapters with a short section containing profiles of notable American Muslims. One chapter focuses on African American Muslims. Smith writes that, "while it is difficult to determine exact proportions, many scholars of American Islam project that perhaps 40 percent of the Muslim community is African American".146 In this dissertation, I use some of Smith's observations about the African American expressions of Islam and contrast those expressions with the situation in Toronto.

In describing ritual practices in America, Smith notes that "most often in American mosques the call is given inside the prayer hall rather than outside, serving not so much as a reminder to the faithful to pray as a kind of beginning to the prayer ritual".147 Again, one sees the interiorization of certain rituals, such as prayer, in a North American context. The personal interiorization of religious experiences by individual Muslims is mirrored by the collective interiorization of the mosque. I describe (in Chapters Five and Seven) how that interiorization is present among Muslims in Toronto.

Smith identifies five "crucial issues on the public agenda for Muslims in America": authority, unity, leadership, women and politics.148 In discussing authority, Smith mentions the special concerns of African American Muslims, who may have had to deal with changes in

146 Ibid., p. xiii.
147 Ibid., p. 11.
the leadership of the Nation of Islam, and the subsequent struggles for leadership. Also, they may face challenges from immigrant Muslims who claim authority based on a longer history of being Muslim. Connected to questions of authority are questions of unity. Muslims in America come from diverse ethnic and linguistic groups, and sometimes it is ethnic allegiances that take precedence over Muslim unity. The question of leadership is also connected to issues of authority and unity. Muslims are concerned about who will lead them, and how their leadership should be trained and educated. The roles that Muslim women play and will play in the future are also of concern to American Muslims. Finally, there has been a relatively recent appeal for Muslims, as Muslims, to involve themselves in the American political system. I discuss how Muslims in Toronto deal with these issues and return to Smith’s work in Chapter Seven of this dissertation.

Another recent book with a section on Islam in North America is *Allah in the West: Islamic Movements in America and Europe*, by Gilles Kepel.199 Kepel’s book is a useful introduction to the role of Islam where it is a minority tradition in the contemporary world. As the subtitle implies, he examines Islamic movements in the USA, Britain and France. His discussion of Islam in the USA focuses almost entirely on the Nation of Islam, its precursors and offshoots. As such, there is very little information on how the great majority of American Muslims express their Islam. The next section deals with the experience of Muslims in British society. Here, he provides a good overview of some of the legal and political struggles that Muslims have had in gaining or maintaining a British identity. Kepel also has an informative section on British responses to Salman Rushdie’s 1988 novel *The Satanic Verses*, with a

particular focus on the reaction of the Bradford Council of Mosques. Perhaps the strongest section in the book is the last section on Muslim experiences in France, where Islam is now the second-largest religion. Kepel discusses in some detail the experiences of those of Algerian origin, and reactions to the veil. I use some of the points that Kepel raises in Chapter Seven below, when I contrast the situations of Muslims in Toronto with those of other Muslim communities.

There is also a growing body of work on Islam as a minority tradition outside of North America. In *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685*, Nabil Matar discusses the influence that Islam had on British society in the period from the accession of Elizabeth I to the death of Charles II. The book is a corrective to the notion that Islam and Muslims had very little impact on Britain and Britons during this time period. Through an extensive analysis of documents from and about this time, Matar reconstructs the relationships between Islam and Christianity. The book provides an historical antecedent to the period discussed by Edward Said in *Orientalism* and should be read together with that work. Matar begins with an account of the conversions to Islam recorded in the English writings of this period. He argues that there were far more converts (both voluntary and forced) to Islam than were previously

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thought, pointing to the power that Muslims had during this time. Matar then examines the influence that the Qur’an (beginning with the first complete English translation in 1649) and other Arabic texts had on British writing and thought. He concludes by comparing the portrayals of Jews and Muslims in Christian eschatological writings of this time.

Another place where Muslims are in the minority is South Africa. Here, there are clear comparisons to the situation in Canada. This history is described in *Islam in South Africa: Mosques, Imams, and Sermons*, by Abdulkader Tayob. Very little has been written on South African Islam that has come to the attention of those living outside Southern Africa. This is regrettable given the vibrancy of Islam in that region, particularly since the end of apartheid. Many developments put South African Muslims on the leading edge of what it means to be Muslim in a minority setting. Abdulkader Tayob’s work is a welcome addition to the literature. His book focuses on the Friday sermons delivered at several mosques. As such, this book will also be of interest to those who wish to learn more about the importance of the sermon in Islamic thought and practice. Tayob examines how the sermon affects and shapes the role of the person who delivers it, and how it supports or challenges notions of orthodoxy and authority. By looking at the sermons in several different mosques, Tayob points to the multiplicity of Islamic expressions in South Africa. This book is recommended not just to those interested in contemporary Islam, but also to those more broadly interested in the phenomenology of religion.

Another important book deals with the role of Islam in contemporary societies, again using the example of the situation in South Africa. This is Farid Esack’s *Qur’an, Liberation*

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Esack is a Muslim theologian who is finishing his term as a member of the South African Commission on Gender Equality. He begins his book with an admission of the poverty of his youth: "Slightly more painful were the many times when my brother and I went around knocking on the doors of neighbours to ask for a piece of bread or scavenging in the gutters for discarded apple cores and the like". In reading this heartbreaking sentence I was reminded of Malcolm X, who also faced poverty and hunger, injustice and oppression as a child. Perhaps it is the experience of being hungry as a child, knowing that there is something fundamentally wrong with the world when you, as a child, go hungry, that inspires so many of us to work for a world wherein it is safe to be human.

In the first section of the book, Esack gives a brief account of his "position", who he is and how he came to write the book that he wrote. After these personal statements, he provides a short summary of the history of Islam in the southern cape of Africa. Having established a context, he then gives a short introduction to the Qur’an.

The main thrust of the book is in the next four sections, where Esack gives his interpretation of ideas such as oppression, justice and struggle (jihad). Esack also examines such ideas as Islam, iman (faith) and kafir (the opposite of iman, which has tragically entered the South African vocabulary in a term of racial abuse, kaffir).

What is most important about Esack’s work is not the text of the book, but the program that he sets forth in that text. He has set the standard for those of us interested in issues of social justice by writing a book about how one can approach and fight oppression

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154 Ibid., p. 2.
from a Qur'anic perspective. Esack's reading of the Qur'an allowed him to conclude that: "Far from preventing Muslims from entering into relationships of solidarity with the religious Other, they [the texts that he analyses] actually facilitate and inspire the progressive Islamists' pursuit of a hermeneutic that accommodates the religious Other and liberative praxis." In the remainder of the book, he went on to discuss how Muslims were able to participate in the struggle against apartheid, and how they were able to help in the construction of the new South Africa. Some may not agree with the conclusions that Esack reaches, but they cannot be ignored.

There is also a growing body of work on dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims. One such book is *Islam and Christianity: Mutual Perceptions Since the Mid-20th Century*, edited by Jacques Waardenburg, which collects nine of the papers presented at a symposium held near Lausanne in 1995. There are five papers in English and four in French, as well as a short introduction in English by Jacques Waardenburg. The first three papers discuss Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox views of Islam. If there is one flaw in this section it is that the geography under discussion is almost exclusively limited to Europe and the Middle East, and the majority of Christians and Muslims live outside of these areas. For

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155 Esack, p. 203.


example, the largest Protestant church in Canada, the United Church of Canada, which has been very involved in issues of Muslim-Christian dialogue, is not mentioned at all. The next four papers discuss Muslim perspectives on Islam. The final two papers are explicitly about dialogues that occur in times of peace (Leonard Swidler) and war (Adnan Silajdžić, who was unable to deliver his paper at the symposium due to the war in Sarajevo). Despite the limited geographical area discussed, this is a very useful volume for those interested in the interactions between Christianity and Islam in the modern period.

Six major points emerge from this survey of the existing literature on Islam in Canada, and the relevant literature on Islam in North America and other places where Muslims are in a minority setting. First, there are very few studies on Islam in Canada, and no major studies on Islam in Toronto. Second, the studies on Islam in Canada show that the community is composed largely of immigrants: most Canadian Muslims are either immigrants or the children of immigrants. Third, the Muslim communities in Canada have grown rapidly since the end of the quota system for immigration in 1967. The recorded number of Muslims in Canada almost tripled in the 1970s, and more than doubled in the 1980s. The majority of Canadian Muslims live in Ontario. Fourth, the research methodology for the studies of Muslims in Canada used a combination of studying textual sources, conducting interviews, and administering questionnaires. Fifth, the available studies of Muslims in Alberta, Ottawa and Montréal all show an adaptation to life in their respective Canadian environments. Sixth, it is inappropriate to apply models or typologies to Muslims in Canada that are developed from studies of Christian groups. Let me now turn to a discussion of the specific methodology that I employ in this dissertation.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL ROOTS

This chapter details the major sources of the methodological approach that I take in my study of the Muslim communities of Toronto. It consists of nine sections, each of which informs certain aspects of my work. In each section, I state what it is in the literature that has influenced my work. This dissertation is in the field of religious studies, a discipline rooted in the methodologies of the humanities as well as the social sciences. The first two sections outline the importance of incorporating both the passionate and the personal into academic narratives. The third section describes some of the important methodological advances from the field of cultural anthropology, particularly with regard to the roles of "native anthropology" and participant observation. The next two sections provide an overview of work by two scholars who have generated much of the theory underpinning the examination of contemporary Muslim societies: Yvonne Haddad and Dale Eickelman. The sixth section mentions the importance of including under-represented groups in my study. The next two sections discuss the theoretical notion of "position" as articulated by Renato Rosaldo, and give some information about my own position. The final section deals with the contributions from sociology to my analysis of Muslims in Toronto.

1. Impassioned Narratives

The main purpose of a doctoral dissertation is to make an original and significant contribution to scholarship. In the preceding two chapters, I have discussed the small body of literature on the Muslim communities in Canada. Of that body of literature, I have demonstrated that a very small percentage of it focuses on the Muslim communities in
Toronto. As such, this dissertation, by its very existence, will be an original contribution to scholarship. If it is to be a significant contribution to scholarly literature, that will, in part, be due to the methodology that I employ in my research. In this section, I provide justification for my writing style.

To begin, the reader will by now have noticed that the tone of this dissertation is not dispassionate. I have never understood why academic writing, including dissertations, should be devoid of passion or impassioned thought. The advice usually given to beginning doctoral students is along the lines of: "Don't begin this work unless you are truly passionate about it. If you aren't passionate about it, you will not have the energy to finish it". Having embarked on research projects about which we are passionate, we are then told to divest ourselves of our passion in the written accounts of our researches. This I do not do. Let me cite as my first methodological influence the prototypical post-colonial writer, George Orwell (born Eric Arthur Blair, in Bengal, 1903).

I have attempted to write following the last two motives that Orwell gave for his own writing (the first two being "sheer egoism" and "aesthetic enthusiasm").

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154 Of course, simple passion by itself is not sufficient for academic writing. I am grateful to Professor Michael Marmura for his wise and gentle counsel on this section.

159 "That is always the cost / As Frank [O'Hara] said, / Of a young artist's remorseless passion / Which starts out as a kiss / And follows like a curse", Jim Carroll, from 8 Fragments for Kurt Cobain (Kingwood, Texas: White Fields Press, 1994), published as Broadside #13, chapbook #50.

160 For example, see the following autobiographical quote from Orwell about his time in Burma as a member of the Indian Imperial Police: "I stayed five years in the service. It did not suit me and made me hate imperialism, although at the time nationalist feelings in Burma were not very marked, and relations between the English and the Burmese were not particularly bad". In The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters, Volume 3 (London: Penguin Books, 1970 [1947 as the preface to the Ukranian edition of Animal Farm]), pp. 455-456.
3. Historical impulse. Desire to see things as they are, to find out true facts and store them up for the use of posterity.

4. Political purpose — using the word ‘political’ in the widest possible sense. Desire to push the world in a certain direction, to alter other people’s idea of the kind of society that they should strive after. Once again, no book is genuinely free from political bias. The opinion that art should have nothing to do with politics is itself a political attitude. 161

Since the Muslim communities in Toronto are relatively new, going back to the late 1950s, it is still possible to hear first-person accounts of the early days of Islam in Toronto. Chapter Four of this dissertation begins with an account by one of the pioneers, Murray Hogben. However, many of those pioneers have passed away (for example, Mirza Qadeer Baig in 1988, Hassan Karachi in 1993, and Muin Muinuddin in 1998), and many of the original institutions have changed. This dissertation is partly an attempt to satisfy the “historical impulse” of Orwell, and document something of the history of Muslims in Toronto.

As mentioned in the preface, this dissertation is also partly an attempt to tell something of the current stories of Muslims in Toronto. Until now, those stories have largely been unheard, unread or worse, unwritten. The ordinary stories are the ones that I seek to document, and it is the “ordinariness” of Islam in Toronto that I seek to demonstrate. In another essay, Orwell writes of something else that he considers to be important:

But now and again there appears a novel which opens up a new world not by revealing what is strange, but by revealing what is familiar. The truly remarkable thing about Ulysses, for instance, is the commonplaceness of its material. Of course there is much more in Ulysses than this . . . but [James Joyce’s] real achievement has been to get the familiar on to paper . . . and in so doing he discovered an America which was under everybody’s nose. Here is a

whole world of stuff which you have lived with since childhood.\textsuperscript{162}

Some of us have lived since childhood as members of the Muslim community in Toronto. Very few of us have written about those experiences and, in so writing, made those experiences accessible to those who had different experiences.

2. The Personal Narrative in Writings on Islam

There is nothing new in the use of participant observation in writing on Muslims. The history of the personal narrative goes back over a century in the study of Islam. I am here thinking of the pioneering work of Sir Richard Francis Burton, particularly \textit{Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccab.}\textsuperscript{163} In 1853, Burton made his pilgrimage, and his account was first published in 1855. It provided one of the few accounts, in English, of the Hajj. Since Burton’s time, the use of the personal narrative has fallen out of favour. The newer fashion was a so-called “objectivity”, or distance from the object of one’s writing. However, in this century, there have been important works in the study of Islam where one cannot divorce the writer from the writing. Let me give two examples here, and later in this chapter I will cite the more contemporary theories of Renato Rosaldo on “position” and objectivity.

In 1982, Herbert Mason published his magisterial translation of the work of Louis


\textsuperscript{163} Sir Richard Francis Burton, \textit{Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccab} (New York: Dover Publications, 1964, reprint of the Memorial Edition of 1893). However, any one of a number of Burton’s books would be appropriate here. For example, \textit{The Lake Regions of Central Africa: A Picture of Exploration; Sindh and the Races That Inhabit the Valley of the Indus; Zanzibar; City, Island, and Coast; First Footsteps in East Africa}, etc.
Massignon, which was itself first published in 1922. Massignon's work on Hallāj was intertwined with Massignon's own life. To quote from Mason's foreword:

On his deathbed Massignon asked a friend and fellow Orientalist, Louis Gardet, to make Hallāj known to others. But it is helpful—to some, perhaps, even essential—to come to know Massignon himself before approaching the great Muslim scholar, poet, traveler, mystic, and, finally, martyr who preoccupied Massignon's life. In fact, when I first encountered Massignon in 1957, and during the five following years of our friendship until his death, I was impressed most with bis [the italics are Mason's] story, and only in 1969, when I began to translate the present work, did I gradually discover the attraction of the other.

Louis Massignon, known to Muslim colleagues as "shaykh" or master teacher, and Husayn ibn Mansūr (857-922), known as "al-Hallāj" or the reader of hearts, stand almost uniquely in history as two friends bound across (and despite) their differences of civilization and time. The present work, the result of over half a century of scholarship in support of this friendship, has to be recognized as remarkable just as a transcultural feat. What Massignon did across vast space and a thousand years of time few are able to do at any given moment even with their most intimate friends: to know and cherish the other as thoroughly as oneself. He had to cross the barrier not only of time but also of language and religion just to meet this friend, let alone to learn how he lived and thought. To achieve that, given the history of differences between East and West, took genius. To want to do it in the first place took profound and eccentric desire. He had both of these in a rare and exciting combination. To be sure, Massignon was as ḡarīb, or strange, as his subject was, and part of his strangeness came from the fact that he believed Hallāj had also reached across to him, and even probed him first. "I do not pretend," Massignon was often quoted as saying, "that the study of his life had yielded to me the secret of his heart, but rather it is he who has fathomed mine and who fathoms it still".165

I have quoted from Mason at length because I believe that it is important to remind us that even (perhaps only) the most scholarly works have a deep connection between the one doing the description and that which is being described. Massignon was profoundly changed

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by his encounters with Hallâj, and this is reflected in his scholarship. Massignon’s work is both impassioned and personal, and still remains scholarly. In my own work, I wish to include and examine that which I find to be personally important, what I have found to be “true” through my own experiences as a Muslim living in Toronto. This dissertation will of course primarily focus on the experience of others, but I will not deliberately exclude my own experiences either.

The other example that I wish to cite is that of the finest Islamicist that Canada has ever produced, Wilfred Cantwell Smith. In 1940, Wilfred and Muriel Smith set sail for India from Cambridge, England. At that time, India was the country with the greatest number of Muslims. It seemed simple enough: If you want to study Islam, you go to a place where there are Muslims. The Smiths lived in Lahore for six years, leaving before the partition of India into India and Pakistan. During that time, Smith wrote *Modern Islam in India*, which was first published in 1943 under the delightfully titled imprint of the “Minerva Book Shop” in Lahore.

Of his parents’ time in Lahore, Brian Cantwell Smith has written:

Officially, my dad taught at Foreman Christian College, while my mom attended medical school. But what they were “really” working on was to help nourish and heal and bring together Muslims and Hindus, so as to avoid the break-up of that country they loved. It was shattering, I think—certainly a profound influence on his later life—that that peaceable effort failed, and the one country split into two. He was tremendously shaken by the breakdown of communion and the ensuing violence.

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166 On April 14, 2000, Brian Cantwell Smith (one of the five children of Wilfred and Muriel Smith) spoke at the opening of the Wilfred and Muriel Smith Collection at the Oviatt Library of California State University, Northridge. Brian Smith said the following about his parents’ trip to India: “They went to India, just as war was breaking out, on—we were told—a one-way passage, without enough money for a return trip. In fact my mom, who had grown up in China, assumed that that was where they would spend their lives”. I am indebted to Brian Smith for providing me with a copy of his remarks.

167 Ibid.
It was this sense of reconciliation that Smith brought to all of his scholarly endeavours.

When Wilfred Smith departed this world on February 7, 2000, Brian Smith wrote the following words as part of his father's obituary:

Smith won over many to the view that religion is best understood as the living, vital faith of individual persons rather than as an abstract set of ideas and doctrines. A consequence of this view is that for an outsider to "understand" a religious tradition (such as Islam), one must achieve a degree of empathy with the situation of the participant in that tradition, though without giving up critical and historical analysis.\footnote{164}

I have tried to follow Smith's view in the research and writing of this dissertation, which will account for the tone that it takes.

3. Cultural Anthropology and Participant Observation

Methodologies for the study of particular cultures have changed recently. George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer begin their book, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*,\footnote{169} with the following admission: "In the United States and elsewhere, recent decades have witnessed a profound challenge to the purpose and styles of theory that have guided the social sciences since their late nineteenth-century origins as professional academic disciplines".\footnote{170} The first two chapters of their book, "A Crisis of Representation in the Human Sciences" and "Ethnography and Interpretive Anthropology", provide an excellent summary of the change in approach since the early work of anthropologists such as Edward Tylor and Émile

\footnote{164} This obituary is available, as of summer 2000, at: <http://www.ageofsig.org/people/wcsmith/>.


\footnote{170} Ibid., p. vii.
Durkheim, through the social theories of Talcott Parsons or Hayden White.\textsuperscript{171} The same year that Marcus and Fischer published their book (1986), Marcus edited a volume with James Clifford, entitled \textit{Writing Culture}.\textsuperscript{172} Of the essays in their volume, Clifford wrote: “They see culture as composed of seriously contested codes and representations; they assume that the poetic and the political are inseparable, that science is in, not above, historical and linguistic processes. They assume that academic and literary genres interpenetrate and that the writing of cultural descriptions is properly experimental and ethical”.\textsuperscript{173} Almost a decade after its publication, Ruth Behar wrote that it “set off a debate about the predicaments of cultural representation that shook up North American anthropology and brought a new self-awareness to the discipline. Even those who criticized \textit{Writing Culture} acknowledged its importance by giving it their serious attention”.\textsuperscript{174}

In 1988, Clifford continued his analysis of the representations of cultures in another book, \textit{The Predicament of Culture}.\textsuperscript{175} Here, he attempts to survey “several hybrid and subversive forms of cultural representation, forms that prefigure an inventive future”.\textsuperscript{176} This book—an excellent introduction to the thought of one of America's most eminent historians of anthropology—forms the basis of some of my own thinking about the narrative of

\textsuperscript{171} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 7-44.

\textsuperscript{172} James Clifford and George E. Marcus, editors, \textit{Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).


\textsuperscript{176} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 17.
representation in this dissertation. It is, to state the obvious, a dissertation which I have written. I give my voice, informed, to be sure, by the voices of those around me. I do not think that it is my role to "give voice to the voiceless", for the Muslims in Toronto certainly are capable of articulating their own voices. I incorporate textual materials, interviews, and my own participation into the narrative that I write. And I have attempted to keep that narrative as readable as possible. As described below, the work of Clifford is contested by others.

In 1995, Ruth Behar and Deborah Gordon edited an important volume entitled Women Writing Culture. Their book was a response to the exclusion of women and feminist criticism in Writing Culture. From the essays in their book, one gets an excellent picture of some of the many issues involved in the representations of women in the human sciences.

Another follow-up to Writing Culture was published in 1997, After Writing Culture. Again, the editors of this work acknowledged the importance of the original volume, stating that it "has come to be regarded as something of a watershed in anthropological thought. . . . Eschewing the holistic persuasions of traditional anthropologists and recognizing that their representations are fundamentally the product of asymmetrical power relations, it exhorted us to develop new forms of representation which could include the multiple voices of those being

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177 Ruth Behar and Deborah A. Gordon, editors, Women Writing Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

178 I must here acknowledge my gratitude to Professor Marsha Hewitt for her conversations with me on feminism and critical theory.

179 Allison James, Jenny Hockey and Andrew Dawson, editors, After Writing Culture: Epistemology and Praxis in Contemporary Anthropology (London: Routledge, 1997).
represented”.

Of their own collection, the editors of *After Writing Culture* wrote that they attempted to “ask who, what, how and why might we represent? In this sense the volume draws on the multiple meanings of the term ‘representation’: representation as interpretation, communication, visualisation, translation and advocacy”.

Another issue with regard to representation is the concept of the “reflexive observer” or the “native anthropologist”. Barbara Tedlock has written an excellent review article about this concept. She writes: “Major transformations in anthropology have also come about because of the emergence of a highly articulate population of ‘native’ ethnographers from the third and fourth worlds, including various bicultural inside/outiders.” As described later in this chapter (in the section “This observer as a participant”), I consider myself to be one of these “bicultural inside/outiders”. Tedlock continues:

However the discipline may develop historically, there currently exists a new breed of ethnographer who is passionately interested in the coproduction of ethnographic knowledge, created and represented in the only way it can be, within an interactive Self/Other dialogue. These new ethnographers—many of whom are themselves subaltern because of their class, gender or ethnicity—cannot be neatly tucked away or pigeonholed within any of the four historical archetypes I enumerated at the outset of this essay: the amateur observer, the armchair anthropologist, the professional ethnographer, or the “gone native” fieldworker. Rather they, or we, combine elements from all four of these


categories.\textsuperscript{144}

With respect to the study of Muslim communities, Lila Abu-Lughod has described her experiences as a woman of Arab and American descent doing fieldwork in Egypt.\textsuperscript{145} Another important article in this area is by Kirin Narayan.\textsuperscript{146} In writing about the writing of ethnography, Narayan writes: "Need the two categories, compelling narrative and rigorous analysis, be impermeable? Increasingly, they seep into each other, and here I want to argue for an emerging style in anthropological writing that I call the \textit{enactment of hybridity} [italics in original]..."\textsuperscript{147} It is this style of writing, described in the first section of this chapter, that I employ in this dissertation.

The final volume that I want to acknowledge in this section\textsuperscript{148} was co-written by Michael Fischer and Mehdi Abedi, \textit{Debating Muslims}.\textsuperscript{149} A companion to Fischer's earlier work.

\textsuperscript{144} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 82.

\textsuperscript{145} Lila Abu-Lughod, "Fieldwork of a Dutiful Daughter", in Soraya Altorki and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh, editors, \textit{Arab Women in the Field: Studying Your Own Society} (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1988), pp. 139-161.

\textsuperscript{146} Kirin Narayan, "How Native Is a 'Native' Anthropologist?", in \textit{American Anthropologist}, 95:3 (September, 1993), pp. 671-686. I am indebted to Professor Judith Nagata for making me aware of this article.

\textsuperscript{147} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 681.


volume, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, this work examined Iranian Shi'i Muslims, both in Iran itself and in the Iranian diaspora in Houston, Texas. It provided for my work a model of how to apply modern anthropological notions to the study of Muslims.

4. Yvonne Haddad and Islam in America

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the key theorist for the study of the Muslim communities in North America is Yvonne Haddad. Over the course of the past twenty-five years, she has published extensively, focussing primarily on Muslims in the United States. Having discussed one of her early articles in Chapter One, I now focus on two of her later works as they provide much of my theoretical framework for the study of Muslims in Toronto.

In January of 1983, Yvonne Haddad began a two-year project with Adair Lummis, examining the Muslim communities in the United States. This research was published in book form in 1987 as *Islamic Values in the United States: A Comparative Study*.$^{190}$ Haddad and Lummis focussed on five different communities of "immigrant" (as distinct from "indigenous", or African American and other converts) Muslims$^{191}$ on the East Coast, upstate New York, and the Midwest. They began their research by interviewing people at eight mosques in the areas mentioned. Most of their interviews were "with persons in leadership capacities in the various mosques, including imams, members of mosque boards, Sunday school teachers, and


past office holders". The second phase of their research involved having informants complete short-answer questionnaires. They received a total of 347 questionnaires, although not all of them could be used.

Among the problems that Haddad and Lummis encountered in conducting their research were:

Some mosques were reluctant to cooperate, and others simply refused, out of fear of misuse or distortion of the information. Many immigrants are suspicious of researchers because they come from countries where the only people asking questions are government agents or spies. One of the major difficulties we encountered in collecting our research was that of establishing sufficient trust that our questions could be answered openly and honestly. Assurance of anonymity was helpful, but the bitter experience that some in the Muslim community have had in the American context made many of those interviewed suspicious of our motives and watchful of our methods. Such problems might be at least partially alleviated if future studies were carried out either by or under the supervision of Muslim scholars. This would help encourage an atmosphere of more complete trust and also provide better access to certain areas, which would broaden the base of information.

One of their main conclusions was that their "experience in considering the three areas surveyed for this study, and in talking personally with numbers of Muslims at these sites, provides persuasive evidence that indeed there is an American Islam, and that it comes in more than one form. Muslims in America have the unusual luxury of being able to devise their own Islamic institutions".

Their research provided insight into the views of immigrant American Muslims on such topics as mosques, imams, languages used, integration into "American" (meaning non-Muslim) society, economic issues, dietary issues and gender roles. They concluded that "even

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192 Ibid., p. 9.
193 Ibid., pp. 9-10.
194 Ibid., p. 22.
in the relatively small sample we were able to study, a wide range of ideas and responses were evidenced. Recognizing the risky nature of generalizations, we have tried throughout this report to illustrate the wide variety, both by giving a summary of the responses to the survey questions and by citing in their own words some of the reflections of individuals at the several sites. A second conclusion was that "some Muslims are feeling at home and welcome assimilation into American life, while others are genuinely concerned that it will jeopardize the maintenance of Islamic values. Both kinds of responses relate to one's image of what it means to be a Muslim in America." 

When I began this study, I used the work of Haddad and Lummis as a model. There are no major studies on the Muslim communities in Toronto. The relevant work done on Muslims in Alberta, Ottawa and Montréal has been discussed in Chapter Two. As a Muslim who had lived in Toronto for over a decade, I was able to avoid the problems that Haddad and Lummis mentioned when research was done by non-Muslims. Their concern about the mistrust of immigrants for researchers was particularly important in Toronto, where the majority of Muslims are immigrants. As an immigrant and a Muslim, I had both the access and trust that were necessary to conduct the research. The issues surrounding my specific participant observation will be discussed later in this chapter.

As an initial step, much of my work was with the archival materials of three Muslim organizations: the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the Council of Muslim Communities of Canada (CMCC) and the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW). I had access to the archives of these organizations, and was able to consult the various

195 Ibid., p. 170.

196 Ibid., p. 171.
magazines, newsletters, calendars, guides and pamphlets that they published. I also had the opportunity to read various annual reports, directories, membership lists (including criteria for membership), minutes and records of meetings. These archival materials are quoted and discussed in the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

Following the model of Haddad and Lummis, I interviewed twenty-five Muslim leaders in Toronto. Sixteen of those leaders are identified by name in the bibliography. On a trip to Cairo in January, 1991, as part of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, I was able to interview two leaders from the worldwide Muslim community. As identified in the bibliography, these two were the Shaikh al-Azhar Jadd al-Haqq, and Dr. ‘Abdullah Omar Naseef of the Muslim World League. I also interviewed three Canadian Christian leaders for their views on Islam in Canada. In some cases, these interviews served to explain in more depth materials that the leaders themselves had written. The interviews were also used to gain an understanding of the issues that the leaders consider to be important, and the messages about them that they give to their various groups.

However, I did not want to limit my interviews to just those in positions of leadership. Therefore, I interviewed sixteen other members of the various communities, not just the leaders. This was done to gain an understanding of what community members consider to be important about their communities. These interviews also served to provide some sort of "check" on the version of Islam given by community leaders. In almost all cases, I have kept anonymous the names of community members that I interviewed. The six that I have identified are listed in the bibliography.

The interviews were unstructured, as I wanted the people to tell me their own stories. However, I would certainly ask follow-up questions to points that I considered interesting.
Some of the interviews were very brief, consisting of only a few questions. Other interviews were much longer, sometimes spanning several sessions. Wherever possible, I conducted my observations and interviews in situ. I would go to my informants, rather than force them to come to me. I wanted to create as "natural" as possible a setting, for my observations so as not to obtain reactions that were the function of an unfamiliar situation. I also allowed my informants to tell me their stories, rather than forcing them to react to concerns they might never have had before. I wanted to find out what questions they had, and not simply ask them to answer a question that was my question, and not theirs. Through years of contact with some of my informants, I was able to obtain the level of trust that would allow them to be honest with me, and me with them. I kept the notes that I took during the interviews to a minimum, so as to not interfere with the conversations that were taking place.

When I began my research, I focussed on the seven issues (mosques, imams, languages used, integration into non-Muslim society, economic issues, dietary issues and gender roles) mentioned above that Haddad and Lummis had discovered in their research. These issues were expanded to fourteen during the course of my research. I have introduced these fourteen issues in Chapter One, and they will be discussed in detail in Chapter Seven.

I did not do any questionnaire-based research for two reasons. First, there are problems with the low rates of returns of these types of questionnaires, as illustrated by Husaini's work on the Muslims of Alberta and Yousif's work on the Muslims of Ottawa.

197 For example the World Conference on Religion and Peace group of which I was a member had a one-hour audience with the Shaikh al-Azhar. During this time, I was only able to ask him for his thoughts on Muslims in Canada, and what he thought would be the future of Islam in Canada. His response is discussed under issue nine (accommodation to "the West") in Chapter Seven.

198 I am indebted to Professor Jerry Hogan for my training in ethology.
Second, and more important, since this is a pioneering study on Muslims in Toronto, there was not enough information yet to know what the relevant questions should be. Having completed this preliminary study, I and other researchers can follow it up with questionnaires to the various communities that I discuss, about the various issues that I raise. Thus, this dissertation is a first step toward creating a more complete picture of the Muslim communities in Toronto.

The second work by Yvonne Haddad that I want to cite is her article entitled “The Dynamics of Islamic Identity in North America”.199 That article was first published in 1998, fifteen years after the beginning of the research project that she did with Adair Lummis. It reflects the work that she has done over the years on the many factors that determine Muslim identity in the United States.200 In that article, Haddad incorporates the relevant issues from the studies that include “indigenous” Muslims, who by design were excluded from her earlier research project. It is these Muslims, mostly African American,201 who help to make Islam in the United States distinct from Islam in Canada. (In the United States, one of the largest groups of Muslims is African Americans, while in Canada, the largest group of Muslims are South Asians.) The discrimination against Muslims in America has also increased in the years since Haddad has done her work, due to events such as the Gulf War, the World Trade Center


200 Although the article does have “North America” in the title, almost all of it is concerned with the Muslim communities in the United States.

201 There are also “White” converts, and increasingly in areas like the American southwest, Latino/a converts, like Hakim Archuleta, imam of the Dar al-Islam mosque in Abiquiu, New Mexico. For more information on Archuleta, see, as of summer 2000, <http://www.astrolabepictures.com/archuleta.html>.
bombing, and continued support of Israel at the expense of the Palestinians. This discrimination provides a backdrop against which American Muslims develop their identities. While there is certainly discrimination against Muslims in Canada, it is often of a different sort than the discrimination that Muslims face in the United States, and this difference also helps to make Canadian Islam distinct from American Islam. This discrimination is discussed in issues nine ("accommodation to the West") and twelve ("racism") in Chapter Seven.

Haddad concludes her article with the following two sentences about Muslims in America: "Demonization by the press reinforces their assurance of the truth of the message they have received. Their hope is that somehow America can both realize and admit its nature as a multicultural and multireligious society and that finally it can be proud of its identity as Christian, Jewish, and Muslim." In this dissertation, I mention how Muslims in Canada respond to the prejudice and discrimination that they face. It is partly through their responses to discrimination that Muslims in Canada are able to effect changes in the communities in

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293 A personal anecdote: during the Gulf War, my mother received a letter from her brother, who at the time was a captain in the Pakistani Navy. She has received numerous letters from him without incident. This time, the letter was opened, refolded, and resealed. On the envelope, there was a note apologizing for the fact that this letter was "accidentally" opened.

294 For example, Canadian foreign policy in regard to Israel is very different from American foreign policy. One consequence of American foreign policy is that there is very limited understanding among many Americans of the Palestinian perspectives on key issues in the Middle East. To offer a personal example, California State University, Northridge, screened a documentary film on the Palestinian poet, Mahmoud Darwish. After the film was over, I was approached by two students in the Honours Program who both mentioned that not only had they had never heard the Palestinian cause articulated so well, but they had never heard it articulated before they saw the film.

which they exist.

5. Dale Eickelman and Local Contexts

Another important theorist in the study of Muslim societies is Dale F. Eickelman. Although he is perhaps best known for two books, *Knowledge and Power in Morocco* and *The Middle East: An Anthropological Approach*, I will focus on three of his other works. In 1976, Eickelman published his first book, *Moroccan Islam: Tradition and Society in a Pilgrimage Center*. He began the second paragraph of his introduction to that book with the following sentence: “I have attempted to portray certain aspects of a particular culture and society through time.” In this dissertation, I will attempt to explore the historical development and current range of representations of Islam in Toronto, as Eickelman did for Islam in Boujad, Morocco. Eickelman went on in his book to mention the changes in the dominant paradigms in the social sciences during the 1960s and 1970s, particularly the increased attention to problems of historical change. In an earlier section of this chapter, I described some of the changes that took place in the human sciences, most notably in cultural anthropology, in the 1980s and early 1990s. Let me quote in its entirety one of the paragraphs that I consider most

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209 Ibid., p.3.

210 Ibid., pp. 4-6.
important in Eickelman's introduction:

I realize that the questions that I raise regarding the nature of religious change in a complex society are difficult and capable of no easy answer. At times my discussion becomes necessarily tentative, and in fairness to the reader, I will point out such instances as they occur. I have preferred this course to that of sacrificing what I feel are significant issues for less crucial ones that lend themselves to at least a surface elegance or a "neat" representation within more conventional explanatory paradigms used by anthropologists. Similarly, my argument is occasionally more detailed ethnographically and historically than may appear immediately necessary for my implicit theoretical argument. This is deliberate. The main features of North African Islam have often been taken for granted or otherwise misrepresented in much of the literature on the region. A fuller presentation, such as I have attempted here, at least permits the reader to check some of my more abstract conclusions and to discern other possible analytical implications than those which I have chosen to emphasize.211

What I have attempted to do in this dissertation is the same "fuller presentation" that Eickelman did for Islam in Morocco.

In 1982, Eickelman published an important article, "The Study of Islam in Local Contexts", which continued the thoughts on methodology begun in his first book.212 He began this article with the following two sentences: "The study of a world religion in local contexts implies what from some perspectives is obvious — any religion’s ideology and practice are elaborated, understood and subsequently reproduced in particular places and at particular moments. Even eternal truths are necessarily revealed in a specific language and setting; for the instance at hand ‘in Arabic, that ye may be understood’ [Qur’an 12:2]".213 In his article, Eickelman provides an excellent summary of the literature on "high culture" versus "folk"

211 Ibid., p. 6.


213 Ibid., p. 1.
versions of Islam. In that summary, he mentions the important work of Marshall Hodgson, Clifford Geertz. Eickelman also presents an excellent summary on some of the pioneering work of Michael Gilsenan and Clive Kessler, who bring a class analysis to the study of Islamic societies. In his conclusion, entitled "New Directions", Eickelman mentions the important work of Michael Fischer, whose work will be described in the next section of this chapter. Eickelman concludes his article with the following sentence: "Whether the meaning at issue is a Qur'anic recitation or the wider expressions of religiosity, the renewed study of Islam in local contexts involves greater attention to how religious tradition and religious organization specifically shape and in turn are shaped by the wider political and economic contexts in which they occur". In this dissertation, I examine the interactions between Muslims in Toronto and the Canadian contexts in which those Muslims live that allows them to express their own Canadian versions of Islam.

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Eickelman's best-known book, *Knowledge and Power in Morocco*, was published in 1985. It contained the foreword by Clifford Geertz that was discussed in Chapter One of this dissertation, and continued Eickelman's study of Moroccan Islam. In the preface to that book, Eickelman made an important statement: "Since the Iranian revolution, studies of Islam have focussed upon 'resurgent' and militant movements. This study suggests alternative, popularly supported Islamic attitudes toward the contemporary world that form part of the background against which more radical Islamic visions can be better understood". As mentioned in Chapter One of this dissertation, there is a great deal of misinformation among the general public about Islam, particularly with regard to the roles of peace and violence within Islam. As Eickelman did with his study, I provide a description and analysis of yet another non-militant version of Islam.

The final work by Eickelman that influenced this dissertation was his 1990 collaboration with James Piscatori, *Muslim Travellers*. This was an edited volume that focussed on pilgrimage and migration. However, the first chapter, co-written by Eickelman and Piscatori, was entitled "Social Theory in the Study of Muslim Societies". They began with a consideration of "what is meant by 'Islam' itself as a social phenomenon". That section of

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223 Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, "Social Theory in the Study of Muslim Societies", in *Muslim Travellers*, p. 3.
their chapter cited Benedict Anderson’s notion of “imagined communities”.224

Muslim communities, like all religious communities, are imagined (italics are theirs) . . . They are created—and knowable—through the vision, faith, and practices of their adherents . . . However, the senses of community which derive from faith and practice are necessarily interpreted and shaped in distinct ways in differing places, times and societies. Participants may assert that their representations of practice and tradition are stable, uniform, and derive from the distant past, yet an examination of the history of these communities indicates both the diversity of these practices and traditions, and their transformations over time.225

From this beginning, Eickelman and Piscatori moved to a specific discussion of Muslim travel, which was the focus of their book. In their conclusion, they returned to the problem of describing the behaviour of Muslims:

We have been concerned with discerning how instances of social action can be understood and illuminated within religious traditions, and specifically, within Muslim religious traditions. The deliberate use of “traditions” in the plural suggests the view that historical “Islam” does not neatly coincide with doctrinal “Islam” and that the practice and significance of Islamic faith in any given historical setting cannot readily be predicted from first principles of dogma or belief.226

One of the theorists that they cite is Wilfred Cantwell Smith, from his work, The Meaning and End of Religion.227 In their words, “we cite Smith at length because, among historians of religion concerned with comparative religious traditions, he recognizes the potential for

225 Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, “Social Theory in the Study of Muslim Societies”, in Muslim Travellers, p. 4.
226 Ibid., p. 18.
misleading reification." Their concluding paragraph states:

Acknowledging a debt to Smith’s writing on religious tradition in general, we suggest that posing smaller questions of religious traditions is in order. . . . These questions include enquiry into how “authoritative” doctrine emerges, and indeed into how ideas of “authority” and “domination” shift over time and across cultures; a sharper focus upon what is meant by “centre” and “periphery”; and an awareness both that the idea of Muslim community varies according to scale and that these varying communities interact with one another.

It is these questions that I seek to answer in my study of the Muslim communities of Toronto: how do different communities emerge, who dictates the discourse, who are the leaders, how is leadership established and maintained, does leadership change, what issues/groups become dominant, what issues/groups become subordinate?

6. Groups Whose Stories Are Not Told

In an important article published in 1983, Anila Srivastava and Michael M. Ames argued that research on Canadian South Asian women perpetuates many of the theoretical and methodological limitations of conventional social science research by relying on the positivistic, a priori categories and concepts defined by a patriarchal, Anglo-American ideology; by failing to adequately express the lived experience of its subjects; by not recognizing a responsibility to enrich, enlighten or enable the lives of the women themselves; and finally, by failing to deal squarely with racism and the ideology of multiculturalism in Canada.

228 Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, “Social Theory in the Study of Muslim Societies”, in Muslim Travellers, p. 20.

229 Ibid., p. 21.

They concluded with a suggestion that “researchers consider the anthropological method of long-term participant research with a small group of informants to gain an intense knowledge of their lives and outlook from their own points of view.” Following their suggestion, this dissertation is based on my own participant observation (and informed by my earlier participation with the communities from 1983 to 1991, before I began to work on this dissertation) with the communities in Toronto. In my dissertation, I wanted not only to do “long-term participant research” but also to pay attention to questions of gender, affecting both males and females. These questions are addressed specifically in issue number six (gender in the performance of ritual and worship) of Chapter Seven. I also wanted to note which groups were dominant and which groups were considered subaltern. The discussion of minority groups is located in issue number one (minorities within a minority) of Chapter Seven.

One of the works that inspired *Women Writing Culture* was an anthology entitled *This Bridge Called My Back,* also published in 1983. Of that anthology, Ruth Behar wrote that it allowed many American readers to educate “ourselves in the issues affecting women of color in our country, which our education in anthropology had neglected” . . . [It] made us rethink the ways in which First World women had unself-consciously created a cultural other

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213 At the risk of criticizing one of the informants of my methodology, there is something in this statement that bothers me. It is the excuse that is given, that one has to discover this “truth” in one’s academic training (which so few of us have the privilege to experience), and not in the world in which most of us live.
in their images of ‘Third World’\textsuperscript{234} or ‘minority’ women.”\textsuperscript{235} In the writing of this dissertation, I had to look no further than the faces of my mother and sister for a reminder of Behar’s observation. Of course, I also look further than those two faces, else this would just be a case study of my family. Sensitized to concerns of gender, I realize that because I am male, women speak to me differently than if I were female. However, by the same token, men would speak to me differently if I were female instead of male. I am thankful for the many discussions that I have had with my sisters and brothers in Islam.

7. Renato Rosaldo and Position

Another key theorist who contributes significantly to my methodology is Renato Rosaldo. In 1993, Rosaldo published \textit{Culture and Truth}, where he articulated his concept of “position”\textsuperscript{236} that I first mentioned in Chapter One. Of position, Rosaldo writes that the ethnographer “occupies a position or structural location and observes with a particular angle of vision. Consider, for example, how age, gender, being an outsider, and association with a neo-colonial regime influence what the ethnographer learns. The notion of position also refers to how life experiences both enable and inhibit particular kinds of insight”.\textsuperscript{237} In his book,

\begin{quote}

\textsuperscript{234} Here I am indebted to Lois Wilson, who may not have coined the phrase “The Two-Thirds World” to replace “The Third World”, but is certainly the woman in Canada who is usually credited with doing so. I am thankful to Lois and Roy Wilson for their many kindnesses.


\textsuperscript{236} Renato Rosaldo, \textit{Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis} (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).

\textsuperscript{237} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 19.
\end{quote}
Rosaldo argues that

a sea change in cultural studies has eroded once-dominant conceptions of truth and objectivity. The truth of objectivism—absolute, universal, and timeless—has lost its monopoly status. It now competes, on more nearly equal terms, with the truths of case studies that are embedded in local contexts, shaped by local interests, and colored by local perceptions. The agenda for social analysis has shifted to include not only eternal verities and lawlike generalizations but also political processes, social changes, and human differences. Such terms as *objectivity, neutrality, and impartiality* [italics are his] refer to subject positions once endowed with great institutional authority, but they are arguably neither more nor less valid than those of more engaged, yet equally perceptive, knowledgeable social actors.218

What is significant from Rosaldo's work for my methodology is a recognition of my position (given below), and the recognition of the variously positioned subjects who inform my research. There are no "grand theories" here, simply the local contexts of Muslim communities in Toronto. From the analysis of these local contexts, I do make certain generalizations about Muslims in Canada.

