Standing on Guard for Thee:  
*The Acceptable Muslim and Boundaries of Racialized Inclusion in Canada*

by

Shelina Kassam

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Graduate Department of Social Justice Education  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education  
University of Toronto

© Copyright by Shelina Kassam, 2018
Standing on Guard for Thee:
The Acceptable Muslim and Boundaries of Racialized Inclusion in Canada

Shelina Kassam
Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of Social Justice Education
University of Toronto
2018

Abstract

This dissertation traces the emergence of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim in Canadian public, political and cultural discourses, and illuminates the conditions for inclusion of such figures in the national imaginary. The Acceptable Muslim is perceived as a ‘good,’ ‘moderate,’ ‘modern,’ and assimilable Muslim, one who espouses a privatized faith with few public expressions of religious/cultural belonging. Against the backdrop of the racialization of Muslim bodies, Acceptable Muslims (re)confirm the racial boundaries of the nation-state, becoming passionate defenders of multiculturalism, whiteness and a global politics of Western domination. I theorize that the figure of the Acceptable Muslim sustains the narrative of the Canadian nation-state as liberal, democratic, secular, modern and inclusive, even as it relentlessly excludes, punishes and eliminates the Muslim Other. In this sense, Acceptable Muslims stand as sentries at the (symbolic) borders of the nation, reanimating the racialized boundaries of acceptability and signaling that those beyond the boundaries can be legitimately policed by the nation-state. The figure of the Acceptable Muslim is central in Canadian debates about multiculturalism, immigration, citizenship and secularism, contestations which often reinforce differential (and racialized) notions of belonging. For the Acceptable Muslim, the price of (conditional) inclusion is fidelity to the ideological goals of the Canadian nation-state.

Grounding my analysis in theories of Orientalism, racialization, citizenship and secularism, I examine Canadian media discourses about Muslims over a ten-year period (2005-2014) and outline the key
frames through which the Muslim body is represented. I then interrogate the work and media footprint of some key Acceptable Muslims and consider how such figures reanimate central tenets of the Canadian national imaginary. Through my analysis, I identify two sets of figures, the Secular Muslim and the Multiculturalist Muslim, both of which fall under the Acceptable Muslim archetype.

While this dissertation examines Acceptable Muslims in the Canadian context, such figures are also evident internationally, illuminating how the figure of the Acceptable Muslim travels across geographical boundaries and is implicated in the global dynamics of power.
Dedication

For Haneefa, my beloved mother
Our love knows no bounds; you are with me always

and

For Stan, Rafique, Sharif and my Dad, Nurdin
In love, we live and explore…
Acknowledgments

The writing of a dissertation may be conducted in solitude, but the journey is shaped by many people who guide, advise, support and sustain the writer. I am extremely grateful for the community of people who have profoundly shaped my academic journey and my life; these are people who inspire and challenge me, and who walk alongside and believe in me.

I am indebted to my exceptional supervisor, Dr. Sherene Razack. Sherene, you are a beacon of intellectual clarity and uncompromising excellence, both in the academic sphere and in the pursuit of justice. Your incisive questions have guided me to search for deeper and more nuanced analyses, and to bring more of myself to my work. My thinking has been profoundly influenced by you. Even when your questions led me towards a path I did not fully understand, it has consistently been towards stronger, deeper and more nuanced questions, analyses and thinking. You have always demanded the best of me, believing in me and in this project. Yours is the voice inside me urging me forward and deeper in my analysis. Thank you for your faith, guidance, compassion, patience, and for continuing to inspire me.

It has been a privilege to work with my Committee, Dr. Minelle Mahtani and Dr. Rinaldo Walcott. I am grateful for your guidance, encouragement and support through this journey and I am honoured by your faith in this project and in me. Collectively, Sherene, Minelle and Rinaldo, I am privileged to have worked with you and am inspired by each of you and your commitment to justice. Dr. Miglena Todorova, thank you for your feedback and your stimulating ideas for further research. Dr. Zareena Grewal, I am deeply indebted for your deep and reflective reading of my work. Your insightful comments have inspired me and encouraged me to think beyond the current dimensions of this project.

I wish to thank my professors at OISE, University of Toronto (in particular, Dr. Kari Delhi, Dr. Sheryl Nestel, Dr. Rinaldo Walcott and Dr. Sherene Razack), who laid a solid foundation for my academic work. I am very grateful for the intellectual guidance and support provided by all of you. Dr. Joan Simalchik has been an important mentor in the arena of teaching undergraduate students; I much appreciate her support and wisdom. My thanks to Zahra Rasul, who first encouraged me to teach in an academic setting. I am also grateful to the many undergraduate students I have taught; their questions have prompted me to search for more effective ways to communicate complex ideas and theories. I thank my colleagues at OISE with whom I shared insights, anxieties, humour and support.
as we made our respective ways through our programs. My special thanks to Shama Dossa, Tammy George, Nazira Mawji, Kate Milley, Shaista Patel, Zahra Rasul, and Sadaf Shallwani. Thank you, Nazira, for the support during the last few months of this journey.

I am blessed to have extraordinary friendships that nurture me in so many ways; these friendships have enriched my life immeasurably. Shamshad Jaffer, I am incredibly blessed to have your gentle presence, clarity of thinking, wisdom and friendship. Orion Smith and Janet Ross, you are always by my side in good times and in challenging ones, and the communion we share is a profound blessing. Sunera Thobani is a dear friend, whose warm friendship and that of Sitara Thobani, encompasses multiple generations of our respective families. I am fortunate to have the mentorship and friendship of Yasmin Jiwani, whose encouragement, care and support are much appreciated. I am thankful for the friendship of Monidipa Dasgupta, whose gentle, warm, and unwavering care are precious. Vera LeClair has been a pillar of support and I am grateful for her support and friendship. I am fortunate to enjoy close friendships, and, though I cannot name them all, I express my special gratitude to Laila Daya, Shama Dossa, Nasrin Husein, Michael Lynk, Sheetal Metha-Karia, Karima Meraly, Taslim Moosa, Nilofer Neky, Rishma Peera, Salimah Shariff and Jill Tansley. You have all walked with me in different ways, supporting me, caring for me, encouraging me, and cheering me on. I thank you for your care, friendship, and for understanding (and excusing) my obsession with this dissertation.

I am especially blessed to be loved and supported by so many members of my extended family (both by blood and by choice). I am warmed by their love and faith in me. My deepest thanks to Farida Jamal, Shaista Shameem, Nikhat Shameem, Nur Alam, Zarina Maherali, Firoz Kassam, Amir Kassam, Amir and Parin Jaffer, Abdul and Kumi Pirbhai, and Amir Bhatia. I am grateful to many members of the Kassam, Sahukhan and Van Uum families, who, from far and wide, embrace me with their love. I am especially grateful for the quiet love and support of my step-mother, Meorah, and my in-laws, Fien, Gerard, Huub, Esther, Saskia and Paul. Bedankt voor jullie steun en liefde!

My family is central to my life. Mum, Dad, Stan, Rafique and Sharif, you are the pillars of my life. You have walked with me, through good days and difficult ones, and your unwavering support has been indispensable – both to the completion of this dissertation and to my life. My beloved mama, your powerful love and unwavering faith in me are beacons which (still) strengthen me. Your quiet wisdom and grace inspire me. I (still) laugh when I recall your humour. Though we have lost you physically, you remain a beloved presence in our lives and our hearts. Dad, your wisdom, energy and life inspire me, and I am moved by your powerful love, stories and music. I marvel at your life which is a testament
to the power of determination, courage, love and sheer willpower. Together, Mum and Dad, you have modeled the power of love, justice, relationships, grace and compassion. I am profoundly blessed to have you as my parents, role models and friends.

Stan, you are my soul-mate, my closest friend, and my partner in all of life’s voyages. We share so much together, and I am so blessed that we share life together. Through this Ph.D. journey, you have encouraged me, supported me, listened (endlessly) to me, challenged me, prodded me to keep working, found ways to protect my time, and have always reminded me to believe in myself. Even during the most difficult times, you kept the faith, so that I would keep going. Through our life’s journey, you make me a better person, encouraging me to be true to myself. You are an incredible human being, and I am continually inspired by your intelligence, gentle nature, and compassion. You are my rock, and I am eternally grateful that we walk life’s path together.

Rafique and Sharif, you are my special gifts in life, and I bask in the love we share. You are both such wonderful human beings. I am inspired daily by each of you, your wisdom, and your compassionate souls. Rafique, I am in awe of your intellectual depth, integrity, gentle spirit, humility and commitment to justice. Sharif, I marvel at your emotional understanding, intelligence, quick wit, powerful instinct and the generosity of your heart. Together, you remind me to laugh, to see the humour in everyday experiences and I am ever-grateful for the many blessings you both bring to my life. I cherish the relationship that we share, the quiet certitude in our deep love.

Mum, Dad, Stan, Rafique, and Sharif, I am so grateful that we walk the journey of life together. I immerse myself in our love and breathe: this is grace.
# Table of Contents

Abstract........................................................................................................................................... ii
Dedication........................................................................................................................................... iv
Acknowledgments.............................................................................................................................. v
Table of Contents ............................................................................................................................... viii
List of Tables and Figures.................................................................................................................. xii
List of Appendices ............................................................................................................................ xiii

Introduction  Imagining the Acceptable Muslim: Situating the Research Project/...................................... 1

Imagining the Muslim: The Other and the Acceptable ........................................................................ 1
Summary of Research Project............................................................................................................. 3
Overview of Dissertation chapters ................................................................................................... 4
Contribution to scholarship ............................................................................................................... 5
Why I do not use the term moderate Muslim .................................................................................... 7
Situating myself in the research ......................................................................................................... 10

Chapter 1  Theorizing the figure of ‘the Muslim’: (Neo)Orientalism and the racialized, gendered Muslim body......................................................................................................................... 14

Introduction....................................................................................................................................... 14

Orientalism: Edward Said, his ideas and his critics......................................................................... 14

Said’s key ideas................................................................................................................................... 14
Orientalism, knowledge and power .................................................................................................... 18
Race, Manifest and Latent Orientalism............................................................................................... 21

Gendered Orientalism......................................................................................................................... 23
Centering Gender and critiquing the critiques of Said’s ideas ............................................................ 23
(Un)Veiling the Orient.......................................................................................................................... 27

The Haunting Fields: Race, racialization, (neo) racism and the Muslim body .................................... 34

Race, racialization and racial projects .............................................................................................. 34
Racialization and religion .................................................................................................................. 40
Racism, anti-racism and born-again racism ....................................................................................... 44

The culturalization of race, multiculturalism and post-racialism and the Muslim body ............. 51

Neo-Orientalism: race, gender, culture and religion in the contemporary moment ...................... 58
Orientalism and hegemonic discourse ............................................................................................... 58

Contemporary neo-Orientalist imaginaries and representations .................................................... 60

viii
Race-thinking, the state of exception and Muslims ............................................................... 66
Culture and the racialization of the Muslim body ................................................................... 69
Gender, visibility and neo-Orientalist governmentality ....................................................... 74
The language of universalism, imperialism and liberal rage .................................................. 82

Chapter 2 Boundaries of acceptability: Race, citizenship and the Muslim .............................. 86

Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 86
A ‘fictive ethnicity’: Western liberal citizenship ..................................................................... 88
Boundaries within the national imaginary: Culture, Race and Citizenship ............................. 92
The Universal and the Particular: Embedding Dominance and Privilege ............................... 93

Defining and protecting the white nation: The fantasy of white space .................................... 95
Nationalist policies of spatial management ............................................................................ 95
Governmental belonging and passive belonging .................................................................... 97
The fantasy of white space in multicultural nation-states ....................................................... 99

National Mythologies: Epic stories of origin and contemporary belonging .......................... 103
Defining boundaries of belonging ......................................................................................... 103
Home and Native Land: Race and the Canadian national narrative ....................................... 105
Producing differential subjectivities in the Canadian national imaginary .............................. 108
The Canadian racial landscape: Indigenous, Asian, and Black bodies ..................................... 110
The Black Muslim body ......................................................................................................... 113
Racial coding and the Muslim body in the Canadian national narrative ............................... 116

Boundaries of Acceptability: The figure of the Muslim in Canadian discourses .................... 119
Narratives of citizenship and belonging ............................................................................... 119
Disciplining Culture, death by culture and death of culture ............................................... 121
Patrolling the boundaries of acceptability: The Acceptable Muslim ...................................... 124
Performing good or acceptable citizenship .......................................................................... 127
Acceptable Muslims and Comprador Intellectuals ............................................................... 129

Research Design and methodological imperatives ................................................................. 131
Key research questions ........................................................................................................... 132
Data Sample ............................................................................................................................. 132

Methodological framework ..................................................................................................... 135
Critical Discourse Analysis: methodological principles ......................................................... 136
Critical Discourse Analysis: methodological tools ................................................................. 140
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on gender equality</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views on Canadian multiculturalism</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion  Sentries at the boundaries: The Acceptable Muslim at the borders of the nation</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing the Muslim Other</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Acceptable Muslim</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ideological implications of the Acceptable Muslim</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations and Areas for further study</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Yearly totals, all searches............................................................................................................. 158
Figure 1: Total Number of Entries for all searches over time ................................................................. 159
Figure 2: Total Number of Entries specified by code .............................................................................. 159
List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Codes for Media Analysis................................................................. 374
Introduction

Imagining the Acceptable Muslim: 
Situating the Research Project

Imagining the Muslim: The Other and the Acceptable
In the post 9/11 era, the notion of Muslimness is deeply entrenched in national and international discourses and psyches. Based on classic Orientalist imaginaries, this notion of Muslimness is invoked in political and public discourses to demarcate the nation and to situate the visibly Muslim body (i.e. those who are identifiable as Muslim by visual markers such as skin colour, beards, clothing, etc.) as barbaric, dangerous, and the Other. The figure of the Muslim Other is a body to be profiled, surveilled and either contained within, or expelled from, civilized society. Notably, the Muslim Other is a gendered construct with Muslim women occupying different but related positions within the Orientalist imaginary. For the contemporary period, Sherene Razack considers the dangerous Muslim man and the imperilled woman as the primary Orientalist figures on the global landscape although she speculates that the figure of the Muslim woman may well be changing and is becoming marked as more dangerous than imperiled. (Razack, 2008, forthcoming). As a racism, Orientalism is organized around the visual; markers of Muslimness include skin colour, physical features, beards, language, and most often, clothing. Visibly Muslim bodies are at the heart of many contestations within national and international narratives, which render these bodies as hyper-visible. Such visible Muslim bodies are used incessantly in discourses that reinforce and reanimate projects of nation-building, citizenship and empire. In this sense, Muslimness becomes a visible marker of something other than religious identity, and, indeed, becomes a marker of political and ideological boundaries within the Western nation-state. Defying easy categorization, this notion of Muslimness is dependent on racially and sexually codified bodies to create a new, re-configured Muslim subjectivity that then becomes the basis for the identification, surveillance and policing of certain bodies and communities.
While the notions on which this Muslimness relies are based on age-old Orientalist discourses, these representations are nuanced in the contemporary moment, in which Muslim bodies are often classified as good or bad Muslims. (Mamdani, 2004). This dichotomy between good and bad Muslim is a central feature of contemporary Orientalist discourses, and especially so in Western multicultural nation-states that rely on these demarcations to (re)configure national narratives and citizenship privileges, all the while extolling their non-racist benevolence. In Western multicultural nation-states, the delineation of acceptable or good Muslims becomes the barometer against which the state can both proclaim its innocence and benevolence and justify continued violence against the so-called dangerous Muslim Other. Thus, the nation-state marks those that belong and those that do not, simultaneously upholding its national narrative as benevolent, and reinforcing its presumed need to protect its boundaries, both external and internal. Post 9/11 discourses on nationhood, citizenship and belonging are imbued with questions about the figure of the Muslim and focus particularly on whether such a figure is assimilable in Western nation-states. Such discourses are founded on neo-Orientalist imaginaries in which race, religion, and culture are conflated to exclude certain (racialized) bodies from the national imaginary, situating some bodies as central and others expendable.

Against the backdrop of the increasing racialization of Muslim bodies, I suggest that another figure – the Acceptable Muslim – emerges in Western discourses. Such a Muslim body is juxtaposed against the racialized and visible Muslim Other and is situated as a good Muslim who integrates well into Western society. This Acceptable Muslim is seen as modern, as one who supports the ideological and political foundations of Western society, and who espouses a privatized faith with few or no public expressions of faith and cultural belonging – and even then, only acceptable expressions. Situated against the backdrop of neo-liberalism, this Acceptable Muslim is seen to be exercising her/his individual choice and perceived to be free of the limitations of culture, religion, race, gender or other such markers of history, community or identity. Such an Acceptable Muslim plays important
ideological roles in the context of Western narratives of citizenship, belonging, multiculturalism, secularism and nationhood.

**Summary of Research Project**
The key focus of this dissertation is to trace the emergence of the Acceptable Muslim in Canadian media, public and political discourses and to interrogate the ideological and political meanings of such a figure. Grounding my project in theories of Orientalism (Said, 1978/2003; Yegenoglu, 1998), racialization, and race-thinking (Arendt, 1973; Razack, 2008), I first examine narratives about Muslims in Canadian media discourses (between 2005 and 2014), and outline the key frames through which the Muslim body is represented and positioned in Canadian public life. Using this analysis as my terrain, I then interrogate the figure of the Acceptable Muslim specifically, how it emerges in Canadian media and public discourses, and the manner in which such a figure is used to reanimate central tenets of the Canadian national imaginary. In identifying the figures of the Acceptable Muslim in Canadian media, I select well-known media personalities who, I argue, occupy the position of the Acceptable Muslim. These individuals are Irshad Manji, Tarek Fatah, Zarqa Nawaz and Sheema Khan. In my analysis of these four personalities, I rely both on their media footprint (Canadian press) in my data, as well as on selected works (both written and audio-visual) by these figures.

The figure of the Acceptable Muslim plays important ideological roles in the Canadian national imaginary, reanimating the demarcations between the civilized, modern, and enlightened citizen-subject (the Western national subject), and the dangerous Other, who must be either saved or policed. In this sense, the Acceptable Muslim is the sentry at the boundaries of acceptability within the Canadian nation-state and is a key marker of so-called legitimate citizenship and that of the Other who is excluded from political community. Such a figure is central to Canadian debates about multiculturalism, immigration, citizenship and secularism, contestations which often reinforce differential (and racialized) notions of belonging. While my project examines Acceptable Muslims in
the Canadian context, such figures (such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Mona Elthahawy, and Asma Noumani) are also evident internationally, illuminating how the figure of the Acceptable Muslim travels across geographical boundaries and is implicated in the global dynamics of power. I attend to the international dimensions of Acceptable Muslims through an engagement with scholarship in the American context in particular.

**Overview of Dissertation chapters**

In Chapter 1, I examine how the racialized and gendered Muslim body is produced by Orientalist, gendered Orientalist and neo-Orientalist imaginaries, all of which are rooted in racial coding. These imaginaries are nuanced in the contemporary moment, in which notions of culture and values complicate societal discourses on race, marking the visible Muslim body as an internal Other, a figure symbolically marginalized within the nation-state. In Chapter 2, I outline the methodological imperatives guiding my analysis, imperatives grounded in narratives of citizenship and belonging in Western multicultural societies. Such narratives enable systemic and racialized demarcations within nations, which are underwritten by relations of power, privilege and domination. Such demarcations of citizenship illustrate how the visible Muslim body is marked as unassimilable and outside the boundaries of acceptable citizenship. In this chapter, I also discuss the Canadian national mythology, and how such a mythology produces differential subjectivities on the racialized landscape of the nation-state. I further outline, in Chapter 2, the key mythological principles and tools upon which I rely for my analysis. Chapters 1 and 2, therefore, provide the theoretical and methodological background to my analysis of Canadian media discourses about Muslims. In Chapter 3, I analyze data from media searches on Muslims in the Canadian press (2005-2014). I outline the key frames through which the Muslim body is represented and trace the emergence of the Acceptable Muslim in these discourses. In Chapter 4, I focus specifically on four key figures of Acceptable Muslims in Canadian public discourse, conducting a detailed analysis of their work and media footprints to interrogate their
perspectives and their ideological functions. Finally, in my conclusion, I summarize the key findings of my dissertation, raise key questions, and point to areas of possible further study.

**Contribution to scholarship**

In the post 9/11 world, there is increasing scholarly attention paid to the role of Muslims in the public life of Western nation-states, especially in discourses relating to multiculturalism, citizenship, immigration and secularism. There is an increasingly expanding body of literature on Muslimness (as the exotic, primitive, extremist Other) and the relationship of such bodies to Western representations, conversations and contestations about a variety of national and international issues. Scholars such as Razack (2008), Thobani (2007, 2014), Jiwani (2005b, 2009, 2011b, 2014), Karim (2000), Mamdani (2004), Maira (2009b), Alsultany (2012), Naber (2008), Zine (2012b), Hage (2000), Kundnani (2008, 2014), Dabashi (2011) and others have written about the racialized Muslim body in the context of Western nation-states with particular attention to the post 9/11 context. Mamdani’s (2004) demarcation between the good and the bad Muslim contributes to the literature on Muslims by complicating the age-old Orientalist depictions of Muslims as exotic, primitive, child-like, threatening figures, ‘different’ from the mature, ‘civilized’ Western subject. Hage (2000), Ahmed (2000), Razack (2008), and Thobani (2007) explore how white settler societies use national narratives to (re)establish and reinforce colonial structures, (re)affirming the right of the (white) colonial manager to assert his authority over others in the nation-state. Razack, Jiwani, and Thobani, in particular, explore the relationship of the racialized Other – and the Muslim in the contemporary moment – in the Canadian national imaginary and specifically in relation to Canadian notions of citizenship and belonging.

In the contemporary moment, there is also increased scholarly attention to the notion of the ‘good’ Muslim in Western nation-states. Scholars such as Alsultany (2012), Dabashi (2011), Kundnani (2014), Bayoumi (2010), Sharify-Funk (2010) and others pay some attention to the figure of the sympathetic, Muslim who is situated as moderate, modern, assimilable, and who does not display visible signs of
Muslimness. These scholars theorize that such a good Muslim body supports and reinforces the ideological goals of the Western nation-state, goals which reanimate the racialized boundaries and citizenship privileges within these states.

My project builds on and extends this theorizing on the Muslim subject, and specifically the good Muslim subject, in the context of Western nation-states. I specifically focus on the figure of the Acceptable Muslim in the Canadian context, a figure which I theorize is vital to the reanimation of racialized boundaries of acceptability in the national imaginary. I begin my project by exploring Canadian media discourses about the Muslim over a 10-year period (2005-2014), a substantially longer period than most studies analyzing representations of Muslims. I use this data from Canadian media to illustrate the primary narratives about Muslims, as well as to trace specifically the emergence of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim. I then conduct a detailed analysis of four Acceptable Muslim figures, all of whom appear consistently in media, public and political discourses. My analysis of the work and perspectives of these four Acceptable Muslims reveals the commonalities and nuances among them and explores how they are used ideologically to reinforce key elements of the Canadian national narrative. In my analysis of these figures, I theorize that some Acceptable Muslims are Secular Muslims (despite self-identifying as Muslim) while others are Multiculturalist Muslims, each of them sharing some commonalities, but also having important distinctions that situate each of these figures differently. Importantly, while there are nuances between these two sub-categories of Acceptable Muslims, I theorize that they both support and reinforce the racialized boundaries of acceptability within the Canadian national imaginary.

In surveying the relevant literature in the field, I have found that while scholarly interest in the figure of the Muslim is vigorous, there is less dedicated interest in the figure I refer to as the Acceptable Muslim, especially in the context of Canadian narratives of citizenship, belonging and nationhood. My
particular contribution to the scholarly field is my specific focus on Acceptable Muslims, their media footprints, and their work, theorizing that there are multiple faces and perspectives to such figures, and that the term good Muslim does not fully capture the nuances of such figures. This multiplicity of faces and perspectives will, I believe, complicate the current scholarship on the good Muslim, and will contribute to a deeper, more nuanced analysis of how the Acceptable Muslim (re)configures and (re)animates contemporary Canadian (and Western) conversations about race, gender, culture, and Muslims. I argue that the price of (conditional) inclusion for the Acceptable Muslim is to express loyalty to the ideological goals of the (white) settler nation-state, a fidelity that reconfirms the racialized boundaries of acceptable citizenship, beyond which other (usually racialized) bodies may be legitimately policed and, if necessary, excluded from the national imaginary. Such an Acceptable Muslim figure then must, in both its secular and multiculturalist forms, defend whiteness and a Western politics of global domination through which the family of white nations reaffirms its power.

**Why I do not use the term moderate Muslim**
The term ‘moderate Muslim’ has become commonplace in Western representations and depictions of Muslims. The term is used primarily in Western discourses to depict those Muslims who are situated as modern, integrated, and those who are perceived to be assimilable, through acceptance (and public expression) of key dominant Western norms. In his analysis of the term moderate Muslim, Ramadan (2010) suggests that “…moderate Muslims are those who adopt no distinctive dress, who consume alcohol and practice their religion ‘as we do ours’ that is, not really, or by making it invisible in the public sphere.” (p. 2). In other words, these are the good Muslims who are situated as more like us, more Western, a figure to juxtapose against the Muslim Other. In my research, I find that this term is used often in media, political and public discourses to identify the Muslim who is not extremist, not radical, and more modern in approach.
I do not use – and, in fact, challenge – the term moderate Muslim. The use of moderate as a qualifier implies that the moderate Muslim is the exceptional Muslim; it is a qualifier which situates the Muslim (without the qualifier) as always-already radical, extreme, violent, and immoderate. Such a qualifier is rarely, if ever, used in describing members of other groups (moderate Jew, moderate Christian, moderate Black, moderate white, moderate Canadian, moderate atheist, moderate secularist). Rarely, if ever, is this term used in relation to right-wing white supremacists who are presumed to be extremist and not reflective of the perspectives of other white people, or indeed, even of other right-leaning individuals. Such usage (such as moderate Canadian) is seen as nonsensical: after all, what is a moderate Canadian? And yet, the term moderate Muslim is used often, with little reflection on its implications, nor what it indicates about societal perceptions of Muslims. The very fact of its common public usage reveals how deeply embedded discourses about Muslims are – there is a sense that the Muslim is always-already extreme, radical, and hence, the term moderate establishes the good credentials of the Muslim in question.

The term moderate Muslim reconfirms Orientalist depictions of Islam and Muslims as primitive, exotic, dangerous, child-like, and threatening. The implication is that one needs to be described as a moderate to be distinguished from these attributes; the moderate is seen to be different from the Muslim masses that are presumably looming in the shadows. The term moderate Muslim is, therefore, as stereotypical and problematic as those terms which posit Muslims – all Muslims – as violent. As one young American Muslim notes, “…when the media talks about ‘moderate Muslims’, they are perpetuating a dangerous narrative of Islam as a violent religion that is at odds with American society. The term ‘moderate Muslim’ assumes that being Muslim isn’t enough. That being Muslim is threatening.” (Younus, 2017).
The prevailing perception in Western public discourse appears to be that all Muslims are assigned responsibility for the extremist actions of a minority. Such an implication is evident in the many calls for apologies from Muslims after violent actions. The qualifier ‘moderate’ implies that Muslims must choose sides, to be moderate and ‘with us’ or to be a Muslim and run the risk of being assigned collective guilt for violence. Such a perspective assumes that extremism and violence are exclusive to Islam and Muslims, and that Muslims (all Muslims, except the moderates) are somehow responsible for extremist violence (rarely addressed is the violence of white supremacists or the violence of the state). In this sense, the term moderate Muslim provides as little space – symbolic, material and discursive – as the Orientalist representations of the primitive, violent and threatening Muslim; both terms provide little nuance or complexity for the lives of millions of Muslims.

For all these reasons, I do not use the term moderate Muslim in my research, even though this is the term commonly used by Western media, public and political discourses for the figures I analyze. Instead, I use the term Acceptable Muslim, a term that I developed to describe the Muslims whose perspectives reinforce (unconsciously, in some cases) central tenets of the Western imaginary, and whose views and bodies are used ideologically by the Western nation-state to reinforce its own ideological positions and projects. The term Acceptable Muslim denotes that this figure must be perceived as acceptable and legitimate by the hegemonic elite of the nation-state, a figure whose acceptability is established against the contours of the Western national imaginary. By using the term Acceptable Muslim, I suggest that such a figure is shaped deeply by the Western nation-state which makes ideological use of the figure to reinforce its racialized boundaries and practices. Hence, my use of the term Acceptable Muslim and avoidance of the term moderate Muslim is conscious and deliberate. In my media research, however, I was compelled to use the term moderate Muslim as this is the term most commonly deployed in media, political and public discourses. I therefore use this term in media searches but do not use the term in my analysis.
Situating myself in the research

Critical Race and feminist scholarship posit that knowledge is not completely neutral, and that researchers must be reflexive, allowing their lived experiences to shape their research. Similarly, Critical Discourse analysis, my primarily methodological framework, conceives of research as “…an engagement in favour of dominated groups in society.” (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 6). Crucial to the scholarly heritage to which I claim allegiance, therefore, is a personal reflexivity that situates myself in my own research, probing my own positioning, the impact of my life experiences, and how these factors shape my research standpoints. As Boylorn (2011) cogently notes, “[a]s I am researching and examining others, I am simultaneously situating myself and reflecting.” (p. 179).

The starting place of my positioning is my social location: I am a Muslim woman, a person of colour, a first-generation immigrant (albeit 40 years ago, but nonetheless defined still as an immigrant), able-bodied, heterosexual, now middle aged (!), educated, and currently upper middle-class (in my own generation, not that of my parents). My family has roots in Tanzania (where I was born), Fiji, South Asia, Trinidad and Afghanistan, and the history of my family illustrates the arc of migrants whose lives are profoundly shaped by colonialism and who find themselves outrunning their histories at every turn.

I carry aspects of both subordination and privilege, situated as I am at the intersections of various sites and identities, each of which is complex, contested, and shifting. I carry with me the stories of my family’s histories of oppressions, privilege, power, subordination and injustice. All these factors shape my thinking, my understandings, my perspectives and my research. I trade in the currencies both of privilege and oppression, always aware that my inclusion or exclusion depends very much on which aspect of my identity I choose to foreground or is being foregrounded for me. Even at a young age, I was aware of this shifting ground, understanding implicitly that the shifting of metaphorical (and literal) accents and dialects gave me greater discursive space. As a young woman of colour, I learned...
to live with, and manage, the various contestations (some manifest, others within my own mind) in which I engaged, recognizing that my “toehold on respectability” (Razack and Fellows, 1998) allows me freedom, but also renders me complicit in various systems of domination. In Canada, my country of longest residence and primary citizenship, my ‘home,’ I am consistently displaced by the invisible empire, by the racism that assumes that I am from elsewhere, underlining that my traditions, my understanding of myself is somehow ‘different,’ ‘exotic,’ or ‘special.’ Yet, because of my educational and class privileges, because of the way I dress, and my supposedly ‘unaccented’ English, I am often perceived as Western, modern, and even moderate (that is, until I begin speaking about politics).

I am a Muslim, one who has neither completely privatized her faith, nor adheres to ritualistic or even normative conceptions of that faith. I challenge the normative frames within which Muslims are compelled (either by Western or orthodox Muslim discourses) to operate. Rather, I practice faith through the lens of personal interpretation and the use of intellect, guided by scriptural, theological and cultural norms, though my interpretation of these is, of course, not static. As an Ismaili Muslim (though often contesting some of these norms as well), I am often situated, because of the community’s public presence, as a modern, assimilable Muslim, one who is perceived to have successfully negotiated integration into Western society. Further, I carry no visible signs of my Muslimness (except my brown skin), and this confers upon me certain privileges: I have not been verbally or physically targeted for any visible Muslimness. How I use this privilege – whether I am complicit in the ongoing demonization of visibly Muslim bodies, or whether I choose to stand against such demonization – forms a central element of my research.

As a teenager and young adult, I was interested in, and concerned about, the representations of Islam and Muslims I saw in Western media. In my youth, I wrote letters to the editors of various newspapers and newsmagazines, expressing my objection to their representations of Muslims. These
representations did not reflect my own experiences as a Muslim, nor did they reflect the diversity of Muslim communities, in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, interpretations of faith or ways of being. Instead, these representations focused on stereotypical ideas either about barbaric and violent Muslim men and oppressed Muslim women, or about the devout, believing Muslim whose every action is inspired by faith. Clearly, I did not fit within these frames of representation and my own experiences as a young Canadian Muslim were rendered silent and invisible. More importantly, I knew these frames to be extremely one-dimensional, painting large numbers of individuals, families and communities as undifferentiated masses. My concern then, as a young adult, was to correct the inaccuracies of media depictions, and to ensure that these representations showed the ‘reality’ of Muslim communities. Little did I know that my journey into academia, activism, and movements against injustice would upend my youthful preoccupation with accuracy. Today I am far more committed to uncovering the relations of power underlying the representations of Muslims and other racialized peoples, and how these reinforce the fantasy of whiteness, its presumed neutrality and normativity, all in the guise of multiculturalism, secularism and the so-called liberal values of Canadian society.

My research interest in the figure of the Acceptable Muslim is rooted in my commitment to exposing the power relations at the heart of Western society and empire, relations which exalt some bodies (the white ones) and marginalize, exclude or expel other bodies (usually racialized bodies). I theorize that the figure of the Acceptable Muslim stands at the boundaries of acceptability within the Western national imaginary: they are the sentries at these boundaries, and hence, they reinforce these racialized boundaries. These Acceptable Muslim figures – whether the radical Secular Muslim, or the softer Multiculturalist Muslim – are used to reinforce hegemonic social relations in Western society, and thus, they become complicit with the various systems of domination that engender injustice and subordination. In the Canadian context, Acceptable Muslims (consciously or otherwise) perpetuate
the illusion that Canada is a multicultural, secular, benevolent, and welcoming society, an illusion which renders invisible the many violences at the heart of Canadian society. I know the illusion as false, as a deception that justifies injustice, and I bristle at the complicity of Acceptable Muslims in upholding (again consciously or otherwise) both the deception itself and the systems of domination the deception renders invisible.

Finally, my research on, and interest in, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim is also shaped by my own personal positioning within the Canadian social and political landscape. Given that I am often perceived as a modern Muslim who is well-integrated, I may, at least on the surface, be mistaken for an Acceptable Muslim. Such a realization is shocking and disturbing to me, for my political perspectives differ markedly from those one might reasonably ascribe to the Acceptable Muslim. I must admit to being unsettled when I first came to the realization, that I was disturbed both intellectually and emotionally, whenever I encountered the Acceptable Muslim. As Dabashi (2011) comments, “[w]hy are we always more incensed and troubled by someone who looks and sounds like us than by any other? Is it because we identify with them, or because the world – the white world – identifies us with them?” (p. 25). I am especially troubled by the figure of the Acceptable Muslim because I could be identified with her by the white world in which I live, but also perhaps because I fear that I could have become her, were it not for my (continuing) journey into the world of critical race, feminist, and social justice scholarship and activism. It is no doubt from this place that this thesis emerges.
Chapter 1

Theorizing the figure of ‘the Muslim’:

*(Neo)Orientalism and the racialized, gendered Muslim body*

Introduction
The figure of the Muslim has been a dominant feature of Western discourse, a discourse that emphasizes the demarcation between the Orientalist Other and the Western Self. Rooted in colonial and imperialist history, this binary remains central to contemporary Western public, political and media discourses. In this chapter, I review scholarly literature on Orientalism, gendered Orientalism, and race/racialization in order to trace the figure of the Muslim Other in contemporary Western (and neo-Orientalist) discourses. Based on this theoretical scaffolding, I suggest that the figure of the racialized and gendered Muslim body, situated within the Orientalist discursive framework, is, in the post 9/11 world, an internal Other and “…has become the pre-eminent ‘folk devil’ of our time.” (Morgan, 2012). Central to the neo-Orientalist discourse is the dichotomy between good and bad Muslims, with the former figure an important mechanism through which the latter racialized and gendered figure continues to be targeted and surveilled in an increasingly Islamophobic or anti-Muslim racist environment.1 In later chapters, I contextualize the figure of the Acceptable Muslim – a reconfigured insider informer who has become a significant feature of Western public narratives – against this neo-Orientalist and racialized backdrop.

Orientalism: Edward Said, his ideas and his critics

*Said’s key ideas*
Edward Said is the most well-known and prolific critic of the Orientalist tradition of scholarship, a tradition which he argues has had a profound impact on dominant representations and understandings of the Muslim body. Said’s ground-breaking monograph, *Orientalism* (1978), though much debated and

---

1 I find Zine’s definition of Islamophobia useful. She suggests that the traditional definition of Islamophobia (fear and hatred of Islam and Muslims) is limiting and hence she places the term “…in a broader sociological framework where fear and hatred manifest into individual, ideological and systemic practices…” (J. Zine, 2017).
critiqued, makes significant contributions to an understanding of how historical ideas about ‘the Orient’ (primarily the Asian and African colonies of Britain and France) shape Western notions and how they have been perpetuated through time. Said (1978/2003) suggests that analyzing and understanding Orientalist discourse is crucial to understanding “…the enormously systematic disciplines through which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period.” (p. 3). Using Foucault’s conception of discourse, and Gramsci’s idea of hegemony, Said presents a masterful survey of Western approaches to the Orient. These Orientalist discourses, initially a scholarly endeavour, have been attached to social and political imperatives, and over time have become an “…accepted grid for filtering the Orient into Western consciousness…” (Said, 1978/2003, p. 6). Given the durability of Orientalist discourses, and their influence on contemporary notions about Muslims, an understanding of Said’s key ideas is crucial to any coherent analysis of Muslims in the contemporary context.

Said defines Orientalism in three ways: (a) as an academic discipline researching, studying and writing about ‘the Orient’; (b) as a way of thinking that demarcates a distinction between ‘the Orient’ and ‘the Occident’; and (c) as a “…corporate institution for dealing with the Orient..” (Said, 1978/2003, pp. 2-3). The three definitions are, of course, related, and combined with the power of colonialism, become

…the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. (Said, 1978/2003, p. 3).

Said traces Orientalist attitudes towards Muslim societies in Western scholarship and political imperatives between the 18th and 20th centuries and shows how these reflect the development of a Muslim Other, particularly because “…for Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma.” (Said, 1978/2003, p. 59). As Said (1978/2003) argues
...for much of its history, then, Orientalism carries within it the stamp of a problematic European attitude towards Islam. Doubtless Islam was a real provocation in many ways. It lay uneasily close to Christianity, geographically and culturally. It drew on the Judeo-Hellenic traditions, it borrowed creatively from Christianity, it could boast of unrivaled military and political successes. Nor was this all. The Islamic lands sit adjacent to and even on top of the Biblical lands; moreover, the heart of the Islamic domain has always been the region closest to Europe, what has been called the Near Orient or Near East. Arabic and Hebrew are Semitic languages, and together they dispose and redispose of material that is urgently important to Christianity. (p. 74).

Orientalist thought relies on a clear demarcation between the East (the Orient) and the West (the Occident), and assigns essentialized characteristics to those belonging to each category. Hence, “…the Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, ‘different’: thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, ‘normal’…” (Said, 1978/2003, p. 40). The mutuality between the two sets of representations is constitutive both of the Oriental, seen as an object to be studied, and the European, a subject with agency and the power to know the other and who consequently is in a position of superiority. Underlying such a discursive binary are essentialist notions of the Orientals, figures “…who cannot represent themselves, they must therefore be represented by others who know more about Islam than Islam knows about itself.” (Said, 1985, p. 7). With boundaries thus demarcated, the Orientalist scholar could then be deployed to study, research, write about and classify the Oriental who lived in a “…thoroughly organized world of his own, a world with its own national, cultural and epistemological boundaries and principles of internal coherence.” (Said, 1978/2003, p. 40). This is, Said says, an “…imaginative geography and history that helps the mind to intensify in its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away.” (1978/2003, p. 55). Hence, this imaginative geography creates reductive, essentialized and one-dimensional perceptions of peoples, based on binary distinctions which are produced by human endeavour rather than naturally existing. Said suggests that these demarcations of the world into the Orient and the West “…have no ontological stability; each is made up of human effort, partly affirmation, partly identification of the Other.” (1978/2003, p. xvii). Such a division of the world into binary opposites
was fashioned by Orientalist scholars, and eventually productively attached to the European colonial project. These Orientalist representations of Islam and Muslims become codified in a particular way, a codification which Said aptly describes:

The Orientalists...saw Islam, for example, as a ‘cultural synthesis’ (the phrase is P.M. Holts’) that could be studied apart from the economics, sociology, and politics of the Islamic peoples. For Orientalism, Islam had a meaning which, if one were to look for its most succinct formulation, could be found in Renan’s first treatise: in order best to be understood Islam had to be reduced to ‘tent and tribe.’ The impact of colonialism, of worldly circumstances, of historical development: all these were to Orientalists as flies to wanton boys, killed – or disregarded – for their sport, never taken seriously enough to complicate the essential Islam. (1978/2003, p. 105).

Orientalist perspectives on Islam and Muslims are essentialized ideas that rely on depictions of a so-called ‘universal’ Islam, a notion which assumes a set of common beliefs, interpretations, values, principles, and cultural practices that can represent the diverse and heterogeneous ways of life of Muslims. Said refers to this ‘Islam’ as “…part fiction, part ideological label, part minimal designation of a religion called Islam.” (1981, p. x). These essentialized and one-dimensional representations are evident in contemporary discourses which represent Islam (and Muslims) through a series of shorthand caricatures, images and ideas which depict Muslims as primitive, backward, irrational, threatening, oppressive, and exotic. Left unacknowledged (and yet strongly present in juxtaposition) in such depictions is the binary opposite of such notions: the modern, rational, free, normal Western subject, a figure which is normalized and naturalized in contemporary discourse. These accounts of an essentialized, static, one-dimensional Islam form the basis of hegemonic discourses – for instance in media, public and political discourses – and constrain deeper analysis of the contemporary social, political, economic, ideological and human conditions facing Muslims. As is evident in my analysis of Canadian media discourse, such lived experiences and conditions rarely, if ever, factor into media commentaries about Muslims; instead, such commentaries focus on Islam, its meaning, and the
manner in which Muslims adhere to the dictates of this faith, which is rarely, if ever, depicted in its complexity, diversity, and actual lived experiences of its adherents. As Said observes,

Islam seems to engulf all aspects of the diverse Muslim world, reducing them all to a special malevolent and unthinking essence. Instead of analysis and understanding as a result, there can be for the most part only the crudest form of us-versus-them…. [T]he world of Islam…is no more than ‘Islam,’ reducible to a small number of unchanging characteristics despite the appearance of contradictions and experiences of variety that seem on the surface to be as plentiful as those of the West. (1981, pp. 8, 10).

Such discourses about Islam and Muslims are grounded in the key dogmas of Orientalism which are (a) the demarcation between the West, seen as rational, mature, modern, and superior, and the Orient, depicted as irrational, child-like, primitive, and inferior; (b) the focus on texts, and textual understandings about the ‘Oriental’, and ‘classical’ Oriental civilization, with textual understanding taking precedence over direct evidence or lived experiences; (c) the idea that the Orient is monolithic and eternal, with little (if any) capacity to define itself, and so which must be defined through the Western scholarship; and (d) that the Orient is either to be feared or controlled, bringing Orientalist scholarship to the service of empire. (Said, 1978/2003, pp. 300-301). Central to the working of these dogmas – both in the past and in contemporary times – is the relationship between knowledge and power.

**Orientalism, knowledge and power**
For Said, Orientalist thought cannot be understood outside the relationship between knowledge and power. The Orientalist binary, with its oppositional comparison, already situates the Western subject in a position of superiority to the figure of the ‘Other,’ who is depicted as a legitimate object for research and study. The superiority of the Western subject, then, positions the Western researcher, scientist, philologist, novelist, and traveller as the bearer of knowledge – and the caretaker of this body of knowledge – about the Orient and, by extension, about the figure of the Oriental. As Said (1978/2003) puts it, “the scientist, the scholar, the missionary, the trader, or the soldier was in, or
thought about, the Orient because he *could be there*, or could think about it, with very little resistance on the Orient’s part.” (p. 7). Said surveys key areas of British and French Orientalist scholarship between the 18th and 20th centuries and maps out how such scholarship situates itself as the guardian of knowledge about the Orient. He illustrates how such scholarship becomes deployed by European colonial and imperial imperatives, using key examples to make his point. In this respect, argues Said, Orientalist scholars have been deeply implicated in the imperial project, both historically and into the 20th century (and, as others have argued, into the 21st century). Said notes that the relationship between the Orient and Europe is one of “…power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony…” (1978/2003, p. 5). Said (1978/2003) suggests that Orientalism is a discourse relating to different shades of power, observing that Orientalism is

...produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what ‘we’ do and what ‘they’ cannot do or understand as ‘we’ do). Indeed, my real argument is that Orientalism is – and does not simply represent – a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture… (p. 12).

The inter-relationship between Orientalist thought and power has, of course, been crucial in the justification of the colonial project. Said illuminates this nexus of knowledge and power in his assessment of the British justification for colonial rule in Egypt. He quotes from a speech by Arthur Balfour, a British Member of Parliament at the time, who declares that “...we know the civilization of Egypt better than we know the civilization of any other country. We know it further back; we know it more intimately; we know more about it.” (Quoted in Said, 1978/2003, p. 32). Said argues that Balfour’s speech illustrates how British supremacy is positioned as an issue of knowledge, hence justifying occupation and domination of Egypt. As Said powerfully articulates,

*England knows Egypt; Egypt is what England knows; England knows that Egypt cannot have self-government; England confirms that by occupying Egypt; for the Egyptians, Egypt is what England has occupied and now governs; foreign occupation therefore becomes ‘the very basis’*
of contemporary Egyptian civilization; Egypt requires, indeed, insists upon, British occupation… (1978/2003, p. 34).

Such examples are key to illuminating the important relationship between Orientalist knowledge and the imperatives of power and colonialism, a relationship that becomes embedded in Western hegemonic discourse and Western empire over the centuries. As Said (1978/2003) states, “every single empire in its official discourse has said that it is not like all the others, that its circumstances are special, that it has a mission to enlighten, civilize, bring order and democracy, and that it uses force only as a last resort. And, sadder still, there is always a chorus of willing intellectuals to say calming words about benign or altruistic empires…” (p. xxi). Orientalist scholarship, suggests Said, has provided the “chorus of willing intellectuals” to justify, administer and manage European colonial projects, with Orientalist scholars very closely associated with the realization of these imperialist designs.

The relationship between Orientalism and power cannot, however, be limited merely to a justification of colonial rule. The durability of Orientalist thinking is dependent on the manner in which it is interwoven into the very fabric of Western society. As Said (1978/2003) argues, “To say simply that Orientalism was a rationalization of colonial rule is to ignore the extent to which colonial rule was justified in advance by Orientalism, rather than after the fact.” (p. 39). Orientalist discourse, fueled by Western scholarship, has been shaped over the centuries; this discourse did not emerge magically during colonial quests. Rather, Orientalist thought is entrenched in all aspects of Western society: literature, history, geography, science, the legal and criminal justice systems, education and other key endeavours of human life. Indeed, Said suggests that Orientalism is deeply embedded in Western cultural norms, “…as much a language about a part of reality as geometry or physics. Orientalism staked its existence, not upon its openness, its receptivity to the Orient, but rather on its internal, repetitious consistency about its constitutive will-to-power over the Orient.” (Said, 1978/2003, p. 222).
Race, Manifest and Latent Orientalism
Said makes an important distinction between manifest and latent Orientalism, a distinction which is central to understanding the durability of Orientalist imaginaries in the contemporary context. He refers to manifest Orientalism as the obvious “…stated views about Oriental society, languages, literatures, history, sociology and so forth.” (Said, 1978/2003, p. 206). Latent Orientalism, on the other hand, represents the unconscious, underlying, perhaps even psychic, impulses that underpin the more obvious perspectives. While manifest Orientalist perspectives may change (and perhaps become more sophisticated) over time, latent Orientalist impulses remain embedded in societal discourses of the Other, ensuring that this latter figure continues to be depicted as backward, primitive, different from ‘us’; as Said (1978/2003) notes, “…the unanimity, stability and durability of latent Orientalism are more or less constant.” (p. 206). It is these enduring latent Orientalist impulses that powerfully persist in shaping the representations of the figure of the Muslim Other in contemporary media, public and political discourses. As I argue later in this dissertation, both Gendered Orientalism and Neo-Orientalism rely heavily on discourses of latent Orientalism, discourses which are not as obvious in their characterizations as manifest classical Orientalism, but which nonetheless remain powerful in their Orientalizing gaze.

Orientalist discourse is rooted in notions of race, especially in the late 18th and 19th centuries, and in the context of expanding European imperial projects and burgeoning capitalism. Orientalist intellectual tradition, steeped in relations of power between the European subject (usually white) and the Oriental Other (usually non-white), is clearly congruent with race-based theories (and practices) of domination. Said (1978/2003) suggests that both Orientalist and racial theories share key characteristics, including “…the culturally sanctioned habit of deploying large generalizations by which reality is divided into various collectives: languages, races, types, colors, mentalities, each category being not so much a neutral designation as an evaluative interpretation” (p. 227). These generalizations
about differences amongst people, common to both Orientalism and racial theory, “…asserted that there was no escape from origins and the types these origins enabled; it set the real boundaries between human beings, on which races, nations, and civilizations were constructed…” (Said, 1978/2003, p. 233). In these generalizations, of course, the white European subject is the superior figure who has authority to speak about (sometimes, speak for), manage, dominate and control the Other. Said notes,

...every statement made by Orientalists or White Men (who were usually interchangeable) conveyed a sense of the irreducible distance separating white from colored, or Occidental from Oriental; moreover, behind each statement there resonated the tradition of experience, learning and education that kept the Oriental-colored subject to his position of object studied by the Occidental-white… (1978/2003, p. 228).

In other words, such theories depend on “…a form of authority before which nonwhites, and even whites themselves, were expected to bend.” (Said, 1978/2003, p. 227). Emerging out of the convergence of Orientalism and racial theory is

...a new dialectic… What is required of the Oriental expert is no longer simply ‘understanding’: now the Orient must be made to perform, its power must be enlisted on the side of ‘our’ values, civilization, interests, goals. Knowledge of the Orient is directly translated into activity, and the results give rise to new currents of thought and action in the Orient. But these in turn will require from the White Man a new assertion of control… (Said, 1978/2003, p. 238).

This convergence of racial and Orientalist discourses becomes a central feature of 19th and 20th century European imperial adventures; the two discourses are deeply entangled in their theoretical ideas and practical applications, and both have been applied to good effect to bolster European colonial and imperial projects. These discourses continue to be entangled in the contemporary context, in which both Orientalism and racial theories, modernized and reconfigured, continue to shape Western discourses about the figure of the Muslim Other.

Overall, Said’s Orientalism is a brilliant contribution to scholarship. His key arguments remain valid almost 40 years since publication of his monograph and have fundamentally shaped the discipline of post-colonial studies. Scholarship since the publication of Orientalism must, in some way, engage with Said’s ideas; contemporary scholarship on Muslims and Islam cannot ignore his contribution to the
field. Said’s analysis of Orientalism is distinctly relevant to my own analysis of contemporary media, public and political discourses in which the figure of the Muslim – both the Muslim Other and the Acceptable Muslim – plays a central role in demarcating the Western national imaginary. As Said notes,

…the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. On this stage will appear figures whose role it is to represent the larger whole from which they emanate. The Orient then seems to be, not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe.” (1978/2003, p. 63).

Gendered Orientalism

*Centering Gender and critiquing the critiques of Said’s ideas*

Said’s analysis, while brilliant and foundational to later scholarship, does not adequately address the question of gender. While he makes some remarks regarding Orientalist clichés of sexual fantasies (harems princesses, veils, dancing girls, etc.), and about the male conception of the world engendered by Orientalism, he does not place gender at the centre of Orientalist discourse. The Occidental fascination with the exotic Oriental woman is central to Orientalist thinking and requires a nuanced analysis that places gender at the heart of this discourse. Meyda Yegenoglu (1998) conducts such a gendered re-reading of Orientalist thought and adds significantly to theorizing about Orientalism. She argues that sexual difference must be central to this analysis and maintains that “…investigations into the question of gender in Orientalism often fall short in recognizing how representations of cultural and sexual difference are constitutive of each other and risk reproducing the categorical distinctions between the two that feminist theory attempts to combat.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 1). Like Said, she argues that the construction of the Oriental subject is critical to the construction of the Western subject (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 2) and that “…one ‘becomes’ and is made Western by being subjected to a process called Westernizing and by imagining oneself in the fantasy frame of belonging to a specific culture called ‘the West’…” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 4). Basing her analysis on notions of fantasy and desire, Yegenoglu (1998) extends Said’s arguments by suggesting that Orientalist discourse requires a reformulation to understand more clearly how both the Western subject (the self) and the Oriental
subject (the Other) are constituted through both cultural and sexual difference, with Western women often complicit in upholding the attendant dichotomies. Yegenoglu complicates analyses of Orientalist discourse by illuminating how “the Orient as it figures in…eighteenth- and nineteenth- century European texts is a fantasy built upon sexual difference [and that] the figure of the ‘veiled Oriental woman’ has a particular place in these texts, not only as signifying Oriental woman as mysterious and exotic but also as signifying the Orient as feminine, always veiled, seductive, and dangerous.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 11). Yegenoglu provides a nuanced reading of Orientalist thought and notes that “…the question of sexuality cannot be treated as a regional one; it governs and structures the subject’s every relation with the other.” (1998, p. 26). Using the veil as a test case, she then suggests that the so-called essence behind the veil is the mechanism through which the Western subject (both male and female) constructs his/her own identity. These ideas and these discursive strategies are pivotal in my own analysis about contemporary media and public discourses about Muslim bodies. I turn, therefore, to a brief summary of Yegenoglu’s key ideas, and her foundation of a gendered Orientalism.

Yegenoglu reviews critiques of Said’s work which argue that he does not address the heterogeneous and gendered diversity of Orientalist discourse. She concurs that Said fails to engage sufficiently with gender and acknowledges the importance of gendered critiques. Yegenoglu outlines some of the arguments made by some feminist scholars (notably Sara Mills, Reina Lewis and Lisa Lowe) about traditional Orientalist analyses (including Said’s). For example, both Mills and Lewis suggest that Orientalist discourse cannot be seen as uniform and essentialist, and that such discourse was nuanced by the contributions of women, some of which can be read as resistance to the colonial gesture. Yegenoglu does not fully accept these critiques, arguing that though Orientalist discourse does include diversities and even contradictions at times, this heterogeneity does not necessarily undermine the unity of Orientalist discourse. She supports her position by referring to Said’s notions of manifest and latent Orientalism; she suggests that “…the apparent contradiction and heterogeneity that characterize
the cluster of texts we call Orientalist belong to the manifest content of Orientalism.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 71). Key Orientalist themes, Yegenoglu notes, have survived because they have responded to changing times and expressed themselves differently according to the social and historical contexts in which they appeared. However, the unconscious impulse underlying these ideas – what Said refers to as latent Orientalism – remains powerful and “…intersects with newly emerging discourses.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 72). As she notes, “…each intersection, each interruption and displacement does in fact multiply and complicate as much as it fixes the discursive unity of Orientalism.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 72). The specific narratives may change; the power underwriting them remains terrifyingly stable.

In addition to critiques by Mills and Lewis, Yegenoglu also addresses the critiques by Lisa Lowe, who suggests that gendered readings of some texts can be read as challenges to traditional Orientalist discourses. In her work on British and French Orientalisms, Lowe analyzes Lady Montagu’s Letters and suggests that because of Montagu’s greater access to Turkish women, she is able to present gendered and nuanced representations of Oriental women. Lowe even suggests that Montagu’s narrative can be used to illustrate a nascent feminist discourse. Yegenoglu disagrees with Lowe’s reading of Montagu’s work, and more particularly does not see it as a disruption of classic Orientalist discourses. In fact, she argues that Montagu’s narrative “…partakes in the Orientalist construction but through a different gesture. [D]espite their apparent divergence from male travelers’ texts, they are inevitably implicated and caught within the masculinist and imperialist acts of subject constitution.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 82). Using her access to the spaces which Turkish women inhabit, Montagu situates herself as an insider able to acquire authentic information about Oriental women; she, therefore, positions herself as the knowledge-bearer about Turkish women, perhaps even the bearer of greater truth about such women. Lowe interprets this move – providing more complete and heterogeneous representations of Turkish women – as challenging one-dimensional and negative
Orientalist representations. While Yegenoglu agrees that Montagu provides different knowledge – perhaps more positive images – about Turkish women than do her male European counterparts, she argues that it precisely this discursive manoeuvre that reinforces the binary that defines Orientalism. As the bearer and steward of authentic knowledge about Turkish women, Montagu thus reaffirms the problematic idea that the Orient has an essence that is differentiated from the Occident, an essence that can be uncovered by access to Oriental woman. Such a formulation of an Orientalist essence is, of course, a central feature of the Orientalist discursive framework. Further, Yegenoglu critiques Lowe’s intervention by suggesting because the latter’s “…theoretical frame is predicated upon evaluating Orientalism in terms of positive versus negative images, she misses the Orientalizing move within these so-called ‘positive’ attributions.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 87). Indeed, Yegenoglu is not concerned with whether Orientalist representations are positive or negative, or whether such representations are based on an authentic understanding, but rather focuses on the power of Orientalist discourse to “…construct the very object it speaks about and…its power to produce a regime of truth about the other and thereby establish the identity and the power of the subject that speaks about it.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 90).

Yegenoglu’s key arguments against Mills, Lewis, and Lowe focus on their lack of attention to the complicity of Western feminism with the imperial project. She argues cogently that feminism is implicated in Orientalist and imperialist discourses and that these projects are not mutually exclusive to each other but are often mutually constitutive. In her work, Yegenoglu presents a nuanced gendered analysis of Orientalist discourse, illuminating how gender stands at the heart of Orientalist discourse, a structural framing that is based on both sexual and cultural difference. She subjects Orientalist representations to a “…more sexualized reading” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 26) and theorizes that the “…representation of otherness is achieved simultaneously through sexual as well as cultural modes of differentiation.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 26). In this sense, Yegenoglu argues that “…Western acts of
understanding the Orient and its women are not two distinct enterprises, but rather the interwoven aspects of the same gesture” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 26), a gesture which is deeply implicated in the imperial project. Yegenoglu’s gendered analysis of Orientalist discourse is nuanced and is crucially important to my own analysis about the gendered and racialized Muslim body in the Western national imaginary.

(Un)Veiling the Orient
A gendered reading of Orientalist discourse maintains that the Oriental woman is the entry point for understanding the Orient, that in seeing her, the Western gaze attempts to penetrate the veiled world of the Orient. In this sense, the Orient is perceived as having an essence, and the Oriental woman is believed to be the site of authentic representations of the Orient, which is depicted as being primitive, barbaric, and uncivilized. As Yegenoglu (1998) suggests,

In Western eyes, the Orient is always more and other than what is appears to be, for it always and everywhere appears in a veiled, disguised, and deceptive manner. It is by way of its veiled appearance, by the very act of its concealment, that the Orient reveals itself, reveals that there is Orient, a place, a culture, an essence that needs to be grasped, known and apprehended. (p. 48).

It is, then, through the Oriental woman that the Orient itself can be known and its essence grasped. The status of Oriental women – seen as exotic, but also oppressed and backward – is perceived as evidence of the backwardness of the entire Orient. As Yegenoglu (1998) notes, “…within the grim picture of the Orient, the situation of its woman, who is secluded behind her veil, looked even more gruesome to the Western colonial gaze. Her situation thus required a much more serious working, for the most essential features of the culture are assumed to be inscribed onto her; she is taken as the concrete embodiment of oppressive Islamic traditions...” (pp. 97-98). The so-called barbaric nature of the Orient is said to be inscribed most clearly on the bodies of women, who are situated as bodies to be rescued from oppressive spaces and practices; in other words, “…the barbaric Orient had to be tamed and civilized.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 97). Such criticism of the oppression faced by Muslim
women is central to the ideological justification for colonial authority and rule, both historically and in contemporary times.

Yegenoglu’s gendered reading of Orientalist discourse suggests that both sexual and cultural differences are crucial elements to Orientalist discourse. This establishes a “…chain of equivalence in which the woman is the Orient, the Orient is woman; woman like the Orient, the Orient like the woman, exists veiled; she is nothing but the name of untruth and deception.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 56). Such equivalence positions the Orient as feminine and the colonial Western subject as masculine, with the power (and the knowledge) to penetrate the Orient. In Yegenoglu’s analysis, this situating of the Orient as feminine is the very reason that “…the Western subject, whether male or female, is always fascinated by the veil or harem, the truth of culture in the space of woman, in the body of woman.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 56). This fascination with the veil, and with the Muslim woman, is evident in contemporary Western discourses about Muslims, discourses that can be depicted as neo-Orientalist.

The Orientalist fascination with the veil is an important element both of Yegenoglu’s work and of contemporary neo-Orientalist discourses. Yegenoglu uses the veil as a test case to illuminate how “…the presumption of a hidden essence and truth behind the veil is the means by which both the Western/colonial and the masculine subject constitute their own identity.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 11). The veiled Muslim woman transfixes the Western imagination, through fantasy, desire and its penetrative gaze, and becomes the symbolic marker through which the Western subject understand both the Other and constitutes his/her own subject position. As Yegenoglu (1998) aptly notes,

[the reference of the veil thus exceeds its sartorial matter; it is in everything that is Oriental or Muslim. The Western eye sees it everywhere, in all aspects of the other’s life. It covers and hides every single Oriental thing that the Western subject wants to gaze at and possess; it stands in the way of his desire for transparency and penetration. (pp. 47-48).]

Hence, the veil becomes a double-sided cipher for the essence of the Orient. Yegenoglu (1998) argues, in fact, that it “…by way of its veiled appearance, by the very act of its concealment, that the Orient
reveals itself, reveals that there is an Orient, a place, a culture, an essence that needs to be grasped, known and apprehended.” (p. 48). However, the veil also conceals: in the same gesture as it reveals the presence of an essence, the veil prevents the Western subject from complete understanding of this so-called essence. In other words, the “…essence as essence is never grasped. One always misses it – the veil is that curtain which simultaneously conceals and reveals; it conceals the Orient’s truth and at the same time reveals its mode of existence…. Therefore, the veil represents simultaneously the truth and the concealment of truth.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 48). Such an analysis of the veil is crucial both to a nuanced understanding of Orientalist discourse, as well as to contemporary narratives in which the veil takes highly charged – even over-determined – meanings, discourses which situate the Muslim woman at the centre of rescue motifs.

Against such a backdrop, the veiled Oriental/Muslim woman becomes a highly symbolic marker for the traditional values of Islam, and a body which should be (must be?) rescued by colonial power. In this sense, “…the veil is taken as the sign of the inherently oppressive and unfree nature of the entire tradition of Islam and Oriental cultures and by extension it is used as a proof of oppression of women in these societies.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 99). For Orientalists, the veil signifies the “…true self of the Islamic culture, its spirituality, its quintessential and unchanging essence” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 101), a symbol which is forever associated with the primitive nature of Islam and Muslims. Such backward practices – with Oriental society caught in a “temporal lag” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 98) – are then used as justification for imperial intervention, using women’s bodies (and their veils) as ideological battlegrounds. The modernizing of Oriental women – and hence the Orient – is often accomplished through the desire to unveil the woman (and through her, Oriental society). Unveiling is presented as a modernizing gesture: by unveiling the Muslim woman’s body, she is seen to leave behind her traditional culture, and is thereby ushered into modernity by the knowing Western subject. As Yegenoglu (1998) notes, “… the desire to unveil the Oriental woman coincided with the broader
agenda of ‘progress’ and belief in the incompatibility of Islam with Western models of modernity and reason…. Conceived as the indisputable emblem of Islamic culture's essential traditionalism, the veil was consistently seen as a problem and its lifting as the most important sign of reform and modernization.” (p. 100). Yegenoglu’s analysis here is apt:

…[i]t is this metonymic association between tradition and woman that can explain the continual obsession and the fundamental weight given to women's unveiling as the privileged sign of progress. Taken as the most visible marker of tradition and religion, the veil provided the benevolent Western woman with what she had desired: a clinching example that interlocks ‘woman’ and ‘tradition/Islam’ so that it could be morally condemned in the name of emancipation. (1998, p. 99).

What Yegenoglu presents here is a stunning analysis of how the veil is used by colonial/imperial men and women to situate the Muslim woman outside the norms of Western society, norms which are naturalized as universal. Especially profound – and relevant to my own analysis – is Yegenoglu’s argument that Western women are deeply implicated in Orientalist discourse, and particularly so in their desire to unveil Muslim women in the name of emancipation. Such discursive manoeuvres – evident in much of the contemporary debate about veiling – reinforce the supposedly superior status of Western women, juxtaposed against that of Muslim women, depicted as being always-already primitive. Differences between Muslim and Western women – essentialized based on Orientalist imaginaries – are thus, not seen as neutral, but “…negated, denied, pushed back in a temporality which is construed in linear and progressive terms.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 98). This linear temporality then imbues the Western woman with superior status, with the power to know, to have authority over, to intervene and manage the body (and life) of the Muslim woman – all in the name of progress, emancipation and the adoption of universal norms. As Yegenoglu (1998) succinctly states,

[what is at stake in the unequivocal acceptance of Western feminists’ lives and achievements as democratic, advanced, emancipated, in short as the norm, is the positing of a universal subject status for themselves, for after all it is their condition which represents the highest achievement of humanity. (pp. 101-102).]
This gendered analysis of Orientalism is vital and has important implications for my own analysis of contemporary discourses of Muslims, in which Muslim women (and their veiled bodies) play central role in demarcating boundaries in the Western imaginary.

The Western desire to unveil the Muslim woman can be read not only as a desire to render knowable the Muslim woman and her society, but also as a possible response to a threat to imperial power. Yegenoglu (1998) suggests that the “…colonial subject’s desire to control and dominate the foreign land is not independent from his scopic desire, from his desire to penetrate, through his surveillant eye, what is behind the veil.” (p. 62). The colonial gaze, like the panopticon’s omnipotent gaze, is accustomed to an unobstructed view, retaining the power to see and know all within his/her domain. This colonial gaze is, therefore, accustomed to retaining this power of unrestricted view, without ever being the object of a returned gaze. The veil disrupts this unrestricted power as “…the veiled woman is not simply an obstacle in the field of visibility and control, but her veiled presence also seems to provide the Western subject with a condition which is the inverse of Bentham’s omnipotent gaze.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 43). Hence, the veiled woman (who was meant to remain object) represents for the Western viewer (who was meant to remain subject) a reversal of the superiority of the latter’s subjectivity and power. As Yegenoglu (1998) notes, “…the loss of control does not imply a mere loss of sight, but a complete reversal of positions: her body completely invisible to the European observer except for her eyes, the veiled woman can see without being seen.” (p. 43). The veiled Muslim woman, then, can be read as not succumbing to the gaze and knowledge – the power – of the Western subject, who is discomfited, even anxious, about this reversal. This analysis explains much of the contemporary furor in Western discourse about the niqab, which foregrounds both the veiled Muslim woman and the anxiety of the (invisible) Western subject. Such anxiety was evident in the Jack Straw controversy (2006) in the United Kingdom. Straw, a then-sitting British Member of Parliament and former Foreign Minister, revealed that he felt uncomfortable about niqabs, and had requested that his female Muslim
constituents remove their face veils in his presence. His argument – based on his insistence that he needed to see the other person’s face to understand what they said to him – is symptomatic of the Western anxiety over the face veils. In fact, Straw implicitly expressed this anxiety when he described how his opinion of the niqab was shaped by an encounter with a veiled Muslim woman, who said to him, “Mr. Straw, it’s nice to meet you face to face.” (Anonymous, 2006b). Straw explains, “…it was not the first time that I had conducted an interview with someone with a full veil, but this particular encounter, though very polite and respectful on both sides, got me thinking… I felt uncomfortable talking to someone ‘face to face’ who I could not see.” (Anonymous, 2006b). The discomfort of which Straw speaks is grounded – albeit unconsciously of course – in the anxiety felt by the colonizer accustomed to enjoying the omnipotent, omniscient gaze, the unobstructed view from which he can see but remain unseen. In this sense, the veiled Muslim woman, by her very presence, represents a reversal of the colonial pattern and the desire of the colonizer to “…fantasize himself as a full subject.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 63). Further, the veiled Muslim woman, by her presence, challenges the Western subject’s sense of superiority – indeed, his very security – about his own subjectivity. In admitting his anxiety about meeting a veiled Muslim woman who he cannot see, Straw betrays his insecurity about his sense of self and subjectivity, which is disrupted by being seen by but being unable to see the veiled Muslim woman. Hence, the veiled Muslim woman is able to see without being seen; she can meet, so to speak, “face-to-face” with Mr. Straw, but he cannot return her gaze. Such a process – unconscious though it is – interrupts the cycle whereby the Western subject is constituted through the (inferior) object of the gaze, knowledge and authority of the colonizer; the security of the colonial gaze is disrupted. As Yegenoglu (1998) notes, “…[T]he invisible other speaks from its absent location. The countergaze of the other should be located in this absent-presence, in this space of the in-between. It is the veil which enables the Oriental other to look without being seen.” (p. 63).
Yegenoglu's arguments about the veil are incisive and are fundamental to a deeper analysis of the role of gender in Orientalist discourse, presenting the crucial foundations of a gendered Orientalism; such analysis is as relevant in the contemporary context as it is to historical and classic Orientalist discourse.

Yegenoglu's analysis of the veil as an important feature of Western fantasy and desire to uncover the essence of the Orient makes a significant contribution to understanding the Western fascination with the veil. She also notes that, in the colonial context, the veil operates as a mask, compelling the Western subject to probe the mystery behind the veil. As she states,

> The veil attracts the eye, and forces one to think, to speculate about what is behind it. It is often represented as some kind of mask, hiding the woman. With the help of this opaque veil, the Oriental woman is considered as not yielding herself to the Western gaze and therefore imagined as hiding something behind the veil. It is through the inscription of the veil as a mask that the Oriental woman is turned into an enigma. Such a discursive construction incites the presumption that the real nature of these women is concealed, their truth is disguised and they appear in a false, deceptive manner. They are therefore other than what they appear to be. (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 44).

The echoes of such representations are abundant in contemporary Western representations of Muslim women. For instance, one commentator in the Canadian press suggests that

> [t]he hiding of facial features in Western society has traditionally been seen as a mark of those who live outside the law (cartoon characters apart): the thief, the kidnapper, the murderer, the terrorist. While the women who wear the niqab may be none of these, they must accept that in choosing to cover their faces they are at the same time choosing to give up the privileges that an uncovered face permits. (Andrachuck, October 23, 2006).

Thus, the veiled Muslim woman is associated with the wearing of a mask and criminality (‘she is not what she appears to be’), an association which separates her from civilized society. Such women (so the argument goes) are undeserving of the privileges of society (one could refer to them also as rights accorded to law-abiding citizens). The association between the veiled Muslim woman and criminals is no accident: this is a discursive move to situate the veiled woman outside the boundaries of civilized society and to reveal how, by virtue of her veil, she masks her true nature, which is associated with criminality and deception. Hence, the veil – seen as a mask – hides the true nature of the Muslim woman – the Other and, by extension, the Orient – from view. In this colonial gaze, the veiled Muslim
woman is other than what she appears to be; she is different, with the veil representing a wall between the real woman beneath it and the world in which she lives. Later in this dissertation (Chapters 3 & 4), I analyze more fully contemporary discourses about the veil and the Muslim woman and trace the strains of gendered (neo)Orientalism in these narratives.

I move now to a review of literature on race and racialization in order to illustrate how the Muslim body has been increasingly racialized in the contemporary post 9/11 neo-Orientalist discourses.

The Haunting Fields: Race, racialization, (neo) racism and the Muslim body

Race, racialization and racial projects

In the contemporary post 9/11 world, dominant media, public and political discourses focus on the demonization of Muslim bodies (or anyone who ‘looks’ Muslim); the image of the “new racial Other” (I. Grewal, 2003, p. 546) has been solidified, reconfiguring the classical Oriental figure in pursuit of new nationalist and ideological goals. The hegemonic discourse about Muslims since 9/11 positions a racialized Muslim (now including other brown-skinned bodies) as the epitome of danger, violence and extremism, a body which is fixed in the public imagination as an ongoing threat to Western civilization. Such a body is situated outside the boundaries of citizenship, both confirming the place of the national subject (read: white, Christian), and reinforcing the racialized boundaries of the Western nation-state. The deployment of race, already embedded in classic Orientalist discourse, is once again enlisted to reaffirm these racialized societal boundaries and to justify a racially ordered world (Razack, 2008, p. 6) in which the community of white nations maintains its privilege and dominance. The racialization of Muslims refashions public identification of Muslims as primarily a religious group, and (re)animates the idea of Muslims as a distinct, racially coded group (even though the ethnic and racial diversity of Muslims belies such a coding). Based on a seemingly “privatized racism” (Goldberg, 2009, p. 334), this renewed racialization of Muslims often renders invisible the language of race (replacing it with the language of culture), but re-institutionalizes the effects of racism in the name of security. This is a
racialization that dares not be named (at least explicitly) yet can justify profiling, detention and denial of rights to those of a particular group, based merely on suspicion or the possibility of extremism. Clearly, an analysis of Muslim bodies in the contemporary climate – be it the Othered or the Acceptable Muslim body – requires an understanding of race and racialization and how they shape public discourses about Muslims. The fantasy of white space (Hage, 2000) on which this renewed racialization is based performs important ideological and political functions in demarcating the Canadian national space and in reaffirming the right of the (white) national subject in managing this space. I pay more attention to the fantasy of white space in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. In this section, I review theories of race and racialization which shape hegemonic discourses about the Muslim body in the contemporary context.

Scholarship on race and racialization is extensive and far-reaching. I focus here on a brief review of literature in which race and racialization are central to the contemporary Western context. Using this theoretical scaffolding, I theorize that Muslim bodies are (re)racialized in the contemporary Western nation-state, and that such racialization both builds on, and adds to, classic Orientalist discourse, merging into a neo-Orientalist discourse that reanimates the racialized boundaries of the nation-state.

Theorists of racialization have long debated whether race is a biological fact (‘it’s about skin colour’) or socially constructed. Critical race scholars generally maintain that race is a social construction, with no biological basis for racial differences, especially given the fluidity of racial categories over time and in diverse political and social circumstances. The socially constructed nature of race, however, does not diminish the very real material impact of race and racism. Race, initially grounded in scientific disciplines and using biological characteristics, has become significant through its political, social and ideological deployment, both in the ordering of domestic society as well as in the service of global imperial interests. Thus, race is a concept that refers to biologically based attributes, but the selection
(and interpretation) of these is always a historical and social process – ultimately, a political and politicized process. The concept of race is fluid, shifting in different historical and social contexts, and is fiercely contested, reflecting political, social and ideological contestations, and constituting notions of self and other. Such contestations, using biological, cultural and other characteristics to demarcate boundaries of inclusion and power, establish and reinforce racialized social hierarchies.

Race has been deployed in the ordering of social relations since at least the 15th century. Goldberg (2009) notes that the arc of history between the medieval and the modern “…can be reflected in the shifts from religion as dominant public frame for structuring and interpreting social life to the civic religion of race as prevailing fabric of public arrangement and imaginative hermeneutics.” (p. 2). Certainly, by the 18th century, race was central both to the social arrangements within European society as well as to the reach and justification of global colonial adventures. Goldberg (2009) suggests that historically, the use of race as a marker of difference has been prompted by three impulses: (a) race as curiosity and cultural fascination; (b) race as a justification for the exploitation of the labour of the Other; and (c) race as a marker of threat and anxiety about the Other. (p. 28). These three impulses are evident in European ideas about race and, by the 18th century, as Europe engaged in its colonial adventures, ideas of race took on a more explicitly political role, becoming more formally codified and deployed in pursuit of social, political, ideological and imperial interests. By the 19th century, European society had incorporated race as a central element of how human activity was organized, with racialized notions being a taken-for-granted aspect of social relations, with inferior or superior status being ascribed to racial characteristics. Goldberg (2009) suggests that

…this easiness of racial ascription served to hide from view – to hide from and for the more racially powerful themselves – exactly the hard work, conceptually and materially, socially and politically, legally and forcefully, it took to set up and reproduce racial arrangements. Science and literature, scripture and law, culture and political rhetoric all worked in subtle and blunt ways to establish the presumption of white supremacy, to naturalize the status of white entitlement and black disenfranchisement, of European belonging wherever the claim might be staked and of non-European servitude and servility. (p. 3).
Racialization is fundamentally a process of defining the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in society, in which some groups are coded as inferior and hence undeserving of societal resources. Lentin (2015) refers to racialization as a process of “ordering...management, sedimentation, sifting, ...correction and disciplining, as empowering some while causing others to buckle under....” (p. 1403). Racialization is

…the view that groups of people are marked by certain generalizable visible and heritable traits. These generalizable traits may be physical or psychological, cultural or culturally inscribed on the body, and the physical and psychological, bodily and cultural traits are usually thought somehow indelibly connected. (Goldberg, 2009, p. 4).

This process of racialization is inherently political and ideological, reflecting the interests of dominant groups in society, relegating the Other to positions of inferiority, exclusion and subordination. The process of racialization identifies key group characteristics – biological or otherwise – and uses them to mark social divisions between groups of people. Hence, while race may refer to biologically based attributes, the meanings ascribed to these attributes render them socially and politically significant, situating such selection (and interpretation) as political and ideological processes. In spite of – or perhaps because of? – its fluidity, race has been a significant political and ideological tool through which societal hegemonies are created, sustained and expanded. These hegemonies, based on racial distinctions, define the boundaries of societal inclusion. Omi and Winant (2015) note that “[r]ace is a fundamental organizing principle of social stratification. It has influenced the definition of rights and privileges, the distribution of resources, and the ideologies and practices of subordination and oppression.” (p. 107).

Race and racialization play constituent roles in the stratification of society, deeply embedded and inscribed in societal institutions and structures. Historically and socially situated racial projects connect race and societal structures. Racial projects – by their very nature politicized – are the link between the ideology of racialized thinking and its practical application in ordering societal relations. Racial projects
bring alive (if one can call it that) the racialized ideas that underlie race-thinking, which divides the world into the deserving and undeserving (Razack, 2008, 8). Race-thinking, according to Razack, “...picks up political projects here and there and annexes itself to ideas such as evolutionist doctrines or romanticism with its notions of inherited genius, eventually growing into the full-blown power of racism.” (Razack, 2008, p. 9). Such notions of race-thinking – reflected in societal structures, institutions and ideologies – become deeply rooted in society and in the psyches of those living within that society. As Omi and Winant (2015) comment,

This racial ‘subjection’ is quintessentially ideological. Everybody learns some combination, some version of the rules of racial classification, and of their own racial identity, often without obvious teaching or conscious inculcation. Thus are we inserted into a comprehensively racialized social structure. Race becomes ‘common sense’ – a way of comprehending, explaining, and acting in the world. A vast web of racial projects mediates between the discursive or representational means in which race is identified and signified on the one hand, and the institutional and organizational forms in which it is routinized and standardized on the other. (p. 127).

Because social relations are racially coded and inscribed in institutions and structures, and because individuals are subject to this ideological imputing, “our very ways of talking, walking, eating and dreaming become racially coded simply because we live in a society where racial awareness is so pervasive.” (Omi, 2015, p. 127). In this way, race becomes completely central —yet completely normalized — and continues to be used to rationalize differential treatment of racialized peoples and groups, reinforcing the hierarchical ordering of society. Goldberg (2009) suggests that race is

...turned into a foundational code. But as with all foundations, (conceptual and material), it had to be cemented into place. Racial thinkers, those seeing to advance racial representation – scientists and philosophers, writers and literary critics, public intellectuals and artists, journalists and clergy, politicians and bureaucrats – for all intents and purposes became the day-laborers, the brick-layers, of racial foundations. (p. 4).

In addition to its important role in social stratification, race has been – and continues to be – embedded in colonial and imperial spatial and territorial (dis)possession; racial arrangements underpin these historical and contemporary cartographies of spatial violence. Some theorists, notably Omi and Winant, (1994, 2015) do not pay sufficient attention to the spatialized violence underwritten by
racialization. Other critical race theorists, among them Razack, challenge this approach and suggest that contemporary Western imperial actions (such as torture for instance) are rooted in this spatialized violence. In her analysis of the use of torture at Abu Ghraib, Razack (2012) notes,

...[I]ncluding aside for the moment the fact that the United States continues to have a colonial relationship with the peoples who are indigenous to North America, we might consider whether the struggles in which torture has been an issue have the hallmarks of a quintessential colonialism involving as they do occupation, control of resources, extreme violence, and persistent marking of Muslims as an inferior race. The racial state that Omi and Winant describe, the state centrally implicated in racial definition and management, is as heavily committed to securing territory and resources as it is to the reproduction of a society organized by white supremacy. (p. 221).

Racialization is thus both a technology of social stratification, demarcating boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, as well as a form of colonial and spatialized power, through which some bodies were (and are) dispossessed – of land, of property, of rights, of cultural practices, even of their very humanity. Such a technology of spatialized power is undergirded by race-thinking, in which the world is divided into the deserving and undeserving, modern and premodern peoples. Embedded in race-thinking is the idea that some bodies are marked as premodern, uncivilized and barbaric while others are marked as modern and civilized, hence superior. Razack (2012) suggests that there is

...a disturbing spatializing of morality that occurs in the story of modern versus premodern peoples. We have reason; they do not. We are located in modernity; they are not. Significantly, because they have not advanced as we have it is our moral obligation to correct, discipline, and keep them in line and to defend ourselves against their irrational excesses. In doing all of these things, the West has often denied the benefits of modernity to those it considers to be outside of it. Evicted from the universal, and thus from civilization and progress, the non-West occupies a zone outside the law. Violence may be directed as it with impunity. (p. 222).

Race remains powerful and pervasive in human society, fundamentally shaping social relations, institutions, norms, everyday experiences, opportunities, colonial/imperial designs, and the spatializing of law, justice and morality. Structured into the very fabric of society, race operates powerfully and “…refuses to remain silent because it isn’t just a word. It is a set of conditions, shifting over time. Never just one thing, it is a way (or really ways) of thinking, a way(s) of living, a disposition.”
Race is significant “…not for what it is, but for what it does” (Lentin, 2015, p. 1404), producing racialized subjects and rendering them outside (or on the margins) of society. Race, in other words, produces differential subjecthoods and demarcates how these subjects are treated. Razack (2014c) argues that “…racial power must be inscribed on all those deemed to be outside the human, regardless of their various routes of eviction from the circle of humanity.” (p. 14).

Such differential subjecthood – determining who is within the circle of humanity, who is outside, and thus cast out of this circle, and who remains on the margins, gaining qualified acceptance (if well-behaved and acceptable) – is at the heart of racial thinking. Goldberg (2009) notes that “the weight of race is at once a racist weight…. Race is the glove in which the titanic, the weighty, hand of racism fits. The cloth may be velvet but it is studded with spikes and soaked in blood.” (p. 9). Goldberg’s powerful analysis states that

Race serves an invisible border line demarcating both who formally belongs or not and what can or cannot be said about it. The border line is inscribed not at the level of personal relation, of social and sexual intercourse or the excitement of avant-garde aesthetic expression, but in the crevices of political divides and formal relations of power, of institutional access and full membership in the policy, of educational standards and citizenship requirements. (2009, p. 176)

**Racialization and religion**

In this historical moment, there are common arguments suggesting that Muslims cannot be (effectively) racialized because they are not a racial but a religious group, with adherents from multi-racial and multi-ethnic backgrounds. Such perspectives position racialization as a process focusing primarily on biological characteristics. Numerous scholars challenge this narrow notion of racialization, suggesting that a more nuanced conception of racialization is required to understand both the historical and the contemporary racialization of religious groups (including Muslims and Jews). Rana (2007) suggests that Muslims are clearly a racialized group in the contemporary moment and that Islamophobia is a “…a gloss for the apparent anti-Muslim racism that has collapsed numerous groups into a singular category of Muslims.” (p. 149). Razack (2012) concurs, noting that “…today it
is obvious that Muslim/Arab has acquired the features of a full-blown racial category in the United States, a status it has long held in Europe.” (p. 221). These scholars, amongst others, argue that the racialization of religious groups is not a recent phenomenon and that religion has historically been deeply implicated in the project of racialization. Rana (2011) observes that “…the process of reframing Islam from a religious category into a racial category in the contemporary U.S. speaks to a wider historical discourse that emanates not only from racism and the maintenance of white Christian supremacy, but also from the historical pre-eminence of imperialism and the maintenance of empire.” (p. 27). Using the example of Spain after the expulsion of Muslims, Selod and Embrick (2013) note that people were separated into ‘godless’ people or those with the ‘wrong’ religion, with the former treated more harshly than the latter, who were treated as savable. Hence, even historically, “…religion was used to create a hierarchy very similar to a racial one, where some groups were seen as potentially assimilable, and others were treated as if they are [sic] incapable of being part of the human race.” (Selod and Embrick, p. 645). In the European context, the figures of the Muslim and the Jew were historically situated as those with the ‘wrong’ religion, and these figures, along with converted Christians, were positioned as biologically inferior to true Christians. Some bodies could pass for Christian either through conversion or through tests for the purity of their blood, resulting in notions of crypto-Jews and crypto Jews. (Rana, 2007, pp. 152-153). In this sense, “…racialization became an issue of religious passing…To pass as a Christian meant to adopt different styles of dress, appearance, bodily comportment, and religious ritual.” (Rana, 2007, p. 153). The notion of purity of blood was used to differentiate these groups, with purity being linked to religious and racial superiority. This “…test of religious purity conflated notions of genetic descent and biology with religious faith and cultural notions of kinship…and demonstrated the symbolic and material importance of the notion of bloodline.” (Rana, 2007, p. 153). In the 18th and 19th centuries, modern racism, leaning on notions
of scientific racism, relied strongly on biological difference and hence displaced religion (at least officially) as a primary form of differentiation. Rana (2007) notes that

…but in the modern form of racism, we see the displacement of religion, and second the displacement of Islamophobia as racism. Yet, the lingering effects of this displacement in modern racism evoke a connection between race and religion. Importantly, Islam was an important feature of the early story of the race concept, offering an important insight into the incorporation of Muslims into modern forms of racism. (p. 153).

Clearly, then, religion and racialization have been linked historically and “…the figure of the Muslim is one that has been historically racialized through popular forms of racial assignment based on a relationship of biological and cultural ideas.” (Rana, 2007, p. 149).

Contemporary manifestations of the racialization of religion and religious groups continue to situate adherents of some religious groups (earlier in the 20th century, Jews and in the contemporary moment, Muslims) as belonging to specific racial categories. In considering racism against Jews, Lentin (2012) argues that “[w]hile European anti-Semitism constituted the Jews as a race apart, the tropes of their difference were cultural as often as they were ‘biological,’ just as in the case of Muslims today.” (p. 7).

Indeed, both Jews and Muslims have been situated as Others vis-a-vis a common European (white) Christianity, with the Jew historically (pre-World War 2) perceived as an internal Other and the Muslim as the external Other. In Nazi death camps, the term muselmann was used to describe the condition of some Jews in Nazi death camps; the term most often depicted those who were suffering and/or dying from malnutrition. Rana (2007) suggests that “…this conflation of the Jew-as-Muslim refers to a projection of a racialized mutability of a religious state that is not only a religious practice but somehow an essential character.” (p. 158). Chaudhry-Kravitz (2013) distinguishes between a religious and racialized bias, the former based on religious belief and practice, and the latter based on properties which are considered “…inborn, immutable, and cannot be removed by converting to another religious faith or otherwise altering one’s religious beliefs or practices.” (p. 8). In this contemporary moment, Muslims are clearly racialized, given depictions of them as inherently uncivilized and pre-
modern, bodies which are perceived as always-already threatening. Such racialization is at the heart of surveillance technologies such as the profiling of Muslims or those looking like Muslims. Such technologies are based on the assumption that Muslims can indeed be identified by visual signifiers (by names, appearance, bodily comportment, clothing, etc.) and that Muslims are naturally adversarial to the Western way of life. As Rana (2007) notes, “…current practices of racial profiling in the War on Terror perpetuate a logic that demands the ability to define what a Muslim looks like from appearance and visual cues. This is not based purely on superficial cultural markers such as religious practice, clothing, language, and identification. A notion of race is at work in the profiling of Muslims.” (p. 149). In the contemporary moment in which Muslims are often targeted for exclusion “… the term Muslim not only is indicative of a faith-based association with Islam but also is an expansive racialized figure of the Muslim that encompasses a range of nationalities, cultures and religions.” (Rana, 2016, p. 120).

The positioning of Muslims as a racialized group is often a flexible one – a “racial becoming” (Rana, 2016, p. 119) – in which key signifiers are conflated to identify social and political difference. Relating racial becoming to Fanon’s notion of becoming Black, racial becoming is “…a flexible process that incorporates the portability of a number of race concepts, such as blackness, indigeneity, colonialism, genocide, immigration and religion, in a system that appears contradictory and nonsensical.” (Rana, 2016, p. 120). Rana further suggests that the process of Muslim racial becoming is an important element of the racial infrastructure of the modern Western nation-state, in which certain bodies (that is, racialized ones) are deemed dangerous. In this way, “…identifying who is a Muslim, and such suspicions, is part of the apparatus of racialization and racial becoming. This notion of the Muslim is not only one of religious affiliation and practice but also one that draws on notions of threats that are related to terror in a commonplace logic of the counterterror state based on preemption and potentials.” (Rana, 2016, p. 119).
The racialization of Muslims in the contemporary moment is set against the backdrop of a reasoning that denies this racialization on the grounds that Muslims constitute a religious rather than a racial group, or that Muslims belong to a variety of racial groupings. What this reasoning obscures is the power of the “…racial infrastructure…to frame bodies as potentials of domination and control to mobilize racial schemas while denying that race is at work.” (Rana, 2016, p. 122). Muslim racial becoming is, therefore, “…a system of race that is deemed not to be race.” (Rana, 2016, p. 120). Following this reasoning, Muslims are read not as racialized but as members of religious groups, a discursive manoeuvre that obscures the racial underpinnings of their exclusion from civilized society.

In contemporary Western multicultural nation-states, exclusions based on immutable factors such as race are clearly positioned as unacceptable, while exclusions based on religious choice or ideological factors (such as threat to Western way of life) can be positioned as defensible. Obscuring the racial underpinnings of the treatment of Muslims in the contemporary moment enables and justifies state action against Muslims (justified in the name of security or protection) as it does against other racialized peoples. In this way,

…the figure of the Muslim enables the policing of people of color at an ever-expanding level that builds upon the preemptive logic of the War on Terror while it continually operates from within the figures of criminality and social death that depend on the racialization of black and brown bodies. In this formulation, racial becoming is what racial infrastructures seek to create. Muslim racial becoming implements racialization while also providing an alibi for policing as an ever-expanding horizon. (Rana, 2016, p. 122).

Racism, anti-racism and born-again racism
Despite its reference to biological categories, race is both socially constructed and situated within the context of European/Western modernity; the idea of race and its use in social arrangements has developed into a “…hierarchical ranking of humanity, from superior white to inferior black, over a long period of 200 years.” (Lentin, 2008, p. 491). Race, therefore, produces racism, which now exists independently of the idea of race: other categories (culture, religion, ethnicity, nationality, language, etc.) often stand in as codes for the word race but continue to operate with race as the fundamental
organizing and differentiating principle of contemporary society. The “syntax of race” (Hall, 1990) is still very much a living language, one which shapes societal relations. In his analysis of racial bias, Hall (1990) suggests that this discursive syntax is identified through three characteristics: (a) stereotypes based on the so-called natural differences between inferior and superior human beings; (b) the displacement of historical understanding by the language of nature, thus excavating historical understanding and grounding of differences; and (c) fixed relations of power, subordination and domination. (p. 14). Clearly, the syntax of race—both in its obvious and more nuanced forms—manifests itself in a variety of social and political institutions, using strategies of differentiation and power to reinforce social hierarchies. These discriminatory manifestations “…in many instances (although by no means always) are disassociated from their origins in the race projects of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (slavery, colonialism, eugenics, genocide)…” (Lentin, 2008, p. 492). Despite this disassociation from the more explicitly racial projects of the past, race and racism remain important ideological tools in the arsenal of social arrangements.

In the contemporary context, racism has taken on new, nuanced, and yet distinct, forms. Coming in the wake of official desegregation and the gains of the civil rights and anti-racism movements, there is a recognition (in public and polite circles) that official racism is not acceptable (at least in Canada). Recent political events in North America and Europe are challenging this recognition as openly racist policies and political leaders are being vaulted into power; it remains to be seen whether these extreme right-wing, populist and openly racist movements will have a lasting impact on hegemonic discourse about race and racism. For now, dominant discourse (in the Canadian context) continues to maintain that racism perpetuated by the state is not acceptable, and that we should aim to live in a colour-blind society. Indeed, the very successes of racist parties, politicians and policies could be attributed to a backlash against the successes of the anti-racism movement; the core tenet of this backlash is that racism has ended and that members of racialized groups are granted too many rights. In other words,
the perception in dominant discourse is that racism has more or less been eliminated, and that racism
does not exist outside of individualized acts of discrimination, exclusion or harassment, a belief that
renders invisible (and unacknowledged) the systemic and institutionalized aspects of racism and race-
based policies. Thus, “…mainstream approaches often adopt a psycho-social attitude to racism, seeing
it as the problem of pathological or ignorant individuals. Therefore, they propose individually based
solutions, emphasizing the need to overcome ignorance through education and a great knowledge of
the Other.” (Lentin, 2015, p. 381).

Under such circumstances, the ideological work of maintaining the racial codifications intrinsic to
society become yet more intense and takes on different forms. Goldberg (2009) suggests that the
newer forms of racism illuminate a distinction between anti-racism and anti-racialism. As he states,
“[i]f antiracist commitment requires remembering and recalling, anti-racialism suggests forgetting,
getting over, moving on, wiping away, the terms of reference…. Indeed, anti-racialism…wipes away
the very vocabulary necessary to recall and recollect, to make a case, to make a claim.” (p. 21). The
goals of anti-racism are, broadly speaking, to undo racism and its effects – the ultimate goal is to
transform the racial status quo, to work towards the ending of inequitable conditions for racialized
groups. The aim of anti-racialism, on the other hand, is to undermine the concept, categorization and
vocabulary of race. It is, in effect, a denial that racial categories and codifications continue to impact
the material, social and political structures of society. Goldberg (2009) summarizes this distinction
succinctly:

Antiracialism is to take a stand, instrumental or institutional, against a concept, a name, a
category, a categorizing. It does not involve standing (up) against (a set of) of conditions of
being or living…. Antiracism, by contrast, conjures a stance against an imposed condition, or
set of conditions, an explicit refusal or a living of one’s life in such a way one refuses the
imposition, whether one is a member of the subjugated population or the subjugating one. It is
an insistence that one not be reduced, at least not completely, to or by the implications marked
by the imposition and constraint, by the devaluation and attendant humiliation. (p. 10).
Anti-racialism, therefore, erases the language of race and racism, urging a movement towards a raceless or colour-blind society, a so-called post-racial society. Such a stance “…seeks to relativize racism and downplay the salience of its experience for non-whites.” (Lentin, 2012, p. 2). Tellingly, of course, advocates of such a position argue for a post-racial society rather than a post-racist society, in which the effects of racism would be acknowledged and eradicated. While the anti-racism movement has had some successes in Western nation-states in terms of dismantling legalized structures of exclusion based on racial categories, it is also clear that these successes have not included a complete transformation of the structures (or effects) of a racially coded society. The terms of engagement in racially codified societies remain essentially the same: the criteria for inclusion of racialized groups (and the power to define these) remain racially exclusionary. In other words, the inequitable effects of the racially coded system remain solidly in place, even as that system is gradually and superficially removing legalized exclusion. As Goldberg (2009) observes, “…equal access to unequal resources and possibilities from positions of unequal preparation and power ultimately entails a third-class ticket to nowhere.” (p. 19). However, because the vocabulary of racism is denied and erased, such radical coding can also effectively be naturalized and normalized, justified in the name of a raceless society. Anti-racialism enables the continued racial codification of society, but in the name of colour-blindness; as such, anti-racialism becomes another name for whiteness that does not acknowledge, let alone erase, the effects and reality of a racially coded society. Racism is thus re-framed: cast as acts of individual discrimination, the systemic effects of racism and racialization are rendered silent and voiceless. The vocabulary of race and racism – important tools with which the anti-racist struggle wages its battles – is silenced. Goldberg (2009) refers to this as “born-again racism”, which he suggests is “…a racism without race, racism gone private, racism without the categories to name it as such. It is racism shorn of the charge, a racism that cannot be named because nothing abounds with which to name it. It is a racism purged of its historical roots, of its groundedness, a racism whose history is lost.” (p. 23). Born-
again racism is especially powerful because it repudiates the concept of race itself, excavating the history and effects of racial codifications, and enabling anti-racism goals to be perceived as attacks on the rights of white people by a society that has taken its corrective measures too far.

Born-again racism is a racism that is relegated to the domain of the individual with little, if any, acknowledgement, of its institutional forms in the public domain; as Goldberg (2009) notes, “[r]acism is crucified in public only to be born again in private.” (p. 24). Racism, in this view, is either confined to the realm of private, individual acts of hatred, prejudice or discrimination, or significant but exceptional public moments of racism (slavery, colonialism, the Holocaust, apartheid), all of which are noticeably in the past and not related to ongoing and contemporary systems of racism and oppression.

In this respect, Born-again racism is

…is a racism acknowledged, where acknowledged at all, as individualized faith, of the socially dislocated heart, rather than as institutionalized inequality…. In short, born-again racism is an unrecognized racism for there are no terms by which it could be recognized: no precedent, no intent, no pattern, no institutional explication. That, at least is the vision. It is a perfectly transparent – a virtual – racism, unseen because see-through. (Goldberg, 2009, p. 23).

In this conception, race is perceived to be disentangled from the institutions and power of the state, with the state now seen as being unimplicated (as least in the contemporary context) in racist practices.

Effectively, this means that “…we generally believe that, in a postcolonial, post-Holocaust era, racism has been expunged from the realm of the state and that any residues that persist lurk on the fringes of politics and society.” (Lentin, 2005, p. 383). The recent surge in popularity (and successes) of populist, openly racist leaders (and their policies) belies this disentanglement of racism, the state, and small but significant pockets of Western society. As Lentin (2008) powerfully notes,

[d]espite the banishment of race from the political lexicon…its classificatory power continues to hold us in its grip. Race, so easy to shrug off and overwrite, yet so perfectly open to malleable interpretations, remains the signifier par excellence out of which the West is imagined, always in relation to its racialized opposite. (p. 490).
The expurgation of the vocabulary of race has significant implications for the struggle against racism and the racial codification of society. At the most basic level, the erasure silences discourses about racism; it amounts to a denial of the existence and impact of racism and racial codification, rendering the struggles against oppression yet more difficult. Second, and just as importantly, such erasure allows racism to flourish while being denied; in effect, racism can be justified in the language of contemporary political projects. As Goldberg (2009) suggests, “[b]orn-again racism appears whenever called upon to do the dirty work of racist politics but purged of its categorical stiffness. Indeed, shed of its stiff categoricality, raceless racism operates in denial, anywhere and anytime.” (p. 25). An understanding of born-again racism is crucial in the current historical moment, in which racism and the racialization of Muslims are justified (and normalized) in the climate of global security and in the name of protecting our civilization. Racism in the contemporary moment thus operates at multiple levels: at the privatized level of individual, everyday actions, as well as the level of state and institutional actors, both domestic and global, in which racist policies are justified under the banner of so-called raceless political projects. In this sense, “[t]he register of race has shifted from the broadly institutional, from which it is at least explicitly excised, to the micro-relational of everyday interactions, on the one hand, and the macro-political strategizing of geo-global interests on the other. The two go hand in glove...” (Goldberg, 2009, p. 25).

The notion of born-again racism is significant for an analysis of the racialization of Muslims in the contemporary context. I argue that such a racialization occurs in the context of this privatization of racism, of a racism silenced, of a vocabulary erased, while yet responding to the global imperialist projects that underwrite such racial codification. Goldberg (2009) argues that there have been three historical conditions that have prompted and facilitated racial conceptions: (a) race as the marker of difference has been tied to notions of curiosity, (b) race as a marker of exploitability (either as grounds before-the-fact or as rationalization after-the-fact), and (c) race carrying with it connotations of threat.
The first two conditions (curiosity and exploitability), deployed most obviously through Western colonial, capitalist and imperial adventures, necessitates some sort of interaction (even if exploitative) with those deemed the racial Other. The third condition requires that the racial Other is held at a distance, with limited engagement or interaction except in terms of the “…violence of incarceration or incapacitation.” (Goldberg, 2009, p. 29). Clearly, in this historical moment and in the context of the racialization of Muslims, the third factor – that of threat – has taken on a special significance in a political environment in which Muslims are faced with multiple levels of violence. Instances of the perceived threat posed by Muslims in the contemporary moment illustrate this condition and the resulting violence against Muslim bodies: Guantanamo Bay, arrests of the Toronto 18, the cases of Maher Arar, Abousfian Abdelrazik (and countless others) as well as the everyday experiences of Muslims (physical and verbal violence, racial profiling on streets, at borders and airports, and in employment/education, etc.) are some examples of how Muslims are racialized daily. And yet, this racialization is silent, erased, because we have lost the language to name it, and because it is justified in the name of security and protection against legitimate threats.

Goldberg (2009) suggests that born-again racism can be divided into various typologies or regionalizations, based on the specificities of different contexts. Of particular relevance to this dissertation are those he characterizes as racial Europeanization and racial Americanization. Goldberg (2009) refers to racial Europeanization as “buried alive”, as race and racism within Europe are linked mainly to extraordinary events such as the Holocaust, which are relegated (‘buried’) in the past. Racial Americanization, says Goldberg, is a form of “informal apartness” in which official segregation has ended, but racial coding remains deeply embedded in societal structures, policies, and practices and hence, results in continued separation. In such a context, this informal segregation is justified as a
matter of choice rather than official policy. The figure of the Muslim Other in these specific contexts is therefore nuanced by the different, although related approaches to born-again racism. In the American context, the Muslim Other is part of the informal apartness that so characterizes racial Americanization; in Europe, the Muslim has a long, difficult history as the perennial Other, in earlier times on the borders of European society, and now very much threatening its internal boundaries. To what extent these typologies have an impact on the Canadian situation, and in particular, on the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, is a topic well worth exploring but is beyond the scope of this current project.

The culturalization of race, multiculturalism and post-racialism and the Muslim body
Racial coding in the contemporary moment rarely uses the vocabulary of race and racism. Anti-racialism has effectively rendered race silent and unmentionable, except in exceptional moments (the Holocaust, Slavery, Jim Crow, Apartheid), with little, if any, acknowledgement of contemporary and systemic racism. Racism is perceived either as an historical problem or as a “…psycho-social attitude” (Lentin, 2005, p. 381) whereby it is only individuals who are involved in discriminatory acts, with these actions rooted in that individual’s ignorance or pathology. The era of multiculturalism – discursively practiced in many Western multicultural states, including Canada – heralds the so-called end of racism, or even a so-called post-racial society. Race and racism, however, remain deeply embedded in societal structures, imaginaries and systems; the terms of the post-racial debate do not account for the existence of the profound racial coding and governmentality shaped by such coding. Deprived of the vocabulary of race, these contemporary forms of racism resort to addressing – to making sense of – difference by using other signifiers to denote the radical coding in society. The new racism has turned to culture, religion, and civilization as key signifiers of a deeply racialized society, a discursive manoeuvre which deflects uncomfortable or inconvenient realities. Indeed, “…culture has become the means through which difference is now most commonly marked.” (Lentin, 2012, p. 7). Balibar
(1988/2005) observes that “…culture can also function like a nature, and it can in particular function as a way of locking individuals and groups a priori into a genealogy, into a determination that it immutable and intangible in origin.” (p. 22). Earlier, I noted how religion is used as a technology of racial coding in the contemporary moment, a coding that relies strongly on a denial of racialization. The new racism, therefore, does not use the syntax of race that focuses on issues of biology or skin colour alone; rather, this new racism, shorn of that vocabulary, uses the idea of culture, or as Goldberg (2009) puts it, “… of culture tied to color, of being to body of ‘blood’ to behaviour.” (p. 175). This reliance on culture is not necessarily new (as racism has always been sufficiently malleable to use signifiers other than biological characteristics), but, in a world deprived of the language of race, culture has become an important signifier for justifying discrimination. Ramachandran (2009) notes that “…culture serves as a way to speak about race without discussing biology. This cultural racism equates race with nation and culture, excluding people based on incompatibility and cultural incommensurability.” (p. 35). Razack (2001) refers to this as the “culturalization of racism” which she suggests is a “…covert practice of domination encoded in the assumption of cultural or acquired inferiority.” (p. 60). As Lentin (2008) suggests, “Race, now disassociated from its crimes, becomes a mere descriptor among others that, because of the discomfort it evokes…has been replaced with other, less threatening terms.” (p. 498). Thus, in this historical moment, “…culture, ethnicity, religion, nationality and (but not always) skin colour can all stand in for race at different times.” (Lentin, 2008, p. 490). Cultural racism is “…directed at bodies, which this racist vision materially inscribes and perceives as culturally different. This racism naturalizes cultural difference to visible features of the body…” (Al-Saji, 2010, p. 889). These contemporary forms of racism – using culture or other non-biological signifiers – are more subtle than overt biological racism but just as deeply rooted in the logics of modernity. These ideas are especially relevant and applicable to the Muslim body (or those
who look Muslim) in the contemporary context, in which race, culture, religion and civilizational difference are often conflated to (re)racialize the Muslim Other.

In contemporary racism, culture comes to be represented as a choice, something one has rather than what one is. In other words, “by anaesthetizing race, and labelling it ‘ethnicity’ or ‘culture’, it becomes something that is possessed, rather than something that is unwillingly acquired.” (Lentin, 2008, p. 498). Volpp (2000) notes that “…behaviour that we might find troubling is more often causally attributed to a group-defined culture when the actor is perceived to ‘have’ culture.” (p. 89). Such subjects who presumably ‘have’ culture then could also presumably choose ‘not to have’ culture, or at least to eschew the cultural norms that mark the subject as significantly different. In this sense, cultural racism creates intolerable subjects, those whose cultural choices mark them as too different from mainstream norms; such racism shifts the burden of responsibility to the Other to prove that she remains within the boundaries of acceptability. Responsibility for discriminatory or oppressive experiences then come to be placed on the bodies (and choices) of those marked cultural rather than placed on the practices of societal institutions. The use of culture undermines the possibility that racism (individual or systemic) can be a significant factor in discriminatory practices; rather, culture is blamed as being incompatible with mainstream culture. Razack (2001) suggests that “…cultural differences are used to explain oppression: if these differences could somehow be taken into account, oppression would disappear.” (p. 61). Hence, cultural incompatibility, rather than systemic racial oppression, is accorded the responsibility (often the blame) for this cultural incompatibility. As Lentin (2012) aptly notes,

…for an act to be considered racist it would appear that it must be provable that the victim did nothing nor possessed any attribute other than a dark(er) skin colour. As soon as the victim can be found to follow practices or have other characteristics that set him/her apart from the society in which he/she lives, any negative reaction he or she is met with may be considered something other than racist… (p. 7).

The subject who is culturally incompatible or is set apart from the society in which she lives is depicted as the cultural Other, an individual who has culture, but chooses not to abandon cultural norms. On
the other hand, national subjects (those of hegemonic cultural norms) are not thought of as having
culture; rather, they are presumed to embody so-called universal values rooted in cultural traditions
that are evolving and dynamic. This hegemonic culture – though equally grounded in particular culture
traditions – is normalized and invisibilized, becoming the assumed standard against which all others
are measured. Cultural racism demarcates the boundaries between acceptable and non-acceptable
cultural Others, boundaries which are defined and determined by the hegemonic norms of mainstream
society. Such naturalized hegemonic norms operate from positions of power and privilege – whiteness
by another name – perpetuating this privilege while denying the existence of racist oppression.

Contemporary forms of racism using culture or other non-racial signifiers perform important
ideological functions in Western, multicultural settler societies. First, this approach of situating culture
as a personal choice individualizes issues of racism, discrimination and oppression, implying that these
can be addressed by individuals, without considering the role of the state, its policies, practices and
systems. Such an approach to racism “…psychologizes and individualizes it, making it impossible to
propose political analyses or solutions.” (Lentin, 2005, p. 388). Second, the use of culture instead of
race does not challenge prevailing hierarchies of groups, based on the presumption that some groups
lack either the cultural or political maturity to succeed in Western society. More often than not, this
results in a sort of paternalism which reworks the civilizing mission (and hence superiority) of some
bodies (read: white) over the so-called traditional and backward behaviour of the racialized Other.
Third, the designation of people into so-called cultural groups reifies the idea of culture itself,
especially for racialized subjects. Culture is assumed – especially for racialized subjects – to be
unchanging, fixed in time, and an essence in which all a cultural group’s members share a set of norms
and traditions. Hegemonic cultural norms, on the other hand, are not depicted in such a reified and
essentialized manner. In this sense,
[r]acialized culture thus becomes an essence that is transmitted in an unchanging form from one generation to the next. We can contrast this racialized culture to culture that is considered to be ‘hegemonic’ – the culture established as the norm. Hegemonic culture is either experienced as invisible or is characterized by hybridity, fluidity and complexity. The sophistication with which we understand hegemonic culture to be complicated and contradictory – something with which we actively negotiate – is unmatched by an equally complicated understanding of outsider cultures. (Volpp, 2000, pp. 94-95).

This culturalist approach essentializes the cultural norms of individuals, but also suggests that cultural explanations are the most important frame through which societal issues can be analyzed. Such an approach – or “culture talk” (Mamdani, 2004) – depoliticizes key societal issues, and truncates the range of possible solutions that can be proposed for their resolution. The exaltation of a cultural framing for societal issues is “…depoliticizing because such thinking often leads us to neglect the power of ‘noncultural’ forces in shaping reality.” (Volpp, 2000, pp. 96-97). Fourth, the use of non-racial signifiers to mark difference reinforces a “…civilized norm – in this case Christian, Eurocentric culture…” (Ramachandran, 2009, p. 35). This (invisibilized) norm is then used to demarcate the boundaries of acceptability in the public sphere, such that some bodies are marked for surveillance or exclusion. The reanimation of this norm both establishes a hierarchy of acceptability within the national imaginary and reinforces the role of the (white) national subject in this national space. The reanimation of these racialized boundaries is especially significant for my analysis of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, a point to which I pay more attention later in this dissertation. Fifth, and finally, reliance on non-racial signifiers for marking difference illuminates the structure of modern racism in which denial of racism and the silencing of the vocabulary of race are crucial to maintaining the racist logics embedded at the heart of modern nation-statehood. In this sense, “…by refusing to see race, by covering it over with alternative signifiers and therefore, most crucially, blinding itself to its consequences… [Western society] sends a message: race is not our problem, it is not ours. It is yours.” (Lentin, 2008, p. 500).
Contemporary racisms are deeply embedded both in ideologies of state multiculturalism (including in Canada), as well as in arguments about and for a so-called post-racial society; both ideologies are, in fact, based on anti-racialist thinking in which the language of race is silenced or rendered unmentionable. Multiculturalism – that is state or prescriptive multiculturalism (Lentin, 2012, p. 11) – is in reality a mechanism by which the state seeks to control the expressions, autonomy and power of racialized groups. In this sense, multiculturalism – by focusing on reified notions of culture – erases the connection between racism, capitalism, modernity and the nation-state, effectively depoliticizing issues of race and racism. As Lentin (2005) notes, “…as a policy, multiculturalism would have us see our societies as race-free and culturally rich.” (p. 381). Multiculturalism is increasingly criticized both by anti-racism advocates – who argue that state multiculturalism evades the reality of race and racism – and the anti-multiculturalists – who represent a backlash to equity and anti-racism initiatives occurring over past decades. Lentin (2012) observes that “…opposition to multiculturalism grows with the few inroads made by anti-racism into politics through the introduction, for example of anti-discrimination legislation.” (p. 9). Calls for limits to multicultural tolerance – in public, political and media discourses – demonstrate this opposition to multiculturalism, an opposition which is framed in cultural terms. Lentin suggests that

…the backlash against multiculturalism does not express a problem with culture, but rather with its excess. That excess is to be found always in an-Other’s culture. Accompanying the current attack on multiculture is the call for more of ‘our’ culture; more ‘citizenship’ events, nationalist commemorations and integration tests. In this sense, the anti-multiculturalist stance mirrors the racism of whiteness that sets itself up as race-neutral while racing others. (Lentin, 2012, p. 10).

Public debate on these issues – racism, oppression, multiculturalism – is constrained, however, by the erasure of the language of race. These issues are confined primarily to the language of culture, and anti-racism advocates using the language of race are often condemned as playing ‘the race card,’ or of stifling open and transparent public debate. Such a process – the erasure of the language of race and confinement to the language of culture – enables liberal society to proclaim that it is post-racial. Such
a notion – that race and racism are no longer issues in society – renders silent the deeply embedded racial coding that remains inscribed in the current framing of societal issues. Indeed, “…much of what comes under post-racialism is racism under another guise. The idea that racism is now ‘reversed’ or ‘anti-white’…has now gone from the political fringes to the mainstream…” (Lentin, 2015, p. 1404).

Recent political events, both in North America and in Europe, testify to the vigorous and aggressive re-emergence of post-racial (and white supremacist) movements in mainstream political discourse.

Public and political discourse around multiculturalism has been clearly associated to the proclamation that society is now post-racial. These two arguments are deeply connected, both implicated in the disavowal of race and racism, and advocating the setting of limits or constraints on the so-called demands of cultural (i.e. racialized) groups. Lentin (2012) argues that

the post-racial argument and the one advocating that multiculturalism is in crisis mirror each other: they both mobilize the notion that racist discrimination is a thing of the past and that racial/cultural minorities have in fact gained the upper hand. Not only does this position imply that there is no longer a need for anti-racism, it also advocates for reinstating the hegemonic status (as if it were ever displaced) of the cultural/white majority. (p. 14).

These arguments – found also in Canadian media, public and political discourses – are grounded in a fantasy of white space in which the racially marked Other is depicted as an outsider, and the white national subject empowered to manage this public space.

In the context of the Western multicultural nation-state, the visibly Muslim body clearly poses a challenge. For a post-racial society in which the language of race is erased, relying on culture to frame difference, the visible Muslim body is often marked as representing an excess of culture. Visible Muslim symbols – the hijab, niqab or other head coverings, beards, turbans, prayer or expressions of faith outside the private domain – have become imbricated with powerful meanings, or as “…synecdoche for multiple cultures.” (Ramachandran, 2009, p. 35). The meanings ascribed to these symbols, rooted in Orientalist discourse, are reconfigured to reflect a radical coding that conflates race, religion and culture, with gender forming an important feature of the racialization of Muslims, and for
their continued exclusion from the national imaginary. Ramachandran (2009) argues that “religion and culture become conflated with race under the rubric of multiculturalism and reasonable accommodation by using gendered constructions of culture as religion to exclude certain symbols and practices under the protection of the ‘brown woman’…” (p. 35). Certainly, the traits of so-called Muslimness become trigger points through which certain bodies are racialized and gendered in pursuit of particular political and ideological goals. Yegenoglu (2014) notes that

Islam…now appears as something more than religion: Islam is now religion’s becoming cultural…. it is the excess of the religiosity of Islam, that is, its becoming a marker of cultural identity that now contributes to the making of Islam as the internal enemy…. Islam’s excess religiosity can be traced in its becoming culture, becoming a way of life, shaping and conditioning the Muslim immigrants’ way of being in the…public. (emphasis in the original, p. 461).

In this sense, both religion and culture are often conflated with race: Muslims (or those who look Muslim) are codified in particular ways: as cultural, overly religious, visible, and racialized (often South Asian or Arab) bodies. The racialization of Muslims is flexible, shifting and often contradictory, a process of “racial becoming” (Rana, 2016). As articulated earlier in this chapter, this racial becoming is never completed and is a flexible positioning that is “…deemed not to be race.” (Rana, 2016, p. 120). In the contemporary moment, then, the visible Muslim body has become increasingly racialized – as Muslims rather than by virtue of their national or ethnic backgrounds – based on the discourses already established by Orientalism and gendered Orientalism. These Orientalists imaginaries, already deeply immersed in race-thinking, become reconfigured in the contemporary moment as they adapt both to newer forms of racism, and to the current political and ideological aims of Western multicultural nation-states. I turn to a exploration of this reconfigured neo-Orientalism, in which race, culture, religion and gender come together to refashion the racial coding framing Muslim bodies.

**Neo-Orientalism: race, gender, culture and religion in the contemporary moment**

**Orientalism and hegemonic discourse**

Classic Orientalist representations and imagery are palpable in contemporary hegemonic media, public and political discourses. Said (1981) notes that 20th century representations of Islam and Muslims
create the illusion, if not always the actuality, of western consensus, a consensus which “…sets limits and maintains pressures…drawing invisible lines beyond which a reporter or commentator does not feel it necessary to go.” (pp. 49-50). In other words, Orientalist discourse provides a lens or frame through which Islam and Muslims are depicted, a frame which necessarily constrains and/or distorts understanding. El-Malik (2014) suggests that Said’s critique of Orientalist discourse illuminates the “…discursively powerful, depoliticizing knowledge practices” (p. 504) that close off possibilities for debate, rendering invisible the power relations structuring society. She outlines three aspects of a Foucauldian analysis through which she argues that hegemonic discourse (1) narrows the conditions of possibility; (2) legitimizes certain speakers and speech; and (3) establishes a foundation for new discourses. (el-Malik, 2014, p. 505). Based on this schema, Orientalist discourse continues to be spread discursively, and entrenches itself in societal hegemonic discourses that simplify representations of Muslims, all while obscuring the power relations that profile and exclude Muslim bodies. Orientalist discourse relies on “…..so-called ‘experts’ [who] encode, package and resubmit this knowledge to the public domain where it saturates public imaginations, including those of political decision-makers and academics…” (el-Malik, 2014, p. 505). Hence, Orientalist discourse, naturalized and invisibilized in society, constricts the possibilities for complex thought and action, legitimating only certain types of thought and speech, while rendering invisible the underlying constraints and relations of power. In this way, “…Orientalism is insidious in that it discursively bounds not only what is actually said, but also what it is possible to say.” (el-Malik, 2014, p. 505). More importantly, Orientalist discourse, embedded in state policies and supported by hegemonic discourse in the public imaginary, has become “…the narrative scaffold for the making of empire” (Razack, 2008, p. 5), a narrative in which race-thinking justifies and legitimates the exclusion of Muslims.
Contemporary neo-Orientalist imaginaries and representations

Orientalist discourse is certainly alive and thriving, albeit in a reconfigured form, in the contemporary moment in which the Muslim body is situated as the racialized, Othered body. While such Othering is, of course, not new, the post 9/11 world has reconfigured the image of the Muslim as a threat to the Western sense of security and has precipitated vociferous state and public reaction to those deemed to be outside the racialized boundaries of so-called civilized society. In this exclusion, the figure of the Muslim Other joins other racialized bodies excluded from the Canadian national imaginary: among others, the Indigenous, Black and Asian bodies. As I outline briefly in Chapter 2, the Canadian racial landscape exalts the white national body while excluding or relegating racialized bodies to the margins of the national imaginary. The classic Oriental figure – dangerous, primitive, threatening, and exotic – has been reanimated and reconfigured, situating the Muslim body as the epitome of danger, violence, extremism, and cultural inassimilability in Western society. This Muslim body, mostly brown-skinned, is fixed in the public imagination, and is usually positioned outside the racialized boundaries of citizenship. The contemporary Muslim body, much like the classic Oriental body, is (re)racialized, a racialization that relies on discourses both of (gendered) Orientalism, and born-again racism. This re-racialization simultaneously reanimates classic Orientalist discourses and renders invisible the essential race-thinking that lies at the heart of such discourses. This racialization positions Muslims as being outside the boundaries of civilized society, bodies whose values are inherently too different or unacceptable in Western society. Razack (2012) notes that “…values talk is really race-thinking, a division of the world into a hierarchy of modern and premodern peoples, the latter inherently so. Although race-thinking varies, for Muslims and Arabs, it is underpinned by the idea that modern, enlightened, secular people must protect themselves from pre-modern religious peoples whose loyalty to tribe and community reigns over their commitment to the rule of law.” (p. 221). These discourses – Orientalism, gendered Orientalism and racialization – come together powerfully in the contemporary moment to produce a neo-Orientalist discourse which reconfigures the racialized Muslim Other, an
Other upon whom race, gender, culture and (visible) religion are inscribed. This racialization is based, on the one hand, on a seemingly privatized racism in which the ideology of neo-liberalism (and individual preference) holds sway and, on the other hand, on a racism that is re-institutionalized in the name of safeguarding ‘our’ civilizational norms. This is a racialization that does not dare to be named, but one which profiles, denies rights, and excludes Muslims based on suspicion and so-called cultural incompatibility. In this context, “…Muslims, formerly identified by a religious affiliation, become racialized, and anti-Muslim racism [becomes] the norm…” (Sriram, 2016, p. 47). Because such racialization is beyond naming, beyond discussion, it is naturalized into hegemonic discourse, with little outcry. While the contemporary racialized and gendered Muslim body is grounded in classic Orientalist imaginaries, these racialized and gendered representations are refashioned in ways that are specific to this historical moment (there was, for instance, no classical depiction of the suicide bomber). The figure of the Muslim Other is excluded from the national imaginary, an exclusion which reinforces the exclusions of other racialized bodies, historically and in the present moment.

Manifestations of Orientalist discourse are evident throughout public, political and media representations, and there is much scholarly literature focusing specifically on contemporary representations of Islam and Muslims. I review some of this scholarly literature on representations of Muslims (Chapter 3), as I analyze my data on Canadian press coverage of Muslims. Here, I simply highlight that Orientalist imaginaries are evident in media representations, both cinematic and journalistic, and that reliance on these imaginaries is a significant element of the discursive spread of Orientalism. For example, in his monumental survey of popular American cinema, Shaheen (2003) documents the “celluloid Arab,” (p. 2) a figure he suggests is situated as “…Public Enemy #1 – brutal, heartless, uncivilized, religious fanatics and money-mad cultural ‘Others’ bent on terrorizing civilized Westerners, especially Christians and Jews.” (p. 2). Shaheen outlines a number of schemas of Arabs/Muslims in popular cinema: (a) villains; (b) sheikhs; (c) maidens; (d) Egyptians; (e) Palestinians;
and (f) gratuitous scenes/slips. These representations, taken together, characterise Arabs and Muslims as primitive, violent and blood-thirsty villains. While such representations may have become more nuanced over the past decade, with some becoming more sympathetic, they remain immersed in Orientalist discourses. Thus, while Alsultany (2012) acknowledges that cinema and televiual representations of Arabs and Muslims have become more sympathetic and less one-dimensional – she refers to these as “...simplified complex representations” (Alsultany, 2012) – she nonetheless suggests that these sympathetic portrayals “...create a post-race illusion that absolves viewers from confronting the persistence of institutionalized racism.” (p. 15). Extending his critique of Orientalist discourse, Said, (1981) analyzes media reporting about Islam and Muslims which depicts “…the world of Islam – its varied societies, histories, and languages notwithstanding – [as] still mired in religion, primitivity, and backwardness…. The world of Islam...is not more than ‘Islam,’ reducible to a small number of unchanging characteristics despite the appearance of contradictions and experiences of variety…” (p. 10). In this way, Orientalist depictions are used as “…floating signifiers, ready to be harnessed to the dominant discourse of the day…” (Jiwani and Dessner, 2016, p. 37). Such floating signifiers, grounded in Orientalist discourse, illuminate the manner in which race, religion, and gender come together to stigmatize and penalize Muslim bodies in the post 9/11 moment.

Orientalist imaginaries continue to shape contemporary ideas about Islam and Muslims. Said identifies six generative stereotypes (Karim, 2000, pp. 61-62) in the coverage of the Middle East which structure (and simplify) western understanding of complex political, social and economic issues of relevance to the region. These stereotypes become part of the hegemonic discourses that “…provide the definitions, theoretical paradigms, agendas, and frames with reference to which a society gives meaning to subjects of importance.” (Karim, 2000, p. 5). Hegemonic discourse about Muslims focus on

…Islam as a primary Other. An ancient enemy darkens the dawn of the new millennium just as we rise from the triumph over the communist East. Despite occasional portrayals of individual Muslims in a favourable light, dominant media discourses have tended to create an overall
picture of the religion as a source of planetary instability: the ‘Islamic peril’ disrupts international order at the very time that globalization is bringing humanity together. (Karim, 2000, p. 1).

While Karim’s observation predates the events of 9/11, the ensuring years have only strengthened such views of Islam and Muslims as a source – perhaps the source – of planetary instability, depictions which are clearly are immersed in neo-Orientalist imaginaries. Kumar (2012) identifies five myths that elucidate the contemporary persistence of Orientalist imaginaries. These myths, which are evident in present-day neo-Orientalist discourse, are: (1) Islam is a monolithic religion; (2) Islam is a uniquely sexist religion; (3) the ‘Muslim mind’ is incapable of reason and rationality; (4) Islam is an inherently violent religion; and (5) Muslims are incapable of democracy and self-rule. (Kumar, 2012). In her analysis of Islamophobia in the American context, Kumar (2012) suggests that these myths have “…dominated the national political conversation ever since the events of 9/11. Both liberals and conservatives accepted the logic of these myths and propagated them in the years after 2001.” (p. 59).

Neo-Orientalist imaginaries generally encode Muslims as primitive, uncivilized and always-already extremist or violent, with the Muslim body becoming a “…projection of all that the West finds strange, alien, and abhorrent, but simultaneously exotic, inviting and alluring. In short, the Orientalized body essentializes otherness.” (Jiwani, 2004, p. 267).

Contemporary representations of Muslims, like their Orientalist forerunners, use the body of the Muslim woman to differentiate between the primitive Muslim Other, and the so-called civilized Western subject. Muslim women are often situated as the boundary markers of cultural Otherness, and it is often upon their bodies that discourses of modernity and pre-modernity are inscribed. Neo-Orientalist discourses commonly position Muslim women as the oppressed victims of a pre-modern, primitive, and patriarchal set of cultural norms, grounded in the supposedly ancient texts and rituals of Islam. Looming behind the oppressed Muslim woman, in this scenario, is the patriarchal Muslim man, who operationalizes these traditions. Later in this dissertation, I examine more fully the visibility
of gendering neo-Orientalist discourses. At this point, I merely note that the terrain of gender is crucial to neo-Orientalist imaginaries as “…it is through gender that we can tell the difference between those who are modern and those who are not.” (Razack, 2008, p. 17).

Neo-Orientalist imaginaries often situate Muslim bodies at the centre of contemporary moral panics in Western nation-states. Common triggers of moral panics include incidents of violence or extremist activity, mainly centring on young Muslim men, or on the clothing choices of Muslim women. Moral panics usually involve garnering strong public support or inducing anxiety about real or perceived threats to social order. Four factors in particular are central to the shaping of a moral panic. These are (a) volatility, conditions that erupt and subside suddenly, and/or are recurring in periodic bouts of attention; (b) hostility, through which key figures (or folk devils) are identified and named as outsiders, and/or deserving of punishment; (c) projection, through which underlying societal fears or anxieties are projected onto the figure of folk devils; and (d) disproportionality, through which harsh measures to resolve the crisis or threat are usually out of proportion to the actual threat. (Morgan and Poynting, pp. 2-3). In the contemporary post 9/11 context, the locus of many moral panics in Western societies, and indeed globally, has focused on the Muslim body, with these moral panics becoming less cyclical and more ongoing. Thus, the “…moral panics around Islam are globalized in a way that sets them apart from the twentieth-century counterparts.” (Morgan and Poynting, p. 4). Moral panics are not isolated to specific state, political or media actors; rather, they are often combined enterprises which involve “…not just state security agents and the media, but also the public…” (Odartey-Wellington, 2009, p. 30). Media discourses are, of course, important tools for catalyzing and reinforcing public support of, or anxiety about individuals or movements perceived to represent a threat to social order. My data on Canadian media discourses about Muslims reveal that key issues are situated as moral panics, in which the Muslim body, both male and female, is centred.
An important feature of neo-Orientalist imaginaries is the movement towards greater complexity of representations; the depictions are no longer exclusively crude caricatures of blood-thirsty, violent, oppressive villains and oppressed victims (though these representations continue to be used). As Alsultany (2005, 2008, 2012), Bayoumi (2010), Jiwani (2004, 2005b, 2007, 2014), Kundnani (2014), Shryock (2010) and others illustrate, Muslims are also being represented in more sympathetic and complex ways. Alsultany (2012) notes that American televisual representations of Arab-Americans have become more complex and sympathetic, representations that she describes as “…simplified complex representations.” (p. 21). These simplified complex representations are

…the representational mode of the so-called post-race era, signifying a new era of racial representations…[which] appear to challenge or complicate former stereotypes and contribute to a multicultural or post-race illusion. Yet at the same time…[these] simplified complex representational strategies promote logics that legitimize racist policies and practices such as torturing Arabs and Muslims. (Alsultany, 2012, p. 21).

Shryock (2010) suggests that contemporary representations about Muslims sometimes vacillate between Islamophobic and Islamophilic impulses, both of which perceive Islam in universalist and essentialist ways. Representations based in Islamophobia or classic Orientalist discourse, he suggests, juxtaposes the Muslim Other and the Western subject “…in an ideologically perfect relationship when they can see each other, first and last, as enemies.” (Shryock, 2010, p. 8). The power of this mode of relationship lies not only in its positioning of the Muslim as the Other globally, but also in situating the domestically-located Muslim body as such. As he says, “…People must be convinced and reminded that Muslims, even the ones who live here with us, are really Them.” (Shryock, 2010, p. 9). Islamophilic impulses, which Shryock refers to as “…a generalized affection for Islam and Muslims” (Shryock, 2010, p. 9), are also grounded in essentializing and universalizing perspectives on Islam and Muslims. Islamophilic impulses are at the heart of the good/bad Muslim binary (Mamdani, 2004) in which the good Muslim is situated as the modern, civilized and acceptable Muslim and the bad Muslim as the primitive, pre-modern one. Both these impulses – Islamophobic and Islamophilic – are
grounded in essentialized ideas about Islam and Muslims. The specific characteristics of the bad and the good Muslim are less significant than the existence of such a categorization which establishes an “enemy-friend binary” (Shryock, 2010, p. 19) in which the Muslim is differentiated from the Western subject. In this context, Muslims are still depicted as objects, either of fear or affection, but objects nonetheless, that are relegated to different (usually ancient) civilizational norms from those of Western society, which remains constituted by subjects. Hence, such representations – seemingly more complex, sympathetic and based on affection – do not disrupt the foundational narrative of neo-Orientalism. Indeed, as Arat-Koc (2014) notes, “…while Islamophobic and Islamophilic discourses and practices may appear to be opposites, …they represent two sides of an Orientalist logic…” (p. 1657). In this structured discourse, even as the good Muslim is depicted as safe and granted qualified inclusion in the citizenship narratives of Western society (and the bad Muslim excluded), the governmentality applied to the category of the Muslim remains in place. As Shryock aptly comments,

The irony of disciplinary inclusion, as applied to Islam and Muslims, is the extent to which it turns phobic and philic sentiments into the very architecture of identity formation. It constructs Muslim enemies even as (or precisely because) it stipulates the qualities of Muslim friends, and it encourages the latter to control and marginalize the former, a contest that unfolds in the self, the family, the community, the nation-state, and the transregional diaspora. (2010, p. 20).

Such an architecture depends on “…patterns of binary cognition, exteriority, flattened complexity, and depoliticization…” (el-Malik, 2014, p. 509), all of which characterize neo-Orientalist discourse, whether situating the Muslim body as enemy or friend.

**Race-thinking, the state of exception and Muslims**

Razack (2008) draws on Arendt’s (1973) notion of race-thinking, which I also find useful in my analysis of the figure of the Muslim. Race-thinking, which Razack (2008, p. 8) maintains is pertinent to understanding the exclusion of Muslims in the contemporary context, establishes a colour line between those that are deemed deserving and those that are not. This form of thinking is based upon the “…denial of a common bond of humanity between people of European descent and those who are
not…” (Razack, 2008, p. 6). Race-thinking, embedded in societal structures, is a central element of contemporary political and ideological discourses, and “…derives its political force from its role in dividing humans.” (Razack, 2014c, p. 3). As discussed in Razack (2008), Goldberg (1993, p. 63) outlines four key features of race-thinking: (a) the rhetoric of descent; (b) a claim of common origins; (c) a sense of kinship and belonging; and (d) the naturalization of social relations. (p. 8). Separating the world into the deserving and undeserving underpins the denial of rights to the latter. Racialized bodies are the ones most commonly marked as being undeserving, especially those bodies who adhere to so-called uncivilized and pre-modern cultural norms. Enter (once again) the powerful amalgamation of race-thinking and Orientalism.

Race-thinking, establishing a colour line, and marking some bodies as undeserving of rights, creates the conditions for a state of exception, in which law (of the sovereign or the state) circumscribes a space in which some bodies live without the protection of the law – in other words, the law creates a space of lawlessness. Under such circumstances, some bodies – in the contemporary context, it is often Muslims – are marked for “…exclusion from civil and political life…[and experience] a rise in attacks against them because they are viewed as outside or beyond the law.” (Sriram, 2016, p. 51). This is an institutionalized form of exclusion, justified by the legal structures of the nation-state. Such a process illustrates how discourses of race-thinking and neo-Orientalism are annexed to the powers of the state, through which forms of governmentality are applied selectively to different subjects within the nation-state. Razack (2008) notes that these practices of governmentality are productive in that they are responsible for the production of differential subjecthoods, within a specific form of nation-state. As she states,

...what is born, or perhaps born again, is a national community organized increasingly as a fortress, with rigid boundaries and borders that mark who belongs and who does not. The national subject of this securitized state understands himself or herself as being under siege. When both developments draw upon, even as they sustain, old notions of the nation as a racial kin group, we are witnessing the consolidation of a racially ordered world. (Razack, 2008, p. 6).
Razack (2008) makes an important distinction between those that are deemed undeserving of rights, and those against whom discriminatory policies are enacted. She notes that “…communities without the right to have rights are significantly different from communities who are merely discriminated against. They are constituted as a different order of humanity altogether by virtue of having no political community willing to guarantee their rights…” (p. 7). These are communities – and bodies – that are viewed as Other, inferior in their development, and therefore undeserving of the rights accorded to other, more civilized, subjects of the Western nation-state. Such arguments rely strongly on the terrain of race, coded as culture, to situate some bodies as trapped in civilizational (or cultural) inferiority, thereby legitimating their exclusion from political community. Razack (2008) uses the example of Canadian security certificates to illustrate how race is central to pre-emptive detention, in which certain bodies (in this case, Muslim men) are deemed unworthy of the fundamental protections of Canadian law. She suggests that the logic underlying the use of security certificates against Muslim men is “…once again a colonial one, whereby states of exception are justified because the colonized cannot be governed through the rule of law…” (Razack, 2008, p. 31). Those detained are seen as always-ready extremist, primitive and violent; they are depicted as “…intrinsically savage…[and] pre-modern.” (Razack, 2008, p. 19). Because Muslim men are thus portrayed in neo-Orientalist imaginaries, “…‘they’ are not like ‘us’ and owing to their natures/cultures are likely to erupt into violence against us.” (Razack, 2008, p. 31). Similarly, in the debates over Shari’ah law and headcoverings, Muslim women are often situated as being restrained by, and adhering to, age-old cultural or religious traditions, which contrast starkly with the liberal, progressive choices of Western women. These debates reinscribe the Orientalist binaries between the Muslim Other and the Western subject, “…marking the difference between the white, modern, enlightened West and people of

---

3 Security certificates are a legal mechanism by which non-citizens of Canada can be pre-emptively detained as ‘security risks’ based on secret evidence (not accessible to the detainee or his lawyer).
colour, in particular, Muslims.” (Razack, 2008, p. 148). Such notions, legitimated on the terrain of culture, are imbued with notions of race and race-thinking, and, using the power of governmentality, mark the racialized Other as undeserving of legal, social and political rights. These forms of governmentality became “…routinized such that a racial hierarchy is maintained without requiring the component of individual actors who are personally hostile towards Muslims….race-thinking becomes embedded in law and bureaucracy so that the suspension of rights appears not as a violence but as the law itself.” (Razack, 2008, p. 9).

Culture and the racialization of the Muslim body
The racialization of the Muslim body – a key element of neo-Orientalist discourse – is shaped by the use of supposedly common biological or cultural characteristics to categorize and justify the racial coding and exclusion of particular bodies that ‘look Muslim’. The question of what a Muslim looks like is rarely raised as the neo-Orientalist imaginary has reinscribed and reinvented representational archetypes that serve the purpose of racial coding and exclusion. In this imaginary, both culture and gender become crucial terrains upon which racial coding is based, yet the terms of the coding (and related power dynamics) are never explicit. Because both culture and gender are seen to be non-racial terms, the racial coding embedded in neo-Orientalist discourse is rendered invisible, with the resulting exclusion of Muslim bodies rendered legitimate in light of civilized norms.

Culture has a privileged place in contemporary born-again racism and neo-Orientalist discourses, with the terrain of cultural difference (or culture clash) used to identify, profile and exclude those whose difference from mainstream cultural norms is perceived as being too great. Razack (2008) refers to this as the “culturalization of race” (p. 60), in which culture or civilizational difference comes to stand for race or other forms of biological racism, thus situating cultural norms as choices which can then be disciplined, surveilled, and excluded from political community. Mamdani (2004) suggests that the post-Cold War moment is “…marked by the ascendancy and rapid politicizing of a single term:
culture” (p. 17), a term becoming increasingly politicized. Culture Talk “…assumes that every culture has a tangible essence that defines it, and it then explains politics as a consequence of that essence.” (Mamdani, 2004, p. 17). This politicization of the notion of culture tends to divide the world into modern and pre-modern, with the latter situated as adhering to archaic cultural norms. Hence, “…culture talk tends to think of individuals (from ‘traditional’ cultures) in authentic and original terms, as if their identities are shaped entirely by the supposedly unchanging culture into which they are born.” (Mamdani, 2002, p. 767). In the contemporary context, then, Muslims (and other cultural Others) are depicted as adhering to traditional and primitive norms that are seen as “…habit, some kind of instinctive activity whose rules are inscribed in early founding texts, usually religious, and mummified in early artifacts.” (Mamdani, 2002, p. 767). In this sense, Muslims are seen to

…just conform to culture…[which] has no history, no politics, and no debates. It seems to have petrified into a lifeless custom. Even more, these people seem incapable of transforming their culture…. The implication is that their salvation lies, as always, in philanthropy, in being saved from the outside… (Mamdani, 2002, p. 767).

Within the discourse of culture talk, those Muslim bodies situated as cultural, who retain allegiance to traditional and primitive norms, are depicted as bad Muslims who refuse to be modernized, while those willing to be liberated from the confines of cultural norms are seen as good Muslims. The distinction between good/bad Muslim is crucial in the contemporary context, in which exclusionary policies and practices against Muslim bodies must be justified and legitimated on discourses that appear to be race-neutral; without such justification, such state policies risk being tarred with charges of racism and Islamophobia. Mamdani (2004) notes that “…unless proved to be ‘good,’ every Muslim [is] presumed to be ‘bad’…” (p. 15). This dichotomy is at the heart of my analysis about the Acceptable Muslim: such good Muslims perform their allegiance to, and within, the Western construct of racialized citizenship, a performance which explicitly places them within the boundaries of acceptability.
In the contemporary context, the so-called clash of civilizations made (in)famous by Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis is underwritten by culture talk. Mamdani (2004) outlines two forms of contemporary culture talk, one which refers to a clash *between* Western and Islamic civilization and the other refers to a clash *within* Muslim civilization. Kundnani (2014) also suggests that these two versions of culture talk – he refers to them as culturalist and reformist – are central to understanding how the idea of culture is annexed to the project of racial coding and exclusion of Muslim bodies. While sharing a focus on the culturalization of politics, these two modes of civilizational discourse differ in nuance, explanatory frameworks and approaches; in general, Kundnani links culturalist approaches (clash between civilizations) to neo-conservative perspectives and reformist approaches (clash within civilization) to (neo)liberal views. As Kundnani (2008) notes,

…whereas the neo-conservatives see Muslims *en masse* as inherently anti-modern, the new liberals see individual Muslims as choosing the wrong kind of modern politics. Whereas the former talk of a clash of civilisations, the latter talk of a clash within civilisations between extremists and moderates, enlisting Muslims or ex-Muslims…. Whereas the neoconservatives emphasize Judeo-Christianity as the basis for western identity the new liberals emphasize the Enlightenment and its legacy of secular liberalism…(p. 42).

I address some of these new liberal approaches, especially the language of universalism and liberal rage, later in this chapter.

Neo-Orientalist discourses, then, rely on the terrain of culture and cultural norms to render some bodies – mainly Muslims in this historical moment – as different and inferior to the Western subject. Notably, it is not culture *per se* that is problematic; rather, is the excess of culture that poses a significant challenge for inclusion in the national imaginary. The supposed excess of culture marks those that observe cultural (or religious) norms that are different from the accepted (and invisiblized) norm. Hence, it is “…the excess of the religiosity of Islam, that is, its becoming a marker of cultural identity that now contributes to the making of Islam as the internal enemy…” (Yegenoglu, 2014, p. 461). Those bodies marked by such cultural or civilizational differences are perceived as being outside the
boundaries of acceptability. While these discourses rely on the terrain of culture, there is little doubt that they are grounded in a racialized coding, a categorization which ensures that the racial, religious, and cultural Other is “…excluded from the universal…[and] placed at a social and moral distance” (Razack, 2014c, pp. 3-4) from the Western subject. In this historical moment, Muslims have become re-racialized as Muslims, rather than on the basis of their ethnic or national origins, and are situated as too different and uncivilized, requiring Western intervention. While Muslims are ethnically and racially diverse, contemporary neo-Orientalist discourse coheres around a particular type of visible Muslim body: this is usually a South Asian or Arab body, who exhibits or expresses visible markers of Muslimness (beards, headcoverings, or other signs of visible Muslimness). Indeed, such visible symbols of Muslim identity have become powerful markers of the racialization of Muslim bodies, a racialization that coheres around these symbols rather than actual racial or ethnic identification. In a study exploring Islamophobia experienced by Muslim women in the United Kingdom, Allen (2014) notes that visible displays of Islam (hijab, niqab, abaya, jalbab) symbolize the identity of Muslim women so powerfully that they render invisible the actual ethnic or racial make-up of the woman. For instance, one white British Muslim woman, wearing the hijab, experienced incidents of Islamophobia, essentially meaning that she is “…recognized as Muslim first and foremost through the identification and recognition of the visible ‘otherness’ of her clothing.” (Allen, 2014, p. 149). In this and other cases, the woman’s clothing choices situate her as a visible Muslim, rendering her race and ethnicity less relevant. Such examples, which Allen (2014) notes are a common feature of Islamophobia experienced by the white British women, are an indication that “…processes of essentialization…do not merely racialize victims but more accurately re-racialize them.” (p. 150).

Racialized and visible Muslims, then, are marked as cultural Others, as bodies which can legitimately be excluded from political community. These bodies can then be marked as people without the right to have rights, living in a state of exception. Such bodies can, through legalized and systemic practices,
be abandoned (for instance, Maher Arar, Omar Khadr, Abousfian Abdelrazik, Saad Hagi Mohamud, or Mohamed Fahmy), excluded (the suspension of civil and legal rights for niqabi women, or Muslim men detained on security certificates) or rendered otherwise unrecognizable by Western political and social community. Because these exclusionary practices are articulated in the language of culture, the relations of power and racial coding are obscured. Relying on the terrain of culture ensures that “…violence against the racialized Other comes to be understood as necessary in order for civilization to flourish, something the state must do to preserve itself.” (Razack, 2008, p. 9). In this contemporary moment, the discourses of race-thinking, culture and neo-Orientalism fuse to ensure that the exclusion of Muslims is underwritten by a civilizational discourse that disguises the racial coding embedded in society. The underlying narrative is made to appear logical and race-neutral: “…we have reason; they do not. We are located in modernity; they are not. Significantly, because they have not advanced as we have, it is our moral obligation to correct, discipline, and keep them in line and to defend ourselves against their irrational excesses.” (Razack, 2008, p. 10).

Razack (2014b) identifies at least two versions of racialized Otherness – she refers to these as “blood narratives” (2014b, p. 61) – which adhere to Muslim bodies in the contemporary context. The first version of this narrative focuses on the innately cultural incommensurability of the Muslim body who “…carries the seeds of violence in their blood, a latent capacity from which we must protect ourselves.” (Razack, 2014b, p. 61). In this context, the psychology of extremists and terrorists becomes a crucial element of the othering of Muslim bodies. This entails the pathologizing of certain (racialized) bodies who are seen to be innately violent, uncivilized and pre-modern; this pathologizing is evident, as I discuss in Chapter 3, in Canadian media discourses about so-called Muslim extremism. Razack (2014b) suggests that this version “…allows us to defend ourselves with the centuries-old colonial line that the natives only understand force and we can deal with them in no other way.” (p. 61). This is precisely the narrative used, for example, in the hearings of Muslim men detained under the provisions
of Canadian security certificates and in other instances where Muslim bodies are deemed to be engaging in extreme, violent or pre-modern behaviour. As Razack (2014b) notes, these instances reveal that “…the psyche becomes the privileged site of investigation and here race has an important role to play. Orientalist notions of monster terrorists who possess an inborn rage and hatred of the West guide the court in determining who is and who is not dangerous.” (p. 63). The second version of this blood narrative is the imperial discourse of saving the uncivilized Other without confronting the material violence being done to that Othered body. Such discourses operate most obviously in narratives about Muslim women and children, who are depicted as rescuable and moreover, “…worthy of rescue…” (Jiwani, 2009, p. 735). As I explore later in this dissertation, this imperial discourse is unmistakable in Canadian media coverage of Muslims. Despite their differences, both narratives are rooted in a fantasy of white space which “…enables white citizens to feel that they are the normative citizens who must defend themselves against racialized groups or who must engage in saving…” (Razack, 2014b, p. 61).

**Gender, visibility and neo-Orientalist governmentality**

Gender, like culture, is centrally implicated in discourses of contemporary neo-Orientalism and the racialization of Muslim bodies. Gender is the terrain on which culture is most noticeable and is the basis on which Western society demarcates those who are included or not within the national imaginary. Many contemporary ideological battles are waged on the bodies of Muslim women, who are perceived as the boundary-markers of community and society. Notions of culture are often inscribed on the bodies of Muslim women, and, in classic Orientalist tradition, they are depicted as carrying the essence of culture, traditions and faith, all of which are cast as being pre-modern. As such, gender is “…crucial to the containment of Muslims to the pre-modern…” (Razack, 2008, p. 16), with Muslim women positioned as oppressed and victimized, and Muslim men as patriarchal oppressors. These representations situate Muslims outside the boundaries of the national imaginary unless they
can be rescued or otherwise rehabilitated and brought into civilization. Razack (2008) notes that “[c]onsidered irredeemably fanatical, irrational, and thus dangerous, Muslim men are…marked as deeply misogynistic patriarchs who have not progressed into the age of gender equality, and who indeed cannot. For the West, Muslim women are the markers of their communities’ place in modernity.” (p. 16). It is, therefore, on the terrain of gender that we can know which bodies are included and excluded from the national imaginary.

Foundational to neo-Orientalist discourses are three figures that comprise the “eternal triangle.” (Razack, 2008). These three allegorical figures are, according to Razack (2008), “…the dangerous Muslim man, the imperiled Muslim woman, and the civilized European, the latter a figure who is seldom explicitly named but who nevertheless anchors the first two figures.” (p. 5). Jiwani (2009) suggests that Muslim women are often represented as “helpless victims”, with Western bodies positioned as “chivalrous knights” (often men, but also now increasingly women) who must save the oppressed Muslim woman. Such notions situate the Western nation-state and/or subject as the saviours of supposedly oppressed Muslim women, a positioning which legitimates the expulsion of Muslims – particularly men – from social and political life. Examples of reliance on these sets of figures – and the rescue mission – abound in Western society: controversies over head coverings worn by some Muslim women, debates about so-called honour-killings of Muslim women and girls, and vociferous debates about the adoption of Shari’ah law in Western contexts. Each of these examples turn on the allegorical figures of the triad: the Muslim woman as the oppressed body, the Muslim male as the threatening, patriarchal, oppressive body, and the Western subject as the “chivalrous knight” (Jiwani, 2009) who must save the Muslim woman from the oppressive traditions of Muslim men. Jiwani refers to this as the “chivalric masculinity” (2009) of the security state in which the “…‘knights of civilization’ redeem their dominative masculinity by being ‘good men’ protecting their women within the homeland and rescuing helpless maidens outside it.” (p. 729). These knights of civilization
are the national subjects – “exalted subjects” (Thobani, 2007) or “national managers” (Hage, 2000) – who feel empowered to manage the public sphere and objects (including racialized bodies) within it. The allegorical figures of the eternal triangle are deeply embedded in contemporary iterations of neo-Orientalist discourses and race-thinking, in which the racialized and visible Muslim body is situated as outside the boundaries of acceptability in Western society.

The “rescue mission” (Jiwani, 2009) and the allegorical figures of the eternal triangle reanimate and deepen the ideological divide between the modern and the pre-modern, a divide which then legitimates state action to exclude some (usually racialized or culturally Othered) bodies. Razack (2008) notes that “…Muslims are stigmatized, put under surveillance, denied full citizenship rights, and detained in camps on the basis that they are a pre-modern people located outside of reason, a people against whom a secular, modern people must protect themselves.” (p. 174). In the contemporary 9/11 world, such an ideological divide has become yet more pivotal to the policies of the Western nation-state, as the boundaries of acceptability are more firmly drawn and reinforced. Jiwani, Razack, Thobani, Zine and other scholars articulate cogently how the various moral panics about Muslims in the Canadian context (Shari’ah law, veils, the Toronto 18, and others) are played out on the terrain of gender, and how these panics rely upon the allegorical figures of the eternal triangle. Gender, like culture, is central to reinforcing these racialized ideological boundaries, and the state policies that emanate from them. In this sense, “…gender operates as a kind of technology of empire enabling the West to make the case for its own modernity and for its civilizational projects around the globe.” (Razack, 2008, p. 18).

The Western fixation on the veil plays an important role in contemporary neo-Orientalist discourse, as it did in the classic Orientalist framework. Jiwani (2010) refers to the veil as an “…iconic sign of difference, but one that is reified to the extent that its strategic use, within Western ways of seeing, veils the intentions or motivations of the definer.” (p. 66). This fascination is grounded in the classic
Orientalist focus on the exotic nature of the veil, which represents “…for the colonial gaze the Orient’s/woman’s mask; it is an exterior surface which is assumed to conceal the site of inferiority, the essence of the culture, i.e. femininity as the embodiment of culture’s authentic core.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 101). In this historical moment, the fascination with the veil has become yet more pronounced, reaffirming an association between the veil and the presumed oppression of the women who wear it. In this sense, the veil is at the centre of numerous debates – often vociferous and operating as moral panics – in Western nation-states. These debates are underwritten by the rescue-motif in which the Western subject (both male and female) seeks to rescue the Muslim woman from the veil, which is represented as a primitive, oppressive and sexist tradition. In such a discourse, Muslim women are more often than not portrayed (and understood) as passive and voiceless in the face of primitive and oppressive religious traditions, and the patriarchal men who enforce these traditions. Just as importantly, the veil, in being situated as a primitive, backward tradition, serves to reinforce the illusion of gender equality in Western society: Western women see themselves as having achieved equality relative to ostensibly subjugated Muslim women. Al-Saji (2010) notes that “…western representations of veiled Muslim women are not simply about Muslim women themselves. Rather than representing Muslim women, these images fulfill a different function: they provide the foil or negative mirror in which western constructions of identity and gender can be positively reflected.” (p. 877). As I explore later in this dissertation, the clothing choices of Muslim women – and especially veils, niqabs and hijabs – animate significant commentary in Canadian media, public and political discourses. Underwriting such commentaries are the figures of the eternal triangle and the rescue-motif, through which Muslim bodies are disciplined into Western norms. Clearly, such vociferous debates about the veil in the contemporary context reflect the classic Orientalist logic that the veil is the “…indisputable emblem of Islamic culture’s essential traditionalism….and] as the most important sign of reform and modernization.” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 100). The contemporary debates
about the veil, which I explore later in this dissertation, illustrate how the saving of Muslim women (by so-called enlightened subjects) has become an important project for Western modernity and empire.

An important element of neo-Orientalist discourse is the hypervisibility of Muslim women (the veil key to this hypervisibility), through which Muslims come to be identified as embodying an excess of culture (or religion). Linking gender with culture, such discourses of hypervisibility depend on a culturalist perspective in which the gender practices of certain cultural groups are highlighted while the structural and systemic inequities faced by Western women are invisibilized or unacknowledged. Hence, this hypervisibility results in “…an intense public and state gaze, almost exclusively, on personal patriarchal relations taking place in racialized families and communities…[which perceives] gender as a cultural problem having to do with the ‘cultural baggage’ others bring…” (Arat-Koc, 2012, p. 9). In other words, the perception is that racialized women face gender inequities while white Western women (and their societies) are assumed to have successfully addressed gender inequity. Arat-Koc (2012) refers to this as the paradox of hypervisibility and invisibility in which policy making is focused on “…invisibilizing and/or individualizing issues for white and Canadian-born women and culturalizing issues facing immigrant and racialized women…” (p. 6). This paradox of hypervisibility and invisibility is embedded in state policies and practices (and seeps into public discourse) that situate gender inequality as a problem specific to racialized women (and, given that Muslims are deemed to have an excess of culture, increasingly for Muslim women) and not for white, Western women, for whom gender equality is assumed to have been achieved. In this way, there is a “…relationship between the invisibility of gender for some and its hyper-visibility for others. The key to this seeming paradox is that the hyper-visibility of ‘other’ women helps to normalize and naturalize the gender order in the larger society.” (Arat-Koc, 2012, p. 9).
The paradox of hypervisibility and invisibility has numerous effects. First, it shifts responsibility for gender inequity away from state/societal policies and practices, instead placing it on notions of culture and religion, which are depicted in essentialized, reified and monolithic ways. Second, because there is an over-emphasis on culture as the site of gender inequity, there is little attempt to investigate more closely the gendered issues facing racialized women, such as labour market shortages, dependence on male sponsors for immigrant women, or the availability of effective social services for racialized women. Arat-Koc (2012) comments that this culturalist perspective, “…creates blind-spots around the relevant material conditions that need to be identified and addressed…” (p. 10), blind-spots that I suggest are relevant for an analysis of the conditions for racialized women, as well as for (some) white women. In other words, attention is focused on the terrain of culture, eliding the gendered structural and systemic inequities faced by women, both racialized and white. As Arat-Koc (2012) observes, “…taking place in a context of Islamophobia and focusing almost exclusively on the ‘cultural difference’ of Islam in a post 9/11 context, the debate has ended up effectively sidelining the general feminist concerns over the negative effects of privatized systems of justice.” (p. 11). Third, situating gender inequity on the terrain of culture enables the continued disciplining of some bodies – those marked as cultural Others – who are deemed to adhere to so-called traditional gender-based cultural norms that are at odds with Western notions of (white, liberal) feminism. Such disciplinary measures are underwritten by the allegorical figures of the eternal triangle and are central to neo-Orientalist discourses at this historical moment. As Arat-Koc (2002) notes, “…when conceptions of the ‘other’ define ‘brown women’ as helpless victims and ‘brown men’ as their barbaric predators exercising the authority given to them by traditional culture, the discourse of the ‘self’ inevitably becomes one who has a moral and political duty to intervene to save.” (p. 58). Fourth, the paradox of hyper/in visibility (re)establishes a hierarchy amongst women, a hierarchy that implicates some Western feminists to “…sustain a particular form of governmentality, one in which the productive power of the imperiled
Muslim woman functions to keep in line Muslim communities…” (Razack, 2008, p. 148). In this way, “…hegemonic forms of femininity in Western society – including feminist – are as implicated as hegemonic masculinity in fashioning an ethos of violence against their monstrous enemy (Islam) and its adherents (believing Muslims).” (Thobani, 2014, p. 474). Rendered invisible and silent through the hyper/in visibility of gender are the power relations integral to such discursive technologies of governance. As Razack (2008) notes, “…when feminists invoke notions of culture clash through appeal to the idea of dangerous Muslim men and imperiled Muslim woman, contemporary political conditions ensure that their words will not be taken lightly.” (p. 85).

The hyper/in visibility of gender relations, rooted in the allegorical figures of the eternal triangle, serves many functions, including the reinforcement of imperial methods of governance, drawing in some Western feminists in a governmentality of imperial feminism. Such an imperial feminism is complicit in the intervention, correction, and disciplining of Muslims in the contemporary moment, evidenced by the many campaigns, both domestic and global, to ‘save’ Muslim women from their oppressive cultural norms. Imperial feminism evokes the four-stage gendered logic of empire\(^4\) (Cooke, 2002) in which brown women are situated as oppressed, imperiled victims requiring rescue by Western feminists. Such logic then, disciplines and regulates Muslim bodies, specifically situating Muslim men as the oppressive, uncivilized, patriarch Other with (some) Muslim women as possibly civilizable through efforts to rescue them. In order to rescue Muslim women, the oppressive, barbaric, dangerous and uncivilized Muslim man must be attacked (either militarily or ideologically). Imperial feminism, therefore, underwrites and reinforces the ideological aims of empire, as “…progressive people, among them many feminists, have come to believe in the urgency of saving Muslim women from their patriarchal communities. As a practice of governance, the idea of the imperiled Muslim woman is...

\(^4\) In her analysis of campaigns seeking to rescue Afghan women during the early years on the War on Terror, Cooke (2002) outlines the logic: (1) Women have inalienable rights within universal civilization; (2) Civilized men recognize and respect these rights; (3) Uncivilized men systematically abrogate these rights; and (4) Such men (the Taliban) thus belong to an alien (Islamic) system. (p. 468).
unparalleled in its capacity to regulate.” (Razack, 2008, p. 17). At the heart of this imperial logic are once again the allegorical figures of the eternal triangle: the dangerous Muslim man, the imperiled Muslim woman and the civilized Western body. As I illustrate through my data on Canadian media discourse, such narratives of imperial feminism continue to play out in debates over the veil (mainly niqab), so-called honour killings, Shari’ah law, and other such issues.

Imperial feminism works with, and underwrites, technologies of governance to achieve political, social, and ideological goals, both in the domestic and global contexts. In the global context, various Western campaigns, both military and ideological, rely on the notions embedded in imperial feminism to justify intervention and neo-imperial adventures. In the domestic context, national narratives rely increasingly on the conflation of gender, culture, race and religion to (re)produce differential subjectivities and reinforce the racialized boundaries of the national imaginary. In her analysis of Muslim bodies in the Canadian national imaginary, Zine (2012b) suggests that the nation-state is unsettled by three narratives in which Muslim bodies play central roles and through which visible Muslims are excluded from belonging. I explore these ideas about citizenship, national boundaries and Muslim bodies further in next chapter of this dissertation. For now, I situate imperial feminism as a key element of systemic technologies of governmentality (underwritten by neo-Orientalist discourses and practices) that seek to correct, discipline and manage Muslim bodies in the contemporary context. These neo-Orientalist forms of governmentality situate the dominant Western body as “…the spectator, the judge and jury, of every facet of Oriental behavior.” (Said, 1978/2003, p. 109). Neo-Orientalist discourses, technologies of governmentality and power echo those of classic Orientalism as a “…corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing

---

5 Zine (2012b) uses three themes to explore Canadian debates about Muslims and suggests that these themes can be used to explore the gendered subject formation of Muslim women. These themes are (1) Disciplining Culture; (2) Death by Culture; and (3) Death of Culture.
views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, …as a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient.” (Said, 1978/2003, p. 3).

**The language of universalism, imperialism and liberal rage**

Contemporary neo-Orientalist discourses rely increasingly on the language of universalism, through which the power of Western imperialism is cloaked and rendered invisible. Whether through discourses about saving Muslim women, the crisis in multiculturalism, honour crimes, or human rights, this universalist language situates the cultural, religious, racial, and sexual Other as the body to be managed by Western subjects and the Western state. In his insightful analysis of the contemporary deployment of Orientalist discourse, Massad (2015) theorizes that universalism is often used as a “…cover for Occidentalism…” (p. 86). Using Said’s (1978/2003) definition of Orientalism, Massad defines Occidentalism as

...a style of thought based on an ontological and epistemological distinction made between (most of the time) ‘the Orient’ (but often the entire world that lies outside what is defined or imagined as the ‘Occident’) and the ‘Occident.’ It is a Western style of dominating the entire knowable world, including the Orient and the Occident. (p. 85).

In situating universalism as a cover for Occidentalism, Massad (2015) suggests that Occidentalism is, in fact, “…always an uninterrogated essential point of departure” (p. 83) through which Western perspectives, ideals, and values are imposed on the world. He provides numerous examples of this Occidential language masquerading as universal values, such as

the liberal, universalizing, and globalizing discourses of democracy and human rights, which oppose themselves to ‘Oriental despotism’ of various chromatisms; discourses of women’s rights where the persistence of the ‘misogyny’ of the Orient has transformed its anthropological objects from foot-binding, sati, and the harem to ‘dowry deaths,’ ‘the veil,’ and ‘honor crimes’ compared to the philogyny of the Occident whose women are depicted as ‘the luckiest in the world’; and lastly in the discourses of sexual rights, where a ‘debauched’ Orient and Africa have been replaced with the sexually ‘repressive’ and ‘homophobic’ Muslims and Africans who oppress homosexuals, compared to the homophilic Occident that loves both its homosexuals and heterosexuals equally…. (Massad, 2015, p. 86).

Indeed, Massad cogently maps out the terrains upon which Occidentalism – or a fantasy of white space – operates in this historical moment. These terrains are grounded in key themes of liberal
discourses – secularism, individualism, gender equality, and sexual freedom – which articulate key supposedly acceptable perspectives (in favour of each of these themes) and demarcates the boundaries of acceptability within the public sphere. Kundnani (2012) concurs when he suggests that the terms of this aggressive liberalism are fraught with contradictions, tensions which in effect render liberalism illiberal in execution.

Using contemporary debates about multiculturalism as an example, Kundnani (2012) notes that “…Muslims – or in some accounts, certain kinds of political Muslims – come to symbolize the danger of cultural difference and become the focus for a project of producing good, liberal individuals who have absorbed…western values.” (Kundnani, 2012, p. 158). Using such logic, the project becomes a civilizing mission, thorough which Muslims are invited (perhaps even coerced) into the liberal, modernist project. Integration into Western civil and social (liberal) norms is central to this civilizing mission, a “…new notion of ‘integration’…[that] must take precedence over considerations of minority rights and equality…” (Kundnani, 2012, p. 159). These liberal discourses appear in the contemporary debates about Muslims in the context of the Western nation-state: gender equity, secularism, liberal values, and individualism are very often deemed universal or human values that the racial or cultural Other is urged to adopt. Such discourses are quite evident in the “…conventional liberal wisdom that in a diverse society, minority groups need to be forcefully integrated into a set of national values in order to guarantee social cohesion [and that]…all political differences must be constrained for the sake of preserving [Western] identity…” (Kundnani, 2012, p. 159). My data on Canadian media, public and political discourses provide ample evidence of such illiberal liberalism – Occidentalism or a white nation fantasy – couched in the language of universalism.

Invoking the concept of universalism is an important tactic in contemporary Western political discourse. Through this invocation, “…liberalism, nationalism and civilization are intertwined,
apparently seamlessly, into a unified discourse of identity.” (Kundnani, 2012, p. 159). Challenges to this Western discourse of identity elicit strong reactions – “liberal rage” (Kundnani, 2008, p. 45) – within Western societies; the vociferousness of the debates about Muslims in the public domain is a clear indicator of these powerful reactions. Perhaps just as importantly, this discourse of universalism “…constitutes a rearticulation of notions of racial and civilizational superiority in an ostensibly liberal idiom…” (Kundnani, 2012, p. 159). This liberal idiom enables a shift from the old language of racial or biological superiority to the language of universal values and liberalism. This supports a “…shift in this discursive tradition from biology to culture: the conservative idea of ‘race’ as cultural identity is now accompanied by a liberal idea of racialized superior values. Whereas the focus of conservative discourses of cultural difference is on ethnicity, the focus of liberal discourses of values, difference is on religion – in particular, Islam.” (Kundnani, 2012, p. 160). In this way, Muslims are held up as those most opposed to the universal liberal values of Western society, an opposition (argue those infused with liberal rage), that should be forcefully dismantled. Thus, such a universalizing discourse relies on the terrain of universal values to reinforce these liberal themes, and, in a silent gesture of power cloaked in humanist language, reanimates the goals of the civilizing imperialist mission.

Contemporary debates about the Muslim body in the context of the Western nation-state often rely on this universalist language, grounded in a liberal idiom. Liberal rage at the racialized Other who refuses to adhere to the liberal legacy of Western values is powerfully evident in the various public, political and media debates and moral panics that litter contemporary political culture. In his analysis of these discourses in the context of British multiculturalism, Kundnani (2012) notes that

On the one hand, the conservative discourse of civilizations tends to regard Muslims…as basically unassimilable except in small numbers…. On the other hand, the liberal discourse that sees European Enlightenment values as under threat tends to put more faith in the state’s ability to mould its subjects who, through various mechanisms, can be guided towards forms of identity deemed appropriate. (p. 162).
The invisibilization of the power dynamics at work in such discourses ensures that “…liberal anti-Muslim sentiment rationalizes itself as no more than criticism of an alien belief system – hostility to religious beliefs rather than a racial group – and therefore distinct from racism.” (Kundnani, 2012, p. 160). Thus, liberal rage is integral to contemporary policies and practices of governmentality such that it is deemed both race-neutral and common-sense to compel racialized Others – those who are deemed disruptive – to accept the liberal values of Western societies. The mantra of ‘liberal values, illiberal means’ appears to be an acceptable – and accepted – means of ensuring social cohesion and the preservation of Western identity. These liberal discourses that aim to shape and guide subjects from an alien culture (read: racialized and visible Muslims) are, therefore, reconfigured through forms of governmentality in which some bodies (again read: visible Muslims) are to be either civilized (hence, made into acceptable Muslims) or excluded from the national imaginary and public sphere of Western nation-states. These technologies of governmentality are enmeshed with national narratives of citizenship and belonging in which racialized and reconfigured boundaries of acceptability ensure the exclusion of those who would disrupt the fantasy of white space articulated in a liberal idiom.