8. This Observer as a Participant

Allow me to articulate my own position: I was born in Pakistan into a Sunni Muslim family. My father emigrated to Canada in 1969, and I came a year later, aged four, with my mother and sister. At that point (in 1970) the Muslim population in Canada was estimated at some 33,370219 and the Pakistani population was estimated at some 5,692.240 The first language


219 This estimate is given in Zohra Husaini, *Muslims in the Canadian Mosaic: Socio-Cultural and Economic Links With Their Countries of Origin* (Edmonton: Muslim Research Foundation, 1990), p. 107.

that I learned to speak was Urdu (the next one was English). The first language that I learned to write was English (the next one was French). All of my education, from kindergarten through grade thirteen, was in Canadian public schools in Toronto and Oakville. In 1983, I returned to Toronto, to begin my undergraduate studies at the University of Toronto. I was married in 1989 to Shannon L. Hamm, a member of the United Church of Canada. Our wedding ceremony was designed together with the officiant, Willard Oxtoby, to interweave Christian and Muslim elements. We also had an Islamic marriage service officiated by the then imam of the Jami Mosque, Shaikh ’Abdullah Hakim Quick. Shannon died suddenly and unexpectedly in 1992.

In 1994, I moved to the Bloor Street West area. With this move, I was close to the Jami Mosque on Boustead Avenue, and a few city blocks away from the original home of the Muslim Society of Toronto (see Chapter Four) located on Dundas St. West. I lived there until the fall of 1997, when I moved to California. So, I spent 15 years living in Toronto, connected and distanced in various ways to the Muslim communities there.

A story of connection: In 1990, I helped to facilitate the Friday afternoon prayer on the campus of the University of Toronto. As Senior Don of the Sir Daniel Wilson Residence of University College, I was able to arrange for the use of space in a basement common room. There is no small amount of irony in the fact that Muslims have prayed at University College if one remembers that the college, founded as the provincial college for arts and science, was deliberately kept non-denominational so as to not privilege Catholics or Protestants. The following year, the Friday prayers moved to the Debates Room of Hart House, where they are still currently held.

A story of distance: I once prayed the Friday afternoon prayer in a certain mosque in
Toronto. At the end of the prayer, a brother came up to me, and remarked on the fact that I was wearing jeans made by the Levi Strauss Company. He was upset that I was wearing jeans, but more upset as in his opinion, these jeans were somehow connected to the Tribe of Levi, and hence were doubly inappropriate as they were "Jewish". The only response I had was "These are the same jeans I wore when I said the Friday prayers at the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (one of the most important sites in the Islamic world). I'm sorry that they aren't good enough for this mosque". I have not visited that mosque again.

I participated regularly in prayers at the University of Toronto and at the Jami Mosque, and made a number of presentations about Islam and Muslims. I was a Muslim representative for the World Interfaith Education Association, the World Conference on Religion and Peace and the National Christian Muslim Liaison Committee. When the University of Toronto's Campus Chaplains Association wanted to expand their membership beyond the Jewish and Christian organizations that were represented, I helped them to draft their guidelines. I served as a Muslim representative on the Canadian Cancer Society's Subcommittee on the Care of the Human Spirit, developing resources to make this group multi-religious. When possible, I attended ISNA events, and spoke at CMCC and Ahmadi events. For one summer, I worked on a youth committee of CMCC. Adding a few more elements, these are some of the locators of my position: I am male, Canadian, working-class, heterosexual, Muslim, English-speaking, thirty-something, long-haired, brown-skinned, a widower, a trained observer of religion and an educator.

9. (Canadian) Sociology

An early work on the sociology of Islam was Reuben Levy's *The Social Structure of*
That work, first printed in 1957, provided a good Orientalist (in Edward Said's use of that word) sociological analysis of Islam, with chapters on "The Grades of Society in Islam", "The Status of Women in Islam", and "The Status of the Child in Islam". However, these categories were based on the early Arabian period of Islam. Not surprisingly, the map entitled "The extent of Islam in A.D. 1955" did not include the Americas. There is no reference in the book to Muslim communities in the United States or Canada.

In place of the literature on the sociology of Islam, another component of my methodology derives from the work of Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith:

It is usually assumed in sociology that the actualities of the experienced world are not already organized and that embarking on inquiry without a conceptual apparatus exposes us to wild incoherence. I am not suggesting that we can do sociology without knowing how to do it, and indeed I believe it to be rather more difficult than is often supposed. But the implication that the actualities of the everyday world are uniformed and unorganized and that the sociologist cannot enter them without a conceptual framework which selects, assembles, and orders them is unfounded in the context of an inquiry very different from that of the natural sciences.

Like Smith, I do not assume that the communities that I study and am a part of are "unformed and unorganized". Instead, I seek to examine those communities, using the

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242 For example, Levy uses the phrase "Muhammadan communities" and the word "Muhammadan" in his preface, refers to Muhammad as a "merchant and former camel-driver" in the first sentence of his introduction, uses the Flügel numbering system for the Qur'an, and translates as "willy-nilly" what should be translated as "willingly or unwillingly" (Qur'an 3:83; had he used the older spelling of "will I, will I", that would have been an accurate rendering, but he must be aware of the connotations of haphazardness suggested by "willy-nilly").


244 Dorothy E. Smith, "What it Might Mean to do a Canadian Sociology: The Everyday World as Problematic", in *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 1:3 (1975), p. 368.
methodology that I have outlined in this chapter. Since I do examine the phenomena of Islam in Toronto, my enquiries might also be called phenomenological. In 1992, Annemarie Schimmel delivered the Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh. Her lectures were published in 1994 as *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*.

Schimmel begins her book with the Qur'anic notion that there are "signs of God" everywhere, and that it is incumbent upon Muslims to take note of them and attempt to interpret those signs. In her book, she examines aspects of creation, nature, space, time, activity and language to express how Muslims view them as "signs of God". A part of her work does focus on the various ways that Muslims have existed in society.

Continuing from the historical groupings that Schimmel describes, I attempt to give some information on how Muslims in Toronto see themselves as part of the phenomena of Muslim communities.

To summarize, there are four main issues that emerge from the methodology that I have described in this chapter. First, I sometimes introduce personal elements into the dissertation, and I am not always dispassionate in my writing. Second, my analysis is based on reading texts, conducting interviews, and long-term participation and participant observation with Muslims in Toronto. Third, as a scholar in the humanities and social sciences, my dominant interests are in description and interpretation. My observations are those of someone trained in ethology, but also informed by issues of the politics of representation from the disciplines of cultural anthropology and sociology. Fourth, the primary focus of this work is on dominant groups because they do often represent the views of the majority, but I also

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include an examination of under-represented groups to get a more complete picture of
Muslims in Toronto. Let us now turn to an examination of the historical beginnings of the
Muslim communities in Toronto.
CHAPTER 4: ROOTS OF THE COMMUNITIES IN TORONTO

In this chapter, I give a brief history of the Muslim communities in Toronto. I discuss the growth, developments and divisions within the community which existed from the early days of the Muslim presence in Toronto. To give an early historical insight, I begin this chapter with a reminiscence of one of the pioneers of community organization in Toronto, Murray Hogben. I then use this reminiscence to give an historical background to the communities from their beginnings in the 1950s until I began to study them in the early 1990s.

On October 8, 1993, I was privileged to meet with Murray Hogben in Kingston, Ontario. Hogben converted to Islam in the early 1950s. During our meeting, he provided me with a five-page, single-spaced account of the early days of the Muslim Society of Toronto. Since this account has never before been published, and since it is of great historical importance, I am reproducing it here with the permission given to me by Hogben in the holograph on the last page of his account. It provides both first-hand documentation of the early history of the Muslim community in Toronto and an adumbration of what would occur. I have kept the original spelling, transliteration and punctuation intact.¹⁷ My additions to the text are enclosed in square brackets.

A Brief Account of The Muslim Society of Toronto

By Murray Hogben, October 1993

When I arrived in Toronto in the summer of 1958 and sought out some contact with the members of the faith I had adopted a couple of years earlier, the Muslim community was still in its infancy. The first Muslims must have been the Arab peddlers from Syria, or from what became Lebanon, who

¹⁷ I am indebted to Professor F. Patrick Nichelson for ensuring that my transcription is true to Dr. Hogben's original text.
travelled all across North America since the mid-19th century and settled as scattered individuals or families based on their retail goods stores or even northern fur-trading posts. Some of these congregated in places like Truro, N.S. in the east, Montreal, Ottawa, Windsor, London, or Edmonton where the first mosque was built in Canada and possibly North America in 1938. There were obviously individuals in Toronto, like Hafeezah Ahmed but they were few and far between.

The first turn-of-the-century non-Lebanese Muslims in Toronto were also from the still-extant Ottoman Empire, and included Albanians. Among the latter was Recep (Rajhab) Assim, often called "Effendi," a perennial bachelor, who arrived here about 1912-13 apparently as a political refugee because of the failure of the Albanian independence movement in which he was involved. He used to tell me about going striding around the mountain villages of Albania wearing a big pistol, something hard to credit in a very thin scholarly little man in his seventies by the time we met in the late 1950s.

Assim Effendi told me that he and his brothers or cousins were denied work here because they weren't Christians, then a sort of condition of employment, and because they were associated with the Turks. The Turks were abhorred for their treatment of Christian revolts in the latter days of the polyglot but Turkish-dominated Ottoman Empire, and certainly during the Great War the Turks were one of the enemies of the Allies, just like the Ukrainians and other East Europeans who belonged to the then German and Austro-Hungarian Empires. As a result of their Islamic faith, Assim and his brothers/cousins were driven to making candy in order to be self-employing and from there they went on to set up High Park Sweets on Bloor Street East [West], just east of the park of the same name. They then became integrated into the community and its politics, and ran their soda fountain shop until the early to mid-1960s.

Assim was a learned man, with a large library upstairs from the shop, and became the Imam or religious leader of the Albanian and indeed tiny Muslim community, although I have no further recollection of the details.

When I arrived in 1958 the only Muslim organization was the Albanian Muslim Society of Toronto, headed by Assim. It held annual Eid dinners but had little in the way of [of] organization or facilities. Assim conducted funeral prayers and did whatever else was needed by his co-religionists.

The very first Muslims I found in my search were Tahir Bokhari, from Pakistan and working at the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] as I did, and Ali Tayyeb, also of Pakistani origin and a professor of geography at the University of Toronto. His wife was Husna, and they had three children. There was a very small Sunday school class which met in the basement of the home of Sami and Fetime Kerim's home, and I went there to see if I could learn more about Islam, and hence encountered the Albanian and Lebanese Muslims. There were also some Bosnians from Yugoslavia who had come to Canada like some of the Albanians after the bloodbath and political strife of the Second World War and the Communist takeover of Eastern Europe.
These people all varied in their sense of religiosity, but those who were interested looked up to their Imam, who in turn looked after their interests.

In 1958–59, I remember attending an Eid dinner at what must have been the Maple Leaf Ballroom of a cousin of Regep Assim, Seitali or S.B. Kerim, the “B.” standing, I presume, for his nickname, “Babe,” because he was the youngest of his family, Sami Kerim being his older brother. I remember there was a newspaper photo printed of all the shoes spread about by those of us saying the special Eid prayers that night, including my own. Babe Kerim’s family must have come to Canada between the two world wars because he ran a dance hall on the lakefront, I believe, which later burned down in the 1950s. His wife Mary, a charming and attractive woman, was an American. Babe was ever concerned for his elder cousin, and took on an increasing amount of the burden of what was renamed in the early 1960s the Muslim Society of Toronto.

Sometime in the first years of the 1960s we had enough money to buy a former workshop at 3047 Dundas St. West, and established a shop-front “Islamic Centre,” not a mosque, so we could make better use of its space. It had an upstairs apartment which we rented out and a long main floor, divided about two-fifths of the way back by a wall between the front room and the prayer room, and a similarly long and rather roughly finished basement. I remember drawing some simple Indian or Islamic arch patterns which we painted on the walls for some minimal decoration, and Hassan Karachi, a handsome Bosnian post-war arrival and owner of Niagara Protective Coatings (still in business despite his death earlier this year), generously provided all the pale green and white paint, including for the basement floor.

I also remember how we held our congregational prayers there on Sundays rather than Fridays—it being so far away. And I remember saying those prayers the first time there with the first real Secretary, Badrul Hasan, and Regep Assim and a few others on one white sheet, dressed in our overcoats because of the cold. He was a big gentle bear of a man who had his wife and daughter with him during his years at U of T (the University of Toronto) before he returned home in the early 1960s, after which I became the long-term Secretary.

The official records of the Society will be with the Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, but I remember we had to fill them in after the fact for several years because we weren’t really up to date or even on record perhaps. These will give the names of so-called directors—we didn’t have any, just an annually elected executive—and may provide some other useful information. Walter Howell, husband of Hafeezah Ahmet’s daughter Violet; Rizwan and Mary Banka, Bosnians; and others were among those taking a major role, besides my wife Alia and myself. Others will no doubt come to mind, and be appended here. [There is a footnote at this point in the text, which reads: “Bosnians included Azem Zunic, alive in 1993, Ferid Foco, Khairuddin Dubrovac, Albanian Fetime Shaban earlier . . ., Egyptians . . ., South African Ahmed Bulbulia, and others . . .”]

Once we opened our doors then the number of Muslims who came for
prayers or at least to witness them — because some of the older ones had never learned how or had forgotten — slowly began to increase. We had a small formal meeting in rows of chairs in the front portion of the building, including some kind of a talk or khutba by Regep Assim or perhaps myself, and a reading from the Qur'an, and then we adjourned to the back for prayers. We had sheets and later some strip prayer mats and even a mock-oriental carpet or two. Assim would always fish out some extra money from his pocket or his cheque book if we were short of money to pay the mortgage on the building. He was a wonderful, sweet, self-deprecating man, who devoted his life to his religion and his ethnic connections.

Then we began to have coffee and something sweet in the basement room afterwards, to extend the social aspects of our very small meetings — 20 or 30 people usually. We also had a small Sunday school for the children, and a small library, supplied largely by Assim Effendi. Our Eid dinners and other festivities often included the dancing of those Middle Eastern Dubke line dances popular with Bosnians, Albanians, and some Arabs with men and women mixed together and we all had a jolly time with no perceived impropriety.

By the mid or late-1960s the number of Indo-Pakistani immigrants increased and in turn disturbed the more even balance among the variety of different cultural groups. This led to a series of disagreements over what was allowable — like the Dubke— and what was "Islamic" in various group's eyes. The President of those years was Dr. M.Q. Baig, a professor of Islamic studies, whom I encouraged to come into the society because he had the kind of knowledge and understanding we didn't have. He served the Society well for several years but unfortunately our differences eventually escalated into an unseemly squabble. Those of us in the core group led by Baig managed to hold out while the largely Pakistani or more activist Muslims went off and formed the Islamic Foundation, buying a building on Rhodes Avenue in the east end of the city.

It is all a long time ago now and time has bridged the gap between what some of us saw as a developing struggle between moderate and fundamentalist Islam as it has turned out to be known as. It was all very unfortunate but very heated and disturbing at the time, especially as we were still so few in number.

However, by about 1967-68 the Society was able to sell the 3047 Dundas St. West building and buy the more imposing Presbyterian church on Boustead Avenue, to be called the Jam'i Masjid. By this time Babe Kerim had become a leading figure, responsible for our financial health, along with Regep Assim, and Dr. Baig was the President, and I was still Secretary. We took out all the church pews and covered the floor with wall-to-wall carpeting. The one notably Christian stained-glass window was taken away — to our relief— by the few Presbyterians left in the changing district. Strings were put down to mark the lines for prayers, and as I recall in those years we found that the Qibla was in fact to the north-east rather than the south-east, so the direction was changed.
We also bought a section of the Glendale Memorial Gardens where a number of Muslims were buried, including Assim Effendi, although the exclusivity of the section was not maintained because not enough Muslims bought plots for their burials.

Again, we held Sunday prayers and now some people would come for Friday Jumaa prayers too, and our numbers increased dramatically with the late 1960s influx of minority groups previously excluded from Canada by the immigration quota system. There were bigger festivities held downstairs and a bigger Sunday school, but all this was not without cost to the original membership, or to moderate Islam. More fundamentalist Muslims flocked in, and Tabligh Jamaat groups came to camp in the prayer room and occupy its corners with their bedding. Generally the atmosphere changed from the more multi-cultural balance of the earlier years.

I was away for the period of 1969–70 during which there was a public division between Dr. Baig and a group of followers and some others, and the police were called to keep the peace. The causes of all this are now forgotten but after my return I didn’t return to the executive committee as far as I remember and we were not sorry to leave when I got a job teaching in Kingston in 1973. Memory being what it is, I have forgotten just when Mr. Assim died. Babe Kerim told me that the by now seriously aging man had been up on a high ladder trying to shoo out some pigeons that had come in and settled on the ledge of the big church window to the east when he fell off and never recovered. Babe said that his cousin died of a broken heart at what had happened despite his quiet efforts over the years, and that is no doubt the case. I do know that some time after that the previous executive, still containing Babe Kerim, sold the mosque through another buyer to the Islamic Society of North America, or ISNA. ISNA was the outgrowth of the earlier and more militant or more recent immigrant-led Muslim Students Association of North America, or MSA.

The alternative, as it developed, to ISNA became the fairly moderate Council of Muslim Communities of Canada, CMCC. The CMCC had been formed in 1973 to give a Canadian face to the rather American-dominated Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada, or FIA. The CMCC held annual conferences and was the source of the series of children’s summer camps, now called Camp Al-Moo-Mee-Neen [Qur’anic Arabic, al-Mu’minin, “the believers”], and the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, or CCMW, which is also still doing well. The CMCC, however, waned in the late 1980s because it had not managed to build a base of individual memberships when its overseas funding ran down, and so became somewhat moribund, although it has apparently been revived in the last two years, holding its 20th anniversary conference in Toronto in September of this year. ISNA is also still going strongly and the differences in their approach to Islam still continue to exist.

Meanwhile, other mosques and centres sprang up across Metro Toronto and across Ontario, but the original Muslim Society of Toronto seems to have gone into limbo. For a while the Albanian remnants had a small
centre in the west end of the city, but it must have been closed down by now. Some of them are still alive. A number of them turned out for Hassan Karachi’s funeral in Niagara Falls this summer.

[At the end of his text, which appears to have been printed using a dot-matrix printer, Dr. Hogben adds the following holograph.]

I also invited Malcolm X to come & speak to us, which he did very early in 1965 before he was [ass]assinated. I have a photo of us at the centre with the illuminated verse from the Qur’an which I framed for him as a gift. There’s lots more no doubt, but for the time being you can use this as my contribution to your efforts. Salaams

Murray Hogben
Oct. 8/93

Hogben’s account of the founding of the Muslim Society of Toronto by Assim Effendi is confirmed by Muin Muinuddin, who arrived in Canada in 1959 and moved to Toronto in 1966. There are a number of interesting points raised by Hogben’s account. I elaborate on those points below.

The Albanian Muslim Society of Toronto was the first Muslim organization in Toronto (and for that matter, Ontario), dating back to 1956 or some two years before Hogben arrived in Toronto. This group still has a small storefront centre in the Bloor West area of Toronto, at 564 Annette Street. With the influx of a number of Albanian refugees to Canada (many of whom settled in Toronto) in the mid 1990s, this group once again became active.

Although Muslims were counted in the first census of 1871, and in every decennial

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census from 1901 to 1931, they were not counted from 1941 to 1971. In the census of 1931, 645 Muslims were counted. By the 1950s, the Muslim population of Canada was still quite small, estimated to be no higher than about 4,000. If we use Haddad's figures from 1978 that 40% of the Muslims in Canada lived in Toronto, and assume the same percentage to be true in 1958, there could be no more than 1,600 Muslims in Toronto when Hogben arrived in that city. In actuality, I suspect that Toronto had a lower percentage of Canada's Muslims in 1958 than it did in 1978, as the quota system for immigration did not end until 1967. As mentioned in Chapter One (and discussed in greater detail below), the first Canadian conference (in 1955) of the Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada was not held in Toronto, but in London, Ontario. It was only after the quota system was dropped that the numbers of South Asian immigrants to Canada increased from, for example, the 100 Pakistanis that were allowed to immigrate each year beginning in 1951. Prior to 1967, the majority of Muslim immigrants were Arabs, many of whom settled in the West or in Montréal.

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251 Ibid., p. 204.

252 The estimate given for the Muslim population in Canada for 1951 is between 2,000 and 3,000 in Zohra Husaini, Muslims in the Canadian Mosaic: Socio-Cultural and Economic Links With Their Countries of Origin (Edmonton: Muslim Research Foundation, 1990), p. 107.

253 Haddad, "Muslims in Canada: A Preliminary Study", in Religion and Ethnicity, p. 73.


255 In "Muslims in Canada: A Preliminary Study" (p. 72), Yvonne Haddad writes that "the number of immigrants to Canada began to increase after the Second World War. The new immigrants came mainly from Lebanon and Palestine. The fifties brought more Muslims from Eastern Europe, Egypt and Lebanon".
Toronto has seen many changes since the late 1950s. John Barber, a reporter for *The Globe and Mail* newspaper, echoed the sentiments of many of his cohort when he wrote of his experiences in Toronto: "I grew up in a tidy, prosperous, narrow-minded town where Catholicism was considered exotic; my children are growing up in the most cosmopolitan city on Earth. The same place".  

Myer Siemiatycki of Ryerson Polytechnic University in Toronto has written an excellent article entitled "Immigration and Urban Politics in Toronto", which outlines some of the changes that immigration has brought to Toronto. As Siemiatycki mentions, in 1961 only 3% of the population of Toronto was composed of visible minorities. By 1996, that number had increased to 37.3%. In 1931, an overwhelming majority (81%) of Toronto's residents declared themselves to be of British (not just generically European, but exclusively from Great Britain) origin. By 1996, only 16% claimed this identification, with the majority (56%) claiming to be "non-British/French/or Aboriginal". With this change in the composition of the population of Toronto has come the issue of discrimination. In the Greater Toronto Area, of the 35 municipal councils that Siemiatycki studied in 1997, he found that "almost half (17) of the municipalities reported they had experienced circumstances of conflict with immigrant communities. . . . Nine municipalities experienced conflict over the location of places of worship for minority religious

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Discrimination and how it relates to the Muslim communities in Toronto is discussed in issue twelve ("racism") of Chapter Seven.

In his reminiscence, Hogben mentions the involvement of Mirza Qadeer Baig in the early days of the organization of Toronto Muslims. Baig, born in India and educated at the University of London (his dissertation was on Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi), arrived in Toronto in 1962 as a professor of Islamic studies at the University of Toronto. In 1967, Friday prayers were established at Hart House, the cultural centre of the University of Toronto. Later, as Hogben alluded, after a split with the community at the Jami Mosque, Baig would found the Canadian Society of Muslims, which is still located in Toronto. The Canadian Society of Muslims provides additional information about the early efforts to organize the Muslims in Toronto:

there were no Islamic centres or mosques here except that the Albanian Muslim community had a small basement beneath a store on Dundas St. This basement was used generally for social gatherings, Eid celebrations, and was also used for prayer purposes as and when the need arose, but it was not used on a regular basis. I am not completely sure, but I think that the name of the man who established this centre was a Mr. Asim. So Dr. Baig took the initiative to do something about establishing a proper place of worship for the Muslim community. In the early 1960s, at his own initiative, he became instrumental in purchasing a small church on Boustead Ave. which had been put up for sale. The small size of the Muslim community and the lack of financial resources at that time, left him with no other choice but to buy a property which came with a heavy mortgage.  

260 Ibid.


Again, the importance of Assim Effendi and the Albanian community to the establishment of a Muslim presence in Toronto is mentioned. In his reminiscence, Hogben noted that the main congregational prayer was held on Sunday instead of Friday, to allow more of the community to be able to congregate. Here, we have evidence for one of the accommodations that Muslims had to make: changing the day of the main congregational prayer. With only one small centre located in the West end of Toronto, it was difficult for people to gather together on Friday afternoons. So, the prayer was shifted to Sunday, when people could travel and, presumably, not have to ask their employers for time off from their regular working schedules. Another accommodation was the use of a mortgage on the property. The Qur'an forbids interest, so Muslims living in countries like Canada, where interest is considered a regular part of economic life,\textsuperscript{264} are often faced with difficult choices. Does one wait until one has the full purchase price before buying property? Does one give in to the prevailing economic norms and accept the use of interest? Does one attempt to create economic alternatives? Recently, Islamic forms of banking have been introduced, and these are discussed in issue thirteen ("economic issues") of Chapter Seven.

These early meetings were not solely for prayer. As Hogben mentioned, there also were the "social aspects" in addition to sermons and readings from the Qur'an. The centre at 3047 Dundas Street West\textsuperscript{265} was also used for Eid dinners by the small Muslim community. At

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item A personal anecdote: In 1994, I was asked to be an observer to the General Council of the United Church of Canada in Fergus, Ontario. During the meetings, one of the questions was whether a certain branch of the church should lend money to another branch of the church at the current interest rate offered by the major banks, or at a reduced interest rate. I expressed surprise that the church was in effect charging itself interest, and was told that "this is standard business practice".

\item Currently (and for the past 10 years), the business at this address is Picture It Framed, Inc., an art gallery and frame store. There is no sign on the building (which is next
these dinners, Hogben remembered, there would be dancing, and men and women would mix freely. As the composition of the community changed, there were challenges about the appropriateness of dancing or the intermingling of the sexes. Hogben remembers the South Asians as being more conservative than the Europeans or Arabs who began the centre. Those who were opposed to the practices of the centre created their own more conservative group, the Islamic Foundation of Toronto, and purchased a building at 182 Rhodes Avenue. This building is usually acknowledged to be the first mosque in Toronto.266 Shaheen Azmi has written of the existence of four mosques in Toronto in 1930, but these must have been places where prayers were offered, and not structures exclusively used for prayers.267

In 1992, the building at 182 Rhodes Avenue was sold to a Turkish Muslim organization, the United Canadian Muslim Association (UCMA), which itself was established in 1991 as the Canadian branch of the much larger United American Muslim Association.268 The mosque was renamed as the Fatih Mosque. So, a mosque founded by Pakistanis in the 1960s, in response to what they considered the "excesses" of European Muslims, many of

door to West Toronto Baptist Church) to mark it as important in the religious history of Toronto.


267 Shaheen Azmi, "Canadian Social Service Provision and the Muslim Community in Metropolitan Toronto", in Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, 17:1 (1997), p. 163. Since the census for 1931 showed only 645 Muslims in all of Canada, the fact that four different places to offer prayers existed in Toronto indicates the divisions in the community even at this early date.

268 The UCMA has a web page available as of summer 2000 at the following location, where one can see a picture of the mosque on Rhodes Ave: <http://www.fatihcami.org/toronto/english/main.htm>.
whom were immigrants from the Ottoman Turkish Empire, has become a Turkish mosque in the 1990s. The Islamic Foundation of Toronto continues to exist, operating one of the largest mosques in Toronto at 441 Nugget Avenue in Scarborough. This mosque was opened in 1994.

As Hogben remembers, in 1968 the Albanian Muslim Society of Toronto was able to move from the centre on Dundas Street West to a new and larger location on 56 Boustead Avenue, still in the High Park area in the West end of Toronto. This new location was the former High Park Presbyterian Church, which was sold to the Muslim community in 1968 and became the Jami Mosque.26 By 1969, according to one of its imams, the church had been remodelled and regular prayers were being offered in the Jami Mosque.27 In its time and for almost two decades after it was opened, it was the largest Sunni mosque in Toronto. Renovated in 1994, it continues as one of the most important mosques in Toronto. It is also known as the Islamic Centre of Toronto.

As a child growing up in the Toronto area in the 1970s, I have vivid memories of attending the Jami Mosque. Due to the fact that neither of my parents could take time off from work during the week (indeed, the very idea was unthinkable to them in those days), we did not attend the Friday prayers. However, when possible, we would try to attend the Eid prayers. At the time, it seemed like such a large gathering of Muslims. Of course, with the subsequent growth of the Muslim community in Toronto, those early Eid gatherings were replaced by much larger events at the Canadian National Exhibition and at Skydome.

26 From personal correspondence with Will Ingram, current minister of Morningside–High Park Presbyterian Church. “The church was sold in 1968, when the congregations of Morningside and High Park were amalgamated into one congregation”.

After the Eid prayers, my parents would often purchase food at the small Muslim grocery store near the mosque, at the corner of Boustead Avenue and Dundas Street West. This was one of the few stores in Toronto that sold halal meat. Twenty years later, in 1994, I moved to this neighbourhood where I lived for three years. I was amazed at the number of Muslim stores, organizations and restaurants that had since sprung up within walking distance of the Jami Mosque.

Interestingly, Hogben recalls that even with a larger community in 1969, there were still congregational prayers offered on Sunday, as well as the regular Friday afternoon prayers. Baig, president of the Muslim Society at the time the Jami Mosque was purchased, was chosen as the first imam of the mosque.271 The mosque provided for both moderate and conservative groups of Muslims, and served as a base of operations for the Tablighi Jamaat.

Always polite and discreet, Hogben does not give the reason for what he terms the “public division” between the followers of Baig and others. In 1971, Baig’s group took the name “The Muslim Society of Toronto”,272 changing in 1980 to “The Canadian Society of Muslims”.273 The split had to do with the Sufi practices and personal charisma of Baig.274 Baig was born in Ajmer, India, which houses the shrine of Muinuddin Chishti (d. 1236), the founder of the Chishtiyya order of Sufism. Initiated into this order, Baig introduced the Chishti tradition to Toronto. He began a Sufi group which still meets regularly at the


274 Yvonne Haddad, “Muslims in Canada”, p. 74.
University of Toronto. For some Muslims, there is a tension between Sufism and what they deem to be “orthodoxy”. As such, Sufi practices are frowned upon by these Muslims, who may go so far as to label Sufis as “non-Muslims”. The Sufi practices in Toronto are discussed in the next chapter. Baig continued to lead the Canadian Society of Muslims and teach at the University of Toronto until his death in 1988.\textsuperscript{275} In the 1970s, Baig led the Muslim Society of Toronto in demonstrations against school textbooks that they considered to have inaccurate information about Islam and Muslims.\textsuperscript{276} One such demonstration took them to the front steps of the legislature at Queen’s Park.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the first mosques were built in North America in the 1930s: Cedar Rapids, Iowa in 1934; Ross, North Dakota in 1937 and Edmonton, Alberta in 1938. It took some time for the Muslim immigrants who arrived in North America at the turn of the century to establish their places of worship. It also took some time to proceed from the building of mosques to the establishment of community organizations. The 1950s saw the beginnings of community organization among Muslims in North America. On June 28, 1952, the first American Muslim conference was held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, forming the International Muslim Society.\textsuperscript{277} Annual conferences were held in Toledo, Ohio, and Chicago, Illinois, in subsequent years.

\textsuperscript{275} In 1985, I took my first “Introduction to Islam” course at the University of Toronto, which was taught by Professor Baig. At that time, I had no idea of the important role that he played in the history of Islam in Toronto. \textit{De mortuis nihil nisi bonum.}

\textsuperscript{276} In particular, there was a protest against \textit{What Man Believes: A Study of the World’s Great Faiths}, published in Toronto in 1973 by McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

At the Chicago conference in 1934, a new umbrella organization was formed, the Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada (FIA). The fourth conference, in 1955, was held in London, Ontario, “signaling the continental structures of its composition and honouring the dedication of its Canadian members, who had been active from its inception”. As Gubbi Ahmed writes, “by the early sixties the FIA had to give way to a new organization, which was better suited to carrying its historical achievement a step further”. This new organization was the Muslim Students Association (MSA), founded in 1963 at a conference in Urbana, Illinois.

In 1968, another organization was founded in Montréal: the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA). ICNA currently has its head office in Jamaica, New York, but has chapters in most major North American cities, including Toronto. ICNA is an active organization, producing a regular monthly magazine entitled The Message, as well as publishing numerous pamphlets on Islam and Muslims.

By the 1970s, a number of mosques were established in Toronto due to the influx of various immigrant communities. Kerim Reis and Dr. Asaf Duraković founded the Croatian Islamic Centre in 1974. According to their brochures, “the Croatian Islamic Centre is an independent, religious, cultural, and advocacy institution dedicated to promoting the welfare and rights of Croatian Muslims within Croatia and in diaspora, and to fostering wider knowledge about the Croatian community”. The centre is located at 75 Birmingham Street in Etobicoke, and welcomes all Muslims. Indeed, the prayer at the centre has often been led by a prominent member of Toronto’s Shi’i community, Husein Khimjee, who regularly leads the

274 Ibid., p. 13.

275 Ibid., p. 15.
prayers at the Jâ'fârî Islamic Centre when they cannot be led by the full-time imam, Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi.  

Twelver and Isma'ili Shi'î Muslims of South Asian origin began arriving with regularity in Canada after the change in immigration laws of 1967. In the early 1970s, their numbers from East Africa began to increase, particularly after 1972, when Idi Amin expelled Asians from Uganda. Azim Nanji has estimated that some 6,000 Isma'ili refugees alone settled in Canada and the USA as a result of the expulsion.  Of the Isma'ili community, Nanji writes that "the first . . . families to migrate to North America arrived in Canada in the 1950s from Pakistan". He states that by 1968, the community in Toronto had organized and met weekly "in either a rented hall or a residence for prayers and communal activities". Nanji estimates that the Isma'ili population in North America was no more than 600 until the Ugandan expulsion.  

Starting in 1968, the Isma'ili community began to organize and meet in jamaat khanas.  

As explained by Fariyal Ross-Sheriff and Azim Nanji, a jamaat khanâ is 

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200 An example of my own personal participant observation: I met Husein Khimjee for lunch one Friday to speak with him about my dissertation. As the time approached for the Friday afternoon prayer, he suggested going to the Croatian mosque. At the mosque, he introduced me to some of the people present, who asked him to lead the prayers. This was one of the moments that I was able to experience the inclusiveness of my fellow Muslims. There I was, a Sunni Muslim of Pakistani origin praying behind a Tanzanian Shi'a Muslim at a mosque that was founded and primarily supported by Croatians. I am grateful to Husein Khimjee for his many kindnesses to me.


202 Ibid., p. 156.

203 Ibid.

204 Ibid., p. 157.
literally "a house of assembly," which has traditionally served among Ismailis as a center for community activities, social gatherings and supererogatory religious observances. Each congregation may be referred to as a jamat. Congregational activity in the initial stages of development in North America has often centered on available sites, such as school halls and other locations, which have served in place of jamatkhanas during the period of transition. More permanent locations are being obtained gradually and with due regard to changing demographic patterns in the community.²⁸⁵

From these beginnings, there are currently some 17 jamaat khanas in the Greater Toronto Area.

On November 4, 1979, the Ja'fari Islamic Centre of the Twelver Shi'a community was formally opened by Abdulaziz Sachedina. This centre, housing a mosque and Imambaragh (a multi-purpose community centre in honour of Imam Husain), is the largest Twelver Shi'a centre in Canada. It is located at 7340 Bayview Avenue in Thornhill. The Shi'i communities (Twelver and Ismaili) in Toronto are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter of this dissertation.

The Council of Muslim Communities of Canada (CMCC) was founded in 1972, and in 1974 they began to run the summer camp that Hogben mentioned, Camp Al-Mu-Mee-Neen.²⁸⁶ This camp, in turn, produced much of the leadership of CMCC in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. In 1981, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) was created out of the Muslim Students Association (MSA), which was founded in 1963. As Hogben remembers, the MSA was developed primarily by immigrant Muslim students at the college and university level. The MSA and its later

²⁸⁵ Fariyal Ross-Sheriff and Azim Nanji, "Islamic Identity, Family and Community: The Case of the Nizari Ismaili Muslims", in Muslim Families in North America, p. 117.

²⁸⁶ The camp is still operating, and has, as of 2000, a web site located at: <http://www.muslimcamp.com/frames.html>.
manifestation, ISNA, were much more conservative in their outlook than was CMCC.

In 1982, CMCC created an organization for women, the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW). The CCMW met for its first conference in 1982 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, with another conference later that year in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. The founding president of CCMW was Dr. Lila Fahlman, an educator from Alberta. According to its brochures, "The Canadian Council of Muslim Women is a national non-profit organization established to assist Muslim women in participating effectively in Canadian society and to promote mutual understanding between Canadian Muslim women and women of other faiths". In the next chapter, I discuss all three of these umbrella groups, and how they affect Islam and Muslims in Toronto.

Another example of the outreach of CMCC was their involvement in the National Christian Muslim Liaison Committee. This committee was established in 1980, sponsored jointly by the Canadian Council of Churches, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Council of Muslim Communities of Canada. The committee developed out of a local Toronto initiative between the CMCC and the United Church of Canada, led by Muin Muinuddin and James Seunarine. 

It meets quarterly, with an attempt to be hosted alternately by Muslims and Christians. As Hogben mentioned, Hassan Karachi, a long-time supporter of CMCC, died in 1993. A mosque in the Niagara region, the former Islamic Society of Niagara Peninsula, was renamed the Hassan Karachi Mosque in his honour. Muin Muinuddin passed away in 1998.

In 1977, the first annual gathering of the Ahmadi Muslim community in Canada took

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237 Information on the origins of the National Christian Muslim Liaison Committee from personal correspondence with Rev. Bruce Gregersen, Secretary for Interfaith Dialogue of the United Church of Canada. I was a member of this committee from 1995 to 1997.
place in Toronto. The most recent conference, which began on June 30, 2000, attracted some 10,000 members of the Ahmadi community in Canada to the mosque in Maple (the community itself claims a membership of 50,000 Muslims in 27 locations throughout Canada, with the largest community in Toronto), slightly north of Toronto. This mosque, named the Bait-ul-Islam (House of Islam), is located at 10610 Jane Street, and is the largest mosque not only in the Toronto area, but in all of Canada. It was designed in 1987 by Gulzar Haider, a professor of architecture at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario. Haider was the same architect who in 1979 was asked to design the mosque for the headquarters of the Islamic Society of North America in Plainfield, Indiana.  

Even before the mosque was designed, a ceremony was held on September 20, 1986 at the site where it was to be built. This ceremony was attended by Mirza Tahir Ahmad, who leads the worldwide Ahmadiyya community from his headquarters in London. At the ceremony, Ahmad laid the foundation stone of the Bait-ul-Islam Mosque. The mosque was officially opened on October 16, 1992, when Ahmad led the Friday prayer. According to the community, “it was an unprecedented event in the sense that for the first time [bold type in original] in the history of Ahmadiyyat and Islam, a sermon by a great leader of Islam—Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV [the title of Ahmad, “Successor of the Messiah”], was carried through live transmission to all continents of the world”. Clearly, this opening was an important event


not just for the community in Toronto or Canada, but for the worldwide Ahmadiyya community.

In this chapter, I have attempted to sketch the background of the various Muslim communities in Toronto from their beginnings in the early 1950s until I began to study them in the late 1980s. To do this, I began with the narrative of Murray Hogben, one of the important figures in the Muslim Society of Toronto. Hogben's narrative served to introduce not only the history of Islam in Toronto, but some of the key issues that would develop in the future. In the 1950s, the number of Muslims in Toronto was less than two thousand, the majority of whom were Arab or European. By the 1990s, that number would increase to approximately 200,000, the majority of whom were South Asian.

Hogben is a witness to a time when there were no permanent, full-time mosques in Toronto. He remembers the creation of the first one, on Rhodes Avenue, and participated in the creation of the second one, the Jami Mosque. Hogben also recounts some of the tensions in the early community that resulted in the creation of the Islamic Foundation of Toronto in opposition to the Albanian Muslim Society of Toronto. Another conservative group, the Tablighi Jamaat, became active in the early days of the Jami Mosque. In 1971, Hogben remembers the split between the Albanian Muslim Society of Toronto and the group led by Baig that would become the Muslim Society of Toronto. Under Baig's leadership, Sufi practices were also established in Toronto. Later, other Muslim organizations would be formed, such as the Council of Muslim Communities of Canada, the Islamic Society of North America, and the Canadian Council of Muslim Women.

Also in the 1970s, an influx of immigrants changed the Muslim landscape of Toronto. The Croatian community established a mosque in the west end of Toronto. After the 1972
expulsion of Asians from Uganda, the Ismaili community in North America grew from 600 to over 6,600. They established jamaat khana as early as 1968 in Toronto. By the end of the 1970s, the Twelver Shi'a community had established its own mosque in Toronto, one of the largest in Canada. In the late 1980s, the Ahmadi community began to make plans to build its mosque near Toronto.

Having provided some historical context, I now turn to my examination of the more recent life of Muslim communities in Toronto. In the next chapter I describe the various communities and groups that I studied. The chapter is divided into five sections: Sunni communities and groups, Shi'i groups, Ahmadiyya, Nation of Islam and Sufi groups.
CHAPTER 5: MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN TORONTO

In this chapter, I discuss the various Muslim communities in Toronto that I studied. The following five communities are discussed, each under its own separate section: Sunni communities and groups (ISNA, CMCC and CCMW), Shi'i groups (Twelver and Ismaili communities), Ahmadiyya, Nation of Islam and Sufi groups. I end this chapter with a short summary of those five communities. In that summary, I begin to draw some preliminary conclusions about Islam in Toronto.

1. Sunni Groups

Sunni communities form the majority of the Muslim communities in Toronto. The literature on Sunni communities has dominated the discourse of academic writing on Muslims in North America. That literature is discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation. In this section, I examine three of the major Sunni organizations in Toronto: the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the Council of Muslim Communities of Canada (CMCC) and the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW). However, I also mention some of the other Sunni groups in Toronto, such as the Canadian Society of Muslims and the Islamic Social Services and Resources Association (ISSRA).

a) ISNA

As described in Chapter Four, ISNA has its roots in the Muslim Students Association (MSA), which was the successor to the Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada (FIA). In Canada, what was then the “Canadian Zonal Office” of the MSA opened
its first office in July of 1977 at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education building, located at 252 Bloor Street West on the campus of the University of Toronto. In 1981, this office was renamed the ISNA-Canada Office. The following year, ISNA-Canada expanded to a two-room office in the same building. On September 13, 1982, ISNA-Canada was formally incorporated under the Canadian federal government, and it obtained charitable status with Revenue Canada in January, 1983. In October of 1986, ISNA purchased a duplex at 219 Beverly Street, a few blocks south of the original location on Bloor Street and one block from the University of Toronto. It began to operate out of that location in 1987, using part of the space for offices and part of the space for a mosque. In 1996, ISNA purchased a much larger property located at 2200 South Sheridan Way in Mississauga and moved the offices to this new location in 1998. This new headquarters is known as the Islamic Centre of Canada. Since April of 1979, the director of ISNA-Canada has been Dr. Mohammad Ashraf.

From its Canadian headquarters previously in Toronto and currently in Mississauga, ISNA offers a number of services to Muslims and non-Muslims. Through the Islamic Book Service, ISNA imports a number of books about Islam and offers them for sale. In the 1970s and 1980s, this was a very valuable service, as it was often difficult to find books about Islam in Toronto. These books were sold through a small store that was part of the Jami Mosque. In the late 1990s, sales of books began to decline, either because of increased competition (particularly from internet sites) or perhaps because consumers had already purchased the books that they needed (once you have purchased a complete set of, for example, the Sahih al-Bukhari, there is no need to purchase another copy). The Islamic Book Service now operates

291 Much of the historical information was obtained from the following pamphlet, “ISNA-Canada Office: A Historical Perspective”, published in 1992 by the Toronto office of ISNA Canada.
out of the Islamic Centre of Canada in Mississauga.

Another service that ISNA offers is the Islamic Cooperative Housing Corporation, which was formed in 1980. This cooperative allows members to buy homes without having to take out a mortgage which would require them to pay interest. According to the cooperative, its objective is “to provide an opportunity to its members, who are committed not to indulge themselves in riba (interest), to buy a house for their family without riba, with security and as much flexibility as possible, within the taxation and legal framework of the country”. In this statement, one sees a desire to create an Islamic alternative that does not conflict with existing Canadian law. There is an expressed interest in working "within" the Canadian legal system rather than challenging that system.

The cooperative owns the homes for its members, who pay back the cooperative in the form of rent. Ownership of the house is transferred to the individual member once they have paid the costs of the home. At the end of 1998, the cooperative had some 1,710 members who owned 290 houses. None of the people that I interviewed were members of the cooperative. However, two young professionals both expressed an interest in becoming members. For one, the reason for joining was not so much the Qur'anic prohibition on interest as it was a frustration with the role played by the major banks in the Canadian economy. He saw the banks as being “wealthy enough already”, and did not want to enrich the banks through his mortgage payments.

In 1983, ISNA formed the Canadian Islamic Trust. This trust grew out of the organization established in 1972 to manage the Jami Mosque. The trust mirrors the concept of

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a *waqf* or “charitable trust” that exists under Islamic law, allowing common property to be “owned” for the purposes of the law. This trust currently is responsible for a number of mosques, organizations and schools across Canada.

Also in 1983, ISNA established the ISNA Islamic School at 1525 Sherway Drive in Mississauga. This school grew out of a nursery and daycare centre that operated out of the basement of the Jami Mosque in 1981. In 1983, ISNA purchased a vacant public school building from the Peel Board of Education. Starting from junior kindergarten to grade three in 1984, the school grew to a full elementary school (up to and including grade eight) in 1990. In 1994, a grade nine class was added. As of 1998, 361 students were enrolled in this school.

In 1997, ISNA formed the Canadian Muslim Council, a counterpart to the American Muslim Council. This council was designed to involve Muslims in the Canadian political process. It encouraged Muslims to vote and supported a number of Muslim candidates at various levels of government. While none of these candidates were elected, it did formally signal an involvement by ISNA in the Canadian political process. Since 1997, ISNA has encouraged Muslims, as Muslims, to vote in Canadian elections.

Another venture of ISNA is a travel agency, which began in 1995. In addition to organizing groups for the Hajj, the agency focuses on travel to Muslim countries. While their business has grown since its inception, they do not have a large advertising budget. As such, many Muslims in the Greater Toronto Area are not aware of this agency.