I turn now to an examination of these boundaries of acceptability, citizenship and belonging in Western nation-states.
Chapter 2

Boundaries of acceptability: 
Race, citizenship and the Muslim

Introduction
The figure of the Muslim Other is, in the post 9/11 world, increasingly racialized and gendered, reanimated as one to be targeted, surveilled, and contained within Canadian and global society. While such representations are not new, based as they are on Orientalist imaginaries, the post 9/11 era has seen the solidification of the figure of the Muslim as the predominant threat to the Western sense of security and has precipitated vociferous public and political reactions to those deemed to be outside the acceptable boundaries of the national public space. The figure of the Muslim has become hyper-visible on the public landscape and is at the centre of numerous debates in the public sphere. In the contemporary moment, Muslim bodies are often classified either as good or bad Muslims (Mamdani, 2004), a dichotomy which is a key feature of neo-Orientalist racialized discourse. Though this dichotomy is not new (based on the good or bad colonial subject), it has taken a central space in neo-Orientalist discourse. Such a dichotomy is even more central in multicultural nation-states which rely on these demarcations to (re)configure national narratives and citizenship privileges, while retaining non-racist credentials. Post 9/11 discourses on citizenship, belonging and nationality focus heavily on the Muslim question and especially on whether the Muslim (her values, traditions, and faith) are assimilable in the Western nation-state. Such discourses rely strongly on racialized and gendered neo-Orientalist discourses through which culture, race, religion and ethnicity are often conflated to mark and exclude certain bodies from the national imaginary. These citizenship discourses, based on key criteria defined by the “aristocratic elite” (Hage, 2000, p. 65), situate some bodies as central to the national will, others as excluded, and yet others as granted conditional inclusion. In this project, I theorize that the figure of the Acceptable Muslim is enlisted to patrol and manage the boundaries of acceptability within Western multicultural, secular nation-states. Such a figure, while also evident in
other contexts, plays important ideological and political roles on the Canadian landscape, especially in the context of the re-animated racialization of Muslim bodies in the post 9/11 world. These Acceptable Muslim figures, juxtaposed against the figure of the Muslim Other, are key in the reinforcement of the Canadian national narrative, and the managing of the boundaries of acceptability in the national imaginary. The figure of the Acceptable Muslim makes its appearance centrally in Canadian discourses on the nation, citizenship and belonging and becomes more prevalent in media, public and political discourses since 2005. Such figures are key players in Canadian national discourses about a range of issues and are used to reinforce the power and privilege of whiteness, while simultaneously rendering invisible the relations of power embedded in the national imaginary. The figure of the Acceptable Muslim is a newly configured insider informer who “…can feign authority while telling their conquerors not what they need to know but what they want to hear.” (Dabashi, 2011, p. 16). These comprador intellectuals (Acceptable Muslims in my lexicon) rely on Orientalist discourses to support, reinforce and legitimate the ideological goals of modern-day Empire. These figures have learned both to acknowledge and deny their Muslim origins and are sometimes seen as so-called voices of dissent, voices which reflect both battles within Muslim communities and the struggle between Western and Muslim civilizations. These figures, I theorize, are guards who stand at the borders of the nation, marking the boundary and signalling that those beyond it can be legitimately policed by the nation-state. In addition, through their inclusion in, and support of, the national body-politic, such figures extol the so-called multicultural tolerance of the Western nation-state, enabling the state to perpetuate violence against some bodies, while reveling in its non-racist rhetoric.

In this chapter, I map out and outline the methodological imperatives guiding my analysis, imperatives which are grounded in narratives of citizenship and belonging in Western multicultural nation-states.
Such narratives, enmeshed in racial coding, enable the systemic and racialized demarcations within nations, which are underwritten by the dynamics of power, privilege and domination.

**A ‘fictive ethnicity’: Western liberal citizenship**

The figure of the Muslim is centrally placed in contemporary discourses about citizenship and belonging in Western multicultural nation-states. There is a solid body of scholarly literature theorizing that citizenship, especially is racially coded, and that boundaries of inclusion/exclusion regulate the benefits and privileges of citizenship. (Ahmed, 2000; Goldberg, 2009; Hage, 2000; Morrison, 1993, 1997; Razack, 1999, 2001, 2008, 2014b, 2015, 2002; Thobani, 2003, 2007, 2014; Volpp, 2002, 2005, 2007a, 2007b). Embedded in such narratives, both historically and in contemporary times, are national scripts about race, gender, space, and culture, all of which shape the boundaries of political and civic engagement. Ideas about citizenship can signify a broad range of meanings, including formal citizenship and legal rights, the rights and enlistments of citizenship, as well as feelings of attachment and belonging to the nation-state. As such, citizenship ultimately defines boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’, positioning some bodies within the boundaries of the nation-state and deserving of the rights of belonging, with other bodies situated outside these boundaries and excluded from such privileges. Such “…construction of boundaries, of a delineated collectivity, that includes some people – concrete or not – and excludes others, involves an act of active and situated imagination.” (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 204). This is the “imagined political community” (Anderson, 2006), in which “…members of the even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” (Anderson, 2006, p. 6). This sense of communion – the image of one’s nation or community – is essential to the idea of citizenship through which modern nation-states “…produce the people.” (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988/2005, p. 93). Such construction of boundaries – the act of producing the people – is an ongoing exercise in which “…the people produce itself continually as national community.” (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988/2005, p. 93). Such ongoing
work of (re)producing the boundaries of the nation – demarcating notions of citizenship and belonging – is central to my analysis of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim in the Canadian nation-state. I turn then to a brief review of theories about citizenship to illuminate the manner in which ideas about citizenship shape the Western national imaginary.

Scholars have paid much attention to notions of citizenship, and specifically to the development of Western citizenship. Classic liberal theories suggest that “…citizenship defines the class of full right-holders; to be designated a citizen means that one has become conscious of one’s identity as a free subject destined to be given state protection of certain rights.” (Volpp, 2001b, p. 60). Such notions of citizenship have been shaped fundamentally by the ideas of T.H. Marshall, who theorized that citizenship rights in Western nation-states follow a particular order: (a) civil rights, offering protection to the individual from excessive state power; (b) political rights, offering individuals the formal ability to participate in the political process; and (c) social rights, offering individuals access to the social and economic resources of the national community. Each of these sets of rights, Marshall suggests, follow one from the other, with the protection of civil rights coming first, and access to social rights last. (Volpp, 2001b). Obscured in this classic liberal view of citizenship is the issue of race and the manner in which racialized groups have been excluded, both historically and in the contemporary moment, from the privileges of this ascending order of rights. In this sense, “…for racialized subjects, the fiction of ‘equal citizenship’ can mean denying the continuing effects of racial exclusion through the government’s failure to protect civil, political and social rights for persons of color.” (Volpp, 2001b, p. 61).

In the context of the Western settler nation-state, the boundaries of citizenship – both material and symbolic – have always been racially coded; such boundaries are, in fact, forged on opposition to the racial Other, an opposition through which dispossession and displacement have been and continue to be justified. Historical notions of citizenship were predicated on the rights of so-called rational or
civilized subjects (usually white men, with access to resources); clearly indigenous communities were denied rights in the moment of colonization in which their lands, property, ways of life and bodies were displaced and rendered illegible for codes of citizenship. Similarly, these conventions of citizenship, rooted in racial and gendered coding, also rendered racialized peoples as falling outside the boundaries of legitimate citizenship. Such historical contradictions and exclusions continue, and in the present moment are sometimes accomplished through “…a discourse of colorblindness, which mandates formal equality but not substantive equality.” (Volpp, 2001b, p. 61). Classic theories of citizenship, rooted in Marshall’s ideas, obscure the exclusionary nature of their own codes, and, importantly, render invisible the power relations that lie at the very heart of these codes, a relationship of privilege and exclusion that persistently replicates itself in contemporary societal systems.

Boundaries of citizenship are far from neutral and naturally occurring; indeed, these are created and replicated through various social and political processes of nation-building. Balibar and Wallerstein suggest that

…no nation possesses an ethnic base naturally, but as social formations are nationalized, the populations included within them divided up among them or dominated by them are ethnicized – that is represented in the past or in the future as if they formed a natural community, possessing of itself an identity of origins, culture and interests which transcends individuals and social conditions. (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988/2005, p. 96).

Balibar and Wallerstein refer to the creation of these social formations as a “fictive ethnicity…which makes it possible for the expression of a pre-existing unity to be seen in the state and continually to measure the state against its ‘historic mission’ in the service of the nation.” (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988/2005, p. 96). The most common ways to produce this fictive ethnicity are language and race, both of which are used, sometimes together, at other times separately, to bind communities together in a national identity. (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988/2005). Both these factors (language and race) are used extensively in the creation and reproduction of the Canadian nation-building narrative, which relies on the colonial enterprise of white (British and French) settlers, bound together by their
whiteness and European languages. Obliterated in this fictive narrative of Canadian nationhood are Indigenous and racialized subjects, who are always-already situated as outside the nation.

Some scholars critique the classic understanding of citizenship theory based on inclusion/exclusion in the nation-state. Bhambra (2015), for instance, observes that citizenship theory often relies on “…the language of inclusion and exclusion [which]…suggests that those who were excluded were outside of the domains of political negotiation when modes of citizenship were being deliberated and enacted.” (p. 110). Such language, she argues, does not account for the violent dispossession and displacement of indigenous peoples or the enslavement of racialized peoples, both processes resulting in defining these latter groups as outside of the boundaries of citizenship. These colonized subjects are situated as non-existent, pre-modern, or lacking in rational subjectivity, all of which seemingly justify their exclusion at the site of the emergence of citizenship. These boundaries – and the exclusion that they historically represent – are naturalized and embedded in the national imaginary, such that some bodies are seen as the natural national subject, while other bodies are situated as non-existent or otherwise not qualifying for citizenship. In this respect, “…race has fundamentally contradicted the promise of liberal democracy, including citizenship.” (Volpp, 2002, p. 1595). The presence of these colonized bodies is only recognized when their demands for political inclusion become insistent, forcing the nation to recognize these demands. Such claims for inclusion – because they are only accommodated gradually – “…[leave] the space for citizenship to be determined by the original exclusionary definitions.” (Bhambra, 2015, p. 108). Such a situation does not address the fundamental inequities built into the very definitions and framing of citizenship. As Bhambra (2015) notes, “…the injustices of displacement, dispossession, enslavement, and domination are not, and have not been, overcome by simply extending ‘equal citizenship’ to those who were previously excluded from it and subjugated by it.” (p. 110).
**Boundaries within the national imaginary: Culture, Race and Citizenship**

Centrally embedded in the notions of citizenship are the histories of colonialism and global capitalism, both of which are imbued with ideas about race, gender, language, ethnicity and culture. Volpp (2007b) suggests that culture and citizenship are inextricably intertwined. She observes that “…citizenship is both a cultural and anti-cultural institution…[in that] citizenship positions itself as oppositional to specific cultures, even as it is constituted by quite specific cultural values.” (2007b, p. 574). Citizenship, she suggests, “…emerges through its distinction from the cultural other.” (Volpp, 2007b, p. 574). Balibar (2008) refers to these distinctions within the boundaries of the nation-state as internal exclusions that restricts the full empowerment of some subjects and limits their access to certain rights.

Notions of the citizen are, therefore, shaped profoundly by key values or virtues which, while depicted as ‘neutral,’ are actually culturally specific. In the Western context, these key values are imbued with “…the Protestant work ethic or the spirit of capitalism, molding the values of socially dominant groups into the identity of the citizen.” (Volpp, 2007b, p. 577). Bosniak (2000) separates citizenship into four distinct discourses: (1) citizenship as formal legal status; (2) citizenship as rights; (3) citizenship as political activity; and (4) citizenship as identity/solidarity. These discourses, while seemingly neutral and value-free, are in fact, deeply implicated in race and racial politics. As Volpp (2001b) notes, “…race cuts against the promise of each of these citizenship discourses.” (p. 58).

Inclusion in any of these discourses of citizenship requires that certain cultural attachments (seen as contradictory to the core values of citizenship) be shed. In this way, “…to be a citizen of certain Western democratic states, particular values must be accepted as a baseline for membership…. The idea that immigrants may espouse contradictory values is thought to preclude them from citizenship, which requires shared moral commitments.” (Volpp, 2007b, p. 579). Volpp (2007b) uses the example of gender equality as a key value of citizenship in Western democratic state (p. 579); as I show in Chapter 3, the issue of gender equality is central to the demarcating of boundaries of acceptability in
the contemporary Canadian national imaginary. Notions of Western citizenship are, therefore, deeply implicated in racial coding, carrying differential notions of citizenship, the boundaries of which demarcate the national body into zones of acceptability and non-acceptability, which go far beyond legalistic definitions of formal citizenship. These zones of acceptability (or otherwise) are rooted in the histories of domination and subordination, with some bodies perceived as the natural subjects of the nation-state, and other bodies being excluded (or under threat of exclusion). Such boundaries of acceptability shape material and symbolic boundaries and realities in the contemporary moment. Hence, racialized subjects encounter a “fragility of belonging” (Volpp, 2012, p. 467) which is...

...exemplified by the saying that ‘if you don’t like it, you should leave,’ which suggests that immigrants, and descendants of immigrants, live under a perpetual threat of banishment. States/nations are imagined as homogenous and at risk from alien cultural difference. Different cultures are segregated spatially, in terms of their presumptively belonging at the center of or outside a particular society. But this spatial ordering is not just horizontal. Spatial ordering is also vertical in that cultures are segregated hierarchically as superior or inferior, suggesting that pure spaces are under threat of alien contamination... (Volpp, 2012, p. 467).

**The Universal and the Particular: Embedding Dominance and Privilege**

At the heart of Western citizenship is an essential demarcation: on the one hand, those who stand at the centre of the national body politic are perceived as culture-less or embodying universal human values, while on the other hand, those who are marked for exclusion from the national body (or on the periphery) are perceived as burdened with an excess of cultural attachments. Embedded in such notions is an inherent contradiction between the universal and particular characteristics of culture. While the values of the nation are presented as universal (e.g. secularism, gender equality, human rights), they are, in fact, drawn from a particular set of embodied traditions and identities which, through a reconfiguration of power relations, are naturalized, invisibilized and embedded in societal structures and processes. Against such a backdrop, the Other is particularized and seen to be different from the so-called universal norms and values of Western nation-states. This tension – which is at the heart of most Western multicultural, secular nation-states – fundamentally shapes the relationship between the nation-state and its citizens. As Fernando (2014b) observes, “...the general will has never
been abstract or universal. Rather, it has represented and continues to represent a set of particular, embodied identities – usually white, male, heterosexual, and secular or Christian – that have proclaimed themselves universal.” (pp. 85-86). Hence, the term ‘cultural’ is, in political, media and public discourses, attached primarily to individuals or groups that adhere to cultural norms that are perceived as different to those valorized as universal. Indeed, in her cogent analysis of citizenship discourses, Volpp (2007b) refers to three different conceptions of the term culture in Western liberal nation-states, conceptions which determine citizenship status. These are (a) the culture of the racial or ethnic Other, norms which are perceived as oppositional to those embedded in Western society; (b) cultural practices which are not usually marked as culture but which “…function as the backdrop to everyday life, the activities in which ‘we all engage,’ that constitute the culture of our civilization.” (Volpp, 2007b, p. 596); and (c) benign cultural practices that are seen as non-threatening to Western norms. These differential conceptions of culture are embedded in societal norms such that a “selective blaming of culture” (Volpp, 2011, p. 94) is used to mark practices that are considered too different from so-called universal norms, and, in so doing, support a “discourse of tradition versus modernity…” (Volpp, 2011, p. 93). Such differential notions of culture are emblematic of the distinction between the universal and the particular, a tension which stands at the heart of many Western nation-states. These are the differential conceptions of culture through which some cultural practices are naturalized as the backdrop to society, while those of others (usually racial Others) are seen either as the bearers of excessive difference (and hence threatening) or as benign difference (and hence enjoyable). As Volpp (2007b) suggests, “…full citizenship and cultural visibility appear to be inversely correlated, so that the least powerful in society are the most culturally endowed. Thus, cultural difference is used to account for the acts of those who are not full citizens.” (p. 599). Such a differentiation of the universal and the particular is also mapped onto the distinction between religion and politics in a secular society, in which these domains are to be separated according to so-called universal or civilized values. As I explore later in this dissertation (Chapter 4), such distinctions
(between universal and particular and between secular and religious), based on the dominance and model of Christian religious traditions, configure how the figure of the Muslim is viewed and treated.

Notions of Western citizenship, and especially conceptions of differential rights, benefits and privileges, are rooted in the power of whiteness and white privilege. Differential conceptions of culture, norms, values and behaviours in Western societies valorize one set of norms – usually that of the dominant white, Christian, male, and heterosexual groups – and embed these in differential (and hierarchical) citizenship privileges. The equation of some norms with so-called universal values renders invisible the power relations embedded in such valorization – “… as long as whiteness is felt to be the human condition, then it alone defines normality and fully inhabits it…. The equation of being white with being human secures a position of power.” (Dyer, 1997, p. 9). As Dyer further observes,

White people have power and believe that they think, feel and act like and for all people; white people, unable to see their particularity, cannot take account of other people’s; white people create the dominant images of the world and don’t quite see that they thus construct the world in their own image; white people set standards for humanity by which they are bound to succeed and others bound to fail. (Dyer, 1997, p. 9).

Such power – the privilege of rendering one’s own perspectives, values, norms, and particularity as the human condition – is at the heart of the fantasy of white space. It is to this phenomenon I turn.

Defining and protecting the white nation: The fantasy of white space

Nationalist policies of spatial management

Crucial to the national imaginaries of Western multicultural settler states is the fantasy of white space, through which the boundaries of racialized citizenship are reinforced. Ghassan Hage, in his seminal work White Nation, (2000) argues cogently that such a fantasy undergirds the national imaginaries of Western multicultural settler states. While his work is situated in Australia, his analysis holds strong resonance for the Canadian national imaginary, a narrative that is deeply rooted in racial coding and fantasies of a whitened public space. Hage (2000) suggests that this fantasy of white space defines, animates and sustains the Western nation-state, its subjects, their sense of belonging to the state, as
well as to racialized others within the nation-space. He further suggests this fantasy undergirds both nationalist (and racist) practices of violence and multicultural policies of many contemporary Western nation-states. While the policies of racist violence (and state policies of openly race-based exclusion) and multiculturalist ideals of cultural acceptance and celebration may appear, on cursory glance, to be contradictory, Hage (2000) suggests that

...both White racists and White multiculturalists share in a conception of themselves as nationalists and of the nation as a space structured around a White culture, where Aboriginal people and non-White ‘ethnics’ are merely national objects to be moved or removed according to a White national will. This White belief in one’s mastery over the nation, whether in the form of a White multiculturalism or in the form of a White racism, is... the ‘White nation’ fantasy. It is a fantasy of a nation governed by White people, a fantasy of White supremacy. (p. 18).

The fantasy of white space is, therefore, a technology of spatial management which idealizes a particular vision of the nation-space and its narratives. Hage’s (2000) analysis demonstrates that both racist practices of exclusion as well multiculturalism’s practices of tolerance should be understood as spatial practices that share the same underlying fantasy. Both sets of practices are underwritten by three assumptions: first, an understanding of a national space; second, a perception of the national subject (Hage refers to this subject as the nationalist) as the manager of this national space; and third, a view of the racial Other as an object within this space, an object that can be controlled (or at least manoeuvred) by the national subject. (Hage, 2000, p. 28).

Implicit in the conception of the national subject to control the nation’s public space is a presumption that such a subject must act on their beliefs, rather than merely hold such beliefs. Hence, Hage (2000) suggests that nationalist practices of exclusion or racism compel action on the part of the national subject. In this respect,

…while racist belief is a significant element of nationalist practices, such beliefs do not impel acting on the basis of such beliefs.... I can believe that Blacks and Asian are racially different or inferior without caring about where they live, whether they sit next to me on the train or whether there are ‘too many of them.’ As soon as I begin to worry about where ‘they’ are located, or about the existence of ‘too many,’ I am beginning to worry about not just my ‘race,’ ‘ethnicity,’ ‘culture,’ or ‘people’ but also about what I consider a privileged relationship between my race, ethnicity and so on, and a territory. (Hage, 2000, p. 32).
The privileged relationship between race and the territory of a nation-state – the nation-space – is a question of belonging, full belonging, to the nation. In the ultimate analysis, this privileged relationship is one of power, the power to define and critique the terms by which belonging to the nation-state is negotiated and understood. It is, ultimately, about the sense of empowerment that some feel over others in the national space. In short, the privileged national subject imagines a particular kind of national space and perceives her-/him-self to have a “managerial capacity” (Hage, 2000) over that (idealized and whitened) national space. For the national subject, the racial Other is seen to be undesirable and “…precisely that which is perceived as stopping the nation from being what it ought to be like…” (Hage, 2000, p. 39). This presents an idealized image that is often structured around the idea of home, which “…clearly implies not only an image of a nation that is one’s own, but also of a self that occupies a privileged position vis-à-vis the nation, a privileged mode of inhabiting it. This is evident in the very categories used by the nationalist which treat the Other as an object to be managed…while treating the self as spatially empowered to position/remove this other.” (Hage, 2000, p. 42).

**Governmental belonging and passive belonging**

Hage’s (2000) analysis offers important insights into the nature of citizenship rights granted to the different bodies inhabiting the nation. He distinguishes between two different types of belonging: (a) passive belonging, which encompasses the formal rights of national belonging: formal citizenship and its associated rights, and (b) governmental belonging, in which the national subject, while holding formal citizenship rights, also believes that he/she has the power to manage the affairs of the nation (even if only by having the right to a legitimate opinion). This is the “managerial capacity” of which Hage (2000) writes, and this is the capacity which is productively sewn into the naturalized norms against which all others are measured. It is this governmental belonging that enables some subjects to feel empowered over others, and over the national space itself. Thus, the national subjects who possess governmental belonging “…inhabit what is often referred to as the national will. It is to
perceive oneself as the enactor or the agent of this will, to the extent that one identifies with it precisely as one’s own.” (Hage, 2000, p. 46). In most Western nation-states (such as Australia, about which Hage writes, or Canada), those who possess governmental belonging are invariably white, with roots in Europe. In this sense, “Whiteness…is not a biological category, but a political one.” (Ang, 2003, p. 200). As Hage (2000) notes, “[t]o say that nationalist practices are White nationalist practices is to say that they are necessarily enacted by those who claim some form of governmental belonging to Australia and that these people do so on the basis of claiming in some way to belong to such a field of Whiteness, to lay claim to being, in some shape or form, legitimate White Australians.” (p. 59). To ensure that this dominance is maintained, the claim to privilege is naturalized, so that these qualities appear to be intrinsic, rather than acquired. As Hage (2000) points out,

No matter how much national capital a ‘Third World looking’ migrant accumulates, the fact that he or she has acquired it, rather than being born with it, devalues what he or she possess compared to the ‘essence’, possessed by the national aristocracy. The latter are those who… have to be what they are as opposed to those who are what they do. They are nationals and behave nationally because they are born nationals, as opposed to the other groups who have to behave nationally to prove that they are nationals. (p. 62).

In this manner, power is consolidated by one particular group by the imposition of symbolic violence on others, a consolidation based on racial coding. This aristocracy of national subjects thus naturalizes their own positions – “...their own topography of the nation…” (Hage, 2000, p. 65) – and imposes a national order in which they continue to be dominant and the ‘managers’ of the national space. This topography of the nation constitutes a national ideal which

…does not only idealise the position of the dominant within the nation, but also a whole series of positions and the relations between them. It consists of a map of what for the dominant are the idealized positions and idealized types occupying these positions. That is, the dominant in the national field do not only have an ideal of themselves in the field, but also an ideal of all the positions in it, that is, an ideal of the field itself which they struggle to impose.... National subjects not only struggle to accumulate and position themselves in a dominant position within the field but also to position others where they deem them to belong. (Hage, 2000, pp. 65-66).
The fantasy of white space in multicultural nation-states

The fantasy of white space is an important technology of spatial management within the national imaginaries of Western multicultural settler nation-states, which, like the racist practices of exclusion, are underwritten by this fantasy. While policies of state multiculturalism may be celebrated as breaks from the racist pasts of many Western nation-states, in reality, the policies of multiculturalism do not erase or even challenge the power of the white national subject. While Hage (2000) differentiates between multicultural policies of tolerance and those of cultural enrichment (and celebration of difference), he illustrates that these political technologies are, like racist policies of exclusion, founded on the assumptions of the fantasy of white space. Discourses of tolerance have, of course, been roundly criticized as “…a mode of incorporating and regulating the presence of the threatening Other within.” (Brown, 2006, p. 27). In Chapter 4, I explore these tolerance discourses further, especially in relation to Western notions of secularism. Here, I focus especially on tolerance discourses which operate as a form of spatial management through which the national subject exercises tolerance but does not lose her capacity for intolerance. In this sense, tolerance discourse does not constitute a passive act of acceptance; rather, tolerance involves the setting of limits in the national space. Hage (2000) notes that “…to tolerate is not just to accept, it is to accept and position the other within specific limits or boundaries.” (p. 89). Those bodies who are encouraged to tolerate difference are the very bodies that set the limits of acceptability in the national space, and who “…feel entitled to engage in intolerance…” (Hage, 2000, p. 87). This power of tolerance is “…the power to position the other as an object within a space that one considers one’s own, within limits one feels legitimately capable of setting…. [and] assumes a space… where one can claim governmental belonging….” (Hage, 2000, p. 90).

These discourses of tolerance and/or limit-setting are, therefore, practices of inclusion, but inclusion on the terms set by the national subjects, who feel empowered to manage the national space and hence include (or exclude) others at will. The terms of this limit-setting in contemporary multicultural
societies are evident, most obviously in the repeated laments (in media, public and political discourses) about ‘multiculturalism in crisis’ or ‘has multiculturalism gone too far?’ As I suggest in Chapter 3, embedded in such laments is the implication that the boundaries of acceptability set by national subjects have been violated by racialized Others (and increasingly by Muslims) and that Western culture (however defined) is under threat. Such claims speak powerfully to the sense of threat and the sense of entitlement felt by the empowered national subject. This is perhaps the paradox at the heart of the fantasy of white space: that the violence (either symbolic or physical) of the national subject is most often executed at moments of insecurity. As Hage (2000) observes, the violent reaction of the national subject occurs when “…they feel that their governmental national belonging is threatened or in decline. Nevertheless, they think they have a legitimate claim to represent the national will embodied in the state.” (p. 69). The thresholds established by discourses of tolerance, then, most often reinscribe the racialized and gendered boundaries of acceptability of the Western national imaginary. The limits (re)establish the points at which the national subject can (legitimately) become intolerant and move to manage (or exclude) the (racialized) Other, seen as objects in the national space. These boundaries of acceptability become “…the threshold of tolerance, a category of governmentality aimed at the spatial control of the presence of the tolerated other…” (Hage, 2000, p. 91). Essentially, the distinction between practices of national exclusion and those of multicultural inclusion is, at best, a difference in the threshold of tolerance, rather than in the principles of the national fantasy. Under the auspices of both constructs, national subjects feel empowered to manage the national space, but place limits (at different levels) on those who transgress the boundaries of the ideal vision (read: the vision of national subjects) of the national space. In short, the national (white) subject acts as the manager of the national space, with the power to manage the objectified Other; the will of the national manager is conflated with the national will.
This analysis of the fantasy of white space clearly has resonance for Canada, a country which proudly proclaims and venerates its multicultural ethos, with an emphasis on discourses both of tolerance and of multicultural celebration. The celebration of song, dance and food – wear a kimono here and eat a samosa there⁶ – is viewed as one indicator of an accepting society. However, the fantasy of white space underwrites discourses which display the cultural traditions of the Other as exhibits in the multicultural feast. The national subject remains at the centre of discourses of (multi)cultural celebration as the surveyor and manager, who is essential to negotiate these cultural differences. As Hage (2000) aptly notes,

To have a multicultural society you need many cultures. Left to themselves, however, these cultures are bound not to mix, or at least not to mix properly without leading to ethnic tensions and wars. For the mix to work, it has to be guided by a White essence, that most valuable of all ingredients: the democratic-tolerance-freedom-of-speech ingredient that only the White aristocracy really knows how to throw into the … stew. (pp. 122-123).

Canadian media discourse about Muslims, as I illustrate in Chapter 3, is replete with these discourses of tolerance and/or multicultural celebration, both of which are underwritten by the fantasy of white space. In this respect, “contemporary multicultural policy…is in no way a challenge to the national myth of Canada as a white nation-space or a raceless state. Rather, multicultural policy is arguably an acknowledgement of the racial state and is in essence a racial contract that binds the arrangement.” (Walcott, 2011, p. 23). Contemporary Canadian discourses – about multiculturalism, integration or cultural commensurability – illuminate a (Canadian) national will in which there is a constant tension with the notion of Otherness. The object is not to eradicate Otherness (lest the multicultural society lose its celebrated status) but to constrain it within acceptable limits, such that the power of the national subject remains unaffected. The Other can exist – indeed, should exist – but only if s/he does not threaten to display any kind of will that might threaten the national will. When the national will is reasonably secure, the position of the racialized Other is perhaps more protected, although still

⁶ I am grateful to my son, Rafique Van Uum, for this phrasing.
under a cloud of suspicion lest he/she transgress the boundaries of acceptability. When the national will is less secure (during times of war or other tensions), there is less flexibility, with the Other being subjected to governmental actions of surveillance, coercion, harassment and violence. In the contemporary moment, Muslims have clearly been subjected to such measures, and have been accused of a subversive will (or even of subversive thought) perceived as threatening to the national interest. Under such circumstances, the national subject, inhabiting his managerial role, feels a sense of responsibility for ensuring that the national space is well-managed and maintains allegiance to his own vision of the nation. Witness the vociferous debates about Muslims and the threat that their traditions supposedly pose to Western civilization – these contestations unmistakably indicate the resilience of the fantasy of white space. In this sense, “…the Third-World-looking migrant is relegated to the position of a national object to be governed by the eternally-worried White national subject. The White national fantasy is a vision of society divided into a class of White worriers and a class of Third World-looking problems.” (Hage, 2000, p. 233). In the contemporary post-9/11 moment, the figure of the racialized Muslim Other has become such a third-world-looking problem – the “folk devil of our time” (Morgan and Poynting, 2012, p. 1) – and is perceived to threaten the national will in many Western multicultural nation-states. The fantasy of white space in these discourses about the Muslim Other is illuminated as “…some categories of citizen are represented as dangerous to ‘our way’ of life, and their communities are suspected of harboring enemies of the nation…” (Morgan and Poynting, 2012, p. 2).

While the racialized Other is perceived as an object to be managed in the fantasy of white space, it is also clear that the body of the Other is vital to the preservation of the fantasy, which must be within the realm of the plausible. Herein lies a vital role for the racialized Other in the national imaginary: “…the ‘other’ is what allows the nationalist to believe in the possibility of such a space eventuating. It helps them avoid having to face the impossible nature of what they are pursuing, the traumatic
kernel of the real, by constructing the other as that which stands in the way of its attainment.” (Hage, 2000, p. 74). This anxiety is at the heart of the fantasy: the fear that the power of the white national subject is threatened by the racialized Other, and yet the fervent belief in the entitlement to that power. These white anxieties

...are dressed up in terms of debates on rights discourses, the future of the liberal democratic state, tensions between the secular state and religion, and so on. In each case, white anxieties betray themselves in their bearers’ assumptions of the role of stewards of the conversation, dialogue, and debate, thus positioning themselves as the protectors of the continually unfolding ‘freedoms’ of secular liberal democratic societies. Consequently, all others, usually racialized others, become the barbarians at the doors. (Walcott, 2011, p. 25).

Hence, the so-called ideal world envisioned is perceived to be under threat from the barbarians, the racialized Others whose bodies allow the national subject to justify the less-than-ideal actualization of his/her fantasy of white space, and to retain the power to be the legitimate steward of the conversation and the national space.

The fantasy of white space therefore produces differential subjectivities in the national imaginary, an imaginary with racialized and gendered boundaries of acceptability. In the Canadian context, Razack and Thobani both cogently illustrate how the fantasy of white space is encoded into the national imaginary, an imaginary which relies powerfully on racialized and gendered narratives. I turn now to an exploration of the Canadian national narrative, and the manner in which these narratives of origin produce differential subjectivities in the contemporary moment.

**National Mythologies: Epic stories of origin and contemporary belonging**

*Defining boundaries of belonging*

The national narratives of nation-states are essentially stories of a nation’s origin, stories that frame the boundaries and categorize the subjects of the contemporary nation-state. These narratives “...form a collective memory that maintains the national self, a sense of wholeness with many internal contradictions” (Korteweg and Yurdakul, 2014, p. 175) and “...enable citizens to think of themselves as part of a community, defining who belongs and who does not belong to the nation.” (Razack,
Such notions of nationhood produce “imagined communities” (Anderson, 2006), both in the literal sense (most people in a nation will never meet each other), and in the metaphorical sense, because the story of the nation is always a selective interpretation. Such narratives demarcate differences and are produced in the tension between the perceived homogeneity of the nation (perhaps an imagined ideal) and the realities of the diverse populations inhabiting the nation. In effect, national narratives produce, manage and reinforce the idea of the nation, and in return offer security and belonging (or not) to those loyal to this vision. In this sense, “…the nation promises its citizens security and, like a husband in a traditional marriage, expects unconditional love and devotion in return. We, the citizens, must promise to love, honour, and obey…” (Razack, 2009, p. 815). Such a vision of the nation is both symbolically and materially important and “…involves not only image and myth-making – the telling of ‘official’ stories of origin – but also the everyday negotiations of what is means to ‘to be’ of that nation(ality). (Ahmed, 2000, p. 98). The privileges of citizenship and belonging are therefore tied powerfully to these narratives, which circumscribe the boundaries within which some bodies are included, and others are not.

National narratives are deeply contested, and rarely stable, as in any given country “…there is a constant redefinition of who ‘we’ are through the very necessity of encountering strangers, within the nation space.” (Ahmed, 2000, p. 101). A national narrative is a discursive formation which is “…born in and from chaos. Its purpose is to restore or imitate order and to minimize confusion about what is at stake and who will pay the price of dissension.” (Morrison, 1997, pp. xv-xvi). Such narratives are grounded in an interpretation of history and origin, an interpretation that demarcates boundaries in the national body-politic and determines the criteria of belonging to the nation. Morrison (1997) refers to these narratives as “…national epics, written, sung, performed and archived in the culture as memory, ideology and art.” (p. xvi). These narratives are generated and sustained by “…an ongoing process of myth-making…[which is] a process of imagining a shared experience that simultaneously
marks various forms of social difference.” (Ewing, 2008, p. 2). National narratives are crucial to the creation of a public truth both about the foundational myths and the contemporary boundaries of the nation-state. As Morrison notes, “…the raison d’etre of this narrative may vary, but its job is straightforward: the production of belief.” (Morrison, 1997, p. xvi).

This process of myth-making – the creation of a public truth – is a vital element of the governmentality of the state through which social relations are managed. The state mediates these social relationships, relying on the boundaries of acceptability shaped by national narratives and, by deploying them, it “…determines who can rightfully claim the benefits of citizenship and who is excluded from them.” (Austin, 2010, p. 20). Such narratives, then, fundamentally shape contemporary ideas of belonging and exclusion – and the material and symbolic privileges that come with belonging – within the national space. National narratives require ongoing ideological work in order to perpetuate, reinforce and sustain the myths of origin, often based on racialized and gendered narratives which animate contemporary boundaries of belonging to the nation. Racial projects are part of this ideological work – they (re)establish the links between the national myth of origin and the boundaries of acceptability in the contemporary moment.

**Home and Native Land: Race and the Canadian national narrative**

In the context of a white settler society such as Canada, national narratives are deeply racialized and spatialized stories, revolving around the colonization of land, and justification of this enterprise on the basis of racial superiority. The story of the European as the rightful owner of the land – the space and psyche of the nation – depends on the central character in the narrative being a white settler, whose violent colonization of Indigenous land is naturalized and rendered invisible. The mythology of the white nation-state is built upon the edifice of this logic, one that justifies the original and continued power and privilege of the (white) ruling class, or the “national manager.” (Hage, 2000). The white settler society is “…one established by Europeans on non-European soil. Its origins lie in
the dispossession and near extermination of Indigenous populations by the conquering Europeans.” (Razack, 2002, p. 1). Such a narrative – which justifies and renders invisible the colonization of land – cannot be anything but a deeply racialized story, one that (re)inscribes a racial hierarchy of national belonging and citizenship. The Canadian national narrative “…produces European settlers as the bearers of civilization while simultaneously trapping Aboriginal people in the pre-modern, that is, before civilization arrived.” (Razack, 2002, p. 2). Such a discursive formation clearly relies on racialized boundaries of belonging; these narratives require ongoing ideological work and compelling reiterations in the contemporary context to sustain the mythology encoded at the centre of settler society.

The original Canadian national myth is based on three key elements. (Razack, 2002, pp. 3-4). First is the notion and legal doctrine of *terra nullius* – the idea that European colonizers came to empty, uninhabited land. Through this doctrine, the lands over which Europeans claimed ownership are deemed to have been empty and, therefore, available for European possession. Second, the narrative emphasizes that the previously empty land has been nurtured and developed by “…hardy and enterprising European settlers. This land…is imagined as populated by white men of grit, a robust Northern race pitting themselves against the harshness of the climate.” (Razack, 2002, p. 3). In the national narrative, the physical hardiness, hard work, and self-reliance of European settlers are seen as symbolic of other internal qualities such as freedom, democracy, and perseverance. Third, and finally, the newest installment of the national Canadian narrative is the 1990s addendum: the (over)crowding of this harry land (Canada) by Third World migrants and refugees “…drawn to Canada by the legendary niceness of European Canadians, with their well-known commitment to democracy, and the bounty of their land.” (Razack, 2002, p. 4).

Deeply embedded in the Canadian national narrative is the story of race and the manner in which it has defined, ordered, coded and inscribed notions of belonging and citizenship. Racial coding marks
some bodies as inferior, allows for the justification of the dispossession of land by colonizers, and reinforces the boundaries of acceptability beyond which some bodies are permanently excluded from the body politic. The doctrine of *terra nullius*, for example, is deployed in the moment of the historical colonial encounter by arguing that the Indigenous people already living on the land were too uncivilized to count as human. Similarly, in the contemporary moment, racial coding of some bodies as unassimilable marks them for exclusion, even as it exalts the values of others. Underwriting these narratives of inclusion, exclusion and belonging (or not) are the strains of the Canadian national narrative, based on historical colonial encounters and sustained by ongoing ideological work. As Austin (2010) remarks,

> [t]he official narratives that Canada tells itself about its history and identity facilitate the contemporary exercise of power, determining who is to be regarded as fully belonging and who is alien. While race is excised from these national narratives, it has in fact been central to the formation of Canadian nationhood. The image of the respectable, peaceful, multiculturalism-loving Canadian citizen, descendant of the two founding nations, France and Britain, goes hand in hand with its opposites: the Indigenous ‘Indian’, the Black, the immigrant newcomer and the refugee. (p. 19).

Race and racial coding are, therefore, central features of the Canadian national narrative. This racial coding, already deeply embedded in the colonial encounter, shapes contemporary notions of belonging, privileging certain (white) bodies and excluding, or granting limited inclusion to racialized bodies within the national imaginary. As Walcott (2011) suggests, “[t]his spectre of the racialized other, invented in the moment of European expansion and solidified in its modernity with its systemic categorizing of people, places and things, continues to structure our contemporary world.” (p. 19).

This national narrative – imbued with racial coding – remains powerfully embedded in contemporary Canadian imaginations. As Razack (2009) notes, “[a]s a nation, we are deeply attached to ideas of intrepid white men in canoes conquering snow and ice as we are to Emily Carr’s painting of decaying totem poles and the confirmation they offer of the vanishing Indian who has thoughtfully left behind his decaying religious artifacts.” (p. 817). This Canadian national narrative is clearly a selective interpretation (one favoured by the colonizers) of historical social relations and “…eclipses a range
of other histories – pre-colonial history, the history of colonisation, the enslavement of Indigenous peoples, the enslavement of African descendants, the head tax and other restrictions on Chinese labourers, to name only a few.” (Austin, 2010, p. 23). Such a narrative of exclusion underwrites the creation of central national myths – about ‘our home and native land’ – and produces different subjectivities – with varying levels of inclusion/exclusion and power – in the national imaginary.

**Producing differential subjectivities in the Canadian national imaginary**

The Canadian national narrative is deeply implicated in the production of differential subjectivities, based on racialized and gendered coding, a sort of “two-tier structure of citizenship.” (Razack, 2002). These differential subjectivities are entrenched in national narratives, through which stories of the nation’s origin and its contemporary manifestations are continually reinscribed in the national imagination. Thobani’s (2007) analysis illuminates three types of subjects in the Canadian national narrative: the exalted, extinct and estranged subjects, all of whom are racially embodied. The exalted subject is the white, so-called legitimate body in the Canadian imaginary; this is the figure that Hage (2000) refers to as “national manager.” The extinct subject is the Indigenous subject, who, in the national mythology has been – and is still – marked for physical or cultural extinction. The estranged subject is the visible or racialized body who is perceived as estranged from the national space (usually by being racialized) but granted conditional inclusion in the national narrative. (Thobani, 2007, p. 6).

These subjects, while rooted in the historical narrative of Canada’s colonial and colonizing encounters, nonetheless shape contemporary social relations in which Indigenous subjects (and their bodies, cultures, and ways of life) are perceived as disappearing (becoming extinct) and racialized subjects are seen as marginal to the nation, granted only qualified inclusion. In the contemporary moment, the qualified inclusion granted to the estranged subject is contingent upon notions of culture

---

7 The phrase is taken from the Canadian national anthem. The lyrics of the anthem read “O Canada! Our home and native land! True patriot love in all thy sons command. With glowing hearts, we see thee rise, the True North strong and free! From far and wide, O Canada, we stand on guard for thee. God keep our land glorious and free! O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.” (Government of Canada, 2017). Proposals to render the lyrics gender-neutral have been debated in the Canadian Parliament (House of Commons and Senate) and may receive final approval in 2018.
and the commensurability of the cultural values of the Other with those of the exalted subject. These distinctions in subjectivity justify, in the dominant discourse, differential treatment of these subjects and, in the end, uphold the systems of power and privilege that underpin white settler society.

The exalted subjects – the national managers – are those who feel, and often materially are, empowered to manage the national space, and, specifically, to manage the positions of other bodies in this space. These exalted subjects are clearly defined in relation to other bodies within the national space: the racialized Other, cast as an object to be managed, must not threaten the power and privilege of the exalted subject. Such exaltation “…has been key to the constitution of the national subject as a particular kind of human being, a particular kind of community, and hence, ontologically and existentially different from the strangers to this community.” (Thobani, 2007, p. 5). The white exalted subject remains at the centre of the national imaginary and, by invisibilizing the power relations at the heart of this imaginary, becomes the invisible norm against which all others are measured. The exalted subject is a “…much venerated one, exalted above all others as the embodiment of the quintessential characteristics of the nation and the personification of its values, ethnics, and civilizational mores. In the trope of the citizen, this subject is universally deemed the legitimate heir to the rights and entitlements proffered by the state.” (Thobani, 2007, pp. 3-4). The national subject – the exalted subject – is thus produced in relation to the stranger, the outsider (whether deemed extinct or estranged), demarcated by racially encoded boundaries. Such boundaries are central to the development and sustenance of a racially tiered citizenship structure that excludes the racialized Other from the national imaginary. Rendered invisible in this discourse are the relations of power underlying this narrative: the managerial capacity of the exalted subject is rendered invisible and naturalized such that it appears as a neutral norm. This exaltation – rendered invisible – is the naturalized privilege enjoyed by white bodies; as Bhandar (2004) observes, “…the act of rendering normalcy invisible is an unacknowledged practice of power.” (p. 262). Through such an invisibilization, the hardy white
settlers that supposedly built the land in historical times purportedly now have earned the right to manage the national space. Differential subjectivities are, therefore, central to the national narratives in which the exalted subject manages the racialized body within the nation-space. Such racial Others “…seem to bob in and out of the national story, sometimes obviously present, at other times mere shadows.” (Razack, 2009, p. 816). What is clear is that race – and the differential subjectivities it produces – is a defining feature of the national narrative. In this narrative, the racially coded Other plays a vital role as it is on the visibly marked body – in the post 9/11 context, it is often (but not only) the Muslim or the Muslim-looking body – upon whom the nation’s boundaries are inscribed.

The Canadian racial landscape: Indigenous, Asian, and Black bodies

The figure of the Muslim – both the Muslim Other and the Acceptable Muslim – is one of numerous racialized figures in the Canadian racial landscape. Such racialized bodies are the backdrop against which the Canadian national narrative foregrounds the hegemonic white body, rendering Canada as a normatively white space. The Canadian national narrative situates the settler as white, positioning Indigenous bodies as disappearing, and racialized bodies as recently arrived guests of the original citizens. (Razack, 2002). Such narratives are rooted in the legacies of settler colonialism, that deploys racialized and Indigenous bodies in particular ways to justify the colonial endeavour and the necessity of differential subjectivities (based on racial coding) with unequal access to rights within the nation-state. Canada’s Others – specifically Indigenous, Black and Asian bodies – are juxtaposed against the white exalted subject in order to justify the perpetuation of white supremacy. Since the early days of the colonial endeavour in Canada, these bodies have been made to carry the wounds and pains of nation-building. Indigenous and racialized bodies (and their resources) have been used by Western empire as raw materials – land, labour and capital – to develop and sustain Western dominance, wealth and power. I provide a brief sketch of Canadian narratives about Indigenous, Asian and Black bodies. While this short sketch cannot do justice to the complexities of these narratives, it does provide a background for my further examination of Muslim bodies in Canada. I follow this cursory
sketch with a brief examination of the Black Muslim body, a largely undertheorized figure in the Canadian context, a figure which has implications for my examination of the Acceptable Muslim.

Canadian narratives about Indigenous peoples are powerful ones, entrenched in the legacy of settler colonialism. These narratives position Indigenous bodies as absent, disappearing, or excess bodies that can be expelled with impunity (‘made to disappear’) by the settler (and the settler state). The expulsion of Indigenous bodies from settler society occurs through a variety of means, including overt physical trauma and force, cultural and social annihilation or expulsion as well as less overt, but equally insidious forms of negligence, inattention and dereliction of the duty of care to Indigenous peoples. Such neglect is commonly embedded in the treatment Indigenous people receive in the systems of policing, justice, social welfare, health care, housing and numerous other state institutions and processes. Racism against Indigenous bodies becomes normalized and practiced by state actors in ways that render the racism both invisible and routine, underscoring the view that “…their bodies do not require care in the same way as humans do.” (Razack, 2015, p. 113).

Asian bodies in Canada are situated, historically and in contemporary times, in a paradoxical position, both recruited to meet the country’s needs and rejected in efforts to ‘keep Canada white.’ In particular, historically recruited as (cheap) labour were Chinese, Japanese and South Asian bodies (and in recent years, Filipino/a bodies) to work in various Canadian industries. Despite the need for labour, Asian bodies faced significant discrimination in employment, labour, immigration, housing, education and social life; they were disenfranchised restricted from upward mobility and not allowed to vote or join the professions. (Coloma, 2017; Miki, 2017; Oikawa, 2017). Asians were (and are) depicted as perpetual outsiders, treated as expendable and threatening bodies. While Asian immigration to

---

8 The term Asian is a broad one, covering diverse and heterogeneous groupings of peoples of East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian and West Asian backgrounds. While I do not intend to oversimplify the term, nor to gloss over the heterogeneities of peoples in these groups, I use the term Asian to illuminate the deployment of such a figure in the Canadian national imagination. While the term Asian encompasses many diverse groups, in the context of Canadian historical narratives, it is used primarily to denote the categories of Chinese, South Asian, Japanese, Filipino/a, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and other mixed-race groups.
Canada was fueled historically by the country’s need for cheap (and exploitable) labour, more recent Asian migration has been fueled by Canada’s need for capital and for a different type of human investment, for example, a cadre of highly educated and financially wealthy migrants. (Yu, 2017, p. 345). These forms of capital – financial, educational, linguistic and social – are the newer forms of commodity that attach to the representation of a specific type of Asian body in the contemporary Canadian context. However, just as in the past, these Asian bodies are welcome under certain conditions, and live under threat of marginalization, if/once their bodies outstay their usefulness or are deemed to transgress the boundaries of their acceptable space/role in Canadian life.9

Narratives about Blackness in the Canadian context are rooted in the denials of the complicity of (white) Canada in the transatlantic slave trade. As in the United States, Black bodies have been perceived as commodities to be exploited at will, reinforcing a racialized hierarchy deeply ingrained in the global capitalist economy. (McKittrick, 2006, 2011, 2013; Walcott, 2003, 2009, 2016). In Canada, Black bodies are usually positioned either as the descendants of former slaves who escaped the brutalities of American slavery or as recent immigrants (for example from the Caribbean or Africa). Such narratives of the erasure of Canadian slavery and the absence of Black bodies (other than descendants of escaped slaves or recent immigrants) maintains the myth of Canada’s non-racist and benevolent character. The actual history of Blackness in Canada is, of course, far more complex, a history which contradicts the Canadian narrative of absent and erased Black bodies. Walcott (2003) refers to three different aspects of Black belonging: (a) a historical Black presence dating back to the founding of the colony (which includes involvement in slavery); (b) a Caribbean presence dating back to the early 1800s and continuing into the 20th and 21st centuries; and (c) recent migrants from Africa.

9 An example of the vulnerable positioning of the Asian body in Canadian public space is the 2010 publication of an article entitled ‘Too Asian’ published in Macleans magazine. The article created a public uproar, reproducing historical narratives and racial stereotypes about Asians, reinforcing the imaginary of Asians as ‘too different’ from a naturalized whiteness. Narratives such as the one embedded in the article are rooted in the historical positioning of the Asian body as a perpetual stranger who can be imported at will to meet Canadian needs, but who can only operate within a clearly prescribed set of conditions which do not threaten the Canadian social order that privileges whiteness.
Such a contradiction between the national mythology and reality, between the erasure and real presence of Black bodies, is masked by a constant and careful obscuring of Black presence in the country. These narratives situate Black bodies outside the boundaries of the nation, and/or marginal to it. Black bodies are disassociated from the Canadian national narrative and are perceived to be both invisible (through erasure in Canadian history) and from elsewhere; as McKittrick (2006) notes, “…black Canada is simultaneously invisible and visibly non-Canadian.” (p. 99). The erasure and absence of Black bodies – except as recent immigrants and as the descendants of former slaves – engenders a distancing from the lives and experiences of Black people. The Black Lives Movement and its reception amongst mainstream Canadians is one indication of this erasure and lack of attention to the experiences of Black people; this is a clear signal of the psychic denial of (white) Canada of its complicity in the historical narrative of slavery, and of the contemporary realities of daily life for Black bodies.

The Black Muslim body
Canadian discourses – public, political, media and scholarly – have thus far been mostly silent about the Black Muslim body. Such discourses tend to “…consistently and some might even say permanently, cast the Muslim body as a ‘brown body,’ making immediately absent and invisible, even unimaginable, a Black and/or African Muslim body.” (Walcott, 2016, p. 222). The inscription of the Muslim body as being primarily brown is evident both in the media narratives I analyse (Chapter 3) and in the figure(s) of the Acceptable Muslim (Chapter 4). Such erasure of the Black Muslim body is significant because it renders invisible the actuality – the bodily presence – of Black Muslim bodies, both historically and in contemporary times. Walcott (2016) argues that such invisibility of Black Muslim bodies belies their actual embodied presence, a presence that “…has a far deeper and more extensive and complicated archive than is currently being addressed by both the right and progressives alike in North America.” (p. 224).
The Black Muslim body in Canada is woefully undertheorized; this is an absence of scholarship and popular discourse grounded in the powerful denial of Canadian complicity in the transatlantic slave trade, and of the actual presence of Black (and Black Muslim) bodies in Canada, both historically and in the contemporary moment. While there is a dearth of scholarship about Black Muslim bodies in the Canadian context, American scholarship on Black Muslims is more prolific. As American scholars have shown, (Daulatzai, 2012; Z. Grewal, 2007, 2014; Khabeer, 2016a, 2016b; McGuire, 2016), there exists a deep tension between the terms Black and Muslim; despite the close association between African-Americans and Islam, there is still a tendency to separate the terms. For instance, Khabeer (2016a), observes about Naeemah, one of her subjects: “[u]nable to be legibly Black American and Muslim, Naeemah moves between two equally problematic subject positions – raced citizen or foreign Muslim suspect.” (p. 3). In her analysis of the Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf controversy10, Grewal (2007) suggests that American media and public understanding of the protest – declared by Abdul-Rauf as driven by his Muslim conscience – was clouded by numerous factors, including the unstated and incorrect assumption that “...Islam is not and cannot be an indigenous, American religion.” (Z. Grewal, 2007, p. 113). In this respect, for some American Black Muslims, “…Islam serves as a tablet on which to inscribe their painful history in the U.S. such that it is more egalitarian and just.” (Z. Grewal, 2007, p. 110). As some of these American scholars observe, the relationship between Blackness and Islam is a source of active negotiation and contestation in the United States, a contestation that continues to shape contemporary American debates about race, religion and politics. Daulatzai (2012) offers that “…to be Black is one thing in America that marks you as un-American, but to be Black and Muslim is quite another, as it marks you as anti-American.” (p. xiv).

---

10 Abdul-Rauf was an NBA player who, in March 1996, refused to stand during the national anthem. Situating his protest as a matter of his Muslim conscience, Rauf was suspended by the NBA and Americans responded in a variety of ways, ranging from outrage to sympathy and admiration. This controversy is an interesting parallel to the current (2017) protest by Colin Kaepernick (and later other athletes).
Black Muslim presence in Canada and in North America has a longer and more complex history than implied by its invisibility in public discourse. In this sense, “…black bodies are presumed always to be Christian, disregarding an historic and contemporary presence of Islam throughout the African diaspora.” (McGuire, 2016, p. 324). Indeed, Muslim presence in the Americas is inextricably connected to the earliest instances of Black presence: “…the long history of Muslim presence in the Americas is in the first instance a Nigger, Negro, or Black one…” (Walcott, 2016, p. 224). Hence, the invisibility or unreadability of the Black Muslim body is, in this respect, a symbol of “…the deeply profound ways in which the African body was not just stolen and made into a commodity, but also it was fundamentally denied the status of a body in the first instance.” (Walcott, 2016, p. 224). The history of Islam in the Americas begins with the slaves brought to North America, but the religious experiences, expressions and identities of these Black Muslims were silenced, as were their voices and bodies under the brutal regimes of slavery. Black Muslims are rendered invisible, therefore, against the erasure of Black bodies generally, silenced and their histories unacknowledged. Black Muslim movements, even while rendered invisible, must also confront the realities and experiences of racism, a racism that focuses on the Blackness of their bodies without acknowledging their Muslimness. As Ashton (2017) notes, Black Muslims are “…doubly burdened and vulnerable – they are also subject to invasive surveillance practices by law enforcement based on widespread suspicion of Muslims…both in the general public as well as in government and policy circles.” (p. 3).

The near-complete erasure of Black Muslims in the history of the Americas results in Muslims in the contemporary context being seen as both brown and as relative newcomers to Canada. Absent from such a reading are Muslims with a significantly longer history in the country, and those that identify as Black Muslims. In this context, Black Muslims become undecipherable, unreadable and unimaginable; society does not read these bodies as Muslim, even as they are targeted and incarcerated through anti-Muslim profiling technologies. Such contradictions between the reading of Black
Muslim bodies and their actual embodied realities in the contemporary context requires “…a different kind of intervention. It is an intervention that blackens and thus complicates a number of histories, trajectories and politics.” (Walcott, 2016, p. 224). Walcott (2016) analyzes the photography of Abdi Osman, a gay man and Black Muslim, whose work challenges the erasure of Black Muslim experiences, as well as the idea that the only Muslim is a brown body. Osman’s work

…asks some other questions about black masculinities in which the Muslim is singularly articulated as a brown body obscuring and making invisible the black/African Muslim body and its complicated histories of colonial entanglements across the Arab world and the West…. Osman, who is aware of a longer African Muslim presence in the Americas that has been obscured by a particular enactment of Africanness…reminds us in his work that the Muslim was first a slave, brute, and nigger in the Americas before a brown body. (Walcott, 2009, p. 88).

Significantly, Osman’s art, featuring Black and queer Muslim images, challenges the stereotypes of a violent Muslim masculinity, compelling the viewer to consider alternative narratives, histories, and experiences than those normally treated in mainstream public discourse. These photographs

…cannot be consumed as terrorist pictures since these are not the usual images of Muslim men we get, and thus, in their refusal to be easily consumed, the photographs offer us a pedagogy of the unasked. Unasked because in our failure to ask questions, Black/African Muslim masculinities and sexualities become obscured and hegemonized in very particular ways as terrorist, patriarchal masculinities. (Walcott, 2016, p. 231).

These pedagogies of the unasked are crucial for (re)imagining the experiences of Muslims on the Canadian racial landscape. Whilst these pedagogies are central to this re-imagining, my project considers contemporary dominant discourses about Muslims on the Canadian racial landscape. In this contemporary dominant discourse, Black Muslims are rendered almost completely invisible, with Muslim bodies almost always being cast as brown bodies (South Asian and Arab).

**Racial coding and the Muslim body in the Canadian national narrative**

In the contemporary context, the figure of the Muslim plays important ideological roles within the Canadian national imaginary, with the racialized Muslim body being perceived as a transgressor of Western values and hence, situated beyond the boundaries of the nation. Such a racialized body is
depicted in opposition to the legitimate (and white) national subject, who is situated as the norm. This racialized body is situated either as a good Muslim, who can be accepted and integrated into the Western way of life, or a bad Muslim who is perceived as unassimilable. The good Muslim is juxtaposed against the image of the bad Muslim, the primitive, barbaric, uncivilized Muslim, who, in turn, is contrasted with the white national subject. Based on Orientalist imagery, the bad Muslim (often male) is an extremist, a heartbeat away from terrorist activity; the female bad Muslim is depicted as the veiled, oppressed, primitive woman. In the contemporary Canadian context, I suggest that the good Muslim is situated as the “familiar stranger (familiar, touchable). . .” (Ahmed, 2000, p. 100), and the bad Muslim as the “stranger stranger (unassimilable, untouchable). . .” (Ahmed, 2000, p. 100). This demarcation between familiar and strange is an important technology of defining borders within the nation. As Ahmed (2000) notes,

…the nation becomes imagined and embodied as a space, not simply by being defined against other spaces, but by being defined as close to some others (friends) and further away from other others (strangers). In this sense, only some others are read as strangers within the nation space. The proximity of strangers within the nation space – that is, the proximity of that which cannot be assimilated into a national body – is a mechanism for the demarcation of the nation body, a way of defining borders within it… (p. 100).

These figures of familiar strangers and stranger strangers are crucial in the demarcating of boundaries of acceptability in the multicultural nation-state, an acceptance that is, more often than not, determined by the commensurability between the values of the strangers to the hegemonic values of the naturalized white nation. Such an (implicit or explicit) demarcation between the familiar and stranger strangers is

…a way of defining the potential and limits of the multicultural nation. The ‘we’ of the nation can expand by incorporating some others, thus providing the appearance of difference, while at the same time, defining other others, who are not natives underneath it, as a betrayal of the multicultural nation itself (such other others may yet be expelled from the national body.) (Ahmed, 2000, p. 106).

Hence, the familiar stranger (or the good Muslim) is a figure that is more acceptable within the nation’s boundaries, one that is granted qualified inclusion in the national imaginary, and the stranger
stranger is positioned as unassimilable and outside the boundaries of the nation. This distinction – between good and bad Muslims, familiar and stranger strangers – is central to my own analysis of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim.

Such an acceptable figure, granted inclusion in the national imaginary, is an important ally to the Canadian nation-state, as it renders invisible the violence it inflicts on other Muslim bodies, those perceived as bad Muslims. This invisibility of violence is important in the perpetuation of the myth of Canadian non-racist benevolence. Countless Muslim bodies in contemporary Canada have faced such violence: Omar Khadr, Maher Arar, Abousfian Abdelrazik, Suaad Hagi Mohamud, and others could justifiably argue that their claims to Canadian citizenship are more tenuous than that of many white national subjects. In the Canadian national narrative, built on the edifice of the fantasy of white space, there is little doubt that the body of the racialized Other – whether the familiar stranger or the stranger stranger (Ahmed, 2000) – is critical to the (re)constitution of the white exalted subject and to the reanimation of an imagined national community.

In the contemporary Canadian context, the differential subjectivities produced by the national narrative are crucial to the reanimation of the racialized boundaries of the national imaginary, boundaries which determine the citizenship privileges (or exclusions) offered to some bodies over others. The boundaries of this imaginary are demarcated and reanimated through racial and gendered coding, which exalts some bodies (white subjects), who feel empowered to manage the national space, and to manage the objects of this national space (racialized Others, and in the contemporary moment, visibly Muslim bodies). To transgress the boundaries of acceptability is to be perceived as violating ‘our’ values which, while rooted in a particular tradition, are naturalized and appear as the norm. These are the boundaries of acceptability within which the visibly Muslim body must negotiate the privileges of citizenship and belonging within the Canadian nation-state. Muslims – and especially the visibly Muslim body – must negotiate the boundaries of this national imaginary which perceives them
“…through the lens of a socially shared fantasy that forms that context through which his [sic] visible attributes are noticed and interpreted. This social fantasy positions the Muslim…as a stigmatized ‘other,’ a positioning that affects the possibilities for…cultural citizenship or full sense of belonging.” (Ewing, 2008, p. 3). I now turn to a brief analysis of the negotiation between Muslim bodies and the boundaries of acceptability in Western multicultural contexts.

Boundaries of Acceptability: The figure of the Muslim in Canadian discourses

Narratives of citizenship and belonging

The differential subjectivities produced by the national narrative and the fantasy of white space lead to the reanimation of the (racialized) boundaries within the Canadian national imaginary. In this imaginary, some bodies are centrally situated, their norms and values valorized as universal, while others are excluded or receive qualified inclusion in the national body politic. This national space or polity is the arena in which narratives of power, belonging and citizenship are played out. Clearly, the notions of citizenship and belonging in the national narrative involve “…more than the narrow passport-holding sense of citizenship…[and include]…broader understandings of inclusion, acceptance, attachment and connection.” (Dobrowolsky, 2007, p. 657). As such, the notion of foreignness or Otherness (despite formal legal status) is a constant reminder of the internal boundaries within the national imaginary. Dhamoon and Abu Laban (2009) refer to foreignness as a floating signifier because while it “…is a constant and long-standing marker of racialized Otherness, the subject marked as foreign is not static but is, instead, historically changeable according to the security threats deemed most significant to those with the power to the nation-state.” (p. 166). This Otherness, then, enables the exclusion of some subjects – the “internal foreigner” (Dhamoon and Abu Laban, 2009, p. 168) – from the national imaginary and reinscribes the boundaries of acceptability in the nation-state. These boundaries of acceptability demarcate “…which subjects are legitimate and which are illegitimate citizens, and which set of values is morally acceptable and which unacceptable.” (Dhamoon and Abu Laban, 2009, p. 167). As such, these boundaries are a “…politics
of belonging [and are]…the boundaries of the political community of belonging, the boundaries that separate the…population into ‘us’ and ‘them.’ (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 204). These boundaries of acceptability in Canada have – historically and currently – excluded Indigenous communities and other racialized groups. In the contemporary post-9/11 moment, the Muslim body is at the centre of highly charged debates with the public sphere, contestations which either expel or threaten to expel the visibly Muslim body. Muslims – perceived to adhere to ancient, primitive, and different norms – “…have been cast as subaltern citizens in the West.” (J. Zine, 2012b, p. 43). Positioned as “sub-citizens” (Nagra, 2016, p. 172), these bodies are subject to differential rights, with their citizenship status “…often perceived as ‘irregular’ or ‘flawed’…” (Nagra, 2016, p. 172). Such subjects – even those with formal citizenship rights – are often perceived to be Other to the national norm, subjects whose culture, faith, beliefs and practices place them decisively outside the boundaries of acceptability. As Zine (2012b) notes, “[i]ncreasingly positioned as anti-liberal, anti-democratic, and unamenable to the requirements of modernity, Muslims represent the ‘anti-citizen’…” (p. 43). In this respect, the characterization of the Muslim body as ‘either for us or against us’ (‘us’ meaning, presumably, the white national subject) has become yet more entrenched in public and political discourses. It is the figure of the Muslim Other – especially one who is visibly and publicly read as Muslim – who is often positioned outside the national boundaries of acceptability.

Race, culture and gender clearly mark the boundaries of acceptability within the Canadian national imaginary. It is on the terrain of these notions that the most fervent ideological battles are waged and that define which bodies are “…mapped onto this landscape as natural and rightful bearers of nationalist largesse and which bodies are constructed as alien and unsettling to the nation.” (J. Zine, 2012b, p. 44). In particular, the visible Muslim woman’s body is perceived as most unsettling to the nation. Seen as the oppressed Other, she is often situated as “…the new frontier on which battles for national identity and citizenship are being waged.” (J. Zine, 2012b, p. 44). The visible Muslim woman
is situated for rescue by Western civilized bodies (both men and women); her presence, as a visibly religious body, is positioned as inconsistent with the secular and gender-equal norms of Western society. Increasingly, however, as Muslim women become more vocal in their demands to be recognized as publicly visible bodies with a legitimate right to belong within the boundaries of the nation-state, their refusal to assimilate to Western norms is situated as more actively threatening to these norms. Zine (2012b) suggests that this creates an interesting paradox: the veiled woman is seen as backward and oppressed by her fidelity to anachronistic religious customs and at the same time is positioned as a cultural renegade unwilling to conform to the standards and codes enforced by the modern state. Through these totalizing discourses, she is constructed as both an oppressed victim of Islamic degeneracy and a recalcitrant immigrant refusing to assimilate…(p. 44).

**Disciplining Culture, death by culture and death of culture**

At this historical moment, the figure of the Muslim Other is repeatedly placed at the centre of various contestations in the national space, contestations which incorporate factors such as race, gender, culture and religion in the national imaginary. Such contestations are critical in the reconfiguration and reconstitution of the nation through which certain bodies are perceived as legitimate and others not. Zine (2012b) analyzes three themes – disciplining culture, death by culture and death of culture – to illustrate how the figure of the Muslim has been used to reconfigure the idea of the Canadian nation. She suggests that these three themes together enlist the figure of the Muslim body to reinforce notions of hegemonic whiteness in the national imaginary, thus reanimating key ideological bases in the Canadian nation-state.

In her analysis, by disciplining cultures, Zine refers to “…disciplinary technologies used to produce and reproduce the nation as a hegemonic cultural entity.” (J. Zine, 2012b, p. 47). Hence, various debates within Canadian public discourse about Muslims and their so-called primitive cultures are used to discipline these cultures and to reinforce the imagery of Western norms (and the state) as civilized, egalitarian and democratic. Such disciplining, often structured as the rescue of Muslim
women, “…not only constitute Canadian Muslim women as universally oppressed victims of cultural misogyny but also, in turn, reconfigure the construction of the state as the benevolent patron and vanguard of these women.” (J. Zine, 2012b, p. 48). This disciplining of culture then reanimates “…the civilizing and recuperative power of the nation” (J. Zine, 2012b, p. 48) and reinforces the racialized boundaries of acceptability within the national imaginary.

The technology of death by culture is used in cases of so-called honour crimes (Z. Grewal, 2009; J. Zine, 2012b) or in debates about veils and headcoverings worn by Muslim women. Grewal (2009) observes that when violence against women is committed by a white male, explanations for such violence focus on individual pathology (mental illness, history, childhood, etc.). On the other hand, “…when a Muslim woman is killed violently by a Muslim man, we are willing to accept culture as an explanation in a way that would never be satisfactory if the perpetrator were white….” (Z. Grewal, 2009, p. 5). In the case of violence perpetrated by Muslim men, the cultural norms and religious faith of Muslims are foregrounded, thus implying that violence and sexism are cultural traits amongst Muslim communities. In such cases, “…the assumption is that in our culture, violence is an exception so we must investigate the perpetrator’s psyche or individual life experience, while in their culture violence is the norm, so what is relevant is their entire culture or religion.” (Z. Grewal, 2009, p. 5).

In addition to referring to so-called honour crimes, Zine (2012b) suggests that this technology of death by culture can extend to other spheres. For example, in the case of proposed restrictions on the wearing of hijabs on the soccer field (restrictions which were proposed in the Canadian context), she asks whether “…the question of safety is a cultural rather than a corporeal issue. In other words, the fear of strangulation may imply something more metaphorical: being ‘strangled’ by her culture.” (J. Zine, 2012b, p. 51). The notion of death by culture “…speaks to how cultural differences in relation to gender have come to unsettle the multicultural nation.” (J. Zine, 2012b, p. 48).
Finally, the technology of death of culture represents the latent fear that Muslims – and Muslim women in particular – are threatening to the nation, and especially to the dominance of Western values and norms. The difference embodied by Muslim women “…is an imperiling difference: they are threatened by the barbaric misogyny of their culture and religion and at the same time pose a threat to the sanctity of the nation as a space for dominant liberal, Christian, Eurocentric values to prevail.” (J. Zine, 2012b, p. 54). In this respect, Muslim women represent contradictory impulses amongst Western subjects: an instinct both to rescue the so-called oppressed Muslim woman and to situate the same woman as outside the boundaries of acceptability in the Canadian nation. In this way, Western subjects are able to “…define Others as subaltern and keep them outside the boundaries of community and nation.” (J. Zine, 2012b, p. 55). She further suggests that the technology of death of culture is representative of fear within the Canadian nation “…that multiculturalism is a slippery slope leading toward the death of the dominant national culture in Canada.” (J. Zine, 2012b, p. 51).

These three technologies—disciplining culture, death by culture and death of culture — together illustrate the manner in which notions of citizenship and nationhood are being unsettled and reconfigured by the figure of the Muslim Other, a figure rooted in Orientalist imaginaries. The Canadian nation – an imaginary community rooted in the dispossession of Indigenous communities and in the exploitation and enslavement of racialized peoples – imagines itself as white and European, with racialized Others either excluded or marginalized in the national landscape. In the contemporary moment, the figure of the Muslim Other is often juxtaposed against the national citizen, confirming and reanimating the governmentality used against racialized bodies throughout Canadian history. In this respect, “…those who appear ‘Middle Eastern, Arab, or Muslim’ may be theoretically entitled to formal rights, but they do not stand in for or represent the nation. Instead, they are interpellated as antithetical to the citizen’s sense of identity.” (Volpp, 2002, p. 1594). In the current moment, the
figure of the Muslim Other helps to (re)configure the national imaginary, by consolidating and reinforcing the racialized boundaries of acceptability in the Canadian nation-state.

**Patrolling the boundaries of acceptability: The Acceptable Muslim**
This demarcation between the Western subject, and the Muslim Other is not new, rooted as these figures are in Orientalist and colonialist discourses. What is distinct in this historical moment is the emergence of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, who helps to patrol the boundaries of acceptability in the national body-politic. As I review earlier in this dissertation, Mamdani (2004) suggests that good and bad Muslims are demarcated by their approaches to cultural and religious traditions, norms which are seen by hegemonic neo-Orientalist discourse as being tribal, primitive and oppressive. He notes that culture talk provides a convenient short-hand way to represent those considered pre-modern as those who “… made culture only at the beginning of creation…” (Mamdani, 2004, p. 18). In this way, dominant discourse situates bad Muslims as those who refuse to be liberated from the grasp of their ancient cultures and traditions, the values of which oppress and do not evolve with modernity. Good Muslims, on the other hand, are those willing to be modernized and either shed their specific cultural or religious practices, or to practice these only in certain (mostly private) areas of their lives. In her analysis of both bad and good Muslims in the American context, Maira (2009a) observes that “…by definition, ‘good’ Muslims are public Muslims who can offer first-person testimonials in the mode of native informants… [while]…‘bad’ Muslims are made into public exemplars of anti-western enemies…” (pp. 635-636). This demarcation between good and bad Muslim – like the demarcation between good and bad colonial subject or immigrant Other – becomes the dividing line between the acceptable and unacceptable in the national polity. The Acceptable Muslim performs Western citizenship in a particular way, “…testifying loyalty to the nation and asserting belief in its democratic ideals.” (Maira, 2009a, p. 634). Through such testimonials, the Acceptable Muslim affirms the ideological goals and projects of the Western nation-state, both reinforcing and reanimating the racialized and gendered boundaries of the nation-state. The aims of
the Western nation state depend, says Maira (2009b), “…not just on policing the legal but also the cultural boundaries of citizenship through defining the behavior required of ‘good’ citizens…” (p. 69). The Acceptable Muslim is thus situated as a moderate who can be integrated into the Western way of life and who can reinforce key aspects of the nation-state’s ideological structure, including the radical coding and differential subjectivities embedded in the national imaginary. Such an acceptable figure reanimates and nuances the boundaries of acceptability within the nation’s notions of citizenship and belonging. How this line of acceptability is drawn (and on the basis of what criteria) is key to my project and its methodological imperatives.

The focus on differential notions of citizenship is crucial to my interrogation of the Acceptable Muslim in contemporary Western discourse. As I observe earlier, Razack (1999, 2004, 2008), Thobani (2007), and Jiwani (2005a, 2005b, 2009) argue cogently that Muslim bodies are racially coded in the Canadian context and are visible markers for the nation-state’s boundaries, demarcations which I suggest are patrolled and reinforced by the figure of the Acceptable Muslim. Such boundaries of acceptability, racially coded, produce differential subjectivities, through which some bodies are exalted while others are rendered extinct or estranged from the body politic. (Thobani, 2007). Razack’s notion of the eternal triangle – the imperilled Muslim woman, the dangerous Muslim man, and the civilized European body (2008) – also produces differential and racially coded subjectivities. Jiwani (2005a, 2009) similarly argues that representations of Muslim women often depict “helpless victims,” who are situated as bodies to be rescued by “chivalrous knights,” (2009), the latter being Western bodies, usually men, but now also increasingly liberal white feminists. Such representations reinforce the notion of a “…rescue mission [that] reproduces the chivalric code of masculinity that is the inverse of the hard power of the security state.” (2009, p. 729). These scholars clearly suggest that these differential subjectivities reproduce the Canadian national narrative, a story of origin that continues to produce racialized (and hierarchically situated) subjects in the contemporary context. As
I map out above, these differential and racialized subjectivities have been (and continue to be) important technologies through which the boundaries of the Canadian national imaginary are discursively and decisively regulated to exclude racialized Others. My project focuses especially on the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, a figure which emerges in Canadian (and international) discourse in the post 9/11 era. This Acceptable Muslim, through her public testimonials and performance of good citizenship, provides “a view from the harem” (Razack, 2008, p. 98), through which the Acceptable Muslim can both provide insider information on the Muslim Other and reinforce her own position within Western society. As I examine in Chapter 4, Acceptable Muslims are often seen as legitimate voices testifying to challenges within Muslim communities, especially in their integration within Western society. Such insider views – “views from the harem” – reanimate “…a long tradition of Western fascination with glimpses into a forbidden world…” (Razack, 2008, p. 98). Importantly, such insider information reinforces the positioning of the Muslim Other as a figure outside the boundaries of acceptable citizenship. The figure of the Acceptable Muslim functions as the sentry at the boundaries of acceptability, seeking either to rescue the Muslim Other from her primitive religious and cultural norms, or to ensure that the Muslim Other remains outside the boundaries of belonging. In this respect, the Acceptable Muslim becomes the newest member of the “chivalrous knights” (Jiwani, 2009) and the civilized body of the eternal triangle (Razack, 2008), figures who are central to the racial coding of the Canadian national narrative. Such an acceptable figure is crucial in enabling the state to proclaim its multicultural ethos while yet maintaining policies that rely on differential and racialized notions of citizenship. In this manner, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim renders invisible the ongoing violence against the bad Muslim Other who is policed by the state, and who remains excluded from the national narrative. Central to the reinforcement of a differentiated and racialized citizenship is the body of the cultural Other. Volpp (2007b) suggests “…the citizen is assumed to be modern and motivated by reason; the cultural other is assumed to be traditional and motivated by culture. In order to be assimilated into citizenship, the cultural other needs to shed his excessive and
archaic culture.” (p. 574). Such a notion underscores the emergence of the Acceptable Muslim in Canadian public life, whereby citizenship rights hinge on the acceptance of key (presumably shared) values. Gender equality has become the centrepiece of Western discourses about citizenship, belonging, multiculturalism and secularism; in many cases, gender equality is used to reinforce the idea that “…the immigrant other must be emancipated from the group or group values of gender subordination to qualify as a citizen.” (Volpp, 2007b, p. 580). As I discuss in Chapter 3, gender is a central preoccupation of the intense and highly charged contestations about Muslims in Canadian media, public and political discourses. Such contestations often position perspectives on gender equality as demarcating the (racialized) boundaries of belonging to the Canadian (or Western) nation-state. These contestations are imbued with political meaning through which hegemonic discourses and state policies are reaffirmed; central to such reaffirmation are the figures of the Muslim Other and the Acceptable Muslim, who are inextricably linked. On the one hand, the nation-state “…needs ‘bad’ Muslims in order to justify its assault on civil liberties, and if they are not visible, it must call them into public being to prove the threat to national security.” (Maira, 2009a, p. 640). On the other hand, the nation-state relies on the public testimonials of Acceptable Muslim in order to depict its policies as non-racist or race-neutral, ensuring that the imagery of Western benevolence and innocence are reinforced. The figure of the Acceptable Muslim is, therefore, crucial to the perpetuation of empire and “…imperial benevolence [which] conceals the racial color line and…mystifies violence.” (Maira, 2009a, p. 652).

**Performing good or acceptable citizenship**
The figure of the Acceptable Muslim is central to the reinforcement of hegemonic social relations in Canada. Some subjects “…recognize themselves as more national than some people and less national than others.” (Hage, 2000, p. 52) The figure of the Acceptable Muslim represents a performance – a performance that the Acceptable Muslim uses to prove her credentials as a good citizen and on the acceptable side of the colour line, hence, within the boundaries of the national imaginary. Riley (2009)
suggests that three themes animate the role of the good Muslim: (a) positioning Muslims as patriotic Canadians; (b) emphasizing the potential of an Islamist threat against Canadians; and (c) a focus on gender and sexuality as sites of ideological contestations. (Riley, 2009, pp. 61-62). Through faithful performance of citizenship norms, the good Muslim proves her credentials as a loyal Canadian citizen-subject, fighting the forces of primitive Muslims and engaging in contestations over issues of gender. Hence, Riley (2009) suggests that

…it is not enough, after all, to be simply not ‘bad.’ It is clear that this proof comes through active production of a certain kind of western secular national subject, an identity that is defined not only through a lack of visible violent or fanatical tendencies, but is instead achieved through specific practices of national accumulation. (p. 61).

The Acceptable Muslim manifests such an identity, performing her loyalty through performances of citizenship. As the newest member of the chivalrous knights (Jiwani, 2009) and the civilized body of the eternal triangle (Razack, 2008), such a figure stands at the heart of national discourses of citizenship, belonging, multiculturalism and secularism. The figure of the Acceptable Muslim has become Canada’s golden citizen who proves her allegiance and national credentials by expressing patriotism and a public commitment to eradicating the so-called oppression of Muslim women. These Acceptable Muslims are portrayed as knights who can help to rescue Muslims from their cultures and are often commended in public discourse for their courage in speaking out. Such voices act as insider informers who testify to the unacceptable cultural traits often associated with Islam and Muslims. As Riley (2009) observes, “…these figures confirm that their communities do indeed pose a threat, but that this is a danger to which they too are vulnerable.” (pp. 64-65). Such figures, seen as modern, liberal, rational and assimilable, offer important support for the political and ideological goals of the Western nation-state. In so doing, such figures situate themselves within the acceptable boundaries of belonging within the national imaginary, and explicitly position others as outside these boundaries. In other words, “…by asserting an authority not only to identify themselves within the Canadian national identity, but also to identify others as outside it, these figures are claiming a greater level of
national capital in the form of being able to have their say on how the nation’s boundaries should be
defined.” (Riley, 2009, p. 65).

**Acceptable Muslims and Comprador Intellectuals**

In the contemporary context, the figure of the racialized Muslim Other is centrally embedded in
national and global contestations about the meanings of race, culture, gender, secularism and
multiculturalism, and in how these shape societal discourses. The Muslim Other, not a new figure but
deeply rooted in Orientalist and colonial imaginaries, continues to haunt the Western imagination and
polity. Such a figure has of course always been racially coded, and in the post 9/11 era, has become
yet more closely associated with Arab and South Asian bodies, an association which is evident in
Canadian media discourse concerning Muslims. It is the figure of the Muslim Other – coded as
looking Arab or South Asian – who is at the centre of the most fervent contestations in Western
nation-states; it is this gendered and racially coded body that is often at the heart of discourses about
the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. In his insightful analysis of the political role of insider
informers, Dabashi (2011) comments that “…brown has become the new black and Muslims the
new Jews.” (p. 6). While a provocative statement, Dabashi nonetheless foregrounds the contemporary
power relations that underwrite the discourses through which the racialized Muslim body is used
ideologically to reinforce an “…ever-changing condition of domination…” (Dabashi, 2011, p. 6). In
his analysis, he suggests that one of the key functions of insider informers – he refers to them as
comprador intellectuals – is to “…facilitate this white supremacist replacement of a black demon with
a brown one, a Jew with a Muslim, to warn Europeans and Americans that they now faced a threat
as dangerous as fascism…” (Dabashi, 2011, p. 36). The comprador intellectual is central to
perpetuating the domination of whiteness and Western imperialism, both within nation-states and
globally. This figure – the comprador intellectual in Dabashi’s term – is what I refer to as the
Acceptable Muslim.
As I suggest in Chapter 4, the domination of Western empire is facilitated and supported by the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, who provides ideological and political cover for the perpetuation of the racial coding necessary for such domination. While this figure is nuanced by differences in the Canadian context (which I discuss in Chapter 4), they are used to provide “views from inside the harem” (Razack, 2008, p. 98), situating themselves as legitimate Western citizen-subjects, and others as outside these boundaries of acceptability. By so doing, these figures provide crucial support to the empire and participate in “…manufacturing the public illusion that empires need to sustain themselves.” (Dabashi, 2011, pp. 12-13). The Acceptable Muslim is the good immigrant who “…affirms that it is immigrants themselves who are to blame for their lack of integration” (Reimers, 2007, p. 249), an invocation that renders invisible the structural and systemic violence to which racialized bodies are subjected. In this sense, the Acceptable Muslim reinforces key ideological perspectives which underpin the hegemonic pillars of the nation state, pillars anchored in whiteness. By identifying as Muslims, such Acceptable Muslim figures can (or are made to) “…feign authority while telling their conquerors not what they need to know but what they want to hear.” (Dabashi, 2011, p. 16). In the contemporary world in which racism takes nuanced and subtle forms, the supremacy of whiteness and the perpetuation of its domination requires the presence of these acceptable figures, who while racialized, nonetheless participate in the public illusion (delusion?) of being post-racial. As Dabashi (2011) observes,

…for the…imperial project to claim global validity, it needs the support of native informers and comprador intellectuals with varying accents to their speech, their prose, and politics. Supported only by white men and women, the project would not have the same degree of narrative authority. But accents from targeted cultures and climes Orientalize, exoticize, and corroborate all at the same time… (p. 36).

Building on the work of established scholarship in the area of race, citizenship and belonging, I suggest that the figure of the Acceptable Muslim provides glimpses into the discourses that seek to control the gendered and racialized Muslim body, as well as to patrol the borders of Canadian notions
of citizenship and belonging. Such discourses are centrally implicated in the Canadian national imaginary, a narrative deeply steeped in racial coding and one which demarcates boundaries of acceptability. I suggest that the figure of the Acceptable Muslim reanimates this imaginary, and are the sentries standing on guard at the boundaries of the nation-state, enabling the state to marginalize and exclude those deemed to be outside these boundaries. I theorize that, in the context of the nation-state’s ongoing governmentality, the price of inclusion for the Acceptable Muslim (as for other racialized bodies) is loyalty to the state and its ideological goals.