ISNA is also involved in the Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA), which sponsors summer and winter camps for young people, as well as other events such as picnics and basketball tournaments. These events occur regularly throughout the year. The events are segregated, with separate events for boys and girls.
Another function of ISNA is the annual conferences that they sponsor. The first such conference was held in London, Ontario, in 1980. Since that time, conferences have been held in Ottawa, Hamilton, Montréal, St. Catharines, Guelph and Toronto. The conferences have had various themes, generally centred on Muslim life in North America. Some of the topics of these conferences have been "Family Life in North America: The Islamic Model, Development of Islamic Institutions in North America, Towards the Future of Muslims in North America and The Muslim Community Then and Now". Beginning in 1989, a Western conference was held annually in Vancouver. A Prairie conference was added in 1990, held on the campus of the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. Given the population base and the history of conferences in the East, it is not surprising that the Eastern conference has the greatest attendance. For example, there were some 2,000 people who attended the 1992 conference in Toronto, while some 350 people attended the same year in Vancouver, and 250 attended in Winnipeg.\(^{293}\)

ISNA also distributes *Islamic Horizons* in Canada. This is the magazine published by the American headquarters of ISNA in Plainfield, Indiana. The first issue was introduced in December, 1991, and has been published bimonthly since 1995. While the magazine covers the international Muslim world, it does have regular features on "Islam in America" in each issue.

Since 1987, ISNA has also been involved with the Canadian government in the sponsorship of refugees. This program was stopped in 1992 as ISNA could not meet funding needs, which resulted in some applicants applying for social welfare, a violation of the agreement that ISNA had reached with the government in 1987. In 1993, the program was allowed to continue, but at a much slower rate and with more strict guidelines from the

\(^{293}\)Figures taken as the low estimate from the *ISNA-Canada Annual Report, 1992*. 
government. By 1993, 2,563 refugee claims had been processed by ISNA.

As Hogben remembered (in the previous chapter), ISNA developed out the MSA, which itself was largely established by immigrant Muslims who were studying in North America. Often having little prior exposure to North American cultures, many of these immigrant Muslims had fairly conservative or "traditional" views about Islam. Hogben provided anecdotal evidence of this when he mentioned that some of the South Asian Muslims in Toronto objected to some of the "cultural" practices such as dancing by Albanian and Middle Eastern Muslims. It was this group that broke away and formed its own mosque, the Islamic Foundation, on Rhodes Avenue in Toronto. Later, there was another dispute over the Sufi teachings and personal charisma of Mirza Qadeer Baig, resulting in the creation of the Canadian Society of Muslims.

ISNA continues to represent a "conservative" version of Sunni Islam. ISNA events tend to be male-dominated, and the same man has been director of ISNA for over twenty years. Seating is usually segregated at ISNA events. For example, at the ISNA conferences that I attended at the University of Toronto in 1992 and 1994, there was separate seating for men and women, and special sessions for women. For some Muslims in Toronto, there is concern over the vision of Islam represented by ISNA. One woman in her early thirties who grew up in Southern Ontario and moved to Toronto as an adult expressed the following opinions to me: "I wish I had a spiritual counsellor whom I could go to for guidance, or as an impartial sounding board. One who would not judge me, or make me feel as though I would have to prescribe to a particular way of thinking before being accepted".

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For example, only 10 refugee claims were processed by ISNA in 1993 and 20 in 1992, as compared with 114 in 1991, 870 in 1990 and 1,143 in 1989. All figures are from the ISNA-Canada Annual Report, 1993, p. 3.
In 1990, there was controversy around ‘Abdullah Hakim Quick, who had been the imam of the Jami Mosque, at the time the “flagship” for ISNA in Toronto. Quick left the mosque to take up the directorship of the Islamic Social Services and Resources Association (ISSRA). ISSRA and Quick’s departure from the Jami Mosque will be discussed later in this section.

b) CMCC

A less conservative alternative to ISNA was the Council of Muslim Communities of Canada (CMCC), created in 1972. The first secretary of CMCC was Muin Muinuddin. According to Hogben’s reminiscence, CMCC was created “to give a Canadian face to the rather American-dominated Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada”. At its peak in the 1970s, the CMCC had over 30 member communities across Canada, including representation from both Twelver and Ismaili Shi’a groups.

In 1972, CMCC launched the publication of Islam Canada, a quarterly magazine that was published for a decade. CMCC was able to obtain funds from the Canadian government in the 1970s as part of the government’s commitment to multiculturalism. It was this funding that allowed the CMCC to hold a series of annual conferences. However, with the end of government funding, CMCC became less and less active in the 1980s. They did, however, hold a twentieth anniversary conference in Toronto on September 18, 1993, with one-time funding from the Community Support Program of the Ministry of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, Canada.

At about this time, the organization retained the same CMCC acronym, but now referred to itself as the Council of the Muslim Community of Canada (rather than the earlier
"Communities"). This change reflects the Islamic desire that the believers should be one community. As expressed by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "politically it [unity] manifests itself in Islam's refusal to accept as the ultimate unit of the body politic anything less that the totality of the Islamic community, or the ummah. There is only one Muslim people, no matter how scattered and far removed its members may be." 295

From 1974 to 1985, CMCC funded a camp for Muslim youth, Camp Al-Mu-Mee-Neen ("Camp of the Believers"). This camp was held at various locations in Ontario, finding a permanent home in 1985 at the Muslim-owned Long Bay Campground near Westport, Ontario. The camp continues to the present day. 296 Hanny Hassan, a leader of CMCC, recalls that the camp played an important role in his own understanding of Islam and provided him with an opportunity to mentor other Muslims. Many of the young people with whom I spoke mentioned that they first made meaningful contacts with other Muslims at this camp. One group of five friends continues to hold periodic meetings in remembrance of their first summer at camp over a decade earlier.

In 1994, Muinuddin began working with the Correctional Service of Canada, listing the CMCC as a contact group. He was involved in prison chaplaincy, as well as being a resource for questions of Islamic dietary practices. However, the address given for CMCC was his home address, reflecting the effective end of CMCC as an organization. 297


296 The camp has a web page at <http://www.muslimcamp.com>.

297 For example, the most recent web page of Correctional Service Canada, listed as being last modified on December 1, 1999, still lists Muinuddin as the contact person, even though he had died on November 19, 1998. See <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/chap/dietec-03.shtm>.
c) CCMW

Out of the CMCC, the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW) was created in 1982 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The founding president was Dr. Lila Fahiman, an educator from Edmonton, Alberta. CCMW lists five “main purposes of the organization”:

- To create awareness, among Muslim women, of their rights, responsibilities and roles in a multicultural society;
- To promote and encourage mutual appreciation and friendly relations between Muslims and other faith communities;
- To acknowledge and respect the cultural differences among Canadian Muslim women and to recognize and develop their common cultural heritage;
- To coordinate the activities of Muslim women’s organizations in Canada;
- To promote a better understanding of Islam and the Islamic way of life.

Following the first meeting in Winnipeg, another meeting was held later in 1982 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. For the next three years, the CCMW met twice a year for conferences. From 1986 on (with the exception of 1989), CCMW has held an annual conference. Often, these conferences have included presentations by academics such as Zohra Husaini and Amina Wadud. Although the present head office of CCMW is in a suburb of Toronto, there are also offices in Edmonton and Ottawa. Currently, there are chapters of CCMW in ten Canadian cities.

In addition to organizing its own conferences and meetings organized by other women’s groups in Toronto. The CCMW understands the

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278 From their 1993 informational pamphlet, “Canadian Council of Muslim Women / Le Conseil Canadien Des Femmes Musulmanes”.

279 The head office is located at 2400 Dundas Street West, Suite 315, Mississauga, Ontario, L5K 2R8. They also have a web page at <http://ccmw.com>.

280 As of 1999, there were active chapters in Calgary, Edmonton, London, Montréal, Niagara, Ottawa, Prince Edward Island, Regina, Toronto and Vancouver. Information from the CCMW web page, located at <http://ccmw.com/spring99.html>.
importance of creating networks among women, so another of its functions is to help Muslim women network with each other and with non-Muslim women. Finally, the CCMW is also involved with refugee sponsorship (most notably with Bosnian Children Relief) and assistance to immigrant women.301

There are clear differences between ISNA and CMCC/CCMW. Created in 1972, CMCC was an attempt to create a Canadian organization, distinct from a North American organization whose interests would be skewed towards the United States. In contrast, ISNA did not open a Canadian office until 1977 and was not formally incorporated as ISNA-Canada until 1982. However, by that time the CMCC had begun to decline. Supported by government funds, it did not have an alternative source when those funds ceased. By contrast, ISNA-Canada had the support of the parent organization, which had become quite powerful in the United States. By the 1990s (with the exception of the anniversary conference in 1993), CMCC was no longer a presence in Canada. However, its vision was carried on by CCMW.

While CMCC was an inclusive group, which welcomed the participation of heterodox groups such as the Ismaili community, ISNA adheres to Sunni orthodoxy. The same person has remained the director of ISNA for over twenty years. CMCC had a number of presidents, including a White Canadian convert, David Russell. Women were involved with the leadership of CMCC, most recently in 1993, when Lila Fahlman was the vice-president.

With regard to the role of Muslim women, CCMW exists as an organization of Muslim women for Muslim women. One often got the sense that ISNA was an organization

301 While Toronto has accommodated immigrants well, there do persist problems, especially for immigrant women. For example, there was a great deal of controversy and allegations of racism against older White feminists following the election of Sunera Thobani, a South Asian, as president of the Canadian National Organization of Women.
of Muslim men who addressed the needs of Muslim women. From the "main purposes" of CCMW listed earlier, it is evident that CCMW has mastered the rhetoric of women's groups in Canada. Clearly, their purposes reflect an understanding of Canadian Muslim women who are comfortable being Canadian, Muslim, and women. For example, the tenth anniversary conference of CCMW featured a performance by a feminist theatre group, "The Company of Sirens". According to the report of that conference:

With a series of consultations, the company produced short skits addressing the social issues affecting the Muslim community and each of its members: women, children and men. Their powerful performance brought about awareness, questioning and appreciation of the reality of the Canadian Muslim community. Racism, sexism, emotional and physical abuse, employment equity, problems in the education system, culturally sensitive counselling and media ignorance were portrayed in a non-threatening and sensitive manner. The combination of education through entertainment proved to be an excellent method of empowering the community. 102

I could not envision an ISNA event that would feature a feminist theatre group, or deal with the issues listed above. For example, a writer for ISNA's national magazine included the following sentence in an article that he wrote on Western feminism: "It is evident that this physical, biological, Darwinian standard would never achieve equality for women, because on a strictly biological basis, women are less capable than men". 103 Rahat Kurd, a young Muslim woman living in Ottawa, did respond to this article and her response was printed in the next issue of the magazine. She wrote:

Often we Canadian and American Muslims are angered by how


103 Shahab Razfar, "Unveiling of Western Feminism", in Islamic Horizons, 22:5 (September, 1994), p. 27. That ISNA would choose a male to write about "Western Feminism" is also telling.
misunderstood and stereotyped we are in the news and popular culture. When it comes to feminism, however, I'm seeing a dismaying number of Muslims give in to the temptation to blame it on society's problems, using the same tactics—superficial judgements based on ignorance and fear—that are often used against us. . . . The most dismaying section of Rafzar's [sic] article is also perhaps the topic which our community as a whole has the most hardship coming to terms with: the issue of physical "difference" between the sexes. . . there is simply no possible excuse for allowing into print, Rafzar's [sic] ludicrous assertion that, "on a strictly and logical basis [sic], women are less capable than men".

It is important to note that while ISNA did print Kurd's article, it was not solicited and was published only because Kurd took the effort to respond to the earlier article. Interestingly, Kurd's article was described as "an ironic look into the relationship between Islam and Western feminism" in the contents page of the issue. To this reader, there was not an appreciable amount of irony in Kurd's article.

d) ISSRA

There has also been some tension within ISNA with regard to leadership. One of their most charismatic imams was Shaikh 'Abdullah Hakim Quick, who was the imam of the Jami Mosque from 1985 to 1990. A native North American of Mohawk and Caribbean/African ancestry, Quick is a dynamic speaker who was often asked to represent the views of the Sunni community. In 1995, he received his PhD from the history department of the University of Toronto with a dissertation on the eighteenth century West African leader, 'Uthman Dan

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However, in 1990, Quick left the Jami Mosque to create the Islamic Social Services and Resources Association (ISSRA).

In a 1995 interview, Quick mentioned his frustration with ISNA’s root organization, the Muslim Students Association, over the issue of gender segregation: “The MSA brings a question to me every year, ‘Brother ‘Abdullah, can we have brothers and sisters in the same room?’ Every year. Every time there is a new leadership in MSA they are asking the same question.” While Quick never criticized ISNA or the Jami Mosque in this interview, he did mention that it was his concern for women and children to have a space where their voices could be heard: “that was one of the things that helped me even to develop this office here, ISSRA. There has to be a place where women can come and youth so they can express themselves”.

It is important to note that Quick was no radical modernist. His position on including women was based on Islamic tradition going back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad,


107 I have a handwritten letter from ‘Abdullah Hakim Quick, dated November 21, 1990, that reads: “Bismallah al-Rahman Al-Rahim. My respected brother Amir, Al-salaamu alakum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu. Al Hamdulillah, I.S.S.R.A. is starting to develop serious programs (food bank, telephone referral, new Muslim classes, personal counselling). We are seeking financial support from the community, as we are not govt. funded. I would appreciate it if you could give a regular contribution to I.S.S.R.A. May Allah bless you in your studies and make you successful in this life and the next. Yours in Islam, Abdullah Hakim. p.s. I have enclosed a copy of our membership form so you can also become a member”. This letter lists some of the serious issues that were of concern to Muslims in Toronto.

108 This interview, conducted by Shireen Ahmed, is available on the web at <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Articles_Gen/Uthm_Fodio.html>.

109 Ibid.
who was concerned with the education of women. As imam of the Jami Mosque, Quick led the mosque’s campaign against Salman Rushdie and The Satanic Verses (see the case study in the next chapter). In a 1997 article, Quick wrote about some of the changes in Ontario: “In cities where winter forces people to cover their bodies, the summer brings out a perverted sense of freedom (freedom to do wrong). In Ontario, laws are being passed to allow women to walk the streets ‘topless’”.\(^\text{10}\) He added that “Muslim children are being taught to question and rebel against all forms of authority and morality. Homosexuality and sexual promiscuity are sadly increasing among Muslims”.\(^\text{11}\) However, Quick was considered threatening by some in ISNA. Others at the Jami Mosque did not approve of him because he was not fluent in Urdu, and a number of South Asian members wanted an imam who could speak to them in their native language. Indeed, at one of the meetings that I attended at the Jami Mosque after Quick left, there was a consensus that the imam should be fluent in Arabic, English and Urdu.

In the summer 1992 issue of the ISNA magazine, Islamic Horizons, there was an article by a Toronto Somali leader, Dawood Zwink, who is also a member of the Shura Council of ISNA. While never directly mentioning Quick, Zwink wrote the following about ISNA’s understanding of leaders: “Leaders must remain humble and not allow arrogance and pride to overtake them. They are to remember that the positions they hold are simply trusts which they must properly care for and then cheerfully return to the people who gave them those

\(^{10}\) Originally printed as an article in the June/July 1997 issue of The Message-Canada, the magazine of the Islamic Circle of North America, this article is available on the web at <http://www.islaam.com/articles/hot_times_in_north_america.htm>.

\(^{11}\) Ibid.
In 1994, the Jami Mosque began publishing its own newsletter, *The Future*. Although the first issue (May 1994) was subtitled "Jami' Mosque News and Views", the subsequent issues were subtitled "Muslim Community News and Views". In the first issue, there was a statement from the mosque's administration about leadership: "We believe in collective leadership rather than that centred around personalities. The principle of Islamic Shura (consultation), not that of secular democracy is our guide". The fourth issue (December 1994) had a cover story on "Islamic Solutions for Community Conflicts", citing "false pride and ego of individuals and groups" as the main reason for "conflicts in North American Muslim communities". Again, there was no direct reference made to Quick, but his was the only conflict of leadership at the mosque at that time.

On May 18, 1990, ISSRA was incorporated. It began to operate in June of that year from an office a few blocks from the Jami Mosque, at 1673 Bloor Street West. In 1995, it moved to a larger office at 2375 St. Clair Avenue West. ISSRA has the following mission, according to one of their pamphlets: "Islamic Social Services and Resources Association is a non-profit organization committed to serving individuals, families and communities who are vulnerable, in distress and lack access to other services because of obstacles of culture, language, race, poverty, gender or other barriers". Quick was the imam and president of

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ISSRA until 1999, when he left Toronto for South Africa.

One of ISSRA's main services is a telephone hotline and referral service that handles approximately 5,000 calls each year. They also operated a food bank and had a toy drive for needy children. Their counsellors work with families as well as individuals. ISSRA holds workshops and seminars on a number of issues, ranging from self-defence classes for women to immigration and ESL classes. They have also operated a summer camp for children that uses the Long Bay campground also used for Camp Al-Mu-Mee-Neen. Clearly, ISSRA represents a second phase in community development. The first phase was the creation of Islamic organizations and the establishment of mosques. This second phase is the establishment of community resources to complement the mosques and organizations.

e) Other Groups

Part of this second phase of development is a more active outreach to other communities in Canada. For example, the National Christian Muslim Liaison Committee was established in 1980 out of a local initiative between the CMCC and the United Church of Canada. The committee continues to be sponsored by the CMCC, the Canadian Council of Churches and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. One of the strategies of the committee is to invite "local liaison committees to sponsor regional gatherings of Muslims and

315 A personal anecdote: At Christmas in 1992, I purchased and donated a number of toys to ISSRA. At that time, I had heard about their toy drive, but did not know what their "rules" were for accepting toys. I was concerned as many of the toys were dolls from a popular animated movie, and I did not know if they would be accepted or rejected as "inappropriate" or "non-Islamic". When I brought them to ISSRA, the sister who answered the door said that the girls who received them would be delighted. It was this openness, and not being bound by rigid interpretations of what was properly "Islamic" that drew me to ISSRA in the first place. I should add here that I was a member of ISNA for years before I became a member of ISSRA.
A number of these gatherings have taken place in Toronto.

Individual Muslims have also taken the lead in making da’wah, or inviting others to Islam. In 1994, Shabir Ally started the Islamic Information and Da’wah Centre International from a storefront office at 957 Dovercourt Road in the West end of Toronto. Currently, the centre is housed in expanded quarters (including a much larger space for prayer) at 1168 Bloor Street West. This centre has sponsored an annual conference on da’wah since 1994. Its main function is to distribute Islamic pamphlets and audio cassettes among Muslims and non-Muslims. For several years, it had a regular spot on Saturday mornings at the corner of Yonge and Bloor Streets in Toronto, as well as across the street from the Toronto Eaton’s Centre.

Another individual, Khizar Hayat, took the initiative in 1992 to publish a magazine on Islam entitled Qalam (“pen”). In the first issue, Hayat wrote that “the launching of Qalam is an historic event because to my knowledge, this is the only international journal of Muslim Umma of this kind published in Canada, aimed to promote solidarity amongst Muslim peoples and create harmony between Muslims and non-Muslims”. The magazine was published from Brampton, Ontario. Unfortunately, after two other issues, the magazine folded.

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316 From an undated note, credited to Stuart Brown, entitled “Regional Seminars” and printed by the National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee.

317 A personal anecdote: When I first entered their office in 1997, the office manager mistook me for a non-Muslim and asked if I was interested in learning about Islam. In our conversation, he mentioned that it was the length of my hair that confused him.


319 Issue no. 2 was dated “April/May/June 1993”, and issue No. 3 was dated “July/August/September 1993”.
An organization that was created as a liaison between Muslims and non-Muslims, and as a political watchdog, was the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC). According to one of its pamphlets:

Canada's Muslims felt the need for a modern organization that would act as a facilitator and liaison with other groups and organizations, as well as represent Muslims and address their concerns and their involvement in all aspects of Canadian life, and help bridge the gaps and provide information about Islam and Muslims.

The idea of the congress was proposed in 1994 by its current president, Mohammed Elmasry, a professor of engineering at the University of Waterloo. The by-laws for the CIC were approved on October 26, 1997, and the organization was registered with the Canadian government on October 2, 1998. The CIC has held an annual conference since 1998, and serves as a media watchdog. Since 1998, it has also annually published a case study of bias in Canadian newspapers, with the most recent report available from their web page. Another CIC publication is a compilation of its own coverage in the press. It also has a "Friday Bulletin" that it sends out by email every Friday to those who are interested.

The Tablighi Jamaat ("community of informing") is also active in Toronto. As mentioned in Hogben's account, the Jami Mosque served as the first base of operations for the

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130 The group has a web page at <http://www.cicnow.com>.

131 "Together we can make a difference", pamphlet published in 1999 by the CIC from their office in Waterloo, Ontario.


133 Canadian Islamic Congress, The Canadian Islamic Congress in the Press (Waterloo: Canadian Islamic Congress, 1999).
Tablighis in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This community has been described by Barbara Metcalf.\textsuperscript{124} It makes an organized effort to invite non-Muslims into Islam and to invite Muslims to a Tablighi interpretation of Islam.

Living in Toronto, I was visited by the Tablighis on several occasions as part of their "mission". On one occasion, three Tablighis knocked on my door. They were middle-aged Pakistani men, all of whom had beards and trimmed moustaches. All of them had their heads covered and were wearing the \textit{shalwar-kameez} that is common among South Asians. When I asked how they had come to knock on my door (I was living in a large apartment building), they mentioned that they used the telephone directory to compile a list of people with "Muslim names". In their visit with me, they asked me if I knew of other Muslims in my building that they might also contact. Apparently, they also use a form of snowball sampling in their proselytization. The visit was a short one, lasting no more than 15 minutes. During that time, they asked if I was a practising Muslim and if I said my prayers at the Jami Mosque. They were also concerned that I fast during the upcoming month of Ramadan. Their visit was polite and non-intrusive.

In Canada, the Tablighis established the Al Rashid Islamic Institute in 1987 to educate boys.\textsuperscript{125} They also operate the Madina Masjid in the East end of Toronto. I visited this mosque on a Friday in 1991 with a friend. My friend was a Palestinian who was a refugee student at the University of Toronto. He too had received a visitation by the Tablighis and was interested in learning more about them. We drove to the mosque in an old sports car, and


\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 113.
received some unfriendly stares as we exited our vehicle. Presumably, this was due to the "fast" or "American" lifestyle that the car represented to them. At the conclusion of the prayer, some people at the Madina Masjid complained to my friend that he was wearing a tight t-shirt tucked into his pants and that he should have a shirt that was untucked and came to mid-thigh. In their own words, "your bottoms should be covered up". We noticed that almost all of the people were South Asian, and most of the men were wearing the shalwar-kameez. The conservativeness of this mosque made both of us uncomfortable. My friend was particularly concerned that even though he was a native speaker of Arabic, he felt cut off from much of the dialogue which took place not in Arabic or English, but in Urdu.

The final organization that I mention is the Canadian Society of Muslims. The beginning of this group under the leadership of Qadeer Baig was mentioned in the previous chapter. In the 1980s, the society began to call for the allowance of Muslim personal law in Canada. Arguing from what they considered to be special treatment given to French-speaking citizens and First Nations in Canada, it wanted the right to be ruled by Muslim personal law. The society was quite clear in arguing not for the implementation of the Shariah in its entirety but only for "Muslim personal law dealing with family relationships—mainly marriage, divorce and intestate succession". Also, it only wanted this for those Muslims who would register to be governed by Muslim personal law: "those Muslims who prefer to be

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governed by secular Canadian family law may continue that way.\textsuperscript{323}

The Canadian Society of Muslims has also spoken out against that fact that Muslims, along with members of other religious traditions, are unable to use government funds for religious education: “Thus Muslims—and this is also true of Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Native peoples and the Protestant Christians—must bear a special burden of paying twice if they want an education that reflects the values and practices of their religious tradition.”\textsuperscript{329}

The Canadian Society of Muslims continues with its campaign, having met with some success in getting the Ontario court to recognize the validity of Muslim mediation in some cases.\textsuperscript{330}

As a summary to this section, I note that for some Muslims, there is concern that the (Sunni) Muslim community is not better organized than it currently is. To quote one Canadian Muslim:

In this atmosphere, Canadian Muslims have been unable to build a forward-looking national organization that can do strategic planning and represent them in dealing with the federal or provincial governments or other institutions, particularly the media. These Muslims do not act as an ummah but as different communities, many of which are bitterly divided on petty issues and are unable to act together for their common good.\textsuperscript{331}

While all of the organizations mentioned in this section are important, none of them can claim to represent the majority of the Sunni Muslims in Toronto.

\textsuperscript{328} \textit{Ibid.}


\textsuperscript{330} For more information, see the links on the following web page by the Canadian Society of Muslims: \url{http://muslim-canada.org/sitedex.htm#familylaw}.

2. Shi'a Groups

Like the majority of Muslims in the world, the majority of Muslims in Toronto describe themselves as members of the Sunni tradition. However, Shi'i Muslims do constitute important communities in Toronto. In this section, I describe both the Twelver (sometimes referred to as "Imami", or by their sometime preferred designation, Abl al-Bayt, "the people of the house") and Ismaili Shi'i groups in Toronto. I begin with the Twelver community.

a) Abl al-Bayt

The Twelver Shi'a are so-named because for them after the Prophet Muhammad authority for this community rests in a series of twelve imams, beginning with 'Ali. The standard introduction to the Twelver Shi'a is by Moojan Momen. However, the community in Toronto has expressed its dissatisfaction with Momen's work. Another good introduction to Twelver Shi'ism is the two-volume set co-edited by perhaps the most famous academic in North America who is also a member of this community, Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

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33 In an issue of a magazine published by the Ja'ffari Centre, there is a lengthy review that is highly critical of the book. See 'Ali Quli Qarai, "Misrepresentation of Shi'i History", in The Right Path, 1:2 (1992), pp. 34–40. Given the persecution of the Baha'i in Iran, some of this criticism may be due to the fact that Momen is a Baha'i.

Abdulaziz Sachedina has written an excellent introductory article on the community in North America. He notes that there is no definitive information about the early days of the Shi'i community in North America: "we have no written sources compiled or maintained by the Shi'i families in North America to give us definite word on the background of the community". However, it is reasonable to assume that at least some of the early Muslim immigrants from a country such as Lebanon would have been Shi'i. Sachedina writes that "it is certain that by the 1950s there were small clusters of Shi'i families in some of the major cities of Canada and the United States". Liakat Ali Takeem of the Ja'ffari Centre has told me that the first North American Shi'i mosque was opened in 1963 in Dearborn, Michigan.

Since that time, the Shi'i community in North America has been augmented by events such as the 1972 expulsion of Asians from Uganda, the 1979 revolution in Iran, the Iran-Iraq war, the 1983 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the war (with its continued sanctions) against Iraq. After the Iranian revolution, for example, the Persian Speaking Group of the Muslim

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335 He is directly connected to the community in Toronto, having among other accomplishments laid the foundation stone for the Ja'ffari Centre. Among his own academic works are *The Just Ruler in Shi'ite Islam: The Comprehensive Authority of the Jurist in Imamite Jurisprudence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) and *Islamic Messianism: The Idea of the Mahdi in Twelver Shi'ism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1981).


337 Ibid., p. 5.

338 Ibid., p. 6.

Students Association (MSA) was formed. At the University of Toronto, there is now an "Ahl al-Bayt" association of Shi'i students to rival the Sunni MSA. Sachedina estimates that "Shi'is make up at least 30 percent of the total Muslim population of North America". Sachedina's estimate would mean a Shi'i population of some 150,000 in Canada, with 45,000 in the Greater Toronto Area.

One of the distinctive features of Shi'a Islam is the khums (literally, "fifth") or religious tax that individuals pay to support their imams and religious centres. This tax has helped to create Shi'a religious centres across North America. In Toronto, the community began to raise funds for a mosque following the 1972 expulsion of Ugandan Asians. The Ja'fari Islamic Centre (named after the sixth imam, Ja'far al-Sadiq, for whom the Ja'fari school of Shi'a jurisprudence is also named) was formally opened on November 4, 1979, by Abdulaziz Sachedina. The centre also has a presence in cyberspace, with its own web page. In addition to this centre, the community in Toronto also opened the As-Sadiq Islamic School in September of 1994. Currently, there are over 160 students enrolled in this school from junior kindergarten to grade eight.

Vernon Schubel has written about the ritual activities at the Ja'fari Centre. In 1982,


342 The web page is located at <http://www.jaffari.org>.

Schubel attended his first majlis (literally, "assembly") at the Zainabiyya Hall of the centre. This was the lamentation that takes place on Ashura, the celebration in the month of Muharram that marks the martyrdom of Imam Husain at Karbala, Iraq. In addition to describing this ritual, Schubel draws attention to one of the concerns of the community: whether the service (meaning the sermons and communication other than the prayer, which is said in Arabic) should be done in English or the traditional Urdu (the congregation is largely South Asian). The question of language is an important one, to be discussed later in this section.

Eight years later, in 1990, Schubel returned to describe the majlis at the Ja'fari Centre. He began his article with the following observation:

The Ja'fari Center is a Shi'i institution whose buildings are located on a major traffic artery in the Toronto suburbs. It serves the spiritual needs of a large community of Urdu- and Gujarati-speaking Shi'a, consisting largely of immigrants from East Africa. The community's members live dispersed throughout the Toronto area. The community is relatively affluent, the majority of its members having successfully made the transition to become suburban residents in the modern Canadian "ethnic quilt". Schubel noted that since his first visit in 1982 the glass arches in the centre had had their window glass replaced with stained glass bearing the Arabic names of "Allah", "Muhammad", "Fatima" (the daughter of Muhammad and the wife of 'Ali), as well as the names of the twelve imams. Also, Schubel noticed that "ornate pieces of Arabic calligraphy", including the Beautiful Names of Allah and the saying of Muhammad at Ghadir Khumm that gave authority to 'Ali, had been installed in the centre.

344 Schubel, "The Muharram Majlis", p. 129.
345 Schubel, "Karbala as Sacred Space", p. 186.
346 Ibid., p. 190.
On the occasion that Schubel described, the majlis was led by Abdulaziz Sachedina. In addition to the issue of English as a “proper” Islamic language, Sachedina “several times raised the issue of gender partition” (men were seated in the main hall, while women were seated in the basement and observed the proceedings via television sets). Schubel wrote that “a member of the community told me that there was a time when men and women sat together for majlis; however, when other members of the community arrived from East Africa, where it was customary for the majlis to be fully segregated, they were shocked by this and demanded that there be a partition”. Gender partition and the role of English will be discussed later in this section.

In addition to writing about the majlis, Schubel also mentioned the annual Muharram procession through the streets of Toronto, which began at Queen’s Park, the provincial legislature. This procession includes participation by both men and women. Informational pamphlets are distributed by the marchers to the generally non-Muslim audience. One of the features of the procession in other countries is the self-flagellation in memory of the suffering of Imam Husain. For example, at the Muharram procession in Los Angeles in 1998, I observed a number of men flagellating themselves with small metal flails. In contrast, Schubel noted that this behaviour was absent in Toronto. He wrote that “recent fatwas have shown that flagellation—while considered permissible—is nevertheless an act that is allowed only with the provision that it not be done in such a way to bring embarrassment to Islam”. Instead, “at the Ja’ffari Center on the day of Ashura, the community set up a Red Cross blood bank

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147 Ibid., p. 194.
148 Ibid.
149 Ibid., p. 196.
and donated over 163 units of blood." The 1999 procession in Toronto drew over 1,000 participants, with a similar number of people who registered to donate blood.

In addition to the events sponsored by the Ja'fari Centre described above, it has since 1992 published a magazine entitled *The Right Path*. This magazine is distributed throughout North America. Since 1994, the community has also operated the As-Sadiq Islamic School at 9000 Bathurst Street in Toronto. According to Dr. Hyder Fazal, the chairman of the school's board of trustees, "the cornerstone of the school purpose and function is not only to foster academic excellence but to cultivate a person, endowed with Islamic values, to become a noble member of society." Since 1999, the principal of the school has been Ishwar Prabdial, who had previously retired as a principal in the York Region District School Board in 1996. Currently, the school goes up to grade eight, with an enrollment of 164 pupils.

In 1987, the Ja'fari Islamic Centre established the first Muslim scouting group in Canada, Toronto's own 392 Muslim Scout Group. This group consists of a Beaver Colony (age 5 to 7), a Cub Pack (age 8 to 10), a Scout Troop (age 11 to 14), a Venturers Section (age 15 to 18) and a Rover Section (age 19 to 26). In 1992, the national governing body, Scouts Canada, ruled that all scout groups had to allow girls to participate in local groups. In 1993, a separate girls' section was created, with all groups up to and including the Venturers. Currently, some 170 young people are involved in this scout group. Clearly, this is another example of Muslims in Toronto adapting to Canadian society without being subsumed by that

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352 The group has a web page at <http://www.392scouts.org/leader.htm>.
society. As a boy growing up in the suburbs of Toronto, I joined a local scout group. At that time, I could not conceive of such a thing as a "Muslim" scout group that would come into existence a dozen years later.

The Ja'ffari Islamic Centre works with other Muslim groups in Toronto, as well as with other religious groups. For example, it is involved in Toronto's "Out of the Cold" program, designed to help the homeless during the winter months. There is not a great amount of tension between the Sunni and Shi'i communities in Toronto. The Ja'ffari Centre is open for prayers every night, led by either the imam, Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi, or by Husein Khimjee. However, Shi'a members will also pray in Sunni mosques. I myself have prayed on numerous occasions in several mosques with Shi'i brothers, including Husein Khimjee, as I mentioned above.

As mentioned earlier by Schubel, two of the main issues for the Shi'a community in Toronto are gender segregation and the use of English. For many of the older members, Urdu or Gujarati is their first language. As such, they are used to hearing religious services in Urdu. However, as Schubel wrote, "Sachedina had previously expressed the opinion in a series of majlis in 1981 that Urdu was not originally an Islamic language: it only became one as Muslims used it. He argued that English will only become an Islamic language when it is spoken by North American Muslims in religious contexts". This is an issue that concerns Shi'i and Sunni Muslims alike, as both groups are faced with youth disinterested in religious services because they cannot understand them. A concomitant factor is that many imams are not trained in English, having obtained their education in countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia or Iran. As such, their English may not be sufficient to communicate properly, even if

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they wished to communicate in English. For all Muslims, the Arabic recitation of the Qur'an occupies a special position as a liturgical language. However, an increasing number of imams deliver all or part of their sermon in English. At a major Eid service in Toronto to mark the end of the month of Ramadan in 1996, a number of people called out “speak English” to the imam who up to that point had been making his remarks entirely in Arabic.

As with the use of English, gender segregation is also an issue that concerns all Muslims. As noted earlier, the Ja’ffari Centre moved from mixed seating to segregated seating at its events. For years, one of the distinctive differences between ISNA and CMCC was that the former had segregated seating, while the latter did not. And as with language, this is an issue that is of particular concern to young people. Growing up in Canadian schools (only a small fraction of Toronto’s Muslim students attend “Islamic” or other private schools), the youth are continually mixing with each other. They are taught by both male and female teachers. However, at “religious” events, they are expected to be segregated by sex and taught only by members of the same sex. To be sure, there are some youth who have taken this to heart. I have heard a small number of young people in both Toronto and Los Angeles tell me that “Islam prohibits mixing of the genders”. When pressed as to why, I have not yet heard an answer other than this the opinion of the “scholars”. However, the majority of young people to whom I spoke did express some concern about the differing expectations at school and at Islamic gatherings. These generational issues are discussed in Chapter Seven.

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355 And, of course, with the exception of their local imam, not one “scholar” has ever been named to me when I ask for a specific name.
b) Ismailis

The other major Shi'a group in Toronto is the Ismaili community. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the South Asian history of this community has been described by Azim Nanji. Among Ismailis, the major split was between the Nizari and Musta'li groups in 1074. Since the Nizari group is dominant in Toronto, I focus on them in the remainder of this section.

Nanji identifies the 1972 expulsion of Asians from Uganda as the key to an increased Ismaili presence in North America. He estimates a population, prior to 1972, of no more than 600 in all of North America, arriving sporadically and slowly since the 1950s. The 1972 expulsion brought some 6,000 Ismaili refugees to North America. The following three years saw increased immigration from other African countries such as Kenya and Tanzania, so that by 1975 there was an estimated population of some 10,000 in North America. This community, now established, began to grow rapidly, such that for the early 1980s Nanji estimated a population of 20,000 in Canada alone. Currently, the Ismaili community self-estimates a population of some 50,000 in Canada.


157 For another good introduction to the Ismaili community, which provides additional information about the split, see Farhad Daftary, A Short History of the Ismailis: Traditions of a Muslim Community (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1998) and his earlier The Isma'ilis: Their History and Doctrines (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).


159 Ibid., p. 151.

160 Ibid., p. 157.

161 Ibid.
By 1768, the community in both Vancouver and Toronto had organized into meetings or jamats and had created jamaat khanas ("houses of meeting"). These are open in the morning and in the evening for prayer and, like Sunni mosques, are particularly well attended on Fridays and religious holidays. Some jamaat khanas are open continuously, offering meeting spaces for seniors and students. Some have libraries and offices attached in which people work during the day. Morning openings are at 3:00 am for meditation and morning prayer before sunrise. For certain religious holidays, very large halls (such as the International Centre) are rented to accommodate the large Toronto Ismaili population. In this way, Ismailis from the Greater Toronto Area can celebrate together.

There are at least 17 jamaat khanas in the Greater Toronto Area, with another 13 in the rest of Ontario. The 17 Toronto jamaat khanas are supported by a population of some 30,000, while the 13 other jamaat khanas have a membership of about 5,000. Some of these jamaat khanas are used exclusively by the Ismaili community, while others are schools or other buildings that are used only occasionally by the community. Occasionally, there may be no visible external signs to mark the building as a jamaat khana. Elders in the Ismaili

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362 Ibid., p. 156.
363 I am indebted to Rubina Ramji for her information about the Ismaili community.
364 These are: Bayview, Brampton, Don Mills, Dundas West, Etobicoke, Greenland, Hamilton, Halton, Mississauga, Pickering, Richmond Hill, Scarborough, Thorncliffe, Toronto Headquarters, Unionville, Willowdale and York Mills. I am grateful to Mr. Riaz Ahmed for helping me to compile this list.
365 These are located in: Barrie, Belleville, Guelph, Kingston, Kitchener, London, Niagara Falls, Oshawa, Ottawa, Peterborough, Sarnia, Sudbury and Windsor. I am grateful to Mr. Riaz Ahmed for helping me to compile this list as well.
366 This anonymity is common in the United States as well. For example, the local jamaat khana in Northridge, California, is in a commercial complex of townhomes on
community recall that their first jamaat khanas were rented spaces, sometimes schools, that were used for prayer on weekends. They then invested in buildings such as warehouses which they renovated themselves. Now, with an established community, they are commissioning new buildings to serve as jamaat khanas. Currently, the Canadian Ismaili community is in the process of raising funds for a new jamaat khana to be built in Toronto near Eglinton Avenue and the Don Valley Parkway. This would be the largest jamaat khana in Canada.

In addition to the jamaat khanas, the Ismaili community has a series of 53 Bait-ul-Ilm ("house of learning") centres across Canada. Some of these are connected to a jamaat khana, while others are housed in separate locations. Since children are involved in the rituals of the jamaat khana, they may often present what they have learned in the Bait-ul-Ilm to the delight of their parents and others in the jamaat khana. Indeed, the Ismaili community takes pride in the fact that men, women and children participate equally in rituals and recitations. The Ismaili community in Canada has created a National Tariqah Board, as well as a series of five regional Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Boards, which oversee the activity in the Bait-ul-Ilm centres. These centres provide religious instruction for children and adults, complementing the education that they receive in public or private Canadian schools.

Similar to the Twelver Shi'a, the Ismaili community in Toronto also has a scout group, the 786 Ismaili Scouts. They also have Ismaili Students Associations (ISA) at many

Nordhoff Street. Unless one watched the building closely, and noted that it was only used by South Asians at particular times, one might never know that it was a jamaat khana. I must confess that I did not know that this was a jamaat khana until I was told so by one of the members of the jamaat. Of course, certain other communities, like the one in Calgary, have built impressive new jamaat khanas that combine Islamic and regional architecture.

major universities, including the University of Toronto. In many ways, the Ismaili community has become the Muslim community most integrated into the non-Muslim matrix of Toronto. Since 1987, they have published a magazine that is distributed throughout the world, *The Ismaili, Canada*. Currently, this magazine is published three times a year from offices in Don Mills, a suburb of Toronto. In 1985, the Ismaili community began two events that still occur annually, Partnership Walk and the Ismaili Run for Charity. Partnership Walk is a fundraiser for programs in the developing world and is held by the Aga Khan Foundation, Canada. The Ismaili Run for Charity supports a different Canadian charity each year, ranging from the United Way, the Hospital for Sick Children and the World Wildlife Fund to the Junior Achievement of Toronto and York Region. These two events allow the Ismaili community to integrate itself with other communities in Toronto.

There is also some co-operation between the Ismaili and the Twelver Shi'a in Toronto. For example, in 1994 the Ismaili community organized a Milad al-Nabi ("birthday of the Prophet") celebration at the Ontario Science Centre. This event featured closing remarks by a member of the Ja'fari Centre's Youth Committee. There have been some tensions between Sunni Muslims and Ismaili Muslims due to the role of the Aga Khan, the spiritual leader of the Ismailis. This tension has its roots in the historical conflicts that have occurred between Sunnis and Ismailis. Some Sunni Muslims believe that the Ismaili reverence for the Aga Khan crosses into what they consider to be the realm of polytheism. In public, the Ismaili community will respond to and rebut these charges; in private the ambiguity is more

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364 And, of course, they have the requisite presence in cyberspace: their web page is <http://www.utoronto.ca/ismaili>. 
pronounced. For example, one young Ismaili woman said to me: "I wouldn't say [that we are] polytheistic. There is the idea that the Imam has esoteric religious knowledge, somehow elevating him from the common person. I don't think he is revered as God himself".

The Ismaili Council of Canada has been involved with the Council of Muslim Communities of Canada (CMCC), one of the large Sunni organizations in Canada. For example, the 20th anniversary banquet of CMCC in Toronto on September 18, 1993, featured the Young Muslim Ismaili Choir singing the national anthem. Also, the Ismaili Council of Ontario made a presentation at the memorial service for Muin Muinuddin in 1998. At the level of interfaith dialogue, the Ismaili Council of Canada is represented on the National Christian Muslim Liaison Committee.

Women have taken an active leadership role in the Ismaili community. For example, they are involved in the national board of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women. Almas Rawjani-Rawji, an Ismaili youth worker, has said: "We consider ourselves to be the most advanced community with respect to empowering women". However, she also recalled that when she ran for election as a school trustee, although the imams did not stop her, "they didn't support me either".

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69 A personal anecdote: In visiting the home of Ismaili friends, I noticed a series of pictures of the Aga Khan in many of the rooms of their house. I asked their young son who the man in the pictures was, and he responded by telling me that they were pictures of "Allah". I asked him if this was the Allah that he prayed to every night, and he answered "yes".

3. Ahmadiyya

Comparatively little has been written about the Ahmadi community in North America, other than one chapter of *Mission to America* by Yvonne Haddad and Jane Smith. This scholarly neglect is perhaps due to the fact that even though the Ahmadiyya identify themselves as Muslims, the majority of Muslims do not consider the Ahmadis to be “true” Muslims. The Ahmadi community in Canada self-estimates a population of 50,000, an identical number to the self-estimate of Ismaili Muslims in Canada. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Ahmadi community has also built the largest mosque in Canada in Maple, a few miles north of Toronto. In addition, the Ahmadi community is very active in the proselytization of their beliefs, for example by publishing a large number of pamphlets and booklets from the mosque in Maple. No study of the Muslim communities of Toronto would

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371 For example, none of the major collected works on Islam in North America—*Muslims on the Americanization Path*, *Muslim Communities in North America*, *The Muslims of America*, *Muslim Families in North America* or *The Muslim Community in North America*—has a section on Ahmadi Muslims. Out of 79 chapters in these five books, not one chapter is devoted to Ahmadi Muslims. *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe* has two brief sections that deal with Ahmadis: two pages by Gulzar Haider, who describes his commission to design the mosque in Maple, Ontario; and one page by Aminah Beverly McCloud, who describes early Ahmadi missionary activity among African Americans. *Islam in America* has three pages where the Ahmadi community is discussed.

be complete without considering Ahmadi Muslims. Due to the lack of information about this community, I begin with a short historical introduction.

The Ahmadi community takes its name from Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908), who lived in what was then India.\(^{573}\) According to one of the pamphlets published by the community, in 1889 Ahmad “founded the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama’at, under Divine guidance. Its main objective is to re-establish the original purity and beauty of Islam”.\(^{574}\) Ahmadis believe that “in the 1880’s, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian declared himself to be the Promised Messiah and the Mahdi, under Divine commandment”.\(^{575}\) In 1914, the community split into two factions, one based in the city of Qadian, and the other in Lahore. The Lahore branch of the community is active in the United States, publishing material from its American headquarters in Columbus, Ohio. The Canadian headquarters of the Lahore branch is in Vancouver, and they do have a mailing address in Ontario.\(^{576}\) Since the group based in Qadian is much larger than the group based in Lahore, and since the community in Toronto is in large part derived from the group in Qadian, it is this branch of


\(^{574}\) Sheikh Abdul Hadi and Akber A. Choudhry, *Who Are Ahmadi Muslims?* (Maple: Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama’at, Canada, n.d.), p. 17. My copy was obtained during a visit to the mosque in Maple in 1997. This booklet has a full-colour cover, the front of which shows the *ka’ba* being circumambulated by pilgrims during the Hajj. The back cover shows the mosque in Maple, illuminated at night. It is a striking juxtaposition of images.