These, then, are the key methodological impulses that guide my analysis in this project. Grounded in theories of Orientalism, colonialism, racialization, whiteness, gender and the culturalization of race, I gravitate to methodologies that enable the study of power, domination and subordination. It is to a discussion of these methodological imperatives and tools that I now turn.

**Research Design and methodological imperatives**

My choice of research methodologies is guided strongly by the grounding of my work in postcolonial and feminist analyses. I begin with a review of existing literature about Orientalism, racialization and citizenship, especially in the Western context, to illustrate how the Muslim body is centrally implicated in public discourses. These discourses are often underwritten by contestations over power and privilege, with relations of domination and subordination being reinforced through such contestations. I focus especially on the delineation of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, a figure which is central to the reinforcement of the racial coding embedded in the Canadian national imaginary. My project interrogates this figure and how such a figure shapes (or is shaped by) Canadian narratives of multiculturalism, citizenship and nation-(re)building. Such discourses invariably shape both what can be said and done in the public sphere, and the constitution of legitimate (or otherwise) speakers in the public domain. My research design is therefore focused on an interrogation of the relations of power, privilege and domination that shape contemporary Canadian society, and on
analyzing what (and who) is produced by such hegemonic relations. My analysis of the figure of Muslim, and specifically the Acceptable Muslim in Canadian discourse, is guided by these imperatives. These imperatives will naturally shape the research design and methodological principles in this project.

**Key research questions**
My project focuses on the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, a figure that reinforces the racialized boundaries that demarcate the Canadian national imaginary. It is this figure who reanimates the boundaries between the civilized, modern, and enlightened citizen-subject (read: the Western subject, or one who is like her) and the dangerous Other, who must either be saved or policed. The Acceptable Muslim helps to police these boundaries between citizenship deemed legitimate and that of the Other who is excluded from political community. Such a figure reinforces differential subjectivities and differential notions of citizenship rights within Canadian discourses on issues such as multiculturalism, immigration, citizenship and secularism. The figure of the Acceptable Muslim emerges in recent Canadian discourses (media, political and public) and is a key player in these contestations. My project seeks to examine the emergence of this figure in Canadian discourses (2005-2014), and to interrogate the political and ideological functions of this Acceptable Muslim figure.

**Data Sample**
My data sample for this project consists both of Canadian press coverage about the figure of the Muslim and the selected works of key Acceptable Muslim figures identified through media discourse. Data from the media are drawn from the Canadian Newsstand database and cover 19 major Canadian newspapers (including two national papers) from most major cities in all 10 Canadian provinces. In order to make the data more manageable, smaller newspapers, from mid-sized or smaller cities, or newspapers from the Canadian Territories are not included in the data sample. Inclusion of these newspapers might have rendered the data sample too large and unmanageable, with little change in, or impact on, my analysis. The newspapers included in my search are the following: *The Globe and*
Mail (national); National Post (national); Toronto Star (Toronto, Ontario); Ottawa Citizen (Ottawa, Ontario); Montreal Gazette (Montreal, Quebec); Vancouver Sun (Vancouver, BC); The Province (Vancouver, BC); Times Colonist (Victoria, BC); Calgary Herald (Calgary, Alberta); Edmonton Journal (Edmonton, Alberta); Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan); Leader-Post (Regina, Saskatchewan); Winnipeg Free Press (Winnipeg, Manitoba); The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton, New Brunswick); Telegraph Journal (St. John, New Brunswick); Times and Transcript (Moncton, New Brunswick); The Chronicle Herald (Halifax, Nova Scotia); The Guardian (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island); and The Telegram (St. Johns, Newfoundland).

The data from the media search cover a ten-year period, spanning from January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2014. The media searches yield data from four separate searches, using four different sets of search terms: (a) ‘Muslim women’ or ‘Muslim woman’ AND ‘Canada’ (S1); (b) ‘Muslim men’ or ‘Muslim man’ AND ‘Canada’ (S2); (c) ‘Moderate Muslim’ or ‘Moderate Islam’11 (S3); and (d) ‘Multiculturalism’ AND ‘Muslims’ (S4). The four searches yield a total of 7986 articles, which I then categorize into 19 different codes, depending on the content of each article. (See Appendix 1 for a list of codes.) These media searches provide significant data that allow for an exploration of the contemporary Canadian narratives about the figure of the Muslim, and, in particular, illuminate the manner in which such a figure is used in contestations about citizenship and belonging. The breadth of data from the media searches also illuminates the emergence of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, which I then interrogate further through an analysis of their voices and work (in Chapter 4).

11 I did not use the term ‘Acceptable Muslim’ when conducting the media search, as this term is not frequently used in media or public discourse; indeed, the term Acceptable Muslim is a term which I have coined to describe the ideological positioning of such figures in the Canadian national imaginary. When conducting the search, I used the term ‘moderate’ as I have found this term used often in media, political and public discourses to distinguish between the Muslim Other and the good Muslim. In this project, I do not use the term moderate Muslim as I challenge the term, which implies that the ‘moderate Muslim’ is the exception to the ‘the Muslim’ who is positioned as always-already immoderate and extremist. I discuss this issue more fully in the introduction to this dissertation.
In Chapter 3, I analyze the data from the media searches, explore how Canadian media situates the figure of the Muslim, and identify the key figures of the Acceptable Muslim emerging from the media.

The data from the media searches identify key figures who appear consistently in media coverage about Muslims. These figures, whom I refer to as Acceptable Muslims, are often situated as moderate, modern, and well-integrated into Canadian society and often express perspectives that situate them inside the boundaries of the Canadian nation. I identify these figures and then analyze their perspectives – through their media footprint and their cultural production – and interrogate their ideological function in the Canadian national imaginary. Specifically, I analyze the perspectives, work and voices of Tarek Fatah, Irshad Manji, Zarqa Nawaz and Sheema Khan, all of whom I situate as Acceptable Muslims. While there are nuances among these figures, I suggest that they are all central to the reinforcement of Canadian narratives of citizenship, belonging and nation- hood. In Chapter 4, I analyze the media footprint, work and cultural products of these four figures, and situate them within significant Canadian public and political discourses.

I offer a short comment on why I focus on Canadian print media; this decision is a conscious one. Although in an era of the increasing digitization of media vehicles print media might seem to be outdated, the medium of print (also accessible to consumers online) continues to be reflective of those who “…control the public means of symbolic reproduction.” (Van Dijk, 1991, p. 6). My earlier work on *Little Mosque on the Prairie* (S. Kassam, 2015) illustrates the contours of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim (and in particular the Multiculturalist Muslim). Based on that research, I hypothesize that an analysis of print media will yield some additional insights that are not as readily available in visual media. For instance, the figure of the Secular Muslim is more readily discernable in print media as figures such as Fatah and Manji respond to (and are asked for commentary about) political events related to Muslims. As such, these Acceptable Muslims are actively engaged through print media, attempting to shape public and elite discourse about significant issues relating to Muslims.
and Islam. In this sense, the print media are relevant as spaces of elite discourse; as such, these media vehicles “…provide the ideological framework for the interpretation…of events” (Van Dijk, 1991, p. 7) and continue to shape public discourse.

**Methodological framework**
The methodological principles and tools I utilize in this dissertation are grounded in my commitment to interrogating how hegemonic discourses reinforce relations of power, privilege, and domination in the world, and in particular, how the figure of the Muslim continues to be used to reinforce such dynamics. My choice of methodology, therefore, must consciously and centrally confront and interrogate the power of discourse to shape questions of race, gender, citizenship, belonging, and nation-building, discourses that often position the racial Other – in this case, the Muslim Other – outside the boundaries of belonging. I theorize that the figure of the Acceptable Muslim nuances the racial coding at the heart of these discourses, providing a modern “view from within the harem” (Razack, 2008), which both legitimizes the exclusionary racial coding and reinforces the imagery of benevolence of the Western nation-state. In this respect, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim is centrally situated in media, public and political discourses, rendering invisible the violence – both symbolic and material – against the Racial Other in Western discourses. My choice of methodology must, therefore, allow me to interrogate these discourses, uncovering the power dynamics which undergird them, and to examine the technologies through which such relations are embedded in societal norms.

My project relies primarily on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to interrogate Canadian media, political and public discourses about the figures of the Muslim Other and the Acceptable Muslim. Critical Discourse Analysis is a research methodology that is “…interested in the (critical) study of social issues, problems, social inequality, domination and related phenomena, in general, and the role
of discourse, language use and communication in such phenomena, in particular.” (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 6).

Such a methodology most suits my own analysis of how Canadian media, political and public discourses interpret (and shape interpretation of) Muslims, and specifically how and why the figure of the Acceptable Muslim emerges in a more clearly delineated manner in recent years. Such a methodology bridges the relationship between my detailed analysis of media and cultural discourses and the larger societal issues I consider. Further, CDA is a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating a socio-political analysis and drawing on key elements of various disciplines including (but not limited to) semiotics, language/communication studies, sociology, history, politics and media studies. Most importantly, CDA is not neutral in its approach, but rather assumes that the researcher is committed to social change. In this sense, “…critical discourse analysts (should) take an explicit sociopolitical stance: they spell out their point of view, perspective, principles and aim, both within their discipline and within society at large… their work is admittedly and ultimately political…” (Van Dijk, 1993b, p. 252). For these reasons, I rely on Critical Discourse Analysis as my primary methodology in this analysis of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim in Canadian media, cultural and public discourses.

Despite my reliance on CDA, I am conscious that issues of racism, neo-Orientalism and relations of domination are not limited to discursive texts. I therefore make limited use of pre-discursive racism (Hook, 2006) as a methodological genre to explore the symbolic nuances of Canadian discourses about Muslims and to probe the reasons for the persistence of the racial coding at the heart of these discourses.

**Critical Discourse Analysis: methodological principles**

How representations come to be embedded in public, cultural, media and political discourses is a central focus of Critical Discourse Analysis. These representations, often rooted in elite perspectives, become so deeply embedded that they come to be common-sense knowledge. These systems of
representation become invisible such that the ideas inherent in the systems – themselves imbued with biases – are seen as the natural order of things. Thus, the use of Critical Discourse Analysis can often expose “…strategies that appear normal or neutral on the surface but which may in fact be ideological and seek to shape the representation of events and persons for particular ends.” (Machin, 2012, p. 5). Central to CDA is uncovering the processes that reflect “…symbolic power, that is…preferential access to, or control over the public discourse.” (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 14). Critical Discourse Analysis is “…a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way in which social power, abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted.” (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 1). My project uses CDA to consider how factors such as ideology, power, privilege, race, gender and dominance shape media discourses of Muslims in the post 9/11 world. I explore how these media discourses illuminate the “mental models” (Van Dijk, 2008) of society, through which elite perspectives and hegemonic discourses are (re)confirmed. Critical Discourse analysts are unapologetically political and committed to social change, through the analysis and uncovering of societal power relations. Such scholarship “…targets…the power elites that enact, sustain, legitimate, condone or ignore social inequality and injustice.” (Van Dijk, 1993b, p. 252). The critique of discourse engendered by CDA “…implies a political critique of those responsible for its perversion in the reproduction of dominance and inequality.” (Van Dijk, 1993b, pp. 252-253). CDA provides important methodological principles and tools which allow me to use specific media narratives and discourses about Muslims to analyze how such discourses are embedded in larger societal discourses of power, domination and subordination.

The relationship between discourse and power is central to Critical Discourse Analysis, as it is to my analysis of Canadian media discourses about the figures of the Muslim and the Acceptable Muslim. CDA explores the knowledge-power nexus and examines how social power is accumulated and used by one group to control others. In this respect, CDA examines how control of knowledge – and discourses – is central to the accumulation and retention of social power through which societal
“mental models” (Van Dijk, 2008) are defined and legitimated. Van Dijk (2008) cogently argues that “…[c]ontrol of the public discourse is control over the mind of the public, and hence, indirectly, control of what the public wants and does.” (p. 14). Thus, the exercise of discursive power in so-called democratic societies relies less on coercion (although coercion is not absent) and more on ideological persuasion. Such ideological persuasion reinforces the dominance of elite groups, with minimal resistance from others, who believe that they are acting of their own free will, thus shaping an “…ideologically based consensus.” (Van Dijk, 1991, p. 38).

Ideology and ideological discourses are significant elements of media, cultural and public discourses. Van Dijk and Hall have paid particular attention to the ideological dimensions of discourses relating to race and racial codification. Hall (1990) refers to ideology as “…those images, concepts and premises which provide the frameworks through which we represent, interpret, understand and ‘make sense’ of some aspect of social existence.” (p. 8). He highlights three important dimensions of ideologies: (a) they are not isolated and separate, but form a distinctive “…chain of meanings” (Hall, 1990, p. 9); (b) ideologies are not products of individual intentions, but rather are a sign of collective, usually unconscious, processes; and (c) ideologies function through “…constructing for their subjects (individual and collective) positions of identification and knowledge which allow them to ‘utter’ ideological truths as if they were the authentic authors.” (Hall, 1990, p. 9). These dimensions of ideology, suggest Hall, are key to how ideological positions become naturalized into societal discourse such that they become taken-for-granted or common sense. Hence, through the process of ideological production, societal discourses on race (or on Muslims, for that matter) are perceived as being part of the natural order of things that make sense and are not perceived as being produced by systematic processes. Van Dijk (2008) refers to an ideological framework as a “…complex cognitive framework…that consists of socially relevant norms, values, goals and principles…” (p. 34). This ideological framework – often naturalized such that is it seen as common sense knowledge –
“…assigns coherence among social attitudes which in turn codetermine social practices.” (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 34). Van Dijk and other scholars emphasize that it is usually the “symbolic elites” (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 36) that control public discourses (though their control is most often rendered invisible and naturalized) such that they “determine the contents and organization of public knowledge, the hierarchies of beliefs and the pervasiveness of the consensus, which in turn are potent factors in the formation and the reproduction of opinions, attitudes and ideologies.” (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 36). Such an understanding of ideology and ideological production is crucial to an interrogation of media, public and cultural discourse relating to racial politics, nation-building, and citizenship in the contemporary Canadian context. Media and cultural producers, in particular, are key as they are “by definition, part of the dominant means of ideological production…. The media construct for us a definition of what race is, what meaning the imagery of race carries, and what the ‘problem of race’ is understood to be…. They help to classify out the world in terms of the categories of race.” (Hall, 1990, p. 11). Media and cultural discourses are therefore immersed in the “grammar of race” (Hall, 1990, p. 15), through which hegemonic discourses communicate (and re-produce) the ideological positions of the symbolic elites. This notion of the grammar of race is central to the theoretical grounding and methodological imperatives of my project.

Central to the methodological imperatives of this project is the notion of the “media gaze”, what Hall refers to as the “white eye: the unmarked position from which all…observations are made and from which, alone, they make sense.” (Hall, 1990, p. 14). In this respect “…[m]ainsteam media may involve claims of neutrality and objectivity yet conceal vested interests behind a smoke screen of platitudes and polemics, while embracing a tacitly accepted agenda of power and privilege without seeming to do so.” (Fleras, 2011, p. 12). Such an agenda of power is very much associated with a media gaze that is centred on the identities and positions of the symbolic elites whose interests and goals are naturalized into the white media gaze. In his work about Canadian media discourses, Fleras (2011)
provides numerous examples to demonstrate how media frame narratives which draw attention to “…some aspects of reality as normal and desirable, and away from others as irrelevant or inferior – in the hopes of encouraging a preferred reading consistent with seeing like the media.” (p. 13). Media and cultural discourses embody the privilege of whiteness, a privilege which is rendered invisible in order to maintain both its power, and its claim to neutrality. Thus, “…[w]hite culture is the hidden norm against which the ‘differences’ of all other subordinate groups are evaluated. For those who have inherited its mantle, Whiteness suggests normality, truth, objectivity and merit.” (Henry and Tator, 2002, p. 10).

Later in this dissertation, I explore these notions further, using notions of ideology and the white gaze, in my analysis of Canadian media discourse. Here, I merely outline these notions as a way to ground my methodological choice of Critical Discourse Analysis, to whose specific methods I now turn.

**Critical Discourse Analysis: methodological tools**
The specific methods I use to analyze my data are placed within the larger context of Critical Discourse Analysis and its guiding principles. Key methodological tools of CDA include the analysis of (a) headlines; (b) choice of topics or subjects; (c) schemata, argumentation, editorials and commentary; (d) quotations, sources and voices heard; (e) meanings and ideologies; and (f) styles and rhetoric. I provide a brief review of these methodological tools.

First, headlines (in print media) or introductory sequences (in audiovisual vehicles) serve important cognitive and persuasive functions. Often, these introductory sequences, conspicuous elements of media narratives, shape how the reader/audience approaches the narrative. Headlines, for example, are “…usually used to activate the relevant knowledge in memory the reader needs in order to understand the report.” (Van Dijk, 1991, p. 50). For the consumer of the media narrative, this provides an interpretative frame through which the narrative is understood.
Second, the choices of topics and subjects in media narratives are important considerations in critical analysis of research data. Topics are “…the semantic micro-structures…[which provide] global, overall meaning” for any given issue. (Van Dijk, 1991, p. 72). Subjects refer to single concepts (e.g. crime, education or terrorism) which “…stand for a larger social or political domain or a complex issue about which the Press offers potentially an infinite number of specific news reports.” (Van Dijk, 1991, p. 78). The topics selected are essentially a set of propositions which summarize key elements of any media narrative, provide the interpretative frame at a glance and work to create (or activate already existing) mental models. These models are “…mental structures of information which, besides the new information offered…feature information about such a situation as inferred from general knowledge scripts.” (Van Dijk, 1991, p. 72). In this sense, models include beliefs, evaluations and personal opinions derived from social attitudes. The topics chosen for media narratives represent to the audience what is relevant, and these topics activate already existing maps of ‘the way the world works’ – in other words, the mental models already established. How the topics are selected and represented in media discourse is very much related to underlying biases (unconscious or conscious) of the media producer. An important aspect of Critical Discourse Analysis is to uncover and make explicit these underlying models in order to highlight how media discourses are shaped by those with specialized access, a process which shapes the interpretative lens through which public consciousness is in turn shaped. Subjects, given that they refer to single concepts standing for larger societal notions, provide important glimpses into how media narratives are connected to larger societal issues and how these are defined. For instance, Van Dijk (1991) comments that street protests (referred to as race riots in media narratives) are often connected to issues of policing, security and Black communities, rather than to public housing, adequate health care, unemployment and poverty. (p. 78). In my own analysis, I note how issues of radical Islam or home-grown extremism are most often related to issues of immigration, security and Muslims, rather than to the systemic exclusion and disenfranchisement of young racialized Canadians.
Third, media narratives are shaped by their underlying schemata, modes of argumentation and commentary. Whether in editorials or commentary columns (where modes of argumentation or schemata are most easy to uncover) or in news reports, these underlying elements are important tools through which media narratives tell a particular story. Critical Discourse Analysis attempts to uncover the schemata and to trace the elements of argumentation present in media discourse. Schemata may alter the topical sequence of the narrative, thereby having an important ideological influence. For example, what are the implications of foregrounding the racial aspect of social disturbances first, rather than the grievance (housing, employment, poverty) of those protesting? Such choices of editorial schemata are not random; rather, they reflect conscious choices amongst media producers to shape the narrative in a particular way, foregrounding some issues and characters and not others. Similarly, as my analysis of Canadian media discourse illustrates, the use of argumentation and persuasive rhetoric is an important element in editorials and commentaries. Van Dijk (1991) suggests that statements of opinion in editorials have at least three elements: (a) definition; (b) explanation and (c) moral (prediction or recommendation). (p. 125). Together, these elements shape how editorials and commentaries present an interpretative frame for relevant issues in the public domain. These elements are evident in many of the commentaries and editorials I analyze, commentaries which often situate the Muslim body in very particular ways. I rely on the deconstruction of argumentation to interrogate the underlying assumptions embedded both in Canadian media narratives about Muslims and, indeed, in the works of the Acceptable Muslims I examine. The uncovering of such assumptions is essential to my analysis as it allows me to connect specific comments to larger societal issues such as notions of citizenship, belonging, secularism, and nationhood.

Fourth, media narratives are shaped by choices of quotations and sources to support their essential points of view. In this respect, key questions raised by CDA scholars relate to the type of sources or quotations used, which actors are able to speak in their own words and which ones are seen as
secondary or even silenced. More importantly, CDA enables an examination of which perspectives, views and actors are seen as legitimate and support the so-called public interest. In the case of Muslims in Canadian media discourse, for example, it is important to question which actors are foregrounded as individuals, positioned as supportive of ‘our’ society, and which ones are either situated as problems or perhaps even silenced. How are these different actors represented (and do they represent themselves?) on the larger canvas of media, political and cultural discourses? And finally, how do these actors or perspectives serve the larger purpose(s) of the media narrative and/or the ideological aims of the Canadian nation-state? These are some of the questions that I raise both in my analysis of Canadian media discourse about Muslims, and in my examination of the work and perspectives of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim.

Fifth, Critical Discourse Analysis emphasizes the role of ideology and meaning, both of which are central to my own analysis. CDA provides a number of methodological tools to uncover the meanings and ideologies in media narratives. These include an examination of perspective, implicit meanings, and a variety of semantic strategies, all of which guide my analysis probing the ideological meanings underlying the narratives I explore. The element of perspective focuses primarily on point-of-view: from whose point-of-view (or perspective) is the narrative being told and which perspective is foregrounded as (more) legitimate? Perspective is not isolated to a single sentence but is discerned through a whole range of cues throughout any given narrative. The element of implicit meanings focuses on uncovering the subtle, often unstated, assumptions embedded in media narratives. A narrative, Van Dijk (1991) observes, is “… like an iceberg of information of which only the tip is actually expressed in words and sentences. The rest is assumed to be supplied by the knowledge scripts and models of the media users, and therefore usually left unsaid.” (p. 181). The study of implicit meanings provides a vital glimpse into the underlying beliefs, attitudes and ideological leanings of media producers as well as those leanings that may already be inscribed in public discourse.
CDA also examines the various semantic strategies used in media narratives. These strategies include the use of hyperbole, ridicule, blaming the victim, mitigation (of the negative actions of an institutional actor, for instance), comparisons, contrast and divisions (between good and bad, for example), admission (to avoid being defined as a racist, for example), and denial of racism. (Van Dijk, 1991, pp. 187-198). An analysis of such strategies in media narratives (news reports, commentaries and the work of Acceptable Muslims) is important in unearthing the ideological meanings embedded in media narratives and to explore the norms and values being highlighted through these narratives. Uncovering the ideological leanings of media narratives is essential as these leanings shape – sometimes implicitly – hegemonic public and political discourse. In his work on racism in the press, Van Dijk (1991) notes that there is often a surprising coherence among the arguments by different reporters/commentators in various newspapers. This, he suggests, is not a sign of formal collusion, but represents a “…very powerful ideology… at work, a unifying framework that is routinely applied.” (Van Dijk, 1991, p. 201). In my own analysis of Canadian media discourse, I find such a coherence in the perspectives, meanings and ideological leanings about both the figures of the Muslim and the Acceptable Muslim.

Sixth and finally, the analytical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis highlights the use of style and rhetoric to examine and expose the central discourses embedded in media narratives; embedded in these discourses are often the power dynamics at the heart of social relations. In this respect, Van Dijk (1993b) suggests that “…we may examine the style, rhetoric or meaning of texts for strategies that aim at the concealment of social power relations, for instance, by playing down, leaving implicit or understating responsible agency of powerful social actors in the events represented in the text.” (p. 250). The element of style usually refers to the voice of the author, commentator or reporter; this is “…the trace…of the personal opinions of the speakers as well as of the social context of language use.” (Van Dijk, 1991, p. 209). Rhetoric, on the other hand, refers to the “…special verbal ploys, such
as alliterations and metaphors that help catch…attention and which therefore are primarily used with a persuasive aim.” (Van Dijk, 1991, p. 209). Included in these rhetorical devices are elements such a lexical style, syntactic style, and rhetorical tools such as the use of repetition, hyperbole, under/over statement and metaphor. The choice of these rhetorical devices (whether choice of words, repetition, or use of specific metaphors) is often influenced by socially shared opinions and/or prevailing elite perspectives. The choice of a descriptor to identify or label a particular actor (e.g. radical Islamist, moderate, Western-educated, urbane, well-spoken…) clearly situates that actor in a particular way in a media narrative. With a few cleverly-chosen words, the producer of the media narrative positions the object of the narrative and communicates his/her interpretation of that actor. Similarly, a choice of metaphor reveals much about the underlying perspective(s) of the media narrative, its producer and the social consensus already in place or being created by media narratives. I rely on these methodological tools in my analysis of Canadian media discourse about Muslims, and in my examination of the work, perspectives and ideological leanings of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim.

These methodological tools are central to Critical Discourse Analysis. While CDA outlines numerous methodological tools, for this project I rely especially on those which enable me to uncover and make explicit the interpretative frames, mental models and schemata underlying my data. In this sense, I focus on those methodological tools that enable me to interrogate the ideological functions of the figures of the Muslim and the Acceptable Muslim in the Canadian national imaginary. I suggest that these figures are both necessary for the reinforcement of racialized boundaries of acceptability in the Canadian nation, and in the reconfirmation of hegemonic social relations embedded in this imaginary, social relations that rely not on coercion but on the ideological persuasion inherent in media and cultural narratives. As Van Dijk (2008) notes, “…one needs no coercion if one can persuade, seduce, indoctrinate or manipulate people.” (p. 14). I suggest that the figures of the Muslim Other and the
Acceptable Muslim are central to understanding the discursive and hegemonic power embedded in Canadian narratives of citizenship, belonging, multiculturalism, secularism, and nationhood.

**Pre-Discursive Racism**
My project relies on Critical Discourse Analysis to interrogate the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, who I suggest is a central figure in the reinforcement of key narratives in Canadian public and political discourses. Such narratives include the belief in multiculturalism, democracy, individualism, race-neutral citizenship, and secularism. Acceptable Muslims are implicated in these discourses and, as my research will illuminate, are key players in enabling the state to perpetuate these mythological narratives. While I rely primarily on Critical Discourse Analysis as my methodology in this project, I recognize that issues of racism, Orientalism, and Islamophobia are not limited to discursive texts alone. Hence, while CDA remains my primary methodological guiding principle, I am conscious that an analysis of discourse alone may be an insufficient tool to explore the symbolic roots of neo-Orientalism, an imaginary rooted in racism, colonialism and imagination. Hence, I make selective use of the notion of pre-discursive racism (Hook, 2001a, 2001b, 2006, 2011, 2012) to explore the symbolic elements underpinning public discourse about Muslims.

Pre-discursive racism enables an investigation beyond the discursive structures and texts examined, and probes the embodied, visceral symbolism that lies underneath these discourses. In his powerful analysis, Hook (2006) observes that pre-discursive racism “…is a racism that need not take verbal form, that is realized in impulses, played out in aversions and reactions of the body; a racism that appears to remain as of yet unconditioned by discourse.” (p. 209). Racism (or Orientalism…) is both a discursive and an affective phenomenon, and while Critical Discourse Analysis is a powerful methodology, it does not always address affective factors. Such affective and visceral factors, suggests Hook, account for the persistence of racism, a persistence that is embedded and normalized in psychic impulses. Orientalist imaginaries, even as they are embedded in discourse, operate very much in the
realm of the latent, subconscious, psychic and imaginative domains; these are the latent Orientalist impulses to which Said (1978/2003) refers. Hence, an analysis of Orientalism in the contemporary context should “…busy itself not merely with the search for a plenitude of meaning, but rather with a search for the scarcity of meaning, with what cannot be said, with what is impossible or unreasonable within certain discursive locations.” (Hook, 2001a, p. 527).

Hook (2006) suggests that discourse analysis does not pay sufficient attention to at least three factors of racism. These are: (a) embodiment; (b) affect; and (c) pre-discursive, in other words, that which precedes the text and words of discourse. (pp. 211-212). He further suggests that racism is as much a psychological as is it a sociopolitical phenomenon. (Hook, 2005). Such phenomena rely on the notion of abjectivity, which provides a way to

...grasp the depth of hatred that racism is able to incur, to understand the threat to body, ego and culture that such a formulation of affect seems able to consecrate.... The notion of abjection enables us to think a theory of racism that is based on boundary threats, on threats to the physical, psychological and symbolic integrity of the racist subject. (Hook, 2006, p. 216).

The abject figure is one who threatens identity, structure, systems – the way ‘we’ do things that define ‘us’. It is this abject figure who must be expelled from the body politic, who must be excluded (forcibly if necessary) from the national imaginary and the nation-state. Such a reaction is not only discursive; this is not a racism as a form of knowledge, but a primal response. As Hook (2006) notes, “…what we see in responses to abjection is the desperate attempt to reaffirm a kind of ego-coherence, an attempt loaded with the exaggerated affect that comes with the reflex urgency of the wish to divide the self from the other.” (p. 217). Against such a backdrop, the figure of the Muslim Other – the threatening barbarian Muslim man or the veiled, mysterious, exotic Muslim woman – in Canadian media and public discourses clearly touches these raw impulses. In the urgent desire to separate ‘us’ from ‘them’ (the barbarian hordes), media and public discourses illuminate the primal urge to reinforce strongly (almost viscerally) the boundaries of civility and acceptability. In these impulses – whether through narratives expressing vehement reaction to the veil, those urging significantly stiffer
controls on immigration or those suggesting that Muslims are barbaric – we see attempts to demarcate more clearly who ‘we’ are, and the desire to expel those others who are seen as abject, those bodies that are marked as unwanted, contaminating, and repulsive.

The notion of abjection demarcates the national imaginary into those that are included, the bodies with rights, and those that must be expelled or ejected, those whose rights can be abrogated. Paula Butler (2014) writes of a “psychic border,” a term she uses as a “…metaphor for contemporary colonial binaries.” (p. 88). She suggests that relations of domination require a psychic disconnect on the part of dominant subjects to “…deny, block, suppress, or reframe the knowledge that they are harming (or killing) others, or enjoying what may rightfully belong to others.” (P. Butler, 2014, p. 92). Such psychic tension is most often experienced by members of the dominant group (generally white bodies) who have power but who “…are collectively assisted and protected by an elaborate social, legal, and discursive architecture designed to make them (us) not know, not feel, not have to recognize, and not to have to be fully accountable for the meaning and effects of their (our) presence.” (P. Butler, 2014, p. 92). This discursive architecture – the scaffolding of empire and domination – allows those who are in power to ignore, disguise and evade accountability for the very systems of domination in which they are privileged. In the contemporary context, in which systems of domination must be more nuanced, such architectural scaffolding requires a

…fence with gaps…a porous fence…the establishment of a ‘grey zone,’ a political-discursive space of ambiguity and possibility in which the integrity of the colonizer/displacers appears feasible. The paradigm of the porous fence enables the displacers to participate simultaneously in walling out the illegalized Other, while engaging hierarchically with the Other as a benefactor (P. Butler, 2014, p. 92).

It is this porous fence which allows the (white) dominant subject – the exalted subject – to live with, ignore, and evade responsibility for the displacement and dispossession of other peoples, but to do so with a degree of psychic protection. Through the metaphor of the porous fence, the colonizer becomes the benefactor, and manages to “…hide and erase from memory and view their foundational
illegitimacy, and to naturalize their presence…” (P. Butler, 2014, p. 93). This duality – the ability to exclude the racialized Other, yet to engage them as a benefactor who can bestow rights, citizenship, belonging and nationality – effectively “…offers psychic protection to the displacer.” (P. Butler, 2014, p. 93).

Against this background of abjection, and the psychic walls protecting the exalted subject, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim plays a significant role: racialized and different from the so-called Canadian norm, she stands at the border between abjection and qualified inclusion; in effect, she stands at the porous fence, enabling continued domination by the Canadian exalted subject. While the Acceptable Muslim lives within the boundaries of acceptability, this inclusion is a qualified inclusion, and one which is at the behest of the exalted subject. By standing on (and within) this border, at the porous fence, the Acceptable Muslim reconfirms (consciously or otherwise) the exclusion and expulsion of the abject Other – in this case, the Muslim Other. If the racialized Muslim Other is the abject body, the Acceptable Muslim is the object of tolerance who reanimates the power of the discourses of multiculturalism, tolerance and secularism through which the exalted national subject confirms his power all the while extolling his own benevolent credentials. In this respect, the figures of the Muslim Other and the Acceptable Muslim are two sides of the same nationalist, racialized imaginary – both figures are required to uphold the national narrative and the role (and power) of the exalted subject to manage the national space. The Muslim Other (or one that might become him/her) must be surveilled, targeted and excluded, possibly even exterminated from the national space. The Acceptable Muslim is the one that can be tolerated and used to patrol the boundaries of acceptability, standing at the porous fence of citizenship. Both figures underlie and reanimate the power of the exalted Subject (Thobani, 2007) who feels both empowered and threatened in the post 9/11 context.

Having mapped out the theoretical and methodological principles upon which my project is grounded, I turn now to my analysis of Canadian media discourses about Muslims.
Chapter 3

Mapping the Terrain:

*Canadian Media Discourse on Muslims, 2005-2014*

**Introduction**

Media, public and cultural discourses since 9/11 is especially haunted, either directly or indirectly, by the spectre of the ‘Muslim Other’ – the figure of the foreign-looking, potentially dangerous, and primitive Other, whose predominant aim is, supposedly, to challenge and destroy the West and its values. While the image of the Other is not new and is evident in Orientalist scholarship of previous eras (Said, 1978/2003), such imagery has been re-animated in the post-9/11 era, and in a more nuanced manner.

Scholarship on media representations of Muslims in the current Western context has been prolific; Said (1978/2003, 1981, 1993), Jiwani (2004, 2005b, 2009, 2011a, 2014), Alsultany (2005, 2007, 2012); Poole (2002); Poole and Richardson (2006); Morey and Yaqin (2011), Saunders (2012), and Karim, (2000, 2008), among others, have analyzed the figure of the Muslim in contemporary media discourse. This scholarship reveals that Orientalist imagery continues to be embedded in contemporary discourses, even as traditional and crude stereotypes have given way to more complex representations. Despite the use of more refined imagery, contemporary discourses continue to distinguish between ‘us’ and ‘them’ – creating a boundary of acceptability between citizens and Others, – illuminating the neo-Orientalist foundations of such discourse.

Against this backdrop of media studies scholarship, my analysis contributes by focusing on key narratives about Muslims in Canadian media discourse, and specifically on the figure of the Acceptable Muslim. Media narratives position Muslims as the Other in Canadian society, embodying different values and, in some cases, threatening the basis of key Canadian norms. In this respect, these narratives situate the Muslim Other as being outside the boundaries of legitimate Canadian citizenship. Against such a
backdrop, the emergence of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim plays crucial ideological roles in the Canadian political and public landscape.

Using the data sample, I explore Canadian media, public and political discourses about Muslims, and the manner in which Orientalist imaginaries are utilized to frame the Muslim Other as a dangerous, threatening, and primitive body that undermines the values of so-called civilized society. I draw attention to the numerous frames (or narratives) through which Muslims are viewed in Canadian discourses, a framing which situates Muslims on the margins of the Canadian national imaginary. Against such a backdrop, I trace the emergence of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim and the manner in which s/he is discursively created in the Canadian press, a space which primarily represents, and certainly privileges, the perspectives of the symbolic elites of the nation-state. I theorize that the Acceptable Muslim demarcates the boundaries separating those that fall within the national body politic and those who do not, and who must consequently be surveilled and policed. The figure of the Acceptable Muslim, therefore, is juxtaposed in the Canadian press against the Muslim Other, an important binary in the “hegemonic field of meaning” (Alsultany, 2012, p. 7) underpinning media and public discourse. The Acceptable Muslim (often referred to as the moderate, liberal, or modern Muslim) is perceived as a palatable alternative to the Muslim Other in the public imagination and appears often in relation to the various controversies fueled by Muslim presence in Canada and other Western nation-states. The figure of the Acceptable Muslim emerges in Canadian media, public and political discourses at the very moment that these discourses frame the Muslim Other as challenging the boundaries of legitimate Canadian citizenship and values. These twin processes are, of course, inextricably linked: the figure of the Acceptable Muslim enables the Canadian nation-state to reinforce the racialized boundaries of the Canadian national imaginary, while simultaneously reaffirming its commitment to a supposedly multicultural and diverse national culture. Such a narrative enables both the policing of those deemed
beyond the pale, and the foregrounding of those deemed acceptable. In both cases, the power dynamic of the Canadian nation-state is reinforced, and the racialized narrative of citizenship reanimated.

In the next chapter, I analyze more thoroughly the figure and characteristics of the Acceptable Muslim and interrogate how this figure is crucial in the reanimation of a racialized national imaginary. In this chapter, I analyze Canadian press coverage pertaining to Muslims in the period 2005 to 2014, in order to identify key media narratives and discourses about Muslims and establish a backdrop for the emergence of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim.

**Media, elite discourse and the figure of the Muslim**

Central to this study of Canadian media discourse about Muslims is the role of media in reaffirming the ideological foundations and power bases of society. Media, in effect, legitimize the opinions of the elite class in society, and reproduce the white lens through which society is perceived. In his study of elite racism, Van Dijk (1993a) observes that media institutions are crucial vehicles through which societal elites determine and shape public discourse. As he states, “Due to the specific and nearly exclusive role of the mass media in communication and the production of public discourse, other elites need the media to inform both the public at large and each other, to exercise their power, to seek legitimation, and to manufacture consensus and consent.” (Van Dijk, 1993a, p. 243). In effect, media, through a variety of structural, ideological and semantic conditions, create, reproduce and reinforce the perspectives of elite groups. As Van Dijk (1993a) succinctly puts it, “…the media have become, so to speak, the managers of public opinion by allocating space to and emphasizing the voice of those elites – and sometimes, indirectly, of those sections of the population at large – that they believe should be heard, while muffling or silencing the voices that should not be heard.” (p. 281).

Referring to media as contemporary bards, Hartley (1982) suggests that the role of the media is active, both producing and reinforcing the common-sense knowledge of society. As he states, “[c]ommon sense is not just there, waiting to be used. While the media are appealing to our common sense to explain all
manner of different subjects, they are at the same time constantly ‘reminding’ us of what the explanations are based on.” (Hartley, 1982, p. 105). In this sense, media discourses are the “builders of realities” (Navarro, 2010, p. 95), using key signifiers or representations that are harnessed effectively by dominant discourses of society. Such signifiers become common-sense by repeated use, and reanimate key ideas embedded in national narratives; the purpose of national narratives is “…to restore or imitate order and to minimize confusion about what is at stake and who will pay the price of dissension.” (Morrison, 1997, pp. xv-xvi). Morrison (1997) further notes that “…democratic discourses are suborned by sudden, accelerated, sustained blasts of media messages – visual and in print – that rapidly enforce the narrative and truncate alternative opinion.” (p. xvi). Such media messages reinforce the national narrative whose ultimate aim is the “…production of belief…[through] control of the presumptions and postulates of the discussion.” (Morrison, 1997, p. xvi). Dominant discourse, then, is reinforced by media messages which centralize elite perspectives and minimize alternative or oppositional ones. Karim (2000) suggests that media do not collude deliberately, but rely on a “…a ‘naturalized’ hegemonic process through which they adhere to a common field of meanings.” (p. 5). This common field of meanings – rooted in the dominant discourse – essentially provides “the definitions, theoretical paradigms, agendas, and frames” through which to view key issues in society. (Karim, 2000, p. 5).

In a Western settler nation-state such as Canada, the dominant discourse (and media messaging) foregrounds perspectives which are white-centred and reproduce “…white event interpretation and broader ideologies characterizing white group dominance.” (Van Dijk, 1993a, p. 246). Stuart Hall (1990) refers to ideology as “…those images, concepts and premises which provide the frameworks through which we represent, interpret, understand and ‘make sense’ of some aspect of social existence.” (pp. 8-9). Media discourses provide frameworks through which their audiences interpret the world, and are inevitably imbued with ideological meanings, which are immersed in the “…rich vocabulary and syntax of race.” (Hall, 1990, p. 13). Perhaps most importantly, media discourses, says Hall (1990), promote the
“…‘absent’ but imperializing ‘white eye’; the unmarked position from which all these ‘observations’ are made and from which, alone, they make sense. The ‘white eye’ is always outside the frame – but seeing and positioning everything within it.” (1990, p. 14). Henry and Tator (2009), in their study of racism in the Canadian media, refer to the “prism of whiteness…[which is] a powerful filter.” (p. 711). Their study of Canadian television programs reveals that “…the discourses and representations in these programs reinforced the construct of whiteness as the normative universe, a society in which essentially ‘all others,’ including people of colour…are constructed as ‘problem peoples’…” (Henry and Tator, 2009, p. 711).

In the contemporary context, the Muslim body is often characterized as a societal problem, whose public presence challenges the national narrative of Western nation-states. As I outline briefly earlier, other racialized bodies in Canada are also characterized in specific ways marking them as either absent, marginal or conditionally included. These racialized bodies are central to the reanimation of the boundaries of acceptability within the Canadian national imaginary. In this chapter, I focus in particular on Canadian media discourses surrounding the Muslim body, a figure which is placed in juxtaposition both to other racialized bodies and to the white norm of the so-called legitimate (read: white) Canadian citizen-subject.

The characterization of the Muslim body as a societal problem is grounded in Orientalist discourse, an imaginary geography first traced by Edward Said (1978/2003). Key to this Orientalist imaginary is a world in which “…the ‘West’ is seen as a dynamic, complex, and ever-changing society that cannot be reduced to its key religion or any other single factor, while the ‘Orient’ or the world of ‘Islam’ is presented as unchanging, barbaric, misogynistic, uncivilized, and despotic.” (Kumar, 2012, p. 33). Said12 and

---

12 In a 1987 debate with Bernard Lewis, Said identifies these six themes: “…(1) The pervasive presence of generally Middle Eastern, more particularly, Arab and/or Islamic terrorism…as well as a ‘terrorist network’…Terrorism here is most often characterized as congenital; (2) The rise of Islamic and Muslim fundamentalism, usually but not always Shi’a; (3) The Middle East as a place whose violent and incomprehensible events are routinely referred back to a distant past of ‘ancient,’ tribal, religious or ethnic hatreds; (4) The Middle East as a contested site in which ‘our’ side is represented by the civilized and democratic West; (5) The Middle East as a locale for the re-emergence of a virulent quasi-European (i.e. Nazi) anti-Semitism; and (6) The Middle East as the fons et origo, the hatching ground of the gratuitous evils of the PLO.” (Quoted in Karim, 2000, pp. 61-62).
Shaheen identify key Orientalist stereotypes and/or characteristics that commonly appear in media representations of Islam, Muslim or Arabs. Yegenoglu (1998) extends this scholarship by placing gender at the heart of Orientalist discourse; the image of veiled, exotic Muslim women has long animated Western imagination and continues to do so. Recent scholarship on representations of Muslims extends this theorizing yet further by illuminating the ideological contestations occurring over the Muslim woman’s body, contestations which are central to reinforcing Orientalist imaginaries. Jiwani (2009) and Razack (2004) suggest that Muslim women are at the centre of contemporary representations of Muslims, with Muslim women positioned as in need of saving by the civilized knight. Such representations position some bodies as saviours with others coded as dangerous (Muslim men) or oppressed (Muslim women). Naber (2008) suggests that contemporary representations reinforce the impression that the figure of the Muslim (and/or Arab) is an “…enemy of the nation” (p. 37) and identifies three general media characterizations of Muslims. These are: (a) The Muslim/Arab man as violent and misogynistic; (b) The Muslim/Arab woman as passive and victimized; and (c) the absent Muslim/Arab woman. (Naber, 2008, p. 37).

In the post 9/11 context, Alsultany (2008) observes there has been both an increase in the quantity of representations and an increase in “sympathetic representations.” (p. 204). More importantly, she situates these more sympathetic representations within the context of “momentary diversity” (2008, p. 207), which she suggests is the process by which the citizen of the Western nation-state is “ideologically redefined as diverse instead of white…” (2008, p. 207). In other words, non-Muslim or non-Arab racialized individuals are (temporarily) incorporated into notions of American identity, while Muslim/Arabs are racialized as threats to the nation. Such a redefinition resolves the contradictions of contemporary racism by reconfiguring racism as “…bad in general but legitimate in the case of Arabs

---

13 Jack Shaheen notes that television produces four primary stereotypes of Arabs. These are, in his words, “…(1) They are all fabulously wealthy; (2) They are barbaric and uncultured; (3) They are sex maniacs with a penchant for white slavery; and (4) They revel in acts of terrorism.” (Quoted in Karim, 2000, p. 62).
and Muslims after 9/11.” (Alsultany, 2008, p. 207). Essentially, such a reconfiguration justifies racism against Muslims/Arabs as respectable and legitimate, thereby justifying both individual acts of discrimination and government practices that discriminate against entire groups (in this case, Muslims and/or Arabs). Alsultany (2008) outlines four conditions which create a state of exception in which Muslims are subjected to so-called legitimate forms of discrimination and the suspension of their civil liberties. These conditions are, in Alsultany’s words,

First, the nation in crisis needs to be established…. Second, the necessity of exceptionalism needs to be established. In order to do that, a norm of democracy and freedom of all peoples regardless of race needs to be affirmed… Then, Arabs and Muslims need to undergo a process of racialization in which their potential threat to the nation becomes intertwined with their ethnic/racial background and religious beliefs. And lastly, it can be stated that racism is wrong but compulsory against this potentially threatening population at this particular exceptional time of crisis. (p. 217).

These conditions are relevant in the Canadian context; the discourses of exceptionalism, momentary diversity (or multiculturalism) and ambivalence are central features of Canadian media discourse about Muslims. My analysis extends the current scholarship on media, public and political discourses about Muslims in Western nation-states. My focus on Canadian media narratives adds to current scholarship on Muslims in Western contexts and meaningfully extends it by considering the figure of the Acceptable Muslim – a body which I suggest is crucial to maintaining the ambivalence and momentary multiculturalism in the Canadian context. These figures – both the bad Muslim against whom the nation must be protected and the Acceptable Muslim who is the boundary-marker of legitimate (and racialized) Canadian citizenship – are crucial to resolving the contradictions of the Canadian national imaginary.

**Setting the context: some general comments about the data sample**

The data sample offers insight into Canadian media discourse about Muslims, and the manner in which Muslim bodies are used to animate Canadian national debates. The data analyzed in this chapter is drawn

---

14 The data analyzed here was collected, coded and analyzed for the purpose of this dissertation. I relied on a part of this data (related to veiling) in a chapter co-authored by Mustafa and myself entitled “Veiling Narratives: Discourses of Canadian multiculturalism, acceptability and citizenship” (2018). The chapter is included in an anthology of work in *The Routledge International Handbook to Veils and Veiling Practices*. In that chapter, I make reference to the data used as having been collected and analyzed as part of a larger, still unpublished research project (i.e. this dissertation).
from the Canadian press, using the Canadian Newsstand search engine. The searches are drawn from 19 major Canadian newspapers, covering major cities and all ten provinces (but excluding the Territories) and over a ten-year period (January 2005 to December 2014). As I indicate in an earlier chapter, I conducted four searches using the following search terms:

1. ‘Muslim women’ or ‘Muslim woman’ and ‘Canada’ (S1);
2. ‘Muslim men’ or ‘Muslim man’ and ‘Canada’ (S2);
3. ‘Moderate Muslim’ or ‘Moderate Islam’ (S3); and
4. ‘Multiculturalism’ and ‘Muslims’ (S4).

These search terms allow for an exploration of the extent to which (and in what manner) Canadian press coverage regarding Muslims is racialized and gendered, and what such coverage about Muslims reveals about questions of multiculturalism, belonging and citizenship within the Canadian context. The four searches yield a total of 7986 items, which I then categorize into 19 codes, based on the content of each article/entry (See Appendix 1 for a list of codes). Before moving to an analysis of the narratives about Muslims – the frames within which discourses about Muslims are situated – I offer some general comments about the data sample overall. The table and graphs below reveal the breakdown of entries in years, searches and codes.

First, the comprehensive data sample (all four searches) reveals that Canadian press coverage concentrates strongly on Muslim women. The search about Muslim women elicited the most articles, with 4224 articles over the 10 years; the dominance of coverage on Muslim women is evident in the table and graphs presented below. Overall, the search on Muslim women (S1) elicited more than twice as many entries/articles as does S2 (Muslim men), the second most numerous search, almost eight times as many as S3, and more than three times as many as S4. In fact, S1 (using the search terms ‘Muslim woman/women’) elicits more articles overall than the other three searches combined.
The table and graphs shown below together provide details on the data, illustrating the breakdown of the data by search terms and codes, showing the total number of articles for each search and code, and illustrating the relative numerical importance of each search and code.

Table 1: Yearly totals, all searches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>S1</th>
<th>S2</th>
<th>S3</th>
<th>S4</th>
<th>% of total articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
<td>1145</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Veiling and dress issues</td>
<td>1358</td>
<td>1222</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Radical Islam</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Triad</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Canadian extremism</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Shari'ah law and arbitration</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Quebec reasonable accommodation</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Immigration and inclusion</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Incarcerated Muslim men</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Security certificates</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>War against Terror International</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Human Rights, Islamophobia and Racial profiling</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>International (Global South)</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>International (Global North)</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Gender (not veiling)</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Cultural Representations</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Moderate Muslim or Moderate Islam</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>General, other or miscellaneous</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Unclassified or unrelated</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7986</td>
<td>4224</td>
<td>2061</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>1161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1: Total Number of Entries for all searches over time

Figure 2: Total Number of Entries specified by code

### Numbers of articles, all codes and searches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code titles</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>200</th>
<th>400</th>
<th>600</th>
<th>800</th>
<th>1000</th>
<th>1200</th>
<th>1400</th>
<th>1600</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veiling and dress issues</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Radical Islam&quot;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The &quot;Triad&quot;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian 'extremism'</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharia law and arbitration</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec &quot;reasonable accommodation&quot;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration and inclusion</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarcerated Muslim men</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security certificates</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War against Terror International</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights, Islamophobia and Racial profiling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International (Global South)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International (Global North)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (not veiling)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Representations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Moderate Muslim&quot; or &quot;Moderate Islam&quot;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General, other or miscellaneous</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified or unrelated</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the chart and tables show, Muslim women (S1) are the dominant theme in almost all codes, except for extremism (Canadian and international), incarcerated Muslim men, and international (global north). My analysis of the data sample, therefore, underscores the gendered nature of the media coverage about Muslims, and on the centrality of Muslim women to media discourse.

It is important here to note that media discourse focuses much attention on the clothing choices of Muslim women. These choices are most often presented as threatening or disruptive to Canadian (and more generally, Western) values of gender equality, freedom, openness, and tolerance. As I analyze later in this chapter, these choices are often presented as markers of opposition to so-called Western values and Canadian multiculturalism. In this context, I suggest that media discourse makes specific use of the body (and clothing choices) of Muslim women in relation to the bodies of other racialized women, who are often excluded in other ways and using other types of representations specific to their bodies. The specific deployment of Muslim women's bodies is a discursive manoeuvre to situate visibly Muslim women as outside the boundaries of acceptability. In so doing, Canadian media, political and public discourses – shaped by elite opinion – function to reaffirm whiteness in a very specific manner and to enable Canada to join the global imperializing family of white nations.

Second, peak years for press coverage on Muslims corresponds, as can be expected, to those years in which Muslims or Islam featured in key events, both nationally and globally. As can be seen from Table 1, peak years of media coverage on Muslims are generally 2006 (all searches); 2007 (S1) 2010 (S1), 2011 (S4) and 2013 (S1 and S4). These years featured significant narratives and events concerning Muslims in general and Muslim women in particular. These events included among others, various debates (multiple years) on veiling (hijabs, niqabs in the courts, voting and veiling, niqabs during Citizenship ceremonies, and other such veiling-related debates); Quebec’s reasonable accommodation debates (multiple years, but specifically in 2007, 2010 and 2013); the arrests of the Toronto 18 (2006-2007) and questions of extremism and home-grown radicals; the Shari’ah law debates (2004-2006); the murders of Aqsa Parvez
(2007) and the Shafia family (2009-2010); legal challenges to the use of security certificates (multiple years); as well as other international and domestic events related to Muslims. The spikes in press coverage about Muslims especially during these years clearly represent societal moral panics in which certain narratives (and bodies) are foregrounded in ways to highlight problematic aspects of society. Underwriting these events and moral panics is a narrative about multiculturalism and the Canadian national imaginary, in which the Muslim Other, like other racialized bodies, is positioned as being outside the boundaries of acceptability. Such a positioning of racialized bodies reinforces whiteness as the naturalized, invisible, but powerful, norm. By so reanimating whiteness as central to the Canadian imaginary and positioning racialized bodies beyond acceptable boundaries, the Canadian nation-state reaffirms its fantasy of white space. With its specific focus on the Muslim body, the nation-state signals its acceptance of, and participation in, the global imperializing empire through which the Muslim body is situated as strongly oppositional to Western civilization.

Third, discussions on multiculturalism are often tied to Muslims generally, frequently focusing on debates about the testing of ‘our’ tolerance and the so-called limits of multiculturalism. Articles and commentaries refer often – either directly or indirectly – to the idea that core Western values (not always identified or defined) are under threat from Muslims, and their ideas, perspectives and actions. Key narratives about Muslims (veiling, radicalism, Quebec’s Reasonable Accommodation debates, etc.) are almost always connected in Canadian media coverage to questions and debates about multiculturalism, and the ostensible clash between Muslim traditions and practices and so-called Western values. This idea of a battle between Islam and the West resonates strongly with theories such as Samuel Huntington’s clash of civilizations, which has been an important undercurrent of key debates, at least in many Western nation-states. Such a perspective on the clash of civilizations is reflective of a “culturalist approach” (Kundnani, 2014), which underscores the idea of a fundamental clash between the values of Islam and those of the West. Kundnani (2014) theorizes that the culturalist approach is one of two approaches (the
other being the reformist approach, discussed below) which structure discourses about Muslims in the foreign policy arena. I extend this theorizing to suggest that such approaches are also prevalent in media and public discourses about Muslims in the domestic realm and have important implications for an analysis of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim. Kundnani maintains that the culturalist approach is prevalent predominantly among conservatives and “….locates the origins of terrorism in what is regarded as Islamic culture’s failure to adapt to modernity.” (Kundnani, 2014, p. 10). The debates in the Canadian press about the incommensurability between Islamic and Western values leads to significant searching for what is considered acceptable in Canadian society, a kind of soul-searching for the basis of Canadian identity and values that symbolizes a supposed re-thinking of the national imaginary. What is strikingly absent from these debates is any significant discussion of the assumptions underlying the national imaginary: in other words, rarely discussed is the colonial history and founding of Canada, the racialized and gendered basis of citizenship, both historically and in contemporary times, or the possibility that the Canadian colonial enterprise continues in contemporary times, albeit in different forms. Almost silent – save for a very few – are counter-narrative voices, those that challenge the common public discourse on Canada and its multicultural ethos. In such a scenario, the notion of differentiating the acceptable from the non-acceptable citizen – and hence illuminating the racialized boundaries of citizenship – becomes a prominent discourse running through the Canadian media.

Fourth, Canadian media discourse, as shown in the data sample, highlights the idea of a battle within Islam between the radicals and the moderates. The notion of a battle within Islam (as opposed to a battle between Islam and the West) is reflective of a “reformist approach.” (Kundnani, 2014). Such an approach, according to Kundnani (2014), is one which argues that Islamic culture is not inherently opposed to the West, but that it has been politicized by a minority of ideologues. This approach is at odds with the culturalist one in that “…whereas culturalists…[see] Islam as having an inherent tendency to generate extremism, the reformists argue[d] that extremism was a product not of Islam but of its
perversion.” (Kundnani, 2014, p. 66). These different approaches – culturalist and reformist (Kundnani, 2014) – are both discernible in Canadian media discourse about Muslims, though the discourse is, of course, not framed using these terms. Rather, the discourse is framed either as a battle between Islamic values and those of the West (culturalist approach) or as a battle within Islam (reformist approach). The reformist approach appears in all searches, with repeated pleas to the Muslim community to side with the moderates and to disavow the radicals. Such commentaries place the figure of the Acceptable Muslim (or, in the language of the media, the moderate Muslim) at centre stage, highlighting the idea of an “internal struggle over Islamic identity…” (Kundnani, 2014, p. 67). Underpinning such a struggle is a supposed cultural war of perspectives on various issues (including acceptance of supposedly core Western values) that become a litmus test of either extremism or moderation. Such a discourse of a battle within Islam, calling for ‘moderate’ perspectives, is an important element of Canadian media discourse in this data sample, thus foregrounding the figure of the Acceptable Muslim.

Fifth, the voices and perspectives of the Acceptable Muslim are prominent in the data sample. Narratives, opinions and articles about and by key individuals such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali (although not Canadian), Tarek Fatah, Irshad Manji, Zarqa Nawaz, Sheema Khan and Raheel Raza are prominent in all searches. These are the figures whose opinions, narratives, work – in effect, whose voices – are most commonly heard or celebrated in the Canadian press. I categorize these figures – media darlings – as Acceptable Muslims, based on their opinions, perspectives and characteristics. I explore these characteristics and perspectives further, both later in this chapter and more fully in the next chapter. It is noteworthy that other personalities – for example, among many others, the voices of El-Farouk Khaki, Sherene Razack, Sunera Thobani, Yasmin Jiwani, Jasmine Zine, all of whom are prominent and progressive academics and activists in the field – remain largely absent from the press. In analyzing the voices that are highlighted – the Acceptable Muslims – it is important to consider what political work
these voices are doing to reinforce Canadian hegemonic discourses (and further, how progressive voices disrupt these discourses).

Sixth, good immigrant stories form an important undercurrent throughout the four searches. While some of the individuals represented in these stories are public figures, more often, they are not well-known and simply depict the person who has been successful in Canada. These stories focus often on individuals or families that have immigrated to Canada, and who have integrated well into Canadian society. Such narratives, often seen as human-interest stories, support the idea that Canadian multiculturalism is a success, and that Canada remains a benevolent and tolerant society. I suggest also that such narratives support and reinforce the notion of the Acceptable Muslim who integrates well into Canadian society, and who is viewed almost as a beacon of hope for Canadian multiculturalism.

Finally, central to the framing of any particular issue is both what is covered in media discourse, but also what is removed, absent, silenced in the frame. Certain key issues of significance for Muslims are only minimally covered in the data sample. These issues include those of security certificates, incarcerated Muslim men, the impact of the War on Terror, as well as the impact of state policies of racial profiling of Muslim bodies and communities. While these issues certainly make an appearance in the data sample, coverage and commentary on these issues are relatively muted and certainly underplayed in light of their effect on the lived realities of Canadian Muslims.

Based on these general comments about the data sample, I move now to an analysis of the findings.

**Framing Muslims: Ten frames of analysis for Canadian press coverage of Muslims**

Analysis of Canadian press coverage concerning Muslims in the period 2005-2014 reveals that key debates within the Canadian national space are often animated by Muslim bodies and their perceived Otherness from the Canadian norm. Narratives about Muslims in the Canadian press do not deviate significantly from classic representational strategies that foreground the “…bearded Muslim fanatic, the
oppressed, veiled woman, the duplicitous terrorist who lives among ‘us’ the better to bring about our destruction.” (Morey and Yaqin, 2011, p. 2). Such depictions provide the outlines of the frames within which Muslims are represented in Canadian media discourse. The frame is a significant representational strategy and provides the organizing framework within which news is presented and understood. In other words, “frames call our attention to the dominant perspectives…” (Morey and Yaqin, 2011, p. 21) and “[tell] viewers what kind of conflict they are observing, which sources of information are relevant, what questions to ask, and how to interpret the answers.” (Steuter and Wills, 2008, pp. 158-159). In this way, “the framing of Muslims amounts to a refraction, not a reflection, of reality.” (Morey and Yaqin, 2011, p. 2). This is certainly true of Canadian media discourse about Muslims.

Using the representational strategy of the frame, my analysis illuminates the framing of Muslims in Canadian media, a framing which is central to the reanimation of the Canadian national narrative. While other studies have explored media discourse about Muslims in Western-nation states, my analysis differs from these in numerous ways. For instance, a survey of media representations about Muslims and Arab Americans in the New York Times presents seven such frames. Briefly, these are: (1) Essentializing Arab/Muslim Americans; (2) The danger of divided loyalties; (3) Muslims as distinctly devout; (4) Devotion to Islam as an obstacle to participation in the nation; (5) Linking Arab and Muslim Americans to international Muslims and Muslim movements; (6) International Muslims – Devoutness and Fanaticism; and (7) Arab Americans and Muslim Americans as high risk citizens. (Joseph et al., 2008, p. 234). While there is some overlap between the frames I identify and those in the Joseph study, my analysis extends current literature on media representations on Muslims in at least three ways. First, my analysis concentrates on the Canadian context, while many studies concentrate on the American or Western European context. Second, my data sample explores media commentary over a ten-year period, in newspapers across the country, rather than being limited to a shorter time period, or in one region of the country. Third, my analysis of Canadian media discourse provides a backdrop to my project
investigating the figure of the Acceptable Muslim in Canada, a figure which has not received significant scholarly attention.

Based on my data sample, I identity ten frames of Canadian media discourse about Muslims; together, these illuminate the dominant perspectives underlying Canadian media and public discourses. These frames structure an overall narrative in which Muslims are cast as outsiders to the nation, as “an irretrievably Other presence…[who] can at a moment’s notice be erected as objects of supervision and discipline, and used to obscure the more troubling questions about ‘us,’ our group identities, our social structures and our motives for action in the world.” (Morey and Yaqin, 2011, p. 5). Hence, I contend that Canadian press coverage of Muslims can be better understood using the following frames:

1. Muslims as the undifferentiated Other in Canadian society
2. Veiled, passive, and oppressed Muslim women
3. Threatening, violent, extremist and barbaric Muslim men
4. The (often invisible) knight saving Muslim women
5. Muslims as symbolic of the failure of multiculturalism
6. Muslims and the battle between gender equality and religious rights
7. Quebec’s reasonable accommodation debates and Canadian benevolence
8. Muslims and the international narrative
9. What about Justice?: Muslims and the narrative of silence
10. Voices from the Inside: The Acceptable Muslim as insider informer

These frames, which I discuss below, together weave a narrative through which Muslims are situated as outside the bounds of legitimate Canadian citizenship, while a few Muslims, deemed as acceptable by the dominant elite, are permitted qualified inclusion at the boundaries of the Canadian nation.

**Muslims as the undifferentiated Other in Canadian Society**
Canadian media discourse has not shifted significantly away from stereotypical Orientalist depictions.

While the representations deployed may be more nuanced than those used in classic Orientalist imagery, Canadian press coverage continues to represent most Muslims as the undifferentiated Other in society. As Karim (2000) notes, “[c]urrent Northern images of the Muslims as post-Cold War Other have roots in age-old ideas about Islam. Certain basic notions about the characteristics of
Muslims, having survived hundreds of years, feed the dominant discourses of contemporary media.” (p. 55). Canadian media discourse represents Muslims as being traditional, devout, either oppressed (women) or oppressive (men) and threatening (either through physical violence or through challenging the so-called normal values of Canadian society). In other words, Muslims are depicted as uncivilized, somehow different, devout, and as high-risk individuals, who require surveillance by the state and its (legitimate) citizens, with many Muslims (those deemed Other) falling outside the boundaries of acceptable citizenship. Such depictions are, of course, grounded in the Orientalist imaginary of the barbaric, uncivilized Muslim Other who is juxtaposed against the modern, civilized Western body. Said’s (1978/2003) argument of an Orientalist binary between East and West is reanimated by the demarcation of Muslims as primitive, barbaric, threatening, uncivilized, and different, all qualities implicitly contrasted with the supposedly normal West: modern, cultured, safe, civilized.

Just as importantly, Canadian media discourse tends to represent Muslim as homogeneous, as though all Muslims share common essentialized values, traditions and beliefs. Rarely, if ever, do the Canadian media explore (or even report on) the tremendous diversity within Muslim communities, racially, theologically, culturally and in terms of ways of life, a diversity which is more reflective of the lived realities of most Muslims than is the homogeneous portrayal common in media and public discourse. Indeed, such essentialization invokes key features of the Orientalist imaginary – that Islam and Muslims can be described by a series of essentialized, shared qualities – sort of a shorthand Islam to which all (or at least most) Muslims adhere. Said (1981) notes that “…there is an unquestioned assumption that Islam can be characterized limitlessly by means of a handful of recklessly general and repeatedly deployed clichés. And always it is supposed that the ‘Islam’ being talked about is some real and stable object out there…” (p. xi). Muslims, then, are perceived to adhere to an Islam that is homogeneous, universal, unchanging and somehow foreign. Naber (2008) writes that “…the ‘Orient’ was conceived as a traditional and monolithic culture, [and] it also emerged as a place upon which
‘Americans’ could project a Protestant narrative.” (p. 4). As I outline in the next chapter, Canadian media, public and political discourses are steeped in Christian (mainly Protestant, but also in Quebec, Catholic) normative values (commonly referred to as secular), a framework which marks as different those (such as Muslims) who do not subscribe to its privatized notions of faith. For this analysis of Canadian press coverage, what is noteworthy is that Muslims are depicted as a homogeneous community, with the unquestioned presumption that all, or at least most Muslims adhere to certain central tenets and doctrines. Hence, Muslims are depicted as being religiously devout, often displaying overt signs of their faith (head-coverings, beards, praying, etc.), and living according to the central tenets of their faith (usually presented as being commonly-held). Such signifiers (visual and verbal) of Muslimness are often deployed in Canadian media discourse, thereby reinforcing the perception of Muslims as a single community with similar beliefs, practices and ways of life, with most, if not all Muslims, presumed to be devout and singularly committed to religious practice.

The perception of Muslims as especially devout (and certainly more devout than non-Muslims) is reinforced further by explorations in media discourse of Muslim religious traditions (e.g. Ramadan, Eid, veiling, etc.). Such stories are often presented as human interest or special interest stories and highlight these traditions and the individuals who participate in them. Rarely do the media cover stories on issues such as Lent (also a fasting tradition) or foreground the Jewishness (or Catholicism or Protestantism) of other subjects, whether immigrant or Canadian. That such stories are predominantly focused on Muslim religious traditions and/or individuals is a testament to the manner in which Canadian media discourse illuminates the Muslim Other as being religiously devout, in marked contrast to the normalized (and mainly invisible) religious traditions and faith of ‘everyday’ Canadians, who presumably practice and express their faith in an acceptably privatized manner. Such media narratives covering the religious traditions of Muslims (represented as different from dominant traditions) also bolsters the case for Canadian multiculturalism and its so-called tolerance for exotic,
different traditions. Thus, media discourse simultaneously invisibilizes the diversities and differences amongst Muslims (depicting them as homogenized) and renders visible the contrast between Muslims and other Canadians (through the foregrounding of the signifiers of Muslimness).

Significantly, Canadian media discourse about Muslims focuses primarily on Arab/South Asian Muslims, with little or any representations of Muslims of other racial backgrounds. This, of course, perpetuates the stereotype that Muslims are racialized as Arab or South Asian, and that most Muslims are from these backgrounds. Later in this chapter, I examine how some Muslims – specifically, young Arab men – are marked in media discourses as irredeemably pre-modern, threatening and unassimilable. These young Muslims are often marked as being always-already extremist and violent with such characteristics perceived as innate and immutable. In this sense, faith and religious affiliation become intertwined with racialization, and especially certain racial groupings. Despite the racial and ethnic diversity of Muslim communities, media discourse continues to identify certain groups as being Muslim, (i.e. those ‘looking Muslim’), with little or no attention paid to Muslims from other racial or ethnic groups. In media discourse – and in the imagination of the Canadian public – ‘the Muslim’ becomes readily identified with Arab and South Asian bodies (even if born and raised in Canada), with these bodies coming under increasing scrutiny and surveillance. Such bodies, especially those considered threatening to Canadian security, are often referred in media discourse to ‘born-in-Canada’ (rather than Canadian), rendering them both outsiders in Canada and inextricably linked to their (usually Arab or South Asian) ethnic or racial backgrounds. This tendency to depict Muslims as being predominantly Arab or South Asian is an important element of Canadian press coverage of Muslims, an element which ideologically supports state policies of surveillance. In the American context, Alsultany (2012) argues that “this conflation of an Arab/Muslim ‘look’…supports policies like racial profiling; even if unintentional, it does the ideological work of making racial profiling seem like an effective tool when it is in fact an unrealistic endeavor.” (p. 10). Likewise,
Canadian media representations of Muslims as predominantly Arab or South Asian enable and support state policies of surveillance and profiling based on these presumably ‘Muslim’ characteristics.

Muslims, then, are situated in Canadian media discourse as the undifferentiated Other, a figure rooted in tradition and culture, one that is devout, and one that is then juxtaposed against the normalized (white), modern and civilized Canadian. The representations used to depict Muslims are ones which have long been embedded in public discourse: grounded in a (neo)Orientalist imaginary, Muslims are viewed through the frame of whiteness – the “white eye” (Hall, 1990, p. 14) – and situated as an identifiable, racialized, and different Other. In his analysis of race in the media, Hall (1990) refers to the “base images of the grammar of race.” (p. 15). He identifies three stock images of Black people in popular culture: (a) the slave figure; (b) the native; and (c) the clown or entertainer. (Hall, 1990, pp. 15-16). These figures are the foundational elements of the representation of Black people in the media. Naber (2008) similarly identifies three media characteristics of Muslims/Arabs in the American context: the violent, misogynistic Muslim/Arab male, the veiled, victimized Muslim/Arab woman, and the absent Muslim/Arab woman. (p. 37). Likewise, Razack (2008) contends that three figures dominate contemporary representations: “the dangerous Muslim man, the imperiled Muslim woman, and the civilized European, the latter a figure who is seldom explicitly named but who nevertheless anchors the first two figures.” (p. 5). Extending these ideas, I contend that there are three particular figures at the bedrock of Canadian discourses about Muslims. These figures, central to analysis of Muslims in the Canadian imaginary, are: (a) the veiled (or hijab-wearing), passive, oppressed, and devout Arab/South Asian Muslim woman; (b) the aggressive, extremist, threatening, misogynistic and devout (often bearded) Muslim man; and (c) the liberal, modern, integrated acceptable Muslim, one who has successfully privatized (or abandoned) her faith and who supports the civilized Western body. My analysis of Canadian press coverage of Muslims illuminates these foundational figures. In the end, Canadian media and political discourses, by reliance on these
foundational figures, produce certain types of subjects within the body politic: on the one hand, those bodies (both men and women) that are different, uncivilized, and threatening to ‘us’ (both in terms of physical threats, and civilizationally) and who therefore require surveillance, and on the other hand, those bodies that are considered modern, acceptable, and who support ‘our’ civilizational values. This latter figure – the Acceptable Muslim – becomes the boundary marker between those bodies requiring policing and those considered legitimate citizens of the nation-state. In (re)producing these foundational figures, Canadian media discourse, then, reanimates racialized notions of citizenship embedded in Canadian society, reinscribing the boundaries between the threatening Other and the so-called normal Canadian.

**Veiled, passive, and oppressed Muslim women**

Canadian media discourse about Muslims focuses overwhelmingly on Muslim women. As outlined previously, S1 (Muslim women) elicits more than twice the number of articles in the Canadian press than S2 (Muslim men) and more articles than all the searches combined. Such a focus on Muslim women is not surprising, given that Muslim women constitute the newest, and perhaps most urgent, grounds for contestations in the ideological war in the post 9/11 era. This ideological use of Muslim women is, of course, not new, given the long history of Orientalist representations; in the post 9/11 world, the ideological contestations have become more nuanced, with perspectives on gender equality forming a central component to the determination of acceptability within public discourse. Hence, the performance of acceptable citizenship in Western nation-states is predicated, in part, on the issue of Muslim women’s visible (in)equality. Recent scholarship has established the centrality of gender as a key element of citizenship discourses. Notably, Razack (2004, 2007, 2008), Jiwani (2004, 2005b, 2009, 2014) and Volpp (2001a, 2005, 2007b) cogently argue that debates over gender equality in Western multicultural states feature prominently both in discourses about saving Muslim women and in delineating the boundaries of acceptable citizenship. Volpp (2007b) observes that the “culturally-laden other” is crucial to notions of belonging, and that “...the immigrant other must be emancipated
from the group or group values of gender subordination to qualify as a citizen.” (p. 580). Similarly, Jiwani and Razack note that the ideological foundations of the contemporary Canadian nation-state are based, in part, on the notion of saving Muslim women, placing gender at the heart of discourses on citizenship. It is not surprising, therefore, that Muslim women constitute such an overwhelming presence in Canadian media discourse in the post 9/11 era, an era in which public debates about citizenship, and specifically acceptable citizenship, has been vigorous. The overwhelming presence of Muslim women in Canadian media discourses does not, of course, diminish the presence (or significance) of other racialized bodies in such discourses. Racialized women continue to have an important presence in Canadian media and public discourses, their bodies used to mark exclusion or marginalization within the national imaginary. I suggest that the Muslim woman’s body adds to the multiple positionings and marginalization of racialized bodies. In the contemporary moment, the visible Muslim woman’s body has become (yet again) a symbol of the Western civilizing mission through which imperial power justifies its management and control over the bodies of a so-called threatening Muslim civilization.

The clothing choices of Muslim women receive much attention in media coverage. The search code on veiling elicits articles focusing on niqabs, burqas, other forms of veils, Hijabs, and other forms of clothing for Muslim women (e.g. burkini), security issues linked specifically to the veil, and the like. In the data sample analyzed, the issue of veiling and Muslim women’s clothing (code 2) garners overwhelmingly more articles in the four searches than any other code/category, with a total of 1358 articles overall. This focus on veiling and Muslim women’s clothing is, for obvious reasons, most prevalent in S1 (on Muslim women), with veiling-related articles accounting for 1222 articles in S1 (from 1358 total veiling-related articles), with the other searches accounting only for a minimal number of veiling-related articles (71 in S2, 5 in S3 and 60 in S4). In S1 (on Muslim women), veiling-related articles constitute approximately 28.93% of all S1 articles.
It is important to note that the number of articles on veiling-related issues is, in fact, underrepresented as some of the other codes also include coverage of veiling issues and controversies. For example, the categories on multiculturalism and on Quebec reasonable accommodation both include articles that deal with veiling and often use veiling-related issues as the starting point for larger debates on the so-called limits of multiculturalism, accommodation or secularism in Canada and Quebec. Hence, there can be little doubt as to the overwhelming (and disproportionate) fixation of Canadian media coverage on veiling and Muslim women’s clothing.

Veiling-related articles in the data sample appear in all years but are most concentrated in 2006 (186 articles); 2007 (349 articles); 2010 (254 articles); and 2011 (202 articles). These correspond to the years in which veiling-related issues were prominent in Canadian public and political discourses. There have been significant controversies stemming from these issues in the past, debates which continue in the present moment. Key events about veiling in public discourse (and reflected in media narratives) have been an almost constraint refrain from late 2006. These controversies include: veiling and voting (2007-2009 and 2011); veiling in the courts (2008-2013); the ban on wearing niqabs during the Oath of Canadian Citizenship (2011-2015); the expulsion of a student wearing the niqab from classes in Quebec (2009-2010); Quebec Bill 94 which proposed to ban face coverings (2010); the proposal by the Muslim Canadian Congress (MCC) to ban all face veils in Canadian public space (2009); veiling and airport security (ongoing, but specifically in 2010); Quebec’s Charter of Values, proposing a ban on conspicuous religious symbols for those giving or receiving public service (2013-2014); as well as numerous issues related to the wearing of the hijab, for example in sports, or in terms of so-called cultural tensions. Against this extensive backdrop of narratives about the veil in Canada, there were also international events and narratives which served as important touchstones for the Canadian context. Among these were the ban on face veils in France (2010-2011) and the 2006 comments by
Jack Straw, then a British MP and former Cabinet Minister, who argued that the face veil is contrary to British values.

Given the focus in public and political spheres on the role of veiling in public space, it is not surprising to find this reflected in Canadian press coverage of Muslim women. Indeed, the clothing choices of Muslim women are often the trigger point for larger contestations about gender equality/feminism, multiculturalism, values, and secularism in Canadian society. The veil – be it hijab or niqab – is the signifier most commonly utilized to depict Muslim women, and to highlight their so-called oppression. Al-Saji (2010) argues that “…western representations of veiled Muslim women are not simply about Muslim women themselves. Rather than representing Muslim women, these images…provide the foil or negative mirror in which Western constructions of identity and gender can be positively reflected.” (p. 877). Such a representational schema is certainly evident in Canadian press coverage of Muslim women, which often situates Muslim women as veiled (hijab or niqab), passive, oppressed, and adhering to values contrary to (and challenging) so-called Canadian values of equality, secularism, and openness. What is especially significant about Canadian press coverage of veiling is that it focuses strongly on the full-face veils, giving disproportionate weight to an issue which is not particularly prevalent in the Canadian context; few Canadian Muslim women wear niqabs/or burqas, and yet face veils (and women who wear them) receive much attention in media, political and public discourses.

The predominance of veiling narratives in Canadian media discourse illustrates the discursive and ideological use of the veil in Canadian (and Western) public discourses. The veil has often been utilized, politically and ideologically, as a symbol of Muslim women’s inequality. In her analysis of representational schemes underlying veiling, Al-Saji (2010) observes that the veil is seen “…as more than a religious sign. It metonymically stands in not only for Islam but for the putative gender oppression of that religion.” (p. 880). Clearly, the issue of veiling strikes a chord in media and public
narratives in Canada. While some of the coverage is reflective of specific political events (such as niqab in the courts, veiling and voting, niqab and the Citizenship Oath, etc.), many articles and commentaries (including editorials) also use veiling more generally as a starting place for broader issues related to multiculturalism, Canadian identity, security, and values. This linkage to larger debates in Canadian society is especially significant given my focus on the figure of the Acceptable Muslim who, I suggest, is prone to (or expected to?) espouse acceptable positions on issues related to Muslim women. For example, Tarek Fatah consistently and forcefully argues that face veils are not acceptable and should not be permitted in Canadian public spaces. His arguments receive prominent coverage in the media, often at the expense of less vehement, more nuanced opinions.

The practice of veiling (and in particular, veiling of the face) in Canadian media discourse is generally positioned as contravening Canada’s supposedly shared values, such as gender equality, respect, and openness. Such a framing is also evident in public and political discourses in which the veil and Muslim women’s rights are hotly debated. Articles, editorials and commentaries addressing these various debates often situate the face veil as an intolerable custom, a practice which is contrary to gender equality and to so-called Canadian values. For instance, one commentator, writing about the controversy over Muslim women wearing the niqab during the oath of Canadian citizenship declares,

> There is not a single positive thing to be said for the niqab, burka or any other visible sign of one gender’s submission to another. Notwithstanding liberal handwringing about diversity and tolerance, it should have no place - none - on any official Canadian stage…

> …the face veil is a powerful symbol of subjugation or, at best, second-class status. It is an aggressive, overt denial of full personhood.

> It really doesn’t matter how its wearers feel about it. Some Muslim women, including Canadian-born converts and young women who have grown up here, have adopted the niqab in an earnest embrace of traditionalism...

> So what? Their misguided attachment doesn’t redeem what is essentially irredeemable: a tangible public statement that women are less than men. (Kennedy, December 11, 2011).

Conspicuous in this excerpt is that the commentator is so explicitly dismissive of the agency and the perspectives of the women who wear niqab; her statement that “…it doesn’t really matter how its
wearers feel about it” is flagrantly dismissive of the rights and voices of niqabi-wearing women. Indeed, when Kennedy refers to “Canadian feminists and liberals” (2011), she is clearly excluding Muslim women – or at least those who support the right of a woman to choose the niqab. In referring to the niqab as “…an aggressive, overt denial of full personhood” (Kennedy, 2011) and then, in the next sentence, dismissing the views of the women who wear the niqab, she is, in effect, denying the personhood of the very women she claims to guard. Al-Saji (2010) contends that Western representations of the veil are a form of racialization that “…puts Muslim women in positions scripted in advance, where veiling is constituted as the equivalent of de-subjectification – a lack of subjectivity, a victimhood or voicelessness, that these images in turn work to enforce.” (p. 877).

Kennedy’s dismissal of Muslim women – like that of numerous other commentators on veiling – is a form of de-subjectification, in which Muslim women are excluded from a debate that affects them directly. These contradictions stand at the heart of the “eternal triangle” (Razack, 2004): the civilized European body (in this case, Kennedy) seeks to rescue imperiled Muslim women from the barbaric and primitive customs of Islam and/or the cultural traditions of Muslim men. In her haste to rescue the Muslim woman, however, this civilized European body (often identifying as a feminist) fails to account for the opinions and perspectives of Muslim women. These saving Muslim women discourses are undergirded by an element of redemption: the notion that ‘we must save them from themselves for they know not what they do’ operates in these civilizing measures, discourses which sometimes result in the dismissal of Muslim women’s voices. Such discourses are “…reminiscent of age-old Orientalist and colonial perspectives, an echo of those earlier, but equally fervent appeals to ‘civilize the natives’…” (Kassam and Mustafa, 2018).

Numerous media commentators rely on the perspectives of Acceptable Muslims who act as native informers, supporting dominant perspectives on a variety of relevant issues in the public domain. In her critique of the niqab, for instance, Kennedy notes that “…the veiling of women is not even true
Islam, strict or otherwise. As Tarek Fatah, liberal Muslim commentator, notes this week, it is really nothing more than tribalism.” (Kennedy, 2011). Such use of the liberal (read: acceptable) perspective is not unique to this author; numerous other commentators and letter-writers use such views to bolster their arguments against the niqab. As articulated by one letter-writer,

Thanks to letter-writer Salma Siddiqui for articulating what, I believe, many Canadians feel but are too reluctant to say aloud out of fear of appearing intolerant, racist, bigoted, narrow minded, or politically incorrect.

When prominent Muslims such as Siddiqui, Sheik Mohamed Tantawi, and others speak out against the niqab as a cultural form of female repression and not, as many incorrectly believe it to be, a religious requirement, perhaps the government should listen.

With his citizenship stance, Jason Kenney has opened the door a crack and Siddiqui has pushed it further. Maybe it’s time to fully open the door and deal with this restrictive anti-social artifact and allow Muslim women to become full and equal Canadian citizens all the time, not just at their citizenship ceremonies. (Manion, December 17, 2011).

Note the use of the term “artifact” in describing the niqab: the implication is that the niqab is a mere relic of ancient cultural customs, and one which should now be relegated to history (or museums!) so that Muslim women can be ‘allowed’ (can there be a more paternalistic term?) to be full Canadian citizens. There is no willingness, apparently, to listen to the voices of actual Muslim women (at least not those who do not hold acceptable opinions) who may want to weigh in on the matter – indeed, who have the right to express an opinion on the issue. And yet, these rights are silenced and denied to niqabi-wearing Muslim women by the very same commentators that seek to save them from barbaric, oppressive customs that supposedly deny them their personhood. The contradiction is telling, as is the reliance on the voices of Acceptable Muslims in making an argument that might otherwise be construed as problematic or dismissive of women’s rights to determine their own choices. Such Acceptable Muslim voices provide protection of sorts from accusations of bigotry and racism, while providing crucial information (or opinions) that reinforce hegemonic discourses of the nation-state. In Dabashi’s words, they “…feign authority while telling their conquerors not what they need to know but what they want to hear.” (2011, p. 16). This reliance on the voices of Acceptable Muslims is a key theme in the Canadian media discourse analyzed.
A significant aspect of Canadian media (and political) discourses about veiling is the depiction of face-veils (niqabs and burqas) as un-Islamic, a discursive shift towards the discussion of the religious (versus the human rights) parameters of contestations about the veil. This focus on the Islamic credentials (whatever that might mean) of the face-veil shifts the discourse away from rights granted under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and moves the discussion towards so-called Islamic religious requirements. Such a discursive manoeuvre shifts the emphasis away from the rights of niqabi-wearing Muslim women, rendering their citizenship less meaningful, and onto the terrain of (Islamic) religious law. In making such a discursive shift, some commentators (and political leaders) become, perhaps unwittingly, arbiters of Islamic law, rather than defenders of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Entrenched in such a position is an inherent tension: on the one hand, such commentators argue that religious symbols (or at least unacceptable religious symbols such as the niqab) should be banned from the public space, thus restricting rights of religious expression in the public sphere but on the other hand, they rely on religious law (and the views of Acceptable Muslims) to maintain that niqabs are un-Islamic. Importantly, such a discursive shift illuminates once again the tenuous (and racialized) nature of the citizenship rights accorded to those who are not deemed acceptable in the Canadian national imaginary.