\(^{576}\) Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishâ’at Islam, Ontario, P.O. Box 1342, Station “B”, Weston, Ontario, M91 2W9.
the community that I discuss in the remainder of this section.\textsuperscript{177}

With the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the community moved from Qadian, India, to a newly-created city called Rabwah in Pakistan. It is their acceptance of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the \textit{Mahdi}, or "divinely guided one", that has led other Muslims, specifically those in Pakistan, to declare the Ahmadis as non-Muslims in 1974 and again in 1984.\textsuperscript{178} In turn, the Ahmadis consider non-Ahmadis to be unbelievers.\textsuperscript{179} For example, in Ahmadi literature they write the following about differences between Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis: "They are distinguished because they accepted what Hadhrat Ahmad (a.s.) decided, in his capacity as the divine arbiter and judge, on the subject of the errors that had found their way into the beliefs and practices of people with the passage of time. But the non-Ahmadis refused to abandon their wrong beliefs".\textsuperscript{180}

Antonio Gualtieri has written about the persecution of the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan.\textsuperscript{181}

\textsuperscript{177} Interestingly enough, the two groups also have their own competing web sites, the Lahore community at <http://www.ahmadiyya.org>, and the Qadiani group at <http://www.ahmadiyya.com>. Each group has extensive information about itself on its respective site.

\textsuperscript{178} Another article on this community that gives information about the Pakistani laws against them is Yohanan Friedmann, "Ahmadiyyah", in John L. Esposito, editor in chief, \textit{The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World}, Volume I (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 54–57. For more information on the history of the Ahmadiyya, as well as a discussion and analysis of the major split within the community, see Yohanan Friedmann, \textit{Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and its Medieval Background} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

\textsuperscript{179} Haddad and Smith, \textit{Mission to America}, p. 51.


\textsuperscript{181} Antonio R. Gualtieri, \textit{Conscience and Coercion: Ahmadi Muslims and Orthodoxy in Pakistan} (Montreal: Guernica Editions Inc., 1989). Since this book is sympathetic to the Ahmadi cause, I was not surprised to see it available for sale in the bookstore of the mosque in
He prefices his work with the text of Ordinance No. XX of 1984 made by then President Zia ul-Haq to prohibit "Ahmadis from indulging in anti-Islamic activities". As a result of the increased persecution caused by this ordinance, the head of the community, Mirza Tahir Ahmad, moved from Pakistan to London, England. He remains the head of the community, and is referred to as Khalifatul Masih IV (the fourth "Successor of the Messiah"); he is the grandson of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

The Ahmadi community has a history of missionary activity outside of India, beginning with the establishment of the London Mission in 1914. Soon after this mission was established, Ahmadis began their work in North America. Mattias Gardell writes that "since the 1921 establishment of their American headquarters in Chicago, the Ahmadiyya endeavored to obtain converts in the black community". They published both a journal, Review of Religions, and a newspaper, The Moslem Sunrise, which were circulated in North America as part of Ahmadi missionary work, and met with some success. Steven Barboza writes that "during and after the 1940s, many American jazz musicians became Ahmadi Muslims, including Yusef Lateef, Art Blakey, Ahmad Jamal, and Dakota Stanton". By the 1950s, the Ahmadiyya was one of the few groups to publicly attack Elijah Muhammad Maple. Indeed, I purchased my own copy of the book there in 1997.

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382 Ibid., pp. 9–10.


and the Nation of Islam. As Gardell writes: "Their condemnation of the NOI was perhaps part of a twofold strategy to establish a profile as a genuine Islamic alternative among the African Americans and to enhance a mainstream Islamic status in the Muslim community."\(^{366}\)

In Canada, the Ahmadi community began to grow slowly in the 1970s. As the majority of the community was, and remains, South Asian immigrants, their numbers grew due to the changes in Canadian immigration laws in 1967. By 1977, the community was large enough to hold its first annual gathering in Toronto. With the opening of the mosque in Maple in 1992, the community was able to hold annual Qur’an and religious education classes, which it has continued to do. There is an "open house" every two months at the mosque, to which the community invites and welcomes visitors. The community has certainly made some converts among non-Muslim Canadians,\(^{367}\) but for the most part, their missionary work in Canada has focussed on education and dissemination of the Ahmadi understanding of Islam rather than on conversion. Willard Oxtoby recounts that at one such open house in Maple, he met a convert who was a White Canadian from British Columbia. This person was a social worker, who had become aware through his work of the social problems that are caused by alcohol. It was Islamic prohibition on alcohol, which he first heard articulated by the Ahmadies, that was the primary reason for his conversion.\(^{368}\)

My first extended contact with the Ahmadi community came in 1996, when I was asked by an Ahmadi leader, Dr. Ijaz Qamar, to make a presentation at one of their gatherings.

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\(^{366}\) Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad*, p. 188.

\(^{367}\) I myself met three such converts at the last open house that I attended on March 9, 1997.

\(^{368}\) Private communication with Willard Oxtoby, September 18, 2000.
The Ahmadi community hosts numerous public meetings in the Toronto area as part of its education/proselytization efforts. In March of 1996 it hosted a symposium entitled “Aspects of Islam”, and in October I was asked to speak at their symposium entitled “Life of Prophet Muhammad”. It was at this symposium that I was first introduced to Mr. Naseem Mahdi, the head of the Canadian community. I gave a short presentation on interreligious dialogue during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, which was well-received by the largely Ahmadi audience.

Prior to my participation in the symposium on October 6, 1996, I knew very little about the Ahmadi community, other than the fact that they were considered heterodox and “non-Muslim” by many Canadian Muslims. Upon entering the auditorium (the symposium was held at a public school in Mississauga), I was surprised to see that the seating was segregated by sex, with both men and women dressed modestly. The majority of the women were either veiled or wearing scarves on their heads, and the men were wearing woolen caps. In my own imagination, having heard proscriptions against the Ahmadiyya at the many ISNA events that I had attended, I did not expect an Ahmadi audience to “look” like an ISNA audience. Haddad and Smith write that “one of the defining characteristics of the Ahmadi community is its emphasis on purdah for women. Purdah has two dimensions: one involves wearing modest dress...and the other refers to the physical segregation of women from men in public places”.

The conservative views of the Ahmadi community are expressed in the literature that they distribute. One of their pamphlets, “Woman in Islam”, advocates segregation and modesty for women: “Unrestricted and unregulated association of men and women, and the women’s decking themselves out for the set purpose of attracting men has become the bane of

Haddad and Smith, Mission to America, p. 73.
Western society, so that all considerations of modesty and decent deportment have been cast aside and all the old, prized values have fallen into contempt and are ridiculed".\textsuperscript{90} Another pamphlet, "Homosexuality: What Islam Says....", concludes that "we Ahmadi Muslims find it imperative to speak out against this abomination, anticipating the dreadful fate of this society which has accepted this grievous sin as normal behaviour. This sinful behaviour is not accepted by God, not by human nature and not by the human body".\textsuperscript{91} Clearly, the Ahmadiyya hold traditional positions on a number of issues.

Interestingly, the Ahmadi audience at the symposium consisted largely of older adults. There were a small number of children, and perhaps a dozen people who looked to be in their thirties or younger. The majority of people (perhaps 80 out of the approximately 100 Ahmadi present) appeared to be in their fifties or sixties. Perhaps the conservativeness of the community is due to the age of the participants, with people from an older immigrant generation holding more conservative views than a younger generation raised in Canada. These generational issues are discussed further in Chapter Seven.

During the symposium (which lasted for five hours), I was able to meet and talk with some of the community. They knew me to be a non-Ahmadi Muslim, and so many of the people were anxious to let me know that they considered themselves to be Muslims. Some of them spoke of the Ahmadi community as a different "interpretation of Islam" than my own Sunni interpretation. They were also concerned that I not misrepresent them in my writing. Most poignant was an encounter that I had in the parking lot as I was about to leave. I was


approached by an elderly Pakistani man, and we talked for a short while about how the Ahmadis were viewed by non-Ahmadi. At the end of our conversation, he said to me in Urdu, “tell them to be kind to the Ahmadis”.

The following year, I had another conversation with Naseem Mahdi. He explained to me that of the worldwide community of over ten million, there were some 50,000 Ahmadi Muslims in Canada, spread out over 27 communities. The largest community is located in Toronto, with other major communities in Ottawa, Montréal, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton and Delta, B.C. The community is divided into three groups for men, and two groups for women. These groups are based on age for men and marital status for women. For men, the groups are as follows: *Afal* for those aged under 15, *Khuddam* for those aged 15 to 40 and *Ansar* for those aged over 40. The women were divided into those “under marrying age” referred to as the *Nasrat* and the *Lajna* or married women.

The community publishes extensively as part of its education/proselytization efforts. In addition to numerous books published by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the community also publishes books by the current head of the worldwide community, Mirza Tahir Ahmad. At the mosque bookstore, these books and several videotapes of lectures by Tahir Ahmad were available for sale, modestly priced so that they would be purchased. There were also calendars and at least three different postcards for sale with images of the mosque from different angles. In complement to the many pamphlets and booklets printed by the Toronto community were those from the worldwide headquarters in London. Interestingly, the community also

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102 Conversation on March 9, 1997.

One of these pamphlets, undated, but listing the Maple mosque as the place of publication, was entitled "A Refutation of the Allegations Against the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at Contained in the Pamphlets Distributed in the Somalian, Bosnian and Other Communities". As expressed in the title, this pamphlet served to reiterate the Ahmadi position and refute the claims made by others against the Ahmadiyya. It is the only pamphlet that I have seen by this community that contains the language of "righteous indignation" against others. Haddad and Smith write about the Ahmadi use of the mubahala, "which is defined as a means of adjudicating a dispute by asking God's judgement (literally, curse) on someone who is perceived as professing a falsehood".

As mentioned earlier, the largest Ahmadi community in Canada is in Toronto. This community is of the "Qadiani" branch, as distinct from the "Lahore" branch. With regard to the practice of Islam, Ahmadies in Toronto follow the same pillars and articles of faith as do other Muslims. For example, an Ahmadi text published by the Toronto community contains a standard hadith about the six articles of faith — belief in: Allah, the angels of Allah, the books

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394 This essay was first published in the May, 1955 issue of Reader's Digest. It was reprinted later that year in the Ahmadi magazine, Muslim Sunrise, 27:3 (1955).

395 For example, the phrase "the curse of Allah be on liars" is repeated throughout this booklet.

396 Haddad and Smith, Mission to America, p. 57.
of Allah, the prophets of Allah, the last day and the decree of Allah.\textsuperscript{397} This same text also contains another standard hadith about the five pillars of Islam: declaration of faith, prayer, zakat, hajj and fasting.\textsuperscript{398} In several respects, as we have seen, the Ahmadis have conservative interpretations of Islam. For example, traditional gender roles are expected of men and women, and both genders are to dress modestly. Veiling or other head covering is common for adult women. Also, Ahmadis, like other traditional Muslims, consider homosexuality to be a sin.

In many ways, the day to day practices of Ahmadis in Toronto are no different from that of other Muslims. Of course, they do differ in the allegiance that Ahmadis give to their founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, and their current leader, Mirza Tahir Ahmad. This allegiance involves financial support for the Ahmadi community, particularly the missionary work that is done by that community. For the most part, Ahmadis and non-Ahmadi Muslims keep to themselves in Toronto, with mutually exclusive gatherings. The location of the Ahmadi mosque on the outskirts of Toronto allows the community to keep to themselves.

Part of the growth of the Ahmadi community in Toronto must surely be due to the fact that it is a Canadian community. Under Canadian law, the Ahmadiyya are not persecuted, and in fact are protected from the persecution that they might receive in a country such as Pakistan. Also, unlike in a country such as Russia, there is no “accepted” or “official” version of Islam sponsored by the state. The freedom to be ignored that Canadian law provides allows this and other minority communities to blossom. Clearly, the Ahmadiyya


\textsuperscript{398} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 9.
have successfully adapted to their Toronto context. Moreover, modern Canadian policies that protect and promote multiculturalism engender a public bias toward diversity, including intra-religious variety.

4. Nation of Islam

As there have been many scholarly works written on the Nation of Islam, I do not here provide a broad historical context for that group. Malcolm X, perhaps the most famous member of the Nation of Islam, did make several visits to Canada. In 1964, he appeared as a guest on the venerable CBC news entertainment program, “Front Page Challenge”. Murray Hogben recounts that Malcolm X visited the Islamic Centre at 3047 Dundas Street West in Toronto “very early in 1965”, before his assassination on February 21. A decade later, after the death of Elijah Muhammad in 1975, his son Warith Deen Muhammad took over the Nation, and brought the majority of its members into Sunni orthodoxy. A number of splinter groups emerged, and on November 8, 1977, Louis Farrakhan declared “his intention to reestablish the

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600 There exists a snippet of videotape of a young Fred Davis introducing “the noted Negro leader Malcolm X”. This is found on a CBS News video, *The Real Malcolm X*, distributed by Fox Video in 1992, catalogue number 5758.
Nation of Islam 'on the platform of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad'”.

My first contact with any of the groups associated with the Nation of Islam came shortly after I moved to Toronto in September of 1983. As I was walking down Yonge Street in the vicinity of the Eaton's Centre, I saw a pair of Black men in flowing white robes. One was selling newspapers, and the other was behind a table in front of a boarded-up doorway selling incense. The one selling newspapers greeted me with the traditional Muslim greeting of “al-salaamu alaikum”, and I returned it with the appropriate “wa alaikum al-salaam”. We fell to talking, and I ended up purchasing a copy of the newspaper that he was selling. When I returned to my residence room, I read the paper and discovered that it was published by the Ansaru Allah (a Qur'anic phrase that is usually translated as “helpers of God”) community, centred around the person of Dwight York (also known as ‘Isa Muhammad, Al Hajj As Sayyid Al Imam ‘Isa Al Mahdi and As Sayyid ‘Isa Al Haadi Al Mahdi) in Brooklyn, New York. I would see these two men occasionally throughout the next two years, sometimes buying their literature, more often simply exchanging a few words with them.

In 1987, I had my next contact with another group associated with the Nation of Islam. That year, I began to visit the Jami Mosque as I had heard about its dynamic young Imam, Shaikh ‘Abdullah Hakim Quick. Outside the mosque after one of the Friday prayers, I noticed a Black man who had prayed the Friday prayers with us. He too was selling a

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401 Gardell, In the Name of Elijah Muhammad, p. 123.


403 For a Sunni polemic against this community, see Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, The Ansar Cult in America (Riyadh: Tawheed Publications, 1988).
newspaper, and I purchased one. It was a copy of the *Muslim Journal*, which was published by Warith Deen Muhammad's group, the American Muslim Mission. He was the only member of this group of whom I was aware at that time.

These two contacts suggested to me that the Nation of Islam and its offshoots did not have a strong presence in Canada. This suggestion was confirmed as I began my dissertation research. In the United States, African Americans make up one of the largest ethnic Muslim groups. However, there are disputed claims as to the size of this community. One researcher, using data from 1980, described them as the single largest ethnic Muslim group in the United States, composing 28.2 percent of the population.\(^{404}\) Jane Smith writes that "while it is difficult to determine exact proportions, many scholars of American Islam project that perhaps 40 percent of the Muslim community is African American".\(^{405}\) Karen Leonard is also comfortable with the estimate of 40 percent.\(^{406}\) Teresa Watanabe, a religion writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, wrote that "estimates of the Muslim American population range from a few million to 10 million, with anywhere from 22% to 42% of them African Americans".\(^{407}\) From talking with African American Muslims and scholars, and examining census figures, my own estimate

\(^{404}\) Carol L. Stone, "Estimates of Muslims Living in America", in *The Muslims of America*, p. 28.


\(^{406}\) From private communication with Karen Leonard. I am indebted to Professor Leonard for sharing some of her unpublished and forthcoming work with me.

is that there are no more than 1.5 million African American Muslims.\footnote{This would include all who identify themselves as Muslims, whether they be Sunni Muslims, members of the Nation of Islam, or belong to any one of the many small splinter groups such as the Five Percenters. I am indebted to David Horne for his help with this estimate.} Using the figure of 6 million American Muslims from Chapter One, this means that African Americans constitute some 25 percent of the Muslim population in America.

From the time of the slave trade, there has been a consciousness about Islam in African American communities.\footnote{For an introduction to some of the slave narratives, see Allan D. Austin, \textit{African Muslims in Antebellum America: Transatlantic Stories and Spiritual Struggles} (New York: Routledge, 1997). Austin also gives a broader introduction to the subject in his \textit{African Muslims in Antebellum America: A Sourcebook} (New York: Garland, 1984).} Moreover, beginning with the early Ahmadi missionary work in the nineteenth century\footnote{Haddad and Smith, \textit{Mission to America}, p. 59, mention the story of Alexander Russell Webb's conversion in the 1880s.} and continuing in the 1920s, there was a specific attempt to introduce and convert African Americans to Islam.\footnote{Haddad and Smith, \textit{Mission to America}, pp. 60–63.} Other groups, such as the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam, exclusively targeted African Americans. As noted earlier, when Warith Deen Muhammad took over the leadership of the Nation of Islam in 1975, he brought the majority of his followers into Sunni orthodoxy. Today, the majority of African American Muslims are Sunni Muslims.

In contrast to the situation in the United States, there is not the same consciousness of Islam among Black Canadians as there is among African Americans. To begin, the majority of Black Canadians see their roots as being in the Caribbean rather than in Africa. To be sure, many of them trace their ancestral roots to Africa, but the Caribbean base is “home”. For
example, the Canadian Census of 1996 lists under the category of "immigrant population by place of birth" 279,405 people with their roots in the "Caribbean and Bermuda" and 229,300 with their roots in "Africa." 42 Of course, this count would also include "White" people who have their roots in these two geographical categories. Moreover, the largest "Black" event in Canada is Toronto's annual Caribana Festival, which attracts over one million people from Canada and the rest of the world. Additionally, Canada does not have the same history of slavery that America does. To be sure, a number of freed slaves found their way into Canada, particularly the Atlantic provinces. However, like many other immigrant groups, the majority of Black Canadian immigrants came after the immigration reforms of the 1960s and are not the descendants of slaves brought over during the slave trade. For those immigrants from countries such as Trinidad or Jamaica, Islam is a known religious tradition, practised mainly by South Asians. It is not a "new" or a "fresh" religion with which to make a counter-cultural stand as it is for African Americans.

It has been the Sunni form of Islam that has been active in the conversion of Black Canadians, often spurred by the ministry of dynamic Black imams such as Shaikh 'Abdullah Hakim Quick 43 or Imam Siraj Wahhaj from New York. The Nation of Islam has not had


43 Another personal anecdote: In the summer of 1989, Quick was a frequent participant in the daily afternoon pick-up basketball game at Hart House in the University of Toronto. These games attracted some of the finest players at the university, and (admission was technically limited to the members of Hart House) some of the finest players from the city, when we could sneak them in. Quick, a talented point guard, would often use his game as a quiet way of "making da'wa", doing missionary work. Here was a religious leader who not only fit in, but who also "had game", the most admired attribute among those present. And, of course, in his modesty he would play wearing a cap, long-sleeved shirt and track pants, as opposed to the usual uniform of a T-shirt and shorts. His team was always "shirts", and out of respect he was never asked to be on the "skins" team (lacking uniforms in the time-honoured
nearly the same history of conversion activity in Canada that it has had in the United States. For instance, my friends from the Ansaru Allah community returned to their headquarters in Brooklyn. Since 1995, however, there has been some activity by the Nation of Islam in Toronto.

Occasionally, ministers from the Nation of Islam in Buffalo, New York (about a ninety-minute drive from Toronto), have made forays into Toronto. However, due to the heterodox nature of the Nation's teachings, they were not invited to speak at "Islamic" gatherings. I heard Minister Don Muhammad from Buffalo speak at a gathering held in a high school auditorium in Toronto in 1995, prior to the Million Man March. I had heard that the Nation had repudiated its earlier racism and no longer held the belief that Whites were "devils". At that gathering, I was surprised at the language of racial divisiveness, which had been absent in some of the material published by the Nation. This hostility was confirmed in 1998, when I heard Minister Tony Muhammad speak on the campus of California State University, Northridge. He referred to White people as "devils", even though some of the public pronouncements of Louis Farrakhan were to the contrary. Then again, Gardell recorded that "Farrakhan regards black-white relationships as remnants of the epoch of

tradition of pick-up basketball, one team would go shirtless to distinguish itself from the other team). I feel compelled to add this perverse minor detail: Quick always appreciated it when I guarded him, as out of respect for him, I would never block any of his shots. Of course, to hear him tell the story, I could never block any of his shots.

41 For an excellent summary of the Nation's teachings and how they differ from mainstream Islam, see Gardell, "The Sun of Islam Will Rise in the West", in In the Name of Elijah Muhammad, pp. 187–231.

415 Although I was lined up to talk with Muhammad after the conclusion of his presentation, I found it telling that he consistently ignored me in favour of speaking with African American students. Then again, it was these brothers that he was trying to "convert", and not me.
slavery, based on inequality, racism, and oppression".116

On Sunday, September 15, 1996, Minister Louis Farrakhan made his first Canadian speech in Toronto at the Westin Harbour Castle Conference Centre. A videotape of this speech is available for sale from the Nation of Islam.117 The speech drew a capacity crowd of close to 3,000, many of whom were curious about what Farrakhan actually had to say. The Canadian Jewish Congress had asked Immigration Minister Lucienne Robillard to prevent Farrakhan from entering the country, as they considered him to be a "hatemonger".118

Farrakhan spoke for nearly three hours, following up on themes from his Million Man March of a year earlier and stressing the ideas of reconciliation and atonement. He again spoke about the evils of racism. As reported in The Toronto Star, a few of the audience members had gone to Washington, DC, as part of the Million Man March.119

Since Farrakhan’s visit, some Canadians have been involved in the Nation, most notably in the Million Youth Movement held in Atlanta on September 4 to 7, 1998.120 However, other than the attention paid to the personal charisma of Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam has not played a significant role among the Muslim communities of Toronto. Where they have played a role is in their influence on rap and hip-hop music by artists such as Public

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116 Gardell, In the Name of Elijah Muhammad, p. 336.


119 Ibid.

Enemy or Ice Cube, listened to by Muslims and non-Muslims, Blacks and non-Blacks.  

Gardell has written of this influence, concluding that “what reggae was to the expansion of the Rastafarian movement in the 1970s, so hip-hop is to the spread of black Islam in the 1980s and 1990s.”  

Interestingly, it is not only Black artists who have been influenced by Islam and spread its message. In 1997, Everlast (born Erik Schrody), the leader of Irish American rap group, House of Pain, became a convert to Islam. Of that conversion, he has said in an interview: “Islam made a lot of things make a lot of sense to me. It makes me look at life from a lot of different sides, and it’s definitely one of the things that made me be honest enough with myself to sing and write some of the stuff about my life that I never would have let out before.” As an example, his Eat at Whitey’s cd released in 2000, ends with the track “Graves to Dig” that begins with the following lyrics: “They go one for the Prophet / Two for Islam / Three for the khutba from the Imam”.  

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422 Gardell, In the Name of Elijah Muhammad, pp. 294–301.  

423 Ibid., p. 295.  


426 Everlast, “Graves to Dig”, from Eat at Whitey’s (New York: Tommy Boy Music, 2000). The song continues with the following lyrics (transcribed as they appear in the cd booklet): “La ilaha ilala / Twelve rakabs short on a full day’s prayer / Just hoping that the lord got some mercy to spare / One for the ummah / Two for the deen / Three for the angels, four for the alamin”.  

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422 Gardell, In the Name of Elijah Muhammad, pp. 294–301.  

423 Ibid., p. 295.  


426 Everlast, “Graves to Dig”, from Eat at Whitey’s (New York: Tommy Boy Music, 2000). The song continues with the following lyrics (transcribed as they appear in the cd booklet): “La ilaha ilala / Twelve rakabs short on a full day’s prayer / Just hoping that the lord got some mercy to spare / One for the ummah / Two for the deen / Three for the angels, four for the alamin”.

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5. Sufism

Sufism is the name usually given to the mystical traditions within Islam. As described by Sachiko Murata and William Chittick, "the Sufis attempted to bring about perfect practice and faith by developing the inner qualities implied, but not necessarily actualized, by correct activity and correct thinking." There are a great many scholarly books on Sufism, and an ever-increasing number of web sites. Recent scholarship has begun to focus on Sufism in North America.

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431 By far the best web page for the study of Sufism is by Alan Godlas, who teaches at the University of Georgia. His page contains an impressive number of links to other web sites. This page is located at: <http://wmv.ar&es.uga.edu/~godlas/Sufism.html>.

432 For an excellent article on this subject that also has a very useful bibliography, see Marcia Hermansen, "Hybrid Identity Formations in Muslim America: The Case of American Sufi Movements", in The Muslim World, 90:1–2 (Spring, 2000), pp. 158–197.
Due to the "interiorization" of practices by certain Sufis, it is difficult to say with certainty when Sufism "began" in Canada. There may well have been early Canadian Muslims who were Sufis or inspired by Sufi teachings who did not publicly reveal themselves as Sufis. Siddiq Noormuhammad is cognizant of this issue, and so writes that "the first well-known Sufi" in Canada was Maulana Muhammad 'Abdul 'Aleem Siddiqui, also known as al-Qadiri.ˈ Siddiqui was an Indian Sufi, born in 1892, who travelled extensively and made a trip to Canada in 1939.43 On his trip to Canada, Siddiqui spoke at the al-Rashid Mosque in Edmonton, which had been opened in 1938.43 After speaking in Edmonton, Siddiqui travelled to Toronto, where he spoke "to a largely non-Muslim gathering".436

With the changes to immigration laws in the 1960s came increased Muslim immigration to Canada. This immigration has been described in the previous chapter. The increased Muslim immigration into Canada allowed for the establishment of a number of Sufi orders in Canada, mainly after the late 1960s. Currently, the Chishti, Alawi, Qadiri, Jerrahi, Rifa'i, Naqshbandi and Nimatullahi orders are active in Toronto.437

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435 From the web page <http://members.tripod.com/~wim_canada/aleem.html>.

436 From the web page <http://muslim-canada.org/sufi/toronto.htm>.

437 See Trimingham, The Sufi Orders in Islam, for more information about the origins and histories of these various Sufi orders.
The “first well-known Sufi” to reside in Toronto was Mirza Qadeer Baig, who has been mentioned previously in Chapter Four. Baig came to Toronto in 1962 to teach Islamic studies at the University of Toronto. In addition to teaching academic courses on Islam and Sufism, he established in Toronto the Gudri Shah branch of the Chishti order of Sufism. Baig was born in Ajmer, India, the city that houses the tomb of the founder of the Chishti order, Khwajah Muinuddin Chishti. The group that Baig established was officially registered under the Corporations Act of Ontario as the Society for Understanding the Finite and the Infinite (acronym SUFI). Later, this same group came to be known as the Sufi Study Circle when it began to meet at the University of Toronto. With Baig’s death in 1988, the leadership of this group passed to Syed Mumtaz Ali, who also leads the Canadian Society of Muslims, another organization founded by Baig.

The Sufi Study Circle continues to meet weekly at the University of Toronto. The current leader of these meetings, appointed by Ali, is James Gaudet, who is also known by his Muslim name of Abdul Rahim. These meetings take place on Wednesday evenings on the third floor of the International Students Centre. Ironically, with all of the conflicts that have occurred between Sufis and “orthodox” Muslims throughout the history of Islam, for many years the Toronto headquarters of ISNA existed about one block away from where the Sufi Study Circle holds its weekly meetings. These meetings, usually lasting about two hours, are really small seminars where the participants read and discuss Sufi literature. Dhikr or “remembrance” is held privately on a weekly basis, either in private homes or at the Indadul Islamic Centre (located at 26 Lepage Court in Toronto) or the Masjid Noor ul-Haram (located at 2478 Ninth Line Road in Oakville). The Chishti order also celebrates the birthday of the

\[418\] From the web page <http://muslim-canada.org/whoweare2.htm>.
Prophet Muhammad (Mawlid al-Nabi), as well as the 'urs or anniversary celebration for the death of their Shaikh.

In addition to the Chishti order, the Alawi order is also active in Toronto. The Shaikh of the Toronto Alawi order was al-Habib Ahmad Mash-hur bin Taha al-Haddad, who is buried in Yemen. For this order, *dhikr* is also held privately, the first Sunday of each month in the home of Sayyid ‘Ali Qullahain and every Thursday evening in the home of Siddiq Osman Noormuhammad. The Alawi order also does *dhikr* and ‘urs at the Imdadul Islamic Centre.

In addition, they participate with the Qadiri order in the remembrance of that order’s founder, Shaikh ‘Abdul Qadir Jilani. The Qadiri order does its own *dhikr* on Thursday or Friday nights, as well as on the eleventh night of each month. The Naqshbandi also do their *dhikr* on Thursday or Friday nights. Usually, these remembrances are segregated by sex, with women offering their own separate sessions. The Nimatullahi order is maintained by Iranian Shi‘i Muslims, many of whom came to Toronto after the 1979 revolution in Iran.

The Jerrahi order is also active in the Greater Toronto Area. At this writing they are still seeking a permanent location for their group in Toronto. Due to the cheaper costs of real estate in the suburbs, their current headquarters are at Masjid Noor ul-Haram located at 2478 Ninth Line in Oakville, Ontario. The Jerrahi order gathers weekly on Saturday evenings in

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49 For a good introduction to the origin, history and development of *Mawlid* celebrations, see Vincent J. Cornell, “The Id al-Mawlid in North Africa”, in Qalam, 3 (July/August/September, 1993), pp. 18–22.

440 From the web page <http://iqra.net/articles/Tariqa/Alawi.htm>.

441 From the web page <http://muslim-canada.org/sufi/toronto.htm>.

442 From the web page <http://muslim-canada.org/sufi/toronto.htm>.

their Oakville headquarters to perform *dhikr* and host discussions and lectures as well as perform Sufi music.

Dr. Asaf Duraković, who helped to establish the Croatian Islamic Centre (mentioned previously in Chapter Four), also established the Rifa’i order in Toronto. The various Sufi orders in Toronto do co-operate with each other and share worship space as described above. As previously mentioned, the Alawi join with the Qadiri to remember the founder of the Qadiri order. Since 1993, the World Islamic Mission has brought together various groups for an annual conference on the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. The most recent conference was held on July 15, 2000, at the Square One shopping centre in Mississauga, Ontario. The World Islamic Mission is itself a small group of no more than sixty families, founded in 1989. Since 1995, an annual joint *dhikr* has been held in Toronto the week before Ramadan, where all of the Sufi orders participate. One Toronto Sufi leader, Haji Ahmad Valli Nathalia, has in his possession a hair from Prophet Muhammad. This hair is brought out with great ceremony at the birthday celebration of the Prophet Muhammad that Nathalia holds privately in his Toronto home.

Even with the great diversity of Sufi orders in Toronto, not many people participate on a regular basis. Marcia Hermansen estimates that, at most, 10,000 people are actively involved in Sufi movements in all of North America. There is not a lot of tension between Sufis and non-Sufis in Toronto. This is due perhaps to the small number of Sufis, or to the fact that many of their rituals are held in private. Those that are held in public, like the weekly

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Ibid.

meetings of the Sufi Study Circle, are usually subsumed under the rubric of "academic discussions" and are thus ignored. Qalam, an independent Muslim magazine that existed for a short run, devoted its third issue to the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. Unfortunately, it was the last issue before the magazine folded. Some Muslim groups have circulated pamphlets or booklets against Sufis. In contrast, a number of non-Muslims have come to know of Sufism through the many "New Age" bookstores in Toronto that stock books on Sufism. However, few of these "seekers" formally join the Sufi orders in Toronto, as evidenced by the low membership numbers of those orders.

For Muslim youth, the one area where they may have come into contact with Sufism is through qawwali, or ecstatic singing and music. Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Pakistan's greatest master of qawwali, played to rave reviews in Toronto at Roy Thompson Hall on August 24, 1996, almost exactly a year before his death on August 16, 1997. His music has been used by "Western" musicians ranging from Peter Gabriel and Eddie Vedder to Joan Osborne and Jeff Buckley. It has also been used in film soundtracks ranging from The Last Temptation of Christ to Natural Born Killers and Dead Man Walking. As rap and hip-hop music transmits the rhetoric of the Nation of Islam, qawwali and other Sufi music (such as the work of Richard Thompson) add Sufi terms to the vocabulary of Toronto's youth.

For example, at my last visit to the Da'wah Centre in 1997, I obtained a copy of a four-page pamphlet entitled "The Reality of Sufism". It gave the following details of publication: "By Shaykh Ibn Rabee Ibn Haadee Al-Madhkaalee, English Translation by Daawood ibn Ronald Burbank, Published by al-Hidaayah, Birmingham, UK".

For example, see the review by Jane Stevenson, "From Pakistan with much love", in the Toronto Sun, August 25, 1996. She described it as "hypnotic, exotic and erotic", and gave it a "4 out of 5" rating.
6. Summary

In this chapter, I have described the major Muslim communities in Toronto. My purpose was to illustrate the various ways in which people identify and group themselves as Muslims. Currently, there are some 200,000 Muslims in the Greater Toronto Area. The majority of Toronto's Muslims are Sunni, and the largest Sunni organization is ISNA. I gave a brief history of this organization and listed the many services that they provide. However, not all Sunni Muslims in Toronto are affiliated with ISNA. For some, there is a conservatism to ISNA that they find disquieting. I provided an illustration of this with the formation of ISSRA by 'Abdullah Hakim Quick. Of course, there was disquiet with conservatism in Toronto before ISNA existed in Toronto. The earliest Canadian Muslim organization in Toronto was CMCC, and I provided some information about that group. It was out of CMCC that an organization for women developed, CCMW. CCMW provides a good example of how Muslim women in Canada are articulating their own voices and claiming their own positions within Canadian society. As Canadians, some Sunni Muslims have argued for the implementation of Muslim personal law in Toronto. The main group behind this impetus has been the Canadian Society of Muslims. I also gave examples of how Muslims in Toronto are making an outreach about Islam, through groups such as the Da'wah Centre or the CIC or participation in the National Christian Muslim Liaison Committee.

In addition to Sunni communities, there are significant Shi'i communities in Toronto. As mentioned previously, one authority has estimated that the Shi'i compose 30 percent of the Canadian Muslim population. Like the Sunnis in Toronto, the majority of the Shi'i are South Asian, arriving from East Africa after 1972. The Ja'ffari Islamic Centre has served as the main
centre for the Twelver Shi'a in Toronto. The Shi'i community is involved in the performance of a number of its rituals in Toronto, as well as operating its own Islamic school. The Shi'i community, like the Sunni community, is involved in interfaith dialogue and interreligious cooperation.

In addition to the Twelver Shi'a, the Ismaili are also quite active in Toronto. At present, there are some 30,000 Ismailis in the Greater Toronto Area. The Ismaili community is perhaps the best integrated into Canadian society, sponsoring such events as the Partnership Walk and the Run for Charity, which have become "fixtures" on the calendar for charitable events in Toronto. The Ismaili community carries out its religious rituals in its jamaat khana, of which there are some 17 in the GTA. The community also has its own religious schools for children.

The Ahmadi community is also quite active in Toronto. They have built the largest mosque in Canada, located north of Toronto. There is controversy between the Ahmadis and other Muslims. Other Muslims (both Sunni and Shi'a) do not consider the Ahmadis to be Muslims, while the Ahmadis consider non-Ahmadis to be misguided. However, under Canadian law, the Ahmadis are free from persecution by other Muslims. As such, they have grown and prospered in Toronto.

In recent years, the Nation of Islam has begun to have a presence in Toronto. Louis Farrakhan, the current leader of the Nation, visited Toronto in 1996. Since his visit, and the Million Man March of a year earlier, there has been some involvement by Torontonians in the Nation. However, it is more through the influences of rap and hip-hop music than actual preaching by the Nation's ministers that the youth in Toronto have learned about the Nation's teachings. Due to differences in history and demographics, the Nation does not
nearly have the same appeal in Toronto as it does in major American cities.

The various Sufi orders in Toronto were discussed last. Currently, there are at least seven different Sufi orders that are active in Toronto. There has been some tension between Sufis and non-Sufis, but, for the most part, the Sufis are left to themselves. Many of the Sufi groups have cooperated with each other, and often celebrate together with each other. Through Sufi music and singing, many Muslims and non-Muslims in Toronto have been influenced by Sufism, even if very few of them would describe themselves as Sufis.

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that there are several different ways to "be" Muslim in Toronto. One Canadian Muslim author described the situation with the following words:

They can practice their faith without fear of persecution or violence; deepen their knowledge of their faith; and are able to interact with fellow Muslims from diverse countries and backgrounds, experiencing true Islamic brotherhood.

They can do so while living in a tolerant, democratic, prosperous and modern country that in theory, and to some degree practice, offers all its citizens the freedom to believe as they see fit. The Bill of Rights, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Multiculturalism Act are designed to provide equality and equal opportunity without discrimination based on race, religion, gender or origin.⁴⁹

Living in a society with an official policy of multiculturalism, there is sometimes direct government support of Muslim activities. For example, CMCC and CCMW were supported for many years by funding from the Canadian government. Indirectly, multiculturalism allows different Muslims groups to articulate their own voices, rather than be subsumed into the dominant, non-Muslim culture. At times, the various Muslim groups in

Toronto came together to voice their dissatisfaction with Canadian society. One such gathering was occasioned by the publication of a novel, Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. Another gathering was in response to the Gulf War. I turn to an examination of those controversies as another way of illustrating the different Muslim communities in Toronto.
CHAPTER 6: THE MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN TORONTO REACT TO

THE SATANIC VERSES

During the period from 1983 to 1997, when I was involved with the Muslim communities in Toronto, two events stood out as peculiarly defining of these communities. These events brought together the different communities, inspiring them to work towards a common goal. These two events were the Gulf War of 1991 and the reaction to the publication of Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* in 1988. To be sure, other events, such as the breakup of Yugoslavia, the settlement of refugees from countries such as Bosnia, Somalia and Albania, or the war against Muslims in Chechnya were also issues on which the Muslims of Toronto would often respond in a united manner. However, none of these events was as salient to the Muslims of Toronto as the Gulf War or the “Rushdie Affair”. Of responses to those two events, I have chosen to study the responses to the “Rushdie Affair” in some detail. Those responses are a case study to examine my thesis that Muslims in Toronto have created distinctly Canadian forms of Islam. I do make some comments about the Gulf War at the end of this chapter.

Michael Fischer and Mehdi Abedi write: “Aside from being a brilliantly funny revisionary novel, *Satanic Verses* has become a highly charged social text, a lightning rod or projective screen against which contemporary cultural and social conflicts are drawn, enacted, and elaborated”.41 As I shall be demonstrating, this novel, and the controversy that surrounded it, allowed the Muslims of Toronto (as well as Muslims worldwide) to articulate

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their "position" as members of a minority religious tradition. To be sure, the Gulf War also allowed for this articulation, but there were, of course, many non-Muslim groups in Toronto who were also opposed to the war. The reaction to the novel provides a greater opportunity to study the *différence* (to use Jacques Derrida's play on the words "difference" and "deferring") of Muslims in Toronto. I first describe the novel, and then move to a discussion of what it was about this book that upset so many Muslims.

*The Satanic Verses* was a 547-page novel that had preoccupied Salman Rushdie for decades. It was his fourth novel. To quote from an interview that he gave prior to the publication of the book: "Parts of the novel have been in my head since I first began to study Islamic history at the university [King's College, Cambridge] 20 years ago. But I started work on the book in early 1984. I stopped after my first draft". In another interview, Rushdie explained that he was writing about his own multiple identities:

In writing *The Satanic Verses* I think I was writing for the first time from the whole of myself. The English part, the Indian part. The part of me that loves London, and the part that longs for Bombay.

But most of the time, people will ask me — will ask anyone like me — are you Indian? Pakistani? English?

What is being expressed is a discomfort with a plural identity. And what I am saying to you — and saying in the novel — is that we have got to come to terms with this. We are increasingly becoming a world of migrants, made up of bits and fragments from here, there. We are here. And we have never really left.

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anywhere we have been.\textsuperscript{454}

It was this theme of migration, of being Brown in England, about which Rushdie wrote. The main character, indeed, the first character introduced in the novel, is Gibreel Farishta (whose name translates out of the Urdu as “the Angel Gabriel”). It is this character who assumes the persona of the Angel Gabriel (“I mean the real one, or the allegedly real one”, as Rushdie remarked when he read from the book in Toronto in October of 1988).\textsuperscript{455} It is in this persona that the character has a series of dreams about the founding of a great religious tradition, which is of course Islam. These dreams begin in the second chapter of the book, “Mahound”. Mahound is an orphan, a businessman living in a city named Jahilia, who through revelation begins to preach a religion named Submission. In another chapter, Gibreel also has a series of encounters with another character, an exile, known simply as “the Imam”, an allusion to the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Companions of Mahound, named Bilal, Salman and Khalid, reappear as companions of the Imam. Gibreel also has another dream, this one set in rural India, where an orphaned peasant girl named Ayesha convinces those in her village to go on foot-pilgrimage to Mecca.

The other protagonist, who is the second character introduced in the novel, is Saladin Chamcha. In many ways, Saladin is the opposite of Gibreel. Where Gibreel is an Indian actor, living in India and acting in Indian movies, Saladin tries to remove his “Indian-ness”. On an aeroplane flight, Saladin is horrified to discover that his carefully cultivated British speaking


\textsuperscript{455} This quote is a transcription of Rushdie’s words as they are recorded on TV Ontario video cassette no. 35112, “Authors at Harbourfront: Salman Rushdie".
voice has “transmogrified” into “the Bombay lilt he had so diligently (and so long ago!) unmade”. No matter how hard Saladin tries to make himself English, however, his Indian lover, Zeenat (Zeeny) Vakil, always tries to bring him back to “Indian-ness”. Saladin has a tempestuous relationship with his father, Changez, that frames the moving conclusion to the novel.

Saladin and Gibreel also have a series of encounters with other Indians living in England. In these encounters, there is more elaboration on themes of migration and identity, including Muslim identity. Gibreel continues to dream of Mahound and Submission and the conquest of Jahilia. In those dreams, a scribe named Salman deliberately changes the words of the revelation to Mahound. When he is found out, he takes refuge in a brothel where the prostitutes have taken the names and assumed the identities of the wives of Mahound. At the end of the novel, Gibreel commits suicide. Saladin reconciles himself with his father, and begins a new life with Zeenat in Bombay.

In his novel, as is evident from the summary above, Rushdie used a great number of Islamic themes and allusions. In addition to describing the historical incident of the Satanic verses, I shall describe some of the other Islamic themes in the second chapter, “Mahound”. After that description I outline what it was in and what it was about the novel that upset so many Muslims. The very title, *The Satanic Verses*, refers to an alleged event in the life of the Prophet Muhammad. In Muhammad’s first recitation of certain verses from the Qur’an

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456 Rushdie has acknowledged his indebtedness to Bill Watterson, the creator of the comic strip "Calvin and Hobbes", for his use of this word. In the comic strip, the character of Calvin has a device called a “transmogrifier”.

(53:19–23), he may have been misled by Satan.\footnote{For more information on the historical incident, see Mohammed Shahab Ahmed’s PhD dissertation, \textit{The Satanic Verses Incident in the Memory of the Early Muslim Community: An Analysis of the Early Riw’ayats and Their Isnāds} (Princeton: Princeton University, 1999), or his article, “Ibn Taymiyyah and the Satanic Verses”, in \textit{Studia Islamica} (1998/2), pp. 67–124. I am indebted to Shahab Ahmed for providing me with a copy of this article.}
The incident of the Satanic verses is related as follows by Ibn Hisham:

> When the apostle saw that his people turned their backs on him and he was pained by their estrangement from what he brought them from God he longed that there should come to him from God a message that would reconcile his people to him. Because of his love for his people and his anxiety over them it would delight him if the obstacle that made his task so difficult could be removed; so that he meditated on the project and longed for it and it was dear to him. Then God sent down “By the star when it sets your comrade errs not and is not deceived, he speaks not from his own desire,” and when he reached His words “Have you thought of al-Lat and al-‘Uzza and Manat the third, the other,” Satan, when he was meditating upon it, and desiring to bring it (reconciliation) to his people, put upon his tongue “these are the exalted Gharaniq whose intercession is approved”.

The Meccans rejoiced in the fact that Muhammad had publicly recognized their goddesses. Indeed, Ibn Hisham went on to relate that the Meccans prostrated themselves along with Muhammad and the Muslims. However, Gabriel, the angel of revelation, came to Muhammad and said: “What have you done, Muhammad? You have read to these people something I did not bring you from God and you have said what He did not say to you”.\footnote{\textit{The Life of Muhammad}, p. 166.} Muhammad was greatly distressed that he had recited the Satanic verses, and to console him, Ibn Hisham recorded,\footnote{Ibid.} the following Qur’anic verse (22:52) was revealed: “Never did We send a
messenger or a prophet before thee, but, when he framed a desire, Satan threw some (vanity) into his desire: but Allah will cancel anything (vain) that Satan throws in, and Allah will confirm (and establish) His Signs: for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom". The Satanic verses were then abrogated with the following revelation that Gabriel brought to Muhammad (53: 19–23): "Have ye seen Lat, and `Uzza, and another, the Third (goddess), Manat? What! For you the male sex, and for Him, the female? Behold, such would be indeed a division most unfair! These are nothing but names which ye have devised, —ye and your fathers— for which Allah has sent down no authority (whatever)". The above is the text of the Qur'an as it was written down, and it is important to remember that the Satanic verses were never incorporated into the written text of the Qur'an. Predictably, the polytheistic Meccans were not pleased with the new verse, and they intensified their persecution of Muhammad and the Muslim community.