It is interesting to note that the issue of veiling in the data sample is not always connected directly to extremism in the media discourse. However, some commentators and media reports do raise issues of security and public safety as related to veils (primarily niqabs and burqas). This framing of veils as a threat to public safety is occasionally used in media and public discourses, with some commentators arguing for a ban on veils tinged with an undercurrent of ‘we don’t really know what they are hiding under there’. Coupled with such undercurrents are random stories about armed robberies in which the perpetrators utilize burqas, niqabs and other forms of face coverings (interesting that ski masks are rarely reported upon!) to commit their crimes.
The issue of veiling does elicit some counter-narrative voices, though these are still in the minority. Such voices frame the debate on the niqab through the lens of human rights, making the argument that restrictions against the face veil are contrary to Canadian values. As one commentator notes,

…Mr. Kenney feels that veils are fundamentally at odds with ‘Canada’s commitment to openness, equality and social cohesion’… But surely neither Mr. Kenney nor an unidentified lobby of concerned Muslims women should be making wardrobe choices for adult women, for any occasion – because that is at odds with Canadian values. (Southey, December 17, 2011).

Such voices are, however, usually in the minority and often elicit numerous responses from readers disagreeing with their counter-narrative perspectives.

Clearly, then, analysis of the data sample reveals that the issue of veiling is an important and recurring theme in the Canadian media discourse. Media and public discourses focus often on the clothing choices of Muslim women, with these debates often igniting further contestations about gender equality, Canadian identity, and the so-called limits of multiculturalism. The contestations over Muslim women’s clothing concentrate especially on the use of face-veils (most commonly, niqabs) in public spaces (e.g. voting, oaths of Citizenship, courts and legal processes, receiving government services, etc.), as well as the wearing of hijabs in educational, athletic and public spaces. Central to these contestations is the fascination with the clothing choices of Muslim women, and, significantly, whether these choices fall within or outside the acceptable boundaries of belonging. These contestations illuminate the contours of the boundaries of the Canadian national narrative, a scaffolding which is often latent, but that becomes visible when challenged. In this sense, veiling is perceived to challenge the civilizational norms of the Canadian narrative seeking to define belonging and exclusion. Korteweg and Yurdakul (2014) observe that “…by challenging established national narratives, the headscarf as a symbol of ‘otherness’ generates conflicts over definitions of national belonging [which]…reveal the continued salience of old narratives of belonging while delineating the parameters of inclusion and exclusion…” (p. 175). Canadian media discourse, through commentaries,
articles and imagery devoted to veiling, reanimates these parameters and boundaries of belonging, situating Muslim women as (generally) veiled, passive, oppressed and a figure in need of rescue.

Supporting and reinforcing these narratives about Muslim women and their clothing choices is often the voice of the Acceptable Muslim, a figure who plays an important role as an insider informer. Such voices reinforce the idea that veiling (and especially face-veils) represents oppressive, regressive and misogynistic (and ‘tribal’) cultural norms, through which women’s inequality is accomplished. It is noteworthy that such Acceptable Muslim voices are most often featured in media debates about Muslim women (clothing choices, Shari’ah, multiculturalism, and the like). This is the realm – in which gender equality is central – in which Acceptable Muslim voices are most commonly featured. This is in marked contrast to the commentary on radicalism/extremism which, while still employing a selection of Acceptable Muslim voices, tends to feature the voices of white scientists, who provide so-called expert opinions on the pathology of terrorism and violence. This featuring of Acceptable Muslim perspectives on Muslim women and gender equality is significant as it reveals how the figure of Acceptable Muslim demarcates the civilizational/normative/ethnical boundaries in the Western nation-state.

**Threatening, violent, extremist and barbaric Muslim men**

Canadian media discourse about Muslim men focuses predominantly on their role in extremism and radicalism, both in Canada and internationally; the image is of threatening, violent, and extremist men involved in radical/fundamentalist activities. In addition, media coverage of Muslim men also focuses on their misogyny and violence within their family lives, a concentration which is revealed most clearly in coverage of so-called honour-killings. I attend to the issue of honour-killing elsewhere in this chapter; in this section, I analyze the media focus on the alleged extremist violence of Muslim men. So-called radical Islam, both domestic and global – constitutes the main focus in 765 articles in the data sample (464 articles on international extremism and 301 on extremism in Canada). While this
number (765) is lower than the number of articles about Muslim women, this total nonetheless is the 4th highest total of all articles (after veiling, multiculturalism and global north), and constitutes an important finding for analysis. Coverage of extremism, both international and Canadian, is most concentrated in the years 2005 and 2006, with an increase in frequency again in 2010 and 2014 (in particular relating to extremism in Canada). The increase in media attention on extremism can be attributed to numerous key events occurring at the time. These events include the London bombings (2005); the arrests of the Toronto 18 and the ensuing trials (2006-2007); the arrests of Dr. Khurram Sher and Misbahuddin Ahmed (2010) and the trials/verdict (2014); the attacks by Martin Rouleau, and Michael Zehaf-Bibeau (2014); and enhanced anti-terror legislation in Canada, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere. The great majority of articles relating to extremism are evident in the search on Muslim men (S2), with 419 articles (of 765 total) appearing in this search. This is not surprising, given that public discourse generally relates extremism to Muslim men, and in particular, a certain type of Muslim man, illuminating the gendered and racialized nature of the discourse. Such a discourse produces the image of a threatening and dangerous Muslim man, who is identifiably Muslim and can easily be recognized. This profile is evident in Canadian media discourse which focuses increasingly on young Muslim men, either of Arab or South Asian origin, often raised in the West, who have become radicalized through the tutelage of a mentor, again usually either Arab or South Asian.

My analysis reveals numerous trends with respect to Canadian media discourse about Muslim men and so-called radicalism.

First, Canadian media discourse on extremism pathologizes Muslim radicals, often presenting psychological profiles of these men, and probing their motivations. As one commentator laments,

What motivated the four young men, all British citizens, to become suicide bombers? And could it happen in Canada? …The London bombers we know about were born and raised in Britain. Yet each was willing to die – and to kill – for his cause.
We’ve become all too familiar with the phenomenon of suicide bombings carried out by young Middle East males with little to lose. But the notion that people who are, in effect, Western Europeans might do the same is frighteningly new. (Butler, July 15, 2005).

Central to such commentaries is the featuring of scientific or psychological experts (presumably white and non-Muslim) about the pathology of violence, extremism or terrorism. Butler, for instance, quotes terrorism experts who claim that “…radical mosques remain the most fertile recruiting grounds for potential suicide bombers in the West.” (D. Butler, 2005). His reliance on psychological experts purportedly supports his overly generalized statements that young Muslim men are “…receptive to the jihadist message because they have become alienated from Western values, which somehow threaten their belief system.” (D. Butler, 2005). He reinscribes the often-stated assumption that “young Middle-Eastern males with little to lose” (D. Butler, 2005) are the primary perpetrators of suicide bombings. With little explanation or probing of such statements, he then quickly moves to his more salient point: that terrorism may now be committed by those who “are, in effect, Western European.” (D. Butler, 2005). Underlying such a statement, of course, is the fear that ‘we’ (i.e. the mainstream public) may not recognize those in ‘our’ midst who endanger public safety.

My analysis of the data sample reveals that such sentiments are common in many editorials and commentaries about Muslim men and extremism: the pathologizing of young Muslim men who, while born in the West, might carry anger and resentment against Western values that could incite violent and extremist beliefs and actions. Jiwani and Dessner (2016) note that “… news accounts suggest that the turn to radicalism is illogical, indicating that those who are radicalized were normal at one time and then suddenly become abnormal.” (p. 42).

The pathologizing of young Muslim radicals is evident in media coverage of the Toronto 18 (June 2006). For instance, one article presents lengthy profiles of the Toronto 18 accused, focusing especially on their transformation into radical young men. The article begins with questioning how “…middle class, ordinary young men – most of them born and raised here – find themselves accused
of such a terrible crime…” (Teotonia, June 10, 2006). In response, the article attempts to explain the path taken by some of the accused towards increased radicalization. Foregrounded in such profiles is the Muslimness of the accused and the search for identity amongst young Muslims. As the article states, “[r]egardless of what form it takes, say experts, the radicalization of young Muslims often begins with a search for, or crisis of, identity…” (Teotonia, 2006). Hence, the commentator argues that while “…[t]he majority of the accused are young Canadian citizens from a variety of ethnic backgrounds…the one common trait is that they are all devout Muslims.” (Teotonia, 2006). In this way, the article provides an organizing frame through which to understand the profiles to follow. What is common in these characterizations is a focus on how each of the men met other Muslims, often already radicalized, sometimes older charismatic men, who then formed a network of radicalized Muslims. While each man’s path may have been different, the article, relying upon experts in terrorism, makes the argument that the common factor is the turn to Islam, especially in the context of each man’s struggle to formulate his identity. Jiwani and Dessner (2016) observe that the presumption underlying media discourse of young Muslim men is “…that radicalization is this amorphous process that emanates from a phenomenon called ‘Islam,’ and is relayed by the Internet. It is as if exposure to Islam results in an alchemical reaction, drastically altering the individual’s personality.” (p. 43).

This, then, is the tenor of media and public discourse about Muslim men and extremism: that young, middle-class Muslim men, confused and searching for a sense of identity, are manipulated and cajoled by charismatic Muslim leaders in radicalized mosques, and lured by the always-already radical tendencies in their common faith, Islam. Such commentaries situate Muslims as undergoing a collective identity crisis, a crisis which is externalizing itself in increased radicalism. Writing about the Toronto 18, one commentator notes,

These ‘born-again believers’…are ‘a lost generation, unmoored from traditional societies and cultures, frustrated by a Western society that does not meet their expectations.’ They are easy
pickings for the strain of radical Islam that has been exported from Saudi Arabia. Religion gives them a way to reconstruct their identity. (Wente, June 6, 2006).

According to such commentators, the impulse behind radicalization is an individual or communal search for identity. Indeed, this overly simplified stance, focusing primarily on either psychological or cultural impulses, is the most common “mental model” (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 14) about Muslim men and extremism in media and public discourses. Absent from such narratives is any exploration of other possible factors that could bear on radicalization, such as political or social grievances, oppression, discrimination, or a sense of marginalization, any of which may (or may not) have contributed to understanding why some young Muslim men might have become radicalized. Such an exploration, of course, would have compelled a more complex reckoning of the Western nation-state with its own policies vis-à-vis racialized peoples, and particularly Muslims in the post 9/11 era; these counter-narrative themes are not often found in Canadian media discourse about Muslim men and extremism (with the possible exception of commentaries by Haroon Siddiqui). Overall, the tenor of media discourse on Muslim men and radicalism is a simplistic one, often probing the psychological or cultural motivations behind the actions of the accused. Indeed, much of Canadian media discourse about Muslim men fixates on extremism, ‘home-grown terror’ and accentuates “…the emergence of a new generation of ‘jihadists’ – a euphemism of terrorism linked to Islam.” (Jiwani and Dessner, 2016, p. 41). Produced by this discourse is a particular type of Muslim man: usually Arab or South Asian, young, confused, angry, searching for identity, vulnerable to radical ideas, and prone to extremist violence. The production of such a figure provides justification for the continued surveillance, policing and containment of those individuals fitting such a profile. Jiwani and Dessner (2016) maintain that “…the securitization of the state is made possible by a discourse of terrorism which pivots on play of orchestrated stereotypes – young Muslim men driven by a sense of grievance, unable to ‘fit in’, and incapable of performing as docile citizens.” (p. 38).
Second, my analysis reveals that acts of violence committed by Muslims are always linked to other such previous acts (and other such radicals) in other places. In this way, the so-called Muslim radical, even if born and raised in the West, is always associated with another place, usually a supposedly foreign place through which his radicalism can be explained. The threat of the homegrown terrorist reveals an anxiety about the racial Other within – that is, within the borders of the Western nation-state. Commentaries about the Toronto 18 often make reference to the 2005 London bombings and other European acts of terror, drawing similarities among the accused in these cases. One commentator, for instance, maintains that there are “…striking similarities between the suspected Canadian terrorist cell, caught up in a Toronto-area sweep last week, and seven British men aged 21 to 34 who are on trial on charges of conspiring to attack British targets.” (Ghafour, June 10, 2006). He does not clarify precisely what similarities he means, except to highlight the faith (Muslim) of those arrested and their age (young). Such commentaries connect different groups of so-called extremist Muslim men, with their shared faith unifying them. For instance, the Toronto 18 accused are often situated as being connected – socially, politically or ideologically – to other so-called radicals including the Khadr family, who are sometimes referred to as Canada’s most notorious terrorist family. By so doing, media discourse frames Canadian extremists as an ideologically and politically related group, one with international ties. Such a premise underlies the paranoia expressed in media narratives that a “…Canadian Jihad is apparently underway.” (Bell, June 4, 2006). By focusing on the connections among various individuals labelled as extremist, and by commenting on the profile of these individuals as “…homegrown...[i]n other words, they have emerged from within Canada, rather than infiltrating it from abroad…” (Bell, 2006), Canadian media discourse produces the spectre of extremist Muslim men lurking in the shadows, always-already violent and ready to express their radical impulses against Western civilization. Such a framing constitutes a moral panic in which young Muslim men are profiled as high-risk and then surveilled in order to mediate these risks. In his analysis of racial profiling of Muslim men in Canada, Odartey-Wellington (2009) suggests that five factors
underlie moral panics, factors which he argues are present in the profiling of Muslim men in Canada. These factors are: (a) a concern that the conduct of some members of society constitutes a threat to social order; (b) the hostility of mainstream society towards members of the group deemed dangerous, who are viewed as folk devils; (c) the presence of a wide social consensus about the risk these folk devils pose, thereby prompting state action; (d) the state-society action against these folk devils must be disproportionate to any actual risk that they may pose; and (e) these moral panics operate in cycles, both reaching a fever pitch quickly and then subsiding as public attention shifts. (Odarth-Welington, 2009, pp. 29-30). My analysis of media discourse illuminates such discursive manoeuvres establishing the conditions for a moral panic triggered by young Muslim men and their supposedly extremist tendencies; these manoeuvres essentially create and re-affirm the social consensus upon which the profiling and exclusion of young Muslim men (now deemed radicals) is based. Such manoeuvres place these men outside the bounds of acceptable Canadian citizenship, hence justifying continued surveillance, policing and exclusion.

Such discursive manoeuvres are illustrated in the following excerpt, which contributes to the sense of moral panic about young Muslim men. Commenting on the court appearance of the Toronto 18 accused, the author points to the alleged connection between some of the accused and Karim Khadr, a member of the Khadr family. She argues that this connection reveals a moral alliance shared by the Khadr family, the Toronto 18 accused, and other such radicals. As she states,

The posse that formed around Karim in his to-ing and fro-ing from court - young Muslim men with their chests thrust out to here - were clearly in tender thrall to the teenager. Perhaps, with his atrophied legs, he is Exhibit A in the professed assault of the West against their faith and their values. He is their tragedy, their undead martyr.

And because the Khadrs are not just anybodies - they are notorious radicals, with thick intelligence dossiers - the suspicion grows that whatever was being fomented by alleged terrorist cadres in Scarborough and Mississauga…may have been even more encompassing, more frightful, than currently portrayed. (DiManno, June 13, 2006).

DiManno’s commentary is illustrative of the tendency to position so-called radical Muslim men into an ideologically connected category, one which can then be placed outside the boundaries of
legitimate Canadian citizenship. Such commentaries often move from making comments on specific acts of radicalism to larger points about Canadian policies on immigration, multiculturalism and belonging. Just as media discourse on Muslim women uses veiling as a means to place some bodies outside the boundaries of acceptable Canadian citizenship, this discourse uses the actions of a few young Muslim men to place these bodies (and others that look like them) outside these same boundaries. As Razack (2008) observes, “the eviction of groups of people from political community begins with their difference, coded as an incomplete modernity that poses a threat to the nation.” (p. 84). In this sense, the figures of young Muslim men – usually Arab, South Asian and/or visibly ‘Muslim’ – are coded as dangerous, situating them as a new generation of jihadists. In this manner, race and religion are conflated becoming, “the proxy for risk.” (Jiwani and Dessner, 2016, p. 38).\(^\text{15}\) Importantly, public and political discourses about Muslim men are underwritten by the implicit assumption that for some bodies (racialized Muslim men), these characteristics (violence, extremism) are not learned, but rather innate and immutable, “…carried, that is, in the blood.” (Razack, 2014a, p. 60). Such assumptions, however implicit, underpin what Razack refers to as “blood narratives” (Razack, 2014a, p. 60), which “…depend on the figure of the Muslim as innately pre- and anti-modern…they carry the seeds of violence in their blood, a latent capacity from which we must protect ourselves.” (Razack, 2014a, p. 61). These blood narratives are evident in Canadian media and political discourses that position Muslim men as innately violent, barbaric, disloyal and threatening. Through such blood narratives – the idea that violence is in the blood, bones and body of Muslim men – “…Muslims, Islamic extremists and terrorists are all collapsed into one category and are imagined to

\(^{15}\text{In an interesting corollary, media coverage uses the wives of the Toronto 18 accused to reaffirm the moral panic about Muslim radicalism. References to burqa-clad women at the courthouse are used often in media narratives, as a not-so-subtle reminder of the primitive nature of Muslim beliefs and practices. One particularly telling article, entitled ‘Hateful chatter behind the veil,’ (El Akkad, 2006) presents a profile of these women and highlights their comments in online discussions. Published sensationally on the front pages of The Globe and Mail, the key themes of the article appear also in other commentaries. The article’s tone implies the presence of a secretive group of Muslim women, with extreme views who do not respect Canadian laws, norms and traditions. It would be highly improbable to find a similar article on the wives of other accused (for example, right-wing racists), and even less likely that the article would receive such prominent coverage. Unquestionably, media and public fascination with Muslim extremism and Muslim women is a powerful combination, reinforcing the moral panic about Muslim radicals, pulsating with anger at the West, and secretly making inroads into the minds and hearts of young Muslims.}
share cultural and social characteristics (of fanaticism and a commitment to violence) that are innate.” (Razack, 2014a, p. 62).

Third, a common theme in media discourse about Muslim men is the framing of these men as immigrants abusing the generosity of Western nation-states. Tellingly, some media narratives refer to young Muslim men born and/or raised in Western countries as ‘Canadian-born’ rather than as simply ‘Canadian’ (which by virtue of birth or citizenship, they are) or even with no listing of citizenship, as would be the case with people assumed to be Canadian (read: white). These supposedly foreign Muslim men are then accused of being ungrateful for and abusing the many freedoms, rights and generosities shown to them. For instance, one letter to the editor comments,

Ottawa’s continuing reluctance to join in a harmonized North American approach to continental security has turned Canada into a willing doormat to all those bent on taking advantage of our inability or unwillingness to protect the integrity of our borders… Terrorists know a good thing when they see it, and to our everlasting disgrace, Canada’s spineless ‘soft power’ aspirations will continue to provide a convenient haven for all those intent on spreading their evil hatred throughout the world. (Bopp, July 14, 2005).

The refrains of Canada’s national mythology are palpable in this letter: the idea that Canada is a peaceful, benevolent country, willing to welcome immigrants and refugees, and that ‘our’ welcoming spirit has been abused. Clearly, this letter-writer believes firmly in the “…tranquility of Canada’s peaceable kingdom” (Bopp, 2005), which is depicted as ‘too easy’ for immigrants. There is no acknowledgement of the ongoing marginalization and suspension of civil liberties of Indigenous and racialized peoples. The narrative is short and simple, situating the immigrant Other as ungracious and the West as generous, benevolent – and now victims of ingratitude. Such sentiments are obvious in numerous commentaries and editorials in Canadian media discourse. Consider the following about the Toronto 18 accused:

The irony, of course, is that the values the accused allegedly rejected in their headlong flight toward militancy…are precisely the values…that are protecting their rights now….

It is either frustrating or inspirational - take your pick - to watch, again, as Canada's most precious covenants are manipulated to justify rancid repudiation of the basic principles we all live by in this country. (DiManno, June 13, 2006).
DiManno’s commentary reflects her double-standard when dealing with Muslim men accused of crimes. On the one hand, she exalts the Canadian judicial system; on the other hand, she openly dismisses the claims of possible mistreatment as “stunning accusations and egregious condemnations [and] huffing and puffing…” (DiManno, 2006). She upholds the legal trials of the accused as an “…extremely conscientious application of this country’s laws” (DiManno, 2006) but refuses to consider whether the civil rights of the accused are adequately protected. Underlying DiManno’s commentary is a sense that the accused are abusing Canadian generosity and multicultural benevolence. Commentaries such as these leverage specific incidents of acts of terror to make larger points about Canadian immigration, multiculturalism and citizenship. Embedded in this critique of multiculturalism, which I analyze elsewhere in this chapter, are the very same figures found in Western Orientalist representations: the undifferentiated, traditional, primitive Other, (in this case, specifically the barbaric Muslim man) and the civilized Western body. Underlying these arguments are the refrains of the Canadian national narrative: ‘we’ (i.e. those that control the discourse) are kind, generous and benevolent, and these insolent Others are abusing our generosity, and that ‘we’ have the right and power to manage the public space.

Fourth, most commentaries on Muslim men and extremism situate radicalism as inspired by Islam rather than by other factors. For instance, Mona Eltahawy, a well-known Egyptian-American journalist and commentator, puts it thus:

Suicide bombings are the Muslim weapon of choice not only in London and Israel but in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. They are killing Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and yet our imams and scholars cannot condemn them.

I never bought the explanation that U.S. foreign policy had ‘brought on’ the Sept. 11 attacks, and I certainly don’t buy the idea that the Iraq war is behind the attacks in London. Many people across the world have opposed U.S. and British foreign policy, but that doesn’t mean they are rushing to fly planes into buildings or to blow up buses and Underground trains in London….

We must accept responsibility for this mess if we are ever to find a way out. (Eltahawy, July 25, 2005).
Eltahawy’s commentary is important to deconstruct as it is based on numerous assumptions, many of which are common to other commentaries on Muslim extremism or radical Islam, assumptions which, by remaining unchallenged, become entrenched in public discourse. Eltahawy is explicit in her condemnation of individuals, both Muslim and non-Muslim, who she feels excuse terrorism by appeal to political or social reasons. She denounces Muslim leaders in particular, but also urges all Muslims to “take responsibility for this mess…” (Eltahawy, 2005). She notably does not comment on why all Muslims should take responsibility for the violence committed by some individuals. That Muslims in general are urged to take responsibility for the acts of a few Muslims is reflective of the burden of representation they carry and echoes a structure often at work in racism generally. Further, by asking all Muslims to take responsibility for the acts of other Muslims, Eltahawy reaffirms the idea that all Muslims are somehow bound together in their allegiance to Islam. This has the effect of rendering invisible the socio-political contexts of relevant to specific individuals or communities in favour of more supposedly universal attributes of Muslims, an assumed universality that is obviously indefensible.

Just as importantly, Eltahawy argues that terrorism cannot and should not be explained as a reaction to Western policies in the international realm, and specifically the War on Terror. In other words, in Eltahawy’s opinion, it is not legitimate to suggest that violence could be rooted in social, political, economic or policy grievances, especially if these grievances are against Western policies. As she does not provide alternate explanations (if such are even possible), one is left wondering if she might be alluding to the (unstated) notion that adherence to culture or religion could be behind terrorism. Such intellectual posturing is symptomatic of “culture talk” (Mamdani, 2004) in which culture (or some variant of it), and not politics, is the de-facto explanation for certain actions. Eltahawy, like many commentators, dismisses, in one deft manoeuvre, the social, political and economic grievances that might be relevant to a better understanding of violence or other acts of terror. Such manoeuvres
render invisible the role of Western imperialism in creating (and sustaining) conditions of social, political and economic exclusion the world over. In dismissing such exclusions, such commentators fail to acknowledge their own privilege in being relatively untouched by difficult social, political or economic conditions; this unacknowledged privilege limits the capacity of these commentators to understand (or to analyze deeply) the challenges facing others. In Eltahawy’s case, rather than presenting a nuanced analysis, she exhorts Muslims (all 1.6 billion of them!) to “take responsibility” in an arbitrary manner, without feeling the need to clarify her position. She makes this argument without clarification precisely, I suggest, because she believes it to be a taken-for-granted understanding within dominant discourse. This dominant discourse produces a juxtaposition of the extremist Muslim Other – angry, threatening and radical – and the civilized body. In her posturing, Eltahawy aligns herself with the civilized body and becomes the insider voice that marks the boundary of acceptability in Western citizenship discourse.

Fifth, and finally, media discourse on Muslim men, while relying on white scientists to pathologize young Muslim men, also depends on the voices of Acceptable Muslims to demarcate the boundaries of citizenship. These insider voices help to strengthen the narrative of Muslim men as threatening and violent, thereby requiring a “casting out of political community” (Razack, 2008), while simultaneously situating some bodies (the acceptable ones) as within the boundaries of acceptability. Such Acceptable Muslim voices reinforce the imagery of Muslim men as threatening Others, bodies which endanger the rights of other (good) Muslims. As Eltahawy states,

The London bombings did it for me. Or maybe it’s the knowledge that the more these faceless cowards strike, the more Muslim men in the West like my brother are pushed onto the stage of suspicion.…

After the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Ehab – who spends virtually all of his time caring for his cardiology patients or fulfilling his role as husband and father – was one of the 5,000 Muslim men questioned by the FBI… (Eltahawy, July 27, 2005).

The boundaries of citizenship are unmistakably demarcated in this excerpt, as Eltahawy says that the actions of some (“faceless cowards”) affect the rights of others. In using the argument that terrorism
promotes greater surveillance of Muslim men, Eltahawy renders invisible the role of the state in developing and advancing racialized, discriminatory and violent practices. She blames enhanced surveillance of Muslim men on suicide bombers and not on the policies and practices of the states that engage in such racial profiling. Her silence on the systemic nature of racial profiling and surveillance, and the violation of civil rights of Muslims in Western countries is deafening, and this silence reflects her denial of the violence inflicted on the lives of Muslims. Such violations of rights and the reality of violence against Muslims underlines how Muslims (or at least the bad ones) are situated as the quintessential Other, seen to be bound by primitive traditions and culture, and treated as bodies to be contained or, if necessary, expelled. As Razack (2008) notes, “…Muslims are stigmatized, put under surveillance, denied full citizenship rights, and detained in camps on the basis that they are a pre-modern people located outside of reason, a people against whom a secular, modern people must protect themselves.” (p. 174).

The perspectives of Acceptable Muslims are also evident in commentaries about assimilation and integration of Muslims in Western societies. Eltahawy argues, for example, that both mainstream society and immigrants have mutual responsibilities for integration and that “…it is not bigoted to ask Muslims if they are integrating into the societies they are living in.” (Eltahawy, July 27, 2005). Her stance is abundantly clear: Muslims who choose to maintain public expression of their faith (e.g. praying during work hours) are not integrating into Western society. Her argument is that immigrants (and, of course, she assumes that all Muslims in Western countries are immigrants) must bear some responsibility towards the host country. There is little acknowledgment of the possibility that some groups could legitimately be advocating for their own rights, a principle that is supposedly valued in free societies. Nor is there any examination of the nature of Western secularism, in which certain expressions of faith are more valued (and normalized) than others. Significantly, Eltahawy places the responsibility of non-integration primarily on Muslim immigrants: there is no recognition of British
(or Western) policies that marginalize Muslims, especially in the post 9/11 era. She argues that these immigrants (again, note that not all British Muslims are immigrants as some are born and raised in Britain) are perpetuating age-old customs and traditions. The imagery is an Orientalist one in which bad Muslims are those who refuse to be liberated from the grasp of their ancient cultures and traditions. In this formulation, the values of those primitive traditions do not evolve with modernity and are contrary to the modernist perspective that Eltahawy embodies. In this modernist perspective, good Muslims are those willing to be modernized, and express their cultures and traditions in acceptable ways in the Western context. Again, such a discourse produces a primitive, traditional, different, and racialized Other, juxtaposed against the normalized, civilized, legitimate and acceptable citizen.

Acceptable Muslim perspectives illuminate both the boundaries of, and the differential subjecthoods embedded in, the national imaginary. Produced through such media narratives is a Muslim man, usually Arab or South Asian, who is perceived to be innately violent, extremist and barbaric, a man who, whether born in the West or an immigrant, is depicted as a threat to Western civilization. Such a racialized and threatening subject must be contained and excluded from the public sphere. Juxtaposed against this threatening Muslim body is the civilized (usually white) body who is perceived as modern, rational and secular, a body who is empowered to manage and control the public space. Such differential subjecthoods reinforce the racialized boundaries of Canadian citizenship and the figure of the Acceptable Muslim stands at these boundaries, carving out a space from which this racialized citizenship is reanimated, and from which they can “accumulate nationality.” (Hage, 2000, p. 52). Such perspectives expose the dichotomy between the good and the bad Muslim (Mamdani, 2004), in which the good Muslim is perceived to be willing to be modern and ‘like us’ while the bad Muslim refuses to be liberated from his/her ancient customs and traditions. The voices of the
Acceptable Muslims are deployed in Canadian media and public discourses to reanimate these taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in the Canadian national imaginary.

In summary, Canadian media discourses about Muslim men focus predominantly on extremism, radicalism, and violence. What is produced by such discourses is the imagery of Muslim men, often young, and mostly Arab or South Asian, who are situated (by virtue of characteristics in their blood, bones and bodies) as threatening to Western civilization. In the wake of the arrests of the Toronto 18 – indeed, in the wake of other activities by so-called extremists, including the later arrests of other Canadian Muslims in 2010 and 2014 – Canadian media discourse engaged in intense debates about extremism, home-grown terrorism, the limits of multiculturalism, and the increasing radicalization of young Canadian Muslims. The figure of the angry, threatening, violent Muslim male undergirds these contestations in public and political discourses, already grounded in Orientalist imagery. If, as blood narratives (Razack, 2014a) assume, Muslims share innate and immutable characteristics (including presumed barbarism, threatening and violent behaviour, and disloyalty to the West), then the surveillance and policing of these bodies becomes yet more critical; these policing measures are often justified by reference to the security of Canadians. The marking of Muslims as innately treacherous unmistakably positions these bodies as outside the boundaries of acceptability, with only a minority (the good ones) able to be rescued into civility. In either case – that of the irredeemably disloyal Muslim with the “latent capacity for violence” (Razack, 2014a, p. 63) or the possibly assimilable Muslim – the West continues to be situated as the benevolent, superior power. As Razack (2014a) observes “…[e]ach narrative enables white citizens to feel that they are the normative citizens who must defend themselves against racialized groups or who must engage in saving…[those] who are salvageable.” (p. 61). Media narratives about threatening, extremist and violent Muslim men promote greater public and political support for increased surveillance, anti-terrorism measures, and stricter controls and policing of immigrant and racialized bodies, especially bodies matching the targeted
profile. Crucial to the strengthening of public support for such measures is, of course, a strong media narrative about the dangerous threat supposedly posed by Muslim men, creating the sense that the extremists are joined in a so-called “moral alliance” (DiManno, June 13, 2006), and suggesting that such radicalism is possibly spreading amongst young (perhaps impressionable) Canadian Muslims. As Van Dijk states, “[c]ontrol of public discourse is control of the mind of the public, and hence, indirectly, control of what the public wants and does. One needs no coercion if one can persuade, seduce, indoctrinate or manipulate people.” (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 14). Such narratives about extremism, both Canadian and international, are crucial to the enhancement of the mental models and frames in media discourse, and how such discourses about Muslims, and Muslim men in particular, shape and define public consciousness.

The (often invisible) knight saving Muslim women
Canadian media discourse about Muslim women underlines the rescue motif in which Muslim women are oppressed by their religion and culture (and the men within these) and are powerless to extricate themselves from these patriarchal, misogynistic traditions. Jiwani (2009) posits that such “…a rescue mission produces and reproduces the chivalric code of masculinity that is the inverse of the hard power of the security state…. [and] redeems their dominative masculinity by being ‘good men’ protecting their women within the homeland and rescuing helpless maidens outside it.” (p. 729). Such a chivalric code of masculinity is an important element in reinforcing the power of the state, both in policies of conquest and empire-building, as well as in domestic policies regulating the conduct of Others within the body politic. Through such policies, the benevolence (and power) of the normalized, naturalized and often invisible legitimate citizen is reaffirmed. The knights in shining armour – usually white and, as I contend, also Acceptable Muslims – are the rescuers, who attempt to free Muslim women from the so-called limits of their cultures and religious traditions. These knights have included both genders in recent years, as liberal feminists have joined their ranks.
My analysis of Canadian press coverage of Muslims reveals that Muslim women, in addition to being seen as veiled, passive and oppressed, are also framed as being in need of rescue from dangerous Muslim men. This is accomplished through stories about veils and headcoverings (in particular, the niqab but also sometimes the hijab) as well as through a focus on violence directed specifically at Muslim women. As I have discussed above, veiling-related articles and commentaries situate Muslim women as needing to be freed from the veil and its so-called oppressive meaning. In this sense, the veil (and especially the niqab) are imbued with an apriori meaning – always-already oppressive – with little or no input from Muslim women. The veil receives much attention in Canadian media, public and political discourses, an attention disproportionate to the actual influence of the niqab on the lives of Canadian Muslim women. That veiling elicits such vociferous commentary – often igniting intense debates about Canadian identity – is an indication that this coverage is not necessarily about the veil itself, but its purported meanings.

The commentary about veiling in Canadian media discourse situates Muslim women as requiring rescue from oppressive cultural and religious traditions, in which they (presumably) have no voice. Such a positioning is embedded in Orientalist imaginaries, in which Muslim women are represented as veiled, voiceless, and passive, bound by oppressive traditions. Canadian press coverage of Muslim women does not shift away significantly from such Orientalist discourses; indeed, commentaries about veils more often reaffirm such a positioning of Muslim women, albeit in a more contemporary setting. The essential focus of such commentaries remains grounded in the idea that many or most Muslim women wear veils or headcoverings and require the intervention of civilized bodies, who adhere to a superior (and modern) set of values, traditions and practices. Embedded in such commentaries is the “eternal triangle” (Razack, 2007, p. 5), consisting of the imperiled Muslim woman, the dangerous Muslim man, and the civilized European. This triad of figures is at the heart of many Canadian media, public and political discourses about Muslims.
Just as veiling-related commentary situates Muslim women as requiring saving, so do articles on so-called honour-kilings. Such articles are grounded in the eternal triangle in which oppressed Muslim women are situated as threatened by patriarchal Muslim men who adhere to oppressive and violent traditions. Violence against Muslim women is positioned not as domestic violence but rather, as violence perpetrated by barbaric Muslim men, who presumably adhere to an Islamic code of honour and control over female family members. Hence, violence faced by Muslim women is often represented as cultural or religious, prompting calls for the rescue of Muslim women from such patriarchal and violent men and traditions.

Canadian media coverage of these issues tells a compelling tale of the moral panics about violence faced by Muslim women, and these stories are often grounded in notions of the triad of figures animating the rescue motif. Analysis of the data sample reveal that the stories of violence and honour killings (215 articles total) are most numerous in the search on Muslim women (S1, with 152 articles) and most concentrated in 2007 (53 articles), 2009 (32 articles), 2010 (44 articles) and 2012 (24 articles). These years correspond almost exactly with key events in the narrative about the Aqsa Parvez murder (2007, with sentencing in 2010) and the Shafia murders (2009, trial in late 2011, and verdict in 2012). These cases are the subject of intense media narrative (reports, editorials and commentaries) about the murders themselves, as well as on whether so-called honour killings should be defined as a specific crime under the Criminal Code. With few exceptions, the media commentary situates the murders as being culturally or religiously motivated.

Commentaries in the Canadian press on both the Parvez and Shafia cases are strongly condemnatory of the killings themselves. However, the cases are also framed in particular ways: culture or faith are often highlighted as important elements in the murders. In this way, the discourse highlights “a simplistic bifurcation between the liberal tolerance of the West, and the premodern barbarism of Islam.” (Haque, 2010, p. 80). Embedded in such a discourse is the notion that Muslim women need
to be saved from threatening Muslim men, and that Muslim culture (however defined) is the cause of violence amongst Muslim families and communities. The tone and tenor of media commentary about the Pervez and Shafia cases are structured very much around the culturalist framework (Kundnani, 2014), an approach which posits that there is a clash of values between Islam and the West. While the Parvez and Shafia murders are undoubtedly horrific, and the perpetrators rightfully held criminally responsible, the framework of a clash of cultures is reductionist and grounded in Orientalist imaginaries about primitive, barbaric and misogynistic traditions. Such depictions do little to unravel the complexities underlying cases of patriarchal violence (within either Muslim or non-Muslim families). Rather, such an approach – positioning violence as cultural or religious – simultaneously positions Muslims as the Other, while rendering invisible domestic violence in both Muslim and non-Muslim Canadian communities. Central to these narratives are the figures of the triad: the imperiled Muslim woman, the barbaric Muslim man and the civilized European (white) body poised to rescue the Muslim woman. (Razack, 2004). The triad of figures is palpable in the media narratives about these murders. For example, Wente, a frequent commentator, states that “…we tend to overlook the domestic strife in immigrant communities caught between competing cultures. There are girls like Aqsa all around us, struggling desperately to reconcile identity and religion, self-expression and family expectations.” (Wente, December 13, 2007). Such comments about culture clash are found often in media commentaries about so-called honour killings. As another commentator says,

The murder of Aqsa Parvez is not about teenage rebellion or domestic violence or even immigrant integration failure, but about the importation of a shame-based social construct that places the entire weight of a man's reputation on the shoulders of his female relatives.

Why are we so unwilling to talk openly about this – what are we afraid of?

We need to keep the promise Canada represents in the world, that this is a country where women are defined as full persons under the law and where freedom means the freedom to decide who you will be, what you will put on your body and who may or may not touch you – in any way.

We need to get this message through to immigrants as they come into this country, as their children attend school, as they hold out their hand for that most precious of documents – Canadian citizenship: In Canada, your honour is wholly dependent upon your good treatment of others. (Veinotte, December 18, 2007).
Veinotte’s commentary is explicitly cultural in its framing of the Pervez story; he dismisses any other explanation for the murder and squarely puts the blame on a “shame-based social construct that places the entire weight of a man’s reputation on the shoulders of his female relatives.” (Veinotte, 2007). There is little doubt that he writes of Islam in this framing, an interpretive narrative that utilizes age-old Orientalist stereotypes in which the culture of the Other is unchanging, static and traditional. Just as importantly, Veinotte and other commentators highlight key ideological values of a tolerant, benevolent Western society, features which are exalted in contrast to the traditions of the Other. Many commentators, including Veinotte and Wente, illuminate a narrative in which Muslim women are imperiled, and at risk of violence – physical, mental, emotional or symbolic – at the hands of Muslim men. And, riding to the rescue, are the (Western) knights in shining armour. The tenacious triad is once again mobilized in such commentaries. The only complication, for Veinotte, as for some others, is the diversity of opinion amongst feminists. He contends that feminists who disagree with his perspective – he refers to them as the “loudest silencers” (Veinotte, 2007) – are simply “apologizing for the abuse Muslim women endure daily the world over.” (Veinotte, 2007). Such feminists, he scoffs, are simply forgetting that the “feminist movement is a political movement, not one of human rights” (Veinotte, 2007), a comment which is as confusing as it is contradictory. Such a statement alludes to the tensions between and amongst feminists around gender equity and religious rights (an issue I discuss elsewhere in this chapter). A juxtaposition of these seemingly contradictory rights is central to the discourse that claims to save Muslim women from their oppressive conditions. In the process, some avowed feminists silence the voices of the Muslim women they claim to save.

Just as in the case of Aqsa Pervez, media discourse about the Shafia case illuminates the contours of the public discourse regarding these murders. Like in the Pervez case, the narrative is framed by the notion that such violence is culturally rooted, rather than embedded in patriarchal societies; Muslims,
therefore, are perceived as unassimilable in Western society. Raheel Raza (who I suggest is an Acceptable Muslim) argues,

Following the recent case in Kingston, where three sisters and their stepmother were killed, there is the usual denial by individuals and organizations about use of the term ‘honour killings’…. It is misguided to ignore the rise in such cases out of the fear that doing otherwise would tarnish [sic] the community image. So people sweep this problem under the carpet and if there is insistence from outside the Muslim community, they raise the red flag of Islamophobia. This has stifled all debate and discussion about honour killings.

Honour killings are mostly perpetuated by males of a family against young women for not conforming to their rules and regulations.

In Canada, where immigrants are welcomed from many parts of the world, they sometimes bring with them their fundamentalist ideologies in the form of excess baggage – cultural and tribal practices that are alien to Canadian democracy. (Raza, July 28, 2009).

Raza’s commentary fits well within the narrative of the culturalist framework of honour killings, a framework in which Muslim women are perceived to be always-already oppressed. Raza relies on the work of Phyllis Chesler, who often resorts to Orientalist stereotypes, generalizations and cultural framing in her work. Raza rejects the argument that the Shafia murders are a form of domestic violence; instead, she attributes such violence to the “cultural and tribal practices” (Raza, 2009) of immigrants. Embedded in such a framing is that violence against girls and women is endemic mainly to Muslim societies and is somehow distinct from domestic violence in non-Muslim or non-immigrant contexts. Raza does not acknowledge domestic violence in non-Muslim contexts, nor does she elaborate on why she (or Chesler) believe that these murders are distinct from other forms of domestic violence. All she offers is the idea that “…[h]onour killings are mostly perpetrated by males of a family against young women for not conforming to their rules and regulations.” (Raza, 2009). Such a description could just as easily be used for all forms of domestic violence. Indeed, domestic violence in all contexts is very much about the power wielded by the abuser over his family members for not “…conforming to their rules and regulations.” (Raza, 2009). Raza lists various examples of such violence, all of which focus on traditions of the Other and which are implicitly juxtaposed against the liberal and modern values of the West. In this way, the prevailing narrative in such commentaries
reinforces the notion that “it is on the terrain of culture that the distinction between the autonomous liberal and non-liberal subject is brokered.” (Haque, 2010, p. 83). The former, then, become the legitimate citizen-subjects of a supposedly culture-less society, in which key values are universalized, thereby rendering invisible the power and privilege of the dominant groups.

Canadian media discourse about the rescue of Muslim women from the violence of Muslim men frame the violence as cultural or religious, a framing that performs important ideological functions.

First, such a framing places Muslims as outside the borders of the Canadian/Western nation-state. Volpp (2007b) argues that “both cultural difference and citizenship are imagined and produced…[and that] citizenship positions itself as oppositional to specific cultures.” (p. 574). The framing of domestic violence within Muslim communities as an issue of culture or religion reinforces the notion that some bodies – in this case, Muslims – exist outside of the boundaries of Western citizenship. This is true both of Muslim men, who are positioned as barbaric and misogynistic and of Muslim women who refuse to be liberated from the confines of their cultural norms. A citizen, says Volpp, “…is assumed to be modern and motivated by reason; the cultural other is assumed to be traditional and motivated by culture.” (2007b, p. 574). The framing of domestic violence as a cultural issue, therefore, reinforces the notion that Muslims fall outside the boundaries of citizenship.

Second, the framing of domestic violence as a cultural issue reanimates the figures of the eternal triangle: the imperiled Muslim woman, the threatening Muslim man and the civilized European. The triad of figures is apparent in numerous commentaries about violence against Muslim women. Such a depiction situates violence against Muslim women as being an attribute of culture and religion rather than one of patriarchy and power. These so-called cultural explanations reinforce Orientalist notions of Muslim culture (as though there is only one culture amongst the 1.6 billion Muslims) as being primitive, violent and patriarchal, clearly different from the culture(s) of dominant groups. This triad
of figures – embedded in cultural explanations for violence – is central to perpetuating these Orientalist discourses and to reinforcing racialized and gendered notions of citizenship and belonging. The triad is crucial to the exaltation of Western values and to reinforcing the sense of benevolence felt by the Western body that s/he is superior and can rescue Muslim women. Underlying such a narrative is a fantasy of white space in which the “…the Third world-looking migrant is relegated to the position of a national object to be governed by the eternally worried White national subject.” (Hage, 2000, p. 233).

Third, a cultural frame for domestic violence enables a discursive shift through which domestic violence, assigned to culture rather than to patriarchy, becomes a feature predominantly of the Other, rather than of all societies. Rendered invisible in such a framing is the violence faced by all women, including non-Muslims in Canada; this violence, like that faced by Muslim women, is rooted in patriarchy, not culture.

Fourth, situating domestic violence as an issue of the cultural Other – and engaging in a moral panic about it – renders invisible other forms of violence faced by Muslim women (and their children, partners and families). Such violence is structural and systemic, and includes, among other issues, racism, oppression, Islamophobia, racial profiling, surveillance, sexism, and discrimination in education, employment, legal and social service sectors. These issues entail both physical and symbolic violence against Muslim communities in Canada; these are not, however, commonly mentioned or addressed in Canadian media, public or political discourses. Rather, media discourse more commonly engages in moral panics over specific incidents of violence (which, of course, should be condemned) in which Muslims are the victims or the perpetrators. Such a cultural framing fails to address the symbolic violence inherent in the saving discourse, in which the voices and perspectives of Muslim women are so often dismissed and ignored, drowned out by efforts to rescue them.
Muslims as symbolic of the failure of multiculturalism

In Canadian media, public and political discourses, Muslims are represented as symbolic of the so-called failure of multiculturalism, their very presence as publicly religious subjects testifying to the challenges of multiculturalism policy and practice. The data sample includes 1145 articles (all searches) that deal with Muslims and multiculturalism, representing 14.32% of all articles. This total number is second only to veiling-related articles in the search. While the concentration of commentaries on Muslims and multiculturalism is most evident in S4 (417 articles, 35.9% of all S4 articles), the theme of multiculturalism is evident in all searches (S1, 537 articles, 12.71% of all S1 articles; S2, 121 articles, 5.87% of all S2 articles; and S3, 70 articles, 12.96% of all S3 articles). Hence, in numerical terms, S1 (Muslim women) contains the highest number of articles about multiculturalism, even though the concentration of these articles is most evident in S4. The code for multiculturalism includes articles about Muslims and multiculturalism including issues of accommodation, limits of multiculturalism, diversity, ‘our’ values, secularism, Canadian identity, citizenship, religious freedoms, polygamy and sexuality (especially as related to rights). The commentaries often begin with one issue (for example, veiling, extremism, Quebec’s reasonable accommodation, so-called honour-kilings) but move to a discussion of the limits of multiculturalism and tolerance in Canada. It is significant to note that all four searches have moderately high percentages of articles coded as being about multiculturalism and hence, this issue is clearly an important one for Canadian media discourse. Commentaries in the data sample about Muslims and multiculturalism encompass a number of key themes, which I present below.

First, media commentaries underline the notion of a benevolent Canadian society – what one commentator calls the “…gentle tolerance for which the nation is justly famous.” (Ferguson, 2006). Numerous commentaries argue that this benevolent tolerance is being tested by the traditional beliefs and practices of its recent immigrants. Such traditional practices are often attributed to an entire faith or culture, calling to mind the notion of “culture talk.” (Mamdani, 2004). One commentator
enumerates such traditions, situating them as barbaric, in contrast to his opinion of Canada’s values. As he states, “In the Muslim world, they include forced marriages, honour killings, and discriminatory divorce laws – not to mention arbitrary executions under the Taliban… Shouldn’t we in the West, women in particular, speak out strongly against such barbarities?..” (Ferguson, November 16, 2006). Evident in this excerpt is the notion that ‘they’ (the undifferentiated, collective mass of Muslims) are barbaric because of such traditional practices – he lists them as existing (and always-already existing) within the Muslim world (although he does not define this term). There is no acknowledgement of the diversity within Muslim communities, simply the assertion that presumably all, or at least most, Muslims practice these barbaric customs. Perhaps just as importantly, there is no analysis of the social, political, economic, or other contexts underlying said traditional practices – simply put, Ferguson posits that culture is the only underlying factor behind such practices and that such traditions should not be tolerated in Canada. Ferguson acknowledges the critiques of “…academic feminists who argue that ‘mainstream’ Canadian values are similarly flawed and Canadian women are still battered and abused as unpaid, child-rearing drudges.” (Ferguson, 2006). However, he dismisses these critiques by saying “…it’s easy to find fault in the way Canadians live. But it’s hard to find anyone, anywhere else in the world doing it better. So why the heck shouldn’t we call it as we see it?” (Ferguson, 2006). Dismissing these critiques, Ferguson returns to his key point: that Canada is benevolent, tolerant and that ‘we’ need to stand firm against the barbarism of the Muslim Other. It is not difficult to discern which bodies are perceived in this configuration as the ‘we’ who are considered benevolent and which bodies positioned as barbaric outsiders. Such a focus on the benevolence and tolerance of Canadian society is a key theme in the commentaries about multiculturalism in Canadian media discourse.

Second, while multiculturalism is viewed as a good and noble idea, many commentators suggest that tolerance has been abused in contemporary times, especially by immigrants who push the boundaries
of ‘our’ tolerance. In this way, commentators often link multiculturalism with immigration, implying that more recent immigrants (often from Muslim-majority countries) are at the root of current challenges in the Canadian public sphere. Some commentators advocate stricter policies and stronger restrictions against immigration, ostensibly to protect both Canadian security and its sense of identity. For instance, one commentator states, “no one can turn back the clock on immigration, though we can and must do a better job of screening newcomers and deporting those who arrive illegally.” (Spector, June 12, 2006). Calls for stricter immigration policies are sometimes coupled with arguments urging more cohesive integration of immigrants, invoking notions of Canadian identity. As Spector suggests, “…over time, integration and, yes, assimilation will proceed, albeit perhaps more slowly than with previous waves of immigration. In the meantime, we should spare no effort to reinforce our sense of citizenship and common values.” (Spector, 2006). Such commentaries promote a nebulous idea of Canadian values with little or no clear articulation of what this might mean. These narratives reproduce and reanimate the fantasy of white space in which notions of Canadian identity or Canadian values (or ‘Old Stock Canadians’) are a thinly-veiled reference to the values embedded in dominant discourse, which are invariably based on white, Protestant norms.

These discourses of whiteness are apparent in many commentaries about multiculturalism in Canadian media discourse. A series of essays by Robert Sibley and published in Canadian newspapers illuminates some of the key assumptions, themes and tensions underlying discourses on Muslims and Canadian multiculturalism. Sibley’s commentary is a rich tapestry of key themes prevalent in the discourses about multiculturalism on the Canadian landscape. Implicit in his commentaries are numerous assumptions, many of which are prevalent in mainstream public discourse. These assumptions, relying on “tolerance talk (Brown, 2006, p. 2), illuminate how whiteness is embedded in contemporary multiculturalist discourse. Sibley argues, for example, that

The virtue of tolerance has been much abused in recent decades…genuine toleration is a hard-won habit. It is not easy to put up with views, values and activities of those with whom we
disagree, and of whom we might even disapprove. Yet...toleration, rightly understood, is a necessary precondition for any stable, orderly and decent way of life.... Unfortunately, this minimalist concept of toleration is not good enough nowadays.... One result...has been the inflation of tolerance into hyper-toleration; that is, extreme toleration in which all lifestyles, beliefs, cultural practices and moral claims are, in theory, recognized, esteemed and validated because all are equal...(Sibley, May 19, 2008).

Sibley argues that ‘we’ (read: white Canadians) are too tolerant of the demands of minority groups; the feeling is that tolerance, while a virtue, has been abused in recent years. It is telling that Sibley, like many commentators, uses the term tolerance as a defining feature of Canadian multiculturalism; tolerance, while seemingly benevolent, embeds elite power dynamics at the heart of society. Brown (2006) suggests that “tolerance is invoked as a liberal democratic principle but for what is named in the cultural domain, a domain that comprises all essentialized identities, from sexuality to ethnicity, that produce the problem of difference within contemporary liberalism.” (p. 23). Hence, tolerance is “always conferred by the dominant, [and]...is always a certain expression of domination even as it offers protection or incorporation to the less powerful.” (Brown, 2006, p. 178). Tolerance discourse, while posing as a neutral value, is, in fact, a deeply ideological framework and one which renders invisible the power relations that structure society. Zine (2012b) comments that “Canada has evolved historically from a society of white settlers to a society of ‘settled whiteness’ where white, Christian, Eurocentric norms and ideals are still hegemonic.... In this context, multicultural difference is often seen as a disruptive rather than a harmonizing feature of society.” (p. 46). Tolerance discourse, then, is a discursive mechanism through which hegemonic norms are naturalized and rendered invisible (as universal values) while the norms of the Other are either incorporated as tolerable (if such norms are acceptable) or relegated outside the bounds of acceptability. The power to tolerate also includes the power not to tolerate, and this power resides with the hegemonic elite. This power to tolerate (or not) is at the heart of the Canadian multiculturalist narrative, a discourse rooted in the fantasy of white space. Hage (2000) refers to this power as the sense of “governmental belonging” (p. 46), through
which the national manager feels entitled to manage decisions (or the Other) as stewards of the public sphere.

Third, many commentators about Muslims and multiculturalism are grounded in the belief that acceptance and tolerance are fundamentally Western values. Many commentators, including Sibley, attribute toleration to “the political and social traditions of [a] Western European heritage”. (Sibley, 2008). Building his argument on this (contested) assumption, Sibley ignores that societies other than those of Western Europe have long histories of successfully living with, and thriving on, diversity and diverse ways of life. Those histories are silenced in Sibley’s narrative, in which only the traditions of Western Europe are exalted. In Sibley’s essay, it is as if Western European ideals and traditions are the only source of enlightenment, political maturity, acceptance (he would use the word ‘tolerance’) of diversity, and societal harmony. The Orientalist and imperialist strains of the argument are distinct: the Western saviour, with his maturity, tolerance and knowledge must civilize the barbaric Other who otherwise would be left in the political and social wilderness. It is noteworthy that many commentators structure the debate about Muslims and multiculturalism by establishing a juxtaposition between gender equality and religious rights. Such a framework demarcates the boundary between those who are deemed modern (and uphold gender equality) and those deemed primitive (and advocate for religious rights). This binary, which I analyze elsewhere in this chapter, is central to reanimating the racialized boundaries of acceptable Canadian citizenship.

Fourth, in discussing Muslims and multiculturalism, many commentators make selective use of Canadian history, completely erasing its colonial foundations, and instead, exalt Western European values as the pinnacle of enlightenment. As Sibley comments, “Canada’s values – peace, order, constitutional government, individual freedom and equality before the law – are grounded in the political and social traditions of its Western European heritage.” (Sibley, 2008). Never once does Sibley reference the fact that these values are grounded in a racist and colonialist history – that the
very heritage in question is based on the expropriation of Indigenous land and property, or that physical and cultural genocide are central elements of the conquest, exploitation and (continuing) settlement of Indigenous lands. This use of history is highly selective and does not acknowledge the fundamental contradictions inherent in Canadian history or society. Perhaps just as importantly, most commentators do not acknowledge that the values they exalt (for example, peace, order, individual freedom, equality, constitutional government) are, in fact, contested terrain; there are countless Canadians who can attest to the racialized nature of exclusion from these very values that these commentators describe and take for granted. Commentaries on Muslims and multiculturalism, therefore, are anchored in positions of privilege and speak primarily to those with similar privilege: the ‘we’ and ‘our’ used in such commentaries are clear indications that the commentators speak from a position of exaltation (Thobani, 2007) from which they lay unfettered claim to the rights of Canadian citizenship, and their right to manage all aspects of that citizenship. Clearly, such media commentators are challenged by what they perceive as unreasonable demands from minority groups. In other words, their fantasy of white space is increasingly being challenged and disrupted, and the (white) managers of this space are threatened in their unfettered entitlement to manage decisions in this space.

Fifth, media commentators about Muslims and multiculturalism position contemporary multiculturalism as being not only abused, but also fundamentally one-sided. Sibley, for instance, maintains that contemporary multiculturalism is a “one-way street” (Sibley, 2008) that permits immigrants to “accept only those Canadian laws and traditions that suit their purposes, but to otherwise avoid integration into the mainstream of Canadian society.” (Sibley, 2008). In such a statement, Sibley erases the reality of the colonial enterprise in Canada: European immigrants certainly did not accept the laws and traditions of Indigenous communities living on this land. Indeed, European colonizers created their own systems of law and government which, in effect,
institutionalized their own privilege and power, and centred whiteness as the hallmark of legitimate citizenship. Hence, embedded in the Canadian national narrative are Eurocentric norms, traditions and values which structure public discourse and societal ideas and understandings of, among other things, citizenship, religious and cultural expression. Such analyses are conspicuously absent from media discourse about Muslims and multiculturalism; instead, media narratives situate Muslims as ‘the problem’ and ‘unreasonable’ in refusing to integrate into ‘our’ (read: white) society. At the same time, Canadian society is depicted in these commentaries as tolerant, fair, and race-blind, situating contemporary multiculturalism as one-sided and unfair.

Sixth, some media commentary about Muslims and multiculturalism commonly position multicultural toleration as over-toleration, an acceptance that has gone too far in its accommodation of the demands of the Other. Sibley, for instance, refers to this as “…hyper-toleration; that is, extreme toleration in which all lifestyles, beliefs, cultural practices and moral claims are, in theory, recognized, esteemed and validated because all are equal.” (Sibley, 2008). Such arguments urge stronger protection of so-called Canadian identity, which is sometimes depicted as threatened by the demands of minority groups. Sibley maintains that tolerance in recent years, has become “…an excuse for moral cowardice., treacly invocations of ‘difference,’ ‘diversity’ and ‘mutual respect’ [which]…are a cop-out, the rhetoric of those who have no convictions.” (Sibley, 2008). Similarly, another commentator asks “…to what extent should a society curb its rules and values to ‘accommodate’ religious minorities.” (Gagnon, January 8, 2007). Underlying these arguments is the belief that Canadians should impose limits to acceptance of certain values, traditions and lifestyles (thereby establishing a hierarchy of values), with little discussion of how acceptable values/norms would be determined. The implication is that Canadian society should use the yardstick of Western values (likely, white, Christian and male) to determine the limits of ‘our’ tolerance, and the values to which recent immigrants should integrate. Such a grounding of Canadian values in European history appears in many commentaries with no
acknowledgment either of the colonial roots of these values, or of the differential access that Indigenous or racialized bodies enjoy to the benefits of these (mostly positive) values. Rarely, if ever, does media discourse provide this deeper analysis of the issues that attach to any serious consideration of so-called Canadian values. Indeed, many commentators do not seem to recognize that what they believe to be self-evident truths (that Canadian values are always positive, emerge from a Western European legacy, and are readily accepted by all) are not, in fact, self-evident but rather are fiercely contested. Underlying such a framework of Canadian values is the figure of the white, exalted subject, with the power to arbitrate and determine what is good for the national body politic. This is the “national manager” (Hage, 2000), who stands at the heart of the national imaginary and has the power to tolerate (or not), to express opinions (or not) about the country’s direction and, ultimately, to make decisions for the nation. Such exaltation of Western values is common to media commentary on Muslims and multiculturalism. Featured in such narratives is the fantasy of a white space, in which the exalted subject and national manager has the power to determine the boundaries of acceptable (or legitimate) citizenship. Muslim bodies are thus held up as the symbols of a failed multicultural policy, and ‘we’ (the invisibilized, powerful, European-origin, white Canadian citizen) must restore the sanctity of the white space in the national imaginary.

Seventh, contemporary multiculturalism in some media commentaries is situated as being good when it is soft multiculturalism as opposed to hard multiculturalism. In one commentary, for instance, Sibley suggests that “…recent demands by some minorities have gone beyond the soft multiculturalism of past decades.” (Sibley, May 19, 2008). Such a statement reflects Sibley’s approval

---

16 The values exalted in the commentaries and named as Canadian or European are usually positive ones such as individual rights, democracy, freedom, equality, and the like. Interestingly, these so-called social and political traditions of Western European heritage (a term often used in the commentaries) could also include the violent occupation and take-over (or theft) of foreign lands; dispossession of property; unequal access to resources; racialized, gendered and classist societal structures and systems; genocide; and political, social and economic machinations to maintain the power of some groups over others. Rarely, if ever, are these other, less positive European attributes discussed in Canadian media, public and political discourses.

17 Such narratives about the limits, challenges and presumed failure of Canadian multiculturalism policy is also reflected in media discourse about Quebec’s reasonable accommodation debates. I analyze this discourse elsewhere in this chapter.
of multiculturalism only in its soft (i.e. ‘saris, samosas and steel bands’) version and his dislike of the so-called hard version (presumably greater rights accorded to minority groups). Sibley contends that this “relativistic multiculturalism amounts to a de facto surrender of those values and traditions that are the very source of tolerance.” (Sibley, 2008). Sibley goes further and argues that soft multiculturalism receives public support – he likely means elite support – while support does not extend to the hard multiculturalism of rights. In other words, multiculturalism is acceptable for the elite so long as the power of the “national manager” (Hage, 2000) is not usurped. According to such views, multiculturalism works so long as minority groups only express manageable or acceptable elements of their cultural identity (the ‘saris, samosas and steel bands’ version) and becomes questionable when these groups challenge the hegemony of the white settler (and exalted subject), or his claim to be the national manager and arbiter of all that is good, stable and acceptable. Such perspectives reinforce the notion that multiculturalism (in its hard version) is threatening to the control and hegemony of the Canadian elite, who stand at the centre of the (white) national space. What is noteworthy is that many commentators do not acknowledge the double-standard inherent in such a position, given Canada’s colonial and racist history. And rarely, in their commentaries, do they refer to counter-narrative perspectives that might challenge their perspectives (or those of the elite): in fact, if anything, most commentators quote repeatedly from academics, philosophers and political theorists who emerge from what they would refer to as the Western tradition. Some commentators also rely on the perspective of Acceptable Muslims, such as Irshad Manji, to reinforce and support their views. As Sibley states, “[t]he ultimate paradox, says Manji, may be that defending diversity will require Westerners ‘to be less tolerant’…” (Sibley, 2008). Such use of the perspectives of Acceptable Muslims is a common refrain in many editorials and commentaries about Muslims and multiculturalism, a refrain that allows commentators to make politically difficult statements, rooted in the fantasy of white space (and racialized citizenship) while maintaining the veneer of multicultural tolerance (and sidestepping charges of racism).
Eighth, media discourse about Canadian multiculturalism is supplemented repeatedly by references to the so-called challenges of multiculturalism in other countries, specifically in Western Europe. Commentary about the challenges of multiculturalism in the data sample is focused especially on the United Kingdom, France, Germany and the Netherlands, each with significant Muslim populations. The tenor of most commentaries is a critique of European multicultural policies, and support for stronger and more restrictive policies for racialized minorities. For instance, one commentator suggests that “…there are growing fears multiculturalism protects and preserves every culture – except the host culture…[and] the presence of the native-born terrorist has become the symbol of multiculturalism’s failure.” (Goodspeed, November 25, 2006). Another editorial argues that Mark Steyn (known for his controversial stances about Islam, Muslims and multiculturalism) “…makes a convincing argument that Europe’s garland of multiculturalism is no match for the Islamist challenge… [and that the] London and Madrid bombings are the opening salvos…in an incipient European civil war.” (Drolet, December 30, 2006). Margaret Wente, a regular commentator in Canadian media discourse, echoes many of these themes in a series of articles about British multiculturalism, themes which resonate with many commentaries about Canadian multiculturalism. For instance, she states,

The truth is that multiculturalism – official policy in Britain for three decades – has been dead for some time. It was buried in the rubble of the 7/7 subway bombings. And long before that, it had become obvious that millions of immigrants were segregating themselves into ethnic enclaves and living separate, parallel lives. (Wente, December 19, 2006).

Noteworthy in Wente’s commentary is her clear denunciation of multiculturalism, “…whose core value [is] the celebration of diversity. All cultures [are] to be celebrated equally, no matter how misogynistic, homophobic or anti-Semitic they might be.” (Wente, 2006a). There is little room in her argument for multiple definitions, or a nuanced understanding of multiculturalism; she assumes that her definition is the only (and most accurate) one, and that multiculturalism requires significant change. She augments her point by implying that the Other is misogynistic, homophobic and anti-
Semitic. Making such statements – using essentialized and generalized perspectives – is a discursive manoeuvre to situate some cultural values (i.e. ‘ours’) as superior to those of other cultures. Such a hierarchy of cultural values renders invisible both the diversity of other cultural groups, and the naturalized privileges of the dominant group. Her commentary projects the fear of mainstream Europeans/Britons in her statement that the nation (read: white Britain) is being confronted by “an assertive, increasingly powerful minority that wants to project its values into the public sphere…[who] are not content to live as a minority; it is insistent on its rights, from halal food in hospitals to the right of a lawyer to wear a veil in court.” (Wente, 2006a). Evidently, according to Wente, the nation does not include the perspectives of Muslims living in Britain (some of whom are born in the country) who, according to her, “…are not content to live like a minority.” (Wente, 2006a). She does not consider why those living in Britain, whether born in the country or otherwise, should not advocate (insistently or otherwise) for their rights. Such is the invisible power of privilege that demarcates the national body politic into a hierarchy in which some are more British (or Western, or Canadian) than others. Wente’s commentary, like others focusing on European multiculturalism, provides important insights in the prevailing discourse about multiculturalism, including in the Canadian context.

Wente’s commentary is merely one of many editorials on European multiculturalism which critique the British, Dutch, German and French case studies. Several editorial commentaries connect these European case studies to the Canadian context. One such editorial argues that

Britain has at last awoken to the dangers wrought by multiculturalism, a policy that only feeds intolerance and misunderstanding by separating people into ethnic and racial tribes, formalizing – indeed celebrating – divisions. Whether four decades of multi-culti indoctrination can be easily undone, and the cancer arrested, is another matter. It’s a question Canadians must also face: with recent studies showing a growing pattern of ghettoization of racial and ethnic communities in Canada, and with our own homegrown terrorist plots, how long before this country is compelled to follow the British example…? (Editorial, The National Post, August 25, 2006)

Likewise, another editorial probes the assumptions underlying the multiculturalist project, both in Europe and in Canada, stating,
…both Canada and Britain need to face the fact that multiculturalism, which for both countries is an article of faith, has brought havoc in its wake. This doctrine holds that all minority cultures must enjoy equal status with the majority, and that any attempt to impose the majority culture over those of minorities is by definition racist. It has helped create a cultural vacuum into which has roared militant Islamism – the interpretation of Islam that preaches holy war. Multiculturalism not only creates the environment in which this clerical fascism can flourish but – crucially – also undermines our ability to defend ourselves against it. (Philips, June 16, 2006).

Editorials and commentaries such as these are important features of Canadian media discourses, reflecting editorial choices to publish critiques of multiculturalism, and to fuel (or perhaps to create) the moral panic about Muslims and Canadian multiculturalism. Such critiques of multiculturalism (both European and Canadian) speak to the increasing public and political anxiety about the Muslim Other and the so-called dangers of multicultural tolerance.

Ninth, and finally, the voices and perspectives of Acceptable Muslims are evident in Canadian media discourse about Muslims and multiculturalism. Some of these voices (notably, Tarek Fatah, Irshad Manji and Raheel Raza) make similar arguments about the so-called limits of tolerance and the need for stronger integration on the part of minority communities. One commentator argues that requests for accommodation “never come from moderate religious minorities. Most Jews, Muslims or Sikhs never ask for preferential treatment.” (Gagnon, January 8, 2007). Clearly discernable in this commentary, is the exaltation of the so-called acceptable (the ‘moderate’) voice, and the fashioning of a litmus test of acceptability into Canadian society. In the view of this commentator, asking for preferential treatment (note the term, rather than use of the term equal rights) is an indication of lack of integration into Canadian society. As Gagnon continues “[w]hy should a society bend its rules to accommodate the wishes of zealots who do not even reflect the values of their own communities?” (Gagnon, 2007). Such a comment betrays the subtext that those who request accommodation fall outside the bounds of acceptable citizenship, both because they make unreasonable requests and because they do not represent and are not satisfied with the supposedly more reasonable requests of their communities. This discourse illuminates the boundaries of acceptable citizenship, rendering
invisible the diversity of perspectives of minority communities and naturalizing the power and privilege of those that are dominant in the Canadian national narrative. As Volpp (2007b) observes, citizenship is not a neutral notion; culture and citizenship are inextricably connected. Canadian media commentary alludes to a supposedly culture-free set of societal norms; however, the messages embedded in media narratives are infused with the specific cultural values of powerful groups – the exalted subjects of the nation. Embedded in the notion of the Western citizen, therefore, are culturally specific values which “…mold the values of socially dominant groups into the identity of the citizen.” (Volpp, 2007b, p. 577). Acceptance of such key values is what distinguishes the acceptable from the non-acceptable citizen. Gagnon’s approval of the voices of “…the moderates…[who] never ask for preferential treatment” (Gagnon, 2007) illuminates this boundary.

In the end, my analysis of the data sample illustrates that media discourses about Muslims and multiculturalism provide important insights into how the ideological use of Muslim bodies in Canada underscores a fantasy of white space, a narrative in which exalted subjects retain power and privilege. Threatened by the potential loss of power and privilege, the (white) Canadian subject (as represented in media and public discourses) feels compelled to defend the hegemonic narrative of Canadian multiculturalism: essentially, the narrative is that multiculturalism, well-intentioned and a good idea, has been abused by immigrant groups and that ‘we’ (white Canadians) must impose reasonable limits to ‘our’ tolerance. Rendered silent and invisible in this narrative are the relations of power embedded in society; unacknowledged is the privilege accorded to some bodies, and the differential access (based on race, gender, class, ability…) of Canadians to the rights and benefits of citizenship and inclusion in the national imaginary. Significantly, also rendered invisible in this discourse are the structural inequities built into the Canadian nation-state, inequities that are reinforced by the narrative of the limits of multiculturalism. What is reanimated through the discourse of the failure of multiculturalism is the figure of an enlightened modern citizen and an ungrateful, pre-modern Other, who must be
controlled and managed within the national imaginary. The rhetoric of multicultural policy continues to centralize and exalt the power of the (white) acceptable citizen, while policing the rest, who must either conform to the demands/restrictions established by exalted subjects, or risk being excluded from the body politic. Canadian media discourses about Muslims and multiculturalism reinscribe these supposedly taken-for-granted assumptions and (re)affirm the boundaries of acceptable citizenship in the nation-state. Rather than truth speaking to power, these multiculturalism narratives are really about power speaking to the rest.

**Muslims and the battle between gender equality and religious rights**
The framing of Muslims in Canadian media discourses positions Muslim women at the heart of a saving discourse, pitting gender equality versus other rights, including religious rights. This is evident in coverage of issues such as veiling, multiculturalism, secularism, Shari’ah law (in Ontario and elsewhere), as well as in the debates about reasonable accommodation in Quebec. The terms of this framework are set as “feminism vs. multiculturalism” (Volpp, 2001a), in which the two perspectives are pitted against each other, with little room for nuance. At the heart of this framework is the depiction of Muslim women as oppressed or as “helpless victims,” (Jiwani, 2009) in need of the support and rescue efforts of “chivalrous knights.” (Jiwani, 2009). Implicit in such depictions is the assumption that gender equality is not respected in Muslim tradition (characterized as an essentialized absolute); the obvious corollary is that Western society honours gender equality. Such a framing – juxtaposing so-called barbaric, misogynistic Muslim traditions with presumably civilized and equality-protecting Western values – invariably positions the secular nation-state as the protector of Muslim women and the guarantor of gender equality. I provide a fuller analysis of the secularist claims of the Western nation-state elsewhere in this dissertation (Chapter 4). For now, I provide an analysis of the manner in which media discourse juxtaposes gender equality against religious rights, and, in so doing, reinforces the paternalistic power of the nation-state. I explore some key trends of such a framing.
First, the frame of gender equality versus religious rights is evident in much media commentary about Muslims, but specifically in discourses about Muslim women. Media discourse about various issues in which Muslim women are central (for example, veiling, Shari’ah law, multiculturalism, honour killings and Quebec’s reasonable accommodation debates) is often framed, sometimes implicitly, through this juxtaposition. Such a structural framing is evident in numerous commentaries, editorials, and indeed, in public and political discourses about Muslim women, who are cast as the embodiment of the conflict between competing rights.

Second, the framing of gender equality versus religious rights forces the discussion (whether about veils, Shari’ah or multiculturalism) into binary opposites, each of which is depicted as an essentialized absolute; diversity of perspectives, therefore, is significantly diminished. The framing of gender equality versus religious rights presumes that one can only support one side; the terms of the debate are thus fossilized into unified and static positions. As Volpp (2001a) argues, “what becomes codified are two falsely unified packages one with the ‘stamp of human rights,’ and one without, each of which depends on the other for its meaning and identity.” (p. 1203). The Shari’ah law debate in Ontario provides a clear example of this framing. Numerous scholars have written extensively about the Shari’ah law debate in Ontario (among others, Razack, 2007, Korteweg, 2012, Korteweg and Selbey, 2012; Zine, 2012). My analysis of the data sample reveals that media discourse situates the narrative simplistically as being one of gender rights versus religious rights: Muslim women in this discourse are situated as being oppressed by the patriarchal traditions of their religious or cultural communities. For instance, media discourse on the Shari’ah law debate depicts Muslim men using the tolerance and flexibility of multicultural policy to impose their misogynistic ideas and values on Muslim women, who require the protection of the values of the West, standards which exhort (and protect) gender

---

18 The Shari’ah law debate was incited in 2004 by a proposal to introduce a version of Islamic law through the province’s then-existing process for arbitration and alternative dispute resolution. While other religious communities had been using this process for many years, the proposal to introduce Shari’ah created a furor in media, public and political discourses.
rights. The Shari’ah law debate is positioned as one of disciplining culture which “…refers to the
disciplinary technologies used to produce and reproduce the nation as a hegemonic cultural entity.”
(J. Zine, 2012b, p. 47). Zine (2012b) contends that the “….disciplining of Muslim culture – done in
the name of safeguarding Muslim women – actually secures the paternalism of the state.” (p. 47). In
my own analysis of the data sample, much of the discourse about Muslim women is focused on the
saving/rescue of Muslim women from Muslim men or, as in the example below, from the control of
so-called oppressive Muslim culture. As one commentator says,

Islam stands out among religions that restrict women’s rights. Islamic fundamentalists do not
seem to grasp that Canada is a secular state, where the powers of religion and government are
separated.... Islam asserts man’s authority over woman… Politicians in Ontario and elsewhere
in Canada are challenged not to be spineless. They must stop mullahs who are fundamentally
against equal rights for men and women. (Kanwar, June 7, 2005).

Such commentaries reflect the framing narrative of gender equality in opposition to religious rights;
Kanwar positions Islam (not some Muslim men, but Islam itself) as an absolute, with little room for
diversity. His argument forces the debate into binary opposites which restrict the terms of the debate.
Such an argument does little to unearth the assumptions in the Shari’ah debate, or to question the
“anachronistic spaces” (Volpp, 2001a, p. 1201) to which Muslims and Islam are often relegated. As
Syed (2012) points out in her analysis of the Shari’ah debate, “…both sides were invested in a
simplistic caricature of Islamic law.” (p. 77). Commentators such as Kanwar do not unearth the
nuances underlying the various debates about Shari’ah law. In fact, many scholars (Al-Hibri, 1992,
Shari’ah – by which they mean “historical Shari’ah” (An-Naim, 1990) – is unalterable. An-Naim
(1990) argues that a “modern Shari’ah”, more suitable for contemporary circumstances, can be
developed through the use of an appropriate reform methodology. Kanwar’s commentary, like many
others, does little to probe the complexities of these issues; rather, he outlines an argument which
pits Islam, the presumably misogynistic, sexist faith against the gender equality of a secular state such
as Canada. Nor, incidentally, does he probe the complexity of secularism. By his overt simplification
and essentialization, he reduces both Islam and Canada to simplistic, absolutist essences, a reductive process which erases nuance. Perhaps most importantly, Kanwar’s commentary, like many others, positions the so-called secular state as the protector of Muslim women’s rights in opposition to presumed patriarchal Muslim culture. Such commentators engage in a chastising of Muslim culture, which reaffirms the power of the state to rescue Muslim women and guarantee their rights. In a similar way, another commentator, writing about veiling, argues that

[b]anning the niqab would undoubtedly be considered by many to be an outrage against religious freedom and freedom of expression, not to mention the potential of such a move for further stigmatizing Muslims in Western culture. But ban it we must and face the consequences. Canada is both inspiring and infuriating for its tendency to accommodate alternate viewpoints. We are so afraid of offending, of upsetting our multicultural mosaic, that we say nothing in the face of cultural practices that are at odds with our values. (Gilmour, 2010).

Gilmour is explicit in her framing of the veiling issue as a battle between gender equality and religious (or cultural) rights. She suggests that multicultural tolerance (though she does not use the word) prevents ‘us’ (presumably those of the dominant group) from upholding important values, one of which is gender equality. Her argument to ban the niqab is situated within a framework that forces the debate into binary opposites; there is little doubt about which side she takes. And, once again, her commentary positions the Western nation-state as the protector par excellence of the rights of Muslim women.

Commentators such as Kanwar and Gilmour, amongst numerous others, rely on these oppositional binaries in order to position various debates about Muslim women. Such a framing is immersed in ideological messages. Zine (2012a) argues that such ideological positionings reinforce the “global dialectics of Islamophobia, religious extremism and imperialism, [with] Muslim women…precariously positioned between these competing ideological campaigns.” (p. 279). In the end, this framing positions the secular state as the guarantor of gender rights, a formation which Korteweg and Selby (2012) suggest fixates on the “…presumed incompatibility between Western and Muslim religious values…[and] on issues of gender inequality and the treatment of women within Islam.” (p. 322).
Such a framing also places Muslim women as needing rescue (and a saviour), again finding the ideal saviour in the enlightened Western body (and state).

Third, the discursive framing of gender equality in opposition to religious rights reanimates Orientalist representations of an unenlightened, primitive, traditional, sexist Other and an enlightened, progressive, equitable Western subject. Such depictions are evident in numerous press commentaries which maintain that gender equality must necessarily trump the religious and cultural rights of minority groups. One editorial comments,

In free and democratic societies, our faces are how we identify those we come into contact with…. The niqab and burka are tools of oppression, misogyny and self-isolation based on religious ideology that runs counter to the very liberal-democratic ideals and laws we uphold in the West – the very reason people want to move here. (The Calgary Herald, Editorial, 2010).

In a similar vein, another commentary, using explicitly Orientalist language, states,

The burqa and niqab represent a tradition that views women as sexual objects, temptresses who, with the flash of an ankle, can bring men (weak creatures incapable of resisting this temptation) to their knees. It’s a repugnant value system and I reject it. So should all Canadians who embrace secular feminism. So let’s ban the burqa, the niqab, and while we’re at it, the hijab. (Gilmour, 2010).

Such commentaries position veiling as a misogynistic, oppressive tradition, one counter to the supposedly egalitarian, liberal ideals of Western society. This framing situates such traditions as being always-already oppressive and inferior to the values of Western society. The use of explicitly Orientalist imagery and representations in these commentaries situates Muslim women in need of rescue from oppressive cultural traditions. Such a discourse reinforces the “…the modernity/pre-modernity distinction apparently without hesitation…. Such constructs…fit neatly into the contemporary Western project to mark Muslims as suspect bodies and to limit their citizenship rights…” (Razack, 2007, p. 6).

Fourth, my analysis of the data reveals a deep fissure amongst feminists, a tension around the stark contrasts involved in the juxtaposition of gender equality and religious rights. The binary framing,
whether about Shari’ah law, veiling, or multiculturalism, illuminates the fault lines of a rift between feminists, a rift which is played out in the public domain. This framing of issues within an oppositional binary between gender equality and religious rights requires numerous discursive manoeuvres that position Muslim women at the centre of a saving discourse by so-called civilized bodies, including liberal feminists (often, but not always, white). Some Canadian feminists are complicit in these discursive manoeuvres, arguing vociferously (as in the Shari’ah law, veiling and other debates) that gender equality can only be upheld by a vigorous rejection of the supposedly patriarchal values embedded in Muslim culture. Such discursive manoeuvres are also evident in the reasonable accommodation debates in Quebec, in which the rescue motif is central in the depiction of Muslim women, a framing that deeply divides feminists. As Sharify-Funk (2011) notes, “feminist claims to gender equality are now being deployed in a new context to reinforce the fundamental distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Nowhere in Canada is this dynamic more evident than in Quebec.” (p. 139).

Indeed, in Quebec, this juxtaposition of gender equality and religious rights is evident in the proposals by the Quebec Council for the Status of Women arguing for a ban on visible religious symbols amongst public sector workers. The ban, predicated on the notion that veils and headcoverings (including the hijab and other coverings) are symbolic of the inequality and oppression of Muslim women, is strongly endorsed by numerous women’s groups. In a similar fashion, the 2013 Quebec Charter of Values, proposed by the then-provincial government, received support from prominent Quebec feminists, including the Janettes and retired Supreme Court Judge, Claire L’Heureux-Dube. Key provisions in the Charter of Values included the banning of all conspicuous religious symbols in the public sphere, arguing that these symbols contravene the principles of gender equality and state secularism. Al-Saji (2010) suggests that this linkage between the veil and presumed oppression is a crucial element both of the racialization of the veil and the desubjectivization of Muslim women. She notes that
…the veil becomes seen as more than just a religious sign. It metonymically stands in not only for Islam but for the putative gender oppression of that religion – allowing a continual slippage in…arguments between Islam as a religion and Islam as essentially oppressive and hence problematic…. It is in the latter sense that the veil becomes a conspicuous religious sign. (Al-Saji, 2010, p. 880).

Al-Saji’s argument is crucial in understanding why the debate is framed in a binary relationship between gender equality and religious rights. Without this oppositional relationship, feminists and those concerned about the rights of Muslim women, could not justify the dismissal of the rights of Muslim women choosing to veil. Without this opposition between gender and religious rights, the choice to veil could be justified on the basis of a woman’s freedom of choice or conscience. In light of this binary relationship between gender equality and religious rights, however, “…freedom from gender oppression effectively overwrites freedom of conscience.” (Al-Saji, 2010, p. 880). In this binary discourse, veiled Muslim women “cannot be understood to have freedom of conscience, since their agency or subjectivity has been mutilated by familial or communal forms of gender oppression.” (Al-Saji, 2010, p. 880). While Al-Saji makes her argument primarily about veiled Muslim women, I contend that her argument holds true for many Muslim women, whether veiled or not, who must negotiate this perilous path. This binary between gender equality and religious rights is equally relevant for understanding how media, public and political discourses frame so-called honour killings and Shari’ah debates.

Finally, while there is evidence in the data of counter-narrative voices to the rescue narrative, these are concentrated predominantly in media commentary about the reasonable accommodation debates in Quebec. Such a concentration of counter-narratives about the Quebec debates illuminates the tendency in Canadian media discourse to compare the province unfavourably with the Rest of Canada (RoC). While I analyze this tendency more thoroughly elsewhere in this chapter, I provide a few examples below which highlight how gender equality and religious rights are often juxtaposed. For
instance, one commentator, condemning the proposal by the Quebec Council for the Status of Women, notes that

The women’s council is adamant that equality must trump religious freedoms.... Their definition of equality appears to differ from the version accepted by the rest of us. To the majority of Canadians, equality means the freedom to choose how we want to live, without others putting barriers in the way or denying to certain groups the rights and privileges accorded to others… Just who is oppressing whom here? (Lakritz, October 4, 2007).

In a similar vein, numerous commentators are critical of the 2013 Quebec Charter of Values, situating the Charter as contrary to the spirit of gender equality. As one commentator states,

By banning articles of faith from the public sector, it states that religion somehow pollutes the public environment and should be cloistered at home or in places of worship. More importantly, it introduces a hierarchy of rights, giving priority to gender equality over religious freedom… The priority given to gender equality serves to justify the ban on Muslim head scarves, on the grounds that they reflect inferior status for women. But what if this is a woman’s own personal choice, made freely? And in any case, is this any of the government’s business? …Why would a government take upon itself to define a set of values that its citizens should ascribe to? In what kind of societies does this happen? Certainly not in liberal democracies, where it is taken for granted that individuals are free to make up their own minds on moral and social issues. (Gagnon, September 11, 2013).

Gagnon explicitly names the hierarchy of rights she believes is embedded in proposals to ban religious symbols in Quebec; her argument poses some difficult questions for governments and feminists who persist in basing their positions on the rescue motif. Such counter narrative perspectives are more evident in commentary about the Quebec context, with the frequency of these voices increasing in later years, and especially about the 2013 Charter of Values. For example, one editorial, commenting on the Bertrand letter19, unequivocally rejects the arguments in the letter (which supported the Charter of Values). In part, the editorial states,

The letter…asserts that in today’s Quebec, equality between men and women is being compromised by freedom of religion, it goes on to say that religion has historically and to this day been used by men to keep women in their place. This may be true to a fair extent, but it begs the question how the equality of women will be enshrined by a law that discriminates against some women. (Editorial, The Gazette, October 17, 2013).

19 The letter, written by Janette Bertrand, a Quebec media personality and co-signed by other Quebec feminists, inflamed an already vigorous media and public debate. The letter urged strong support for the Charter of Values, arguing that veils and headcoverings are a symbol of women’s inequality.
These counter-narrative perspectives, discernable in editorials, commentaries and letters to editors, is a surprising finding of my data analysis. Such views, representing a small but significant example of alternative perspectives, focus almost completely on the Quebec reasonable accommodation debates and become more pointed about the 2013 Charter of Values. What is noteworthy is that most of these commentaries, whether for or against these various proposals, leverage similar discourses of gender equality, tolerance and secularism. As Sharify-Funk (2011) notes, “both sides seem to be drawing on the same modern liberal discourse to support diametrically opposed views.” (p. 156). Such an alignment of discourses, even in the service of opposite perspectives, illustrates that the oppositional binary between gender equality and religious rights is central to media, public and political discourses about Muslims. Such an oppositional binary depicts Muslims (both male and female) as inherently opposed to gender equality (which is assumed to have been achieved in Western society). In effect, “what we recognize as gender is already racialized. Western and white, heterosexual gender relations are naturalized by means of the contrast instituted with other forms of gendering…represented in themselves as oppressive.” (Al-Saji, 2010, p. 889).

Despite the presence of counter-narrative voices in media discourse about Quebec and reasonable accommodation, it is noteworthy that such perspectives are not universally applied to similar issues in Canada. For instance, with few exceptions (Haroon Siddiqui being a notable example), media commentators and editorialists do not juxtapose their positions on the Quebec Charter of Values against positions on, say, the banning of the niqab in the Oath of Canadian Citizenship. While one could argue (as some do) that the niqab is fundamentally different from the hijab and other non-face covering veils (also targeted in the 2013 Charter as conspicuous religious symbols), I suggest that the essential argument remains the same. Proposals to restrict the rights of women to choose how they express their faith testify to the power dynamic at work: the forced uncovering and forced covering of Muslim women both rely on the exclusion and desubjectivization of Muslim women. As Al-Saji
(2010) notes, there is “…no subject-position within this debate from which veiled women could speak as feminist.” (p. 881). Hence, the oppositional binary between gender equality and religious rights contributes to a discourse in which some bodies are deemed superior, with agency and privilege, while other bodies (or behaviours, clothing or perspectives) are deemed unacceptable and/or needing to be brought into modernity, represented by key values such as gender equality.

In conclusion, Canadian media discourse about Muslims, and specifically Muslim women, frames the various debates vis-a-vis an ideological binary opposition between gender equality and religious rights. The debate is undoubtedly structured as a stark choice between equal rights for either women or religious minorities, with little (if any) room for nuance. Such a discourse produces the imagery of a modern, enlightened and progressive Western subject, and a traditional, primitive and child-like Other who must be rescued and brought into modernity, presumably by a civilized body or nation-state. The bifurcation between the West and the Rest (even those living in the West) is a significant feature of media discourse about Muslims, as is the active participation of well-known feminists, many of whom maintain steadfastly that gender equality is only protected by the modern, progressive, and enlightened West. In the end, I concur with Razack (2007) that such a discourse helps to “sustain a form of governmentality, one in which the productive power of the imperiled Muslim woman functions to keep in line Muslim communities at the same time it defuses more radical feminist and anti-racist critique of conservative religious forces.” (p. 6).

Quebec’s reasonable accommodation debates and Canadian benevolence
My analysis of Canadian media discourse about Muslims reveals that the reasonable accommodation debates in Quebec form a significant sub-set of the discourse. These debates, primarily occurring between 2007 and approximately 2013 (and revived yet once again in 2017), focus on issues of integration, accommodation to minority group requests and elements of Quebecois/e identity. These debates present an interesting counterpoint to the larger conversations about multiculturalism in
Canada, which I analyze elsewhere in this chapter. In my data sample, the reasonable accommodation debates elicit 597 articles, which comprises 7.47% of the total number of articles. Articles and commentaries about Muslims and Quebec reasonable accommodation debates appear mostly in S1 (Muslim women), with 439 articles, and S4 (multiculturalism) with 113 articles. This distribution of articles reveals the predominant focus of the Quebec reasonable accommodation debates on Muslim women. The concentration of articles on Quebec reasonable accommodation is most evident in 2007 (151 articles), 2010 (49 articles) and 2013 (236 articles). These years correspond to important narratives and debates in public discourse, both in Quebec and the rest of Canada, regarding Muslims and the role of faith in public life.

While the debates on reasonable accommodation began in late 2006 with conflicts between a local YMCA and a Hasidic synagogue, the focus moved quickly to issues of Muslim immigrants and their requests for accommodation. Key events informing the reasonable accommodation debates include the Hérouxville code of living norms, ongoing debates about hijabs in sports, the granting of additional statutory holidays for faiths other than Christianity, issues related to veiling during voting, the Bouchard-Taylor Commission on Reasonable Accommodation, the controversy over the expulsion of a niqabi student (Naima Atef Ahmed) from a college classes, Bill 94 (2010), and Bill 60 (2013), colloquially known as the Quebec Charter of Values. These events contributed to intense debate in Quebec about the rights and responsibilities of religious minorities and whether Quebec

---

20 Bill 94 proposed to prohibit the wearing of niqabs by those working in the public service, wishing to do business with, or receive services from, government officials. The bill, introduced in February 2011, was officially named “An Act to establish guidelines governing accommodation requests within the Administration and certain institutions.” The bill incited public and media debate about the rights of minority groups and the responsibility (or otherwise) of governments to respond to requests for accommodations. The bill did not become law, as the Liberal Provincial Government was defeated in the 2012 Quebec election.

21 Bill 60 or “The Quebec Charter of Values,” proposed to prohibit all ‘conspicuous’ religious symbols for all state employees, imposing on them a duty of strict neutrality. It also proposed to ban face coverings for those either providing or receiving government services. The bill, introduced in November 2013, was officially titled “The Charter affirming the values of State Secularism and Religious Neutrality and of Equality between women and men and providing a framework for accommodation requests.” The Charter inflamed debate about reasonable accommodation in Quebec and nationally, with intense media, political and public commentary on the bill itself, as well as its underlying assumptions. The bill did not become law as the Parti Quebecois government was defeated in the 2014 elections.
should impose reasonable limits to minority group requests for accommodation. Bill 94 (2010) and the Charter of Values (2013) incited particularly passionate and public debates, both within Quebec and nationally, about accommodation of religious communities. These debates were undergirded by discussions about gender equality and secularism, and whether, based on these ideals, reasonable limits should be imposed on religious expressions. Against this background of Quebec-specific issues, other national and international events shaped the Quebec debates, including various Canadian and European debates about niqabs, citizenship, multiculturalism and the rights/responsibilities of religious minorities. Together, these events incited intense media, political and public deliberations about secularism, gender equality, human rights, multiculturalism (or inter-culturalism in Quebec), and the relationship of religious minorities to dominant society. I now turn to an analysis of the key themes of Canadian media discourse about the Quebec reasonable accommodation debates.

First, much like discourse in the larger Canadian context, media narratives about the reasonable accommodation debates fixate predominantly on Muslim women and their clothing choices. This discourse centres both on specific incidents about veiling (voting, sports, in educational institutions, etc.) as well as on more general questions of whether veiling violates key principles of gender equality and secularism. The niqab, in particular, elicits heated and intense debate, attention which embeds (both in Quebec and elsewhere) a “representational schema…whereby gender oppression is naturalized to the Muslim veil.” (Al-Saji, 2010, p. 876). While the intensity of the debate about veiling (or Muslim women) is not unique to Quebec, the narrative has a particular nuance in Quebec where “…there has been a constant ‘push and pull’ between the notion of plurality and protecting the French language culture.” (Golnaraghi, 2013, p. 157). Media discourse during this time is concentrated especially on Muslim women who are “…seen as characterizing Muslim inability or unwillingness to assimilate to Quebec culture and values.” (Golnaraghi, 2013, p. 163). Indeed, through the course of the debates, with increasing efforts to limit or prohibit the wearing of niqabs, Golnaraghi notes that
by 2010, the “…niqab-wearing Muslim woman is portrayed as being difficult, resistant and an aggressor.” (2013, p. 165). Such a framing of the niqab-wearing Muslim woman as aggressor (which is, incidentally, common to Quebec and Canada) resonates with Zine’s (2012b) argument about the death of culture through which Muslim women are seen to threaten the nation. In this respect, “…[t]he difference they embody is an imperilling difference; they are threatened by the barbaric misogyny of their culture and religion and at the same time pose a threat to the sanctity of the nation as a space for dominant liberal, Christian, Eurocentric values to prevail.” (J. Zine, 2012b, p. 54).

Hence, gender equality – perceived as a Western value – becomes linked to discourses about Muslim women and their clothing choices. As Sharify-Funk (2011) notes, “…feminist claims to gender equality are now being deployed in a new context to reinforce fundamental distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ Nowhere in Canada is this dynamic more evident than in Quebec.” (p. 139). Clearly, the figure of the Muslim woman – and in particular, the veiled Muslim woman – touches a sensitive nerve in media and public discourses, a nerve that is reactivated time and again during the numerous Quebec reasonable accommodation debates over the years.22

Second, the debate on reasonable accommodation in Quebec is often framed in media discourse as a search for Quebec’s identity, a debate perceived as being healthy. Embedded in such perspectives are critiques of multiculturalism and so called political correctness, as well as a dismissal of the racist

---

22 On October 18, 2017, the Quebec Government passed legislation (Bill 62) which stipulates that anyone employed by, or receiving services from, governmental agencies, must have their faces uncovered. The Act is officially known as “An Act to foster adherence to State religious neutrality, and in particular, to provide a framework for requests for accommodations on religious grounds in certain bodies”. While there are still questions on the enforceability and implementation of the Act, legal challenges to it have been lodged in the Quebec courts, with the federal government not yet taking any firm position. The provisions of the Act are widely believed to target Muslim women (in particular niqabi women) and numerous protests have been launched, challenging the ban, with some groups arguing that the Act will, in effect, deny services to niqabi women and violate their rights. Public opinion on the Act, both within Quebec and in Canada generally, appears divided. While I have not conducted a detailed analysis of the Act and the various opinions about it, a cursory review of the media discourse suggests that the debate is situated, much like the debate on the Charter of Values (2013) and earlier proposed legislation, as a contestation between the rights of religious minorities and gender equality. Of the four Acceptable figures I study in this dissertation, two, namely Sheema Khan and Tarek Fatah, have written newspaper columns on the ongoing debate about the legislation, Khan in The Globe and Mail (October 7, 2017), and Fatah in The Toronto Sun (October 24, 2017).
undertones of some of the discourse. For example, in discussing the Hérouxville code of conduct, one commentator states

No, no, please don’t roll your eyes. And don’t avert them either. For this crisis would not have happened if it had been possible to discuss issues of identity, and to criticize multiculturalism, without being called a bigoted racist by the smart set, guardians of the PC fiction that all cultures are equally valid.

In fact, I was pleased to see the plucky little Maurice town stand by community standards a country mile outside the norms of so-called polite debate in this society… Is there a bit of xenophobia between the lines of the community standards? Undoubtedly. Possibly a touch of racism, too. Any group of humans is liable to contain some. But it would be wrong to dismiss them as vulgar and bigoted. (Pellerin, February 6, 2007).

What is especially noteworthy about such a commentary is its complete dismissal of the xenophobia and racism embedded in the Hérouxville code of conduct. While Pellerin acknowledges that the Hérouxville Code may have “a touch” of xenophobia and racism, she does not centralize or even fully problematize these in her narrative. She effectively dismisses these as being unimportant and instead focuses on the need for a calm (and, in her view, a healthy) debate about Quebec identity and the integration of immigrants to mainstream Quebec values. She valorizes those who (like the town Councillors of Hérouxville) instigate the debate and refers to them as both the backbone of this country… [and] the ones who are genuinely patriotic. (Pellerin, 2007). Nowhere in her commentary is there a recognition that racism and xenophobia are critical issues for society, especially for those at the receiving end of racist or xenophobia trends. Rendered invisible is her own privilege in dismissing racism and xenophobia, privilege denied to those who face the effects of racism in their daily lives. This privilege is, indeed, at the heart of her commentary: she is silent about her privilege, how it shapes her arguments, and the manner in which it situates her at a powerful nexus in the discourse. Such commentaries, then, illuminate the power of the Canadian elite – intellectual, racial, ethnic, class – to shape the terms of the debate such that xenophobic or racist perspectives are normalized and seen as reasonable, effectively leaving racism and xenophobia unchallenged. Pellerin’s commentary is an example of media discourse that disguises the racist undertones of the debate and shifts the blame to others; in essence, she (like others) argues that the problem is not racism, but the absence of an
open debate. As she states, “Hérouxville is a classic example of normal people who are sick and tired of being bullied into politically-correct nonsense by fast-talking intellectuals, pushing back as best they can. If it creates an opening for racism, blame privileged intellectuals who abdicated their responsibility to talk honestly.” (Pellerin, 2007). In other words, suggests Pellerin, racists (who she refers to as normal people) should not be blamed for their racism; rather we should blame the unwillingness of “privileged intellectuals” (Pellerin, 2007) both to debate these issues honestly and to compel immigrants to accept dominant values and ways of life. Pellerin’s discursive manoeuvres effectively silence those voices arguing that racism and xenophobia should very much be part of the discourse and renders invisible the experiences of those navigating racism and xenophobia in society. Embedded in such discursive frameworks is the fantasy of white space in which the exalted subject (Thobani, 2007) or national manager (Hage, 2000) feels empowered to determine limits to religious accommodation and to boundaries of acceptability within the nation-state.

Third, Canadian media discourse about Quebec’s debates on reasonable accommodation are often situated within the context of Canadian national debates about gender equality, multiculturalism (or inter-culturalism, in the Quebec case), secularism, and identity (Canadian or Quebecois/e). Importantly, media discourse about Quebec’s accommodation of religious minorities is often juxtaposed against similar debates in the Rest of Canada (RoC). Central to such narratives is the implicit (or sometimes explicit) judgement that Quebec is less accommodating of religious (or cultural) difference, situating the province as more racist and xenophobic than the RoC, which is depicted as a beacon of multicultural tolerance. Such a framing of Quebec and its challenges with reasonable accommodation reinforces the Canadian national narrative, situating itself as benevolent, tolerant, and accommodating. This narrative reaffirms the Canadian sense of innocence and lack of complicity for past (and contemporary) racist policies and practices. Canadian media discourse about
Quebec’s challenges with reasonable accommodation reinforces such narratives of Canadian benevolence. For example, one editorial, referring to the 2013 Charter of Values, observes,

If the charter is adopted in the form that many fear it will be, its enshrinement will mark Quebec’s departure from Canada’s well-established consensus on religious freedoms…. Quebeckers are proud of the fact they have separated a church and state that were once interlaced more tightly than the stitching on a priest’s cassock. It is an essential Quebec value. So, what must they do to accommodate in others what they no longer wish to accommodate in themselves?

They already have the answer: Canada. The so-called Rest of Canada has gone through its own upheavals related to religious accommodation…. Canada has for the most part arrived at a consensus in which the expression of one’s religion is protected as long as it doesn’t harm society’s basic values…. This is where Quebec can find its answer… The model is transferable. (The Globe and Mail, June 15, 2013).

Clearly discernable in this editorial is the comparison of Quebec with Canada, through which the benevolence of Canada is re-affirmed. Such a framing is not limited to media discourse about the 2013 Charter of Values, a proposal which receives much attention in public and media narratives. Indeed, this framing of Quebec and RoC is evident much earlier in Canadian media discourse. For instance, an editorial, commenting on the 2007 Hérouxville code, uses a similar tenor and framing, stating,

Intolerance is in the air… The intolerance needs to be answered. Canada is not a country of them and us. It has a strong record of integration and social peace. Hérouxville is not defending Canadian traditions but attacking them… at its core, Canada is accommodating….

Canada may never change Hérouxville, but Hérouxville must not be permitted to change Canada. (The Globe and Mail, October 27, 2007, page A26).

Entrenched in such commentaries is the contrasting of Quebec versus the Rest of Canada; indeed, Quebeckers are encouraged to follow Canada’s example of tolerance. Implicit in such a discourse is that Canadians share a consensus on the accommodation of religious minorities, a consensus that is far from settled. Such commentaries about Quebec are noticeably silent about similar challenges being posed to the accommodation of religious minorities in the rest of the country; rarely mentioned (if at all) in these commentaries are the many Canadian debates about the niqab (e.g. oath of Canadian citizenship, the courts, etc.), challenges which were ongoing in other parts of Canada at the time that
these commentaries were published. Instead, the editorials and commentaries highlight the ideal of a Canadian consensus on the rights of religious (and cultural) groups, a consensus which is idealistically situated as settled and complete. Even a cursory glance at Canadian discourses (media, public and political) about the rights of religious and cultural groups, and especially of Muslims, reveals that the debate is far from settled. Such commentaries reanimate the mythology embedded in the Canadian national imaginary: that Canada is essentially a tolerant, benevolent and accepting society. Media discourse critiquing the debates in Quebec without acknowledging similar issues within the Canadian context present a clear contrast between Quebec and Canada, a positioning in which Canada is distinctly positioned as superior. Such a discourse frames Canadian values as rooted in pluralism which, note Korteweg and Yurdakul (2014), presents “… ‘our values’ as ones that you can dissent from and still belong.” (p. 182).

The narrative of Quebec vs. RoC in media discourse reinforces the contours of the Canadian national imaginary, a discourse which situates the exalted subject at the centre of the national imaginary, with the Indigenous subject as extinct, and the racialized subject as estranged. (Thobani, 2007). Such narratives exalt the cultural values of dominant groups (read: white) while completely marginalizing the Indigenous subject and offering limited inclusion (through acceptance of key common values) to the racialized subject. The contours of this narrative are not exclusive to the discourse on Quebec reasonable accommodation; they are evident also in media discourse about other key issues, most notably in the debates about multiculturalism, which I analyze elsewhere in this chapter. Notable in the Quebec context is that such myths take a particular form, and are anchored in the “…fact that the province’s dominant French-Canadian population is a national minority living in the economic and cultural shadow of English Canada and the U.S.” (Austin, 2010, p. 23). Given Canada’s history of the two founding nations (i.e. two colonial powers), the embedding of Quebecois values complicates the exaltation of Canadian values in that Quebec, while still a colonial power, is
positioned as a linguistic and cultural minority within Canada. In its positioning of Muslims outside the boundaries of acceptability, Quebec exalts the secularism of its dominant majority. Such a secularism is, of course, rooted in a long and complex history of Quebec’s relationship with the Catholic Church and in the uncoupling of the Church from the workings of political and public life. The contours of racialized inclusion in Quebec are, nonetheless, definitively racialized; it is noteworthy to highlight how such racialized boundaries in Quebec are so strongly criticized in the Rest of Canada, with little reflection about the latter’s own racialized boundaries. The racialized Canadian national narrative is unmistakably discernable in media, public and political discourses about Muslims and in the debates on reasonable accommodation in Quebec. Indeed, the implicit nature of this narrative in media discourse is precisely the point: it is so deeply embedded that it has become naturalized and a common-sense understanding of Canadian public discourse.

Fourth, media discourse on Quebec reasonable accommodation becomes increasingly pointed over the years, with Canadian opinion becoming increasingly (but not exclusively) critical of Quebec’s policies, and especially of more explicit governmental policies such as the Charter of Values (2013). Media discourse in earlier years is more explicit in its questioning of the accommodations accorded to minority groups. However, media commentary shifts in later years, and specifically around the promulgation of the Charter of Values (2013), which many Canadian commentators (including some in Quebec) criticize, often depicting it as a ploy to win votes on the part of a beleaguered provincial government. One commentator, writing in 2007, asks, “…to what extent should a society curb its rules and values to ‘accommodate’ religious minorities?” (Gagnon, 2007). In this early commentary, Gagnon argues that there should be limits on accommodations, limits which should be determined by the dominant group. By 2013, this same commentator unequivocally condemns the Charter of Values, stating, 

Wedge politics is a dangerous tactic, especially when it involves an attack on minorities. Unfortunately, it also often works.... In Quebec, as in France, secularism often serves as a
screen for plain xenophobia…. Brandishing the noble principle of equality between men and women is another way to cover Islamophobia with a politically correct varnish. (Gagnon, September 4, 2013).

Gagnon’s shift in tenor and framing are important; she is a frequent commentator to national debates on political and social issues and her opinion is influential. Her 2007 commentaries, like those of other commentators, are more focused on the limits of reasonable accommodation, while by 2013, her columns are strongly critical of the discourse to restrict religious expression. Gagnon’s condemnation of the 2013 Charter of Values is explicit and utilizes ideas and language that reflects a shifted understanding. For instance, in a 2013 editorial, she refers to efforts to ban religious symbols as a “…hierarchy of rights, giving priority to gender equality over religious freedom…” (Gagnon, 2013a), a formulation which testifies to her understanding of the dynamics at play.

Like Gagnon, other voices in Canadian media discourse are explicit in their condemnation of the Quebec Charter of Values, stating, for example, that it is “…racist and targets religious groups and visible minorities.” (The Times Transcript, September 14, 2013). An editorial in The National Post laments that “[S]hould their Charter of Values be adopted, it seems sadly and certainly that Quebec will once again be in the headlines of all the world’s major newspapers after an orthodox Jewish surgeon is escorted out of a hospital by the new ‘Secular Police’….A ridiculous notion absolutely.” (Housefather, September 16, 2013). My analysis reveals an important shift in Canadian media discourse about the reasonable accommodation debates in Quebec. While in earlier years, the discourse leans towards an endorsement of setting limits on the accommodation of religious/cultural minorities, by 2013, this discourse shifts to a more explicit condemnation of proposals to ban conspicuous religious symbols, a move which most commentators condemn as infringing on the rights of minority groups.

The preponderance of condemnatory media commentaries and editorials on the Charter of Values does not, of course, mean that the discourse on reasonable accommodation is entirely one-sided. There are some commentaries which support the attempts of the provincial government to limit the
accommodation of minority rights, some arguing that “…a policy that require[s] government workers not to make ostentatious shows of their private beliefs in the course of performing their public duties could be justified. Nor would this, as many seem to believe, constitute ‘discrimination.’ No one is forced to work for the government.” (Crowley, September 14, 2013). Another commentator states

For all their celebrated liberalism, Quebecers have no problem telling minority groups where to go…. Quebecers have little patience for what they consider pushy immigrants…. There really ought to be a series of etiquette courses on how to be a good minority…. The most important rule is to never forget you are a minority. Non-Christians, for example, should always remember that Canada is a Christian country. (Stern, March 31, 2007).

These commentaries reflect some of the perspectives explicitly calling for limits to accommodation of religious minorities in Quebec. Crowley argues for a debate about the role of faith in public life, and he calls for a stricter separation of religious beliefs and the responsibilities of government officials. In his commentary, he uses an example of a government official refusing to issue licenses or perform marriage ceremonies for same-sex couples, a refusal that most Canadians find problematic. Stern is even more blunt: he explicitly argues that the values of the majority take precedence over the rights, values, and beliefs of minority groups, who, he suggests, should simply learn how to be ‘good’ minorities. Stern’s arguments are reflective of the extreme perspectives expressed by those who believe that minority groups in Canada are making unreasonable demands, which are also evident in media and public discourse about the Quebec accommodation debates.

Fifth, media discourse about Muslims and the reasonable accommodation debates in Quebec also incorporate the perspectives shared by immigrants and/or racialized groups; these, too, shape the discourse about the rights of minority groups in Quebec and within the Canadian multicultural ethos.

For example, one letter-writer, who explicitly situates himself as an immigrant, states

The separation of Church and State is the lifeline that ensures the continued survival of the Western multicultural societies and ultimate safeguard against theocratic rule….As an immigrant from the Middle East who grew up under the tyranny of religious piety and discrimination, I whole-heartedly support the Quebec government for having the moral courage to stand up for secularism in government institutions through the new proposed Charter of Values. (Aziz, September 25, 2013).
Media discourse embraces the voices of Acceptable Muslims, such as Tarek Fatah and Raheel Raza, who are frequent contributors to the Quebec debates as well as those nationally. Using the Quebec debates as their entry point, Fatah and Raza acknowledge that the Quebec debates have “…made it safe for members of the public to honestly express their concerns.” (Raza and Fatah, October 29, 2007) While disagreeing with the proposal to ban hijabs by the Quebec Council for the Status of Women, Raza and Fatah support the niqab ban and suggest that such practices (they use examples such as covering of the face, female genital mutilation and honour killings) are “…tribal practices which have unfortunately been imported into Canada.” (Raza and Fatah, October 29, 2007). Note the linkage between the wearing of the niqab with honour killings and female genital mutilation, a discursive strategy targeting the most extreme practices (and not necessarily ‘Islamic’ or practiced only by Muslims) of a small minority of individuals. Most interestingly, Raza and Fatah make their perspectives on accommodation evident when they state

…accommodation is a two-way street – you accommodate, we adapt. Accommodation places a huge responsibility on us not to make a nuisance of ourselves…. If my religious freedom becomes a nuisance for others, it’s no longer a freedom but a burden…. At a critical time when liberal, progressive Muslim Canadians are trying to make a dent in the dogma, it’s important to let mainstream Canada know that we don’t require extra accommodation; we need better accommodation for all Canadians. (Raza and Fatah, October 29, 2007).

The perspectives of Raza and Fatah are abundantly transparent in this excerpt; these views are, indeed, an example of the views of some Acceptable Muslims. These perspectives are strongly supportive of the ideals of the Canadian narrative (using issues such as gender equality, secularism, multiculturalism), a narrative which assumes an unracialized history of citizenship. Such perspectives – coming as they do from Acceptable Muslims – are central to reanimating the fantasy of white space, all the while maintaining Canada’s reputation as a non-racist society. Raza and Fatah state that Canadian citizenship is “not based on inherited race or religion” (Raza and Fatah, October 29, 2007), with no recognition or acknowledgement of the history (and current reality) of racialized policies of citizenship. Such racialized policies have long excluded and marginalized some bodies, while
rendering invisible the privilege of the (white) dominant groups in Canada. The commentary by Raza and Fatah, unsurprisingly, contains no hint of this racialized reality. Further, their editorial, similar to most media commentaries in the Canadian discourse, includes no reference to the colonial history in which adaptation was demanded not of the newcomers (i.e. the colonizers) but of the Indigenous populations. Rendered invisible in such commentaries is the literal and symbolic violence of colonial conquest, a continuing violence deeply embedded in contemporary society. In discussing the issue of Quebec accommodation, then, the perspectives of Raza and Fatah illuminate the boundary of acceptability through which ‘good’ citizenship is performed. In this respect, “…those who reject the existence of racism and Islamophobia are reaffirmed as good Muslims and appropriate national subjects.” (Riley, 2009, p. 63). These are the Acceptable Muslims, who demarcate the boundaries of acceptable Canadian citizenship, a boundary which is anchored in racial and gendered exclusions.

In summary, media discourse on the Quebec reasonable accommodation debates provides a meaningful insight into the significant challenges, tensions and perspectives of the national conversation(s). Media commentary on this issue is fervent, touching a nerve deep within the Canadian and Quebec psyches. Like the debates on multiculturalism, and to an extent, on veiling, these discourses illuminate the fault lines in notions of Canadian citizenship and belonging. Touching as they do on deeply held beliefs, the debates on Quebec accommodation hold up a mirror to Canadian society, contributing to the already active and ongoing debates about Canadian multiculturalism.

**Muslims and the international narrative**

My analysis of Canadian media discourse about Muslims reveals that Muslims are often represented as part of a larger global network. Given that Muslims live world-over, the coverage of international events and Muslims is not, by itself, surprising. What is noteworthy is the nature of events in which Muslims are included and the type of coverage they receive. While I analyze some issues about the
international narrative elsewhere in this chapter (most notably, radicalism and multiculturalism in Western Europe), it remains beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a detailed analysis of the other international issues covered. Hence, I briefly provide a few comments below.

First, Canadian media discourse about Muslims (or Muslim issues) on the international scene is evident in its coverage of several issues including the Bosnian conflict, the Danish cartoons, the Park 51 controversy (the so-called Ground Zero mosque), Shari’ah law in other countries, incidents of Islamophobia, and the Norway massacres (although not perpetrated by a Muslim). Central to the media narrative of many of these issues is the notion that Muslims – tenuously connected only by virtue of adherence to Islam – are somehow connected in a larger and perhaps mysterious network of international Muslims. This presents an essentialized idea of a presumably universal Islam and reanimates the myth that most Muslims adhere to this universal notion. This essentialized notion of Islam is, of course, deeply imbued in the (neo)Orientalist imaginary.

Second, it is noteworthy that some issues – for example, the Bosnian conflict and the Srebrenica massacre – elicit media reports, news articles and photographs, but do not, in the data sample, elicit significant editorial commentary. On the other hand, other issues – such as the Danish cartoons and the Park 51 controversy – elicit both news reports and robust editorial commentary.

Third, editorial commentary on Muslims and the international narrative tends to reinforce key ideological discourses already embedded in the Western normative ethos. For example, commentary on the Danish cartoons situates the debate within an ideological framing that centres some perspectives (i.e. freedom of speech) while dismissing (or minimizing) other perspectives (the right to be free from openly Islamophobic views).

Fourth, in some cases, media commentaries on Muslims in the international context sometimes rely upon conservative, even Islamophobic, voices, such as Daniel Pipes, an infamous (and Islamophobic)
American academic. For instance, Pipes structures his commentary on the Park 51 controversy as a battle between the West and Islamism, noting that “… the energetic push-back of recent months finds me partially elated: those who reject Islamism and all its works now constitute a majority and are on the march. For the first time in 15 years, I feel I may be on the winning team.” (Pipes, 2010). Significantly, these Islamophobic perspectives are not challenged in the Canadian media discourse, a silence which is deafening.

Finally, Canadian media coverage of international events sometimes situates Muslims as the problem even when Muslims are not directly tied to these events. The most obvious example of this tendency is the coverage of the Norway massacre (July 2011) perpetrated by Anders Behring Breivik, a far-right, white terrorist. Numerous commentators use the massacre and Breivik’s manifesto to critique multiculturalism, pointing to Muslims as a symbol of these so-called failures. Media commentary acknowledges that Breivik is a native (read: white) Norwegian who acted on his far-right, xenophobic and racist beliefs; however, such discourse quickly turns to a criticism of multiculturalism, sometimes urging stronger policies of integration. Such commentary, then, implicitly (and ironically) reinforces the key arguments in Breivik’s manifesto. The so-called Muslim problem, therefore, is a significant feature of media discourse about the Norway massacre. Breivik’s manifesto is a convenient launch for media, public and political discourses which often rely on overly generalized statements (for example, Muslims as supposedly prone to anti-Semitism; having a crude understanding of the Middle Eastern conflict; or being more religiously devout than non-Muslims). These generalized statements contribute to the Orientalist imagery of an undifferentiated Muslim Other, who is essentialized and depicted in a uniform manner. To suggest, for instance, that Muslims “…consistently show higher degrees of religiosity…and therefore, have more conservative attitudes toward women and (especially) gays and lesbians” (Hansen, 2011) reveals numerous stereotypical ideas about Muslims

23 Breivik’s manifesto outlines his militant ideology expresses his opposition to Islam and advocates the deportation of all Muslims from Europe.
and religion in general. To make such a statement without probing the nature of religious expression or interrogating the nature of Western secularism is deeply problematic.

In summary, media discourse about Muslims and global events concentrate generally on numerous key events in which the figure of the Muslim becomes an issue, either directly or indirectly. What these diverse issues have in common is that Muslims are central to the discourse, even in those instances when Muslims are not directly involved (e.g. Norway). The framing of Muslims in the international arena, then, focuses on ‘the Muslim’ in the sense that media discourse foregrounds the Muslimness of the key actors, even when another descriptor (e.g. national, ethnic, cultural, political etc.) might have been more appropriate. In the end, the figure of the Muslim is placed in media discourse at the heart of key international events, suggesting that Muslims share a common identity; even where divided by class, ethnicity, nationality, or race, Muslims are depicted in the media discourse as being Muslim (first and primarily), linked globally to each other.

**What about Justice?: Muslims and the narrative of silence**
Public, political and media discourses are shaped both by what is obvious and stated, as well as by what remains unstated or silent. As Hartley comments, “…meaning in news discourse is not only determined by what is there, but also by what is absent, not selected, discursively repressed.” (1982, p. 117). Some important issues faced by Muslims remain largely absent from Canadian media discourse, both in terms of the relatively few news reports, as well as in the absence of significant editorial commentary. These absent issues include the use of security certificates as well as the incarceration of numerous Muslim men. These are issues of crucial importance to Muslim communities, and, given their possible constitutional implications, presumably to all Canadians. While a detailed analysis of these issues is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I provide a few comments about the (relatively muted) media narrative on these issues.
First, my analysis shows that media discourse on both these issues – security certificates and incarcerated Muslim men – is muted. In the case of security certificates, there are only 140 articles in the data sample in which security certificates form the central focus. These articles are concentrated in 2005 (31 articles), 2006 (44 articles) and 2009 (37 articles). The data sample covers the years in which there was significant legal and political activity surrounding the five men (Muslim and Arab) detained under security certificates. On the issue of incarcerated Muslim men (Maher Arar, Absoufian Abdelrazik and Omar Khadr, to list a few), there are only 82 articles, concentrated mainly in 2005 (19 articles), 2006 (20 articles) and 2007 (24 articles). Some of the media narrative on Khadr is also coded in other categories (specifically in codes encompassing extremism and radicalization), hence raising the number of articles on Khadr. However, that reports on Khadr appear in relation to extremism is, itself, telling. Overall, given the legal, constitutional and human rights issues embedded in these issues – both the security certificate process and that of incarcerated Muslim men – the silence of media discourse is noteworthy.

Second, even when media narratives do address the issues of security certificates and/or incarcerated Muslim men, they do so in line with dominant and/or governmental perspectives on these issues. For instance, commentaries on the security certificates process rely heavily on quotations from government ministers and sources, used early in the reports, establishing the frame through which the story is understood. Even when quotations are used from non-government sources, these are used towards the end of the narrative, and often as an aside, rather than used to challenge the official perspective.

Third, these two issues (security certificates and incarcerated Muslim men) elicit news reports rather than editorial commentary; hence, there a reporting of the so-called facts of the cases, but rarely any interrogation of the issues or assumptions underlying them. Security certificates provide a mechanism by which the Government of Canada can detain and deport non-citizens (on the basis of secret
evidence) and have been used, post 9/11, to bolster the state’s anti-terrorism tools and practices. Security certificates, though challenged in the legal system, have “…become the ‘front-line tools’ used by Canada to fight terrorism.” (Razack, 2008, p. 26). The security certificate process is, in effect, a form of preventative detention, based on racialized and Orientalist notions of the beliefs, associations and the potential of an individual to commit a terrorist act. Similarly, the cases of Muslim men (such as Arar, Abdelrazik and Khadr, among others) denied Canadian government support should have warranted significant coverage and been important and deeply alarming narratives in media and public discourse; given the human and legal rights at stake, it would be reasonable to expect that media commentators would use these cases to spotlight the challenges faced by these Canadians in receiving fair treatment and/or securing their freedom. Even the few editorial commentators that do attempt to address these concerns, do so cautiously, balancing the need for security versus rights; in the end, even these few editorials express support for strong measures and legislation to combat terror. Such perspectives unmistakably frame the narrative within the context of ‘our’ security rather than within the context of the rights of those detained through the use of security certificates or held in other countries and effectively abandoned by their own (Canadian) government. The absence of significant editorial commentary on these serious issues reveals the lack of concern (let alone outrage) about these constitutional and human rights issues of relevance to Muslims.

Fourth, even the relatively muted media narrative on these issues – the security certificate process and incarcerated Muslim men – situate Muslim men as dangerous, threatening, and security risks, and usually connect these men to Canadian immigration and refugee policies. For example, one editorial states that the security certificate process is “…an imperfect solution to a complex problem” (Travers, June 19, 2006), arguing that this complex issue is related to the Canadian immigration and refugee system in Canada, which “…lets rejected refugees linger in Canada for years, and sometimes decades.” (Travers, June 19, 2006). Such a framing reanimates the idea that Muslims are the
dangerous, foreign Other, imagery aimed at underlining the need for stronger security measures. Embedded in such commentaries are the discursive manoeuvres required to reinforce hegemonic perspectives and support for state policies for increased surveillance and policing of Muslim (and other racialized) bodies. Rarely do such commentators refer to the violation of human, civil and constitutional rights experienced by Muslim (and other racialized) bodies, either those detained under the security certificate process and those detained in other countries. Such a framing resonates with political discourses that situate these men as either terrorists or somehow (through the use of racial profiling) connected to terrorists.

Finally, race is not a significant feature in editorials and commentaries either about the security certificate provisions or the Muslim men incarcerated overseas and denied Canadian support. While all the men are identified as Muslim and/or of Arab origin, this is not named as being significant in editorial commentary about these issues. And yet, race is very much relevant to these cases, both in the context of the security certificates and in the denial of Canadian government support to Muslims incarcerated overseas (including Arar, Abdelrazik and Khadr). In her analysis of the security certificate provisions, Razack (2008) notes that race provides the “interpretative framework” (p. 48) to identify the alleged beliefs, ideologies and histories of the detainees. As she contends, “…race is an important pivot on which the story must turn. Race makes it possible to accept the outlines of the state’s story about ideology because it helps us to believe readily in Muslim irrationality and the monsters it spawns.” (2008, p. 47). I contend that race provides the interpretative framework for the cases of Arar, Abdelrazik, and Khadr. How else does one make sense of why these identifiably Muslim (and Canadian) men (and others like them including, more recently, Mohamed Al-Fahmy) are denied the support of their own government, being effectively abandoned while other, non-Muslim Canadians who similarly run into legal difficulties overseas receive significant governmental assistance? Racial profiling, therefore, is central to developing and maintaining this interpretative framework and is
utilized repeatedly in the case both of men detained under the security certificate process, and those
detained overseas. Razack (2008) contends that

Race soothes any worries we have about the display of raw power. It invests the proceedings
with a kind of coherency that belies that arbitrary nature of what is unfolding. There are monster
terrorists, we believe, and the things we must do in order to contain them, things we would not
ordinarily accept, become justified. It is through the powerful evocations of jihad and pitiless,
misogynist men in beards that we come to accept that we do not need due process, that proof
does not matter. We become inured to lawlessness, as long as it remains in the camps, as long,
that is, that it is applied only to certain bodies who live outside reason. (pp. 57-58).

In summary, then, Canadian media discourse is relatively muted on some key issues affecting Muslims
in the period between 2005 and 2014; specifically, there is little commentary on the security certificate
provisions and the incarceration of (and denial of Canadian governmental support to) Muslim men
overseas. Media commentary is either silent on the injustices in these cases (security certificates or
incarcerated Muslim men) or frames the men as somehow connected to violence and terrorism. Such
perspectives illuminate the extent to which media narratives are shaped (implicitly) by state policies
and ideological considerations. Hall (1990) refers to ideology as “…those images, concepts and
premises which provide the frameworks through which we represent, interpret, understand and make
sense of some aspect of social existence.” (p. 8). Ideology helps to naturalize certain perspectives into
societal discourses such that they are taken-for-granted. The relative media silence about Muslim men
detained either through security certificates or in other countries is a product of the ideological
discourses at work. The ideological and political positions of the Canadian government remain
unchallenged by most media commentators and become naturalized narratives in the public
imagination. The narratives of these Muslim men, with their allegations of unfair and unjust processes,
would disrupt the essential foundations of the Canadian national imaginary: that Canada is
benevolent, just, fair, race-blind, and transparent in its dealings. In this way, media commentators, by
remaining silent (or unaware) are crucial players in maintaining and reinforcing the Canadian narrative
of benevolence, refusing to disrupt this narrative, even if the price of that silence is violence and injustice.\footnote{In October 2017, the Canadian government revealed that it had negotiated a settlement and formally apologized to three Muslim men detained and tortured in the Middle East. The three men, Abdullah Almalki, Ahmed El Maati and Muayyed Nureddin had been jailed in Syria and tortured by investigators who had received information from the Canadian Security and Intelligence Services (CSIS) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). A 2008 report (the Iacobucci report) concluded that Canadian security and police agencies had labelled the men 'Islamic extremists' and had shared information with other countries without ascertaining its reliability. The three men were never charged, and each sued the government for $100 million. The legal settlement, originally concluded in March 2017 but made public in October 2017, paid $31.25 million to the three men. (although it is not clear how much each man will receive). Further, in July 2017, the Canadian government agreed to pay $10.5 million to Omar Khadr to resolve his civil suit over the Canadian government’s violation of his rights. The Supreme Court had ruled in 2010 that Khadr's rights had been violated. While I have not conducted a detailed examination of these settlements and the ensuing media and public debates, it appears evident to me that the outcry over the settlements is more vociferous than the condemnation over the human and civil rights violations endured by these four men. Even a cursory review of media discourse and public comments reveals that much of the Canadian public is more enraged about the payments than about the legal and constitutional abuses endured by Muslim men.}

\textit{Voices from the Inside: The Acceptable Muslim as insider informer}

The figure of the Acceptable Muslim emerges in Canadian media discourse as a so-called moderate Muslim who expresses perspectives seen to be liberal, modern and who “…seamlessly integrates her faith into the multicultural fabric of Canada.” (S. Kassam, 2015, p. 607). This figure demarcates the racialized boundaries of Canadian citizenship and reanimates the Canadian national imaginary, in which the fantasy of white space is crucial. The figure of the Acceptable Muslim is juxtaposed against the Muslim Other, a figure who is positioned as a threat, both physical and symbolic, to the norms and security of Western society. As I have argued elsewhere (S. Kassam, 2011, 2015), such an acceptable figure performs important political and ideological functions in post 9/11 Canadian society. This figure illuminates the difference between good and bad Muslims/immigrants, enabling “…a new kind of racism, one that projects antiracism and multiculturalism on the surface but simultaneously produces the logics and affects necessary to legitimize racist policies and practices.” (Alsultany, 2012, p. 16).

The figure of the Acceptable Muslim appears consistently throughout the data sample. These figures are generally represented sympathetically, embodying values that are seen to be more Western than those of the Muslim Other, and this sympathetic representation situates the Acceptable Muslim as an
ally of dominant discourse. Alsultany (2012) claims that a contrast of good and bad figures “...creates a post-race illusion that absolves viewers from confronting the persistence of institutionalized racism.... Sympathetic representations of Arabs and Muslims after 9/11 give the impression that racism is not tolerated in the United States, despite the slew of policies that have targeted and disproportionately affected Arabs and Muslims.” (p. 15). Said (1978/2003) comments that “…there is always a chorus of willing intellectuals to say calming words about benign or altruistic empires…” (p. xxi); I suggest that the figure of the Acceptable Muslim is part of the “chorus of willing intellectuals” who support the ideological goals of empire. The figure of the Acceptable Muslim in Canadian media discourse – sympathetically represented as an ally of dominant Western discourse – plays important roles in reinscribing the Canadian national narrative. I provide a brief overview of some of the key trends of media discourse about the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, and how such a figure becomes crystalized in the discourse.

First, stories about immigration and inclusion form an important backdrop to Canadian media discourse about Muslims and, in particular, to narratives about Acceptable Muslims. Such stories, evenly distributed through the data sample, cover issues such as immigration policies, settlement of immigrants and refugees, and the lives, challenges and successes of immigrants. Notably, these human-interest stories focus on good immigrants, those who have integrated successfully into the Canadian mainstream (usually involving at least one Muslim), and these narratives provide a consistent backdrop (and feel-good soundtrack) to media discourse about Muslims in the Canadian press. This backdrop of success stories reinforces the Canadian national narrative, in which Canada is represented as welcoming, benevolent and accommodating. By highlighting the successes of good immigrants, media discourse illuminates the boundaries of acceptable citizenship and belonging to the Canadian nation, an imaginary embedded throughout the data sample analyzed. Such a discourse reinforces the power of the national narrative to hold sway over the public imagination.
Such a backdrop – about good immigrant and their success stories – helps to illuminate the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, who is represented as modern and well-integrated into the fabric of Canadian society. Significantly, such individuals express perspectives that reinforce key elements of the Canadian national imaginary, a narrative which demarcates the boundaries of a racialized citizenship. Media discourse foregrounds the perspectives of these Acceptable Muslims both by relying on such figures for quotations and opinions on issues relevant to Muslims, and by providing ample opportunities for such figures to write their own (often weekly) columns in the press. In addition, media discourse gives exposure to these Acceptable Muslim figures through their vehicles of cultural production (books, plays, television shows, exhibits, documentaries, etc.), in which their opinions are showcased.

Second, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim is framed, often subtly, as a battle within Islam (radicals versus moderates). This narrative is embedded in media and public discourses in many ways and across the years. Such an interpretative frame resonates with key approaches on the part of Western political elites about Muslim perspectives, communities and approaches. Kundnani (2014) theorizes that “…two main modes of thinking pervade the war on terror…. The first mode locates the origins of terrorism in what is regarded as Islamic culture’s failure to adapt to modernity. The second identifies the roots of terrorism not in Islam itself but in a series of twentieth-century ideologies who distorted the religion to produce a totalitarian ideology – Islamism.” (p. 10). These two approaches – Kundnani (2014) refers to them as culturalist and reformist – are crucial to my analysis of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim. The culturalist approach is based on the notion that Muslim politics is a product of a cultural construct – Islam. Such an approach, says Kundnani, “…takes Islam to have only one possible meaning. This kind of view of Islam reduces a complex social, economic, and political history to an underlying cultural essence that is taken to be the root cause of a wide range of phenomena spread across vastly different historical and geographical contexts.” (2014, p. 58). Similar
to the notion of culture talk, (Mamdani, 2004), the culturalist approach views Muslims as living within a cultural framework, which is perceived to have an unchanging essence, while those in the West, are without culture, living in the modern world, in a universal space of values. On the other hand, the reformist approach, according to Kundnani, (2014) suggests that the politicization of Islamic culture (not Islam itself) is the underlying cause of extremism. The culturalist approach suggests a clash between Islamic and Western civilizations, while the reformist approach implies that there is a battle within Islamic civilization. I explore these approaches further in the next chapter. For now, it is significant to note that these approaches shape much of the discourse about (and by) the Acceptable Muslim. Canadian media and public discourse about and by Acceptable Muslims reveal elements of both the culturalist and the reformist approaches; there are strains of both the clash between civilizations (i.e. ‘they’ are opposed to ‘our’ values) and the clash within Islamic civilization (i.e. the extremists versus the moderates).

Third, Canadian media discourse on Acceptable Muslims is concentrated on some key figures, whose perspectives, lives, work and thoughts are most often articulated in the media narratives. These key figures include most prominently, Tarek Fatah, Irshad Manji, Ayaan Hirsi Ali (although not Canadian), Sheema Khan, Zarqa Nawaz, Raheel Raza, and, to a lesser extent, others such as Shahina Siddiqui and Farzana Hassan. These figures (noticeably, mostly Muslim women), appear consistently and persistently in media discourse about Muslims, through their work, publicized opinions or life stories. Each of these figures is foregrounded in different ways: thus, for instance, the perspectives of Fatah, Manji, Raza and Khan are most often featured in discussions relating to Muslims, such as veiling, extremism or radical Islam, multiculturalism, immigration, and Quebec’s debates on reasonable accommodation. The data sample includes numerous stories in which these figures of the Acceptable Muslim are either the key commentators, or at the very least, key sources for opinions expressed. While the perspectives of Fatah, Manji, Raza and Khan are featured through their opinions
on key debates in the public sphere, the presence of Ayaan Hirsi Ali is concentrated primarily on her personal narrative, which relies heavily on the discourse of saving Muslim women. While Manji’s personal narrative elicits some coverage (especially in earlier years), her opinions on key issues elicits the most attention. Media coverage of Nawaz, in contrast, is almost entirely devoted to her body of work, and specifically, on *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, the most publicly successful of her work. While Nawaz’s opinions are sometimes covered in the data sample, these are not as significantly featured as the opinions or lives of some of the other figures. Each of these figures play an important role in commentaries or perspectives about Muslims in Canadian media discourse, and I analyze some of these figures (and their perspectives) in the next chapter.

Fourth, while there are, of course, differences in the perspectives, narratives and work of key Acceptable Muslim figures, they also share numerous common characteristics. While I explore these figures in further depth in the next chapter, I summarize some key characteristics here. One such characteristic is the support or admiration expressed for so-called Western values – these include secularism, gender equity, individualism, freedom, rationalism, democracy, and multiculturalism, among other such values. Acceptable Muslim figures pay special attention to gender equality as a key battleground for debates on citizenship and national belonging; gender equality is often placed at the hearts of these debates, even if the specifics of how to achieve gender equality are nuanced. The focus on gender equality as a central element of an ideological battle is crucial: through this discursive manoeuvre, the Acceptable Muslim, I theorize, becomes the newest member of the knight in shining armour (i.e. the civilized one) who campaigns to rescue the imperiled Muslim woman from the clutches of the dangerous Muslim man and his barbaric culture. Yet another characteristic shared by Acceptable Muslims is the open criticism of radical Muslims, and, more explicitly, a call for all Muslims to condemn such extremism (rather than an approach that challenges why individual Muslims should be asked to take responsibility for the actions of others). Such perspectives resonate
with the idea of a battle within Islamic civilization, with the moderates (I refer to them as Acceptable Muslims) standing firmly against extremism, but without challenging the very assumptions on which such a supposed divide rests. Nor do these figures challenge the idea that the ‘true Muslims’ (if it is even possible to define these) should publicly take responsibility for the extremists. Similar to Orientalist or culturalist approaches, Acceptable Muslims sometimes employ essentialized ideas about Islam and Muslims, though the nature of those ideas may differ. Just as importantly, these narratives by and about Acceptable Muslims, while depending on Orientalist structures, are modernized for use in the contemporary context. In her analysis of representations of Muslim women in American literature, Ahmad notes that contemporary representations rely on Orientalist discourses but in a reconfigured manner. As she notes,

Unlike colonial haram accounts, these narratives allow women to speak, at least purportedly – but only in ways that are legible and familiar within the language and experience of American feminism. They cannily appropriate central tenets of twentieth-century feminism and civil rights: the personal as political; the importance of speaking for oneself. These heroines are made over to look like us precisely so that we can take for granted what we are rescuing them into. Underneath an inconvenient and irritating layer of culture – a culture separated from the messy imbrications that characterize contemporary world politics – lies a free liberal subject waiting to emerge into unproblematic selfhood. (Ahmad, 2009, p. 109).

In a similar manner, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim in Canadian media discourse reconfigures Orientalist imaginaries to reinforce key ideas about insiders and outsiders – and the values each embodies – in the contemporary imaginary. Such an Acceptable Muslim figure illuminates the boundary of acceptability in the Canadian (or Western) national imaginary, embodying key Western ideals and attaining qualified (or marginal) acceptance in the national body politic. In so demarcating this boundary, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim enables and reinforces the power of the nation-state to police, surveil and even, where deemed necessary, eliminate the Other – the body deemed (by the dominant group) to be dangerous, extremist or a threat to the national body politic.

Fifth, the figures of the Acceptable Muslims feature prominently in media coverage of vehicles of cultural production (television, books, documentaries, movies, plays, comedies, art exhibits, etc.) Such
coverage amplifies these perspectives embedded both in discussions about issues relevant to Muslims and the good immigrant stories discussed above. Analysis of the data sample reveals a concentration of articles about cultural representations by Muslims, and in particular, by Muslim women. No doubt, this reflects the public’s fascination with Muslim women as well as (perhaps) a greater self-assertion on the part of Muslim women, both in Canada and overseas, to shape their own narratives.

Noteworthy is the concentration of narratives in key years: 2005, 2007 and 2010. These correspond to the years in which key vehicles of cultural representation were released and, especially those related to perspectives of the Acceptable Muslim. The year 2007, for example, saw the launch of the television sitcom, *Little Mosque on the Prairie* (developed by Zarqa Nawaz), the English-language publication of Ayaan Hirsi Ali’s book, *Infidel*; the release of Irshad Manji’s documentary, *Faith without Fear*; and the release of Tarek Fatah’s book, *Chasing a Mirage: the tragic illusion of an Islamic State*. Similarly, 2010 saw the publication of Hirsi Ali’s second book, *Nomad*, as well as Fatah’s *The Jew is not my enemy.* While there is no evidence that the release of these was a coordinated effort, the confluence of these representational vehicles is significant, and reflects an underlying interest in the perspectives of Muslims, and especially the voices and figures of the Acceptable Muslim. In an analysis of what she refers to as Muslim dissident literature, Sharify-Funk (2010) comments that “…in their preoccupation with the question ‘what’s wrong with Muslims?’ the books appeal to cultural liberals as well as to political conservatives, and they meet the demands of a market that was created in North America after the events of 9/11.” (p. 133). The success of such forms of cultural representation – in which Acceptable Muslim voices are dominant – is certainly evident in the data sample. The likes of Acceptable Muslims such as Fatah, Hirsi Ali, Manji, Nawaz, Raza and Khan receive much media attention during this time, their books, work, and lives examined, reviewed and publicized.

Sixth, the presence of Acceptable Muslim voices is prevalent in Canadian media discourse, most obviously through their own voices, but also in contrast to the almost complete absence of other
counter-narrative, more radical, voices. Rarely, if ever, does media discourse include regular contributions from other voices, more critical ones, those that challenge the very assumptions upon which the national imaginary (and hence, the nation-state) is based. The absence of these voices makes the voices of Acceptable Muslims yet more powerful in the media narrative, underscoring once again the power and privilege of the dominant elite.

Seventh, and finally, just as there are common characteristics of Acceptable Muslim perspectives, there are also differences, which nuance my analyses of these figures. Using the data sample, I theorize that there are two types of Acceptable Muslims: I refer to these as, first, the Acceptable Secular Muslim and, second, the Acceptable Multiculturalist Muslim. These figures, I argue, are different in detail, not in essence, as both support the overall goals of the Western, liberal nation-state. The Acceptable Secular Muslim is openly supportive of the ideological goals of Western nation-states, while the Acceptable Multiculturalist Muslim expresses reservation about some aspects of this agenda. The Acceptable Secular Muslim advocates an open (almost fierce) secular approach to public life; the general position is that faith should have little, if any, role in the public sphere. On the other hand, the Acceptable Multiculturalist Muslim advocates a limited, perhaps private, role for faith in public life. Thus, the Acceptable Secular Muslim becomes a missionary for secularism in the neocolonial world and operates, I theorize, almost as a proxy for the neo-imperial state, much as the Christian missionary did in the colonial world. The Acceptable Multiculturalist Muslim, while clearly not a missionary for secularism, does nonetheless support key secularist ideas, notably, that expressions of faith should be limited and relegated to safely acceptable expressions in the public realm. In support of his/her roles as insider informants, both the Acceptable Secular Muslim and the Acceptable Multiculturalist Muslim make use of Muslim history and culture: I suggest that the former erases Muslim history, culture and contributions to society, enabling the racialized Muslim body to live (at least partially) unmarked by culture; the latter makes selective use of history and culture in order to
support Acceptable Muslim perspectives and embody cultural traits that are acceptable to mainstream society. Resonating with Kundnani’s (2014) thinking, I theorize that the perspectives of the Acceptable Secular Muslims are congruent with the culturalist approach; the views of this figure are reminiscent of the clash of civilizations argument, which presumes a cultural divide between Muslims and the West. In contrast, the perspectives of the Acceptable Multiculturalist Muslims are congruent with the reformist approach as their perspectives and presence in the public sphere reanimate the idea of a battle between extremist and so-called moderate views within Muslim communities.

The Acceptable Secular and Acceptable Multiculturalist Muslims are central to my analysis of Canadian media, public and political discourses. How and why these Acceptable Muslim voices are represented in Canadian media discourse is the heart of my analysis. The figures of the Acceptable Secular and Acceptable Multiculturalist Muslim emerge clearly in Canadian media discourse in the years 2005-2014; such discourses propel these figures prominently into national contestations over a range of significant issues in the public sphere including feverish debates about visibly Muslim bodies in the public space, the limits of multiculturalism, and the importance of a supposedly race-neutral Canadian national narrative. The perspectives of Acceptable Muslim – supportive of the ideological goals of the Canadian nation-state – are situated as acceptable or good Muslim voices, a positioning that enables these figures to stand as the sentries at the boundaries of acceptability within the Canadian national imaginary. How and why the Acceptable Muslim figures are embedded in Canadian public and political discourses (and the ideological roles they play) is central to my analysis in this project. It is to this I now turn.
Chapter 4

The enlightened space and the dark jungle: Secularism and the figure of the Acceptable Muslim

Introduction
Canadian discourse about Muslims is generally presented through two essential prongs: first, the dangerous Muslim man is used as an entry point into discourses about terror and security, and second, the imperiled Muslim woman is used to segue into narratives about multiculturalism, secularism and the so-called loss of Canadian values. Muslims become, therefore, the nodal points of larger contestations within Canadian society, contestations which often position Muslims as outside the boundaries of belonging, leaving them targeted for exclusion within the Canadian nation-state. The dominant narrative – media, political and public – is grounded in a triad of allegorical figures: “...the dangerous Muslim male, the imperiled Muslim woman and the civilized European, the latter a figure who is seldom explicitly named but who nevertheless anchors the first two figures.” (Razack, 2008, p. 5). As outlined in previous chapters, these figures are central to the commentaries and narratives which invariably position the figure of the Muslim as being traditional, primitive, and antithetical to modern values such as freedom, individuality, and secularism. Illuminated in these discourses is the boundary of acceptability between good and bad Muslims (Mamdani, 2004). This boundary differentiates between those who willing to be modernized and practice their traditions in an acceptable (usually privatized) manner, and those who refuse to be liberated from their ancient cultures, the values of which oppress and do not evolve. Those Muslims who are willing to suppress public expression of their religious or cultural traditions (or at least the most obvious symbols of these) and to embrace the values of being Canadian (however defined) are welcomed within the acceptable boundaries of the national imaginary; these are the bodies that are “…welcomed into the inner circle.” (Kassam and

\[25\] With thanks to Talal Asad for this phrase.
Mustafa, 2017, p. 75). On the other hand, those who insist on public expression of their religious or cultural traditions, are excluded from belonging; at best, these bodies “…orbit on the outside” (Kassam and Mustafa, 2017, p. 75), and, at worst, are marked for surveillance and (physical or symbolic) violence. As evidenced in the previous chapter, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim appears consistently and persistently in Canadian media and public discourses. Such figures are active in debates about issues of Canadian identity, multiculturalism and secularism, and often express support (or are used to support) Canadian values (however defined). These figures illuminate the boundary of acceptability in the Canadian national narrative and are held up as evidence of the country’s non-racist credentials, even as the nation-state develops more exclusionary policies and practices against the unacceptable (racialized and/or Muslim) Other.

Central to this boundary of acceptability and to the Canadian national imaginary (and indeed, that of many other Western multicultural nation-states) is the notion of secularism. Secularism is commonly used to critique the public expression of faith, and, in many cases, to support policies and legislation to restrict such public expression. In the name of secularism, the public display of religiosity (and in the post 9/11 era, especially that of Muslims) is sometimes curtailed and critiqued. In the Canadian context, national debates about Shari’ah law, veiling, and other such debates regarding the public expression of religious faith are undergirded by a construct of secularism that outlines the terms of such expression.

In this chapter, I analyze the construct of secularism and how the figure of the Acceptable Muslim is a vital component of this construct in Western multicultural societies such as Canada. Theorists such as Talal Asad (2003, 2006, 2013), Wendy Brown (2006, 2012, 2013), and Saba Mahmood (2005a, 2006, 2013), among others, argue that secularism, especially in Western multicultural nation-states, rather than maintaining religious neutrality (as is the claim), effectively endorses the idea that the state should
manage religious expression in the public sphere. This construct of secularism universalizes the norms of a particular tradition (usually the Protestant ethic) as it promotes notions of an individualized faith rooted in personal conscience, a personal relationship with God, and privatized worship. Such a construct both defines the relationship of religion (and religious traditions) to society in a particular way and naturalizes the assumptions of one specific religious tradition. Religious traditions other than those of the dominant group must then conform to this definition: in order to be recognized, such religious traditions must be rendered recognizable and function within the parameters (the apriori definition of religion) already established. The contradiction between the universal and the particular in the context of citizenship values (already discussed in an earlier chapter) is also evident in the structure of secularism and religious tradition, as well as in the political arrangements pertaining to acceptable religious expression in the public sphere.

I examine, in this chapter, the contradictions inherent in the Western construct of secularism, and, building on my earlier arguments about the boundaries of acceptable Canadian citizenship, I theorize that the figure of the Acceptable Muslim is a vital player in upholding and reinforcing the construct of Western secularism. Such figures render a secular state viable (especially in the context of multiculturalism) by supporting a privatized, autonomous, individualized form of religious expression in public life. In other words, these Acceptable Muslims are central to the state’s ability to manage the type, definition, and flavour of religious expression in the public domain. Significantly, these Acceptable Muslims mask the tensions and contradictions entrenched in the Canadian national imaginary – the idea of Canada, if you will – and render invisible the constructed mythologies at work (re)producing the racialized, gendered fissures at the heart of the Canadian nation-state. By being such vital players in the buttressing of the national imaginary, such Acceptable Muslims are central to the maintenance of the status-quo, while simultaneously celebrated as symbols of Canadian multicultural tolerance and benevolence. I then interrogate these ideas about secularism and the Acceptable Muslim
through an exploration of key theories about secularism, moving to an exploration of the work and voices of some Acceptable Muslims in the Canadian context. Finally, I link their ideas both to the Western construct of secularism and to acceptable notions of citizenship, in which secularism is seen to be a key shared value.

**Secularism and its critiques**

In the popular imagination, secularism claims to be about religious neutrality in, and/or the separation of religion from, the public sphere of the state. Many contemporary debates, most often about Muslim women’s clothing, presume secularism to be a key value against which the beliefs, practices and behaviours of the Other are measured. In many senses, secularism is perceived as a fundamental value, one to which modern, progressive individuals and societies should subscribe and which should be incorporated into public life. Indeed, secularism is seen as a key value of Western civilization which both exalts individual rights and excludes religious practices from the public sphere.

The Western framework of secularism, seen as a pillar of so-called civilized and universal values, rests on numerous assumptions, which require closer interrogation. Numerous contemporary scholars (notably, Asad, Brown, and Mahmood, among others) justifiably challenge the assumptions underlying this construct. In effect, these scholars argue that secularism does not embody religious neutrality; rather, they contend that secularism is a means through which the state controls religious expression in the public sphere. At the same time, the construct of secularism enables a universalization of key norms that are specific to a particular tradition (generally the Protestant tradition) but masks the specificity of these particular norms. These critiques have numerous implications for my examination of the Acceptable Muslim in the context of Western multicultural nation-states. I turn, therefore, to an exploration of these critiques of secularism, before moving to my analysis of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim in contemporary Canadian discourse.
Modern secularism is rooted in 17\textsuperscript{th} century attempts to fashion political solutions to end religious wars; the goal was to create a common language (politically speaking) amongst competing Christian denominations by defining a “…political ethic altogether independent of religious doctrines.” (Mahmood, 2006, p. 324). The creation of a common language necessitated other conditions for society including, in Mahmood’s words, “the centralization of state authority, and a concomitant demarcation of society into political, economic, religious and familial domains whose contours could then be mapped and subjected to the calculus of state rule.” (2006, p. 324). Asad suggests that the notion of secularism is preceded by the idea of the secular in which the sacred refers to matters of social interest (2003, p. 33) such as traditions, values and sentiments. He further contends that the category of the sacred came to be perceived as both universal and as a constraint to political action. In other words, “…the sacred was at once a transcendent force that imposed itself on the subject and a space that must never, under threat of dire consequences, be violated – that is, profaned.” (Asad, 2003, p. 33). Furthermore, the notion of secular is neither a simple continuation of the so-called religious that preceded it, nor is it a complete break from the religious. The notions of secular and religious are not fixed, stable or independent of each other. Rather, they emerge out of a particular history, fueled by the encounters of emerging communities – different Christian denominations and non-Europeans/Christians alike – and compelling new ideas about political and social life. Hence, Asad and other scholars suggest that the demarcation of spaces of secular and religious is a function of specific political and social circumstances in Christian and European histories, and their particular encounters, both internally and with others. Ideas about the secular, the religious and secularism are therefore both rooted in European history and are far more intertwined with this history than current popular and political imaginations would posit.

Asad (2003) outlines the historical processes through which notions of the secular became embedded in political and public life. He suggests that 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} century theological ideas such as idolatry and
devil worship became interpreted through the secular conception of ‘superstition’ in 18th and 19th century thought. (Asad, 2003, p. 35). However, despite the change in nomenclature, these ideas continued to hold some legitimacy. Asad argues that “…they had to be constituted as categories of illusion and oppression before people could be liberated from them.” (2003, p. 35). The idea of secularization (or, in this case, the idea of profanization, as Asad refers to it in the historical context), compelled the definition of such ideas as false, thereby reasserting the power of reason to define these ideas in the public sphere (or attempt to eliminate them). In so doing, the state (using universal reason) asserted its power. Indeed, as Asad (2003) confirms, “[a]t the very moment of becoming secular, these claims were transcendentalized, and they set in motion legal and moral disciplines to protect themselves (with violence where necessary) as universal. Although profanation appears to shift the gaze from the transcendental to the mundane, what is does is to rearrange barriers between the illusory and the actual.” (pp. 35-36).

These ideas about the secular and secularism are translated into political life in numerous ways historically and are clearly embedded in contemporary ideas about public life. Brown (2013) rightly comments that “…from Mill to Marx, Diderot to Kant and Hume, we greet the Enlightenment presumption that the true, the objective, the real, the rational, and even the scientific emerge only with the shedding of religious authority or ‘prejudice’…” (p. 5). Liberal political ideology is based on these ideas and provides its adherents with a common political language – now normalized as universal and transcendent – with which to address, debate, and resolve public issues, including those of individual freedom/rights, state power (and limits to this) and the interaction of diverse groups of people within the public sphere. Asad (2003) observes that while the roots of secularism are grounded in Christian tradition, they are not merely restatements of Christian sacred myths. Rather, he suggests that what he refers to as secular projects “…embrace a distinctive pattern (democratic, anticlerical)…[and] propose a different kind of morality (based on the sacredness of the individual conscience and individual
right)…” (Asad, 2003, p. 61). Such a political language is so embedded in societal discourse that it is often no longer seen as the product of a specific history and world view, but rather as the universal language of enlightenment and civilization. The ideas embedded in Enlightenment liberalism – based on a specific conception of the world – undergird numerous political projects. As Asad (2013) comments “…[l]iberalism thus provides moderns with a vocabulary that can cover a multitude of sins – and virtues.” (p. 19).

The historical background of secularism provides an important backdrop to an exploration of the assumptions and critiques of contemporary ideas about it. The perception of secularism as being religiously (and culturally) neutral, with demarcated spaces for the religious and the secular – ideas still prominent in the public imagination – is increasingly challenged by scholars. These ideas and challenges are important to my exploration of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, and it is to these critiques that I now turn.

Most critiques of secularism challenge the notion that the public sphere is religiously neutral. Brown (2006) contends that secularism “…operates from a conceit of neutrality that is actually thick with bourgeois Protestant norms.” (p. 7). The construct of secularism promotes the principles of liberalism – again, based on a specific conception of the world – and incorporates assumptions that both individualize the notion of religion and universalize these norms. Mahmood (2006) refers to this construct as “secular normativity” (p. 329) and suggests that the construct is a “…rearticulation of religion in a manner that is commensurate with modern sensibilities and modes of governance.” (2013, p. 59). Brown (2012) uses the so-called burqa-bans to illuminate and critique five assumptions embedded in the Western conception of secularism (she refers to these assumptions as the conceits of Western secularism). These assumptions are that: (1) Secularism generates religious neutrality; (2) Western secularism is equally available to all religions; (3) Secularism generates tolerance as a practice
of mutual respect among religions; (4) Secularism is culturally neutral; (5) Western secularism generates gender freedom and equality. These assumptions, at the heart of the construct of Western secularism, are strongly challenged by numerous scholars, including, most notably, Asad, Brown and Mahmood. I turn to a brief deconstruction of these assumptions in order to unmask the framework of “secular normativity” (Mahmood, 2006, p. 329) within which the figure of the acceptable Muslim must exist.

Assumption 1: Secularism generates religiously neutral

The first assumption about religious neutrality focuses on the idea that secularism generates a neutral public sphere, that there is a clear boundary between the religious (the church) and the state or that religion is completely banished from public life. As Mahmood (2006) suggests, “…the assumption is that the state, by virtue of its declared neutrality towards specific religious truth claims, makes religious goals indifferent to the exercise of politics and, in doing so, ensures that religion is practiced without coercion, out of individual choice and personal assent.” (p. 324). Indeed, many contemporary debates about Muslims (veils, niqab, Shari’ah law and others) are premised on this assumption. However, the boundary between the religious and the secular is not as clear as might be imagined, with religion far more embedded in public life than is commonly believed. Indeed, “…the so-called firewall separation between church and state does not adequately describe how religion and modern governance are constitutively intertwined…[which] suggests a far more porous relationship than the doctrine of secularism suggests.” (Mahmood, 2006, p. 325). Brown (2012) uses contemporary examples to illustrate her argument:

Angela Merkel, elaborating on her claim that ‘multiculturalism has failed,’ argued for the importance of recognizing that Germany is defined by a ‘Christian view of mankind.’ In parallel fashion, Samuel Huntington insists that a multicultural West is incoherent insofar as Christianity is ‘the central component of Western Civilization’. And yet, this avowedly Christian (or oxymoronically, Judeo-Christian) character of amorphous Western values nestles next to the assertion of the secular state as religiously neutral and as bound to keeping all public life and institutions free of religion. (p. 2).
This contradiction – between declarations of state religious neutrality and an emphasis on the state’s Christian roots – is key to understanding the construct of Western secularism. Such a contradiction – often passing unnoticed in public discourse – can only be reconciled, argues Brown, by acknowledging the state’s “…Protestant legacy and a modality of secularism that formally banishes religion to private life even as it secures Christian hegemony in social and political life.” (2012, p. 2). Key elements of the Protestant legacy incorporated into Western secularism include “…a propositional belief, privatized worship, and an individualized faith rooted in conscience and a personal relationship with God.” (Brown, 2012, p. 2). This legacy, embedded as it is in the Western secular model, does not banish religion from the public sphere, but, in fact, shapes the very contours of religion in the public sphere. As Mahmood (2006) observes, “…secularism has sought not so much to banish religion from the public domain, but to reshape the form it takes, the subjectivities it endorses, and the epistemological claims it can make.” (p. 326). Brown (2012) concurs when she notes that “…with this model of religion, secularism does not simply limit the reach of religious authority – it does not simply bind or position religion within the social order – but gives religion itself a specific definition, shape and meaning.” (p. 2).

Such critiques of the idea of religious neutrality illustrate that Western secularism is not the removal of religion from the public sphere, but, rather, the management and control of religion and religious expression (and what counts as religion) in the public space. Hence, secularism transforms society’s relationship to religion while naturalizing (and normalizing) the norms of a particular religious tradition. Brown (2012) suggests that “[s]ecularism cannot govern religions and subjects without stipulating their form and content, and this stipulation necessarily emerges from within particular religious histories and predicaments – there is no religiously neutral outside.” (p. 3).
The state’s re-definition of religion has important implications for religious traditions other than the dominant one. If the state is to determine the definition, form and content of religion in the public sphere, it follows that other religions must either conform to these definitions or risk being de-legitimized – as religious traditions – in the public sphere. The key characteristics for a ‘proper’ religion in the context of a Western, secular state are, among others, the focus on individual belief and personal conscience (i.e. religion viewed primarily as a matter of personal belief), the centrality of text in religious traditions, the idea of privatized, individualized worship/practice (or in designated spaces), and the separation of religion (that is, minority traditions) from public life and especially from politics. As will be clear, these characteristics are not always common to all religious traditions, and as such, religious traditions other than the dominant one (Christianity, specifically, Protestantism and in the case of Quebec, Catholicism) must often undergo reform in order to attain (or retain) legitimacy (to be recognized as religions) in the public domain. Rendered invisible in this process is that the norms of one particular religious tradition become normalized and universalized such that they are embedded in the very construct of secularism and that this so-called secular norm is far from religiously neutral.

As Brown (2012) aptly summarizes,

…far from a generic or neutral formula for separating the religious from the political, or divesting the public sphere of religious values, Western secularism tacitly universalizes Christianity as the model for religion and tacitly generalizes secular modernity’s novel ordering of state, society and individual, including its division of what is appropriately private and individualized on the one hand, public and shared on the other. (p. 4).

Assumption 2: Secularism is equally available to all religious traditions

The second assumption that Brown and others critique is that, despite its Christian roots, Western secularism is perceived as available equally to all religious traditions, including those practicing so-called minority religious traditions in Western nation-states. Such a claim is predicated on the previous assumption defining the public space as religiously neutral, with a clearly defined boundary between religious and secular spaces. Hence, those who do not subscribe to the notion of the privatization of
religion (for instance, by wearing religious clothing, or praying outside designated spaces) are perceived to fall outside the bounds of secular society. As Brown (2012) notes, “[t]his assumption casts those who resist secularization on Western terms as refusing modernity and its putative elements: religion relegated to the private sphere and a public sphere wholly governed by reason, enlightenment, and the rule of law, according to principles of freedom, equality, tolerance and universal justice.” (p. 5). In other words, adherents of religious traditions must subscribe publicly to (and act in accordance with) the definitions of religion prescribed by Western secularism. The boundary marker of a good, secular citizen-subject, is, therefore, her/his adherence to the characteristics of a properly secularized religious tradition, including privatized expressions of religious practices. Those individuals not able or willing to adhere to such norms, or to privative their religious expressions, are perceived as being anti-modern and/or religious fundamentalists; such “...subjects do not register as secular in the liberal imaginary even as the degree or intensity of their piety may differ little from that of a practicing Protestant or Catholic…. What appears non-secular is simply the failure of these religious practices to remain within the bound of home and church.” (Brown, 2012, p. 6). Western secularism is rooted in Christian religious and political principles; such a construct privileges the norms of Christianity and cannot be equally available to those of other traditions.

The implications of this model of secularism for Muslims in contemporary Canada are profound. A Muslim who chooses to express her/his faith openly (wearing a head covering, fasting, praying in public...) risks being seen as non-secular, anti-modern, and a religious zealot. The good Muslim (or religious subject) who wishes to be perceived as living within the acceptable boundaries of Western secular society is one who privatizes her faith, and who accepts that being religious is relegated to a matter of personal belief and conscience rather than being a way of life. Such subjects – Acceptable Muslims in my terminology – are seen as those who have become secularized and accepted the essential premises of Western secularism. As Mahmood (2006) shows, these subjects are often viewed
positively by Western nation-states and are an “...indigenous ally in the form of moderate or liberal Muslims who... are most open to a 'Western vision of civilization, political order and society’...” (p. 329). She highlights the “autonomous individual believer...who is a necessary protagonist in the plot of secular political rationality, one who owes his allegiance to the sovereign rule of the state rather than the structures of traditional authority.” (Mahmood, 2006, p. 340). Such insider supporters are crucial to the project of reinforcing the contours of Western secular society in which the privilege and power of the dominant group(s) remain unfettered and yet invisibilized.

Assumption 3: Secularism promotes tolerance as a practice of mutual respect
The third assumption of Western secularism suggests that secular society promotes tolerance and mutual respect amongst religious traditions. This idea is also based on the assumption that tolerance is neutral, a claim that does not hold up under scrutiny. Brown (2006) argues cogently that tolerance discourse is far from innocent as it is a “...productive force – one that fashions, regulates, and positions subjects, citizens, and states as well as one that legitimates certain kinds of actions...” (p. 10). As such, tolerance discourse seeks to manage, rather than eliminate, the differences, inequities and exclusions embedded in society, but it also “...depoliticizes them, naturalizing them as innately hostile differences rather than effects of history and power.” (Brown, 2012, p. 6). As a result, tolerance discourse “...disavows and disappears the hegemonic norm it is protecting, e.g., the whiteness, Christianity, or heterosexuality tolerating its other.” (Brown, 2012, p. 6). Those that are tolerated will always be different from the norm, marked as foreign and Other; such subjects can be offered conditional inclusion only if they live within the prescribed boundaries set by the terms of dominant society. Central to understanding tolerance discourse, therefore, is the notion of power – that those that tolerate the Other ultimately retain the power not to tolerate whoever or whatever strays too far from the invisible norm established. As Brown (2012) notes, “...tolerance discourse confers supremacy, beneficence and normalcy upon the tolerant while consecrating the abject status of the
tolerated – only what is difficult, foreign, or unwanted is tolerated and tolerance itself anoints its objects with this status.” (p. 6). Tolerance discourse renders invisible the power and naturalized norms embedded in these processes.

Tolerance discourse ensures a demarcating line between the tolerable (those that are different, but acceptable) and the intolerable (those that are deviant and unacceptable), or as Brown (2012) puts it, “…beyond the pale – the fifteenth century British neologism for the uncolonized, hence uncivilized…” (p. 7). Thus, tolerance discourse is far more than a neutral bureaucratic tool to manage difference; rather it is a form of governmentality that regulates social relations and provides a normative framework (based on particular histories and traditions) within which the Other (whether tolerated or intolerable) must operate. In other words, “…[o]perating within an idiom of universal inclusion and justice, tolerance secures a hegemonic norm and manages unwanted differences without granting them substantive or even formal equality. Tolerance is not a synonym for equality but a supplement or substitute to it; liberal democratic equality deals in sameness, tolerance manages difference.” (Brown, 2012, pp. 6-7). Such social regulation based on tolerance discourses is an important feature of the Canadian national imaginary in which some bodies are exalted, while others are granted conditional inclusion (the tolerated) and yet others completely excluded. It is within this environment that the figure of the acceptable Muslim is illuminated.

**Assumption 4: Secularism is culturally neutral**

The fourth assumption that Brown critiques is that secularism is perceived as culturally neutral, in that the public sphere is considered to be culture-less. The model of secularism in Western nation-states is considered to be religiously and culturally neutral, in that these notions (religion and culture) are relegated to the private sphere. As Brown (2006) aptly notes, “…though ‘culture’ is what nonliberal people are imagined to be ruled and ordered by, liberal peoples are considered to have culture or cultures… ‘We’ have culture while culture has ‘them,’ or we have culture while they are a culture.” (pp.
Thus, for liberal (or neoliberal) subjects, culture becomes a privatized way of life – food, dress, lifestyles – while the nonliberal subject is ruled by the power of culture, with an express desire to have these attributes recognized in the public sphere. As such, “…secular orders are understood to feature individuals with optional and privatized relations to culture and religion, while unsecular orders are understood to feature subjects both saturated and governed by culture and religion.” (Brown, 2012, p. 8). What is noteworthy, however, is to recognize that the so-called culture-less public sphere is far from neutral and without norms. Indeed, many contemporary debates about culture, multiculturalism and integration in Canada (and many Western nation-states) are undergirded by the defense of ‘our’ values. As I outlined in the previous chapter, much of Canadian media discourse about Muslims features such commentary, in which minority demands for accommodation (veils, Shari’ah, requests for same-sex health care providers, etc.) are refuted on the basis of defense of ‘our’ way of life, and ‘our’ values. Such commentary betrays an implicit acknowledgement that the construct of Western secularism is far from neutral and illuminates the idea of a Canadian culture (however defined). The same can be said about the discourses in other Western nation-states in which discussions of multiculturalism and integration have become prominent; these discourses commonly invoke the idea of a national culture (i.e. a Western culture) against which the Other is judged. Yet, the myth of cultural neutrality persists. As Brown (2012) summarizes,

…as with religious neutrality, secular law’s own circulation of cultural values is disavowed in these discourses; ‘cultural defenses’ are what minorities are said to make against liberal legalism, not what liberal legalism itself provisions. Thus, ‘Western culture’ appears as that against which multiculturalism is judged only to disappear again when secular law is at issue. (p. 8).

This myth of cultural neutrality is a powerful one and has significant implications for the Canadian context. As evidenced by Canadian media, political and public discourses, these ideas are deeply embedded in the psyche of national discourse. The figure of the Muslim stands in stark contrast to the supposedly culture-less national subject, and the former must either conform to the privatized
cultural framework ingrained in the national imaginary or risk being excluded and marginalized. The figure of the Acceptable Muslim is one which navigates this framework, usually finding acceptable (and privatized) expressions of their cultural and/or religious identities. In so doing, the Acceptable Muslim finds qualified inclusion in the national imaginary, while simultaneously reinforcing both the boundaries of acceptability in the public sphere and reinforcing key elements of the so-called culture-less national public sphere.

**Assumption 5: Secularism promotes gender equality**
The fifth, and final, assumption of Western secularism Brown critiques is that secularism generates gender freedom and equality. This assumption is palpable in many of the contemporary debates about Muslims, and especially in the context of discussions about Muslim women’s clothing, so-called honour killings and Shari’ah law. Secularism is perceived to produce equality and freedom for women due to numerous conditions, which include the presumed subservience of religion in public life, the idea that freedom is best secured through the notion of individual choice, and through the promotion of the universalization of justice. In essence, this assumption presumes that women’s equality and freedom emerge out of the history and political project of secularism. However, given the history of Western political development and the gendered inequality embedded in society, both historically and in contemporary times, there is little evidence of a necessary co-relation between the development of Western secularism and gender equality. As Brown (2012) argues, “…women’s domestic confinement was intensified by new social arrangements wrought by capital, and women were discursively identified with the family, a sexualized body and religious passion.” (p. 9). Secularism, says Brown, is commonly associated with women’s equality and, through “emancipation by association” (Scott, Quoted in Brown, 2012, p. 9) to a universal code of justice, even when such a code contains exclusions based on race and gender. The movements for women’s equality which were waged in the 19th and 20th centuries
were predicated as struggles for inclusion in this universal code, which marginalized some bodies based on race, gender and other criteria.