Commentators on the Qur'an have used the incident of the Satanic verses to explain the concept of the abrogation of certain verses by other ones. The idea of abrogation is discussed in some detail by John Burton. It is important to mention how Muslims and non-Muslims have dealt with this incident. According to Anthony Johns: "Non-Muslim authors, not accepting the doctrine of the prophetic `isma have found no difficulty in accepting the story, and according to the period in which they wrote, or their personal inclinations, either


463 Ibid., p. 1379.

464 The Life of Muhammad, p. 167.

condemned or excused what appeared as a short-lived compromise between Muhammad and the wealthy Meccans*. For example, William Muir thought that the incident was a conscious effort by Muhammad to reach a compromise with the Meccans. Later, Montgomery Watt saw the incident as one in a series whereby Muhammad developed a sense of both what was required of him as a prophet, and the nature of the message that he received. Among Muslims, according to Johns, “the sinlessness of the Prophet has been the primary consideration, hence the story has either been rejected out of hand, or explained away*. Rushdie’s second chapter, “Mahound”, begins with Gibreel Farishta dreaming in the arms of his mother that he is the Archangel Gabriel: “Little devil, she scolds, but then folds him in her arms, my little farishta [angel], boys will be boys, and he falls past her into sleep*. Before he dreams of the Prophet, we are told that Gibreel dreamt of much older things. He dreamt about the creation of Satan and his subsequent fall from heaven; about three goddesses worshipped in pre-Islamic Arabia, al-Lat, al-'Uzza and Manat; about the story of Abraham, Hagar and their son Ishmael; and about the rediscovery by ‘Abd al-Muttalib (the grandfather

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466 Anthony H. Johns, “The Incident of the ‘Satanic Verses’ (Allegedly Interpolated into Sura 53 Al-Najm of the Kur'an): A Psychological and Mystical Explanation by the 17th Century Naqshbandi Author Mulla Ibrahim Al-Kurani (d. Madina 1101/1690)”, paper presented in Mexico in 1977, p. 150. I am indebted to Professor Johns for providing me with a copy of his paper, and for his many kindnesses to me.

467 Sir William Muir, The Life of Mohammad (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1923), pp. 82–86.


469 Johns, p. 150.

470 The Satanic Verses, p. 91.
of Muhammad, who is referred to in the novel simply as Muttalib) of the well of Zamzam, which Muslims believe was originally revealed by God to Ishmael and Hagar to keep them alive in the desert. Finally, Gibreel dreams of "the businessman", who with his tendencies toward asceticism was a "strange manner of businessman". Of course, in the traditional Muslim biographies, Muhammad was a fairly successful Meccan businessman before his prophetic career began.

We are told that at times when he is dreaming, Gibreel thinks himself to be mad, and that these thoughts are just what "the businessman . . . felt when he first saw the archangel: thought he was cracked, wanted to throw himself down from a rock, from a high rock".

Again, this is a reference to a tradition about Muhammad. As related by Ibn Hisham:

I [Muhammad] thought, Woe is me poet or possessed —Never shall Quraysh say this of me! I will go to the top of the mountain and throw myself down that I may kill myself and gain rest. So I went forth to do so and then when I was midway on the mountain, I heard a voice from heaven saying, "O Muhammad! thou art the apostle of God and I am Gabriel." I raised my head towards heaven to see (who was speaking), and lo, Gabriel in the form of a man with feet astride the horizon saying, "O Muhammad! thou art the apostle of God, and I am Gabriel".

After introducing his prophet, Rushdie moves to an important discussion of faith and doubt, which he considers to be the opposite of faith. In the novel, doubt is "the human

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\(^{471}\) For a traditional Muslim understanding of the stories of Abraham, Hagar, Ishmael and ‘Abd al-Muttalib’s rediscovery of the well of Zamzam, see Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1986), pp. 1–2 and 10–11. The first edition of Lings’ work was published by George Allen & Unwin in 1983, and the way in which Lings recounts his stories is very similar to the way in which Rushdie mentions them in *The Satanic Verses*.

\(^{472}\) *The Satanic Verses*, p. 92.

\(^{473}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{474}\) Ibn Hisham, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 106.
condition" that separates humanity from the angelic order. Again, this is based upon traditional Islamic angelology, where angels are thought to do only the will of God.

Rushdie mentions the fact that Mahound, like Muhammad, was an orphan: "Orphans learn to be moving targets, develop a rapid walk, quick reactions, hold-your-tongue caution." Rushdie also describes Mahound as "a fit man, no soft-bellied usurer he." This serves to differentiate Mahound from the rest of the business community around him. Then Rushdie explains the name of his prophet:

His name: a dream-name, changed by the vision. Pronounced correctly, it means he-for-whom-thanks-should-be-given, but he won't answer to that here; nor, though he's well aware of what they call him, to his nickname in Jahilia down below _he-who-goes-up-and-down-old-Coney_ [Mount Coney, where he receives his revelations. Italics are Rushdie's]. Here he is neither Mahomet nor MoefHammered; has adopted, instead, the demon-tag the farangis hung around his neck. To turn insults into strengths, whigs, tories, Blacks all chose to wear with pride the names they were given in scorn; likewise, our mountain-climbing, prophet-motivated solitary is to be the medieval baby-frightener, the Devil's synonym: Mahound.

The above passage requires several comments. First, the translation of "Muhammad" does mean "praised" or "commendable". However, the name that he was called by the Meccans was Mudhammam, which translates as "greatly dispraised". Third, the name "Mahound" was

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475 The Satanic Verses, p. 92.
476 Ibid., p. 93.
477 Ibid.
478 Ibid.
480 In fact, there is a hadith in which the Prophet expressed thanks that the Quraysh cursed and abused Mudhammam, while his name was Muhammad. See Muhammad Muhsin Khan, translator, The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih al-Bukhari, 4 (Lahore: Kazi Publications, 1986), p. 482.
a mediaeval European name meaning: “The ‘false prophet’ Mohammed; in the Middle Ages often vaguely imagined to be worshipped as a god”. The first occurrence of “Mahound” was in approximately 1290, and it was used by such writers as Edmund Spenser (1596) and Alexander Pope (1735). It is important to note that Rushdie makes explicit that this term of derision has been appropriated by his prophet in the same way that other groups had turned “insults into strengths”. The name “Mahound”, then, is not used as a term of derision for the Prophet Muhammad in the novel.

It has already been mentioned that the name of the city in which Mahound first preaches is Jahilia. The noun jahiliyyah occurs four times in the Qur’an (3:148, 5:55, 33:33 and 48:26), and means either “pagan ignorance” or the “Age of Ignorance”. Jahilia is the usual Muslim term for pre-Islamic Arabia. The heart of the city of Jahilia is described in the novel as the “House of the Black Stone”. This is of course a reference to the ka'aba, believed by Muslims to be built by Abraham and Ishmael as the house of worship for the one true God.

In the novel, Mahound's chief antagonist is the leader of Jahilia, a man named Karim Abu Simbel who is married to a woman named Hind. This is an allusion to Abu Sufyan, a cousin of Muhammad’s who fiercely persecuted Muslims and was also married to a woman named Hind. On his way to meet the poet Baal, whom Abu Simbel will employ to compose

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42 Ibid.


44 The Satanic Verses, p. 94.

45 Lings, p. 65.
poems against Mahound, Abu Simbel meets a sorceress, skilled in “little knots”. This is an allusion to women in Mecca, who according to the Qur’an (113: 1–4) were skilled at casting spells using knots in a thread: “Say: ‘I take refuge with the Lord of the Daybreak from the evil of what He has created, from the evil of darkness when it gathers, from the evil of the women who blow on knots’.”

When Abu Simbel and Baal leave the “House of the Black Stone”, they view several of the followers of Mahound. The passage that describes them is lengthy, but contains a number of allusions:

The water-carrier Khalid is there, and some sort of bum from Persia by the outlandish name of Salman, and to complete this trinity of scum there is the slave Bilal, the one Mahound freed, an enormous black monster, this one, with a voice to match his size. The three idlers sit on the enclosure wall. “That bunch of riff-raff,” Abu Simbel says. “Those are your targets. Write about them; and their leader, too.” Baal, for all his terror, cannot conceal his disbelief. “Grandee, those goons — those fucking clowns? [italics are Rushdie’s] You don’t have to worry about them. What do you think? That Mahound’s one God will bankrupt your temples? Three-sixty verses one, and the one wins? Can’t happen.” He giggles, close to hysteria. Abu Simbel remains calm: “Keep your insults for your verses.” Giggling Baal can’t stop. “A revolution of water-carriers, immigrants and slaves ... wow, Grandee. I’m really scared.” Abu Simbel looks carefully at the tittering poet. “Yes,” he answers, “that’s right, you should be afraid.”

As Rushdie’s Jahilia is built entirely out of sand, water is its mortal enemy, and so water-carriers are despised. The Persian Salman is a reference to the historical figure, Salman Farsi, a

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486 The Satanic Verses, p. 97.


slave who was one of the early converts to Islam and was freed by Muhammad.\textsuperscript{49} It is also of course a reference to the author of the novel, which perhaps describes why his name is considered “outlandish”. The third figure is Bilal, who historically was also a convert to Islam, another slave freed by Muhammad. Indeed, the historical story of the freeing of Bilal by Muhammad occurs in much the same way that Rushdie describes the freeing of Bilal by Mahound.\textsuperscript{490}

Together, the three are described as a “trinity of scum”. One supposes that this is not Rushdie’s own view of the above three, but is instead a reflection of how they were viewed by the citizens of Jahilia. Historically, Muhammad and his companions were regularly reviled and persecuted by the citizens of Mecca. For example, Ibn Hisham relates: “When the Quraysh became distressed by the trouble caused by the enmity between them and the apostle and those of their people who accepted his teaching, they stirred up against him foolish men who called him a liar, insulted him.”\textsuperscript{491} The three companions of Mahound are derided in much the same way that the companions of Muhammad were derided. The phrase “a revolution of water-carriers, immigrants and slaves” could apply just as readily to the followers of Muhammad as it does to the followers of Mahound.

There are a number of other Islamic themes and allusions throughout the remainder of the book, including a section in which Mahound recites the Satanic verses. Later in the novel, Salman claims that in the act of copying he changes the words of the revelation to

\textsuperscript{49} For more information about Salman Farsi, see the section “How Salman Became a Muslim”, in Ibn Hisham, pp. 95–98.

\textsuperscript{490} \textit{The Satanic Verses}, p. 102.

\textsuperscript{491} Ibn Hisham, p. 130.
Mahound and Mahound does not immediately detect the changes. When Mahound does discover the changes, Salman flees. After the conquest of Jahilia, Salman is brought before Mahound. Salman is not allowed to convert to “Submission”, as Mahound tells him that “your blasphemy, Salman, can’t be forgiven. Did you think I wouldn’t work it out? To set your words against the Words of God”. However, Salman’s life is spared due to the intercession of Bilal.

There are other Islamic references in the novel. The fourth chapter of the novel, for example, is titled “Ayesha”, the name of one of the wives of Muhammad. That chapter contains a dream that Gibreel has about an exiled figure, the Imam. It suffices to state that Rushdie knows a great deal about Islam. At Cambridge, Rushdie read history, and “he wrote a paper on Muhammad, Islam and the Rise of the Caliph for Part II of his history tripos”. In an interview, he stated:

The point is that I am not a religious person any more, formally; but I have remained all my life, very attached to and interested in the subject of Islam. I studied it at university — indeed the place where I first heard about the satanic verses (of which a fictionalized version is in the book) is when I was studying

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492 The Satanic Verses, p. 374.


Islam. So it’s an image which has remained with me for 20 years.495 

He made good use of his knowledge about Islam, and it is for this reason that he was attacked by many Muslims: One attacks earnestly when one knows that one’s opponent has valid arguments that might persuade others. Also of relevance is that Rushdie himself came from a Muslim background. Timothy Brennan wrote that “as very few pointed out in the frenzy of late February 1989, this extreme response had everything to do with Rushdie’s special position as an ‘insider/outsider’”.496 Muslims opposed to the novel cited a number of reasons why they were offended by it. Mohammad Hashim Kamali, a professor of law at the International Islamic University in Malaysia, provided an excellent, two-sentence summary of those reasons: “The Satanic Verses reviles and defames the Prophet of Islam (saws), the wives of the Prophet (saws) and his leading Companions. The book also contains contemptuous passages concerning the Holy Qur’an and some of the cardinal values and principles of the Islamic faith”.497 Many Muslims considered Rushdie an apostate. At the eleventh session of the Islamic Law Academy of the Muslim World League, held in Mecca in February, 1989, Rushdie was declared an apostate with a recommendation “that he and his publishers should be prosecuted under criminal charges in a British court” as well as “tried in absentia in an Islamic country under the rules of the Shari‘ah”.498

Lamin Sanneh pointed to the fact that a number of Muslims were concerned with the

495 Ibid., p. 40.

496 Brennan, p. 144.


498 Ibid., p. 297.
fact that Rushdie employed dream imagery. Sanneh wrote: "For Muslims the dream is not a neutral category, or even, as Rushdie claims, a pathological state, which is also how the modern West views the subject. On the contrary, the dream has an exalted place in the Muslim tradition".499 Dreams and the interpretation of dreams are, for example, key elements to the story of Joseph in Chapter Twelve of the Qur'an.

A number of Muslims and Muslim groups circulated excerpts from the book which they considered to be offensive. One such example was a 24-page booklet prepared by Ahmed Deedat, and circulated among English-speaking Muslims in 1989.500 In that booklet, Deedat cited Rushdie's use of profanity in the novel, and also claimed that the book was racist and sexist in addition to being profane.

To take only one example from the book of a passage that some found offensive, consider Rushdie’s fictional account of Abraham, the patriarch:

In ancient time the patriarch Ibrahim came into this valley with Hagar and Ismail, their son. Here, in this waterless wilderness, he abandoned her. She asked him, can this be God’s will? He replied, it is. And left, the bastard. From the beginning men used God to justify the unjustifiable. He moves in mysterious ways: men say. Small wonder, then, that women have turned to me. —But I’ll keep to the point; Hagar wasn’t a witch. She was trusting: then surely He will not let me perish [italics are Rushdie's]. After Ibrahim left her, she fed the baby at her breast until her milk ran out. Then she climbed two hills, first Safa then Marwah, running from one to the other in her desperation, trying to sight a tent, a camel, a human being. She saw nothing. That was when he came to her, Gibreel, and showed her the waters of Zamzam. So Hagar survived; but why now do the pilgrims congregate? To celebrate her survival? No, no. They are celebrating the honour done the valley by the visit


of, you've guessed it, Ibrahim.\textsuperscript{501}

For Rushdie, that Abraham (whose name he uses in its proper Arabic form, "Ibrahim") should leave Hagar and the child Ismail in the desert is inexcusable: “From the beginning men used God to justify the unjustifiable”. It is for this reason that Abraham is referred to as “the bastard”. While Muslims may take offence at this insult to a prophet, the fact remains that Abraham is said to have abandoned both the mother of his child and his child in the desert, and, to an outside observer, this may not seem like the best thing that one can do for the people that one loves.\textsuperscript{502} The other point that Rushdie makes is that even though Gibreel appears to Hagar and Ismail to save them, people still give all of the glory to Abraham. This is true even in modern-day Islam, where Abraham is honoured as the patriarch while Hagar is all but forgotten except for once each year during the pilgrimage, when pilgrims reenact her desperate run between Safa and Marwah in search of water. Clearly, Rushdie is cognizant of and objects to the status of women in the Islamic world.

After analysing the Islamic themes and allusions in the novel, I concluded that Rushdie was pro-Islam, but anti-Muslim. Rushdie thought that Islam was a great idea: “Islam is, after all, one of the greatest ideas that ever came into the world—I suppose the next idea of that size would have been Marxism—and the chance to study the birth of a great historical idea is

\textsuperscript{501} \textit{The Satanic Verses}, p. 95.

\textsuperscript{502} There is also the issue of Abraham’s being willing to kill his child. For an anthropologist’s examination of the Abraham story in Judaism, Christianity and Islam see Carol Delaney, \textit{Abraham on Trial: The Social Legacy of Biblical Myth} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). Her interest in investigating the social repercussions of Abraham’s sacrifice of a son was sparked by a 1990 trial in California, where a man murdered his favourite child because he believed he had been commanded to do so by God.
interesting".  However, as he wrote in an earlier novel, *Shame*, Islam was not utilized not to liberate people, but to enslave them to a particular political regime:

So-called Islamic "fundamentalism" does not spring, in Pakistan, from the people. It is imposed on them from above. Autocratic regimes find it useful to espouse the rhetoric of faith, because people respect that language, are reluctant to oppose it. This is how religions shore up dictators; by encircling them with words of power, words which the people are reluctant to see discredited, disenfranchised, mocked.  

Given this understanding of the novel as I see it, I turn now to a summary of world reactions to the book before beginning a discussion of the specific responses of the Muslim communities in Toronto. As we shall see, Muslim reactions, and in turn media reactions to Muslim reactions, were intertwined.

On September 26, 1988, Viking Penguin published *The Satanic Verses* in the United Kingdom and Canada. A few days later, on October 5, 1988, the book was banned from India by the government of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi due to the urging of several Indian Muslim politicians. Notable among them was Syed Shahabuddin, who wrote in a letter to Rushdie: "You are aggrieved that some of us have condemned you without a hearing and asked for the ban without reading your book. Yes, I have not read it, nor do I intend to. I do not have to wade through a filthy drain to know what filth is." It is important to note that Shahabuddin, a member of the Indian parliament, asked for the ban without reading the book. His reasoning would be followed by many others who sought a ban on the book. Clearly, Shahabuddin was not objecting to the words that Rushdie had written, for he admitted to not

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505 Quoted in *The Rushdie File*, p. 47.
reading them. Instead, his call for a ban was to assert his own power as a political representative of the Muslim minority in India. Shahabuddin was a member of the Janata party, in opposition to Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party, and a general election was scheduled for later that year. Gandhi allowed the book to be banned in an attempt to win the Muslim vote. On February 24, 1989, twelve people were killed in Bombay during demonstrations against the book “when police opened fire during a struggle between two factions to assert control over Muslim leadership”.

Following the ban in India, the book was quickly banned in Pakistan, where word about the book had spread to Pakistani Muslims who kept a close watch on events concerning Indian Muslims. On November 24, 1988, it was banned in South Africa as well, again due to the work of Muslims of South Asian origin. On February 12, 1989, six people were killed after a protest in Islamabad, Pakistan, at the offices of the US Information Service. This demonstration was to protest the plan to publish the American edition of the book, which was published ten days later on February 22, 1989. The following day, another person was killed following a protest in Kashmir.

Perhaps the most publicised demonstrations against the book were in England.

506 Fischer and Abedi, Debating Muslims, p. 397.


508 Fischer and Abedi, Debating Muslims, p. 397.

509 For some of the early British reactions (both from Muslims and non-Muslims) to the book, see Jørgen S. Nielsen, editor, The "Rushdie Affair"—A Documentation. Research Papers, Muslims in Europe, No. 42 (Birmingham: Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Selly Oak Colleges, 1989). For a more recent reaction, see Fred Halliday, “Islam is in Danger: Authority, Rushdie and the Struggle for the Migrant Soul”, in Jochen Hippler and Andrea Lueg, editors, The Next Threat: Western Perceptions of Islam (Boulder:
Bhikhu Parekh has written brilliantly about the English reactions to the novel.\(^{510}\) In October of 1988, after the book was banned in India, Muslims in England began to protest the novel. Again, one saw a global networking of Muslims worldwide, inspired by events that began in India. Of those protesters, Parekh wrote that what struck him the most was "not so much their intolerance as their timidity, not their feeling of rage but a sense of hurt, not their anger but their distress".\(^{511}\) The initial protests were limited to contact with the publishers and government officials. These protests were either ignored or not taken seriously. Of the reactions by the British press, Parekh wrote: "Neither the quality nor the quantity papers published the offending passages, or invited Muslim spokesmen to state their case, or themselves made an attempt to read the book with their eyes. Instead they mocked the Muslims, accused them of 'intolerance', and wondered if a tolerant society should tolerate the intolerant".\(^{512}\)

On December 2, 1988, a small group of Muslims burned a copy of the book in Bolton. However, their action received no national attention in the British press. The protesters were then apparently advised (by a solicitor, no less) that they would attract much more attention if they alerted the media prior to burning the book.\(^{513}\) On January 14, 1989, in Bradford, the


\(^{511}\) Ibid., p. 75.

\(^{512}\) Ibid.

\(^{513}\) Ibid., p. 76.
media were present, the book was burned and international publicity was achieved. Of this burning, Parekh wrote:

Rather than stimulate a reasoned discussion of their grievance as they had naively hoped, the book-burning incident led to a torrent of denunciation. Muslims were called “barbarians”, “uncivilized”, “fanatics”, and compared to the Nazis. Many a writer, some of impeccable liberal credentials, openly wondered how Britain could “civilize” them and protect their innocent progeny against their parent’s “medieval fundamentalism”. Hardly anyone appreciated that the burning of *The Satanic Verses* was more an act of impatience than of intolerance, and that it bore no resemblance to the Nazi burning of libraries and persecution of intellectuals. No one cared to point out either that only a few months earlier, several Labour Members of Parliament had burnt a copy of the new immigration rules outside the House of Commons without raising so much as a murmur of protest.514

In his article, Parekh provides an excellent summary of and critical reaction to the many newspaper accounts following the Bradford book-burning.515 Of the Muslim reactions in Britain, Parekh concluded that, “with isolated exceptions, Muslim spokesmen showed remarkable incapacity to state their case cogently and coherently. They did not, or would not, appreciate the force of the liberal case for free speech and the difficulties involved in deciding when and how to restrict it”.516 However, he also concluded that “the Muslims did not deny free speech; they only questioned the conventional criteria used to restrict it. Though they put their case badly, they *had* [italics are his] a case and threw up important issues of which we need to take note”.517 In Britain, as elsewhere, some communication is privileged, such as that between doctors and patients or lawyers and clients. Other speech is also protected; for


example parliamentary speeches or academic lectures have different "rules" than those applied to "ordinary" discourse. And, of course, speech that is considered libellous, treasonous, blasphemous, or inciting to hatred is in fact banned. The Muslims in Britain who were opposed to the novel saw it as example of speech that could be banned under the law.

In the British media reaction to Muslim concerns, another contribution came from the writings of Malise Ruthven.\footnote{518 Malise Ruthven, \textit{A Satanic Affair: Salman Rushdie and the Rage of Islam} (London: Chatto \& Windus, 1990).} Ruthven subtitled his work "Salman Rushdie and the Rage of Islam", and his own prejudices are clear from his opening paragraph. In describing participants at a British rally against the book on May 27, 1989, Ruthven wrote:

> They wore white hats and long baggy trousers with flapping shirt tails. Most of them were bearded; the older men looked wild and scraggy with curly, grey-flecked beards—they were mountain men from Punjab, farmers from the Ganges delta, peasants from the hills of Mirpur and Campbellopur. After decades of living in Britain, they still seemed utterly foreign: [italics are his] even in Hyde Park, a most cosmopolitan part of a very cosmopolitan city, where Arab families foregather in summer, where French, Spanish and Dutch are spoken sooner than English, they were aliens. They were not sophisticated, suave metropolitan like the blacks—the Afro-Caribbeans—with whom the racists and anti-racists banded them; they seemed like men from the sticks, irredeemably provincial.\footnote{519 \textit{Ibid.}, p. 1.} They are not suave, but are

Note that Ruthven does not describe what Rushdie or his detractors said or did. Instead, he is more interested in describing the crowd. The people that Ruthven describes are always "they" and "them", and one as umes that no women were present. The language of derision is everywhere: the clothes of the men are "baggy" and their shirt tails are untucked, they are "wild and scraggy", "mountain men", "farmers" and "peasants".\footnote{520 I suspect that few of the men were actually agricultural workers in Britain, and so Ruthven must be describing how they "look" to him and not their occupations.}
instead unsophisticated, "foreign", "alien", "from the sticks", and not only "provincial" but "irredeemably" so. Interestingly, while Ruthven gives evidence of a European cosmopolitanness to Hyde Park, he neglects to mention if, for example, one also hears Tamil or Cantonese spoken there. And, of course, he prefers "the blacks" to "the Afro-Caribbeans". 521 Ruthven's dislike of the provinces is evident from another telling sentence, where he describes a British Muslim leader: "I had no doubt that had he been born with the right connections, or done his postgraduate work somewhere other than Canada, he would be lecturing students at one of our universities, instead of doing a rather humdrum job in the community relations department of Bradford City Council". 522

It is not surprising, therefore, to read about "the rage with which this extraordinary, challenging novel has been greeted by Muslims in Britain and beyond". 523 Ruthven writes that "even Dr Zaki Badawi, head of the Muslim College in Ealing and one of Britain's most liberal Muslim leaders, felt deeply pained by the book". 524 Apparently, for Ruthven, to be "liberal" means that one cannot or perhaps should not feel pain. And of course, Badawi is not enraged as Ruthven would have us believe, but "pained", as Parekh properly described and analysed. Other stereotypes are also invoked by Ruthven. For example, we are told the following: "Shi'a, who resemble some Catholic sects like the Penitentes in their excessive devotion to

521 If Ruthven's words were spoken, one could overlook his use of "blacks" as a simple misspeaking, quickly corrected to the term "Afro-Caribbeans". However, his words were not spoken, but published. Clearly, Ruthven had the opportunity to replace "blacks" with "Afro-Caribbeans" in his printed text, but he chose not to do that.

522 Ruthven, pp. 123-124. The leader being described is Shabbir Akhtar.

523 Ibid., p. 28.

524 Ibid., p. 29.
martyrdom”, and “the temper of Indian Islam is, compared with Arab Islam, harsh, neurotic and insecure”. Also, Ruthven reminds us that “the Christian response to insult is to try to gain the moral and psychological advantage, to ‘turn the other cheek’. The Islamic model is diametrically different”. One need only point to works like Ruthven’s to find an explanation for why Muslims claim that they are misunderstood, even caricatured, by those who would describe them.

An updated version (2000) of Ruthven’s work contains a number of factual errors. For example, we are told that Rushdie won the “Booker Prize for fiction in 1984” (he received the prize in 1981, and the “Booker of Bookers” in 1993), and that the novel “was published in November 1988” (it was published in September). Clearly, Ruthven has not been careful in his research into reactions to the novel in Britain and elsewhere. However, his work was a response to the strong reactions that took place against the book in Britain. I discuss later in this chapter how the reactions in Toronto were much different from the reactions in Britain.

Elsewhere in the world, the reaction to the novel that drew the most attention was in Iran. Michael Fischer and Mehdi Abedi write:

The book was published in late September 1988, and was given a dismissive

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525 Ibid., p. 46.
526 Ibid., p. 55.
528 Ruthven’s book received a two-page excerpt prior to its publication in the book review section of The Sunday Times (February 4, 1990, pp. H8–9), as well as a positive review in the Canberra Times of April 19, 1990. I am indebted to Anthony Johns for providing me with these reviews.
review in Tehran without any special notice or concern. Rushdie was well-known: both *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame* had been translated into Persian, the latter even winning the state prize, awarded by President Ali Khamenei, for the best translation of a novel. Both these previous novels contain considerable satire about (mis)uses of Islam. It was only four and a half months later, on 14 February 1989, that Khomeini issued the *fatwā* declaring Rushdie essentially an apostate, *mabdi‘ al-dam* (one whose blood may be shed without trial, the term used to facilitate the execution and murder of Bahai’s). This *fatwā* was disputed in its legal validity by various Muslim jurists.\(^{530}\)

The text of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s *fatwā* was:

> In the name of Him, the Highest. There is only one God, to whom we all shall return. I inform all zealous Muslims of the world that the author of the book *The Satanic Verses* — which has been compiled, printed, and published in opposition to Islam, the Prophet, and the Qur’an — and all those involved in its publication who were aware of its content, are sentenced to death.

> I call on all zealous Muslims to execute them quickly, wherever they may be found, so that no one else will dare to insult the Muslim sanctities. God willing, whoever is killed on this path is a martyr.

> In addition, anyone who has access to the author of this book, but does not possess the power to execute him, should report him to the people so that he may be punished for his actions.

> May peace and the mercy of God and His blessings be with you.\(^ {531}\)

Khomeini’s sentence is undoubtedly harsh; its universal quality, however, is usually misunderstood. In the words of Fischer and Abedi: “Technically, Khomeini’s *fatwā* is but an opinion issued in response to questions submitted to him by Muslims in Britain, and is not enforceable unless there is a trial under Islamic due process”.\(^ {532}\) They concluded that “the timing of Khomeini’s call was not arbitrary: it was a way to seize international leadership for a cause célèbre that others had created in other arenas, and it blocked a series of moves by

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\(^{530}\) Fischer and Abedi, *Debating Muslims*, p. 388.


\(^{532}\) Fischer and Abedi, *Debating Muslims*, p. 398.
internal factions to normalize relations with the West.\textsuperscript{533} Fischer and Abedi then discussed the role of satire and satirical works in Shi'a Islam, situating \textit{The Satanic Verses} in that context.\textsuperscript{534} In that discussion, they included a Sufi poem that was written by Khomeini, and published after his death as a memorial tribute by his son Ahmad.\textsuperscript{535} That poem served "as a reminder to those who would accept too quickly the charge that Rushdie blasphemed based on superficial readings of Rushdie and superficial knowledge of Islamic idioms of debate."\textsuperscript{536} For many Muslims, there was concern over Khomeini's death sentence, and the image that it created that somehow Khomeini spoke for all Muslims. Mohammad Kamali wrote that the "\textit{fatwa} evoked mixed responses from the 'ulamā' and Muslim leaders who expressed reservations over the wisdom of [Khomeini's] verdict addressing the Muslims at large to kill Rushdie without any reference to due judicial process."\textsuperscript{537}

Having mentioned the international reactions to the book, let me turn to a discussion of events in Canada, specifically those that occurred in Toronto. As noted earlier, the novel was published in Canada on September 26, 1988. Among the earliest reactions to its publication was an open letter written by the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) in October to Canadian Muslims, asking them to protest the novel.\textsuperscript{538} This letter was distributed

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{533} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 399.
\item \textsuperscript{534} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 399–403.
\item \textsuperscript{535} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 451–454.
\item \textsuperscript{536} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 452.
\item \textsuperscript{537} Mohammad Kamali, \textit{Freedom of Expression in Islam}, pp. 296–297.
\item \textsuperscript{538} For information about ISNA's actions in Canada, I am indebted to Dr. Mohammad Ashraf, the Director of the Canadian Office of ISNA, who provided me with photocopies of the material relating to the controversy that he had in his files.
\end{itemize}
to mosques, imams and Islamic centres, but it was not sent out as a press release to non-Muslims. Given the large number of South Asian Muslims in Toronto and their connections to India and Pakistan, it is not surprising that Muslims were quick to criticize the novel so soon after it was banned in India. At the University of Toronto, the Muslim Students Association (MSA) asked its members to write letters to the publisher protesting the book.  

Rushdie had been invited to Toronto to read from his novel at the annual “Authors at Harbourfront” reading series which took place in October. As reported by Diane Turbide: “during a panel discussion, a clearly agitated Moslem member of the audience had accused Rushdie of betraying Moslems. ‘How do you, Suliman Rushdie,’ he said angrily, ‘define yourself, as a Moslem, as a man?’ Rushdie responded coolly, ‘First of all, I call myself Salman, and I do not have to define myself to you.’ The exchange ended there.” Excerpts from the above-mentioned reading and from the panel discussions were presented in a television program prepared by TV Ontario.

Perhaps the first violent action against the novel in Toronto occurred on November 17, 1988, when a copy of the novel was burned in the University of Toronto’s bookstore. No one was charged in the case, and the University of Toronto’s MSA dissociated itself from the book-burning. Until February, 1989, nothing else of consequence was done by the Muslim

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540 Diane Turbide, “Dangerous Involvement”, in Maclean’s, February 27, 1989, p. 22.

541 Available as TV Ontario video cassette no. 35112, “Authors at Harbourfront: Salman Rushdie”.

community in Toronto in response to the novel.

After Ayatollah Khomeini issued his fatwā (legal opinion) of February 14, 1989, sentencing Rushdie to death, Canadian Muslims again began to protest against the book. During the two-week period from February 12 to 26, the “Rushdie Affair” received a great amount of media coverage in Canada. However, much of this coverage focussed on the international reaction and the death sentence, and relatively little information about the Canadian Muslim responses was given. On the whole, the response of Canadian Muslims consisted of peaceful protests. A number of Muslim groups in Toronto protested against the novel. ISNA formed the “Islamic Action Committee” as a temporary vehicle of protest. The committee consisted of Masood Chowdhry, ‘Abdullah Hakim Quick, S. Imtiaz Ahmad and Haroon Salamat. Anab Whitehouse, secretary of the Canadian Society of Muslims, protested, as did Mohsin Kamalia, the president of the Ja’ffari Islamic Centre.543 ‘Abdullah Idris, principal of Toronto’s Islamic Community School, also joined the protest.544

The generally peaceful nature of the Canadian protest was emphasised in a letter issued by the Islamic Action Committee of ISNA:

First and foremost, we want to make it clear that we do not condone, let alone support, any acts of violence in this connection from any quarter. We have constantly called for calm and legitimate democratic dissent, and for mutual

543 In an issue of The Right Path, 1:3 (January–March, 1993), a magazine published by the centre, seven pages are devoted to reactions to the novel, including a portion of a previously published article by Ali Mazrui and a commentary by the imam of the centre, Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi. Rizvi concluded that The Satanic Verses “is not to be taken as a fictitious novel in which any resemblance to Islamic personalities is coincidental. It was a work produced with the intention of offending the Muslims and abusing Islam — at the hands of someone who was once within the folds of that religion” (p.18). Khomeini’s fatwā against Rushdie was also supported (p. 23).

understanding between peoples of all faiths in multicultural Canada. . . We call on fellow-Muslims to remain calm, despite the extreme provocation caused by this book and the overwhelming negative light in which they and their religion are being portrayed by some segments of the Canadian society.545

Also, in an interview with The Toronto Star, Shaikh 'Abdullah Hakim Quick, the imam of Toronto’s largest Sunni mosque at that date (the Jami Mosque), was quoted as saying: “We are trying to calm people down. . . We have advised people not to have major demonstrations or book-burnings because it would probably sell more books.”546 Another group which stressed a non-violent reaction to the book was the Canadian Zone of the Islamic Circle of North America. In a pamphlet, they wrote: “We are determined to: Continue our protest until our demands are met; Stand firm on our objectives; Solve our problems through democratic and peaceful process [sic].”547

The Ahmadi community, while opposed to the book, also took a non-violent stance. Writing from his headquarters in England a few years after the crisis, Mirza Tahir Ahmad wrote: “Having studied the Holy Quran extensively and repeatedly with deep concentration, I have failed to find a single verse which declares blasphemy to be a crime punishable by man”.548

545 The letter is entitled “Metro Muslims Respond to Rushdie Book”, but it is not dated. The letter is signed by Masood Chowdry, a Toronto lawyer and member of ISNA, for the Islamic Action Committee. The text of this letter is included in Appendix One.


547 A pamphlet produced by the Canadian Zone of the Islamic Circle of North America, entitled “List of the Books Banned in Canada”. ICNA also put out other pamphlets on the controversy, entitled “Fanatic Muslims?” and “Canadian Muslims on Satanic Verses”.

Canada, he reiterated Ahmad’s position, saying that there was “no worldly punishment for blasphemy”.

Mahdi thought that Salman Rushdie would be judged at the appropriate time by Allah.

Rima Berns McGown has written about reactions to the novel among Somali Muslims in Toronto. Some Somalis were very angry with Rushdie himself, with one saying: “What he did was totally wrong”. However, many of Toronto’s Somalis were also upset with those who did not understand how they were hurt by the book. According to one Somali:

I don’t know about Khomeini; we have different ways, Shi’a and Sunni. And Rushdie is an individual. . . But what is unforgivable to me is the West. Why did they have to jump to be on his side? He insulted us. If he is hurting us, what kind of freedom is that? . . . It is the lack of respect for Muslim feelings that the West showed that bothered me, not everyone, but the majority of people.

The objective of a number of Canadian Muslim groups was to have The Satanic Verses banned by the Canadian government under existing hate literature laws. To this end, a complaint was lodged against the book by a Muslim group in Ottawa. However, contrary to the information reported in the media, the Canadian government did not take action directly as a result of this complaint. Instead, as explained in a press release issued by the Office of the Minister of National Revenue, dated February 19, 1989: “Following the original complaint,

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549 From a conversation with Naseem Mahdi, March 9, 1997.


552 Ibid., p. 179. Note that this quote shows that some Muslims in Toronto do not see themselves as part of the “West”.

Penguin Books asked for an advance ruling late Friday [February 17, 1989]. Between February 17 and 18, the book was examined by government reviewers, who recommended:

In our opinion this book should be allowed into Canada as it does not constitute hate propaganda against an identifiable group ... as unacceptable as this book may be for some people, it does not promote hatred against Muslims. The book may be questioning Mohammed, but in our opinion Canadians will not hate Muslims because their Prophet has been viewed in a given light by the author.

It should be noted that at no time was the book banned by the Canadian government, nor was this review process unusual, as the February 19 press release also said that “approximately 400 publications are reviewed annually with respect to hate propaganda provisions of the Criminal Code”. It should also be noted that there is in fact a large amount of literature whose importation into Canada is banned. And of the 191 letters sent to the Office of the Minister of National Revenue concerning the book, only 53 requested that the novel be banned. This low response rate indicates that the reaction was muted. There was no record kept of how these 191 letter-writers identified themselves, but it is clear that almost three times as many people wanted the book circulated as wanted to have it banned.

In Toronto, ISNA arranged for Muslim leaders to give interviews to television and

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553 This press release, along with other information about the Canadian government’s ruling on the book (including the synopsis of the book that was prepared by government reviewers), a list of the items banned in Canada, relevant portions of the Criminal Code and how it is interpreted, and a personal letter were sent to me by the Honourable Otto Jelinek, Minister of National Revenue. I am indebted to Mr. Jelinek for making this material available to me.

554 “Hate Propaganda” form, case number 54224. This form was part of the material sent to me by the Minister of National Revenue.

555 From personal correspondence with the Minister of National Revenue, the Honourable Otto Jelinek, September 18, 1989.
radio stations, as well as newspapers. S. Imtiaz Ahmed, the vice-president of ISNA, sent out a letter for general distribution dated February 18, 1989. In that letter, he wrote: "No one should take the law in their own hands to deliver justice to others on whims. There is a need to reconsider some preconceived notions about the Muslims and Islam, and take action, with reference to the book in question, more in line with the reality of the Muslim situation, in Canada and worldwide." A modified version of Ahmad's letter was sent to the producer of CBC's "The Journal", requesting more airtime than was given on the original broadcast of February 14, 1989. Mohammad Ashraf, the director of ISNA, sent a letter to the president of the Canadian chapter of PEN (Poets, Essayists and Novelists), asking for dialogue between the two groups. In that letter he wrote: "The Muslims in Canada respect the institutions that guard the freedom of expression. We also are deeply interested in contributing to building a society in Canada that cares for the interests of all segments of its population."

On behalf of ISNA, Ahmad sent another modified version of his letter of 18 February concerning the novel to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, John Turner (Leader of the Opposition and head of the Liberal Party) and Edward Broadbent (Leader of the New

556 In a letter dated March 5, 1989, ISNA outlined its "line of action", which included giving interviews to television stations CTV (Canada AM, interviews with Jamal Badawi and Ihsan Bagby), CITY (City Pulse, interview with 'Abdullah Hakim Quick) and CBC (The Journal, interview with S. Imtiaz Ahmad), to CBC Radio, and to the three largest Toronto daily newspapers (The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star, and the Toronto Sun).

557 The text of this letter is included in Appendix Two.

558 Ibid.

559 The text of this letter is included in Appendix Three.

560 The text of this letter is included in Appendix Four.

561 Ibid.
Democratic Party). A special assistant to the prime minister wrote a brief reply, which concluded: “Thank you for apprising the Prime Minister of the views held by the Islamic Society of North America. You may be assured that your comments are most appreciated and have been given careful note”. The director of correspondence for John Turner wrote a two-page reply. In that letter, she wrote that, “although we acknowledge the opposition which has been expressed by members of the Muslim community and remain sensitive to their values and concerns, we cannot condone any call for retribution against Mr. Rushdie, his associates, or his work”. She also noted that the “Mulroney government was remiss in failing to promptly and unequivocally condemn the Ayatollah Khomeini”.

Edward Broadbent responded personally, writing that while he was aware that “there are many Muslims who find Mr. Rushdie’s novel extremely offensive. . . . I nonetheless believe it important in a free society that men and women continue to have the right to publish views and opinions which they take seriously”.

From the minbar of the Jami Mosque, ‘Abdullah Hakim Quick urged Muslims to make telephone calls to their local elected officials, as well as to the federal government. Another imam who was involved in protests against the novel was Ezz Gad, who hosted a local Toronto television program entitled “Reflections on Islam”. He spoke out against the novel on his program, and wrote the following in a Toronto newspaper:

Muslims are also puzzled by the attitude of some writers defending obscenities

562 Letter from Susan Fletcher to Imtiaz Ahmad, dated May 2, 1989.
563 Letter from Judy Wood to Imtiaz Ahmad, dated April 19, 1989.
564 Ibid.
against innocent people, and calling it “freedom of expression.”

Are we looking at “selective” freedom of expression here? Is freedom of expression okay as long as it doesn’t touch privileged or special-interest groups, even if sacred scriptures are desecrated and revered personalities are slandered?

There are few Muslims in Canada. They have little economic or political power. If they complain because their religion is attacked, they are ridiculed and labelled uncivilized.

Muslims are sometime threatened because they speak up against wrongdoing.

Critical studies of the Qur’an are encouraged by God and the prophets. Neither God nor His prophets want people to follow the religion blindly.566

Not all Canadian Muslims, however, were in favour of banning the book. In an interview published in Toronto’s alternative weekly newspaper, NOW, a Muslim professor (Hadia Dajani-Shakeel), lawyer (Zubeida Barmania) and author (Nazneen Sadiq) all opposed efforts to ban the novel.567 Abdullah Sabree, a Toronto imam, stated: “We want to limit free access of this material into the public system. The book may be passed around underground — that’s fine— but we want social recognition that such a book not be allowed to freely circulate”.568

On March 7, 1989, Imtiaz Ahmad wrote an advertisement that appeared in newspapers across Southern Ontario, entitled “Fanatic Muslims!”569 This advertisement served to counter the media representations of some of the Muslim arguments against the book.

Ahmad wrote that Muslims “have politely sought to diffuse the situation. Yet ironically, it is

566 Ezz Gad, from a column in the Toronto Sun.


568 Ibid.

569 The text of this advertisement is included in Appendix Six.
the Muslims who are now being blamed for intolerance".\textsuperscript{570}

On March 8, 1989, at the request of the MSA, Shaikh ‘Abdullah Hakim Quick spoke at Erindale College of the University of Toronto about local Muslim responses to the book.\textsuperscript{571} He mentioned that as the imam of the Jami Mosque, he was in contact with both Muslims and non-Muslims. He told of a conversation with a non-Muslim woman who was concerned about what Muslims in her apartment building might do, and how he reassured her that “Muslims in Canada are by and large very law-abiding”. While Quick was in favour of banning the book, he also pointed out that Toronto Muslims wanted the book banned under existing hate literature laws and that their request was not unusual. He described the ethnic diversity of Muslims in Toronto, and stated that they “are here to stay [as] part of Canadian society”. Quick then stressed the peaceful nature of the protest, and urged Muslims to remain calm and peaceful. He outlined the themes in the book that were offensive, and read brief excerpts to the audience. Quick summarized his arguments by saying that the novel “is profane, contemptuous, irreverent, malicious and it stirs up hatred and public ridicule, it presents a damaging picture of Islam as a way of life”. Finally, he spoke at some length about how the “sensibilities” of Muslims had been offended by the book, and how the media never took this into consideration, never asking Muslims “why does this hurt you?” or “why are you angry?”

From my own personal observations, I can corroborate Quick’s observations. At many gatherings of Muslims, I heard people express their disgust with the novel. Some were concerned simply because of the profanity used by Rushdie. Others were angered at the way

\textsuperscript{570} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{571} The entire speech was videotaped and the video cassette entitled “Satanic Verses and Freedom of Speech” was available for sale from the Jami Mosque’s bookstore in 1989.
in which companions of the Prophet Muhammad were described in the book. Shi'a Muslims also took offence to the portrayal of the character who was based on Ayatollah Khomeini. To be sure, I heard much anger directed at Rushdie. But I also heard the voices of hurt. I particularly remember a conversation with an older Pakistani gentleman, who with a great deal of pain in his face, asked “why does he wish to hurt us so much?”

The Muslim positions—varied, but for the most part highly critical of the novel—were largely misunderstood by the Canadian media. During the crisis, one Toronto newspaper columnist wrote the following gem about Islam: “Mohammed’s wives, revered as goddesses in Islam and parodied as whores by Rushdie.” More troubling was the oft-repeated refrain of “Why were the complaints of Muslim lobbyists allowed to supersede—even briefly—one of Canada’s basic democratic values: freedom of expression?” and “How does a nation such as Canada open its arms to ethnic minorities, without importing their home-grown hatreds and tensions?” The latter sentiment was also expressed by Mississauga City Councillor David J. Culham in a letter to Shaikh ‘Abdullah Hakim Quick dated February 23, 1989: “Most Canadians have had enough! Respect and show allegiance to the values that have given economic and social well being in this society, or get out.”