The equation of secularism with women’s equality rests on numerous assumptions which uphold and yet render invisible gendered inequalities in Western society. The history of Western political and economic development – and particularly the advent of capitalism – created and reinforced a gendered separation of labour (between, for instance, waged and household work), and social norms (for example, the nuclear family), and reproduced these divisions. However, these divisions are rendered invisible by the liberal presumption that conflates formal rights with freedom. As such, “…as with the status of religion and culture in Western public values, the gendered private/public distinction is foundational to modern Western social orders yet it vanishes in discussions of individual freedom and universality.” (Brown, 2012, p. 10). In this way, even when women’s movements succeed in securing rights based on the so-called universal code of rights, women do not necessarily gain substantive rights in Western secular contexts.

The assumption that secularism promotes gender equality also rests on another notion, which is that “…freedom is only constrained by law or edict, that the subject is free to pursue ends of her or his own devising in the absence of an authoritative ‘no’…” (Brown, 2012, p. 10). Such a presumption does not account for other possible constraints on freedom (such as social norms, economics, sexism, consumerism, etc.), each of which affects the choices of individuals in Western secular society. Brown (2012) uses the example of women’s fashion and shoes to illustrate this point effectively: “…if shoes nearly impossible to stand let alone walk in are freely chosen, that does not make them shoes of freedom, something of course that can be said of hijab or niqab as well. Yet…no one, anywhere in the Western world, has ever seriously considered passing legislation to outlaw such shoes, their making or their wearing, including in schools or state offices.” (2012, p. 11). Yet, Western secular discourse
often contrasts freedom of choice for Western women versus that of women from non-Western contexts, with little or no acknowledgement of the factors (besides legal) that might constrain the choices of women. Brown (2012) maintains that such discourses fail to account for numerous factors: (1) how conditions of choice are organized and how choice itself is normatively produced; (2) how subjects can be dominated through choice, a concern that stretches from Plato to Mill, Marcuse to Foucault; and (3) how subjects can choose against their freedom or equality, an argument for which we can draw on Hobbes, Dostoyevsky, and Freud.” (Brown, 2012, p. 11). Perhaps most importantly, such discourses contrasting freedom of choice for Western women while lamenting the lack of choice for non-Western women completely ignores how choices are shaped by power. Further, what such discourses fail to acknowledge is “…the extent to which choice is an impoverished account of freedom, especially political freedom.” (Brown, 2012, p. 11).

The co-relation between the construct of Western secularism and women’s equality has significant ramifications for Muslims in the contemporary Canadian context. As I explore in Chapter 3, Canadian media and public discourses are strongly focused on Muslim women and their supposed lack of freedom and equality. Many of these debates and commentaries rely on the idea that Muslim women are unfree and need to be rescued and brought into the same freedoms enjoyed by Western women. Gender equality is, therefore, clearly a touchstone for national and international conversations about Muslims. In many senses, gender is a demarcating line between acceptable and non-acceptable Muslims, the former perceived to be ‘more like us’ and adhering to the founding principles of the Western construct of secularism. Asad (2006) suggests that arguments for the ban on veils in France

…were embedded in…power. They seemed to me not so much about tolerance towards Muslims in a religiously diverse society, nor even about the strict separation between religion and state. They were first and foremost about the structure of political liberties – about the relations of subordination and immunity, the recognition of oneself as a particular kind of self – on which this state is built, and about the structure of emotions that underlie these liberties. (p. 95).
These critiques of the construct of Western secularism illuminate the numerous assumptions on which it is based and reveal that the Western public sphere is far from religiously/culturally neutral. Further, such critiques expose how secularism is rooted in particular histories, cultural contexts and religious traditions. Western secularism presents a “…secularized conception of religion in which religion is understood to be an abstracted category of beliefs and doctrines from which the individual believer stands apart to examine, compare, and evaluate its various manifestations. Religion, in a properly secularized world, is therefore an object of individual free choice…” (Mahmood, 2006, p. 341). As Casanova (2009) notes, “[i]t is precisely this assumption that secular people think and act on their own and are rational autonomous free agents, while religious people somehow are unfree, heteronomous, nonrational agents, that constitutes the foundational premise of secularist ideology.” (p. 1057). This secularist ideology re-defines religion based on Christian (and specifically Protestant) traditions and transforms society’s relationship to religion, while naturalizing (and rendering invisible) these particular norms and histories. This transformation, suggests Asad (2003), is a form of violence that depends both on the idea of an “enlightened space and the darkness of the outside jungle.” (p. 59). This is a “liberal violence… [which is] translucent. It is the violence of universalizing reason itself. For to make an enlightened space, the liberal must continually attack the darkness of the outside world that threatens to overwhelm that space.” (Asad, 2003, p. 59). Hence, the transformation of society’s relationship with religion – the liberal violence that is deeply embedded in Western political ideology – has significant implications for those not of the dominant tradition. It is to these implications that I now turn.

Secular normativity and its implications
Critiques of the construct of Western secularism make clear that, far from being religiously and culturally neutral, this construct is in fact rooted in particular religious traditions, histories and norms which, while foundational to society, are also naturalized and rendered invisible. In effect, the Western
construct of secularism – secular normativity (Mahmood, 2006) – defines what religion is and compels societal conformity (through law, policy, norms, tradition) to such a definition. Key characteristics for a proper religion include the focus on individual belief and personal conscience, the centrality of text in religious traditions, the idea of privatized, individualized worship and practice, and the notion that religious expression (or at least those of non-dominant religious traditions) be relegated to the private sphere. Those religious traditions not conforming to such characteristics are perceived to be at best, non-secular, and at worst, religiously fundamentalist. Such a construct of secularism is deeply embedded in the political, social, cultural and ideological formations of the Western nation-state, though presented as so-called universal values. In her incisive analysis of Muslims in France, Fernando (2014b) suggests that “…the general will has never been abstract or universal. Rather, it has represented a set of particular embodied identities – usually white, male, bourgeois, heterosexual, and secular or Christian – that proclaimed themselves universal.” (pp. 85-86). Hence, the exclusions of the Other are built into the very structure and foundation of Western secular nation-states, with these Others having to prove their adherence to key norms in order to be recognized and included in the national public sphere. Asad’s (2003) comment about the “enlightened space” and the “darkness of the jungle” is apt: the enlightened liberal subject and state must continually fight against the darkness of the Other in order to maintain the enlightenment of the public sphere. The so-called outsider must either conform to the universal values of the enlightened space or be excluded from the benefits of citizenship. The construct of secularism does not, contrary to perception, provide a religiously neutral space for all; rather, it seeks to manage and control the expressions of religious traditions and to ensure that any displays fall within already-established (and dominant) definitions. Such a construct ensures “…a process in which some kinds of religion are determined to be compatible with liberal, democratic modernity, while others are not…” (Scherer, 2011, p. 625). In order for a religious tradition to be recognized, it must be recognizable by the secular state, based on the model it has defined (the apriori
definition of religion). Using the examples of both Jews in France and Muslims in Algeria, Fernando (2014b) illuminates how both groups were incorporated into dominant society by becoming recognizable as citizens. (p. 111). Measures included the restricted use of religious laws, the reduction or elimination of the authority of religious leaders, the undermining of group loyalties, and changes to how members of each group would interact with (and receive benefits from) the state. In the case of Jews in France

...this process of secularization, called emancipation, was...pronounced and it fundamentally transformed Jewish life. Jews’ incorporation as citizens into French social and political life depended on their becoming incorporable, which in turn depended on a radical re-formation of Jews’ relationship to community, self and the divine... [and] was premised on a process of secularization that would turn Judaism into a religion, one that could be separated from political citizenship. (Fernando, 2014b, pp. 111, 113-114).

In other words, in both the cases of Jews in France and Muslims in Algeria, the focus of the French state’s efforts was to ensure that members of both groups would see themselves (and relate to the state) as individuals (rather than as members of their respective groups) and receive individual benefits from (and be loyal to) the state. In so doing, “…[e]ligious norms were rendered private” (Fernando, 2014b, p. 115) and regulation of these individuals came under the authority of the state. However, Muslims and Jews were nonetheless deemed to be sufficiently visibly (read: racially and religiously) different so as to make complete inclusion impossible.

Muslims in the contemporary Western context face similar dilemmas. As Fernando (2014b) notes, “[l]ike the emancipation of French Jews...the project of recognizing and including Islam in the republic is a disciplinary project of secular governmentality, one that seeks to refashion Islam and Muslims in ways that make them recognizable to the secular state.” (p. 122). In the Canadian context, secularist ideology, coupled with multiculturalist rhetoric, is geared towards the effective management and regulation of non-dominant religious/cultural traditions. The Canadian national imaginary upholds this secularist ideology, allowing the proclamation of religious neutrality, all the while
reinforcing racialized and gendered notions of religiosity and of acceptable citizenship. The Canadian state, grounded in this racialized national narrative, declares its commitment to multiculturalist rhetoric and religious neutrality, even as it tacitly (and sometimes not so tacitly) reinforces the norms of a particular religious and cultural tradition. In this sense, the so-called secularist Canadian nation-state re-defines acceptable religious commitment in a particular way: as a matter of individual, personal belief and conscience, privatized expression and worship (or in specific designated spaces), and an acceptance of key, supposedly shared values (secularism, individualism, gender equity, rationalism, and tolerance, among others). Such a definition of religion in the public sphere demarcates the boundaries of acceptability in the Canadian national imaginary and allows both for qualified inclusion of some (acceptable or tolerated Others) and exclusion of others (the unacceptable or intolerable), while reinforcing the privilege and power of the national subject and the state itself. The acceptable subject is one who affirms (and in some cases, publicly proclaims and celebrates) the cherished norms embedded in the secularist ideology of the contemporary nation-state. In order to render such a state viable, especially in the context of multiculturalist rhetoric, the state requires key people – insider or native informants – who support such a privatized, autonomous, individualized form of religion in public life. Such insider informants must be perceived to belong to the religious Other (in the contemporary context, predominantly Muslims), but also as championing the ideals of the secular Western state. These insider informants – the Acceptable Muslim, in my terms – are vital to the state’s ability to manage the type of religious expressions permitted in the public sphere, while maintaining its multicultural and supposedly non-racist image.

**Muslims and acceptability in the secular state**
The construct of Western secularism is closely connected to the structure of citizenship, which I discuss in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. Acceptable citizenship in Western, multicultural, secularist, settler states, such as Canada, is based very much on the acceptance by the citizen-subject of certain
Secularist ideology enables the state to proclaim its religious neutrality and yet effectively manage and control how religion (and what type of religion) is expressed in the public sphere; the acceptable citizen is a body who is perceived to accept the assumptions and foundations of this construct. Importantly, the construct of secularism also underpins the ideological goals of empire, both domestically and globally. Such a construct provides a convenient cover for what Dabashi (2011) refers to as a “…moral mission, even a divine destiny” (p. 8) in which Western values are seen to be superior, but, more specifically, as promising salvation. While the mission is far from neutral or secular, the construct of secularism (and related to this, Western-style democracy) enables the propagation of Western values under the banner of so-called universal values. Dabashi (2011) maintains that “…imperialism is not about denying the natives their history and culture; it is just better that these backward cultures (and by that they mean no disrespect) see the light of day and do as Americans do…” (p. 9) In this manner, acceptable citizen-subjects are central to the essential logic of multicultural, secular Western nation-states; such subjects are needed to demarcate the boundaries of legitimate citizenship and support crucial ideological and political goals. Acceptable citizen-subjects illuminate the distinction between the commensurable and incommensurable differences, between those deemed recognizable and those deemed Other who are not recognized as citizens, and hence are marked for exclusion.

In Western multicultural states, the discourse of tolerance plays an important role in distinguishing between the acceptable and the unacceptable subject. Brown (2006) comments that

[in every lexicon, tolerance signifies the limits on what foreign, erroneous, objectionable or dangerous element can be allowed to cohabit with the host without destroying the host... The very invocation of tolerance in each domain indicates that something contaminating or dangerous is at hand, or something foreign is at issue, and the limits of tolerance are determined by how much of this toxicity can be accommodated without destroying the object, value, claim or body. Tolerance appears, then, as a mode of incorporating and regulating the presence of the threatening Other within... (p. 27).]
Tolerance discourse is, therefore, crucial to the drawing and reinforcing of boundaries in the public sphere, and the reaffirming of the power dynamics at the heart of such discourse. This discourse compels subjects, under threat of possible exclusion, to accept the terms of secular society, and to transfer her/his loyalty to the state in return for inclusion, even if this is marginal or qualified inclusion. The process is often subtle, as the old loyalty (i.e. faith and cultural traditions) may simply be privatized, rather than completely abandoned, with the new attachment (loyalty to the state and its norms) performed in public. This is related to the contention, already considered above, that liberal subjects have culture/religion (i.e. freely choose culture/religion), while non-liberal subjects are dominated and ruled by culture/religion. Hence, “…these analytic moves to situate culture [or faith] as extrinsic to the individual, as forming the background of the individual, as that which the individual ‘chooses’ or has a right to, do not merely confirm the autonomy of the individual, but also figure culture as inherently oppressive when it saturates or governs law and politics.” (Brown, 2006, p. 170). This process illuminates a power differential between liberal subjects who ‘have’ culture and can tolerate (or not) the others who accept the terms of the unspoken societal compact. The Acceptable Muslim is situated against this backdrop of the liberal, secularist compact in society, in which the terms of engagement compel an acceptance of key shared norms, without which the Other subject is threatened with exclusion.

In the contemporary context, Muslims are often under the threat of exclusion in the Western secular state (as the bodies of racialized people have been historically – and continue to be). The figure of the Acceptable Muslim supports and reinforces the construct of Western secularism, citizenship and the moral mission (although not always explicitly) by displaying and enacting the criteria for acceptability on these fronts. Just as importantly, the Acceptable Muslim is crucial to masking the inherent tensions, contradictions and power asymmetries in Western, secular, multicultural states. These contradictions reflect the universal-particular tension at the heart of the secularist state, a tension which is
paradoxically both confirmed and denied by the presence of the acceptable Other. As Fernando (2014b) observes

...[r]epublican citizenship demands that individuals abstract their particular racial or religious identities in order to be proper, universal citizens. This distinction between particular and universal maps onto the distinction between religion and politics that undergirds secularism as a political arrangement, in which religion is privatized and religious commitments are divorced from public engagement. The distinction between universal and particular, public and private and politics and religion produce the Muslim question as a matter of visibility and invisibility: to be an integrated secular citizen means abstracting one’s Muslimness and rendering it invisible in the public sphere. (p. 36).

Hence, the outlines of secularist ideology are fundamentally rooted not in neutrality, but very much in the reinforcement of the power and privilege of historically dominant groups. Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism in the contemporary Western context rely on key Orientalist imaginaries, buttressed by the politics of nationalism and empire, and are grounded in the language of civilizational discourse. As Fernando (2014b) suggests, “[o]ften morphing into a defense of Western secularism, the new Islamophobia regards Islam as a civilizational threat. The problem with Islam, according to this discourse, is that it cannot separate religious and political life and be merely a religion – hence its supposed existential threat to the secular West...” (p. 45). In the contemporary context, the figure of the Muslim profoundly challenges the foundations of the secularist ideology, and, distinguishing itself from this racialized Muslim Other, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim emerges consistently in public, media and political discourses. Dabashi (2011) contends that native informers (he refers to them as comprador intellectuals) are crucial to the workings of an ideological society. His argument focuses on those native informers who serve “…the empire on the home front” (2011, p. 13) and who help support imperial strategies of domination. He suggests that these native informers provide white-identified perspectives (2011, p. 15) and serve to legitimize the ideological goals of the societies they serve. Often framed by liberals as voices of dissent, such figures have “…learned the art of simultaneously acknowledging and denying their Muslim origins.” (Dabashi, 2011, p. 16). He further argues that such figures are significant because “…they provide…a cover of legitimacy to American
imperial designs on the Islamic world. They have undertaken their activities in the honorable name of defending the human rights, women’s rights, and civil rights of Muslims themselves.” (Dabashi, 2011, p. 17).

In the American context, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim – often referred to as a moderate Muslim – is situated as an ally of the nation-state. In her research on the so-called moderate Muslim in the United States, Shehabuddin (2011) refers to a Rand Corporation Report (issued in 2007) entitled *Building Moderate Muslim Networks*. The Report recommends that the U.S. government develop and ally itself with a network of ‘moderate Muslims’ in an effort to counter radical Muslims. Interestingly, the Report identifies key characteristics – tellingly referred to as ‘marker issues’ – of the moderate Muslim, which include this description: “…they support democracy, gender equality, and freedom of worship; they respect diversity; they accept nonsectarian sources of law; and they oppose ‘terrorism’…” (Shehabuddin, 2011, p. 122). Clearly, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim in the American context is an ally (or native informer) to dominant elites and to the state; these allies, sometimes (though not always) directly cooperating with state institutions, are deeply implicated in tentacles of power and empire. These are the “comprador intellectuals” (Dabashi, 2011) and the “the chorus of willing intellectuals” (Said, 1978/2003, p. xxi) who provide insider support to bolster the political and ideological projects of empire.

While Dabashi (2011) and Shehabuddin (2011) write about the Acceptable Muslim figures in the American context, I concur with their analyses in my own treatment of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim in Canada. I theorize that the perspectives and commentaries of the Canadian Acceptable Muslims support the ideological goals of the Canadian nation-state, some more explicitly than others, and they underline values key to the multicultural secularist nation-state. These Acceptable Muslims have internalized the language of Canadian benevolence, tolerance, liberalism and multiculturalism
and speak it “…with the authority of natives.” (Dabashi, 2011, p. 18). These are the figures that are granted qualified inclusion into the Canadian national imaginary, and whose voices are used to amplify and support key elements of the national narrative.

**The Acceptable Muslim in Canada: Who are they?**

As I discuss in the previous chapter, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim features in my data on Canadian media and public discourse between 2005 and 2014. Their voices are prominently placed both in Canadian press, and in other public spaces, as the so-called moderate (though the term is problematic), those who successfully integrate their cultural/religious identities into Canadian life. These perspectives are often highlighted in public debates about multiculturalism and integration and are also represented in an increasing number of books, commentaries, and vehicles of cultural production (television, plays, books, etc.). From a survey of my data, I identify numerous figures that appear regularly and insistently in Canadian media, public and political discourses. These figures include, among others, Tarek Fatah, Irshad Manji, Sheema Khan, Zarqa Nawaz and Raheel Raza. Of these, the first four (Fatah, Manji, Khan and Nawaz) are most prominently (and consistently) featured, with Fatah, Manji, and Khan featured predominantly in as media commentators, while Nawaz, while featured in press commentary, is more often touted for being the creator of *Little Mosque on the Prairie*. Together, these four individuals, their voices and their work (written and audio-visual), represent the figure of the Acceptable Muslim in Canada. While there are, of course, nuances and differences among their perspectives, the four share some common characteristics, which establish their credentials as Acceptable Muslims. In this chapter, I analyze their work and voices, noting both their common characteristics and those that differentiate them, in order to interrogate their roles as Acceptable Muslims in the Canadian context.
Before moving to an analysis of the work of the four individuals, it is useful to outline briefly the biographies of the figures analyzed. Such biographical background provides an introduction to each figure and serves to set the context for their work and perspectives.

Tarek Fatah (1949-) is a writer, broadcaster and political activist born in Pakistan, and currently living in Toronto. He is the publisher of two books: *Chasing a mirage: The tragic illusion of an Islamic State* (2008) and *The Jew is not my Enemy* (2010). Fatah is one of the founders of the Muslim Canadian Congress (established 2001), an advocacy group that advertises itself as “…more liberal-thinking (as opposed to the highly conservative Islamism movement) with their stances on various controversial subjects.” (MCC, 2016). Among the positions taken by the Congress is the call for legislation against the wearing of face veils (niqabs and burqas) in Canadian public space. Fatah consistently argues against the wearing of face veils, and is unequivocal in his condemnation of perspectives (whether concerning veils or other issues) that he perceives (and labels) as “Islamofacism.” (Fatah, 2015). Fatah has been a regular contributor to Canadian media discourse, writing for various publications, and has a regular column in the *Toronto Sun*. His opinions are often used by other commentators in media and public discourses to legitimate opinions about the so-called limits of multiculturalism and assimilation. He is deeply critical of Muslim extremists and urges Canadian Muslims to

…lead the attack on jihadi Islamists. They need to stop vying for a gold medal in the Olympics of victimhood. They should say clearly in their mosques that the days of jihad are over…. Why are we so reluctant to criticize the supremacist ideology of Islamism? Islamism is not Islam, it is the use of Islam as a political and fascist ideology to wage war on the civilization we have inherited after 200 years of Enlightenment. Enough with the Chamberlains. We need a Churchill. (Fatah, 2009b).

Irshad Manji (1968-) was born in Uganda, and, after the expulsion of Asians by Idi Amin, moved to Canada with her family. She grew up in Vancouver/Richmond, BC and lived in Ottawa and Toronto before moving to the United States. She is an author, writer and activist who has been an active commentator on a variety of issues, including those related to Muslims, multiculturalism, and the rights
of gays and lesbians. She is the author of two books, *The Trouble with Islam* (2005) and *Allah, Liberty and Love* (2011), and the producer of a documentary on Muslims, *Faith without Fear* (2007). She is well-known for her advocacy of what she refers to as a reform of Islam (or at least the manner in which Muslims interpret Islam). Manji refers to herself as a “Muslim refusenik” (Manji, 2005), a term saturated with political meaning. She states that “…reform isn’t about telling ordinary Muslims what not to think, but about giving Islam’s one billion devotees permission to think.” (Manji, 2005, p. 40).

Like Fatah, Manji has been a regular contributor to Canadian (and international) media and public discourses, and her opinions are often used to supplement the perspectives of others on issues of multiculturalism, Muslims and the state. Manji is the founder (and current Director) of the Moral Courage Project (initially at New York University and now at the University of Southern California).

Sheema Khan (date of birth unknown) was born in India and moved to Canada as a child. She is an academic and author who writes a regular column for *The Globe and Mail*. She holds a PhD from Harvard University in chemical physics and has won numerous patents (she is a registered patent agent) on drug delivery technology. She was the founder and first President of the Canadian Council on America-Islamic Relations (CAIR-Can), now renamed the National Council on Canadian Muslims (NCCM), and has served on the board of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. She is the author of a book entitled *Of Hockey and Hijab* (2009) in which she outlines her perspectives on Islam, multiculturalism, gender equality, and integration, among other issues. While Khan does not refrain

---

26 The term refusenik was originally used for Soviet Jews who were denied permission to emigrate from the former Soviet Union. The marking of individuals as refuseniks often indicated social, political, and economic marginalization in the public sphere, particularly for dissidents marked for exclusion. Over the years, the term refusenik has come to signify a person who refuses to do something, especially by way of protest. The term achieved additional notoriety in the context of the State of Israel, when conscientious objectors refused to serve in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) when deployed in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. That Manji chooses to use the term refusenik certainly marks her self-identification as a dissident, but this is an interesting (and deeply political) choice, especially given the history of the term used in the context of Israel and Palestine. It is hard to envision that the choice of such a term to describe herself can be an innocent one.

27 The Moral Courage Project is a quasi-academic, educational, and activist centre, which, according to its website endeavours to “teach moral courage” and is a “learning lab that connects self-knowledge to social progress.” [http://moralcourage.com/teaching/teaching-details/#our-academic-home](http://moralcourage.com/teaching/teaching-details/#our-academic-home), accessed September 17, 2017.
from criticism of Canadian and Western policies which affect Muslims, her perspectives generally reinforce multicultural constructs embedded in the Canadian national imaginary. As she states, “[O]ur multiculturalism policy seems light years ahead of Europe’s dysfunctional immigration policies. We’re nice. We’re Canadian.” (2009b, p. 13). She urges Canadian Muslims to take public stands against Muslim extremists whether in Canada or internationally and contends that the values espoused in Canada (freedom, democracy, human rights, diversity) resonate with the fundamental tenets of Islam. Her viewpoints, grounded both in an understanding of Islam and in the liberal ideology embedded in the Canadian national imaginary, essentially reinforce the ideals and values of the Canadian multicultural nation-state.

Zarqa Nawaz (1968 - ) was born in the United Kingdom, is of Pakistani origin and was raised in Toronto. She is a journalist, writer, and filmmaker who is best known as the creator (and consulting producer) of Little Mosque in the Prairie (2007-2012), the first mainstream television show featuring Canadian Muslims. She has also produced a documentary, entitled Me and the Mosque (2005b) and numerous other short films including BBQ Muslims (1995), Death Threat (1998), Random Check (2005c), and Fred’s Burqa (2005a). She is the author of one book, Laughing all the way to the Mosque (2014), in which she writes about her experiences as a Canadian Muslim. She is a regular contributor to Canadian (and international) media and public discourses, most often related to issues of Muslims in western contexts. Little Mosque on the Prairie (LMOP) aired for 6 years in Canada, and was aired in approximately 90 other countries including France, the United Arab Emirates, Finland and numerous countries in francophone Africa. (MacDonald, 2007, p. R1). As I argue elsewhere, the sitcom idealizes the figure of the Acceptable Muslim “…who is represented as ‘liberal,’ ‘modern,’ and one who seamlessly integrates her faith into the multicultural fabric of Canada.” (S. Kassam, 2015, p. 607). The sitcom, while certainly challenging Orientalist stereotypes, also reaffirms the Canadian national narrative, which is grounded in racialized and gendered notions of citizenship. While screenwriters developed
scripts for *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, there is little doubt that Nawaz is the driving force behind the concepts, themes and characters on the sitcom, which reaffirm the acceptable boundaries of Canadian citizenship. Beneath the *Little Mosque* veneer, Nawaz challenges gender norms within Muslim communities (most notably in her documentary, *Me and the Mosque*) while exploring the nuances of being Muslim and Canadian.

These, then, are the four figures (Fatah, Manji, Khan and Nawaz) that I analyze as Acceptable Muslims in Canada. They are regular contributors to Canadian media, public and political discourses, and, as is evidenced by my analysis of Canadian press coverage (Chapter 3), are repeatedly used as commentators, interview subjects, and serve as the focus of numerous articles about Muslims in Canada. These four figures share some similar characteristics and perspectives, which I suggest, situate them as acceptable in the Canadian context. However, there are some nuances which differentiate them from each other. In particular, I suggest that two of the figures (Manji and Fatah) are what I refer to as Acceptable Secular Muslims while the other two (Khan and Nawaz) are, in my terminology, Acceptable Multiculturalist Muslims. Both types of figures (Secular Muslims and Multiculturalist Muslims) play significant roles in the Canadian national imaginary, and both sets of figures fall within the archetype of the Acceptable Muslim.

I now move to an exploration of the characteristics of the Acceptable Muslim, as evidenced by their perspectives as embedded in their media footprints and cultural production of these four figures. In so doing, I will note the nuances that differentiate these two sets of figures (Secular and Multiculturalist).

**The Acceptable Muslim in Canada: key characteristics**

Fatah, Manji, Khan and Nawaz share numerous characteristics that situate them as Acceptable Muslims within the Canadian national imaginary. These figures resonate with other such figures globally including Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Mona Eltahawy, and others. Some of these figures, most notably
Manji and Nawaz (and to a certain extent, perhaps Fatah) have developed international reputations, perhaps due to the perspectives they express, and/or the success of their work. While I analyze the perspectives of these four figures specifically within the Canadian context, I suggest that the figure of the Acceptable Muslim is not limited to Canada; indeed, such a figure is relevant globally and in varied contexts. Hence, my work on Canadian Acceptable Muslim figures can be read in the context of other such figures in other parts of the world. Fernando (2009, 2014b) analyzes such figures – she refers to them as “secular Muslim women” (p. 380) – in the French context and highlights the important roles that such figures play in the reinforcement of key republican ideals. She suggests that such “…secular Muslim and ex-Muslim women…position[ed] themselves as having cast off the chains of Islamic tradition and embrace[d] the secular-qua-universal values of liberty, equality, and tolerance.” (Fernando, 2009, p. 380). Hence, while my analysis concentrates specifically on the Canadian context – data and analysis which is lacking in current scholarship – I contend that the characterization of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim is relevant and important for other contexts and has global currency.

The perspectives of the four Canadian Acceptable Muslim figures share key features which situate them as acceptable in the Canadian context. I explore these similarities, along with some nuances below.

**Public condemnation of extremism**
First, all four figures openly condemn extremists and so-called radical Muslims and urge Muslims to publicly reject or condemn extremism. Manji, for instance, implores “[t]hrough our screaming self-pity and our conspicuous silences, we Muslims are conspiring against ourselves. We’re in crisis, and we’re dragging the rest of the world with us. If ever there was a moment for an Islamic reformation, it’s now. For the love of God, what are we doing about it?” (Manji, 2005, p. 3). Similarly, Khan says that “…every Muslim has a responsibility to confront the hate espoused by these hirabis [she translates this word as ‘barbarians’]. Silence is not an option…” (Khan, 2009b, p. 22). Nawaz, in the
characterizations prominent in *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, idealizes the balanced and good Muslim while denouncing or excluding the extremist or bad Muslim from acceptable community. In commenting about an alleged terror plot in Ottawa, Fatah, known for his vitriolic commentary, co-authored a commentary with Salma Siddiqui, stating,

As Muslim Canadians, both of us, while asking for the due judicial process to take its course, had no hesitation in condemning the rising tide of jihadi radicalism that is sweeping like a contagious disease among Muslim youth, especially of Pakistani ancestry, across Canada. However, by and large, the leadership of traditional Islamist organizations and the mosque establishment repeated the now tired and cliché-ridden depiction of Muslims as the real victims. (2010).

Hence, the condemnation of radical Muslims – and the urging of public condemnation of these extremists by all Muslims – is a key feature of the perspectives of Acceptable Muslims. It is noteworthy that none of these Acceptable Muslim figures question why they are calling upon Muslims specifically to condemn extremists when other groups (whether religious, cultural or others) are not urged (or required) to do so. Yet, in the contemporary context, Muslims are often called upon to publicly renounce extremist perspectives, positions or actions, and are urged to do so by these Acceptable Muslim figures. In part, this relates to the assumption that Muslims are and should be accountable for the actions of other Muslims. Such a notion of “…collective Muslim guilt is a common staple of the mass media.” (Dabashi, 2011, p. 3). The double-standard to which Muslims (like other racialized and Indigenous bodies) are subject is quite clear: members of groups with the privilege of dominance are not asked or required to take responsibility for the actions of others from their groups. As Dabashi (2011) succinctly observes, “Can we reverse the angle? How many Americans were ready to ‘isolate, condemn and denounce publicly and repeatedly’ the murders for which George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, and Donald Rumsfeld were responsible? (pp. 3-4).

Such urging of public condemnation reveals the fault line in the Canadian national narrative between national subjects and those perceived as the Other. Those perceived to be ‘real’ Canadians are seen as
individuals and are not required to identify with community affiliations (be they religious, cultural, ethnic…); these subjects are part of the invisible norm against which the Other is measured and judged. The national subject, seen as the universal individual citizen (or the Canadian, in this case) is bestowed the privilege of being seen as unmarked or ‘normal’. On the other hand, the Other is perceived as part of the minority (even the quintessentially Canadian term ‘visible minority’ attests to this) and hence is associated with specific traditions/communities. Against this backdrop, those perceived as the Other(s) must somehow publicly proclaim commitment to the values of the invisible norm, in an effort to be granted inclusion (however qualified) in the national imaginary. In the post 9/11 world, Muslims are perceived as always-already bad Muslims (Mamdani, 2004) and must perform their good Muslim credentials in order to be considered inside the acceptable boundaries of the national imaginary. In her analysis of Muslims in France, Fernando (2014a) observes that the Other seeks to “…to give an account of herself and to show that she is a normal, modern French woman, not a victim of fundamentalists or, alternatively, a fundamentalist herself…Always already interpellated as religious aberrant, she must prove otherwise.” (p. 692). By urging fellow Muslims to publicly condemn extremism and so-called radical Muslims – and by not alluding to the double-standard embedded in such a call – the Acceptable Muslim situates herself as one who accepts the unspoken assumptions of the national imaginary and renders invisible the structural racial disparities with which it teems.

**Essentializing Muslims**

A second feature shared by Canadian Acceptable Muslims analyzed is that all four of the figures seek to essentialize Muslims, albeit in different ways. Fatah and Manji, those I refer to as Secular Muslims, have a different approach to the essentializing of Muslims than do Khan and Nawaz, whom I refer to as Multiculturalist Muslims. Secular Muslims (those of Manji and Fatah’s ilk) articulate stereotypical notions of Muslims, such that they effectively erase the richness of Muslim history, traditions, cultures
and interpretations (and not coincidentally, can position themselves as unmarked by culture and faith). Multiculturalist Muslims, on the other hand, make selective use of Muslim history and traditions, such that they engage with a politics of authenticity (as I explain below). Manji, a Secular Muslim, for instance, often speaks about Muslims using stereotypes and overgeneralizations that paint (with very broad strokes) entire groups of people as having certain (shared) qualities. Consider this sentiment: “Because Arab norms set infantile expectations of men, something else emerges: a victim mentality that allows Muslim men to commit assorted abuses of power, including rampages against anybody who seemingly humiliates their frail and fragmented sense of self….Whether real or imagined, their trauma imperils the security of more people, from their own families to citizens of the West.” (Manji, 2011, p. 134). In her documentary, Faith without Fear, (2007), Manji focuses on the most extreme examples of Muslim practice and behaviour (with sections on women in Yemen, interviews with a man claiming to be the bodyguard of Osama bin Laden, and young Muslims in the Netherlands). In attempting to contextualize these varied narratives, she does not explore the issues – social, political, economic and ideological – underlying the attitudes and actions of the people involved. Rather, she links these individuals, contexts and issues through their shared commitment to Islam (with no acknowledgment that Islam can have different meanings and inspire varied actions on the part of 1.6 billion Muslims). Nor does she explore in her work the diversity of Muslim interpretations about Islam. Indeed, she is unequivocal in her commentary that the majority of Muslims are literalists and traditionalists. As she states,

...believers in the historically ‘reformed’ religions don’t operate on a herd mentality as much as Muslims do. Christian leaders are aware of the intellectual diversity within their ranks. While each can deny the validity of other interpretations – and many do – none can deny that a plethora of interpretations exist. As for Jews, they’re way ahead of the crowd. Jews actually publicize disagreements by surrounding their scriptures with commentaries and incorporating debates into the Talmud itself. By contrast, most Muslims treat the Quran as a document to imitate rather than interpret, suffocating our capacity to think for ourselves. (Manji, 2005, pp. 33-34).
Fatah, in his many columns and publications, has no regard for those he labels “Islamofacists.” (Fatah, 2011). He often makes sweeping statements about Muslims, both historically and in contemporary times, and refers to Muslims as having little or no interpretational diversity, thus situating Muslims as an undifferentiated mass. Such perspectives erase the long history (and contemporary reality) of diversity and debate within Muslim scholarship, juridical opinions, and interpretational divergences. Such a view essentializes the perspectives of Muslims and makes the judgement that they need to be reformed (Manji’s word); consider Manji’s plea for a Muslim reformation which will “…help Muslims realize our right and responsibility to think.” (Manji, 2011, p. 33). In this sense, both Fatah and Manji minimize (even erase) Muslim intellectual history, cultures and the spirit of reflection and inquiry in which Muslims have engaged historically and in contemporary times. Dabashi (2011) notes that

Muslims, like the adherents of any other world religion, have agreed and disagreed, celebrated their faith and contested its doctrines, challenged the metaphysical veracity of their culture and enriched its ethical dexterity; they have narrated their faith in juridical terms, then turned around and speculated about their religion theologically, before opposing both proclivities mystically, thus exploring the boundaries of reason and revelation. Muslims have produced a record of literary humanism in Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Turkish unparalleled in medieval history. In art and architecture, science and technology, literature and poetry, Muslims have generated and sustained a world civilization. They have also systematically dismantled their own intellectual history to transform their faith into the site of ideological resistance to colonialism. (p. 96).

This rich intellectual, cultural and political history – what Dabashi (2011) refers to as “the historical and contemporary polyvocality of Muslims” (p. 85) – is not reflected in the views of Fatah and Manji, who, instead, provide over-simplified and reductionist perspectives on Islamic history and traditions, as they fashion their arguments pitting the primitive Muslim Other against the enlightened modern subject. Such perspectives present Islam and Muslims as existing in an always-already world, one in which specific contexts (geography, history, context, politics) are deemed unimportant or irrelevant. Instead Islam and Muslims exist in archetypal forms, ready to be deployed in crude and unsophisticated forms in pursuit of ideological goals. Shehabuddin (2011) suggests that some

…imperial feminists, much like the ‘radical,’ ‘misogynist’ Muslim men they lambaste, assume an immutable ‘Islamic’ gender ideology, as though the categories of Islam and the West, ‘Muslim
man’ and ‘Muslim woman’, and the roles and status of Muslim women, arise, exist, and persist apart from and above societal, economic, and political developments in specific geographical contexts. (p. 104).

Secular Muslims such as Fatah and Manji often present Muslims and Islam in such an immutable manner, erasing history, geography, political, social and economic contexts – all factors that would particularize Muslim experiences. Instead, their commentaries generalize these experiences, and reconfirm the “…unstated assumption…that the proper name ‘Islam’ denotes a simple thing to which one can refer immediately as one refers to ‘democracy’, or to a person, or to an institution like the Catholic Church.” (Said, 1981, p. 38).

While Manji and Fatah (Secular Muslims) essentialize Muslims by erasing the richness of Muslim societies and interpretations, Khan and Nawaz, both Multiculturalist Muslims, engage in a politics of authenticity which, in the end, also essentializes Muslims, albeit in a different fashion. For instance, Nawaz, in the depictions of Muslims on *Little Mosque on the Prairie* presents idealized characters who, while challenging blatant Orientalist stereotypes, nonetheless reinforce the notion of a good or authentic Muslim. As I argue elsewhere, “[t]he sub-text of the sitcom privileges the idea of a ‘proper Muslim,’ a notion which is far too simplistic and reductionist to represent the actual realities of Muslims – in terms of interpretations, schools of thought, perspectives and practice of faith.” (S. Kassam, 2015, p. 612). Though the representation of Muslim women on *Little Mosque on the Prairie* are certainly an improvement to earlier, blatantly Orientalist stereotypes, the sitcom nonetheless presents a “…singular version of a Muslim woman.” (Hirji, 2011, p. 42). The sitcom’s female characters, while ethnically diverse and expressing a variety of opinions on matters of faith, nonetheless fall within an acceptably authentic notion of Muslim womanhood. As Hirji (2011) observes, “…while there are departures from stereotypes…they are not complete departures from an assumed Muslim norm.” (p.

---

28 Although the sitcom’s writing team has included numerous writers, there is little doubt that Nawaz, as the show’s creator, is the inspiration behind the characters and general themes of the show.
This assumed Muslim norm is similar to the search for a common Muslim identity which is itself based on a so-called universal interpretation of Islam, devoid of its particularized and complicated diversities, an Islam purified of its specific social, cultural, political, geographical and historical contexts. Such a perspective on “…an ‘authentic,’ ‘universal’ Islam assumes that Islam has an ‘essence’…both essentializing and homogenizing the lived experiences of Muslims.” (S. Kassam, 2015, p. 619). These perspectives about an authentic Islam (and its idealization on the sitcom) are reflected in Nawaz’s personal opinions. In an opinion editorial, Nawaz describes herself as “someone who genuinely loves Islam but wants a critical dialogue about some of the cultural practices that have seeped in over the centuries…” (Nawaz, 2015). Underlying – albeit implicitly – such a view is that there is one Islam that can be purified of the cultural practices through which Muslims have practiced and expressed faith, both historically and in contemporary times. Is it even possible to separate such a ‘pure’ Islam (by which I presume that Nawaz and others mean an Islam of the Prophet Muhammed, which is an Arab-centric Islam) from its social, cultural moorings, from the things that have “seeped in”? I suggest that Islam (like life) cannot be unsituated; rather, Muslims express, practice and interpret their faith in light of their own cultural, political, historical, social and interpretational lenses. Hence, the politics of authenticity in which Multiculturalist Muslims engage, illuminate the contours of “the re-imagined Ummah” (Mandaville, 2001, pp. 1, 23), a globalizing community without the differences that threaten to divide. Such perspectives, grounded in a politics of authenticity, attempt to challenge Orientalist stereotypes (which both Nawaz and Khan attempt), but nonetheless essentialize and homogenize Muslims, in an effort to find common ground. Thus, while Manji and Fatah engage in an erasure of the richness of Muslim intellectual, cultural and political history, Multiculturalist Muslims such as Nawaz and Khan engage in a selective use of Muslim history and tradition, an approach which upholds, prioritizes, and renders as authentic some aspects of Muslim history and interpretation. Further, while Khan and Nawaz display greater awareness of (and empathy towards) issues facing
Muslim communities in the secular Western context, their perspectives do not represent counter-narratives. While they ask good questions in their work, both about internal reform in Muslim communities, as well as about the marginalization of Muslims in the Canadian national imaginary, they do not probe those questions with sufficient depth or challenge the very foundations upon which key secularist and nationalist assumptions are based.

**Reaffirming secular normativity**
The third feature shared by Acceptable Muslims in the Canadian context is their support for the secular norms of Western society. As I outline earlier in this chapter, such secular norms, while framed as religious neutrality, are actually rooted in a particular religious tradition which is universalized and naturalized. In order to be situated as proper, a religious tradition must essentially accept (even if implicitly) the fundamental tenets of the Western construct of secularism. These include the idea that proper religion is one that focuses on belief and individual conscience, a personal relationship with God, with faith being individualized and privatized. In this context, those perceived as bringing their religious faith into the public sphere risk being read as fundamentalists or religious zealots. Embedded in the work and perspectives of Acceptable Muslims in the Canadian context are confirmations – some more explicit than others – of the foundational norms of liberal, secular society. Manji (2005) writes, for instance, that she “…started to decentralize [her] faith, cultivating a personal relationship with God rather than assuming it had to be mediated through a congregation. In that spirit, [she] prayed in solitude.” (p. 19). Such an outlook indicates her acceptance of a faith which is centred on a personal relationship with God and an individualized faith grounded in personal belief and conscience. Manji’s commitment to key secular values is also evident when she states unequivocally that

> [t]ravelling from East to West and back again, we’ve assembled a set of human values: individual liberty, freedom of conscience, and pluralism of nonviolent ideas. Human values transgress the borders that segregationist, imperialists, isolationists and other fearmongers concoct. Human values make it possible for individuals to practice moral courage, and if enough of us do it, we vanquish spasms of supremacy. (Manji, 2011, p. 76).
In outlining certain values and norms – individual liberty, freedom of conscience, and pluralism – Manji reveals her perspective about the secular norms of Western society. These norms are rooted in a particular tradition which places individual belief and conscience at the heart of ‘proper’ (or acceptable) religion. By naming these values as universal, Manji erases both the history of the construct of secularism (grounded in Christian Protestant values) as well as the invisibilized privilege accorded to those who adhere to it. In that silence, lies a clear stance: Manji accepts, supports and fortifies the norms of the Western construct of secularism, with little reservation.

Manji’s stance, however, goes further than passive endorsement of the Western construct of secularism. In the vociferous debate about the Danish cartoons, she added her name (along with Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Salman Rushdie, and others) to the Manifesto of 12, which argued that Islamism is a (and, by the tenor of the Manifesto, perhaps the most) dangerous contemporary totalitarian threat, comparing it to Nazism and Stalinism. I quote the Manifesto at length because it provides an insight into the thinking that underlies the approach of secularists, and in the case of Manji, a Secular Muslim:

…we call for the promotion of freedom, equal opportunity and secular values worldwide…. The necessity of these universal values has been revealed by events since the publication of the Muhammad drawings in European newspapers. This struggle will not be won by arms, but in the arena of ideas. What we are witnessing is not a clash of civilizations, nor an antagonism of East versus West, but a global struggle between democrats and theocrats…. Islamism is a reactionary ideology which kills equality, freedom and secularism wherever it is present. Its success can only lead to a world of greater power imbalances: man’s domination of woman, the Islamists’ domination of all others…. We plead for the universality of free expression, so that a critical spirit may be exercised on every continent, against every abuse and dogma. We appeal to democrats and free spirits of all countries that our century should be one of enlightenment, not obscurantism. (Quoted by Manji, 2011, pp. 167-168).

Manji maintains that she signed the Manifesto to ensure that “…as a faithful Muslim, I could show that a ‘critical spirit,’ ‘equal opportunity’, and ‘secular values’ don’t have to be exclusive domain of atheists… [and that] secularism and faith can be defended at the same time.” (Manji, 2011, pp. 168-169). Such statements indicate the idealization of secular values, universalized with no commentary on how these are rooted in a specific tradition and, importantly, experienced differently by groups
outside the dominant norm. There is no commentary on the double-standard applied to Muslims, compared to other faith groups, in relation to blasphemy laws, nor to the social, economic and political exclusions experienced by some groups (Muslims included), issues that have at least as much impact, if not more, than do religious sensitivities on reaction to the cartoons. Such silence on the conditions faced by Muslims, but so much attention on their so-called reactionary actions effectively shifts the burden of responsibility for intolerance and violence onto Muslims, rather than accounting for the complex and nuanced issues underlying these events. Through such discursive manoeuvres, Muslims are again represented as barbaric and primitive – clearly Orientalist depictions – with no acknowledgement of the complexity of these issues. Simultaneously, the tensions embedded at the heart of the Western secular society – between the rhetoric of universal human values and the particular roots of these same values – are rendered invisible. Erased also are the historical and contemporary abuses of these same universal human values by Western society, including some of the most horrific cases of fascism, totalitarianism, and racism known to humankind, most of which have been pursued by ostensibly secular governments. Fernando (2014b) observes,

[...]that rhetorical sleight-of-hand is indicative of a broader ideological and political displacement in which a focus on Muslim intolerance reaffirms Europe’s commitment to tolerance in the face of so-called autochthonous Europeans whose actions muddy the barbarism-civilizational distinction mapped onto, respectively, Muslims and Europeans. Europe’s inability to reconcile its supposedly constitutive values with the actions of Europeans is deferred through a critical focus on Muslim intolerance; it is Muslims who become almost solely responsible for the problem of intolerance in Europe. (2014b, p. 256).

Manji’s defense of secularism is grounded in her belief that “…only in a secular society can diversity of belief thrive. Secular values open up space for all of us to worship, or not, as our personal consciences require…. Secular values are meant to ensure that no religion can take over the public square and bulldoze the freedoms of those who choose not to believe, or who choose interpretations that religious community leaders would want to censor.” (2011, p. 169). Manji’s articulation of secularism as a space in which all can practice their faith according to personal conscience emulates
the Protestantization of religious expression in the public space. Religion, according to this view, is one in which faith is a matter of personal belief and conscience, rather than practice, and religious expression is best relegated to the private rather than the public sphere.

Fatah, another Secular Muslim, shares Manji’s perspectives on the construct of Western secularism. Despite his differences with Manji (they had a public falling out over numerous issues), his views on religious expression in the public sphere resonate with hers. As articulated in a newspaper column penned by Fatah and Raheel Raza,

> Muslims are an essential part of Canadian society, whose values of secular democracy and individual freedoms are under attacks by Islamists. Muslims should realize that citizenship in Canada is not based on inherited race or religion, but on a set of common laws created by men and women whom we elect and send to Parliament. Those who wish to introduce laws based on divine texts should try living in Saudi Arabia and Iran before they force the rest of us to embrace their prescription. (Fatah and Raza, 2007).

The excerpt exemplifies a celebration of secular values, with no acknowledgement of their roots in a particular tradition or the naturalization of their norms such that they appear universal. Just as importantly, Fatah and Raza fail to acknowledge the deeply embedded racialized and gendered notions of Canadian citizenship and institutional structures, including, among others, the systems of justice/law and social services. To state unequivocally that Canadian citizenship is not based on inherited race or religion represents an erasure of history, and reconfirms the national narrative, in which colonialism, racism, exclusion and marginalization are rendered invisible. Such is the discourse of the figures of the Secular Muslim, one of the two archetypes of Acceptable Muslims in the Canadian context. These Secular Muslims accept, reinforce and do not challenge the norms of the Western construct of secularism.

While Secular Muslims openly champion the Western construct of secularism, Multiculturalist Muslims are more implicit in their support of its underlying norms. Khan and Nawaz, both of whom I would characterize as Multiculturalist Muslims, are practicing Muslims and both wear hijabs. Both
Khan and Nawaz differ from Manji and Fatah as the former two do not advocate for a strict secular society; neither of them argues that faith should be completely divorced from public life. Indeed, both openly advocate for religious expression in the public sphere, as is evidenced by their work as well as their choices to wear the hijab. Despite this, I theorize that both Khan and Nawaz, while certainly less vociferous (and perhaps more open to self-critique) than Secular Muslims such as Fatah and Manji, nonetheless accept and reaffirm (perhaps implicitly) the Western construct of secularism. Hence, Nawaz, while categorically addressing issues of Muslims in *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, as well as in her other work, underlines, perhaps unwittingly, the public-private divide which lies at the heart of the construct of secular normativity. Perhaps most obviously, the sitcom’s very raison d’être is to explore and showcase the commonalities between Muslims and non-Muslims in Canada, such that “…although different, we are all surprisingly similar when it comes to family, love, the generation gap and our attempts to balance our secular and religious lives.” (CBC, 2007). In this respect, the sitcom reaffirms its commitment to the multicultural rhetoric in Canada; such rhetoric includes the acceptance of differing traditions, so long as they adhere to the limitations and boundaries of Western secular society. The plots, characters, and tenor of *Little Mosque on the Prairie* – essentially the underlying ethos of the sitcom – illustrate an implicit acceptance of the boundaries embedded in multicultural, secular Canada. The sitcom creates binary characters who act as concise signifiers to communicate key messages and embody the sitcom’s ideological foundations. For instance, the idealized Muslims on *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, in particular, Amaar and Rayyan, are both characterized as liberal and moderate in their approach to matters of faith and practice their faith within the boundaries generally accepted by Western secularism. The expressions of the religious beliefs and practices of these characters remain largely within acceptable boundaries of Western norms. Such practices include the challenging of gender norms and advocating for gender equality within the mosque, finding ‘balanced’ solutions to questions of faith, being respectful of differences, and idealizing and celebrating of the
multicultural ethos of Canada. On the sitcom, Amaar and Rayyan are, together, situated as idealized Canadian Muslims who are enlightened, questioning, educated, and integrated comfortably into Canadian society, while retaining their identities as Muslims, albeit expressing their faith in a suitably privatized manner. These characters are committed to the essential foundations of Canadian secularism and multiculturalism – the idea that the public space is accepting of people irrespective of differences (invoking discourses of mutual respect and tolerance). In contrast, other characters on the sitcom (notably, Baber and Fatima) are more traditional and conservative in their approaches to interpretation and expressions of faith in public life, and though they are situated as more rooted in conservative Muslim tradition than Amaar and Rayyan, they are not depicted as dangerous or extremist, but merely as humorous conservative voices. These traditional characters are often juxtaposed with the idealized characters (mainly Rayyan and Amaar) and the underlying tension between these perspectives is often resolved in favour of these more modern characters. Notably absent from the sitcom’s characterizations are either extremist Muslims (except as ghosts to be discussed by the more acceptable characters on the sitcom), or progressive voices resisting the foundational norms of the Canadian national imaginary. Thus, the characters on *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, while certainly challenging Orientalist stereotypes, nonetheless reaffirm the boundaries of the (racialized and gendered) Canadian national imaginary.29

Like Nawaz, Khan is a more complicated Acceptable Muslim than are the Secular Muslim figures of Fatah and Manji. On the one hand, in media footprints and their work, both Nawaz and Khan raise important questions for consideration (such as gender equality, discrimination, racism and internal reform within Muslim communities). On the other hand, their perspectives often legitimate, rather than seriously challenge, society’s dominant norms. Khan does not accept the doctrine of what she

refers to as “neo-secularism,” (2009b, p. 156) because she finds it “...thoroughly unsatisfying, for it fails to address the dynamic of one’s spiritual core.” (2009b, p. 157). However, she frames her desire for a greater emphasis on faith in society through a plea to “…cultivate a deep personal connection with God in daily life.” (2009b, p. 156). While she claims to refute the relegation of religion to the realm of the private (2009b, p. 144), she nonetheless upholds and reinforces the secular ethos of society, in which acceptance of the Other is predicated on adherence to clear, prescribed (although implicit) limitations. Khan grounds her perspectives in Muslim history and tradition; in effect, she argues that democratic ideals are not incompatible with Muslim tradition. As she notes,

…if you look back at Islamic governance over fourteen centuries, you will find a system akin to constitutional democracy serving as the foundation of certain states. The norms of the Quran and the Sunnah (the authentic traditions of the Prophet Muhammad) served as the constitution, while bodies of independent scholars provided rulings in light of these texts. The principle of public participation was enshrined in the institution of shurah (consultation), but such consultation required that laws be applied equally to both the ruling class and the ruled…Canadians should recognize aspects of such a democracy… (Khan, 2009b, p. 81).

In a similar vein, Khan suggests the current dichotomy between faith and science has “…never been an issue in Islamic thought…” (2009b, p. 92). Notably, she credits Newton for outlining his ideas on a superior Being, though she argues that “…while his science propagated through space and time, his harmonization of faith and scientific inquiry did not.” (2009b, p. 92). Through such rhetorical strategies, Khan attempts to identify commonalities between Muslim tradition and Western ideals, perhaps in an effort to counter the contemporary view of Muslims as foreign or the Other. Given this desire to find common ground between Muslim and Western values, how different, I ask, is Khan’s endeavour to find commonalities between Muslims and non-Muslim Canadians from that of Nawaz in Little Mosque on the Prairie? Indeed, Khan, in her commentary on Little Mosque on the Prairie, praises the sitcom and situates it as a “…modest attempt to build bridges of understanding by showing Muslims as ordinary Canadians interacting with other ordinary Canadians.” (2009b, pp. 102-103). She contends, in fact, that the sitcom resonates with audiences because “…it embodies that most Canadian
of traits: dialogue. We fervently believe that a culture of dialogue transcends the antagonistic cultures of fear and humiliation.” (2009b, p. 103).

Both Khan and Nawaz uphold and reinforce key ideas embedded in the secular and multicultural rhetoric of Canada, while rarely challenging (despite some attempts to raise some questions) the assumptions sustaining the national narrative. In effect, these Multiculturalist Muslims perform their good Muslim credentials in a manner consistent with the national imaginary; they illuminate the contours of acceptable Canadian citizenship and bolster the nation’s sense of itself as a benevolent, multicultural, tolerant, secular space. Khan (2009b) affirms “…the fundamental nature of Canada as a place where an individual, regardless of gender, creed, or ethnic origin can strive for justice, a claim few nations can make.” (p. 108). For her part, Nawaz (2015) observes that

I was always secure in the feeling that Canada was home and I was Canadian…. I am considered one of the few Muslims in the world who have successfully bridged the worlds of faith and comedy. But I would never have been able to do this had I lived anywhere else in the world. In Pakistan, I would have been killed by now; in Europe, I would have been too broken by xenophobia and rejection to even try; the Islamophobic, post-Sept. 11, 2001, world of the United States would have stopped me cold. It was only in Canada, where I truly felt I belonged and was cherished as a Muslim, [italics mine] where I could safely poke fun at both my Muslim and non-Muslim worlds. (Nawaz, 2015).

There are numerous generalizations and assumptions embedded in such a statement. Most obviously, it is quite a blatant generalization to state that Nawaz would have been killed for her humour in Pakistan; such a statement relies on stereotypes which erase the possibility (and reality) of progressive voices in Pakistan (or, for that matter, in Europe or the United States). Further, Nawaz states that it is only in Canada that she feels “…cherished as a Muslim…” An important subtext to her comments, which she does not explore, is which kind of Muslim is cherished in Canada? Are all Muslims cherished equally or only those that meet certain criteria or accept certain norms? These are questions – left unasked – that could have prompted a deeper analysis and a challenging of the implicit norms and assumptions embedded in the Canadian national imagination.
Such are the perspectives of the Multiculturalist Muslims such as Khan and Nawaz, views that publicly reaffirm the key secular ideals embedded in the Canadian national imaginary. While both Khan and Nawaz raise some significant questions concerning pertinent issues (e.g. racism, gender equality, racial profiling, discrimination, etc.), they ultimately reinforce dominant norms. In an era when the racially coded Muslim Other faces severe penalties for transgressions of the nation-state’s limits, the perspectives of such Multiculturalist Muslims fall within the parameters of acceptable citizenship. Neither Khan nor Nawaz fully confront the reality that some bodies – Muslims, Indigenous, and other racialized bodies – are often marginalized or excluded in construct of secular normativity embedded in the Canadian narrative. Hence, neither figure acknowledges that secular norms impose a form of regulatory power over the bodies – and expressions of religious or cultural belonging – of the racial, cultural and religious Other (including Muslims) such that these bodies must live in a manner recognizable in Canadian society and must conform to the acceptable norms defined by a white, Christian (mostly Protestant) dominant elite. These constraints and regulatory powers are rendered silent and unmapped in the perspectives of Multiculturalist Muslims. Both Nawaz, in her writing and on *Little Mosque on the Prairie* and Khan, in her commentaries, situate Canada as a beacon of secular multicultural tolerance, with Muslims able to choose to successfully integrate into society. No mention is made of the price paid by some bodies, either of qualified inclusion or outright exclusion. Instead, Canada is praised as “…a model of multicultural harmony. As Canadians, let’s continue to weave our compassionate meritocracy, based on genuine respect for each and every human being, notwithstanding their values, their beliefs and their origins…” (Khan, 2009b, p. 49)

In the end, all four figures of the Acceptable Muslim (both Secular and Multiculturalist) reinforce the construct of Western secularism. Despite some nuances, all four figures reaffirm, some more explicitly than others, that acceptable religiosity falls within the boundaries established by Western secularist normativity, which relegates religious expressions to the private sphere. As Fernando (2014b) notes,
“…within the secular imaginary, religion is likely a matter of private belief; its manifestation through ritual practice must be in the private sphere or the sacred space…” (p. 138). In secular normativity, key features of acceptable religiosity include a faith grounded in individual belief and personal conscience, the centrality of text, and privatized modes of religious expression, with “…a few exceptional forays into public space for festivals and processions.” (Fernando, 2014b, p. 124). Within this secular conception of religiosity, “…public expressions of Islam outside the designated spaces…must take place under the sign of shareable culture.” (Fernando, 2014b, p. 138). Those expressions that do not fall within these restricted parameters – either in the private domain, within designated space or as shareable culture – run the risk of being perceived as extremist (as is, for example, the niqab). All four figures of the Acceptable Muslim – Manji, Fatah, Nawaz, and Khan – essentially reinforce – or more precisely, help enforce – the contours of this secularist paradigm.

**Focus on gender equality**
A fourth feature shared by these figures of Acceptable Muslims is the strong focus on gender equality. This is perhaps not surprising, given that the gender has become a key battleground in ongoing debates about Muslims within the secular imaginary. In this sense, “[s]ecularism is increasingly posited as the best guarantee of women’s sexual freedom and equality, and as what distinguishes the West from the woman-abusing rest.” (Fernando, 2014b, p. 187). As I note earlier, a key assumption underlying secular normativity is that secularism best promotes gender equality and freedom. Against this background, Acceptable Muslims are important allies in the reinforcement of such an assumption and the four Acceptable figures analyzed here are no exception. While these figures focus on gender differently, there is no doubt that they all consider gender as one of the central pillars of their work. Fatah and Manji are deeply critical of the gender inequality that they perceive is endemic to Islam. Manji notes that “Muslims exhibit a knack for degrading women…” (Manji, 2005, p. 176) while Fatah is vociferous in his condemnation of what he sees as “gender apartheid” (Fatah, 2009c). Fatah, in particular, is a
leading voice speaking out against the niqab, and, in his (former) association with the Muslim Canadian Congress (MCC), has urged the Canadian government to ban the niqab in public spaces. He endorses proposals to legislate and ban face veils, including the Quebec governments various efforts to deny government services for those wearing the face veil. Writing about Quebec’s Bill 94 (2010), Fatah refers to this legislation as a “bold step to stall the inroads being made by Islamists,” (T. Fatah, 2010b).

His perspective on this proposed legislation is clear:

As a Muslim Canadian, I am thrilled at this development, and welcome the rescue of all Muslim-Canadian women who were being blackmailed, bullied and brainwashed into wearing attire that has no place in either Islam or the 21st century.... The burqa is not just a piece of clothing: it is a symbol of Islamofascism and a rejection of the West and its cherished value of gender equality… To the Islamists and their apologists who argue that Canada’s position on the niqab should be based on Canadian values of equal citizenship, rather than assimilative French values, I simply say: Canadian values are themselves based on French and British values. They did not fall from the sky. Furthermore, if importing ideas from France is so suspect, then smuggling the values of tribal monarchies and theocracies into Canada is far worse. We would rather embrace France’s equality than the institutionalized misogyny and polygamy of Iran and Saudi Arabia. (T. Fatah, 2010b).

In this excerpt, Fatah is unequivocal and unrepentant in his criticism of the niqab and burqa (terms which he uses interchangeably) and argues that equality of rights is inherent in British and French values. In making his argument, he very easily slips from the issue of the niqab to those of theocracies and polygamy, connections which are far from obvious. His invective suggests that those who disagree with his opinion on niqabs are necessarily in favour of polygamy and misogyny, a rhetorical sleight-of-hand which is far from accurate or fair. Striking in Fatah’s perspective is that he avoids the question of equality of rights: while he raises the counter-argument that the Canadian stance on niqabs should be based on values of equal citizenship, he simply retorts that these values are themselves are based on British and French values. Thus, he does not address the critique and simply situates the banning of niqabs in public spaces as grounded in French and British values, an association that is (still) fiercely contested. He acknowledges that Canadian values are drawn from British and French values, but he does not address, not even subtly, the implications of this historical legacy. Such implications include,
at the very least, deeply racialized and gendered notions of citizenship, a legacy of colonialism and settler statehood, and the continued dominance of Western European norms, not all of which have honoured equality. Such a dominance of European values and the Western secular construct clearly places some bodies (based on race, religion, gender, class, ability, etc.) outside the acceptable boundaries of the national imaginary. Fatah does not address any of these assumptions, not only in this commentary, but overall in his work. Rather, he makes blanket statements which situate his arguments as common-sense but do not recognize (or acknowledge) that these statements are far from neutral and are, in fact, grounded in deeply ideological positions. In his claim that ‘we’ (who is this ‘we’?) prefer France’s equality to conditions found in Iran and Saudi Arabia (why those countries?), he unreservedly positions himself as part of the dominant group. Fatah repeatedly condemns the niqab and dismisses any suggestion that Muslim women’s choices (for example, to wear the niqab) should be protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In fact, Fatah does not even acknowledge that some women choose to wear niqab, dismissing the women who so choose the niqab as victims of an oppressive, misogynistic Wahabist mentality. Early on – even before the niqab became a national obsession – he urged Muslim women to reject it, positioning the debate on the niqab as one primarily within Muslim society and as “…part of the battle for the heart and soul of Muslim communities.” (Fatah, 2006a). In the same commentary, he remarks that while Canadian Muslims should be well integrated in order to enjoy prosperity in Canada (implying that a rejection of the niqab is part of that integration), this “…doesn’t mean giving up any part of our faith, which is constitutionally guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.” (Fatah, 2006a). Fatah’s position hardens over the years, as evidenced by his position that the government ban the niqab, despite judicial opinion that such bans (at citizenship ceremonies, in court…) stand on tenuous legal grounds. He situates the niqab as not required by the tenets of Islam (he does not consider questions such as whose Islam? Which Islam? When? Where?) and contends that the niqab is the “…epitome of male control over women…”
While the niqab may well be a symbol of patriarchy (and what, I ask, of high heels?), Fatah refuses to consider other forms of patriarchy prevalent in the tolerant and free West, and unambiguously positions himself as the arbiter both of good integration, and of good Islam. In the end, Fatah reductively positions the niqab as a vehicle of extremism and cultural narrow-mindedness; in so doing, he situates himself within a particular ideological paradigm – that of secular normativity – and attempts to educate the Other to join him. Whatever my position on niqab, I challenge Fatah’s rhetoric to ban it and his dismissal of the perspectives – the choices – of Muslim women themselves. I suggest that there is little (or no) difference in the power dynamic between the compulsory covering and the compulsory uncovering of Muslim women. Gender equality is not safeguarded by perspectives or policies that seek to surveil and regulate how women, Muslim or otherwise, should dress, live, express faith or behave. Such power dynamics are, however, central both to secular normativity and to the saving discourse, in which certain types of bodies, dress, behaviours or perspectives are deemed unacceptable and/ in need of rescue.

Fatah’s obsession with Muslim women’s clothing is not focused only on the niqab; the hijab also comes under his withering criticism. Whilst he stops short of arguing for a ban on the hijab, he claims that the hijab is a “…modern symbol of defiance and, at best, a show of piety by Islamists and orthodox Muslims…” (2007b). He maintains that “…the Koran [sic] does not mandate the hijab at all… [and that] Muslim women who so vociferously defend its religious use should consider its history before determining whether they must wear it.” (2007b). It is noteworthy that Fatah and his co-author, Farzana Hassan, resort to interpretation of the Quran to argue against the hijab and niqab. I am not commenting on the theological validity (or otherwise) of this argument, as theological debate is beyond the scope of this project. Rather, I am commenting on the desire, perhaps even the need to find theological legitimation for their arguments. This, too, is one of the implications of secular normativity. In their commentary, Fatah and Hassan (2007b) situate their disapproval of the hijab by resorting to
Quranic injunction to defend their arguments. Underlying their arguments is a presumption that good Muslim women reject head coverings in order to integrate seamlessly into the Canadian fabric. As with his perspectives on the niqab, Fatah blithely ignores or dismisses the actual voices and opinions of the real-life Muslim women he seeks to educate and/or rescue. Such is the power of the secular construct that surveillance and regulation – couched as mere commentary and education – continue unabated and (almost) unnoticed.

In addition to his perspectives on Muslim women’s clothing, Fatah comments on other gender-related issues. In discussing the death of Aqsa Parvez, he (again, with his co-commentator, Farzana Hassan) situates the murder as one committed in the name of culture and religion, rather than one rooted in patriarchy and domestic violence. In the commentary, Fatah and Hassan do not once comment on issues of domestic violence, power, privilege or patriarchy, except in the context of Islamic extremism and cultural fundamentalism. Rather, Fatah and Hassan urge Muslims to “…stand up to this sort of emotional and religious blackmail.” Central to such arguments, of course, is the same reductionist interpretation: on one side, stands the tolerant, secular, benevolent West; and on the other, the presumably barbaric, intolerant, misogynistic traditions of Islam. The issue is not whether Aqsa Parvez’s murder is criminal – clearly it is – but that the causes of the murder are viewed through a cultural and religious lens, rather than through an exploration of the issues of power, privilege, violence and the institutionalized conditions within which Parvez and her family lived. Fatah’s commentary on the Shafia murders also situates the murders as so-called honour killings. In

---

30 Aqsa Parvez was a teenager killed in December 2007 by her father and brother (who eventually pleaded guilty). Media discourse repeatedly and insistently situated her murder as one of a ‘clash of cultures’ and ‘Islamic honour codes’. For further details about the media discourse on the murder, see my analysis in Chapter 3 of this dissertation and Haque (2010) Homegrown, Muslim and Other: Tolerance, Secularism and the Limits of Multiculturalism.

31 The murder of four members of the Shafia family (Zainab, Sehar, Geeti, and their step-mother, Rona) occurred in June 2009. Accused in the crimes were Mohamed Shafia and Tooba Yahya (the parents of the three young women; Rona was Mohamed’s first wife) and their son, Hamed. Media discourse and legal proceedings repeatedly situated these murders as rooted in ‘culture clashes,’ ‘Islamic traditionalism’ and ‘Islamic codes of honour.’
his commentary, he notes that some Muslim organizations suggest that the killings are not related to Islam (Fatah, 2009c), but that in his view, “…to deny the fact that many honour killings are conducted by Muslim fathers, sons and brothers, and that many victims are Muslim women, is to exercise intellectual dishonesty.” (Fatah, 2009c). He further maintains that “…there is no denying that Islam, in its contemporary expression, is obsessed with women’s sexuality.” (Fatah, 2009c). He buttresses his argument about women as second-class citizens in Muslim communities by referring to segregation in mosques and Shari’ah law’s injunctions against pre-marital sex. As with the murder of Aqsa Parvez, Fatah situates the Shafia murders as being religiously and culturally motivated, as being about honour as opposed to domestic violence, power, privilege, social support and economics. Fatah’s approach is a reductionist one – using signifiers of cultural and religious backwardness and traditionalism – that does not explore the complexity of the myriad issues underlying the murders. Perhaps more tellingly, while he raises the issue of segregation in mosques, he does so only to reinforce his other points about the primitive nature of Muslims who, in his mind, justify violence against women. In contrast to the approaches of Khan and Nawaz on gender separation in mosques, Fatah’s perspective is that of an outsider to Muslim community life. He makes the argument that, in his opinion, Muslim women are segregated without reflecting a desire to make any constructive change to Muslim community life in this regard. He displays, therefore, no commitment to Muslim communal life, a perspective that is consistent with his positioning within the Western construct of secularism.

Manji, like Fatah, pays significant attention to gender issues in the context of Muslim communities and societies. Her documentary, *Faith without Fear*, (2007) devotes significant attention to gender and Muslim women’s clothing, albeit in the context of Muslim-majority societies rather than in Western contexts. In one memorable scene, Manji wears a burqa, while making sarcastic comments about “blind faith” and “always wanting somebody to dress me” (Manji, 2007). Tellingly, she notes that “it’s bad enough that the burqa is so physically confining. What’s demeaning is that it erases my
individuality.” (Manji, 2007). Such a statement unmistakably situates individuality and individual rights as one of the central pillars of Manji’s work. Manji’s (2011) perspective on hijab is evident in her commentary linking the hijab to “Arab tribal culture.” As she states,

...I choose not to wear it, and if another woman decides the opposite for herself, I won’t stop her. But what I will do is express my judgement that choosing hijab makes her a billboard for the most chauvinistic aspects of Arab tribal culture. Far from protecting herself against the ‘Western’ disease of sexualizing breasts and other bodily bits, she’s fetishizing her entire body as genitalia…. It’s an emblem of faux modesty…. Some women tell me that by choosing hijab they’re making a political point, not a spiritual one. ‘If the liberated West pities poor me,’ goes the argument, ‘then let the West see that I’m choosing my own oppression!’ But by marshaling the hijab to make a public show of politics rather than a personal investment in faith, such women are exhibitionists. I’m offending here, but I too am offended. I’m offended by the superficiality of combating Western prejudices about Muslim women by using Arab prejudices about women. As modes of ‘progressive’ politics, these women do a severe injustice to progress. Real progress doesn’t drape itself in problematic definitions of honor; it dismantles those definitions.” (Manji, 2011, pp. 180-182).

Manji’s commentary on Muslim women’s clothing leaves little room for confusion: she is clearly opposed to these forms of clothing. Although she does not suggest banning the hijab, she has no hesitation in expressing her thoughts on the choices of Muslim women to wear the hijab (or presumably, the niqab) in Western contexts. While her statement expressing that “I won’t stop her [from wearing hijab]” may be a convenient turn of phrase, it could also signal a more problematic narrative, couched in the discourse of tolerance. Implicit in her statement “I won’t stop…” may be the underlying thought that she has the power to allow (or not) a woman’s choice to wear hijab but does not exercise this authority because of the tolerance and benevolence engendered by Western society. Underlying such a statement is the privilege of dominance; perhaps she is aware (even only unconsciously) that her views on hijab resonate with those of the dominant elite and her positioning as an Acceptable Muslim situates her in the role of a quasi-national manager with the freedom to comment on the choices of others. Such a perspective is grounded in secularist discourse that seeks not only to demarcate the public and private spheres, but also to regulate the domain of the private. A key tension in secular rule is that while the secular state attempts to separate private religion from
the public sphere (and politics), this also results in the breaching of these demarcating lines. In this sense, “…secularization requires the constant surveillance of the private spaces to which religion has been assigned in order to verify that subjects (Muslims in this instance) are, in fact, being properly religious.” (Fernando, 2014a, p. 691).

Manji’s comments about gender (including, but not limited to, her views on Muslim women’s clothing) invokes her criticism of what she refers to as “Islamo-tribalism.” (2011, p. 90). Her commentary on gender is grounded in her critique of Muslim interpretation of Islam and its tenets, and in her foregrounding of individual rights as the crux of a supposedly enlightened Islam. For instance, she comments that “[a]ccording to Islamo-tribalists, shame resides in the woman. Much more so than her brothers, sons or uncles, a woman bears the freight of her entire family’s reputation. In effect, men are off the hook…. Since men have all the self-restraint of children, it’s up to the women to curtail their choices.” (Manji, 2011, p. 134). She writes of “honour culture” (Manji, 2011, p. 142) and lists numerous real-life examples (from her conversations with Muslims) as examples of such a culture (not all of the examples are related to gender). Manji situates personal conscience as the corner-stone of her arguments, juxtaposing individual conscience against what she calls the group-focused thinking of many Muslims. She states that she has “…hope that honor can be founded on one’s personal conscience rather than on opaque group consensus…. [and that] individuality is the essence of a redefined honor, one that impels each of us to do what’s right despite how we’re judged by those who confuse feeling with thinking.” (Manji, 2011, pp. 144-145).

Manji’s perspectives on the importance of individuality – whether in relation to issues of gender, interpretation, honour, or politics – resonate with the norms embedded in the construct of Western secularism. By expressing such views, Manji situates herself as having thrown off the chains of traditionalism and has, to use Fernando’s words, “…embraced the secular-qua-universal values of
liberty, equality and tolerance.” (Fernando, 2009, p. 380). Significantly, Manji uses her personal experiences with Muslim traditionalism (and increasingly, those of the Muslims with whom she interacts in her public life) to become a well-situated informer who can claim to be “…ideally suited to speak on behalf of [her] sisters silenced by patriarchal Islamic ‘fundamentalists’…” (Fernando, 2009, p. 380). Secular Muslim figures, such as Manji, support the policies of the Western nation-state, the imaginaries of which reinscribe the racialized and gendered boundaries of secular citizenship, even as they maintain the rhetoric of diversity and neutrality. Such Secular Muslim figures are crucial in rendering invisible the tensions and contradictions embedded in Western society, a contradiction between the claim of universality and the reality of one particular dominant tradition. Hence, while Manji, as a Secular Muslim, “…represents the universal promise of abstract citizenship, the racial and cultural bases of citizenship render her incapable of transcending her Muslim difference.” (Fernando, 2009, p. 381).

The perspectives of Nawaz and Khan on gender are more nuanced than those of Secular Muslims such as Manji and Fatah. Both Nawaz and Khan identify as practicing Muslims and are grounded in Muslim community life. In their work, both are critical of the gender inequality they witness and experience in Muslim communities, and both devote considerable attention to gender relations, but do so with more compassion and care for the issues involved, compared to Fatah and Manji, who speak as virtual outsiders to Muslim communities (although, of course, they might deny such a characterization). Khan and Nawaz are situated within their respective local Muslim communities, and while they are reflective commentators on gender norms within Canadian Muslim communities, their perspectives nonetheless fall within the range of acceptable positions within the Canadian national imaginary.
Nawaz’s documentary, *Me and the Mosque* (2005b) explores gender relations in North American mosques (including the efforts of women to pray in mosques, and the use of partitions). In the documentary, she explores “…the issue of segregation and separation and how that was affecting and preventing women from being integrated in the community.” (Nawaz, as quoted in Zine et al., 2007, p. 380). Nawaz contextualizes issues of gender equality within the context of other religious traditions: “…I think that any organized religion suffers from the same problem: Men! I think that it’s universal to interpret things in order to maintain tradition so it’s a struggle that all women in all religions go through. But the pervasive notion is that only Muslim women are oppressed and everybody else is emancipated and this is very false.” (Nawaz as quoted in Zine et al., 2007, p. 381). Nawaz also reveals that in what she refers to as a “deal with patriarchy” (2007, p. 382), she relies in her documentary mainly on male Muslim scholars to support women’s rights in order to ensure greater receptivity amongst conservative Muslim men. In addition, her memoir *Laughing all the way to the Mosque* (2014) addresses issues related to gender norms within Muslim communities. In her narratives about her life, she finds humorous ways to raise such issues, and, to challenge them, albeit within certain acceptable limits.

Nawaz’s advocacy for Muslim women’s issues is an important theme of *Little Mosque on the Prairie*; many of the story-lines centre on gender norms and relations within the Muslim community. *Little Mosque on the Prairie* clearly makes important gains in the representations of Muslim women and challenges key Orientalist depictions of Muslim women as exotic, veiled, submissive and oppressed. Rayyan (a character who I suspect is modelled on Nawaz herself) is far from submissive and is vocal in her challenging of gender norms amongst Muslim men (and women). The sitcom’s female characters are central to its narrative and Nawaz’s intellectual direction is obvious. The story-lines address issues such as interfaith dating, polygamy, segregation in the mosques, gender roles, and women’s dress codes. Rayyan, an idealized Acceptable Muslim, is framed in the sitcom as a modern,
articulate, professional, independent and outspoken woman, who does not shy away from critiquing
gender norms. Despite this emphasis on gender in the sitcom, the show’s underlying narrative
reinforces the idea of an ‘authentic’ Muslim woman, a construct which Hirji refers to as “…a singular
version of the Muslim woman…” (2011, p. 38). As I observe earlier, the sitcom reaffirms a politics of
authenticity; nowhere is this more evident than in the sitcom’s depiction of Muslim women. Such a
politics of authenticity could be animated by Nawaz’s perspective on a universal or more authentic
Islam or could also be related to other factors such as the demands of the sitcom format or the
constraints of working within an institutionalized broadcasting body such as CBC. This may be a
question for further study but is beyond the scope of this current project.

The foregrounding of gender in Little Mosque on the Prairie is a function, in part, of Nawaz’s passion (as
evident in her earlier work), but it is also a function of the boundary-marking of the acceptable citizen-
subject in the Canadian national imaginary. By showcasing a certain type of good Muslim woman, the
sitcom “…animates the notion that the ‘acceptable’ Muslim is ‘liberated’ from the constraints of
culture and faith…” (S. Kassam, 2015, p. 613). Both of these factors – the hypervisibility of Muslim
women’s issues and the reinforcement of an implied Muslim norm – reaffirm the centrality of gender
as a site for ideological battles in the contemporary national imaginary. As is evident in the data on
Canadian media discourse (see Chapter 3), discourses about Muslim women and gender norms elicit
the most frequent and hotly debated commentaries. Against this highly-charged background, Little
Mosque on the Prairie could have served a crucial function in deepening the discourse around Muslim
women. While it serves an important function in challenging some Orientalist stereotypes, the sitcom
ultimately fails “…to deliver on its considerable potential to provide deeper, more meaningful and
diverse perspectives on the lives and concerns of Muslim women.” (S. Kassam, 2015, p. 613). While
Nawaz is undoubtedly committed to exploring and critiquing traditional gender norms and gender
inequality within Muslim communities, her most successful vehicle (at least for the general public)
does not successfully articulate a more nuanced gender politics. The implicit acceptance of an assumed Muslim woman’s norm constrains the discursive space for the diversity – of interpretation, behaviour, choices, politics and lifestyles – of Muslim women. At the same time, the sitcom, while raising some important questions facing Muslim women, both within their own communities and in Canadian society generally, does not allow those questions to challenge the dominant structures within which they live. In reaffirming, for instance, the Canadian multicultural ethos, the sitcom elides the implications of such a construct, some of which include the marginalization of some (mainly Indigenous and racialized) bodies. In effect, in foregrounding the idealized Acceptable Muslim, the sitcom reaffirms the boundary of acceptable Canadian citizen-subjecthood. In so doing, it renders invisible the structural violence against those bodies who are deemed unacceptable or intolerable. In the contemporary post 9/11 context, many of these unacceptable bodies are, of course, Muslims, and on these issues, the sitcom (and ultimately Nawaz) is silent on this structural violence against Muslims (and Indigenous and racialized bodies).

Sheema Khan, like the other Acceptable Muslim figures, devotes considerable attention to gender in her commentaries. Her perspectives on gender inequality are rooted both in an Islamic paradigm (in that she grounds her views in Muslim tradition) and in norms embedded in secular normativity. Unlike Fatah and Manji, her commentaries can be fairly nuanced on some aspects of gender inequality. For instance, not only does she maintain that the physical barriers for women’s participation in the mosque be removed, she points out that these physical barriers point to a host of “…institutional barriers that prevent their full participation in community affairs. Far too many mosques (and other Muslim institutions) are run primarily by men.” (Khan, 2014). In fact, she goes further and critiques the Canadian government for either funding or continuing to grant charitable status to such male-run Muslim organizations. In so doing, she distinguishes herself from the other Acceptable Muslims (Fatah, Manji and Nawaz) by openly critiquing the Canadian government, albeit as a minor part of her
commentary. In general, Khan focuses her critique of gender norms on male-dominated Muslim institutions, mosques and leadership, which she argues perpetuate patriarchal interpretations of traditions and norms. In an early column she raises the issue of domestic abuse and notes that some Muslim legal scholars have sometimes sanctioned abuse, a situation which she insists must be changed through a re-examination of Quranic injunctions which have been interpreted in a patriarchal manner. (Khan, 2008d). As with other issues, Khan’s perspectives on gender are often grounded in Muslim legal and interpretative tradition, a grounding which perhaps reflects her desire to support reform from within Muslim communities. Her use of Muslim legal tradition and interpretational techniques help to contextualize her arguments within an Islamic paradigm, a paradigm which may make her suggestions more acceptable within Muslim communities, thereby supporting possibilities for reform from within such communities. Sometimes, her perspectives on gender equality are strongly worded, as is obvious in a column when she challenges patriarchal interpretations of Islam:

…Female subservience as an essential Muslim characteristic is a myth…. Muslims must make an effort to educate themselves about their own history – especially with regards to women, who were scholars, artists, writers, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, warriors and mothers…. Most important, no one can make proclamations about the ‘essential’ nature of God’s creation. In feeble attempts to justify the ‘irrationality, thy name is woman’ paradigm, Muslim ‘scholars’ have freely borrowed from Victorian teachings and spurious Western ‘scientific’ studies. That bias must be challenged head on…. There must also be a deeper exploration of supposed prophetic narrations that demean women, in order to ascertain authenticity and context. Those who advocate female subservience under the cloak of religion must be asked: when was this unequivocally sanctioned during the life of the Prophet? (Khan, 2012a).

Significant about Khan’s commentary here is that she situates patriarchal interpretations of Islam as being part of both Muslim and Western traditions. Essentially, she is building an argument for gender equality in which patriarchal interpretations and traditions of both Islam and the West should be dismantled and abandoned. However, in asking the question about what was “…unequivocally sanctioned during the life of the Prophet”, she inadvertently establishes an authentic interpretation of Islam which elevates the tradition of the Prophet as the ‘real’ Islam. While this is a common characteristic of many Muslims (as the Prophet is venerated as a model), such a politics of authenticity
limits the discursive space for diverse interpretations – and especially perspectives that may not wish to emulate the traditions of 7th century Arabia.