573 From an article in the Toronto Sun by Ian Harvey.


575 This letter was from ISNA’s files. Throughout this letter, and another one that Mr. Culham wrote to ISNA (March 15, 1989), he uses the word “iman” (faith) instead of “imam” when addressing ‘Abdullah Hakim Quick. Also, Quick’s first name is misspelled as
Having outlined the reactions to the novel in Toronto, let me turn to my own evaluation of the reactions to the book and the significance of those reactions. As stated earlier, Rushdie thought that Islam was a good idea. However, as he wrote in *Shame*, the idea of Islam was not used to liberate people, but to enslave them to a particular political regime. In my own reading of the novel, it is against this enslavement that Rushdie is protesting. He protests against the mullahs and the "fundamentalists", who with their very selective and very limited interpretations of Islam keep their people oppressed and backward. Like the fictional Abraham of the novel, they have "used God to justify the unjustifiable". Most of the events that Rushdie describes in the novel are firmly grounded in Islamic tradition. However, contrary to the thought of many Muslims, Rushdie does not disparage Islam as such, but disparages some Muslims. Given the state of the Islamic world at the time that Rushdie was writing—the Iran-Iraq war raged; pilgrims in Mecca were shot; monarchs passed succession to their sons; members of the Arabian royal families spent more on their horses than they spent on improving the lives of their subjects; illiteracy rates in the Muslim world grew more and more frightening—it was not necessarily unfair to criticize Muslims for what they were, or were not, doing.

In the novel, Islam is presented as a good idea. It is an idea in opposition to "jabilia", or "ignorance". The prophet of Islam is not profaned, and when he is insulted, he is insulted by people who are either drunk or clearly inferior to him. He may have compromised in the

"Abdulhah". In his letter to ISNA, Culham wrote: "My remarks do not intimidate but indicate that the clear option for those that do not accept our laws is to go elsewhere". As Quick has often mentioned, his grandmother was a member of the Mohawk nation, and his ancestors were imported into North America as slaves from West Africa centuries ago. "Where is my country?", he often remarks in response to requests of "go back to your own country".
novel, but his compromise separated him from others who did not, and so were destroyed. And in victory, the mercy of the prophet in the novel is perhaps even greater than the mercy that the Prophet Muhammad had for some people when he captured Mecca, if the accounts of Ibn Hisham are to be believed. As Professor Hadia Dajani-Shakeel has written, "in the past few centuries, perhaps nobody [i.e., no Muslim] has written so bluntly, so openly, about Islam and its messenger. And so nobody is prepared to hear it." This perhaps partly explains the Muslim response. Not many were prepared to question their religion and the things that had been done in the name of their faith. Since their religion was of course faultless, it was the messenger who was to blame, so Rushdie was forced into hiding. The fact that Rushdie was forced into hiding by Khomeini is particularly ironic, as in an earlier essay entitled "Outside the Whale", Rushdie had been sympathetic towards the Iranian revolution: "We may not approve of Khomeini's Iran, but the revolution there was a genuine mass movement." And, of course, Khomeini himself was exiled by the Shah of Iran.

Was the novel obscene or indecent? It was both, but not in the way that most Muslims thought. To quote Rushdie from a panel discussion:

Freedom in a civilized society was limited by decency. Now, this sounds as if

576 For example: "The apostle had instructed his commanders when they entered Mecca only to fight against those who resisted them, except a small number who were to be killed even if they were found beneath the curtains of the Ka'ba. Among them was 'Abdullah b. Sa'd. . . . Another was 'Abdullah b. Khatal. . . . [who] had two singing-girls Fartana and her friend who used to sing satirical songs about the apostle, so he ordered that they should be killed with him. . . . Another was Al-Huwayrith b. Nuqaydh b. Wahb b. 'Abd b. Qusayy, one of those who used to insult him in Mecca". In 'Abd al-Malik ibn Hisham, The Life of Muhammad, translated by Alfred Guillaume (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 550-551.

577 Hadia Dajani-Shakeel, "A Twisted History", in Maclean's, February 27, 1989, p. 21.

it means something. It seems to me very important to say that it’s not true. That, in fact, the right to be indecent is where art comes from. If what you have to do is always be limited by what most right-thinking people will reasonably accept, then you’re dead before you start. So, in that sense, I absolutely accept that *The Satanic Verses* is a deeply indecent novel.579

Reactions to the “Rushdie Affair” demonstrate that for the most part Muslims in Toronto have become assimilated into Canadian society. They recognized the value that Canada puts on multiculturalism. As members of Canadian society, they wanted the same rights and privileges that are available to other members. They presented their case in the way that other groups had done, by issuing press releases and giving interviews to the media. That in many cases, the media did not understand their arguments shows the media’s own concerns.580 Muslims in Toronto did not ask for separate treatment. On the contrary, they wanted the existing laws on “blasphemous libel” (the idea of which many Muslims approved) to be applied to this case. On the other hand, remarks by some Muslims about “Western” persecution clearly placed them outside mainstream Canadian sensibilities. Muslim views of themselves in Toronto cannot be made uniform.

On the whole, the Canadian responses were much more muted and peaceful than in

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579 This quote is a transcription of Rushdie’s words as they are recorded on TV Ontario video cassette no. 35112, “Authors at Harbourfront: Salman Rushdie”.

580 Sometimes, the media were guilty of nothing other than simple ignorance. To state, as previously mentioned by a newspaper columnist, that Muhammad’s wives were “revered as goddesses in Islam” is a factual error. To state that Canadian Muslims were “importing their home-grown hatreds and tensions” into Canada is a much more sinister statement. It mixes errors of fact with errors of interpretation. Many Muslims are Canadian citizens, with no other “home” to which they can return. To take only my own example, I was born in Pakistan, but came to Canada when I was four, and have been a Canadian citizen since 1977. Pakistan is the country of my birth, Canada is my home (of which I am continually reminded now that I am living in the USA!). The error of interpretation is that somehow Canadians don’t have any tensions in their midst, that hatred must be imported from the home country and is not autochthonous.
other countries. In Toronto, there was a deliberate effort made by various Muslim communities to keep the protests non-violent. The protests in Toronto were not used for political purposes, in the same way that they were used, for example, in Iran or India. No Muslim leaders in Toronto used the book as an occasion to develop or consolidate their own power. The protests, although often directed to politicians, were not "political", in the sense that Muslims in Toronto were not seeking to serve their own political agendas. Many Muslims in Toronto felt hurt by the book, and their protest was in reaction to their hurt. Unlike in some other countries, such as Pakistan, there was also some sympathy and tolerance for Rushdie in Canada, and a small group of Muslims in fact did not want the book to be banned.

I think that *The Satanic Verses* marks a watershed in the history of the Muslim communities in Toronto, with five major implications. First, it forced some Toronto Muslims (even the ones who did not read it) to think critically, perhaps for the first time, about their own tradition. It challenged them to develop and articulate their own beliefs, and see how those beliefs "fit" alongside the beliefs of others. This articulation was different from, for example, the protests led by M. Qadeer Baig in the late 1970s against inaccurate portrayals of Islam and Muslims in secondary school textbooks. Second, it gave Muslims an opportunity to express to non-Muslims their discontent with the current legal system, which they felt did not protect them. It gave Muslims the opportunity, as Muslims, to request equal treatment under the law and protest the book as both "hate literature" and "blasphemous libel". Third, it allowed Muslims, as Muslims, the opportunity to challenge existing laws. Many Muslims

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51 In his speech at Erindale College on March 8, Shaikh ‘Abdullah Hakim Quick spent some time discussing what was considered as "blasphemous libel" under the Criminal Code of Canada. Using several definitions of both "blasphemy" and "libel", he argued that *The Satanic Verses* constituted "blasphemous libel" under existing Canadian laws.
wanted the existing laws changed after they could not persuade the Canadian government that
the novel was something that they considered to be hate literature or blasphemy. Fourth, it
brought together different Muslim groups, and gave them some sense of the power that they
might have if they would work together. Fifth, the event revealed the existence of at least a
small group of reformist/critical thinkers among Canadian Muslims.

The “Rushdie Affair” demonstrated to Muslims the sometimes negative way that they
are portrayed in literature and the media, and consequently how they are thought of by non-
Muslims. It made the community leaders realize that they must be more proactive: they
needed first to ensure that non-Muslims have a grasp of the basics of Islam.\textsuperscript{582} Secondly, it
demonstrated that they needed to articulate their own ideas more effectively, cognizant of
Canadian modes of expression. A consequence of the “Rushdie Affair” was that it taught
Canadian Muslims how they must alter their presentations of their Islam to accommodate that
mythical entity, the “Canadian Mosaic”. I will turn to an examination of the relevant issues
concerning Canadian Islam in the following chapter.

Some words from Wilfred Cantwell Smith’s \textit{The Meaning and End of Religion} are
appropriate here: “A religious reformer does not seek to reform religion, but seeks to reform
[people’s] awareness of their total environment, and [people’s] lives; and in the process reified
religion has often to be shattered, in order that that awareness and those lives may be restored
to wholeness.”\textsuperscript{583} With this definition, perhaps I am not too far off base in describing Salman
Rushdie as a religious reformer. However, I acknowledge that many sophisticated Muslims did

\textsuperscript{582} For an example of the type of literature created in response to the Rushdie Affair, see Appendix Five.

not share in this assessment during the time of the crises.

A decade after the "Rushdie Affair", Muslims in Toronto held a conference entitled "From the Islamic Hinterland". At this conference, they sought to redefine and reclaim the progressive and liberal elements in Canadian Islam. Many of the themes that they discussed, such as appropriations of the Qur'an, the roles of men and women, the issues of multiple identities and the existence of multiple communities of interpretation were prefigured in Rushdie's rhetoric a decade earlier.

But let the last words on this issue be Rushdie's, from his magnificent essay, "Outside the Whale":

The truth is that there is no whale. We live in a world without hiding places; the missiles have made sure of that. However much we may wish to return to the womb, we cannot be unborn. So we are left with a fairly straightforward choice. Either we agree to delude ourselves, to lose ourselves in the fantasy of the great fish — for which a second metaphor is that of Pangloss's garden and for which a third would be the position adopted by the ostrich in time of danger; or we can do what all human beings do instinctively when they realize that the womb has been lost for ever: we can make the very devil of a racket. Certainly, when we cry, we cry partly for the safety we have lost; but we also cry to affirm ourselves, to say, here I am, I matter, too — you're going to have to reckon with me. So in place of Jonah's womb, I am recommending the ancient tradition of making as big a fuss, as noisy a complaint about the world as is humanly possible. Where Orwell wished quietism, let there be rowdyism; in place of the whale, the protesting wail. . . .

Outside the whale is the unceasing storm, the continual quarrel, the dialectic of history. Outside the whale there is a genuine need for political fiction, for books that draw new and better maps of reality, and make new languages with which we can understand the world. Outside the whale we see that we are all irradiated by history, we are radioactive with history and politics; we see that it can be as false to create a politics-free fictional universe as to create one in which nobody needs to work or eat or hate or love or sleep. Outside the whale it becomes necessary, and even exhilarating, to grapple with the special problems created by the incorporation of political material, because politics is by turns farce and tragedy, and sometimes (e.g. Zia's Pakistan) both at once.

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This conference was held from September 3 to 5, 1999, at Metro Hall in Toronto.
Outside the whale the writer is obliged to accept that he (or she) is part of the crowd, part of the ocean, part of the storm, so that objectivity becomes a great dream, like perfection, an unattainable goal for which one must struggle in spite of the impossibility of success.585

From this excerpt, I highlight three key points. First, Rushdie writes of the need to cry out, "to say, here I am, I matter, too". This is being done by the Muslim communities in Toronto. They are articulating their own positions as Canadians in Canadian society. Second, Rushdie writes of the need to "draw new and better maps of reality". This is also something that Muslims in Toronto are concerned with. They are actively trying to correct the stereotypes and misinformation that, for example, are presented in the media. Third, Rushdie writes of the need for people to incorporate "political material" into the narratives of their lives. The Muslim community is also attempting to do this, for example, by urging people to join the political process and at the very least to vote in elections. Ironically, Rushdie's visit to Toronto in 1992 and his being publicly embraced by then Premier Bob Rae caused a number of Muslim groups to write letters of protest to the government.586 A similar response occurred the following year, when Rushdie met with American President Bill Clinton.587 Also in 1993, the Modern Language Association (MLA) held its convention in Toronto, and a number of


586 For example, the Ja’ffari Centre organized a letter-writing campaign, and made public letters of protest to Bob Rae at the level of the provincial government, and Barbara McDougall at the level of the federal government. See "Canada and Rushdie", in The Right Path, 1:2 (1992), pp. 43–44.

587 For example, Ahmed El-Hattab, the then Acting Secretary General of ISNA wrote an open letter of protest to Bill Clinton, published in Islamic Horizons, 22:3 (December, 1993), p. 43.
people spoke about Rushdie and the defence of free speech. A 1994 article in ISNA's magazine concluded that Rushdie "pours all his hatred, and spite for religions in his filthy novel, *The Satanic Verses*, a piece of work that hurt not only Muslims but all those who respect religion all over the world".

Two years after the "Rushdie Affair", in 1991, Muslims in Canada and around the world came together once again to protest the Gulf War. In the days prior to the Gulf War, Rushdie himself spoke about some of his concerns in an interview with Akbar Ahmed:

> There's another issue which has to do with the Gulf. Many Muslims are worried and must be worried about the implications for the community in this country. One thinks about what happened with Japanese Americans in the second world war, what happened in Britain to people who had German names in the second world war; there was increasing hostility, there was in some cases internment, there was a kind of general desire to characterise those minorities as a fifth column, or an enemy within. It seems to me that there is a great danger that something of that sort may be aimed at the Muslim community once the temperature gets so high that there's actually a war going on and it's very important in that context that all of us who are able to speak, speak very loudly against that attitude and struggle against it.

Akbar Ahmed: What do you think of the situation in the Gulf?

Salman Rushdie: There is a specific historical problem in Saudi Arabia which is the presence of Mecca and Medina. The idea of there being a very large long-term Western military presence there is something which all Muslims from wherever they are in the world, whatever their relation to this specific crisis might be, would find very, very worrying. One of the great fears is that those Holy places may be in danger and that, if nothing else, is one reason why I think there's a legitimate Muslim position in this confrontation.

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which is that one must find an end to it which is not a shooting match.\textsuperscript{590}

Unfortunately, a very big “shooting match” did in fact occur.

A number of books have been written about the Gulf War and the responses to that war.\textsuperscript{591} To summarize events, on August 2, 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait. That same day, the United Nations’ Security Council passed Resolution 660 demanding an immediate Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. On August 6, Resolution 661 was passed, authorizing the use of economic sanctions against Iraq. On November 29, Resolution 678 was passed, authorizing the use of military force if Iraq had not withdrawn from Kuwait by January 15, 1991. On January 16, 1991, the Gulf War began, and lasted until February 27, when the end of the war was announced by American President George Bush.

Once Resolution 678 was passed, a number of groups became concerned about the imminent threat of war. In December of 1990, I was asked to be the Canadian representative for an emergency meeting of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (which had non-governmental observer status with the United Nations) to take place in Cairo, Egypt. A small group of us, from different countries and representing different religious traditions, met for a

\textsuperscript{590} Originally printed in \textit{The Guardian} (Manchester) on January 17, 1991, the interview was reprinted in Michael Reder, editor, \textit{Conversations with Salman Rushdie} (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), p. 149.

week to discuss options for peace and alternatives to war. The group included Dr. 'Abdullah Omar Naseef of the Saudi Arabian based Muslim World League, and met with both the Shaikh al-Azhar and Pope Shenouda III of the Coptic Church. Unfortunately, our own and other calls for peace went unheeded.

On my return to Toronto, I became aware of and involved in Muslim attempts to seek a peaceful end to the crisis. Before the war began, there were calls from Muslims in Toronto to not attack Iraq. In January of 1991, I heard a moving sermon at the Friday afternoon prayer at the University of Toronto. At that time, the prayer was held in the basement of the Sir Daniel Wilson Residence of University College. Typically, there were a number of people who alternated in leading the prayer and delivering the sermon. This time, the sermon was given by a brother who worked in Robarts Library. He attended the prayers regularly, but I do not recall his delivering a sermon before or since. He used as his main analogy an event from the life of Muhammad, when the Quraysh plotted to kill him before the hijrah. As the story is told by Martin Lings, “every clan was to nominate a strong, reliable and well-connected young man, and at a given moment all these chosen men together should fall upon Muhammad, each striking him a mortal blow, so that his blood would be on all the clans”.

The brother giving the sermon said that this was precisely what would happen in Iraq, an attack by a multinational force in order to avoid responsibility falling on any one country.

Once the Gulf War began, a number of Muslims in Toronto spoke out about their concerns. Muin Muinuddin summarized the feelings of many by saying: “The mood of the

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community is one of anguish, concern and worry, . . . and in certain sectors, fear." Many Muslims in Toronto were opposed to the policies of Saddam Hussein, but thought that the war would do tremendous harm to the people of Iraq. Hameed Shaikh was quoted as saying: "Our greatest concern is not for just a few leaders. It's for the common people, men, women and children." A number of Muslims and Arabs, according to an article in *Maclean's*, spoke "of fear, despair and anger. Their fellow citizens, they say, have become occasionally distant, mistrustful or openly hostile."

Unlike the events of the "Rushdie Affair", there were many Canadians who allied themselves with Muslims and were opposed to the Gulf War. For example, a small group of students at Trent University in Peterborough kept a "peace fire" burning as a symbol of their opposition. One of those students, Ellen Rambukkana, echoed the words of Talat Muinuddin by saying: "I was proud of Canada's role before, as a peacekeeper."

Worldwide, there were also a number of people who voiced their disapproval with the war. On February 20, 1991, while the Gulf War was being waged, Bob Dylan sang "Masters of War" in protest after winning a lifetime achievement award at the Grammy Awards ceremony.
in New York. Another musician, Roger Waters, released a song entitled “The Bravery of Being out of Range” with lyrics that mocked the use of technology in the war. Perhaps Noam Chomsky was the most prominent intellectual to speak out against the war. Miriam Cooke has written about the Gulf War, and reactions to that war by Arab women writers. Of American media coverage of the war, Cooke wrote: “Throughout the fall of 1990, the U.S. press was filled with debate about intervention in southwest Asia. After the outbreak of the air war, however, the media’s patriotic hype silenced dissenting voices. What followed, behind the screen of clean weapons and surgical airstrikes, was confusion, friendly fire, and a brutality that the press did not cover.”

For Muslims in Toronto, the Gulf War provided yet another example of how their concerns were sometimes not understood, and how they were stereotyped as “terrorists”. The Gulf War did give them another opportunity to articulate their concerns to non-Muslims. A major difference between the Gulf War and the Rushdie crisis, however, was that in the case of the former, a larger number of non-Muslim Canadians were sympathetic to an anti-establishment critique. Muslim and non-Muslim Canadians stood shoulder to shoulder on this issue, while in the case of the Rushdie crisis Canadian Muslims were able to evoke less understanding for a position (respect for religious beliefs) that is otherwise enshrined in Canadian thought. Late twentieth-century Canadian separation of religion and politics tends

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598 The lyrics include “Just love those laser guided bombs / They’re really great for righting wrongs / You hit the target / And win the game / From bars 3,000 miles away / 3,000 miles away / We play the game / With the bravery of being out of range / We zap and maim / With the bravery of being out of range”. From Roger Waters, Amused to Death, 1991.


600 Ibid., p. 10.
to evoke in the general population little sympathy for Jews, Christians and others (e.g., Sikhs) who are seen to "import" personal, sometimes ethnic, beliefs into everyday life. The Federal election of 2000 is an example of the scorn that was heaped on Canadian Alliance Party candidates who spoke about integrating politics and Christianity. A key challenge facing both Muslim and non-Muslim Canadians in the coming decades will be how to respect human rights in a way that does not preclude religion, particularly when practised in ways outside the mainstream Catholic and Protestant traditions.

Following the end of the war, Muslims continued to protest the sanctions against Iraq. For example, Mohamed Elmasry began a letter to the editor of The Globe and Mail by stating that "Canadian Muslims strongly oppose Canada's symbolic support of this war", and concluded with the following two paragraphs:

Human life is sacred, irrespective of origin, race, color or religion. The life of an Iraqi is as valuable as that of an American or a Canadian. Human suffering is abundant as a result of natural disasters, as it has become evident in the last ice storm over Ontario and Quebec. The world does not need the U.S. to manufacture human misery, death, poverty and destruction. The Canadian government must act in the spirit of Canada's legacy as a peace making and a peace keeping nation. We Canadians should not encourage a tyranny superpower to impose its imperial policies on the world. The Canadian government must take a historical responsibility in the name of Canada-U.S. friendship to speak up in clear opposition of U.S. aggression against the people of Iraq. Not only to stop the military war but also to lift the sanctions. This would lead to a better world, not only for Iraq, but for the U.S. and Canada.601

It is important to note that Elmasry identified Canadian Muslims as "we Canadians", thereby claiming all of the rights and privileges of being Canadian. Canadian Muslim voices reflected

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601 From a letter by Mohamed Elmasry, dated February 10, 1998. Elmasry was the president of the Kitchener-Waterloo Islamic Association, and would later found and head the Canadian Islamic Congress. Available from the web page of the CIC at <http://www.cicnow.com/docs/us_agr.htm>.
in reactions to both the “Rushdie Affair” and the Gulf War show how the various Muslim communities in Canada identify themselves. Muslims in Canada have articulated that they are both Canadian and Muslim, and that these identities are not mutually exclusive, but instead are held simultaneously.

Having discussed the various communities in Toronto in the previous chapter, and responses by Toronto’s Muslims in this chapter, let us turn to an examination of the issues that I think are key to understanding Islam in Toronto.
CHAPTER 7: EXPOSITION OF ISSUES AND DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In Chapter Five, I described and discussed the various Muslim communities in Toronto. In Chapter Six, I analysed reactions in Toronto to *The Satanic Verses*, and contrasted those reactions with reactions in other places. From the description in those two chapters emerge fourteen issues necessary to an understanding of Islam in Toronto. In this chapter, I discuss those issues that I have sorted into the following three categories: Issues regarding the creation of distinct Muslim groups in reaction to the minority status of Muslims in Toronto; internal issues with which each of the various Muslim groups has to concern itself; and issues regarding cultural trends in the society at large that concern, but are not particular to, these Muslim groups. The last of these, regarding education, is so substantial that it will receive nine sub-heads.

I delineate these fourteen issues, each of which could be studied further in subsequent research. I then contrast briefly the situation of Muslims in Toronto with that of Muslims in other Western countries where they form the minority of the population, such as the USA, Great Britain, France and South Africa. I argue that there are sometimes distinct differences among these countries with regard to the practice of Islam.

1. Muslim Groups

a) *Minorities within a minority*

While Islam is a minority tradition in Canada, Sunni Muslims constitute the majority
of Toronto's Muslims. However, there are substantial minority communities who practise their own forms of Islam. Shi'i traditions are quite well represented in Toronto. As noted in Chapter Five, Abdulaziz Sachedina has estimated that the Shi'i account for some 30 percent of the Muslims in North America. According to Mahmoud Ayoub, Shi'is make up only 12.5 percent of the worldwide Muslim population.\textsuperscript{602} The fact that the Shi'i population in North America is over twice that found generally among Muslims is attributable to immigration patterns. As mentioned in Chapter Five, the Shi'i community in Canada increased dramatically after the expulsion of South Asians from Uganda in 1972 and the subsequent arrival of Muslims from other East African countries such as Kenya or Tanzania. Seven years later came the revolution in Iran, resulting in another wave of Shi'i immigration into North America. There is also a substantial Ismaili community in Canada, self-estimated to consist of some 30,000 members in the Greater Toronto Area alone. Another minority is the Ahmadi community in Toronto.

In some ways, the "minority within a minority" status of these groups has allowed them to prosper. With an official Canadian government policy on multiculturalism (discussed later in this chapter), these groups are free from the persecution that they might encounter elsewhere in the Muslim world. Many of these groups have successfully assimilated into Canadian society, with, for example, Shi'i scout troops or an Ismaili run for charity. However, this minority status sometimes means that the distinctiveness of these groups is not well understood by the majority of Canadians, who are non-Muslim. For example, I spoke with an Iranian Muslim who had done an undergraduate degree at McMaster University and

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was working on a graduate degree in history at the University of Toronto. He spoke of being in Iran during the 1979 revolution, participating in the revolution and then coming to Canada when he realized that the revolution no longer represented him. As an Iranian Shi’i who was opposed to Khomeini, he found that not many people in Canada could understand how he could be against the Shah but not for Khomeini. In a similar way, a young Ismaili woman in Toronto mentioned to me how she had developed what she referred to as a “mantra”: “I’m an Ismaili. That means I’m a Shi’a Muslim, but I don’t follow Khomeini. Our leader is the Aga Khan”.

The multiplicity of Muslim traditions in Toronto also creates issues for the teaching of Islam. Are all of the traditions taught, or does the instructor focus only Sunni understandings of what it means to be Muslim? This is discussed below in issue fourteen, “the teaching of Islam”.

b) Subordinate groups

Within the majority and minority Muslim groups described earlier are several subordinate groups. Sometimes, these subordinate groups become successful in their own right. For example, the CCMW emerged out of the CMCC as a group for Muslim women. The issues relative to the positions of women and men will be discussed below under issue six, “gender”.

Another example of a subordinate group is that of Muslim youth. There is concern in the Muslim communities about what will happen to Muslim youth. The 20th anniversary

603 For example, the cover story of a recent issue of the ICNA magazine, The Message International, 24:8 (August, 2000), is entitled “Muslim Youth: Facing Ideological Dilemmas”. ISNA has also had cover stories about Muslim youth in its magazine. For examples, see
conference of CMCC in Toronto on September 18, 1993, featured a workshop on youth issues. I was one of seven facilitators for that workshop. Among the issues discussed were alienation, identity, gender and political activity. CMCC asked five of the facilitators to form an ad-hoc committee on youth issues. This committee created a youth advisory group for CMCC. On May 16, 1994, we mailed a letter to those who attended the earlier CMCC workshop, asking for their interest in such an advisory group for youth. However, we received very few responses. Coupled with the decreased activity of CMCC in general at that time, the lack of interest in a youth group meant that not much was done to address youth issues.

Five years later, a much more successful event was held in Toronto to address the concerns of Canadian Muslims, including those of Muslim youth. This was the "From the Islamic Hinterland: Critical Debates Among Canadian Muslims" conference held from September 3 to 5, 1999, at Metro Hall in Toronto. It featured Amina Wadud, Farid Esack and Shabbir Akhtar as the keynote speakers. Part of the sponsorship for this conference came from the CCMW. Among the issues discussed were the questions of subordinate groups and how authority and leadership were determined.

Clearly, there are generational issues within the Muslim communities of Toronto. An earlier, immigrant generation may be much more conservative in its practices and

“Islamic Education: Nurturing the Future Generation”, in Islamic Horizons, 26:3 (June/July, 1997); and “Our Youth, Our Family, Our Future”, in Islamic Horizons, 22:5 (September, 1994).


605 The web site for this conference is <http://members.tripod.com/hinterland99>.
interpretations than a later generation, born and educated in Canada. For example, as described below, much of the work designed to support gay and lesbian Muslims has been done by people in their twenties and thirties. In this case, there is a parallel with the experience of other religious communities, most notably Jews and Christians, who have also struggled in recent years with issues of sexual orientation.

There were also clear generational issues discussed in Chapter Five with regard to the Shi'i communities of Toronto. To an earlier generation, the worship in the majlis might be segregated by gender, with the primary language of the service being Urdu (while the prayers were recited in Arabic). Now, English may be used as a language, with men and women seated in the same room. These practices may in turn cause conflicts between generations.

In addition to the support services provided by ISSRA, another agency has been created to help those Muslims who feel marginalised in Canadian society. With support from the Ja'fari Islamic Centre, Lifeline-Muslim Support Centre was created in 1999. Lifeline became operational on December 7, 1999, with Sabira Fuller-Pradhan as the co-ordinator.\textsuperscript{406} At present, Lifeline serves as a distress centre, with two long distance numbers that serve Muslims in North America.\textsuperscript{407} Staffed by volunteers, Lifeline is only open on a limited basis, but Fuller-Pradhan hopes that it will one day be open at all hours as a support for the Muslim communities of Toronto.

Another subordinate group is the Tablighis. They are concerned with spreading Islam to both Muslims and non-Muslims. They make a conscious effort to contact Muslims, making

\textsuperscript{406} Personal communication with Sabira Fuller-Pradhan (the same Sabira Pradhan mentioned above), December 18, 1999.

\textsuperscript{407} The local Toronto telephone number is (905) 762-0422, while the toll free number is (877) 901-LIFE (5433).
home visits to encourage people to follow Muslim practices such as observance of the five pillars. They will be mentioned in issue four below, "mission".

c) Sexual orientation

With regard to sexuality, traditional Islam recognizes the validity of only the heterosexual relationship. As mentioned in Chapter Five, a number of Muslim groups and leaders have spoken out against homosexuality. However, there are Muslims who self-identify as gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered (GLBT). There have emerged a few support groups, such as Salaam, which exists for South Asians in general and not Muslims in particular. A particular GLBT support group for Muslims is Min al-Alaq. Their name comes from a Qur'anic phrase that translates literally as "from the clot". The implication is that members consider all believers, whatever their sexual orientation, to be derived "from the same clot".

I have met in Toronto with the founder of Min al-Alaq, who has explained to me that the organization exists as a support group. Due to the homophobia of some in the Muslim community, the group does not openly advertise its meetings or even its existence. Instead, information is passed along to "fellow travellers", and counselling and support are offered on an individual basis. The group is active in Vancouver as well as in Toronto. In talking with another member of Min al-Alaq, I was reminded of the tremendous religious isolation that comes with being a gay Muslim in Toronto. His partner was a Christian, who attended an "affirming congregation" which welcomed the full participation of all, regardless of their sexual orientation. With no such option, he lamented the fact that there were no "affirming

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mosques" in Toronto. As a result, he found that although he could pray corporately with other Muslims in the mosque, he could only be "welcomed" religiously and openly in his partner's church.

Sometimes, though, there are some slight advantages due to the attitudes of those who do not approve of homosexual lifestyles. One lesbian Muslim in Toronto told me how she was unable to "come out", or reveal the fact of her being a lesbian to her parents. However, since both she and her partner were South Asian, her parents approved of her living with "a nice Indian girl" as her roommate. Were she heterosexual, she knew that her parents would never let her live with a boy to whom she was not married. So, she was able to live with her partner, even though her parents were trying to arrange her marriage to a man.

Another group for GLBT Muslims in North America is Al-Fatiha ("the Opening"). There have been meetings of this group in several major cities in North America, and an expressed desire by some to create chapters in major American cities such as Los Angeles. One of these meeting was hosted by a non-Muslim at his home in April, 2001. He reported:

They only had eight people, including myself and one Christian, but the conversations that the Muslims were having were quite interesting. One thing they were discussing were gay Sunni Muslims versus gay Shi'i Muslims. A few years ago, they were all just "gay Muslims" but now, they can be more divisive. It's much along the same lines as gay Christians who are now gay Baptists, gay Methodists, gay Adventists and so on. . . . I was quite impressed with how well these people know their religion, particularly considering how young many of them are. Faisal (the leader) is only 23. Salman is 25. The others were in their 30s, with the exception of one man in his 40s, but it's the younger ones who got the ball rolling.

While I am not aware of Al-Fatiha being active in Canadian cities, I do know that some gay Muslims in Toronto are aware of this group.

With increasing accessibility to the World Wide Web (and the anonymity that it also provides), a number of web sites for gay Muslims have been created. Any of these are
accessible to people in Toronto. One example is Queer Jihad, which has a base in West Hollywood, an area in California where gay people have an open and strong voice in local government and community affairs. From its web page, the members define themselves in the following way: “Queer Jihad is the queer Muslim struggle for acceptance: first, the struggle to accept ourselves as being exactly the way Allah has created us to be; and secondly, the struggle for acceptance and tolerance among Muslims in general.”609 Another web site is that of the South Asian Gay and Lesbian Association of New York. On its web page, one can find a description of the first GLBT Muslim conference, that was held in Boston in October of 1998.610

For many Muslims, GLBT is an oxymoron. They see homosexuality as being incompatible with calling oneself a Muslim. As an example, ISNA-Canada’s Annual Report for 1994 noted that “Alhamdo Lillah ISNA-Canada is involved heavily in the fight against homosexuality [sic] and lesbians in Canada”.611 For some of Toronto’s Muslims, there is concern about what their children are being taught in schools. This is of particular concern in a city such as Toronto that is at the forefront of “gay-positive” education. In 1999, concerned Muslim parents in Toronto formed TDMEA, the Toronto District Muslim Education Assembly.612 Currently, it is involved in a struggle with the Toronto District School Board over the proper curriculum for human sexuality in Toronto’s public schools. Not


surprisingly, it has made links with other non-Muslim conservative groups, inviting them to speak at TDMEA sponsored events.

d) Mission: making da'wa

In several passages of the Qur'an, Muslims are encouraged to do da'wa, or invite others to Islam. For example see 12:108, “Say: ‘This is my way. I invite to Allah’”, or 16:125 which begins “Invite to the way of your Lord”. There are organized groups in Toronto that try to spread knowledge about Islam. This missionary work is done not only to bring non-Muslims to Islam but also to encourage Muslims to become more faithful in their observances. As mentioned in Chapters Four and Five, the Tablighis have been active in Toronto since the early days of the Jami Mosque in the 1970s.

In 1994, the Islamic Information and Da'wah Centre International was created with an office at 957 Dovercourt Road in Toronto. It has since moved to larger headquarters at 1168 Bloor Street West. Founded by Shabir Ally, the centre distributes pamphlets and audio cassettes about Islam. In addition, it holds classes on Arabic, youth issues and Islam. The centre has organized a yearly conference on da'wa since 1994 and has a regular radio program about Islam on Saturday mornings. It also sponsors a summer program for high school students who are interested in learning more about Islam.

In addition to these two formal organizations for making da'wa, a number of Muslims do this on an individual basis. For example, as described in Chapter Five, 'Abdullah Hakim Quick would often use basketball as a way of introducing athletes to Islam. Sometimes, however, the people making da'wa are not very sensitive to how they might be perceived by others. As an example, at a Muslim conference held at a hotel in downtown Toronto in 1993,
I observed a number of young men heading out after the lunch break. They were all high school students, with the exception of a few who were in their first year of university. They left the conference hotel in a group, loudly and proudly shouting "Allahu akbar". Some of them had pamphlets about Islam that they wanted to distribute in the downtown area. When they returned a short while later, they expressed their disappointment to me that not many people had stopped to talk to them. Clearly, these young men were interested in spreading information about Islam. However, they had no formal training in how to do missionary work, and had only their own enthusiasm to lead them. Many were familiar with the debates between Muslim and Christian polemicists in North America. These debates are described in an MA thesis by Chad Hillier. Hillier argues that polemic is often intended not to convert people, but to establish one's own understanding of certain doctrines. These young men that I observed did not understand this idea, which perhaps explains their failure to attract converts.

2. Internal Issues

a) Community life and Muslim worship

Twelver and Ismaili Shi'i Muslims in Toronto have their own organizations, as do the Ahmadis. There are any number of Sunni groups such as ISNA, CMCC, CCMW, CIC and ICNA. At least seven Sufi orders are active in Toronto. The Nation of Islam has begun to be active. Since 1990, ISSRA has existed as a community resource for Muslims. Many of these

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613 Harold Chad Hillier, unpublished MA thesis, *Representations of Jesus in Contemporary Western Islamic Scholarship* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University, 2001). I am indebted to Chad and his supervisor, Michel Desjardins, for providing me the opportunity to read this thesis.
organizations sponsor community gatherings for prayer and other ritual acts of worship.

Recently, North America in general and Toronto in particular have seen a number of debates with regard to the Muslim calendar and the dates for the main religious festivals. I describe this debate as it provides information about a particular concern among Muslims in Toronto.

The two main celebrations mark the end of the month of fasting (Eid al-Fitr, celebrated on the first day of the month of Shawwal) and the sacrifice of Abraham (Eid al-Adha, celebrated on the tenth day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah). Since the Islamic tradition holds that the new crescent moon must be observed, Muslims do not rely on astronomical tables to determine the beginning and ending of months. It is this tradition of observation that has led to problems in contemporary Muslim worship, particularly with regard to the dates of the two Eids.

In countries where Muslims are in the majority, there are usually government agencies to determine the beginning and ending of months. As such, there may be official pronouncements about when to celebrate the two Eids. In North America, where there is no Muslim majority, Muslims are left to decide for themselves when they will celebrate. In the past, this lack of one (and only one) authoritative opinion led to discrepancies in the beginning and ending of the month of fasting. Recently, the lack of one authoritative opinion has also affected the determination of Eid al-Adha, which is even more problematic.\(^6\)

Several times in the past decade Muslim communities in North America have

\(^6\) Since the commemoration of the sacrifice of Abraham falls on the tenth day of the month of Hajj, one would assume that the conflict would be over when the month begins, and therefore which day is the tenth. However, the problem becomes whether the sacrifice should be celebrated everywhere on the same day it is celebrated by the pilgrims in Saudi Arabia.
celebrated Eid al-Fitr on different days. Sometimes, this has meant that people in the same city celebrate Eid on different days. Since the Muslim tradition does not actually require each individual Muslim to observe the new crescent moon and allows for people to accept the word of trustworthy observers that they have seen the new moon, this is an issue not so much of reliability as it is an issue of power. For example, a particular community may decide that it does not want to accept the opinion (and hence the authority) of a group such as ISNA, which is the largest umbrella organization for Muslims in North America.

In 1994, the Islamic Shura Council of North America established guidelines for determining the start of months and decided that "a confirmed crescent sighting report in North America will be accepted as long as such a report does not contradict indisputable astronomical information." However, these guidelines did not put an end to controversy. A recent example of controversy occurred with the Eids celebrated in the year 2000. Muslims celebrated the end of the month of Ramadan on dates ranging from Thursday, January 6, through to Sunday, January 9, 2000. Some of this, to be sure, was due to the geographical spread of Muslims throughout the world. However, some of it was due to the autonomy of local Muslim communities. For example, Muslims in both Toronto and Los Angeles

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616 From a letter sent by the Islamic Shura Council of North America, dated February 1, 1994 and signed by W. Deen Mohammed, Jamil Al-Amin, Mohammad Yunus and Abdalla Ali.

celebrated Eid al-Fitr on either Friday or Saturday. Predictably, there was concern among Muslims that they could not come together to celebrate, and that some were fasting while others were celebrating.

Many Muslims with whom I spoke expressed their dissatisfaction at the way in which the end of the month of Ramadan was decided. They could not understand why some of their friends would be fasting on the day that they would be celebrating Eid. They saw this as a lack of organization or coherence on the part of Muslim organizations. For some, this lack of unity made them see themselves more as individuals than as members of a community.

The controversy over the calendar continued to the date of Eid al-Adha for 2000. This holiday was celebrated by Muslims from Wednesday, March 15 through to Friday, March 17, 2000. Here, the controversy was over whether Muslims should celebrate this holiday on the tenth day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah or on the date that the pilgrims were offering their sacrifice in Saudi Arabia. The Fiqh Council of North America, a branch of ISNA, issued a ruling that Muslims in North America should celebrate the Eid on the same day that it was being celebrated in Saudi Arabia.\(^618\) This ruling was contested by a number of Muslim scholars throughout the world, who believed that Muslims in North America should celebrate on the actual tenth day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah.\(^619\) Here, there was the added concern among some North American Muslims about being slavish in following the practices of Saudi

\(^{618}\) This ruling, entitled “Element of Place is Dominant in Eid al Adha” is available at the following location: <http://moonsighting.com/ElementOfPlace.html>.

\(^{619}\) For example, see the ruling by the Pakistani jurist Maulana Mufti M. Taqi Usmani at <http://moonsighting.com/usmani.html> or the ruling by the American scholar, Dr. Omar Afzal, available at <http://www.ummah.net/haji/oahaji.html>.
The controversies about the calendar provide some insight into Muslim religious practices in North America. There are issues among North American Muslims as to who speaks for them, and whose rulings they will follow. Some are willing to sacrifice unity (which they claim never existed in the first place) for the principle of self-determination. Clearly, these dialogues of power among Muslims in North America will be important for those of us who are Muslim and those of us who study Islam.

Regula Qureshi has written the following about Muslim rituals in Canada: “This shared religious life appears essentially private, personal, and deeply conservative”. For many Muslims with whom I spoke, the rituals that they practice are done in private. This private practice represents a departure from the idea of corporate worship that has played an important role in defining Islam throughout history. These Muslims feel a greater affinity for their own “Islam” when, in private, they pray or fast. A number of people mentioned to me how it is the fasting they do during the month of Ramadan that connects and reconnects them to their own faith. They may be the only Muslim in their workplace, a fact which becomes apparent to their co-workers when they no longer join them for lunch or coffee breaks. They may feel uncomfortable at the mosque, and some have mentioned to me that they have

620 Of course, the Saudis have done their part to reward those who follow them. For example, the King Fahd Mosque in Culver City, California, was financed by a US$ 8,100,000 donation from King Fahd himself.


622 Regula Qureshi, “Transcending Space: Recitation and Community among South Asian Muslims in Canada”, in Barbara Metcalf, editor, Making Muslim Space, p. 58.
stopped attending mosques because it does not "fit" them. Instead, they pray in private, often in their homes. It is this private prayer that connects them to Allah and allows them to self-identify as Muslims.

b) Gender

Gender concerns both women and men. In Muslim communities in Toronto the category has typically been problematised in regards to women; future studies will need to explore implications for both sexes. As mentioned in the previous chapter, CCMW has emerged as the leading group for Muslim women in Toronto. It has been quite active in holding conferences and other workshops, working towards its goal of empowering Muslim women. Other groups such as ISSRA have also held classes and workshops for women that are led by women. In addition, the Da'wah Centre in one of its flyers mentions that it has "established classes for sisters taught by a sister".

Of course, Muslim women and men struggle with discrimination based on their gender. Some of this discrimination is surely generational, as the first generation of immigrants may not have been raised with an awareness of gender bias in society. However, the children of that first generation, educated for the most part in public schools, certainly were made aware of questions of gender.

Some Muslim organizations such as ISNA continue to have a male-dominated


624 For example, see Shaheen Azmi's PhD dissertation, Perceptions of the Welfare Response to Wife Abuse in the Muslim Community of Metropolitan Toronto (Toronto: University of Toronto, Faculty of Social Work, 1996).
leadership. This is not to say that men do not have contributions to make to questions of gender, or that they are "gender-free". However, when it is only men who are making presentations about gender, particularly if they are making presentations to women, it appears that only half of the picture is presented. There have been calls, however, for ISNA to begin rethinking gender roles by using inclusive language. Pamela Taylor wrote:

By using non-inclusive language, we are in effect reinforcing the lack of participation by women. It is clear that Muslims must strive to make their language inclusive. In order to avoid misinformation about Islam, alienation of women from the community, and misrepresentation of what women are like, we must return to the way of the Qur'an and the prophet (peace be upon him).

In Toronto, it has largely been men who have constructed gender roles for men and women.

There are also issues of gender segregation in Muslim gatherings. Some organizations are strict about this, providing separate rooms for men and women. Others have segregated seating within the same room. A few have mixed seating for men and women. Of course, many Muslim gatherings take place in private homes as opposed to public buildings. Regula Qureshi explains that,

in reality, however, networks of connectedness among women and among men have always been strong. This point bears emphasizing, precisely because the spatial element of female seclusion tends to claim much attention at the

625 The first Muslim woman to be elected to the Majlis Ash-Shura of ISNA is Khadija Haffajee of Ottawa, Ontario. She was elected in 1997, 34 years after the founding of ISNA.

626 For example, see Yusuf al-Qardawi, "The Voice of a Woman in Islam", in *Islamic Horizons*, 26:3 (June/July, 1997), pp. 65-66. It is striking to see an article about a woman's voice, written by a man, with a picture of him below the headline. Another example is a lecture that was held in Toronto on February 13, 2000. Entitled "Women in the Bible, the Qur'an and Western Society: Regaining the Lost Liberation of Women", the featured speakers were two men, Abdur Raheem Green and Shabir Ally.

expense of recognizing the autonomous role of women in South Asian Muslim homes. Home-based affairs are always in the hands of women, who also, of course, produce the repasts provided for social or religious "functions" outside the home.628

For many of the women whom I interviewed, it was questions of gender that were most important to them. Two of them had the opportunity to study issues concerning gender and Islam at the University of Toronto. They expressed their frustration at having to struggle with Muslim men who often knew far less about Islam than they did. However, they also expressed their frustration with non-Muslim male professors who also, in the words of one of them, "just didn't get it". One woman who wore hijab made reference to Rahat Kurd’s essay on hijab that was published in The Globe and Mail newspaper.629 She mentioned how she photocopied Kurd’s essay and sent it to her friends as evidence that there were other strong Muslim women’s voices that struggled to be heard. Some Muslim women mentioned how they had consciously made decisions either to wear hijab or not. The majority of women with whom I spoke did not wear hijab.

One young Muslim woman who grew up in Toronto gave me the following response regarding her concerns as a Muslim woman: “My major concern is wanting to raise my children one day as Muslims. I know that I need to focus on creating balance in my life. That balance will be made up of mental, physical, spiritual and emotional strength. I know I have the tools, I just need the discipline and perseverance to charge forward”. Another young Muslim woman who did not grow up in Toronto, but has lived there for almost a decade, said that her greatest concern was “balancing career with family, the pressure for women to marry

628 Qureshi, in Making Muslim Space, p. 52.

rather than work and my own internal struggle about working versus staying home”.

The question of gender, of course, is more complicated than just simply the positions of women. Many Muslim women (especially those in CCMW), and some Muslim men, are rethinking gender roles for all Muslims. As a male, I was able to observe many of the public rituals that were carried out by Muslims in Toronto. However, as a male, I was excluded from gatherings that were only for women. In Toronto the traditional, segregated gendered roles for Muslim men and women perdure.

c) Mosques

A number of issues have arisen for Muslims over the construction of mosques. When it comes to the construction of new mosques, Canadian law sometimes creates problems for Muslims. For example, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the Canadian Islamic Trust (CIT) was created by ISNA in 1983 to satisfy Canadian legal requirements about ownership. However, there have at times been tensions between those who have been on the board of the CIT and the people whom they claim to represent. During the meetings in the Jami Mosque in 1990 to discuss the ouster of the then imam, ‘Abdullah Hakim Quick, I did hear one of the CIT board members refer to the Jami Mosque as “his” mosque, and that “he” could decide who the leader would be.

There is also the question of financing new mosques, or renovating older ones. The costs associated with this may be great (ISNA estimated a need for $2,000,000 to finance the purchase and move to the Islamic Centre of Canada). There may be opposition from neighbourhood groups who are opposed to a new or bigger mosque in their area.

Some of the mosques may be ethnically homogeneous, such as the Madina Masjid,
which is composed almost entirely of South Asians, or the Fatih Cami, purchased by the
Turkish community and operated as a “Turkish” mosque. Other mosques may be more
ethnically varied, such as the Jami Mosque or the Friday congregation at the University of
Toronto. There may exist some degree of discomfort in certain Muslims about attending
certain mosques.\textsuperscript{630}

Another question is the function of mosques. Again, this is sometimes a generational
question. To an older, immigrant generation, a mosque may be viewed as only a place of
prayer, and not as a community centre. Their home country may well have distinct mosques
and community centres. To a newer generation, the mosque may be the only “Islamic” space
that they know, serving a variety of functions. In 1984, a film entitled \textit{A Tale of Two Mosques}
was released about the al-Rashid Mosque in Edmonton, the first mosque built in Canada.\textsuperscript{631}
This mosque was replaced with a new and larger mosque in 1982. Part of the new building
housed a gymnasium. Young people were attracted to the mosque by the recreational facilities.
A gymnasium was included in the original plans for the Islamic Centre of Canada. However,
this had to be removed due to an increased number of parking spaces required by city zoning
laws.

The function of the mosque in turn may lead to issues of gender segregation. Are
women welcome at the mosque? What if the mosque is not being used as a place of prayer but
as the location for an Islamic school— are women allowed entry for that purpose? One

\textsuperscript{630} For a description of this situation among Muslims in Germany, see Farid Esack, “A

\textsuperscript{631} \textit{A Tale of Two Mosques}, produced and distributed in 1984 by Arabeel Productions.
The three producers are Abdullah Khandwani, Jennifer Hodge and Sudha Thakkar
Khandwani.
Toronto Muslim woman mentioned that she was uncomfortable attending mosques due to their "conservative approaches that don't relate to Canadian reality or societal evolution". However, she felt that not attending the mosque would subtract from her "sense of community" with the small group of women who were there regularly.

The questions of who will be the imam of the mosque and what qualifications the imam should have are also important. A number of people have expressed dissatisfaction with mosque worship because the imam may have a poor command of English, or he may be seen as not sufficiently sensitive to issues of Canadian culture. The imams may well be young men trained in Mecca or Cairo, but Mecca and Cairo are not Toronto. As a result, a number of people mentioned to me that they no longer attended a mosque, choosing instead to pray in their own homes.

d) Marking boundaries

There has been an attempt in recent years by Muslims to make their homes more visibly "Muslim", through the use of Islamic decorations. In the past, these decorations could only be obtained with some difficulty. Now, there is a trained group of Muslim artists and craftspeople in North America, creating Islamic art. One such group is IMAN, the International Muslimah Arts Network, formed in 1997 and dedicated to art by female Muslim artists.62 The co-founder of IMAN, Safiya Godlas, makes exquisite Islamic glazed pottery. There are also Muslim calligraphers now working in North America. The most famous is

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Mohamed Zakariya, who works and trains students in Arlington, Virginia. Zakariya wrote the brochure for a travelling exhibition entitled “Letters in Gold: Ottoman Calligraphy from the Sakip Sabanci Collection, Istanbul”. That exhibition was featured at three American museums between 1998 and 2000. Zakariya was also commissioned by the United States Postal Service to design a postage stamp for Eid. That stamp, which features his calligraphy for “Eid Mubarak”, is scheduled to debut in 2001.

Aminah McCloud has written about African American Muslims who have made conscious attempts to make their homes more “Islamic” through the use of decorations. Of the Canadian situation, Regula Qureshi has written:

Consider the following vivid images of Canadian Muslim living: ritual prayers recited using towels as makeshift prayer rugs on any available floor area, subject only to identifying the direction of the Ka'ba; of reading the Qur’an during spare moments at the office desk; of holding a Sufi zikr seated informally across the space facing an unlit fireplace; of a funeral oration in the gymnasium that is part of the mosque complex; of breaking the fast during Ramadan in front of a TV or anywhere in the house; of a list of Qur’anic invocations held by a magnet on the refrigerator door.

This marking of Muslim space also occurs in Toronto. I met with one young Muslim woman who creates and sells Islamic decorative objects such as boxes or frames. She often has “shows”

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634 Mohamed Zakariya, Music for the Eyes: An Introduction to Islamic and Ottoman Calligraphy (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1998).

635 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Arthur M. Sackler Museum.

636 Aminah Beverly McCloud, “This is a Muslim Home: Signs of Difference in the African-American Row House”, in Making Muslim Space, pp. 65–73.

637 Qureshi, in Making Muslim Space, p. 48.
in her home, where she does a good business in selling these items to other young Muslims. They are used by people to decorate their own homes, or given to friends (both Muslim and non-Muslim) as gifts. Through the use of these decorative objects, Muslims are creating more visibly “Islamic” spaces in their homes.

e) Accommodations to “the West”

For many Muslims in Canada, the issue of accommodation to “the West” is an important one. A few go to the extreme of shutting out what they term to be “Western” influences, such as television or popular music. Others try to create “Islamic” alternatives to, for example, children’s television programs. Sound Vision has produced a series of videos for children entitled “Adam’s World”, featuring a young Muslim puppet named Adam and his sister, Aneesah. As discussed in the “economic issues” below, many Muslims are creating economic alternatives to using interest.

Sometimes, these alternatives are quite successful in their own right. A small butcher shop that was established in Niagara Falls, Ontario, in 1948 purchased a meat-processing plant in Kitchener in 1987. The company, then known as M.G.I. Packers, Inc., decided in 1991 to start selling halal meat when they were contacted by a Malaysian customer. They hired a number of Muslim employees, including butchers, and obtained halal certification from ISNA. They are now quite successful, to the point where they export their product to countries that have a significant Muslim population, such as Malaysia, Egypt and Indonesia. The meat, now


distributed under the name of Al-Safa, is available at many supermarkets and meat stores in Southern Ontario.640

In part, the issue of accommodation is influenced by the degree to which people feel welcomed by the Western society in which they live. The policy of multiculturalism in Canada does, I think, mean a lower level of discrimination than that found in America. And, of course, the history of institutionalised racism is much longer in America than it is in Canada. The issue of racism is discussed below.

For some in the Muslim world, there is great interest in how Muslims in North America are living out their Islam. As mentioned in Chapter Three, I had the opportunity to meet briefly with the Shaikh al-Azhar in 1990. I mentioned that I was Canadian and brought greetings to him from Muslims in Canada. He stated that he was interested in what was happening in Canada and the United States, and that he looked with much interest at how North American Muslims were creating Islamic institutions in a non-Muslim setting. He saw this as the future of Islam.

3. Cultural Trends in Canadian Society

a) Interfaith dialogue

There have been attempts at dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Canada going back at least to the 1939 visit to Canada by Maulana Siddiqui, described in Chapter Five.

640 The company has a web page at <http://www.halalsafa.com>. One of its print advertisements to retailers from 1997 reads: "By retailing our Halal beef products, you'll be attracting customers who may not normally frequent your store. Consider this: over 400,000 Muslims reside in Canada, 8 million in the USA and in excess of 1.2 billion throughout the world. Imagine the extra customers!"
Some Canadian Muslim communities were dependent on support from Christians for early meeting facilities. For example, the first public prayer service in Ottawa (1963) was held in the basement of a Christian church. According to a former president of the Ottawa Muslim Association, “we have to acknowledge the help we got from Christians, especially the United Church”. Since 1980, the National Christian Muslim Liaison Committee has existed as an official vehicle of dialogue. Led by the largest Protestant denomination in Canada, the United Church of Canada, there have been a number of conferences and workshops on interfaith dialogue. Several useful resources have been produced as a result of these workshops. This interfaith work also involves the attendance of non-Muslims at Muslim rituals and celebrations and the attendance of Muslims at non-Muslim religious ceremonies. The result is an “Islam” that influences and in turn is influenced by the other traditions with which it comes into contact.

Muslim leaders in Toronto have made a number of comparisons between their communities and the Jewish communities. They are appreciative of the fact that the Jewish communities in Toronto have been able to build not just synagogues, but educational facilities


642 Ibid.


644 For an example of this, see Amir Hussain, “Shannon’s Song”, in Stories in my Neighbour’s Faith, pp. 101-106. Another example in the same collection is Zohra Husaini’s “The Tragedy of Karbala”, where on page 31 she connects Imam Hussain with Jesus and Karbala with Calvary.
and medical centres. There is a desire among many Muslims to match the success of the Jewish communities in Toronto with regard to creating public institutions as well as public support for their religious tradition.

As a result of the interfaith dialogue in Toronto, many non-Muslims are aware of some of the basic elements of Islam. By contrast, cities such as Los Angeles do not have the same level of interfaith dialogue. Having participated in interfaith dialogue in both cities, I find that people ask me basic questions about Islam in Los Angeles. By contrast, in Toronto, people had a basic knowledge and instead were interested in deeper questions.

There is also the issue of what some of the underlying assumptions of religious pluralism mean for Islamic theology in North America. Are we teaching things that are old news to our students or things that our students are not prepared to hear? As an example, when I say, “I have said Friday prayers in the Aqsa mosque and in the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, and I have prayed in the sweat lodge in Manitoba, and I do not think that Allah distinguishes between these prayers”, I get some very interesting student reactions. Some want to hear more about each of these occasions. Some are genuinely interested in connections between Islam and the religious traditions of First Nations. Others are horrified that I have prayed with non-Muslims or that I have linked the lodge with the mosque.

b) Islam in prison

In 1994, the CMCC began to work with the Correctional Service of Canada to assist Muslims who were imprisoned. Muin Muinuddin was actively involved in prison chaplaincy, visiting inmates in the Don Jail in Toronto. He was also an advocate for Muslim prisoners to receive halal meals. In Scarborough, the Scarborough Muslim Association helped to sponsor
the Muslim Inmate Assistance and Rehabilitation Program. In one of its brochures, the program estimates the Muslim population in Ontario's prisons to be between eight and twelve percent. They work as volunteers not only to help Muslim inmates but also to spread knowledge about Islam in prisons. While the attempt in Toronto to make da'wa among non-Muslim prisoners is usually supported in the Muslim community, the idea that there are Muslim inmates who need support is not well received. I have heard imams give sermons or talks where they boast of the fact that Muslims do not break the law.

c) Racism and discrimination

Unfortunately, racism and discrimination are problems for Muslims as well as for non-Muslims. Some mosques are segregated by ethnic groups. With the influx of refugees in the 1990s, the problem of racism was exacerbated for certain communities, particularly the Somali community. Virginia Lee Barnes and Janice Boddy have published an oral history of one Somali woman who moved to the United States as an adult. Rima Berns McGown has written an excellent account of the Somali community in Toronto. She reports that by 1995 there were some 30,000 Somalis in Toronto. Many Somalis see themselves as being

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647 Ibid., p. 14. This number is also given in Boddy's "Foreword", p. viii.
discriminated against in Toronto. Berns McGown writes the following:

Yusuf, thirty-four, called Canada “tolerant” despite having experienced racism in the country. He was once attacked and beaten by what he described as a group of street thugs for being black, but he was more concerned about the anti-Muslim racism that he detected even at university. “Canada is a most tolerant society. It is second to none but far from perfect. Racism is alive and well here. Even things that Canadians take for granted are more difficult for me. If I call to get my cable installed, my accent says I am a foreigner and it will take longer for me than for other people. I got higher marks in university if I wrote my initials on an exam, so people didn’t know I was a Muslim. Anti-Muslim racism is worse than colour racism here. Still, Canada is home. I’m here to stay and very proud to be Canadian”.

The Somalis with whom I spoke reiterated that they are discriminated against because they are Brown or Black, but also because they speak English with an accent. They may also be discriminated against because of their dress or their customs. One Somali mentioned to me how, as he and another Somali were holding hands, they were subjected to homophobic taunts from schoolboys.

The Somali Islamic Society of Canada was incorporated in 1990. In November of 1996, they purchased a building at 16 Bethridge Road in Etobicoke with the intention of creating a mosque. This was named the Masjid Khalid Bin Al-Walid.

There are also the more general problems of Muslims, as ethnic minorities, being discriminated against in Canadian society. Some of the people I interviewed mentioned that it was their ethnicity that was the first thing that other people noticed. One South Asian recalled that he was known as “Paki” long before any of his schoolmates knew him to be a

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650 The mosque has a web page at <http://www.khalidmosque.com/english.htm>.
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Nuzhat Jafri, who

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grent

up in

Toronto,

has

written

the following:

In the early twenties, I was in my teenage years, and the need to be accepted by my peers and mainstream society was enormous. As a child, I felt very comfortable telling people where I came from. As a teenager, I hesitated to tell people that I came from Pakistan. Paki-bashing had become commonplace and I was afraid to have all the stereotypes attributed to “Pakis” also attributed to me. The odd thing was that [when] I did tell people where I was from, people would say to me, “you don’t sound like it,” or “you don’t look like it.”

Many South Asian Muslims in Toronto would be able to tell accounts similar to Jafri’s.

d) Economic issues

With the Islamic prohibition on interest, a number of creative options have been developed. There are now, for example, Islamic stock index funds, which include only those companies that are not considered to be un-Islamic. One such fund is the Dow Jones Islamic Index Fund, which was created in 1995. According to the fund’s advertising information, “the Index consists of U.S. common stocks that meet Islamic Investment principles. Excluded are certain industries (e.g. alcohol, tobacco, pornography, gambling, banks) as well as companies that derive a substantial amount of impure interest income or have high debt.”

Another such fund is the Amana Mutual Funds Trust, which has two available options, the

651 And as he recalled, a “Paki” in schoolyard usage was anyone who was South Asian, whether they were from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh or Sri Lanka. In fact, whether they were Muslim was also irrelevant, as he recalled people that he knew to be Sikhs, Hindus and one Buddhist also referred to as “Paki”.


653 For information on this fund, see <http://www.investaaa.com>.

654 From an advertisement that takes up the back page (p. 36) of the Pakistan Link newspaper, September 29, 2000.
Amana Growth Fund and the Amana Income Fund.\textsuperscript{455} These funds are advertised on their web site as "halal investing" and described in the following way: "The Amana Funds invest according to Islamic principles. Generally, these principles require that investors share in profit and loss, receive no interest, and that they not invest in businesses such as liquor, wine, casinos, pornography, gambling and interest-based financial institutions".

Also, Muslims have created trusts and co-ops, such as those mentioned in the previous chapter, which allow people to purchase homes without a mortgage. While the majority of Muslims in Toronto do not participate in these endeavours, the number who do is rising. There is also interest among non-Muslims in Islamic forms of banking and economics.

e) The teaching of Islam in North America: "The Two Sons of Adam"

One of the main concerns of Muslims in Toronto is the education received by the younger generation. The beginnings of Muslim primary and secondary schools were described in Chapter Five. In 2001, there were 18 Islamic schools in the Greater Toronto Area, with another seven in the rest of Ontario. While the number of Islamic schools is greatly increased from the first school established in the basement of the Jami Mosque in 1981, Islamic schools represent only a small fraction of the some 725 independent schools in Ontario. Estimates of the number of children enrolled in Islamic schools in Ontario in 1999 ranged from 2,240 (from the Ontario Ministry of Education) to 4,000 (from Muslim organizations).\textsuperscript{454} Clearly, the issue of Islamic schools in Ontario is an important one. Jasmin Zine is writing about

\textsuperscript{455} Information on these funds can be found at \textless http://www.saturna.com/amana/amana.html\textgreater .

Islamic schools for her PhD dissertation at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

It is in colleges and universities that Muslims in Canada usually have their first serious opportunities to learn about their own traditions and to articulate their own ways of being Muslim. There is a marked difference here from the experience of Christian or Jewish students. There are any number of Christian or Jewish schools in Toronto, in addition to a number of religious institutions of learning. By contrast, only a small percentage of Muslim students are the product of Islamic schools. They do not have the same opportunities to learn about their religion that are available to Jewish or Christian children.

Between 1994 and 1997, I taught courses on Islam at three different universities in Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University, McMaster University and the University of Waterloo. Since 1997 I have taught courses on Islam at California State University, Northridge. It is my experience as a Muslim who has taught for three years in Southern Ontario and for three years in Southern California that has given me some insight into the teaching of Islam.

The title of this issue comes from 5:27 of the Qur'an, “Recite to them in truth the story of the two sons of Adam”. In the Qur'an, these sons are not named. The Islamic tradition gives them the names of Hābil (Abel) and Qābil (Cain). Many of us are familiar with this story not from the Qur'anic accounts of 5:27-32, but from Chapter Four of the book of Genesis. I begin with the biblical story, and then return to the Qur'an. In Genesis 4:2, we are told that “Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground”. They both make their offerings to the Lord, who respects the first-born animals of Abel but not the first fruits of Cain. As a result, Cain out of jealousy and anger murders Abel.

It is this conflict between Cain and Abel, the conflict between the nomad and the agriculturalist, that I use as my main metaphor for describing the teaching of Islam. In my
appropriation of the metaphor, the university is the city, and the student the nomad. I concede at once that many of us are teaching nomads, but the institutions remain more or less "fixed". Students come and go, but the university remains. It is a two-way interchange, to be sure. Nine relevant issues have arisen for me over the past six years of teaching Islam. I have divided this list of issues into the following four categories: the assumptions of the instructor; the assumptions of the students; the role of the instructor in the modern university; and the political act of teaching.

(i) The assumptions of the instructor

1) There is the question of teaching Islam. I use a deliberate ambiguity here, for I teach about Islam, but I also teach Islam, mostly to Muslim students, but to non-Muslim students as well. At the beginning of each course I ask students to say something about themselves, and why they are taking that particular course. Usually, about half of the students self-identify as Muslims, and many of them state that they are taking the course to learn more about their religion. With this, the easy dichotomy of religious studies vs. theology becomes not so easy any more. The Muslim students are learning about Islam, but since it is their own tradition, it has a personal impact on many of them. They may have no other place to learn about their own tradition.

2) There is the issue of who teaches whom. Muslims/non-Muslims teach Muslims/non-Muslims. Jane McAuliffe has talked about what it means for her as a Catholic to teach Islam to Muslim students at the University of Toronto, where she may be the only non-Muslim in the classroom. One also thinks about the questions of gender raised by Annemarie Schimmel when she was the only woman teaching at the Faculty of Theology at the
University of Turkey. What attitude does the instructor, usually non-Muslim, have to Muslim students in his or her class? On January 4, 2000, the Detroit News reported that Muslim students at two community colleges had filed complaints against their instructors. One student at Washtenaw Community College was prevented from saying “bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim” before the beginning of her presentation. She was offered a formal apology by the college’s president the next day. The other case was more troubling, involving a student at Oakland Community College, whose instructor brought in an article entitled “Should we be afraid of Islam?”, and then allegedly said: “A religion that has a sword for a symbol, I guess we should be afraid of them”. I note that both of these incidents occurred in Detroit, a city with a large and established Muslim population.

When the instructor is a Muslim, Muslim students, even more than usual, may expect to learn about only the type of Islam with which they are familiar. As an example, I had a conversation with a Muslim woman who was a volunteer at ISSRA. She was also enrolled in a course on Islam at a university in Toronto, where her instructor was a Muslim woman. The student complained to me about her instructor, claiming that the instructor was “not a good Muslim”. She expected to have her own version of Islam taught exclusively in the class and was distressed that the instructor was teaching about other versions of Islam. She was also concerned that her instructor did not wear any covering over her hair and sometimes wore short-sleeved clothes.

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3) The above comment raises the issue of what, if any, type of "Islam" is considered "normative". Is the course taught from a Sunni perspective? How does one teach about groups that are marginalised, such as the Ahmadi community, or groups, such as the Nation of Islam, that are considered to some extent un-Islamic by other Muslims. Is there adequate discussion of the Shi'a, who form substantial minority communities in a city such as Toronto? Sometimes, there is a problem when some Muslim students do not consider other groups to be Muslim enough for them. Herbert Berg, while teaching a course on Islam at York University, mentioned that some of his students were concerned that he was spending time teaching them about the Nation of Islam, who they considered to be non-Muslim. I also had the same question posed to me by a student involved in the MSA of McMaster University when I taught a course on Islam in the Modern World. When I mentioned to the student that Louis Farrakhan had made the Hajj several times, an act reserved for Muslims, the student began to rethink his position on the Nation.

4) There is also the issue of why we read early versions of texts as the correct version. To illustrate this issue, I return to the line from the Qur'an with which I began this section. In the Qur'an, the story about the two sons of Adam is usually understood not as the agriculturalist slaying the nomad but as the older slaying the younger. In many commentaries, there is a link made here to the older traditions of Judaism and Christianity and their enmity towards Islam. When we teach, why do we assume that the biblical text gets things right, and the Qur'an, where it conflicts with biblical accounts, is in error? The Qur'an uses the phrase "in truth" to emphasise the idea that the earlier version is wrong. The story in the Qur'an continues with God sending a raven who scratches at the ground to remind the one brother that his murdered sibling lies unburied. This is an incredibly rich text (it continues with a line
similar to that in the Mishnah about the value of saving or killing one life), and yet how many of us teach it? Or, to take another example, when I talk about Abraham in the Qur'an, I ask students why they assume that Abraham is Jewish. This startles some of them, the idea that Abraham (or Jesus, to take another example) is claimed as a Muslim by Muslims. Husein Khimjee, who taught a course on Islam at Wilfrid Laurier University, has had similar experiences when he talks about how Muslims acknowledge, as Muslims, a number of biblical prophets. It needs to be added that the question of origins is highly complex, since modern Muslim communities usually consider the Qur'an absolutely central to life—so, while wanting to deconstruct their third place standing on the Judeo-Christian-Muslim trajectory by questioning a previous myth of origins, they also want to construct another one by placing priority on their founding text.

Related to this issue is the question of why we often do not look to Muslim scholarship, or look at it with suspicion. At the 1999 meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Boston, a colleague used the phrase, "Muslim or critical scholarship". This statement was not questioned, but a Muslim woman (Saadia Shaikh of Temple University) talking about the Qur'an as patriarchal was questioned by those present, including a number of Muslims. Again, there is a discontinuity with the way in which Islam is taught as compared to the teaching of Judaism and Christianity. For both of those traditions, there is a great deal of material, written by self-identified Jews or Christians, that is regarded as "critical" and often used in the classroom. I do not know how many people use texts for their classes on Islam that are written by Muslims.
(ii) The assumptions of the students

5) There is the issue of what one does with the “fundamentalists” in the audience, who are typically young males, with the assuredness that only young males can have that they alone possess “the truth”. For example, at a lecture given by Farid Esack at California State University, Northridge, on November 11, 1999, a young man stood up during the question period. He questioned why Esack presented less than a fawning picture of Islam in South Africa and reproached him for airing “dirty laundry”. I thought to myself that this young man couldn’t have been any more than three or four years old when Esack was in jail in South Africa, fighting against apartheid from an Islamic perspective (and in the words of Hunter S. Thompson, “that’s prison, in South Africa”). And this young man has the nerve to question Esack’s “Islam”?

I have had students in Toronto tell me that music is forbidden in Islam. When I play them music that has been recorded by Muslims, the students charge the musicians with being unbelievers. Of course, the students are unable to tell me why they think that music is forbidden to them.

6) There is the issue of multiple identities. In the USA, my primary identity is as a Canadian, and not as a Muslim. Similarly, our students have multiple identities. How do we properly address the multiple identities that we all have? In the North American context, where I find Islam to be marginalised, I do sometimes see myself as “more” Muslim than I do at other times. Shawn Green, the Jewish baseball player who was traded from Toronto to the

659 I have no particular fondness for this word, but Farid Esack has reclaimed it with his South African pronunciation/contraction of “foon-das”.

Los Angeles Dodgers, has said that following the example of Sandy Koufax, “he would likely not play baseball on Yom Kippur in the future, not for religious reasons, but to make a statement”. And so I make a statement, by deliberately beginning with a Muslim greeting of peace to self-identify myself as a Muslim. Add to this the question of being a “role model”, a Brown person in a job where, according to a recent survey from the NEA, 92% of my colleagues are White. What do these facts do for us and our students?

(iii) The role of the instructor in the modern university

7) The issues raised by the uses of new technology in teaching are vital throughout the academy. I have a web page and am encouraged to do so by my university. However, I am troubled by the assumption that technology makes for better students, that a student with unlimited access to a powerful computer is somehow a “better” student. To be sure, it is precisely in a “developed” country like Canada that the use of high technology would sculpt people’s self-awareness into new formations, including religious self-awareness.\(^{66}\) Muslims in Toronto and in other parts of the world have access, through the World Wide Web, to an ever increasing number of web sites that help them to develop their understandings of what it means to be Muslim. Since the teaching of Islam in new forms would have an impact on that self-awareness, this possibility needs to be studied by communications scholars. Some questions that need to be addressed include: Are immigrant students more, or less, disadvantaged by the use of new technologies in the classroom? What are the gender implications? And will the use of new technologies lead more quickly to a loss of group

\(^{66}\) I am here thinking of the important work in this area by another Canadian, Marshall McLuhan. The University of Toronto fittingly sponsors an on-line journal devoted to his work at \(<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/mcluhan-studies/mstudies.htm>\).
identity, or can they serve to reinforce it?

(iv) The political act of teaching

8) There is the question of when and whether to politicize certain issues — and whether any issue can be without political implications. The first event that I co-ordinated at California State University, Northridge, as part of our Study of Islam Program was a showing of a documentary film on the national poet of Palestine, Mahmoud Darwish. The film, *As the Land is the Language*, was made by an Israeli/Moroccan director, Simone Bitton, who spoke about the film that she had made. I deliberately wanted to have her as the first speaker, as she is a non-Muslim. I don't want to narrowly define “Islamic Studies” as a topic suitable only for Muslims. There is a scene in the film where Darwish is reciting one of his poems and repeats the line “I am, and I am here, and I am, and I am here...”. Darwish is not at all an “Islamic” poet, yet the issue of Palestine and the Palestinians is such an important one to Muslims. At the end of the film, a number of students came up to me and said that they had never heard the Palestinian cause articulated before. Now, when I can, I try to “sneak” in some of his poems, particularly a few lines from “Identity Card” (*Bitaaqat Haweeya*), published the year before I was born, when Darwish was himself only 22:

662 This in itself is a contested idea. My own thoughts on this area were first influenced by Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, translated by Myra B. Ramos (New York: Continuum, 1993 [1970]). I am indebted to Dr. Larry Williams of Surrey Place Centre in Toronto, who offered me his reminiscences of Freire from the time that Williams helped to establish a department of psychology in São Paulo, Brazil. Another important work in this area is bell hooks [lower case sic], *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

663 Not simply articulated well, they had never heard it articulated at all before this film.
Write down at the top of the first page:
I do not hate people.
I steal from no-one.
However
if I am hungry
I will eat the flesh of my usurper.
Beware beware of my hunger
& of my anger.44

How can we not talk about situations such as those in Palestine or Chechnya in our courses on Islam? Of course, this is not unique to the study of Islam. Can one talk about India without talking about the problems that the Indian government calls “communalism”?

Tied into the political awareness mentioned above, there is a sense of activism that I try to pass on to my students. I often make reference to Muhammad Ali, and how he, as a Black Muslim, affected America. In the 1996 documentary film When We Were Kings (directed by Leon Gast), George Plimpton recalls his memories of the fight between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman. In his reminiscences, Plimpton talks about a poem that Ali read to a gathering of university students. The poem was two simple words, and Plimpton claimed it was the shortest poem in the English language. The poem was “Me. We”. This, for Plimpton was the essence of Ali’s gift: the ability to make a connection with people, to transcend the “me” and get to the “we”. As an academic, I try to get students to do this: to think not only of themselves and how ideas affect them in isolation, but how they are an integral part of the world around them, to link experiences, to share them, to make people aware of how they are connected to other people. This is what informs my ideas of pedagogy.

As an academic, I rage against the immorality of the notion “academic neutrality”. All too often, we academics are silent when our voices need to be heard. We are, at bottom,

afraid. It is Farid Esack (who was the second guest speaker for the program that I am trying to create, with Riffat Hassan being the third and Brian Cantwell Smith the fourth speaker) that has helped me to conquer this fear, to help me realize the links, that I need to make my voice heard against oppression and injustice. One of the men that we both admire is the recently deceased Archbishop Dom Helder Camara of Brazil. Archbishop Camara’s most famous saying speaks about the nature of telling the truth and making a difference. “When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist”. This is also Esack’s gift, the ability to ask the difficult questions, which are often the most basic questions. Why is there oppression? Why do we oppress each other? Why do we not link oppression on the basis of race with oppression on the basis of gender or sexuality?\footnote{For two essays that discuss these linkages, see Karen Brodkin, “Once More into the Streets”, in 

9) Who pays for our scholarship? Along with the notion of academic neutrality (and by the way, why is it that we in the study of religion are asked to be neutral, while our colleagues in the business school are free to make converts?) is the notion of academic freedom. Who “controls” scholarship? For whom are we writing? Who pays for our scholarship?\footnote{I am here indebted to the work of Neil McMullin at the University of Toronto, who was the first person in the study of religion to make me aware of this question.} The problems with this are evident in the sciences. For example, Nancy Oliveri
struggled with a major drug company, Apotex, at the University of Toronto.\footnote{For information on this case, see the following article from The Bulletin of the University of Toronto, available at <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/bulletin/oct25_99/art4.htm>.} What about for us? Whom do we try to please? Colleagues? Deans and administrators? The "community"? What if the community disapproves, and the administration backs the community (as in the case of Tazim Kassam, who was almost surely denied tenure at Middlebury College for publishing a scholarly book that met with the disapproval of some members of the Ismaili community)?\footnote{I am indebted to Tazim Kassam for her willingness to discuss her situation with me.} What about trying to do fund raising in the community for "controversial" research? Already, the University of Toronto has seen a disagreement with the Sikh community over the funding of a chair in Sikh studies. Will the same issue arise if the university actively seeks donations from the Muslim communities of Toronto?

These are some of the many issues with regard to teaching Islam. I think that they are important to an understanding of Islam in Toronto. It is at the university level that so many Muslims in Toronto are first able to learn about their own religion. It is also at the university level that many non-Muslims first learn about Islam.

4. The Question of Distinctiveness

In this chapter, I have delineated some of the issues that are important to an understanding of Islam in Toronto. Any of the previous fourteen issues could be investigated further to gain a more detailed description of the life of Muslims in Canada. Many Muslims are influenced by their organizations and the leaders of those organizations. There is a considerable degree of homogeneity within those organizations. Of course, the organizations
are themselves heterogeneous.

There are also a number of Muslims in Toronto who do not identify with any particular organization. In part, this makes it difficult to estimate precisely the number of Muslims in Toronto. One simply cannot "add up" the numbers of those who attend mosques or are members of ISNA, ISSRA, CMCC, or any other Muslim group. For these Muslims, there may be issues of differing interpretations with the organizations or with the leaders who they feel do not represent them.

The situation of Muslims in Toronto has some parallel with the situations of Muslims in other countries. There are, to be sure, other countries where Muslims struggle to articulate their Islam in a society which may be predominantly Christian, Western and modern. One thinks of the USA, Great Britain, France and South Africa as other examples. However, all of these countries have their own defining characteristics. I argue that there is a Canadian Islam, sometimes quite distinct from these other, equally valid, visions of Islam.

a) Contrasts With European and South African Muslim Communities

As outlined earlier in this chapter, Muslims in Toronto do face racism and discrimination. However, Canada does not have nearly the same history of institutional racism as South Africa. Abdulkader Tayob writes that: "South Africa has undergone various forms of European occupation and control. Dutch company rule was followed by English colonization". With the end of apartheid and the government of Nelson Mandela, modern South Africa may well develop parallels with Canadian society. At the present time, South

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Africans are busy determining what will be the future of their country.

There is also a diversity of national origins that creates differences between South African, European and Canadian Muslim communities. In South Africa, the first Muslims were of Southeast Asian origin. These Muslims were joined by South Asian (particularly from India and Bengal) and African (particularly from Somalia) Muslims, with the South Asians becoming the majority community. In European countries, Muslims immigrants tend to be from one specific geographical area. Thus the majority of immigrant Muslims in Great Britain are from South Asia, while immigrant Muslims in Germany are largely from Turkey, immigrant Muslims in Italy are from Albania, and the majority of Muslims in France are immigrants from North Africa. As described earlier in this dissertation, the ethnic composition of Canadian Muslim communities is much more diverse than it is in Europe or South Africa. While the majority of Muslims in Toronto are of South Asian origin, there are substantial communities of Somali, Bosnian/Croatian, and Middle Eastern Muslims. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the first Muslim organization in Toronto was created by Albanians.

France and Great Britain have their own histories of colonialism and colonized peoples. There are similarities, I think, to the situation of those Muslims of Algerian descent in France with those Muslims of South Asian descent in England. One sees the Muslim Parliament in England as an example of the attempt to create separate but parallel institutions for Muslims in Great Britain. In Toronto, there have been calls by the Canadian Society of Muslims to implement Islamic personal law, but this call is not well supported by the majority

\(^{671}\) *Ibid.*

of Toronto’s Muslims.

b) Contrasts With Muslim Communities in the USA

The closest similarity for Muslims in Canada is the situation of Muslims in the United States. There are, of course, a number of similarities between Canada and the United States. In both countries, Muslims form minority communities of approximately the same number in proportion to the total population in their respective country. There is a common educational, scientific and technological culture shared by Canadians and Americans. Both countries share a communications system including news and entertainment media. Despite “civil religion”, there is a largely parallel secular political ethos which locates major areas of public welfare and policy outside the administrative control of religious groups. Although Catholics outnumber Protestants in Canada (and in some States such as California), it has been Protestant Christianity which has been the tradition defining the social values in the two countries.

With regard to Muslim communities, there are important differences between Canada and the United States. First, there is a difference in the ethnic composition of the communities. A 2001 study of mosques in America documented ethnic composition, finding that: “At the average mosque, one-third (33%) of members are South Asian, three-tenths (30%) are African American, and a quarter (25%) are Arab.”67 No one of these three ethnic groups dominates to the exclusion of the others. As described throughout this dissertation, the principal single “voice” among Muslims in Toronto is the South Asian voice.

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67 Ihsan Bagby, Paul M. Perl and Bryan T. Froehle, The Mosque in America: A National Portrait (Washington: Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2001), p. 3. This study estimated that some two million American Muslims were associated with a mosque.
Second, as demonstrated by the press coverage in September and October of 2000 about the death of Pierre Trudeau, there are also important differences between the two countries with regard to the issue of multiculturalism. Trudeau, with his vision of "the Just Society", was seen by many as the exemplary Canadian leader. Many Canadians see the policy of multiculturalism, implemented by Trudeau, to be one of the main differences between Canada and America.

The Canadian Multiculturalism Act was officially assented to on July 21, 1988. Section 3.(1) of the act in part reads:

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to (a) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage; (b) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future.

It is important to note that this act was assented to unanimously. The act reflected trends in the Canadian government going back to the early 1970s. According to the Canadian government, the important difference between the Canadian Multiculturalism Act and the

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674 One of the finest pieces was by Michael Valpy, "The Dream, the Vision, the Style, the Man", in *The Globe and Mail*, September 29, 2000. Valpy wrote: "He was —is— our one mythological prime minister, our one mythic hero . . . . Through mythic heroes we tell our cultural story. Pierre Trudeau, and some might squirm a bit at the language here, was the divine enhancement of the earthbound Canadian". At the funeral, it was pointed out that Fidel Castro shared a pew with Jimmy Carter, something "that would not have brought joy to the U.S. State Department to see". From John Gray and Tu Thanh Ha, ""Je T'aime, Papa", in *The Globe and Mail*, October 4, 2000.


Employment Equity Act is that the latter "focusses on the workplace, whereas multiculturalism policy, which has strong social, cultural, political and economic dimensions, has a wider scope and focusses on the whole of society". 

There is, of course, a distinction between the diversity within the Muslim communities of Toronto and the diversity in the wider society within which those communities exist. While South Asians form the majority of Toronto's Muslim communities, there are important contributions from Muslims of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Historically, some of the important contributions to Muslim life in Toronto were made by Albanian and Croatian Muslims. More recently, mentioned a number of times in this dissertation (especially in Chapters Five and Six) is the contribution of Shaikh ‘Abdullah Hakim Quick to the Muslim life of Toronto in the 1980s and 1990s. Quick was of mixed Caribbean, African and First Nations ancestry, but was perhaps the most "visible" imam in Toronto. More recently still, as outlined in this chapter, there has been a growing Somali presence among the Muslim leadership in Toronto.

In the United States, the emphasis is not on multiculturalism and the rights of groups, but on integration and the rights of individuals. However, the United States is moving to a practical multiculturalism, though not yet a governmentally stated multiculturalism. This move is pronounced in California, as evidenced by the information being released from Census 2000. 

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68 For more information on the changing demographic trends in the United States, see the web page for the Ralph and Goldy Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies at UCLA, located at: <http://www.sppsr.ucla.edu/lewis/hs—CensusUpdates.html>.
A third difference between Islam in Canada and the United States is related to the first issue of differing ethnic compositions. In America, one of the largest Muslim groups is African Americans, while in Canada the largest group is South Asians. There are sometimes tensions between African American and "immigrant" Muslims in the USA. These tensions are not significant in Canadian Islam. There is also a history of slavery and racism that is integral to understanding African American Islam, which of course influences American Islam. That history is a much different one in Canada, which is a factor in making Canadian Islam distinct from American Islam. Muslims in Canada, particularly those who were born or raised in Canada, are shaped by Canada. This was best articulated by a young Canadian Muslim woman, Rahat Kurd: "A reality check seems in order: The Islam you see being 'paraded' on the streets of Canadian cities grew up here. It said the Lord's Prayer in public school and read Anne of Green Gables and played hockey and went to university and filed income taxes and somehow began guiding how we pray and work and think and live".

3. Muslim Communities in Toronto

There is, I have been arguing, a distinctly Canadian form of Islam, with its own particular manifestation in Toronto. In both the United States and Canada, it is at the university where many Muslim students first have the opportunity to study Islam. It was for this reason that I detailed earlier in this chapter some of the issues in the teaching of Islam.

679 For example, see the article on the UMMA Clinic in South Central Los Angeles by Teresa Watanabe, "Muslims Raise $284,000 to Halt Closure of Free Clinic", in the Los Angeles Times, November 20, 2000, p. B1 and B5.

And it is of course the modern liberal state that sponsors the teaching and learning at universities. One important difference between the two countries is the much larger number of private universities in America as compared with Canada. Putting this difference aside and examining only public universities, one sees differences in attitudes towards religious faith, certain religions (such as Islam) and ethnic differences.

For the past three years, I have lived and worked in Southern California, in what is part of Greater Los Angeles. The students whom I teach here know Islam from the brothers in the Nation of Islam selling copies of The Final Call newspaper outside the university bookstore. Or they may know Islam from their Iranian friends, who may have fled with the Shah or helped to drive him out. They may be Armenians, who have never had a Muslim friend because of what their elders tell them was done by the Turks during the Armenian Genocide. They may be Jewish students who have never before heard the Palestinian cause articulated. In all of these ways, for the most part they have different understandings of Islam than the students whom I taught in the Greater Toronto Area.

The Muslim students in Los Angeles tell me that they must struggle to make others understand their Islam, as well as the other components of their identity. In this way, they are different from the Muslim students in Toronto, whose classmates knew about their culture due to multiculturalism and events such as Caravan, but did not know about their religion. While Islam is seen as being alien to both Americans and Canadians, I think the degree of alienation is less in Canada. Universities, being vessels of national identity, reflect some of these variations between Canada and the USA.631 Interestingly, Toronto and Los Angeles,

631 For an excellent analysis of universities and the transmissions of national cultures, see Bill Readings, The University in Ruins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996). However, North American universities are also sites that break down national differences
being so poly-cultural and international, may be more alike on many issues than are, for example, Prairie cities in the two countries. There is clearly some important work, for instance, that needs to be done in comparing Islam in Toronto with Islam in Los Angeles.

The population of Muslims is smaller in Canada than it is in the United States and is concentrated in the Greater Toronto Area. As such, Muslims in Toronto are closer to each other, physically and otherwise, than are Muslims in Los Angeles (with its vast geographic expanse). This closeness allows them to have a greater impact on Canadian society than they do in the United States, where they are more numerous (although not disproportionately so) but also more dispersed.

The Canadian form of Islam that I have described is defined not only by its location in the Greater Toronto Area but also by its place in time. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were very few Muslims in Toronto. As Murray Hogben described, it was not until the 1960s that the first full-time mosque was built in Toronto. It was only in the 1970s that the numbers of Muslims in Toronto began to increase dramatically. In these two areas (the construction of mosques and the growth of the population), Muslims in Toronto mirror Muslim communities in other Canadian cities. However, it was in Toronto in the 1970s that Muslims in Canada began to organize themselves into groups such as CMCC or ISNA-Canada. It has been Toronto that has emerged as the focal point of the Muslim communities in Canada, with Toronto Muslims taking, for example, the leadership role in the Canadian Muslim protests against The Satanic Verses. From the 1970s to the 1990s, the Muslims of Toronto were primarily concerned with establishing their religion, building mosques and

since human and textual resources often overlap.

I am indebted to Professor F. Patrick Nichelson for his thoughts on this point.
religious schools. It was only in 1990 that ISSRA, the first social services agency for Muslims, was opened in Toronto. In the 1990s one saw the emergence of the Muslims in Toronto, claiming their own “spaces” in the landscapes of Toronto.

What began as a collection of diaspora “Islams” (where authority was located not in the host country, but in the country of origin) at the beginning of this century, has, by the end of this century, emerged as distinctly Canadian Islamic traditions. Muslims in Toronto see themselves as Canadians, with no other home than Toronto. There is no hope of return to the home country that characterized Canadian Islam at the beginning of this century. Instead, Muslims in Toronto are developing their own local Islamic traditions. In this development lies the future of Islam.

Of course, this future is connected to other minority communities in Toronto. Muslims are not alone in articulating what once were diaspora traditions. There are large Sikh and Hindu communities, for example, in Toronto. In those communities, one finds the same issues arising. How they will all develop their own religious traditions in the next century will be tremendously important, for the future of those traditions, for Canada, and for the world.
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUDING SUMMARY

In this dissertation, I have provided information on the Islamic reality in Toronto. This is the first major study of the Muslim communities of Toronto. As such, it contains a broad overview of the many communities in Toronto rather than a detailed description of any one community. Further research needs to be done on all of the communities that are here identified.

I began with a brief account of some of the recent scholarship on the growth of Islam in Canada. Given the population of Muslims in Canada—at least 500,000, if not more— it is surprising how little academic work has been done on Canadian Muslims. Coupled with the paucity of academic literature on contemporary Canadian Islam, there are problems with some of the material that has been published. When the results of the 2001 Canadian census are made public, Islam should be the second largest religious tradition in Canada, behind Christianity, ahead of Judaism. This dissertation adds to our understanding of Islam in Canada.

As described in the first chapter, there has been a Muslim presence in Canada since before Canada officially existed. The early Muslims were immigrants, many of whom stayed for a short time in Canada before returning to their countries of origin. However, some of them did stay, building the first mosque in Canada in 1938. It was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that the population of Muslims in Canada increased dramatically. This was due to the changes in Canadian immigration laws, which allowed a greater number of people to emigrate to Canada. Since the 1970s, the majority of Canada's Muslims have lived in Ontario, with the greatest concentration in the Greater Toronto Area. There are over 200,000 Muslims
in Toronto.

Muslims in Toronto live as members of a minority tradition in a city that has been described by the United Nations as the most cosmopolitan city in the world. They are also forced to deal with the issues that arise with living in the modern North American world. It is the interplay of these factors, being a minority, being multicultural, being Western and being modern that creates Canadian ways of being Muslim.

Racism and discrimination are manifested daily in Toronto. As the majority of Muslims in Toronto are either immigrants or the children of immigrants, they often have to define themselves in the face of opposition. Muslims in Toronto are also a post-colonial people, many of whom have a history of dealing with European colonialism. In spite of this oppression, past and present, Torontonian Muslims have a long history of non-aggression. Indeed, Islam in Toronto (and more generally in Canada) is yet another example of the non-militant type of Islam that is much more common than the stereotypical, violent versions that are often presented. There is no Muslim "rage" in Toronto, nor is there a "clash of civilizations".

Moreover, Islam in Toronto is not simply a collection of diaspora Islams, but instead is its own local manifestation of Canadian Islam. Muslims in Toronto are engaged in creating distinct religious lives for themselves. It is in the English language that many of those lives find articulation. With that articulation, English has become an Islamic language in Toronto.

I described the scholarly literature on Muslims in Canada in the second chapter. Much of the early literature focussed on immigrant communities. Often, these early studies were more concerned with ethnicity than they were with religion. There has been substantially more work done on Muslims in the United States than on Muslims in Canada. Two of the
most important scholars in this regard are Yvonne Haddad and Jane Smith. Much of the theoretical underpinning of this dissertation is based on their large body of work. There has also been some work done on Muslim communities in Europe and in South Africa.

As mentioned in the second chapter, Frederick Denny has raised awareness that it is wrong to take models or typologies of religious organizations that emerged from an examination of various Christian groups (i.e., church/sect theory) and apply them to Muslim groups in North America. I demonstrate that this is the case for Toronto. I might add that there is no single official “church” to which all of Toronto’s Muslims do belong or once belonged. Instead, there are numerous groups, operating simultaneously with one another.

The methodological roots of this dissertation were described in Chapter Three. I lived in Toronto from 1983 to 1997. Much of this dissertation is based in my participant observations from 1991 to 1997 as a member of the Muslim community of Toronto. I use “community” in the singular to distinguish the Muslim community from other communities in Toronto. I use the plural, “Muslim communities”, when I describe the differences among various Muslim groups in Toronto. My “position”, in the sense in which Renato Rosaldo understands the term, is described in detail in Chapter Three.

While writing a dissertation in the study of religion, I have used methodological advances developed in other human sciences. Most notably, I have used certain tools of ethnography developed by cultural anthropologists. This dissertation was written with an awareness of some of the issues of representation raised in the 1980s by scholars such as James Clifford, George Marcus and Michael Fischer. I do not claim to create a new methodology that should be followed by other researchers. I do, however, articulate the methodology that I have employed in my own research.
I used archival material from three Muslim organizations in Toronto: the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the Council of Muslim Communities of Canada (CMCC) and the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW). This archival material was supplemented with interviews and interactions with both community leaders and community members. My own participation and participant observation also contributed to this dissertation. As a Muslim living in Toronto, I had a history with and access to the various communities that might have been denied to non-Muslim scholars. As a scholar of religion, I was able to obtain information from the various communities that might have been denied to non-academic researchers.

As I was not a witness to the beginnings of community formation among Muslims in Toronto, I included the reminiscence of one such witness. Chapter Four began with a description of the early days of the organized Muslim community in Toronto, written by Murray Hogben. Using Hogben's narrative as a starting point, I traced some of the developments in the Muslim community in Toronto from the 1950s to the 1980s. During that time period, the community in Toronto grew at a tremendous rate, tripling in population in the 1970s and more than doubling in the 1980s. Having begun with an initial ethnic composition of European (e.g., Albanian and Bosnian) and Middle Eastern Muslims, the community in Toronto now has South Asians as its largest ethnic group.

There was heterogeneity from the beginnings of community organization in the 1950s. The first permanent full-time mosque in Toronto was established by South Asians who opposed what they deemed to be the "un-Islamic" practices of European and Middle-Eastern Muslims. These practices included dancing and the free association of men and women. This mosque, which is still in existence and operation, is now a Turkish mosque.
The second permanent mosque to be created in Toronto was the Jami Mosque, now also known as the Islamic Centre of Toronto. Its building was originally a Presbyterian church that was purchased by Muslims in Toronto in 1968. Mosques in Toronto have been located in what were originally existing commercial buildings, churches, or in the case of the Madina Masjid, a school. Several new mosques in Toronto have been designed and built without using an already existing structure. The TARIC (Toronto And Region Islamic Congregation) Mosque and the Bait-ul-Islam Mosque of the Ahmadi community are examples of two such "original" mosques.

There are over 30 Sunni mosques in Toronto, with at least another 30 locations in which prayers are regularly held. The Ja'ffari Islamic Centre of the Twelver Shi'i community is the largest such centre in North America. The Bait-ul-Islam Mosque of the Ahmadis is the largest mosque in Canada. There are also some 17 Ismaili jamaat khana in the Toronto area.

The bulk of my observations about the Muslim communities are contained in Chapter Five. I am not aware of any other scholarly literature that describes the various Muslim communities in Toronto. As the majority of Muslims in Toronto are Sunni, I described at length the Sunni organizations in Toronto. I discussed groups such as ISNA, CMCC, CCMW, ISSRA (the Islamic Social Services and Resources Association) and CIC (the Canadian Islamic Congress). CMCC was formed in 1972, ISNA in 1981 and CCMW in 1982. The latter two groups continue to be active in Toronto. ISNA emerged out of the MSA, which was itself created in 1963 by immigrant Muslim students. The MSA and ISNA represent conservative forms of Islam. CMCC was also created by immigrants, but immigrants who had decided to settle in Canada and not return to their countries of origin. The founders of CMCC had liberal interpretations of Islam. One example of this liberalism was in the creation of CCMW,
the first Canadian organization for Muslim women.

Another Toronto group that was created was ISSRA, which emerged in 1990. ISSRA was created to offer a more egalitarian, socially-sensitive place for men, women and children. It served to address the social casualties among Toronto's Muslims. The existence of those casualties was often denied by other Muslim organizations in Toronto.

I also described the Shi'i communities in Toronto, both Twelver and Ismaili. These communities are quite large, relative to the overall number of Muslims in Toronto. Approximately 30 percent of Toronto's Muslims are Shi'i, which is more than double the worldwide percentage. I discussed how they were able to grow and develop as minority communities in Toronto.

I then turned my attention to numerically less dominant Muslim communities. One is the Ahmadis. Comparatively little has been written about this community in the scholarly literature, even though they have built the largest mosque in Canada. More study needs to be devoted to this community in Toronto. The Nation of Islam is beginning to have some impact on Muslim life in Toronto. I described that impact briefly. There are also Sufi communities in Toronto, with at least seven different orders that I was able to list. While there are not a lot of tensions between either the Sufi groups or the Nation and other Muslims in Toronto, there are some tensions that do exist. Often, it is through music, rap and hip-hop in the case of the Nation, qawwali in the case of Sufis, that these groups are able to impact others, both Muslims and non-Muslims. Studies of Islamic music in North America need to be done.

There are clearly several different ways to "be" Muslim in Toronto. With the official Canadian policy of multiculturalism, many of the smaller Muslim groups in Toronto are able to flourish. Some groups, such as CMCC and CCMW, are supported with funds from the
government. Other groups, such as ISSRA, work to provide services that the government is unable to provide.

To provide some insight into these different communities in Toronto, I described in Chapter Six a case study of the various Muslim reactions to the publication of *The Satanic Verses*. There were important differences between the reactions of Muslims in Canada, centred in Toronto, and those with Muslims in other countries. Unlike in other countries, there were no violent reactions to, or large-scale demonstrations against, the novel in Toronto, proof again of the non-violent practices of Canadian Muslims. The controversy over that novel provided information about how Muslims in Toronto understood themselves, and how their concerns were often not understood by others in Toronto.

From the observations and descriptions in Chapters Five and Six, I demonstrate that Muslims in Toronto are articulating their own positions as Canadians in Canadian society. They have created their own groups that are part of already existing Canadian institutions such as Scouts Canada. They have expressed their discontent with the legal system and the fact that laws proscribing hate literature and blasphemy were not used against *The Satanic Verses*. One group, the Canadian Society of Muslims, has advocated for the implementation of Muslim personal law for those who wish to be governed by it in Canada. Another group has challenged the Toronto School Board's policy of teaching about homosexuality as an acceptable alternative lifestyle.

In Chapter Seven, I continued with a delineation of the issues that are important to understanding Islam in Toronto. In discussing these issues, I gave further evidence of some of the heterogeneity among Muslims in Toronto. Chapters Five, Six and Seven together provide the beginnings of the stories of Toronto's Muslims. These stories have not been told before, or
in some cases have not been told often enough. These chapters are intended to add those stories to the scholarly literature. Of course, any of the fourteen issues that I described could be the subject of its own study by religionists, sociologists, anthropologists, ethnographers, linguists, historians, communications scholars and others. At the end of Chapter Seven I have drawn some important contrasts between Muslim communities in Toronto and Muslim communities elsewhere in the world.

My research has shown that Muslims in Toronto, with their wealth of differences, have created their own Islamic discourse, separate from that of other Muslims in countries such as the United States or England or South Africa. It is an Islam that is shaped by the historical realities of Canadian multiculturalism as distinct from American integrationism, English colonialism or South African institutionalized racism. Sometimes, Muslims in Toronto face comparable situations to Muslims in other countries. For example, there are similar questions of gender or sexuality raised in Toronto and Los Angeles. Muslims in Toronto seek full participation as Canadians in Canadian society while retaining their distinct Islamic identities. It is this Canadian Islam, these Canadian ways of being Muslim, that need to be studied further. This is the first study of the Islamic reality in Toronto, and a number of other works can follow.

Each of the organizations that I have described could be the focus of a separate study. While there is a degree of homogeneity within those organizations, the organizations themselves are heterogenous. A number of Muslims do not identify with any particular organization. The stories of these individuals need to be collected, as do the stories of those who do identify with Muslim organizations.

My research to date has identified and described a sizeable, significant and dynamic
community. It is one that will not remain static, but rather will continue to develop and be shaped as its members become increasingly integrated into the fabric of a Canadian society that is itself changing. As I come to the end of this dissertation, I wish to identify a number of developments and issues that are likely to involve the Muslims of Toronto, and call attention to them as opportunities for further research.

In important ways, technology has an impact on the Muslims in Toronto. Through the use of the World Wide Web, Toronto's Muslims have access to communities that are not bounded by space or time. They are thus free to develop their own communities of interpretation. One sees this development, for example, with support groups for gay and lesbian Muslims. A number of web sites have been created by Muslims in Toronto, and a great many other sites are accessed by Muslims in Toronto. Many of these sites are listed in the bibliography, and a separate study could be written about Canadian Muslim communities in cyberspace.

As with sexual orientation, Muslims in Toronto are rethinking questions of gender and the traditional roles assigned to men and women. They have held conferences and workshops, many of which were sponsored by CCMW, on these questions. A number of links have been made by Muslim women in Toronto with other women's groups.

The Muslim community in Toronto has had to deal with the settlement of refugees. The first such settlement occurred in 1972, after the expulsion of Asians from Uganda. That expulsion and subsequent migrations by other Asians from East Africa dramatically increased the Twelver and Ismaili Shi'i communities in North America. In later years came refugees from Iran and Afghanistan. Other refugees have come from places such as Somalia, Bosnia, Albania and Chechnya. The Somali community has become quite large in Toronto, creating
their own mosque in 1996.

There are also generational issues present among Muslims in Toronto. Many young Muslims have a different vision of Islam from the vision of their parents. The parents' vision may have been represented by the model of Islam in the diaspora, but the children's vision is surely shaped by the Canadian reality that there is no diaspora. It is Toronto that is home, not the city or country of ethnic origin. It is in Toronto that they articulate their own expressions of Islam.

It is in the universities and colleges that that articulation often occurs. For many Muslim students in Toronto who attend colleges and universities, their first opportunity to study their own traditions seriously comes only at the post-secondary level of education. I have outlined some of the many issues that arise in teaching Islam, an understanding of which is crucial to an understanding of Islam. Of course, Islam is also taught to non-Muslim students, who also often have their first exposure to Islam in the classroom. The teaching of Islam is something that needs to be studied further.

There are important comparisons that need to be made with the situations of Muslims in Toronto and those in other Canadian cities. In many ways, Toronto with its population and the cosmopolitan constituents of that population, is unique in Canada. As such, there is a need to examine the lives of Muslims in other cities and contrast those different experiences. Also, there are strong parallels and sharp contrasts with the experiences of Muslims in American cities, such as Los Angeles. A comparison of the communities in Toronto and Los Angeles needs to be written.

Through interfaith dialogue, most notably facilitated by the United Church of Canada, a number of Muslims in Toronto are able to explain their faith to those with faiths
other than their own. In turn, they are made aware of the faith traditions of those who are non-Muslim.

Islam in Toronto and in Canada more broadly, like all other non-Christian traditions, is bound to remain a minority way of life. In this way, Muslims are forced to articulate visions of Islam that do not “fit” the standard historical model, where Islam was assumed to be the dominant tradition. That they are making that articulation should give pause and perhaps reassurance to those who are worried about a clash between “Muslims” and “the West”. It should be obvious that Muslims in Toronto are both “Western” and “Muslim”, and proudly Canadian, and that Canadian Islam therefore offers an important window through which to view a future role for Islam to play in the world.
APPENDICES

Appendix One

Metro Muslims Respond to Rushdie's Book

The Islamic Action Committee, a group representing most of the mosques and Muslim organizations in Metro Toronto and vicinity, is deeply concerned about the offense caused by the book, *The Satanic Verses*. We are also concerned about the uproar caused by the book and its resulting backlash against the Muslim community in Canada.

First and foremost, we want to make it clear that we do not condone, let alone support, any acts of violence in this connection from any quarter. We have constantly called for calm and legitimate democratic dissent, and for mutual understanding between peoples of all faiths in multicultural Canada.

There has, however, been insufficient understanding of the deeply felt anger created by the book and its author among Muslims. The expression of this anger has taken many forms, some of which has fed existing stereotypes and prejudices against Islam and Muslims in Canada, and clouded the main issue. The entire Muslim Community, not just the so-called “fundamentalists”, are offended by this book. It is of utmost importance that all Canadians understand and appreciate the reasons for Muslim outrage on the issue.

*The Satanic Verses* is sexist, since it attempts to portray the wives of the Prophet Mohammed as prostitutes. It is racist because it portrays a distinguished Ethiopian companion of the Prophet in racially derogatory terms. It is also racist because it evokes anger, ridicule and hatred towards Muslims.

The book mocks, ridicules and abuses the practices of Muslims. It insults the Prophet and questions his integrity. All of this is done under the guise of fiction. But for those familiar with Islamic history and aware of the sanctity of the Prophet, his wives, his companions, and the events surrounding the birth of Islam, this “fiction” is an attack on the very foundations of Islam and an affront to Muslims. Just because the insults and the ridicule are shrouded in fiction, it is no less offensive.

For Muslims, it is hate literature. For Muslims, it is libelous. For Muslims, it crosses the boundaries of good taste and what can be deemed to be acceptable.

Muslims are not against the freedom of expression. They uphold the right of free speech. In those principles, we find the best protection of a minority group like Muslims. But every individual’s right of free speech has limits, just as Ernst Zundel’s and James Keegstra’s treatise[s] did, and were deemed by Canadian courts to constitute hate literature. If Zundel’s and Keegstra’s treatises were shrouded in fiction, they would have been still considered offensive to Jewish people.
We, therefore, call on Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, [and] Justice Minister Jim Lewis to refer *The Satanic Verses* to the courts and let the justice system determine if it constitutes hate literature. This is the least the government of Canada can do, caught as it has been between the right of freedom of speech and the right of a people not to be libelled and maligned and be the target of hate literature.

We call upon Canadians of goodwill to understand and appreciate the offensive nature of this book and how it has caused grief and pain to the Muslims.

We call upon Liberal leader John Turner, New Democratic Party leader Ed Broadbent, Ontario Premier David Peterson, Mayor Art Eggleton and others to dissociate themselves from this scandalous work.

We call on fellow-Muslims to remain calm, despite the extreme provocation caused by this book and the overwhelming negative light in which they and their religion are being portrayed by some segments of the Canadian society.

Masood Q. Chowdhry  
for: Islamic Action Committee

For more information, call:

1. Masood Chowdhry - (416) 657-1465 (office) / 961-4217 (evenings)

2. Abdullah Hakim  
   (Jami Mosque) - (416) 769-1192

3. Professor Imtiaz  
   c/o ISNA Zonal Office - (416) 977-2057

4. Haroon Salamah [sic] (Taric Group) - (416) 822-4320
Appendix Two

February 18, 1989

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter to bring to your attention some aspects of "The Satanic Verses" by Salman Rushdie and the reactions of the Muslims in Canada.

First, I would like to state that this book is a well thought out, cleverly planned, malevolently obscene attempt on the part of the author to attack religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. We, the Muslims, just happened to be a convenient target at this time. The complaints of the Muslims are sincere and not symptomatic of other problems. When asked on ABC's Nightline why he wrote the book, the author responded by saying that he wanted to question the idea of revelations from God and the belief that they were true. He was further asked whether or not he expected the kind of strong reaction that he was now seeing among the Muslims around the world. He said that indeed he did expect it.

The central issue here is not that of freedom of speech or freedom of expression in other forms. We all believe in it as a matter of principle; its practice is not in question. If Salman Rushdie intended to question the beliefs held by the Muslims, he should have presented his arguments based on reason and rationale. A person who simply maligns an entire class of people has some other purpose in mind. The book uses names of real places and real people. The author then creates mirror images which are ugly and obscene. A disclaimer that this is fiction may stand in a court of law but it has no moral persuasion. The book amounts to hate propaganda. In the words of Alan Borovoy of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, "You do not debate the merits of a malevolent obscenity." The important thing is to recognize the extent of distress among over 900 million Muslims around the World [upper case sic] caused by this worldwide pollution of obscenity from Rushdie's "The Satanic Verses."

Salman Rushdie has literary talent. He understands what makes a society like ours tick. However, he has used his skills to the detriment of the masses. He claims that the book contains fictional dream sequences. What kind of fiction is it when he refers to the patriarch Ibrahim (Abraham) and his son who we all know, and calls one of them "bastard". He refers to the act of revelations as pouring all over the Prophet like being sick. He refers to the Prophet and his companions as highway robbers, lawless, despised persons on the loose, approving of sodomy, etc. He talks about the scribe who recorded the verses revealed to the prophet as one who was surreptitiously altering things while recording, and that he went on with acts of bedevilment (hence "The Satanic Verses"). The scribe also lamented, "If my poor words could not be distinguished from the Revelation by God's own message, then what did that mean?" He talks about a group of prostitutes who were exactly in the same number and had the same names as the wives of the Prophet. About the Prophet one companion is described as saying, "After his wife's death, Mahound was no angel, you understand my meaning." In sentence after sentence, obscenities are hurled at real people in a fashion of playing with mirrors, and then words are added, leading the readers to sinister conclusions. As many critics have rightly said, this is not an innocent fiction. It is an attempt at mind control.

Since the author, in his own words, expected the reactions of the Muslims, he is now further exploiting it to his own advantage. On the one hand he claims that people who are...
objecting have not read his book. This is simply not true. Many of us have read it out of necessity regardless of how distasteful this has been. He is using this slogan simply as a sales pitch. On the other hand, he is pointing fingers at the protesters, connecting them all with the violence such as the one in Pakistan, and saying to the Western world that this behavior is typical of all the Muslims, thus continuing his hate propaganda. A noted Canadian correspondent, who was present at the scene when the violence in Pakistan occurred, has said that the violence was provoked by people who apparently had other political motives. Likewise, other calls for violence may be used by people to rally support to their causes.

Islam believes in the due processes of the law. It also relies heavily on the concept that the collective good of the community takes precedence over the purely selfish motives of an individual. It requires all believers to promote the good and inhibit the bad. It believes that human beings are created equal, that life is a trust from God. No one should hurt himself by claiming that his body belongs to him. No one should take the law in their own hands to deliver justice to others on whims.

There is a need to reconsider some preconceived notions about the Muslims and Islam, and take action, with reference to the book in question, more in line with the reality of the Muslim situation, in Canada and worldwide.

We will greatly appreciate your support in alleviating the distress caused by this book among the Muslims across Canada. We are also seeking your advice on whatever steps we may take in this regard.

Sincerely,

S. Imtiaz Ahmad, Ph.D.
Vice President, Canada
Islamic Society of North America
February 18, 1989

Mr. Mark Starowicz
Executive Producer, The Journal
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
P.O. Box 14000, Stn. A
Toronto, ON M5W 1A0

RE: "THE SATANIC VERSES" BY SALMAN RUSHDIE
ON THE JOURNAL, TUESDAY, FEB. 14, 1989

Dear Mr. Starowicz:

I am writing this letter to bring to your attention some aspects of the coverage by The Journal of "The Satanic Verses" by Salman Rushdie and the reactions of the Muslims in Canada.

First, I would like to state that this book is a well thought out, cleverly planned, malevolently obscene attempt on the part of the author to attack religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. We, the Muslims, just happened to be a convenient target at this time. The complaints of the Muslims are sincere and not symptomatic of other problems. When asked on ABC's Nightline why he wrote the book, the author responded by that he wanted to question the idea of revelations from God and the belief that they were true. He was further asked whether or not he expected the kind of strong reaction that he was now seeing among the Muslims around the world. He said that indeed he did expect it.

The central issue here is not that of freedom of speech or freedom of expression in other forms. We all believe in it as a matter of principle; its practice is not in question. If Salman Rushdie intended to question the beliefs held by the Muslims, he should have presented his arguments based on reason and rationale. A person who simply maligned an entire class of people has some other purpose in mind. The book uses names of real places and real people. The author then creates mirror images which are ugly and obscene. A disclaimer that this is fiction may stand in a court of law but it has no moral persuasion. The book amounts to hate propaganda. In the words of Alan Borovoy of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, "You do not debate the merits of a malevolent obscenity." The Journal's role should, in proper journalistic spirit, be to cover the news of distress among over 900 million Muslims around the World [upper case sic] caused by this worldwide pollution of obscenity from Rushdie's "The Satanic Verses."

Salman Rushdie has literary talent. He understands what makes a society like ours tick. However, he has used his skills to the detriment of the masses. He claims that the book contains fictional dream sequences. What kind of fiction is it when he refers to the patriarch Ibrahim (Abraham) and his son who we all know, and calls one of them "bastard". He refers to the act of revelations as pouring all over the Prophet like being sick. He refers to the
Prophet and his companions as highway robbers, lawless, despised persons on the loose, approving of sodomy, etc. He talks about the scribe who recorded the verses revealed to the prophet as one who was surreptitiously altering things while recording, and that he went on with acts of bedevilment (hence "The Satanic Verses"). The scribe also lamented, "If my poor words could not be distinguished from the Revelation by God's own message, then what did that mean?" He talks about a group of prostitutes who were exactly in the same number and had the same names as the wives of the Prophet. About the Prophet one companion is described as saying, "After his wife's death, Mahound was no angel, you understand my meaning." In sentence after sentence, obscenities are hurled at real people in a fashion of playing with mirrors, and then words are added, leading the readers to sinister conclusions. As many critics have rightly said, this is not an innocent fiction. It is an attempt at mind control.

The Journal did exactly the opposite of what Alan Borovoy advised us to do in such situations. It invited the author and one of his friends to discuss the merits of this obscene book.

Since the author, in his own words, expected the reactions of the Muslims, he is now further exploiting it to his own advantage. On the one hand he claims that people who are objecting have not read his book. This is simply not true. Many of us have read it out of necessity regardless of how distasteful this has been. He is using this slogan simply as a sales pitch. On the other hand, he is pointing fingers at the protesters, connecting them all with the violence such as the one in Pakistan, and saying to the Western world that this behavior is typical of all the Muslims, thus continuing his hate propaganda. A noted Canadian correspondent, who was present at the scene when the violence in Pakistan occurred, has said that the violence was provoked by people who apparently had other political motives. Likewise, other calls for violence may be used by people to rally support to their causes.

Islam believes in the due processes of the law. It also relies heavily on the concept that the collective good of the community takes precedence over the purely selfish motives of an individual. It requires all believers to promote the good and inhibit the bad. It believes that human beings are created equal, that life is a trust from God. No one should hurt himself by claiming that his body belongs to him. No one should take the law in their own hands to deliver justice to others on whims.

I am requesting The Journal to reconsider some preconceived notions about the Muslims and Islam, and give coverage more in line with the coverage provided by other national media in Canada. I was invited to discuss this issue by another national television program. However, in view of my prior commitments, I arranged for someone who was very knowledgeable on the subject to take my place. The other network accepted my offer but The Journal declined. If it was critical to have a Canadian speak, I could have made another arrangement on behalf of the Muslims in Canada. I would greatly appreciate receiving your response to my letter.

Sincerely,

[signed]
S. Imtiaz Ahmad, Ph.D.
Vice President, Canada
Islamic Society of North America
(519) 735-6373
Appendix Four

THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA
Canadian Zonal Office: P.O. Box 160, Station P, Toronto, Ont. M5S 2S7
Phone: (416) 977-2057

March 24, 1989

Mr. Graeme Gibson
President, The Canadian Centre
International P.E.N.
24 Ryerson Avenue
Toronto, ON M5T 2P3

Dear Mr. Gibson:

I am responding to your letter of March 7 regarding the the [sic] ‘Rushdie Affair’ as reported in the media and the reaction of the public and Canadian Government. If you recall the conversation that Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad had with you at the time of the program on the Journal, there is no doubt that there is a need for better understanding of this and other issues that affect the well being of our society. However, it requires a dialogue that leads to an exchange of information and ideas free of preconceived notions and positions. Let us find a forum to state our respective positions and discuss them with a view to understanding each other better.

I am enclosing a copy of a short paper on the Rushdie Affair [“A Muslim View of the Rushdie Affair”, a six-page essay written by Asad Zaman, dated March 1989 and included as Appendix Five]. This is not an official document of the Islamic Society of North America. However, it clearly outlines much of what we would like to say on this subject. I would greatly appreciate it if you could find the time to read it, and give us your response to what it says.

The Muslims in Canada respect the institutions that guard the freedom of expression. We also are deeply interested in contributing to building a society in Canada that cares for the interests of all segments of its population. We hope that the Islamic Society of North America and the Canadian Centre of International P.E.N. can find means for common action towards this goal.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[signed]
Mohammad Ashraf, Ph.D.
Director [sic], Canada Office
Islamic Society of North America
Appendix Five

A Muslim View of the Rushdie Affair

Asad Zaman

March 1989

1 Preliminaries

All praise is due to Allah alone, the Creator, Sustainer and Nourisher of the Worlds. I seek the protection of God from the mischief that is in my soul and the evil consequences of my deeds. Those whom God leads to guidance, none can lead astray; those whom God leads astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no God except Allah; He is One and has no partners. I bear witness that Muhammad is his slave and his messenger.

As a Muslim, my sole concern is to please my Creator. If my actions and beliefs please God, it matters not at all if the entire world condemns me. If I am disobedient to God, the praise and approval of the entire world gains me nothing. Why then should I seek to explain the behavior of myself and my fellow Muslims to a non-Muslim audience? My efforts are directed to removing obstacles to understanding Islam created by slanders and lies. After the last prophet Muhammad, this duty of conveying the message of our Creator to mankind has been assigned to all his followers.

Unfortunately, the task is enormous. Starting with the Crusades, and continuing through the era of Colonialism, a tremendous amount of grossly distorted or completely false information about Islam and Muslims has been taken as axiomatic in the West (footnote: See the excellent book Orientalism by Edward Said for documentation of some aspects). The misunderstandings regarding Rushdie are but a trivial manifestation of the widespread ignorance (combined with fear and hate, in many cases) about Islam. For a good introduction to Islam written from a Western perspective, see Islam and the Destiny of Man by Charles Le Gai Eaton.

2 Freedom of Speech?

I and my fellow Muslims are perplexed at Western defence of Rushdie in terms of freedom speech [sic]. Muslims see the Westerners as acting in bad faith in this issue; freedom of speech is invoked where it suits them, and ignored when it does not. For example,

- The American press was, in general, mildly amused at the discomfiture of the British Government when they banned the book 'Spycatcher' by Peter Wright recently. There was no impassioned outrage at the restriction of free speech by Mrs. Thatcher (as opposed to the Ayatollah).

- When Jimmy the Greek uttered remarks offensive to blacks, he was dropped from all major TV networks, and has not been seen since. Presumably, he has suffered serious loss of income. No one has defended his right of free speech.
A research center in Southern California responsible for propagating the idea that the Holocaust never happened, or else that the numbers involved have been exaggerated, was bombed and burned down. Death threat[s] were made to the personnel. No national outrage at this denial of free speech was visible.

Very recently, a Chicago art exhibit required people to step on the flag, apparently to properly view the exhibit. The Daughters of the American Revolution promptly came in with the requisite bomb threats. A reconciliation was reached by restricting the viewing of the exhibit. Again, the incident (and its relation to free speech and the Rushdie case) went unnoticed in [the] national press.

During the Nixon administration, General Brown uttered remarks about the excessive influence exercised by Jews in America. This influence can easily be substantiated by reading the memoirs of Kissinger, Nixon, and the more controversial 'They Dare to Speak Out', by Senator Paul Findlay. Ironic proof of his own statement was provided by the subsequent demotion of General Brown.

The list goes on and on, but the above should be sufficient as a sampler. The point is that Muslims regard invocations of freedom of speech as merely a pretext by Westerners to freely heap insults on Muslims and Islam.

We take the view that just as my freedom to move my arm is restricted by your nose, freedom of speech is restricted by the need to avoid damage to society. Libel laws protect individuals from verbal attacks which hold them up to 'ridicule, hatred, or contempt'. The concept of banning the book (or removing its offensive portions) to prevent this libel is not as 'alien' to Western principles as Westerners claim. Indeed, a previous book by Rushdie, which made false allegations about Mrs. Gandhi, was successfully sued and subsequently edited to remove the offensive portions. Again no complaints were registered regarding Rushdie's right to freely insult Mrs. Gandhi. How then does Rushdie have the right to freely insult deeply the approximately one billion Muslims of the world? In my view, an appropriate resolution to this problem would be for Rushdie to revise and eliminate the sections offensive to the Muslims, showing us the same courtesy shown to Mrs. Gandhi.

3 Who is the Terrorist?

From the strong horrified reactions to Khomeini's death sentence, one would think that such behavior is unknown in the West. Nobody was horrified about Ronald Reagan's attempted assassination of Muammar Khaddafi, which succeeded only in killing his adopted child. The murder of a PLO official in his bedroom in Tunis by Israeli [sic] commandos did not inspire horrified comments. In both cases, Westerners feel that the murdered men were terrorists and deserved to die, and legal niceties are not relevant. They take upon themselves the 'White man's burden' of trying, judging, and executing these men, but don't feel anybody of a different race can take similar liberties.

Westerners see Khomeini as a terrorist, while they regard Rushdie as an innocent. In fact, the terrorist in this affair is really Rushdie, and not Khomeini. Whereas nobody has been killed (yet) as a consequence of Khomeini's edict, well over fifty people have been killed in riots in India and Pakistan directly caused by publication of 'Satanic Verses'.
Should Rushdie be held responsible for the rioting and deaths that have occurred in response to the publication of his book? There is ample evidence (supported by Rushdie’s own comments from his interview on Nightline) to suggest that the book is deliberately provocative. Exactly like the producers of ‘The Last Temptation’, he and Penguin Press counted on such [an] adverse reaction to boost sales.

Let us however, give Rushdie the benefit of the doubt. Suppose that he was indeed surprised by the rioting and deaths that occurred in India and Pakistan, in the violent reaction over his book. How then can we explain his appeal to Rajiv Gandhi to lift the ban on his book, and move towards making India a ‘less repressive society’? Even a casual observer should realize that if the publication of the book in America caused over 50 deaths in riots, there would be considerably greater violence if it was actually published in India. My own estimate is the number of deaths would range in thousands if we are lucky, and could easily reach the hundred thousand level.

What kind of man is willing to let so many die, for personal motives? Rushdie has a tremendous hatred for Muslims (footnote: Desperate for acceptance into English society in his youth, he was denied it because of his race and culture. A common response (familiar to Blacks in American society) to this childhood trauma is intense hatred for one’s own race/culture/religion.) Those who are unyielding in their support of Rushdie are also unmoved by the numerous deaths of Muslims. We should remember that the Holocaust was caused by the great hatred of one man for Jews combined with the indifference of many to deaths of Jews [italics in original].

Many Americans incorrectly categorize Rushdie along with Scopes as being persecuted for expressing his beliefs, which are contrary to religious dogma. Thus they feel the Muslims ‘should read the book before condemning it’, or else, simply ‘not read it if they find it offensive’ etc. It must be emphasized that Rushdie is not [italics in original] expressing a point of view, or a belief. Fantasizing about our prophet and his companions in demeaning situations (completely out of the boundaries of historical probability), and using derogatory and pornographic language, is insulting to us, regardless of the context (i.e. within a dream) in which this occurs. We do not feel it is appropriate for Westerners to dictate to us what we should or should not find offensive. The correct analogy regarding Rushdie is not Scopes, but for example, trashy pornography regarding the Virgin Mary and Jesus.

4 Should Rushdie be Killed?

Because of deep insults to our religion contained in Rushdie’s book, many Muslims are so outraged that they wish to kill him. The teaching of Islam is that in this and all matters, we must surrender our wills to the will of Allah. Thus the question of whether or not Rushdie should be killed becomes, for the Muslim, strictly a question of Islamic Law. When we look for precedents, we find examples of all kinds. When during the reign of Omar (the second Caliph in Islamic History), a Christian was slapped by a Muslim for uttering insults about Mohammed, the Christian took the case to court! The ruling went against him, in that the Qazi (Judge) found that civil liberties did not inclue [sic] the right to insult Mohammed, but no penalties were imposed. In Muslim Spain, there was a period during which Christians would come in, publicly abuse the prophet, be executed, and thereby achieve martyrdom. Eventually Muslims sent a delegation to the Church. The church then removed execution for abuse of Mohammed [the name is transliterated in various forms throughout the essay] from
the list of ways to attain martyrdom, and this stopped.

Why should abuse of the prophet be punishable by death? Exactly as the Rosenbergs (who may have been innocent) were executed for the crime of treason to the state, so treason to Islam is punishable by death. Rushdie's case vis-a-vis Islamic law is complicated by the fact that he is a citizen of Britain, a non-Muslim country which has diplomatic relations with Muslim countries. In complex situations, scholars of Islamic law issue rulings (called *fatwa's* [sic]) which give their opinion regarding the matter. The completely misunderstood 'death sentence' of Khomeini, is no more or less than a scholarly finding that, (contrary to opinions expressed by scholars at Al Azhar University), 'Islamic Law sanctions death penalty for Rushdie' [sic]. He did not, contrary to popular impression, put a price on Rushdie's head (this was done by private citizens in Iran). He did not, unlike Reagan or the Israelis, send out a commando team to execute Rushdie. Surely his freedom of speech, which may result in the death of one man, is as valuable as Rushdie's, which has already resulted in deaths of over 50. Finally, it must be clarified that his sentence is not binding on Muslims. If by strange happenstance, Rushdie were to enter Iran, he would not [italics in original] be killed on the spot (footnote: If some overzealous Muslim were to kill him, he would face trial in an Islamic court). Rather, he would be tried in an Islamic court. The judge would (probably) take into consideration Khomeini's *fatwa*, but may well call for other fatwas from other experts. Incidentally, Khomeini is not, as some have suggested, the world's [sic] greatest authority on Islam. There are many scholars of equal or greater eminence. Khomeini is merely the one best known to the West for obvious reasons.

5 Love of the Prophet

The key to understanding Muslim reactions to Rushdie is the love that all Muslims have for the prophet Mohammed. This and similar statements are routinely misinterpreted by Westerners to be expressions of piety or theological dogma. While the commandments to 'love God' and to 'love our neighbors' are more remote, love of our prophet is a concrete reality in the lives of Muslims. One aspect of this love is demonstrated in the following of *Sunnah*, or the way of the prophet. The Sunnah includes all aspects, including trivial ones (footnote: such as the sequence in which he cut his fingernails), of the prophets [sic] behavior.

I despair of conveying the nature of our love for the prophet to a non-Muslim audience. Both in terms of its intensity and its universality among Muslims, it is a phenomenon outside the range of Western experience. It is this love which binds Muslims of different races, cultures, and social status. Odes to the prophet constitute a special genre of poetry in Muslim languages, and good ones are capable of moving large audiences to tears.

Perhaps it would be more effective to illustrate the kind of effect that the Rushdie book has had on lives of ordinary Muslims. On the eve of the demonstration in Manhattan against 'Satanic Verses', we received a call from an elderly Muslim lady, urging us to go. When she heard of our distaste for demonstrations, she began weeping. Her sentiments were 'that our Prophet should be so insulted in public, and that no one should speak on his behalf, or come to his defence, this is unbearable'. Out of deference to the lady's tears, I went to the demonstration, which was attended by about ten thousand Muslims. In another incident, I attended a meeting of Muslims to discuss responses to the Rushdie affair. One hotheaded youth was infuriated by our 'lukewarm' discussion regarding pamphlets, talks, demonstrations, etc. He challenged us, "Are you cowards or men? That our mothers be called
prostitutes, and we should sit on our hands and look the other way?". It took great effort by
the rest of us to persuade him Islam teaches us restraint, and we must obey Allah and not act
on our baser impulses. Yet another index of Muslim feelings about this matter is in the
(private) responses of the large immigrant Muslim population. Many have had deep regrets,
and second thoughts about their decision to settle here, given the obvious hostility to Islam,
Islamic values, and Muslims displayed by the Western response on this issue. I have no doubt
that among the many Muslims I know who have been toying with the idea of going back,
some will be spurred into action as a consequence of this event.

Who was Mohammed, and why does he inspire such affection? We have a wealth of
detailed information about his life. Over the short span of thirteen years, he changed the
course of history. His achievement was the transformation of a semi-barbaric culture to
sublime heights of civilization (footnote: Here again is a stumbling block for Western
understanding. The measure of civilization from the Muslim point of view is neither wealth
(italics in original) nor scientific, intellectual, or artistic accomplishment. A civilization is judged solely
(italics in original) by the character of the people. From the Islamic point of view, a
civilization is developed if the people are truthful and trustworthy, generous, loving, and take
good care of their own disadvantaged, elderly, and poor). Our prophet (and all prophets,
including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus) personified the most excellent character achievable, and
taught us by word and deed how to achieve this ideal. He was compassionate, gentle, soft-
spoken, and humble. Until his death he lived a life of great austerity, even though Muslims
became quite affluent following political successes. He never (italics in original) turned down a
request for assistance, to the extent of giving up the shirt on his back, or his only meal for the
day.

6 Closing Prayer

When the prophet Abraham (may Allah shower his blessings upon him) refused to renounce
his faith in one God and his opposition to idol worship, King Nimrod had him thrown in a
huge fire. God ordered the fire to be cool, and it did not burn Abraham. This story, like all
other things reported in the Quran, are taken literally as historical events by all (italics in
original) Muslims (footnote: It is not well-known that, unlike the Bible, events as reported in
the Quran (such as Noah’s flood, creation, etc) are not (italics in original) in conflict with
current scientific findings. See, The Bible, Quran, and Science by Maurice Bucaille for
documentation of the striking accord between Quran and later scientific discoveries).

A Sufi parable (not to be taken literally) relates the story of a bird attempting to put
the fire out using drops of water carried in its beak. The bird explains that its efforts are
directed towards God; it does not wish to be accused of standing by idly, while a beloved
prophet of God was burning.

I feel much like the bird. I pray that God will accept my efforts, and forgive my
errors. I pray that he may heal the rifts between us. I pray that he may lead us all to the love
of God, from which springs the love of all creation. All praise is for Allah, the Merciful and
the Compassionate.
Appendix Six

Message from Imtiaz Ahmad to Mohammad Ashraf, dated March 7, 1989, containing the text of a newspaper advertisement.

FANATIC MUSLIMS!

Words have power and therefore they have to be used carefully. Words can wound and they can heal. It is naive to say that freedom to use words of hate and destruction can be unlimited. No civilized society allows this. That is why Penguin, or any other main stream publisher does not publish Ku Klux Klan or the neo Nazi literature \[sic\]. The physical injuries can heal faster but emotional injuries caused by pen/words leave deep rooted scars.

We Muslims believe that it is highly imprudent and inconsiderate for an individual to completely ignore the religious sensitivities of his fellow citizens while exercising his/her freedom of speech. Right[s] of individuals are undoubtedly guaranteed by the state but it is the spirit of harmony, goodwill, and mutual respect of the society that ensures the full enjoyment of those rights by all.

The recent media attention to Mr. Rushdie's book, the Satanic Verses and the worldwide condemnation of the book by the Muslims have given rise to talks on such issues as freedom of expression, decency and intolerance. We feel truth and honesty have been the real casualties in the nightly drama of the evening news. We draw attention to these facts here so that you may hear the Muslim side of the debate and form your own opinion.

What is in "The Satanic Verses:"

Nearly everyone agrees on one thing about the book; it contains offensive material. But to say this is to put it very mildly. The facts are much harsher. By depicting Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), Islam, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and his family in a highly defamatory, obscene and derogatory manner, Rushdie, author of the book, has grievously offended the Islamic world.

Rushdie describes Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), the patriarch Prophet common to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as "the bastard," (p. 95). An African companion is painted as "an enormous black monster," a remark which is both racist and monstrous. Rushdie's so called "scholarship" is further evidenced when he describes other companions of the Prophet as those "goons and f.... clowns" (p. 101).

No, Mr. Rushdie's case is not at all "intellectual," nor are Muslims trying to counter his scholarship with a box of matches. Several 'intellectual' works which take [a] less-than-favorable view of Islam are being and have been published all over the world. We Muslims do not throw such works into the incinerator. We buy them for our libraries and universities and at times invite the authors to give a lecture or seminar on their 'studies.'
Indeed, the very first verses revealed in the Qur’an to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are: “Read: In the name of your Lord Who Creates...Read: And your Lord is the Most Bountiful, Who taught the use of the pen.” (Chapter 96; verses 1–4).

Islamic civilization and Muslims cherish scholarship whether it favors them or not. But the book, The Satanic Verses, does not indulge itself in the intellectual criticism of Islam. It scandalizes and maligns Islam.

Slander and libel are nothing new to Mr. Rushdie. In a previous novel, Midnight’s Children, he tried his hand at the late Indian prime minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. She had to be given a public apology by both the author and the publishers in answer to her libel suit. They also paid costs and gave an undertaking to remove from all future editions the passages objected [to] by her.

In The Satanic Verses, Rushdie is not libelling an individual, he insults and libels a whole community. It is obscene, it has self-hating racist undertones. And it incites racial as well as religious passions against the Muslim community and any decent human being.

Once the book was published in England, it was strongly criticized by the Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It failed to win the Booker award [sic]. In [the] British Parliament, the members backing a motion condemning the Rushdie book has swelled to 33.

For the past four months, tens of thousands of Muslims from all over the USA and Canada wrote and called Penguin/Viking requesting that the book be withdrawn from Britain and not published in the USA. Muslim leaders made every effort to arrange to meet with the publisher so that this potentially explosive situation be diffused before it reaches crisis proportion. But the publisher has declined even to receive a representative delegation of the Muslim community.

*Are Muslims intolerant?*

The above points establish that Muslims in the country have politely sought to diffuse the situation. Yet ironically, it is the Muslims who are now being blamed for intolerance.

Muslims in North America are a five million strong community. We are here to stay and prosper. A vast majority of us are taxing professionals, scientists, and educators. We trust that Penguin would not publish any slanderous material on a person like Dr. Martin Luther King, or any work of so-called art from an author like Rushdie declaring that Hitler was an angel, and his actions were heavenly, because it would be against the sensitivities of good race relations and it would cause emotional injuries. Penguin should have exercised better judgement in selecting and printing a book which has offended one fifth of the human race, a billion Muslims and many other decent human beings.

It is not unusual in our Western democratic societies for the media and the publishing industry to exercise self restraint in the interest of social order as well as in consideration of moral and ethical norms and racial and religious sensitivities of the society. The Muslims
would like the people in media and the publishing industry to extend to them the same courtesy which has generally been extended to other ethnic, racial and religious groups threatened by stereotypical portrayal, innuendoes *[sic]* and false characterizations.

In raising their objections to The Satanic Verses, Muslims are only trying to underscore the difference between the sacred and the profane, and between liberty and license. We see it basically as a moral issue, one about decency and civilization across all religions or ethnic lines. It is not civilized to insult the sanctities of any people. And that is why Muslims were in the protest march against the movie "The Last Temptation of Christ."

For more information on Islam watch 'Islam at a Glance' every Sunday at 6:30 p.m. on Channel 62. For a free copy of the English translation of The Holy Qur'an, and information on Islam, please call (519) .... or (519) .... or write to P.O. Box ..., Windsor, ON.....

We have presented the facts:

**YOU BE THE JUDGE!**
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100 McLevin Avenue, Suite 4A, Scarborough, ON M1B 2V5
This archive consists of:
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- Annual and other reports
- Meeting minutes
- Various pamphlets and booklets
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100 McLevin Avenue, Unit 204A, Scarborough, ON M1B 2V5
This archive consists of:
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\(^{683}\) I am indebted to Mr. Hameed Shaikh of CMCC for access to this archive.

\(^{684}\) I am indebted to Dr. Muhammad Ashraf of ISNA for access to this archive. This archive is at present located in the new larger headquarters for ISNA, The Islamic Centre of Canada, located at 2200 South Sheridan Way, Mississauga, ON L5J 2M4.

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Mr. Riaz Ahmed, Oakville, Ontario
Mr. Shabir Ally, Toronto
Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, ISNA, Toronto
Professor G. E. Bentley, Jr., Toronto
Dr. Lila Fahlman, CCMW, Edmonton, Alberta
Rev. Bruce Gregerson, United Church of Canada, Toronto
Shaikh Jadd al-Haqq, Shaikh al-Azhar, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt
Mr. Hanny Hassan, CMCC, Toronto
Dr. Murray Hogben, Kingston, Ontario
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Ms. Shaheen Sayed, CCMW, Toronto
Mr. Hameed Shaikh, CMCC, Toronto
Professor Wilfred Cantwell and Dr. Muriel Smith, Toronto
Imam Dr. Liakat Ali Takeem, Ja'ffari Islamic Centre, Toronto

Web Sites:

The Ahmadi communities have two major web sites:
- The larger group, based in London and sometimes referred to as the Qadiani group
  (the community in Toronto is part of this larger group) is at <http://www.ahmadiyya.com>.
- The smaller group, based in Lahore and sometimes referred to as the Ahmadiyya Anjuman is at <http://www.ahmadiyya.org>.


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