While I do not disagree with some of Khan’s views specifically on domestic abuse, patriarchal interpretations of Muslim tradition or the male-domination of Muslim institutions, I cannot help but wonder whether her prominence in Canadian media discourse (a regular column in *The Globe and Mail*) is precisely because her views resonate with ideas of the dominant elite about the inherently patriarchal nature of Muslim men.

Khan also raises other issues about gender including the question of female genital mutilation (Khan, 2010c), and so-called honour killings (Khan, 2010b). About crimes of honour, she notes that

…we must act quickly before more blood is shed. These barbaric acts should be clearly designated as honour crimes, making it clear that such customs are unwelcome and will be severely punished…. Community leaders must unequivocally condemn imported misogynous practices and attitudes. They should deal with the root causes of gender-based violence head on, rather than blaming the media for image problems. It’s time for a critical reflection of violence rooted in religious and cultural tradition…. Women are dead as a result of breaching family honour. Who knows how many live under the threat of violence? It’s time to take off the gloves of political correctness and stop the importation of this murderous custom. (Khan, 2010b).

I suggest that Khan’s commentary on so-called honour killings reflects a knee-jerk reaction rather than a deep or reflective analysis. She does not engage in any questioning about the term honour crime, and she explicitly situates such violence as rooted in cultural tradition. In so doing, she reinforces (perhaps unwittingly) key Orientalist imaginaries about barbaric Muslim men and does not catalyze a deeper analysis of some of the issues (beyond culture and religion) underlying such gender-based violence. Instead, she calls on community leaders to “…condemn imported misogynous practices and attitudes” without also reflecting on the complexity of gender-based violence. Further, she does not acknowledge the reality that domestic violence is rooted not only in cultural or religious traditions but also in patriarchal systems of power and privilege, systems which affect all women, regardless of their religious or cultural affiliations. In this manner, Khan’s commentary on so-called honour crimes is
grounded in dominant narratives that situate such violence as a product primarily of (foreign) religious and cultural fundamentalism.

Khan’s perspectives on the niqab provide a valuable insight into her acceptance of the terms of secular normativity. She rejects proposals to ban the niqab (or the hijab) in the Canadian context, and suggests “…a made-in-Canada” paradigm” (Khan, 2010a) for the niqab in public spaces. While acknowledging the discomfort of many Canadians about the face-veils, and that “…many assume veiled women are coerced into wearing ‘that thing’…” (Khan, 2010a), she also notes that the face-veil has become a “…misogynous icon, due to the Taliban, and Saudi ‘religious’ police.” (Khan, 2010a). She contextualizes her arguments by noting that Muslim women who wear niqab do so for varied reasons. Interestingly, unlike Fatah and Manji, she does not ground her arguments either in Quranic injunction or in Muslim legal scholarship; rather, she situates her arguments within the context of the Canadian Charter of Rights. Even more noteworthy is her use of secular norms: she explains the difference between norms inspired by Rousseau and those inspired by Locke. In so doing, she situates her perspectives on niqab squarely within the secular construct embedded in Canada. As she notes, “…Locke believed freedom of conscience to be the foundation of individual rights, which guarantee freedom from the state…. Not surprisingly, the Canadian Charter is more akin to Lockean principles. Individual rights, such as freedom of religion, carry heavy weight.” (Khan, 2010a). Her reliance on freedom of conscience as a primary determinant of individual and societal rights reinforces the apriori definition of religion in the secular state: a ‘proper’ religion outlines personal conscience as the authentic site of faith, and reconfirms “…the individualization of religiosity.” (Fernando, 2014b, p. 148). In this way, while Khan suggests that women wear the niqab for many reasons, her positioning of the veil as a choice (perhaps albeit implicitly) signals that the face-veil is part of a larger group of “…religious practices [that] comprise the outward manifestation – ‘signs and insignia’ – of an already constituted conscience.” (Fernando, 2014b, pp. 164-165). Therefore Khan, perhaps unconsciously,
reinforces the construct of secularism – rooted in Christian norms – which place belief and conscience (rather than ethical, bodily or communal practices) at the centre of religious faith. Such a framing of religious practices as a “…freely chosen expression of the wearer’s religious belonging may mark these Muslim women as conventionally modern religious subjects, but it simultaneously restricts their ability to articulate what it means to wear the veil as a religious duty.” (Fernando, 2014b, p. 149). In France, Fernando (2014b) suggests that the positioning of the veil as a manifestation of personal conscience reinforces the idea that “…banning a practice like veiling does not constitute a violation of religious liberty because if the practice-as-sign presumably has no effect on the believer’s conscience, neither would its disappearance. The ban was therefore envisioned not as a restriction on veiled women’s conscience, but rather as a limitation on their right to manifest that conscience. (p. 165). In Canada, the Supreme Court has reaffirmed that niqabs should not be banned, except in specific circumstances. However, the reasoning behind this decision (which Khan supports) nonetheless upholds the secularist conception of religious belief as the central pillar of a ‘proper’ religion. As Khan notes, “…Canada’s Supreme Court has ruled that the state is not an ‘arbiter of religious dogma’ – what matters is the sincerity of the individual’s belief. If a woman honestly believes it is part of her faith to cover her face in public, the state cannot counter that a different religious opinion carries greater religious legitimacy.” (Khan, 2010a). This is the “made-in-Canada” solution that Khan supports, a solution that upholds a central facet of secular normality – the centring of personal conscience as a decisive element of faith – and situates religious practices within the realm of individual choice. While Khan’s perspective is a more nuanced position than those of Secular Muslims such as Manji and Fatah, her commentaries suggest an acceptance of key elements of the construct of the secularism entrenched in the Canadian national imaginary.

Khan’s commentaries on gender include the highlighting of exceptional Muslim women, including Malala Yousafzai (Khan, 2013a, 2013b), Mukhtar Mai (Khan, 2013b), Tawakkul Karman (Khan, 2011),
and Ali Sabur, the youngest woman in the history of academia (Khan, 2008a). In illuminating these exceptional women, Khan is, by her own admission, attempting to “…shatter the Western stereotype of Muslim women as dim-witted and oppressed.” (Khan, 2008a). She uses the examples of some of these women as a “…rejoinder to those Muslims who believe women have been created intellectually inferior to men.” (Khan, 2008a). In lauding Karman, for instance, she notes that

…her example subverts assumptions on both sides of the East-West divide… The first is the Western assumption that Muslim women are meek, oppressed by Islam and in need of rescue. In fact, Muslim women have protested alongside men in the Arab spring, enduring hunger strikes, beatings and imprisonment. Second are Muslim cultural paradigms that cast women as weak, deferential and incapable of leadership. Ms. Karman has inspired a generation of Muslim women to follow their beliefs for the greater good, and to ignore personal attacks by those in power – be they presidents or clerics. (Khan, 2011).

It is noteworthy in her commentary about Karman that Khan comments on the role of Karman’s husband, who is “…his wife’s ardent supporter and co-activist…and who] has withstood withering criticism, admonishment and violence for his position.” (Khan, 2011). She then states that “…[p]artnership, rather than control, in marriage is anathema in many Muslim cultures…” (Khan, 2011), a rather strongly-worded generalization about gender relations amongst Muslims that reinforces the theme of primitive traditions. Further, Khan comments that during Karman’s 2009 visit to the United States, “…pluralism, activism and citizen engagement made a lasting impression on her.” (Khan, 2011). Through the lauding of prominent Muslim women such as Kamran, Yousafzai, Sabur and Mai (among others), Khan attempts to counter popular stereotypes about Muslim women. Such a reversal of positive images about Muslims, while rooted in a desire to combat age-old representations of Muslim women as oppressed, do not, however, undermine the essential power relations embedded in these depictions. As Yegenoglu (1998) observes,

…we cannot merely posit the depiction of positive images of the Orient and its women as a means of shattering the power of Orientalism. Nor can we ignore the fact that to invert the opposites and thereby install the excluded term at the center cannot constitute a subversive politics, for such a simple reversal would retain the very structure and the force and violence through which opposites are constructed as opposites. (p. 87).
Khan relies on the models of exceptional Muslim women to support her argument against the Quebec Charter of Values (2013). In her commentary, she suggests that these women, all successful and recognized internationally, would, under the Charter of Values, be considered “…oppressed…[and] meek, in need of liberation for [their] own good…[because] all these women of distinction are Muslim and cover their hair in some form.” (Khan, 2013a). She is categorical also in her assessment of “les feminists laïques” (Khan, 2013a), secular feminists who support the Charter of Values. She argues that

…”la feminism laïque on display in Quebec is offensive on so many levels. There is no respect for the actual choice of the women they purportedly seek to liberate…. For them, the hijab is merely a political symbol – a sign of militancy and a vehicle for extremist infiltration. All hijabis and niqabis are brainwashed and must not be allowed to change Quebec’s values, they say. Apparently, secular liberalism is no longer a Quebec value, according to these feminists. (Khan, 2013a).

Khan argues in the same commentary that “…feminism, we thought, [was]…about empowering women to make choices for themselves. Instead, la feminism laïque is the new patriarchy, with its condescending, my-way-or-the-highway attitude…” (Khan, 2013a). Her opposition to the Charter of Values is distinctly situated within a secularist paradigm, as she exalts women’s rights to make their own choices, and grounds this right within an individualistic framework. She especially lauds Muslim women for “…fusing a new breed of feminism where spirituality melds with activism to advance the cause of both genders…. Muslim women are on the rise, working with allies on a foundation of mutual respect and, where differences arise, agreeing to disagree.” (Khan, 2013a). Her acceptance of the norms of secular, liberal society is clear: people should be empowered to make their own choices (situating individual rights as a central pillar of society), and when disagreements arise, reasonable (read: liberal) people will agree to disagree (read: tolerate differences and accept them). In this sense, Khan’s commentary can be read as an implicit acceptance of the key elements of secular normativity and the apriori definition of religion as grounded in individual choice and personal conscience.
The four Acceptable Muslim figures, then, all focus on gender equality as a key pillar of their work. While there are nuances and differences in how they view gender equality amongst Muslims, what is common is that they all place Muslim women’s equality as central to their perspectives and work. In different ways, and with varying degrees of assertion, all four Acceptable Muslim figures place the blame for this inequality primarily on Muslim men and their dominance (and although Khan, in particular, alludes to some systemic issues, this is not a significant feature of her analysis as I explain below). In many senses, the perspectives on gender of these Acceptable Muslims fortify the contours of the eternal triad – the imperiled Muslim woman, the dangerous Muslim man, and the civilized European (Razack, 2008) – without illuminating or challenging the fundamental structural violences underlying gendered inequality. While Khan and Nawaz challenge the rescue motif by representing (and being) Muslim women who are vocal and strong rather than oppressed and submissive, in the end, all four Acceptable Muslims operate express perspectives that function within a prescribed set of norms that situate gender at the heart of the discourse about Muslims. Such a deeply embedded focus on gender and the Muslim woman is grounded in age-old Orientalist imaginaries. Writing about traditional depictions of the Oriental woman, Yegenoglu (1998) notes that “…her situation thus required a much more serious working, for the most essential features of the culture are assumed to be inscribed onto her; she is taken as the concrete embodiment of oppressive Islamic traditions which the Orient desperately needed to break up in order to reach the level of development the West achieved a long time ago.” (pp. 97-98). In this sense, “…the fight to protect women’s rights has been transformed into a battle to protect the secular republic.” (Fernando, 2014b, p. 203). In the overall scheme of empire, these Acceptable Muslims provide nuance to the eternal triangle in that they (i.e. the Acceptable Muslims) are perceived as civilized subjects who can help to rescue imperiled Muslim women (from the clutches of communalist and barbaric Muslim men and/or Islam). Such a positioning of the Acceptable Muslim as knights who rescue the Other erases the racialized logic
underlying the rescue motif and how it serves the goals of empire. In this sense, the Canadian nation-state can continue to surveil and regulate the lives of Muslims, using the Acceptable Muslims as the insider informers (and advance guard), and yet retain its benevolent secular and multicultural rhetoric. The Acceptable Muslims stand as sentries at the boundaries of the nation, ensuring that these racialized borders of acceptability position some bodies outside the nation and other bodies inside. For the Acceptable Muslim, inclusion can only be secured by expressing publicly and adamantly – by performing – the dance of loyalty to the ideological goals of the (white) Canadian nation-state.

Interestingly, the work of at least three of these figures (Manji, Nawaz and Khan) are based, at least in part, on their own life stories and experiences (Fatah’s is also based on his experiences, but perhaps less obviously so). In this sense, their experiences as Muslims (and specifically as Muslim women) are used as important testimonies to the gendered inequality prevalent within Muslim communities. While I do not dismiss the importance of gender equality within and outside Muslim communities, the perspectives on gender of these Acceptable Muslims share two key commonalities: first, they do not pay attention to the structural violences underlying gendered inequality; and second, they use the experiences of Muslim women (sometimes their own) to support and bolster their arguments. The use of the life experiences of Nawaz, Manji and Khan (and the experiences of the other Muslim women upon whom their narratives rely) is an important sub-text to this narrative. Could, in fact, the “privileging of personal experience or expertise – in fact, the transformation of experience into expertise” (Fernando, 2014b, p. 193) be one of the reasons behind the embrace of the narratives of these Muslim women in Canadian media, public and political discourses? Is it possible that these Muslim women are those with which the Canadian public is comfortable (i.e. safe) in that they narrate the “…story of a Muslim woman’s embrace of secular-republican values” (Fernando, 2014b, p. 193), and the resulting freedom from a communalist (rather than privatized) Islam? The Acceptable Muslim thus finds herself in a dilemma: the ability to speak in the public space is shaped by constraints of
(symbolic) language, vocabulary, diction, form and tenor. Reliance on personal narratives situates Acceptable Muslims as authentic voices through which the dominant elite (read: white citizen-subjects) can recognize the perspectives of Muslims, and through which these same subjects can engage in a politics of rescue and saving. The price that the Acceptable Muslim must pay for inclusion, to belong (however qualified) and be recognized in the Canadian public sphere (i.e. the right to be heard) is a public affirmation of the narratives that reinscribe whiteness (though in the guise of multiculturalism and diversity) at the centre of the national imaginary. Such a positioning is, of course, not new; it is reminiscent of age-old rescue narratives in which white subjects (male and female) have engaged. In this sense, Acceptable Muslims face a dilemma not unfamiliar to earlier generations of racialized scholars, feminists, and activists:

Caught up in the compelling discourse of saving women, we do an imperial dance. We can become the academy’s most authentic voice of reverence, an icon that redeems the First World, or its uncooperative native, a reviled scholar guilty of that most wretched of native sins – ingratitude. (Razack, 2000, p. 42).

Views on Canadian multiculturalism
The fifth, and final, characteristic of the figures of the Acceptable Muslim (both Secular and Multiculturalist) is that all four figures comment on, and interact with, Canadian (state) multiculturalism. Indeed, there can be little escape from multiculturalism in the Canadian context as this rhetoric is deeply embedded in the national imaginary. While all four figures interact with multiculturalism, their perspectives differ, as would be expected.

Secular Muslims such as Manji and Fatah argue that Canadian multiculturalism has ‘gone too far’ in accepting the cultures of immigrants. Fatah refers to the “cowardice of the multiculturalists”, (2010a, p. 15) and contends that this over-tolerance is responsible for many of the ills confronting Canadian society. He further argues that under Canadian multicultural policy “…we are told endlessly that Canada has no official culture, that all cultures are equal and that if you wish to
introduce homophobia and misogyny into Canada as part of your culture, we will accept it.” (Fatah, 2009a). Fatah’s ideological perspective is evident in his easy slippage between cultural acceptance (or equality of cultures) and homophobia and misogyny. He offers no evidence that such conflation is anything more than ideological posturing. Just as importantly, he does not challenge the assumption in his statement that multiculturalism decrees that there is no official culture and that all cultures are deemed equal. Such an assumption renders invisible the privilege and dominance of some bodies over others in the Canadian national imaginary, a privilege that is based on racialized and gendered notions of citizenship. Fatah also condemns multiculturalism for fostering and tolerating extremist views: Muslim groups, he suggests, have “…draped themselves in ‘moderate’ garb and then sprinkled their discourse with leftist lingo…but the weapon these groups have used most effectively has always been multiculturalism. It is the camouflage behind which Islamists all over the West hide their misogynist, homophobic and segregationist agenda.” (Fatah, 2006b). Once again, Fatah’s conflation of multiculturalism with acceptance of homophobia and misogyny reveals his ideological positioning as a strong critic of Canadian multiculturalism.

Like Fatah, Manji’s views on multiculturalism situate her as its vehement critic; she urges a move beyond “multicultural orthodoxy” (2011, p. 133). She comments,

As Westerners grovel before multiculturalism, we often act as if anything goes. We see our readiness to accommodate as a strength – even a form of cultural superiority (though few of us will admit that part). But fundamentalists [Manji’s word for ‘fundamentalists’] see our inclusive instincts as a weakness that makes us soft, lardy, rudderless… [they] detest weakness. They believe the weak deserve to be vanquished. Paradoxically, then, the more we accommodate to placate, the more their contempt for our ‘weakness’ grows. The ultimate paradox may be that in order to defend our diversity, we’ll need to be less tolerant. At the very least, we’ll need to be more vigilant. (Manji, 2005, p. 221).

Like Fatah, Manji argues that extremists use Western multiculturalism as a cover for imposing their will on the rest of society. She also suggests that Western multiculturalism results in a “rudderless” and weak society, one which hesitates to take a stand on important issues. What is most noteworthy
in her commentary here is how she maintains that diversity can best be protected by intolerance and a greater vigilance. Such a sleight-of-hand is “…one of the greater paradoxes of the liberal ethic of tolerance – namely, the intolerance of intolerance in the name of tolerance.” (Fernando, 2014b, pp. 224-225). Fernando (2014b) further notes that “…[w]ithin the liberal-democratic tradition, tolerance reaches its limits at intolerance, at which point the ethical commitment to tolerate can, and even must, be advocated to preserve the value of tolerance itself.” (pp. 224-225).

In comparison, Multiculturalist Muslims such as Nawaz and Khan are more supportive of the model of Canadian multiculturalism. Nawaz’s perspective on multiculturalism can likely be found most clearly in *Little Mosque on the Prairie* in which a central theme is the model of Canadian multiculturalism. The discourse of multiculturalism is very much embedded in the sitcom’s narrative and characters, reaffirming an acceptance of the key elements of such a discourse. For instance, one episode (season 1, episode 2) about barriers (between men and women) involves a protest by non-Muslim women. One of the characters, Sarah (notably a white Muslim convert) steps forward, points to a (Black) Muslim woman, saying “…do you think it is our place as privileged white people to tell her how to worship?” (Darling, 2007-2012). The protesters retreat hastily, apologizing profusely. What is interesting about this exchange is first, Sarah’s positioning of herself as supportive of the protestors (she first whispers her support), and second, her use of the language of multiculturalism to mediate between the groups. This discourse, relying on the vocabulary of multiculturalism, “…situates ‘acceptable’ Muslims within its parameters and, noticeably, it is the white converted Muslim who mediates the difference between ‘traditional’ Muslims and the protestors.” (S. Kassam, 2015, p. 614). Another example from *Little Mosque on the Prairie* is just as revealing. In season 4, episode 7, one character (Yasir) inadvertently breaks a statute of Jesus in the church. Rather than admit his mistake, he secretly (without admitting this to the local priest) orders a new statute. Upon delivery, Yasir discovers that the statute depicts a Black Jesus. Sarah, Yasir’s wife, cannot contain her shock and
exclaims, “...oh, this is terrible... I mean, not that he’s black. It’s great that he is black... I mean.... I am not a racist.... We didn’t mean to break the normal one... I mean, the white one... I am not a racist...” (Darling, 2007-2012). In continuing to repeat the phrase “I am not racist,” Sarah is “…clearly positioning herself as a ‘good’ Canadian who does not harbour racist views. Such a dialogue, “…while presented as humorous (and likely meant to be a satirical reflection of Canadian attitudes about race, religion and society)...references the (mainly white) Canadian anxiety about being perceived as racist, while simultaneously, satirizing the ‘white norms’ of the Canadian national imaginary.” (S. Kassam, 2015, p. 614).

Examples such as these illuminate Little Mosque on the Prairie’s implicit (or perhaps not so implicit?) acceptance of the multicultural ethos of Canadian society. Further, the characters on the sitcom are situated as binary figures and are powerful signifiers of its key themes. The main characters (and those most idealized) are the acceptable or modern figures (in particular, those of Rayyan and Amaar) who represent the good Canadian Muslims who are situated as liberal, modern and committed to their faith within a secular, multicultural paradigm. These characters are well-integrated into the secular and multicultural fabric of Canadian society: they “…stand at the very heart of the sitcom, communicating hegemonic messages and values important to the Canadian national imaginary and reinforcing the Canadian ‘consensus’ (often unspoken) on the benefits of multiculturalism.” (S. Kassam, 2015, p. 615).

Nawaz reaffirms this idea when, in discussing the success of the sitcom, she states “…Europeans are watching the program for a different reason: it reflects a multicultural society that is a success rather than a failure.” (Nawaz, 2015). She further reiterates her acceptance of, and commitment to, multicultural Canada by saying “…I was always very secure in the feeling that Canada was home and I was Canadian. That security gave me time to look into the practices of my community with a critical lens.” (Nawaz, 2015).
Nawaz’s acceptance of Canada’s multicultural ethos leaves many silences. In acknowledging her own security about Canada as her home, she does not acknowledge that this security is a privilege not shared by all bodies in the nation. She, therefore, does not acknowledge the differential citizenship of subjects considered Other, and she renders invisible the stratification of Canadian society. Through this erasure, she leaves unacknowledged her own complicity as a boundary marker in racialized notions of multiculturalism and citizenship; hers is the acceptable Muslim body who gains qualified inclusion in the Canadian national imaginary. Her acceptable subject- hood, therefore, can be used by the nation-state as a technology of power by which the Other is surveilled, marginalized and excluded from the public sphere, her own (acceptable) subject- hood rendering invisible the structural violences performed by the nation-state (all the while upgrading the secular, multicultural and non-racist credentials of the state). In this sense, the title of Nawaz’s sitcom is illuminating; the title, *Little Mosque on the Prairie* is derived from a previous (1970s) show, *Little House on the Prairie*, which narrates the stories of the settling of the American mid-west. Such a narrative renders invisible the colonialism and violence experienced by Indigenous communities while idealizing the experiences of settlers. In a similar way, *Little Mosque on the Prairie* situates Acceptable Muslims as pioneers in the contemporary Canadian ideological landscape. Hence, “...rendered invisible is the violence done to other groups of Muslims/immigrants (those outside the boundary of ‘acceptability’) through valorization of a certain type of Canadian Muslim who reinforces key elements of the Canadian national narrative.” (S. Kassam, 2015). I suggest that this silence and erasure are the price for (conditional) inclusion in the nation-state – the Acceptable Muslim must publicly support the ideological goals of the Canadian nation-state and reaffirm (even implicitly) the whiteness that lies at its heart.

Khan, while also a Multiculturalist Muslim (and Acceptable Muslim), does attempt in her commentaries to challenge some assumptions embedded in the multiculturalist national imaginary (though, in the end, she also resorts to commentaries that reaffirm the Canadian national paradigm).
For instance, she raises significant issues such as incarcerated Muslim men overseas (Arar, Almalki, El Maati and Nureddin, Abdelrazik) (Khan, 2008b); the use of security certificates against Muslim men (Almrei, Charkaoui, Harkat, Jaballah and Mahjoub) (Khan, 2008c); the case of Omar Khadr (Khan, 2012b); and the murder of Marwa al-Sherbini. (Khan, 2009a). These are significant and politically charged issues, and Khan, unlike the other three Acceptable Muslims, raises these, and asks pertinent questions. For instance, she comments “…[f]or many immigrants to this great land, the post 9/11 era is one of insecurity, in which they wonder: What value is my Canadian passport when travelling abroad? Will my government stand up for my basic rights, or trade them to curry favour with certain regimes?” (Khan, 2008c). Khan is critical of the Canadian government’s policies relating to detention and incarceration of Muslim men, arguing that these men should be protected and accorded their full citizenship rights and protections. She suggests that many Muslim men have not been granted such protections, referring to them as “…government excesses…[and] abuses of power.” (Khan, 2008c). While she couches her critique in qualifying comments such as “…by all means, let’s be vigilant about our security…” (Khan, 2008c), she nonetheless is the only one of the Acceptable Muslims to voice any criticism (even if couched) of governmental policies that target some groups (in this case Muslim men).

Khan notes the double-standard revealed by the killing of Marwa al-Sherbini who was murdered in a German courtroom by a man she had accused of Islamophobia. Khan notes that this murder of al-Sherbini, a Muslim woman wearing hijab, elicited only a “…muted reaction …in the heart of Europe…. No need to imagine the outrage if a woman is killed for not wearing a hijab – just look to the visceral reaction at the killing of Mississauga teenager Aqsa Parvez in 2007.” (Khan, 2009a). She also observes that German security officials, in attempting to respond, initially shot al-Sherbini’s husband, who was attempting to intervene. Khan, unlike the other Acceptable Muslim figures, raises (though not always consistently) the history of discrimination and abuse perpetuated by the Canadian
nation-state (including the dispossession of Indigenous people, the internment of the Japanese and other groups. (Khan, 2009b, p. 57). That Khan at least names such issues is a salient distinction between her and the other Acceptable Muslim figures, a distinction that illuminates her tentative attempts to challenge some ideas.

In analyzing Khan’s work and its underlying paradigm, I nonetheless theorize that, despite her challenges to it, she remains within the acceptable paradigm of Canadian multiculturalism. Her questions and arguments, while more challenging than those of the other Acceptable Muslim figures, are referenced within the paradigm of inclusivity and acceptance, and foreground the notion of individual rights. As she notes, “…how do we build an inclusive society, where all members feel that they are welcome to contribute towards the betterment of self and nation?” (Khan, 2009b, p. 48). She reaffirms the notion of a “Canadian way” (Khan, 2009b, p. 101), which upholds key ideals in the national narrative: individual liberty, acceptance, inclusivity, dialogue, human rights, and a “…culture of compassionate meritocracy…” (Khan, 2009b, p. 104). She lauds “…the fundamental nature of Canada as a place where an individual, regardless of gender, creed, or ethnic origin can strive for justice, a claim few nations can make.” (Khan, 2009b, p. 108). Embedded in such language are key ideals of the Canadian multicultural nation-state, ideals which Khan clearly embraces. It is noteworthy that, of the four Acceptable Muslim figures, Khan is the only one who publicly acknowledges the violence expressed towards Muslim men. However, even though she raises the issue, she cannot abandon, in her commentary, the language of multiculturalism, a language which is propagated and supported by the same state that commits the violence against Muslim (and other racialized) bodies. Despite what appears to be her genuine desire to raise important and probing questions in her work, Khan, in the end, retreats back to language that expresses loyalty to the ideological goals of the Canadian nation-state and reaffirms the deeply racialized nature of its national imaginary. For the Acceptable Muslim, the condition of being able to speak (and to be heard and recognized as acceptable
in the public sphere) is that s/he speaks the language of multiculturalism. While Khan raises the injustice faced by Muslim (and other racialized) bodies, she does not make this the focus of her commentaries, for to do so would render her illegible, not acceptable, and marginalized in the Canadian public sphere. The price of (conditional) inclusion for the Acceptable Muslim body is public fidelity to a white (and therefore multicultural) Canada.

Reflective of Khan’s commitment to multicultural ideals is her promotion of an “…indigenous Canadian Muslim culture.” (Khan, 2008e). In an early column, she suggests that the tensions between secular democracy and Muslim religious identity in Canada might well be resolved by learning from the examples of Chinese Muslims. She suggests that the Hui Muslim minority “…developed language, cultural paradigms and institutions that bridged the two worlds, to create a vibrant culture that was wholly Chinese and Muslim.” (Khan, 2008e). Importantly, she further notes that “…Hui scholars did not deconstruct Chinese ethos; rather, they built on the best of Chinese traditions.” (Khan, 2008e). The implication is clear: Canada’s ethos must be embraced and respected, and she urges Canadian Muslims to reflect on their engagement with Canadian norms, including, notably “…an impending collision between gender equity and the authoritarian patriarchy entrenched in many of the country’s Muslim institutions.” (Khan, 2008e). That she places gender at the centre of her plea for an indigenous Canadian Muslim culture is not surprising, given the centrality of gender in contemporary ideological discourses. Further, Khan lists the key qualities of this indigenous Canadian Muslim culture: “…freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, critical inquiry, and pluralism… [these] must be incorporated by Muslims into their lives if they are to thrive in Canada. So must a respectful appreciation of the best Canadian traditions.” (Khan, 2008e). Thus, Khan reinforces the key ideals of the multicultural, secular Canadian national imaginary.
Khan’s use of the hockey metaphor, while humorous and catchy (who can resist a book entitled Of Hockey and Hijab?), also reflects her desire to be viewed as ‘just another Canadian’. While I have no doubt that Khan plays (and enjoys) hockey, her use of this metaphor (albeit a stereotypical Canadian one) is an attempt to situate herself as a bona fide Canadian. She writes several columns about hockey, both her own games and her support for the Montreal Canadiens. She describes her childhood playing hockey: “…I grew up playing street hockey, driveway hockey and table hockey…” (Khan, 2009b). In such a description, one can almost hear echoes of the childhoods of many Canadians (at least in some circles) in which hockey holds a cherished (dare I say exalted?) place. By building on this narrative of a hockey-playing and hockey-loving young Sheema, she grounds herself squarely in the Canadian narrative, in which she is a hockey-loving Canadian who happens to wear hijab. I do not question that Khan played hockey as a young person, nor that she genuinely enjoys it; what I am alluding to is her conscious (one can only presume that it is conscious) positioning within the Canadian metaphorical landscape. Khan also uses hockey to challenge stereotypes about Muslim women when she writes of facing incredulity from others: “And then it hit me. Muslim women, especially hijabis, aren’t expected to be interested in sports, let alone play.” (2009b, p. 101). Hence, her hockey metaphor allows Khan to situate herself (and her personal narrative) within the larger landscape of the Canadian national narrative, a position from which she, an Acceptable Muslim, can attempt to challenge some stereotypes about Muslims.

In the end, all four of the Acceptable Muslim figures engage with the multicultural construct embedded in the Canadian national imaginary. While some of these figures, in particular Multiculturalist Muslims such as Khan and Nawaz, work within, and accept, the norms embedded in multiculturalist discourses, Secular Muslims such as Manji and Fatah, argue that such norms move away from so-called Canadian values. Multiculturalism is closely linked to ideas of an individualist and rationalist ethos, rooted in turn in secular normativity. However, official multiculturalism in the
Canadian context “…further[s] popular perceptions of the nation having made a successful transition from a white settler colony to a multiracial, multi-ethnic, liberal-democratic society.” (Thobani, 2007, p. 144). The policy enables the nation-state to manage difference while maintaining the power of “exalted subjects” (Thobani, 2007), constituting difference mainly in cultural terms, with the public sphere reconfirmed as a white space. Multiculturalist discourse is deeply ingrained in the Canadian national imaginary; indeed, it is perceived as one of the central pillars of Canadian society. However, besides reaffirming the Canadian public sphere as a white space, official multiculturalism policy also, implicitly if not explicitly, associates the lack of integration of the Other (usually immigrant) with their cultural differences from mainstream Canadian culture. Hence, multiculturalism policy, “…in emphasizing culture…suppress[es] public discussion of the racism, both institutional and personal, which bar[s] the full participation of people of colour within the economic and socio-political establishment.” (Thobani, 2007, p. 156). In the Canadian context, racialized groups sometimes internalize such multiculturalist discourses and underlying themes such that they “…imagine themselves in the same ‘culturalist’ tropes nationalists used against them, thereby coming to see themselves through the eyes of the nation.” (Thobani, 2007, p. 162). In this context, challenges to the institutional racism and systemic marginalization faced by some bodies are seen to be “…in bad form, or, worse, as acting in bad faith.” (Thobani, 2007, p. 163). It is against such a backdrop that Acceptable Muslims engage with the ethos and language of Canadian multiculturalism, and within which their comments about multiculturalism can be interpreted. Secular Muslims such as Fatah and Manji are deeply critical of Western multiculturalism and what they deem are its dangerous implications; these views are similar to those voices in the public domain calling for the so-called limits of tolerance. These perspectives, including those of Fatah and Manji, resonate with discourses that reaffirm the whiteness of the public sphere, and the right of the dominant subject (read: white or whitened) to manage it. In their claims that ‘multiculturalism has gone too far’ there is an implicit call for the return
of the power of the (whitened) national subject. On the other hand, the views of Multiculturalist Muslims such as Nawaz and Khan are more embracing of multiculturalism and its ethos. While attempting to challenge stereotypes of the Other (in this case, Muslims), they implicitly subscribe to the culturalist ethos underlying Canadian public discourse. While they (in particular Khan) do raise some challenging questions about government policy, in the end, Multiculturalist Muslims reaffirm the essential terms of the multiculturalist framework. This reaffirmation is why Multiculturalist Muslims have achieved more (and sustained) prominence than those who attempt to challenge and disrupt the institutional and systemic privileges of some subjects over others. In this sense, the multiculturalist discourse frames and constrains the types of dialogues that are seen as legitimate within the Canadian public sphere. As Thobani (2007) notes, “…[m]any immigrants have embraced their culturalization, some have rejected it, others have tried to ‘pass’ as Canadian, and yet others have sought to reframe this culturalist discourse within an anti-racist framework. All, however, have had to engage with it. None have escaped its reach. (p. 165).

Conclusion
The four figures – Manji, Fatah, Khan and Nawaz – are situated as Acceptable Muslims in the Canadian national imaginary. They are perceived as good Muslims, who reaffirm the norms framing Canadian society: liberalism, rationalism, individualism, secularism, multiculturalism, and tolerance. These Muslims, both accepted in and sheltered by the Canadian narrative, accept the essential framework through which the elite of the Western nation-state maintain the privilege and power of some subjects. As I note above, these Acceptable Muslims share some common characteristics. These include (a) public condemnation of extremism; (b) the essentializing of Muslims, their histories and traditions; (c) reaffirmation of the construct of Western secularism (secular normativity); (d) a central focus on gender; and (e) an engagement with multiculturalism and multiculturalist discourse. There are, of course, divergences among the perspectives of these four figures and I categorize them as two
sub-types – Secular Muslims and Multiculturalist Muslims – each of which have distinct features. However, both Secular and Multiculturalist Muslims situate themselves (or are situated) as Acceptable Muslims in the Canadian national imaginary. Such figures are crucial in that they illuminate the boundaries of legitimate (or acceptable) Canadian citizenship, and through their presence and prominence, render invisible the racialized and gendered nature of this citizenship. In this way, Acceptable Muslims mediate and “…defer the contradictions of republican citizenship…” (Fernando, 2009, p. 381) in which the particularity of citizenship is normalized and embedded in the rhetoric of an abstract, universal citizenship. This is significant in a settler-state such as Canada, in which the national narrative depends on the erasure of colonial legacies and the disavowal of racist structures, both historically and in contemporary times. Hence, the Acceptable Muslim demarcates the boundary between the (white) exalted subject, the acceptable citizen who attains qualified inclusion in society (as these figures have) and the non-acceptable whose body can be (continue to be) surveilled, regulated, marginalized and excluded. The figures of the Acceptable Muslims are those with commensurable difference, juxtaposed against those with non-commensurable difference, who, so the narrative goes, can be legitimately excluded from society.

Acceptable Muslims reinforce and accept the construct of secular normativity in which all religious traditions must be recognizable in terms established by the history of Christianity (and specifically Protestant Christianity). These terms include the centring of personal belief and conscience as sites of authentic faith, an individualized, privatized religious expression, relegated either to the private realm, or within acceptable and designated spaces, and public expressions of faith limited to acceptable limits, with other expressions marked as extremist, which must be publicly condemned. Based on these norms, religious traditions need to be confined to being recognizable in the public domain; I suggest that efforts to constrain Islam (and expressions of Islam) in this manner amount to a ‘Protestantization’ of Muslims, a process in which Acceptable Muslims play a significant role. Of these
figures, the Secular Muslim is the more openly committed to the secular ideology: s/he operates almost
as a missionary for secularism, as a proxy (domestically at least) for the imperial state, much as the
Christian missionary did in the colonial world. The Multiculturalist Muslim, while not an open
missionary for secularism, nonetheless accepts implicitly the terms of secular normativity. By accepting
and articulating their interpretations of faith within these terms of secular normativity, Acceptable
Muslims effectively become, consciously or unconsciously, advocates for this process. While there are
differences in how Secular and Multiculturalist Muslims participate in this process and in their
acceptance of secular normativity, I suggest that these differences are a matter of degree, rather than
of substance, and that all these Acceptable Muslims signal an acceptance of secular norms.

The figure of the Acceptable Muslim is crucial in supporting the ideological goals of the Canadian
settler-state, which claims to be both secular and multicultural. In order to reinforce its sense of itself
as benevolent and neutral, the nation-state requires “…the presence of assimilated foreigners, whose
acceptance and integration of republican values prove the latter’s universalist promise.” (Fernando,
2009, p. 387). As assimilated foreigners (those with commensurable differences), Acceptable Muslims
are the insider informers on which the nation-state relies in order to achieve its ideological aims while
retaining its benevolent image. These figures are seen as “voices of dissent” (Dabashi, 2011, p. 17)
who are able to speak with a certain authority about challenges in Muslim communities, and who can
be public advocates for reaffirming some of the ideals of the nation-state. Such insider informers
generally preserve an idealized view of the nation-state – despite some of their critiques – and their
views do not challenge the essential framework of the Canadian nation-state. Dabashi (2011) notes
that “…empire thrives on the stories it tells about liberty and democracy or about the ‘end of history’
or the ‘clash of civilizations,’ [and, I would add, religious neutrality and multiculturalism]…. These
stories need exotic seasoning, and the native informers provide them.” (2011, p. 128). In this sense,
Acceptable Muslims are situated as acceptable Others precisely because they confirm and affirm the
ideological underpinnings of the Canadian/Western multicultural, secular nation-state. This, I suggest, is the price of inclusion: that the Acceptable Muslim must reaffirm loyalty to the central tenets of the national imaginary – multiculturalism, secularism, privatized faith, democracy and, most importantly, to a whiteness embedded at the heart of the nation-state. The deployment of the Acceptable Muslim enables the nation-state to deny its fundamentally racialized national codes by dressing its whiteness in the cloak of multiculturalism, diversity and ‘tolerant’ benevolence.

Given that the figures of the Acceptable Muslim support the ideological goals of the nation-state, it is these figures who are most prominent in Canadian media, public and political discourse; the voices of Muslims who hold more progressive, even radical and counter-narrative perspectives are not as prominent, and certainly do not enjoy the same recognition and acceptance as do the Acceptable Muslim figures. These Acceptable Muslim figures are considered the modern, liberal and reasonable ones, those who accept the fundamental premises of Canadian (and Western) society and seek to integrate into the Canadian mainstream, either unmarked by culture (Fatah and Manji) or as acceptably marked by culture (Nawaz and Khan). These, then, are the recognizable, reasonable and acceptable Canadian Muslims, those that can and will be audible in the Canadian public sphere, and who are most ideologically useful when juxtaposed with the unacceptable, unreasonable Other. For, as Dabashi observes, “…the black man [sic] who dares to speak…is called anything from passionate to angry, but never ‘reasonable’. He may have a point, he is repeatedly told, but he is so angry he defeats his own purpose. Reason and composure, of course, are white.” (2011, p. 29). The Acceptable Muslim is, then, seen as reasonable and can be heard (and is heard) in the Canadian public sphere.

As insider informers, these figures of the Acceptable Muslim articulate the narratives of Muslims (often using their own personal stories and experiences) in the contemporary Canadian context. As with most insider informers, they articulate these personal and community narratives in a language
and discourse which will be intelligible to the dominant elite. In this sense, Acceptable Muslim figures need to be able to view themselves (and Muslims) through the lens of the dominant elite (even if, as with Nawaz and Khan, they do not identify completely with such a lens). Dabashi, in his analysis of native informers refers to this as “…white-identified to the bone” (2011, p. 80), an epithet I would certainly apply to Manji and Fatah, though perhaps not completely to Nawaz and Khan. At the centre of these Acceptable Muslim narratives is the white gaze, invisibilized and yet so central to media, public and political discourses in Canada.

Against the backdrop of the white gaze, it is significant that the four Canadian Acceptable Muslim figures are all of South Asian descent. In fact, in my analysis of data from Canadian media (Chapter 3), it is clear that the Muslim body is often positioned as a brown body (i.e. South Asian or Arab). In my data sample, there are no identifiable Acceptable Arab Muslims, at least not in English-language media discourses (there may well be in French language media discourses, but this is beyond the scope of the current project). I suggest that Arab Muslims, while consistently present in media discourses (see my analysis in chapter 3), are usually represented as inassimilable, embodying immutable characteristics of extremism or so-called primitive cultural/religious traditions. Arab Muslims are depicted in Canadian media discourse either as angry men, violence in their tainted blood or as oppressed women, who require rescue. In either case, Arab Muslims are not often positioned in Canadian media discourse as Acceptable Muslims. Further, also noticeably absent from Canadian media discourses are Black Muslims, despite their actual numbers and presence (e.g. Somali Muslims in Toronto). Indeed, Canadian discourse is noticeably silent about the Black Muslim body, whether the Muslim Other or the Acceptable Muslim. As I observe earlier, narratives about Blackness in Canada revolve around absence, erasure, displacement or ‘from elsewhere’, narratives which place them (erroneously and fictively) outside the boundaries of the nation. In the contemporary context, Black bodies are often coded in Canadian public and media discourse as ‘problems’, bodies that are
read as requiring the force of state systemic violence. The absence of Acceptable Black Muslims reinforces the ideological representations of Blackness: contemporary Black bodies are coded as violent and dangerous (and hence, subject to state violence and forcible repression). On the other hand, brown bodies are coded as either marginally acceptable or excluded (and hence, to be surveilled, regulated or rescued from their primitive existences). In this context, acceptability (and conditional inclusion) coalesces on South Asian Muslim bodies, who, according to the Canadian narrative, are more likely to hold acceptable (read: white-identified or white-favouring) perspectives than are Black bodies. While an examination of Black Muslim bodies – and whether they appear as Acceptable Muslims (or not) in other forms of media, or in different time periods – is an important area for further study, it is, for now, beyond the scope of my current study.

The figure of the Acceptable Muslim does important ideological work in the contemporary Canadian context. Situated at the borderline of legitimate Canadian citizenship – including the norms of secularism, liberalism, and individualism – the Acceptable Muslim illuminates, supports and reinforces the key terms of the (racialized and gendered) Canadian national imaginary. The figure of the Acceptable Muslim, therefore, is an important tool in the arsenal of a Western settler-state such as Canada. Underlying these norms, is the overarching (but invisibilized) presence of whiteness – a presence that haunts the Canadian imaginary, but which effectively manages the racialized bodies within its realm/empire. The boundaries of the colonial settler nation-state continue to be racialized and gendered as ever. The Acceptable Muslim stands at the boundaries, acting as sentries to reaffirm the “psychic borders” (P. Butler, 2014) of the nation, signaling that those beyond the borders can be surveilled, marginalized, excluded or expelled. The Acceptable Muslim is granted conditional inclusion within the borders of the nation, and s/he must validate that inclusion consistently by public reaffirmations of loyalty to the nation, and to the whiteness (invisible though it might be) at the heart of the national imaginary. In other words, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim must always be vigilant
and ‘stand on guard,’ to ensure that the borders of the nation are not breached by unacceptable Others who threaten the nation. She must also stand on guard to ensure that s/he does not lose her conditional inclusion by a slip, a giveaway, or by expressing unacceptable words or actions – s/he must always be on guard that her words and actions do not betray her Muslimness (or her commitment to justice and equity), that she is not mistaken for the Muslim Other (or a so-called ungrateful Other), thereby losing her place (conditional though it is) within the nation.

In this sense, the Acceptable Muslim “…does not tell the white master what he needs to know but what he wants to hear…” (Dabashi, 2011, p. 96). The Canadian nation-state, like other (neo)imperial projects, requires the presence of such Acceptable Muslims – both Secular Muslims and Multiculturalist Muslims – to support its ideological goals. As Dabashi notes, in order to claim global legitimacy, a (neo)imperial

…needs the support of native informers and comprador intellectuals with varying accents to their speech, their prose and politics. Supported only by white men and women, the project would not have the same degree of narrative authority. But accents from targeted cultures and climes Orientalize, exoticize, and corroborate all at the same time; they accentuate that supremely self-alienating moment when by offering their services, native informers authorize and authenticate the dominant accent – which no longer hears its own imperial accent. (Dabashi, 2011, p. 36).
Conclusion

Sentries at the boundaries:
The Acceptable Muslim at the borders of the nation

Introduction
In the post 9/11 era, the figure of the Muslim has come to be an important one on the Canadian racial landscape, a figure which consistently appears in media, public and political discourses as an extremist, always-already violent, traditional, primitive, and oppressed/oppressive (depending on female/male gender). In the Canadian racial landscape, Indigenous and racialized bodies are marginalized, excluded and expelled from the national imaginary, an expulsion upon which the Canadian settler nation-state relies to centre whiteness at the heart of its national landscape. Through such a centring of whiteness, certain subjects (white ones) are seen as legitimate bodies and citizen-subjects, heirs to the so-called founders of the nation, while other subjects (Indigenous and racialized bodies) are situated at the margins of the nation or excluded entirely. In the contemporary context, such a centring of whiteness – a (neo)colonial enterprise – relies fundamentally on differential subjectivities: the racial, inassimilable Other, the assimilable or tolerable Other, and, rendered invisible but very much in power, the exalted white citizen-subject. Hence, the figures of both the racial Other and the good or tolerable Other play important roles in supporting and reinforcing the racial boundaries of the nation.

In this dissertation, I trace the emergence of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim in Canadian public, political and cultural discourses (2005-2014), and analyze the political and ideological meanings of such a figure. Through an analysis of Canadian print media narratives, I first examine how the figure of the Muslim is depicted, rooting these representations in a history of Orientalism and racialization, and I analyze how this figure is framed in the context of Canadian public and political discourses. Through this analysis, I trace the emergence of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, a figure who is depicted as good, modern, and assimilable, one who espouses a privatized faith with few public
expressions of cultural/religious belonging. I then conduct a detailed analysis of four Acceptable Muslim figures and their work and trace these figures, their perspectives, characteristics, and the roles they play in the Canadian national imaginary. These Acceptable Muslim figures publicly express support – ranging in tone from diplomatic to fierce – of Western ideological goals, and all sustain the narrative of the Canadian nation-state as liberal, democratic, secular and inclusive, even as it marginalizes, excludes, punishes and expels the Muslim Other. I theorize that Acceptable Muslims stand as sentries at the (symbolic) borders of the nation, reaffirming racialized boundaries of acceptability.

In this chapter, I summarize my findings, and point to further areas of study.

Framing the Muslim Other
Canadian media discourse about Muslims is haunted by the spectre of the Muslim Other, a figure which is situated as foreign, dangerous, primitive, and always-already violent. Although such depictions are rooted in Orientalist imaginaries, they have been reanimated and nuanced in the post 9/11 era. My analysis of media discourse about Muslims reveals that narratives about Muslims can be grouped into 10 frames. This framing situates the Muslim Other at the margins of the national imaginary, with the Acceptable Muslim positioned at the borders, demarcating the boundaries between those that fall within the national body politic and those that do not. Based on my data sample, I suggest that Canadian media discourse is coded through the following frames:

1. Muslims as the undifferentiated Other in Canadian society
2. Veiled, passive, and oppressed Muslim women
3. Threatening, violent, extremist and barbaric Muslim men
4. The (often invisible) knight saving Muslim women
5. Muslims as symbolic of the failure of multiculturalism
6. Muslims and the battle between gender equality and religious rights
7. Quebec’s reasonable accommodation debates and Canadian benevolence
8. Muslims and the international narrative
9. What about Justice?: Muslims and the narrative of silence
10. Voices from the Inside: The Acceptable Muslim as insider informer
These frames together present a narrative in which most Muslims are situated outside the bounds of legitimate Canadian citizenship, while a few Muslims, deemed acceptable or assimilable, by the dominant elite, are permitted qualified inclusion in the Canadian national imaginary.

My analysis of Canadian media narratives about Muslims reveals an overwhelming focus on the bodies of Muslim women, their clothing choices, their lives, and their relationships with Muslim men and communities perceived to be oppressive. Throughout these media narratives – whether news reports or commentaries/editorials – Muslim women in Canadian media discourse are often positioned as imperiled and under threat from barbaric, primitive and patriarchal religious/cultural traditions. Underlying these narratives are the three figures of the eternal triangle: the imperiled Muslim woman, the dangerous Muslim man and the civilized European body who engages in a discourse of saving and rescue. (Razack, 2008). Media discourses situate some Muslim women as assimilable (those willing to privatize their faith or only exhibit acceptable expressions of cultural/religious belonging), while others (e.g. niqabi women, or those unwilling to privatize their expressions of faith) are deemed to be inassimilable, and beyond the boundaries of acceptability. In post 9/11 Canadian media, public and political discourses, these boundaries separating acceptability and unacceptability are often imprinted on the bodies of Muslim women. Very often, media narratives frame the challenges of Muslim women as a battle between gender equality and multiculturalism, a framing which reaffirms the power of Western states and subjects (including Western feminists) to engage in the regulation, management and rescue of ‘oppressed’ Muslim women.

My data on Canadian media narratives reveal that Muslim men are generally represented as oppressive, patriarchal, always-already violent, and extremist figures who are seen to be threatening both to Muslim women, and to Western society. Such narratives position Muslim men as irredeemably violent and extremist – violence seen as being in their blood, bones and body – and hence are situated as
unassimilable subjects in the Canadian national imaginary. These Muslim men, especially young men, are seen in media narratives as those that threaten ‘our’ security and who must be surveilled, policed, and, if necessary, excluded (either physically or symbolically) from the Canadian public sphere. Such narratives underlie various state attempts to profile, incarcerate or otherwise marginalize Muslim men.

The bodies of Muslims often serve in Canadian discourses (media, public and political) as trigger points for larger conversations about Canadian multiculturalism, secularism, Canadian identity, and Canadian values. Muslim bodies are often situated in the data as testing the limits of these discourses, and heated commentaries are framed around the questions seemingly posed by the visible presence of Muslims in the public sphere. Time and again, media narratives focus on visible or identifiable markers of so-called Muslimness (e.g. clothing, domestic violence, prayers in educational and employment settings, public prayers, extremist beliefs or actions deemed Islamic, so-called honour killings, etc.); these narratives often begin with specific cases or instances, and very quickly turn to these larger questions about Canadian multiculturalism, secularism or values. Further, the reasonable accommodation debates in Quebec are often positioned as counterpoints to Canadian debates, with Quebec depicted as less tolerant and accepting of multiculturalism than the Rest of Canada (RoC). Such a depiction of Quebec positions the RoC as a beacon of tolerance, reaffirming the sense of Canadian benevolence, but leaving unacknowledged (and invisible) the racialized boundaries so central to the Canadian imaginary.

Overall, my examination of Canadian media discourses about Muslims reveals that these narratives focus primarily on the differences embodied by Muslims, differences which render Muslims as racial outsiders in the Canadian national landscape. Rarely do media narratives focus on the systemic issues (racial justice, security certificates, incarceration of Muslim men, employment, etc.) that affect the lives of Muslims. Through the data, I theorize that Canadian media narratives (re)produce differential
subjectivities which I summarize as (a) the inassimilable Muslim (male and female); (b) the assimilable, tolerable acceptable Muslim (female and male); and (c) the civilized, normative (white) citizen-subject (male or female). These subjects are crucial for the reinforcement of the Canadian national narrative, in which boundaries of acceptability are clearly marked. These subjects reaffirm the centrality of whiteness (and the white subject), reinforcing the power of the state and the white subject (male and female) to manage, control, and regulate the (intolerable and racialized) Other. Undergirding these boundaries of acceptability and imaginaries is the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, who stands as a sentinel at the (symbolic) borders of the nation.

The Acceptable Muslim
My analysis in this dissertation focuses especially on the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, a figure who is situated as a good, moderate, modern Muslim who “…seamlessly integrates her faith into the multicultural fabric of Canada.” (S. Kassam, 2015, p. 607). The Acceptable Muslim, juxtaposed against the Muslim Other, demarcates the racialized boundaries of acceptability in the Canadian imaginary, signaling that the Other can be policed, managed, excluded, and expelled. This Acceptable Muslim figure, therefore, reanimates the Canadian national imaginary, in which the fantasy of white space (Hage, 2000) is central, and enables “…a new kind of racism, one that projects antiracism and multiculturalism on the surface but simultaneously produces the logics and affects necessary to legitimize racist policies and practices.” (Alsultany, 2012, p. 16). I conduct, in this dissertation, a detailed analysis of key Canadian Acceptable Muslim figures and their work in order to interrogate the characteristics, perspectives and ideological meanings of such figures. Based on my examination of Canadian media discourses, I identify four figures who emerge consistently in these narratives, and whose perspectives are commonly used to reinforce key ideological messages. These figures are (1) Tarek Fatah, (2) Irshad Manji, (3) Zarqa Nawaz, and (4) Sheema Khan. In my analysis, I theorize that these figures, sharing some common characteristics, but also with some important distinctions,
reaffirm the norms framing Canadian society: secularism, multiculturalism, individualism, gender equity, liberalism, and rationalism. These are Muslims who are deemed acceptable in the Canadian national imaginary, and who, simultaneously, accept the framework through which the elite of the Western nation-state safeguards the power and privilege of some subjects.

The construct of Western secularism – secular normativity – is central to my analysis of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim. As various scholars (among others, Asad, 2003, 2006, 2013; Brown, 2006, 2012, 2013; Mahmood, 2005b, 2006) argue cogently, secularism does not involve banishment of religion from the public sphere; rather, they suggest, secularism entails a redefinition of religion, and its management and regulation, in the public sphere. This redefinition of religion (and religious expression) in the public sphere is based on a Protestant legacy which defines religion in a particular way: an individualized faith, rooted in personal conscience and a personal relationship with God, with few public expressions of faith. Such a definition of a ‘proper’ religion is naturalized into the Canadian public sphere, emerging as the so-called secular norm through which others are framed. Religious traditions other than those of the dominant group must conform to this definition: to be recognized, such religious traditions (and their adherents) must be rendered recognizable, and function within the parameters already defined. Hence, to be recognized as religions, non-dominant religious traditions need to be measured/read against this norm (touted as secular but rooted in a specific religious tradition), and, in order to be read as acceptably religious subjects, these other subjects must accept – or at least not openly flout – these definitions of religion in the public sphere. Those falling outside this definition of religion are situated as extremists or fundamentalists who are not assimilable in the Western construct of secular normativity. In the post 9/11 context, it is often visibly Muslim bodies who fall outside these definitions. In her examination of French Muslims, Fernando (2014b) notes, “…the project of recognizing and including Islam in the republic is a disciplinary project of secular governmentality, one that seeks to refashion Islam and Muslims in ways that make them recognizable
to the secular state.” (p. 122). The construct of Western secularism is also closely connected to the structure of citizenship. As various scholars (Ahmed, Goldberg, Hage, Morrison, Razack, Thobani, and others) theorize, national narratives about citizenship, especially in Western nation-states, are racially coded, with the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in the body politic regulating the benefits and privileges of citizenship. In this sense, acceptable citizenship in Western, multicultural, secular settler states such as Canada is based on the acceptance of the citizen-subject of certain key values (such as secularism, gender equity, multiculturalism, liberalism, tolerance, democracy…). The construct of secular normativity enables the state to proclaim its supposed religious neutrality and yet manage and regulate how religion (and what type of religion) is expressed in the public domain. The acceptable citizen is a body which is seen to accept the assumptions on which this construct is predicated. In this dissertation, I illustrate the manner in which Acceptable Muslim figures support and reinforce the construct of Western secularism and citizenship, reanimating both the racialized boundaries of acceptability, and the neo-colonial mission (both domestic and global) of the family of white nations. Just as importantly, Acceptable Muslims mask and render invisible the contradictions, tensions and power asymmetries in Western, secular nation-states.

Acceptable Muslims conform to these essential definitions of secularism and citizenship embedded in the Canadian national imaginary, placing them at the borders of the nation, operating as sentries, marking inclusion/exclusion within the nation-state. In my examination of these figures, I suggest that the figure of the Acceptable Muslim in the Canadian context can be one of two types: (a) the Secular Muslim; and (b) the Multiculturalist Muslim. These figures are distinguished by nuances in their perspectives, but share common characteristics, which place them within the general archetypal figure of the Acceptable Muslim.
As I note in my in-depth examination of these figures (Chapter 4), key characteristics of the archetypal Acceptable Muslim are the following: (a) a public condemnation extremism and radical Muslims; (b) the essentializing of Muslims, their histories and traditions; (c) a reaffirmation of the construction of secular normativity; (d) a central focus on gender equality; (e) an engagement with the language and discourse of Canadian multiculturalism. I summarize below each of these characteristics and identify how Secular Muslims and Multiculturalist Muslims are nuanced by their perspectives in each of these areas.

First, all four figures that I analyze are unequivocal in their denunciation of Muslims who express extremist beliefs, or who commit acts of violence. In some cases, this condemnation is explicit (such as in the case of Fatah and Manji) while in other cases (such as Nawaz and Khan), it is more implicit, at times even expressed through praise for temperate Muslim perspectives. Through the characters in Little Mosque on the Prairie, for instance, Nawaz unmistakably reveals her distaste for extreme beliefs and actions, and her preference for more modern Muslim characters. Whether their denunciation of extremist Muslims is explicit or implicit, all these Acceptable Muslim figures publicly express this denunciation and call upon Muslims (again, both explicitly and implicitly) to condemn such extremist beliefs and actions. None of the four Acceptable Muslim figures question the assumptions underlying such a call for public condemnation. Rarely raised is a questioning of the burden of representation faced by Muslims; why, after all, should Muslims be compelled to feel responsible for the beliefs and actions of other Muslims? None of the four Acceptable Muslims question such assumptions, and, in the end, reinforce the idea that some bodies (i.e. in this case, Muslim bodies) should be called upon to renounce extremist perspectives or actions. Such urging of public denunciations on the part of Muslims illuminates the fault line between the national citizen-subject, situated as individuals, and those perceived to be the Other, clearly identified with community affiliations. The national citizen-subject is perceived as the universal individual citizen), one who carries the privilege of being seen as
‘normal’ and of being the invisible norm against which the Other is measured and judged. The racially
Othered subject is perceived as a minority, one who is associated with specific traditions. Against this
backdrop, those perceived as the Other must publicly proclaim their commitment to the values of the
invisible norm (the dominant elite) in an effort to be granted conditional inclusion in the national
imaginary. All four of the Acceptable Muslim figures I analyze proclaim this commitment, urging other
Muslims to do the same, and are situated within the boundaries of acceptability of the Canadian nation-
state. By urging fellow Muslims to denounce so-called radical Muslims, the Acceptable Muslim signals
public agreement (explicit or implicit) with the unspoken assumptions underlying the national
imaginary, and dissimulates the violence embedded in the imaginary.

Second, all four Acceptable Muslim figures I analyze in this dissertation engage in an essentializing of
Muslims, albeit in different ways. The perspectives of Secular Muslims (Fatah and Manji) are often
rooted in stereotypical notions of Islam and Muslims, using overgeneralizations and undifferentiated
depictions of Muslims to make their points. Such depictions, rooted in Orientalist imaginaries,
effectively erase the richness and diversity of Muslim histories, traditions, cultures and interpretations,
and often sensationalize the most extreme examples of the views and practices of some Muslims.
These Secular Muslim perspectives, then, situate entire groups of people as sharing certain (often
extreme) qualities, beliefs or actions, with little (if any) acknowledgement of the diversity of
interpretations amongst Muslims. In this respect, Secular Muslims essentialize the perspectives of
Muslims, ignore the diversity of Muslim communities, and erase Muslim intellectual and
interpretational history, cultures and spirit of inquiry. On the other hand, Multiculturalist Muslims
(Nawaz and Khan) make selective use of Muslim history and traditions, relying on a politics of
authenticity, a politics which also essentializes Muslims, although in a different fashion. In their work,
both Khan and Nawaz promote an “…assumed Muslim norm” (Hirji, 2011, p. 38), a discursive
technique which is grounded in a search for a common Muslim identity. Such a search for a common
identity is rooted in a so-called universal interpretation of Islam, devoid of its complicated diversities, an Islam that is supposedly ‘purified’ of its specific historical, social, political, cultural, geographical and economic contexts. Such a desire for “…an ‘authentic’ or ‘universal’ Islam assumes that Islam has an ‘essence’…both essentializing and homogenizing the lived experiences of Muslims.” (S. Kassam, 2015, p. 619). Such perspectives underlie the efforts of Multiculturalist Muslims (notwithstanding best intentions) to reconfirm a normative Islam, one which can be separated from the cultural practices of its adherents. I suggest that Islam cannot be unsituated and that Muslims interpret and practice their faith in the context of their own cultural, political, historical, social and interpretational lenses. The politics of authenticity in which Multiculturalist Muslims engage illuminates the contours of the “…re-imagined Ummah,” (Mandaville, 2001), a supposedly global community which can be perceived as a unified one. Such a politics of authenticity attempts to challenge Orientalist stereotypes, but in the end essentialize and homogenize Muslims, in an effort to find common ground. Hence, while Secular Muslims (Manji and Fatah) erase the richness of Muslim intellectual, cultural and political histories, Multiculturalist Muslims (Khan and Nawaz) make selective use of Muslim histories and traditions, a selectivity that upholds and renders authentic some aspects of Muslim history and interpretation.

Third, my analysis reveals that Acceptable Muslims fundamentally affirm the norms and assumptions of the construct of Western secularism, a construct framed as religious neutrality, but which is grounded the norms of one specific religious tradition, rendered universalized and naturalized. These norms shape the definition, management and regulation of religious expression in the public domain. Embedded in this construct is a definition of acceptable religion which is privatized, through which religion is situated as a matter of personal conscience, rather than communal expression or practice. Expressions of faith that transgress these boundaries of a ‘proper’ religion are read as extreme or even fundamentalist, falling outside the bounds of acceptability. In my examination of the work of these four Acceptable Muslims, I maintain that they subscribe to these foundational secular norms of
Western society. All four Acceptable Muslims reconfirm their commitment to the privatization of faith, with Secular Muslims being explicit about their commitment to the complete separation of private faith from the public domain. In so doing, Secular Muslims also situate themselves as being unmarked by public expressions of faith and culture. Both Manji and Fatah are passionate defenders of the secular norms of Western society, arguing that such norms are the best mechanism to ensure freedom. Neither of the Secular Muslims question the assumptions underlying secular normativity, nor do they acknowledge that the Canadian public sphere is far from religiously or culturally neutral but is, in fact, grounded in specific traditions, both religious and racial. Multiculturalist Muslims are less explicit in their confirmation of secular normativity; both wear hijabs and clearly advocate for some expression of faith in the public sphere, underlining their rejection of a complete separation of faith and public life. Nonetheless, both Khan and Nawaz implicitly reaffirm their commitment to the construct of secular normativity in which expressions of faith remain largely within acceptable boundaries of Western norms. Whether through the characters and plots of Little Mosque on the Prairie (Nawaz) or through commentaries urging the cultivation of a personal relationship with God (Khan), both these Multiculturalist Muslims uphold and reinforce the secular ethos of society, in which acceptance of the Other is predicated on adherence to prescribed (though implicit) norms. Both Khan and Nawaz suggest that the Islamic ideals and norms are not dissimilar to the ethos of Western society, identifying commonalities between Muslim tradition and Western ideals, seeking perhaps to counter representations of Muslims as the foreign Other. In this respect, Multiculturalist Muslims perform good Muslim (and good Canadian) credentials in a manner consistent with the construct of secular normativity; they illuminate the contours of acceptable Canadian citizenship and reaffirm the nation’s sense of itself as a benevolent, multicultural, and secular space. Thus, even though Multiculturalist Muslims are more implicit in their affirmation of the secular norms of Western society than are Secular Muslims, they nonetheless reinforce key ideas embedded in the multicultural and secular rhetoric of
Canadian society and do not challenge the foundational assumptions underlying such constructs. Like Secular Muslims, Multiculturalist Muslims do not challenge these assumptions, nor do they acknowledge that such constructs are based on the norms of a particular and specific religious, cultural and racial elite. None of these Acceptable Muslim figures – either Secular Muslims or Multiculturalist Muslims – acknowledge the regulatory power that secular normativity imposes on the lives, bodies, and religious/cultural expressions of the Other, a power which compels the racial, cultural or religious Other to live according to the norms of the white Christian (mostly Protestant) dominant elite. Hence, all the figures of the Acceptable Muslim reaffirm, (some more explicitly than others), that acceptable religiosity should fall within the limits prescribed by Western secular normativity, and these figures reinforce, rather than challenge, the contours of this secularist paradigm.

Fourth, the Acceptable Muslim figures I analyze all focus strongly on the issue of gender equality in ongoing debates about Muslims in the national and secular imaginary, reinforcing the assumption that secularism best promotes gender equality. The voices of Acceptable Muslims are important allies in the reinforcement of this assumption, with each of the four figures relying on gender equity as a central feature of their work, commentaries and perspectives. Secular Muslims such as Fatah and Manji are deeply critical of the gender equality they situate as endemic to Islam and Muslim communities. For instance, Fatah refers to a “gender apartheid” (Fatah, 2009c) which he suggests is responsible for much of the gender inequality (including so-called honour killings, the wearing of the niqab, etc.) within Muslim communities. Similarly, Manji suggests that “…Muslims exhibit a knack for degrading women…” (2005, p. 176), and attributes gender inequality to the “…Arab tribal culture” (2011), which she claims many Muslims follow. In building their arguments about gender equality, Secular Muslims such as Fatah and Manji often start with one issue (e.g. niqab or domestic violence) and move quickly to others (e.g. polygamy, violence within Muslim families, hijab, segregation in mosques, individuality, etc.), using discursive manoeuvres to paint with broad strokes the traditions and customs of Muslims
in different historical, geographical, political or social contexts. Importantly, Secular Muslims suggest that these issues – and underlying assumptions about gender inequality – can be understood through a religious or cultural lens, a lens that situates Muslims as cultural or religious Others. Fatah, for instance, notes that “…there is no denying that Islam, in its contemporary expression, is obsessed with women’s sexuality.” (Fatah, 2009c). Similarly, Manji maintains that gender inequality is embedded in “Islamo-tribalism” (Manji, 2011, p. 90); her critique of gender inequality is grounded in her critiques of Muslim interpretations of Islam, and in her foregrounding of individual rights as the pillar of an purportedly enlightened Islam. Deeply embedded in the perspectives of Secular Muslims is the reductionist imagery of a benevolent, secular West juxtaposed against a primitive, barbaric and oppressed Islam. Such depictions, deeply rooted in Orientalist imaginaries and symbolism, enable Secular Muslims to engage in discourses of saving and rescue of oppressed Muslim women, discourses in which these figures place themselves on the side of the “chivalrous knights” (Jiwani, 2009) of civilization, bringing equality, tolerance, and freedom to the “helpless maidens” (Jiwani, 2009) of Islam. Secular Muslims such as Manji and Fatah centralize gender in their commentaries but do so as outsiders to Muslim community life (though Manji in particular might reject an outsider status).

The perspectives of Multiculturalist Muslims on gender are more nuanced than those of Secular Muslims. Both Khan and Nawaz identify as practicing Muslims and are clearly grounded in Muslim community life. While they are critical of gender inequality in Muslim communities (some of it through experience), their perspectives reflect greater compassion, and they suggest that such inequality is grounded in community patriarchy and the interpretation of traditional Muslim men (rather than in Islam itself). Importantly, both Nawaz and Khan situate issues of gender inequality within the context of other religious traditions (Nawaz) and Western societal norms (Khan). Despite these important nuances, I theorize that the perspectives on gender of Multiculturalist Muslims fall within the acceptable range of positions, which enable them to perform their credentials of good citizenship. For
example, while female characters and their challenging of gender norms on *Little Mosque on the Prairie* (Nawaz’s creation) are important features of the sitcom; such characters nonetheless reinforce the notion of an authentic Muslim woman. By foregrounding an authentic Muslim woman, the sitcom “…animates the notion that the ‘acceptable’ Muslim is ‘liberated’ from the constraints of faith and culture.” (S. Kassam, 2015, p. 613). Rendering Muslim women’s issues as hypervisible and yet reinforcing the idea of an implied Muslim norm, the sitcom reaffirms the centrality of gender as an important site – perhaps the most important site – for ideological battles about Muslims in the Canadian national imaginary. The acceptance and reinforcement of an implied Muslim norm constrains the discursive space for diversity – of interpretation, behaviour, choices, politics and lifestyles – for Muslim women, and ultimately, the sitcom (and by association, Nawaz) does not articulate a nuanced gender politics. Like other Acceptable Muslim figures, Khan devotes considerable attention to gender in her commentaries. Her perspectives are fairly nuanced on some aspects of gender inequality; of the four Acceptable Muslim figures, Khan is the one who makes the attempt (though not always successfully) to place gender inequality within the context of larger, institutional concerns and within patriarchal contexts, both of Muslim communities and Western society. She raises issues of gender inequality in Muslim communities (e.g. partitions in mosques, domestic violence, mosques dominated by men, female genital mutilation, etc.), but does not always effectively challenge the assumptions underlying these issues, nor does she move away from a politics of authenticity. In building arguments for the abandonment of patriarchal interpretations (both in Muslim communities and in the West), Khan resorts to an upholding of prophetic tradition to ascertain what is authentically Islamic, thereby elevating the traditions of the Prophet as the ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ Islam. While the veneration of the traditions of the Prophet Muhammed is common to many Muslims, Khan’s reliance on such an authenticity vis-à-vis gender equality constrains the discursive space for diversity of interpretations. Importantly, Khan does not seriously challenge some of the terms of Western
discourses about gender (in)equality: for example, she does not challenge the term honour-crime, and she explicitly grounds such violence within the realm of culture. In so doing, she, perhaps inadvertently, reinforces key Orientalist representations about the barbarism of Muslim men, depictions which position her squarely as an acceptable figure within the Canadian racial landscape. Further, in an attempt to counter negative Orientalist images of the oppressed Muslim woman, Khan highlights exceptional and successful Muslim women, a manoeuvre which does not unearth or challenge the power relations that lie at the heart of such depictions.

Overall, these four Acceptable Muslims centre gender as key pillar of their work; while there are nuances to the perspectives of each, they all place Muslim women’s equality at the heart of their work. Importantly, in different ways, all four Acceptable Muslims place the responsibility for Muslim women’s inequality primarily on the dominance of Muslim men. The perspectives of these Acceptable Muslim figures are undergirded by the eternal triangle – the imperiled Muslim woman, the dangerous Muslim man, and the civilized European (Razack, 2008) – which reaffirms the structural violence underlying gendered inequality. While Multiculturalist Muslims (Nawaz and Khan) disrupt the discourse of saving by their clear positioning as vocal and strong Muslim women, all four Acceptable Muslim figures operate within a limited set of norms that situate gender at the heart of the discourse about Muslims, norms which are grounded (despite the best intentions of Multiculturalist Muslims) in Orientalist imaginaries. These Acceptable Muslims provide a nuanced approach to the eternal triangle in that they can function as civilized subjects who rescue the imperiled Muslim woman, a positioning which erases the racialized logic at the heart of the rescue motif. The focus on gender equality – central to the assumptions of secular normativity – undergirds the positioning of Acceptable Muslims at the (symbolic) borders of the nation, signaling the (racialized) boundaries of inclusion. For the Acceptable Muslim, inclusion can best be secured by expressing commitment to the ideological goals of the (white) Canadian nation-state, goals which foreground gender as an important marker of these boundaries.
Fifth, and finally, all four Acceptable Muslim figures I analyze in this dissertation engage with the language and discourse of Canadian state multiculturalism, a discourse deeply embedded in the Canadian national imaginary. Secular Muslims such as Fatah and Manji argue that multiculturalism is over-tolerant in its acceptance of the cultural traditions of immigrants; they blame this over-tolerance for many of the challenges faced by Canadian society. Indeed, both Manji and Fatah maintain that Canadian society should be less tolerant in order to safeguard its multicultural and benevolent ethos, an ethos that renders Western society “…soft, lardy, rudderless…” (Manji, 2005, p. 221). Such a discursive manoeuvre is “…one of the great paradoxes of the liberal ethic of tolerance – namely the intolerance of intolerance in the name of tolerance.” (Fernando, 2014b, pp. 224-225). These Secular Muslims position themselves ideologically with the dominant elite, and do not acknowledge the racialized and gendered basis of the Canadian national imaginary, in which the fantasy of white space is centrally located. In contrast to Secular Muslims, who promote a monocultural ethos, Multiculturalist Muslims are supportive of the model of Canadian state multiculturalism. The discourse of multiculturalism is embedded in Little Mosque on the Prairie, in which binary sets of characters and the sitcom’s narratives are situated within the Canadian multicultural paradigm. Such underlining of a multicultural discourse is, therefore central to the sitcom, and, in the words of Nawaz, “…reflects a multicultural society that is a success rather than a failure” (Nawaz, 2015). Nawaz’s (and the sitcom’s) embrace of state-sponsored multiculturalism, however, erases the racialized nature of such a discourse: unacknowledged in this narrative are differential (and racialized) citizenship rights, racial, gendered and class divisions of Canadian society, the positioning of the Acceptable Muslim as the boundary marker of inclusion, granted qualified inclusion in the nation-state, and her own complicity in the technologies of governmentality in the state’s regulation of racialized bodies. Rendered silent in Nawaz’s embrace of multiculturalism are the structural violences committed against racialized bodies; this silence on the part of Acceptable Muslims is the price exacted for conditional inclusion in the
nation. Similarly, in her own commentaries, Khan, also a Multiculturalist Muslim, engages with, and publicly supports the discourse and language of state multiculturalism. Of the four Acceptable Muslim figures, Khan is the only one to attempt a challenge to the practices of the Canadian nation-state, which is an important distinction between Khan and the other three Acceptable Muslim figures. However, in the end, her perspectives reinforce the assumptions, language and discourse of Canadian state multiculturalism; her challenges remain within the paradigm of inclusivity and acceptance and foreground the importance of individual rights. Khan, therefore, reinforces values perceived to be consistent with a Canadian way: individualism, liberty, acceptance, inclusivity, dialogue, and human rights. She expresses open admiration for “….the fundamental nature of Canada as a place where an individual, regardless of gender, creed, or ethnic origin can strive for justice, a claim few nations can make.” (Khan, 2009b, p. 108). Embedded in such language are the ideals espoused by the Canadian nation-state, clearly ideals that Khan embraces. Though she attempts to raise politically sensitive issues, Khan ultimately retreats to the language of fidelity to the nation-state’s ideological goals and reaffirms the racialized nature of its national imaginary. For the Acceptable Muslim, the price of (conditional) acceptance (and the right to speak) in the national public space is that s/he speaks the language of multiculturalism.

In the end, all four Acceptable Muslim figures engage with the language and discourse of multiculturalism, even if they do so in different manners; there is no escape from this language for the racialized body seeking acceptance and speaking rights in the public sphere. While Multiculturalist Muslims work within, accept and reinforce the construct of multiculturalism, Secular Muslims are critical of what they refer to the over-tolerance of multicultural discourse. Despite these differences, all four Acceptable Muslims reaffirm the essential terms of the multiculturalist framework, a discourse which foregrounds a culturalist approach to managing difference. Such perspectives resonate with discourses that reaffirm the whiteness of the Canadian public sphere, and the right of the dominant
elite (the white national subject) to manage the public sphere. While Secular Muslims are more explicit in their call for monoculturalism, and a return to the power of the (white or whitened) national subject, Multiculturalist Muslims nonetheless implicitly (and perhaps even inadvertently) subscribe to the cultural framing of societal difference. This engagement with the language of multiculturalism – and the reaffirmation of its essential paradigm – underlies the prominence of Acceptable Muslims in the Canadian public sphere; this is perhaps one of the reasons why such figures are prominent in the period 2005-2014, in the very moment when the spectre of the racialized Muslim Other was (re)emerging in Canadian public and political discourses.

The ideological implications of the Acceptable Muslim
My analysis of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim reveals a predominance of such figures in Canadian public and political discourses in the period 2005-2014. Such a figure plays important ideological roles in the Canadian nation-state, an ideological positioning which reinforces key narratives embedded in the national imaginary. Here I summarize the ideological implications of such a figure.

The Acceptable Muslim is positioned as a good Muslim (Mamdani, 2004) who reinforces the norms and ideological goals of Western society, including secularism, multiculturalism, and liberalism. Perhaps most importantly, these Acceptable Muslim figures function as insider informers who reanimate the racialized boundaries of the national imaginary, refashioning (and making more politically correct) the fantasy of whiteness at the heart of the imaginary. While my analysis identifies two sub-types of Acceptable Muslims – the Secular Muslim and the Multiculturalist Muslim – these Acceptable Muslim figures all illuminate the boundaries of Canadian citizenship and, through their presence, render invisible the racialized and gendered bases of such citizenship. In this way, Acceptable Muslims “…defer the contradictions of republican citizenship” (Fernando, 2009, p. 381), erasing the manner in which so-called universal (and race-neutral) citizenship is, in fact, grounded in specific racial and religious traditions. Such an erasure is crucial in a settler-state like Canada, in which the colonial
legacy is invisibilized and a disavowal of contemporary racial (and racist) structures continues unabated. The Acceptable Muslim demarcates the boundaries between various subjects in the national imaginary: the so-called legitimate (i.e. white) citizen-subject, the racial or religious Other who is granted conditional inclusion, and the non-assimilable racial or religious Other whose body is marked for exclusion. The figure of the Acceptable Muslim is the body with commensurable difference, granted qualified inclusion in the nation, juxtaposed against the racial and religious Other, with non-commensurable difference, who can be expelled from the nation. In this sense, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim polices the borders of the nation, standing on guard, signaling that inassimilable Muslims (and Indigenous and racialized bodies) can continue to be surveilled, regulated, managed and, if necessary, forcibly ejected from political community. Such an Acceptable Muslim figure, then, is an important element of the state’s technology of power, ensuring that its governmentality can be directed at the racial, religious and intolerable Other.

The figure of the Acceptable Muslim reinforces the construct of Western secularism in which all religious traditions must conform to the definitions and norms established by Christian (and particularly Protestant) history. Such norms include the privatization of faith, based on the idea of faith as personal conscience and personal relationship with God, with expressions of faith either relegated to the private domain, or within acceptable or designated spaces and forms. Under such circumstances, religious traditions other than that of the dominant elite must comply with these norms, if they are to be read as ‘proper’ religions and not as expressions of extremism or fundamentalism. In this respect, I suggest that efforts to constrain the expressions of Muslims within these norms lead to a Protestantization of Muslims, in which the figure of the Acceptable Muslim plays a crucial role. While Secular Muslims are more explicit in their calls for relegation of expressions of faith/culture to the private domain, Multiculturalists Muslims also implicitly accept the terms of this construct of secular normativity. As such, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim become advocates for the
Protestantization of Muslims, encouraging, supporting and reinforcing the notion that religious or cultural expressions must conform to the norms established by the Protestant legacy embedded in Canadian society.

Acceptable Muslims support the ideological goals of the Canadian nation-state, becoming key players in reinforcing the supposed multicultural and secular mythos of the nation. In an age where openly racialized policies are no longer acceptable, the nation-state requires “…the presence of assimilated foreigners, whose acceptance and integration of republican values prove the latter’s universalist promise…” (Fernando, 2009, p. 387). Acceptable Muslims – those with commensurable difference – are the bodies on which the nation-state relies to fulfil its ideological goals – rooted in racial coding – and yet retain its image as a benevolent and race-neutral entity. Acceptable Muslims are situated as the “…voices of dissent” (Dabashi, 2011, p. 17) who can both speak with authority about Muslims and can be public advocates for the ideological goals of the nation-state. As Dabashi (2011) aptly comments, “…empire thrives on the stories it tells about liberty and democracy or about the ‘end of history’ or the ‘clash of civilizations’…. These stories need exotic seasoning, and the native informers provide them.” (p. 128).

The inclusion of the Acceptable Muslim is, however, a conditional and qualified one; the figure is only tenuously accepted and must pay a price for this conditional acceptance. The price of this inclusion is public expression of fidelity to the ideological goals of the nation, and importantly, an acceptance of the racialized framework within which the nation functions. Such fidelity on the part of the Acceptable Muslim must include acceptance of the norms governing multiculturalism, secularism and citizenship, all of which are centrally implicated in the colonization, exclusion and entrapment of racialized bodies in the tentacles of empire. Undergirding these discourses is also the centrality of whiteness, which is embedded at the very heart of the national imaginary. Reliance on the figures of the Acceptable Muslim
is a crucial element of the technology through which the nation-state denies its racial coding, dressing its whiteness in the language of multiculturalism, while simultaneously continuing to marginalize, exclude and expel racialized bodies.

**Limitations and Areas for further study**
In this dissertation, I have analyzed Canadian media, political and public discourse about the figure of the Acceptable Muslim, a body which is granted conditional inclusion in the nation-state and is juxtaposed against the racialized Muslim Other. Such an Acceptable Muslim figure elucidates numerous discourses and boundaries in the Canadian national imaginary, and reinforces the ideological goals of the nation-state, reaffirming (but dissimulating) the whiteness that stands at the heart of the nation. While my project is focused on the Canadian context, the figure of the Acceptable Muslim makes its appearance in other contexts, revealing that such a figure (and the discourses s/he illuminates) travels across national borders, having global implications.

My study has several limitations. First, the data for this dissertation focuses on English-language discourses; while I address the issue of Quebec, I do so through English-language media narratives. Given the different history and political context in Quebec, this lack of attention to French-language media may have important implications. For instance, while I suggest in this dissertation that the figure of the Acceptable Muslim in Canada is a South Asian figure, such a conclusion may not necessarily apply to the Quebec situation, which has a different colonial history. There is existing scholarship on the figure of the Muslim in Quebec (among others (Jiwani, 2004; Lenk, 1998; Leroux, 2010, 2014; Sharify-Funk, 2010, 2013), although, with the exception of Sharify-Funk, there is little scholarship on the figure of the Acceptable Muslim (or the ‘moderate’ Muslim) in the Quebec context. My own preliminary assessment is that the figure of the Acceptable Muslim in Quebec, as in France, may well be an Arab woman (for example, such as Fatima Houda-Pepin, a former Parti Quebecois Member of the National Assembly), a figure who assumes the norms of Quebec and French colonial history. The
ideological context of the Canadian nation-state is grounded in the coloniality of two powers – the British and the French – and, while my dissertation does look at media narratives across the country, it concentrates on the ideological contours of the former of these powers.

A second limitation of this dissertation is that it relies primarily on print media. While I use some audio-visual material to examine the work of the Acceptable Muslim (including television and films), my research focuses predominantly on print media. This will, of course, shape the conclusions I draw in my analysis. My choice to focus on print media, while conscious, also has an impact on the type of data I analyze. A focus on other forms of media – digital, blogs, youtube, art, music, audio-visual, social media, etc. – may well have revealed less focus on acceptable voices, and illuminated other, more progressive voices, those that ‘talk back’ to the power embedded in the Canadian public space.

Building on my dissertation, and considering the limitations of this study, I now identify some areas for further study which can extend this research.

First, while this dissertation is focused on the period 2005-2014, it would be useful to extend this study to the contemporary context (2015-2018). Such a study could consider whether the era of the Acceptable Muslim has lost momentum or currency (with the figure more prominent in the earlier period) or whether such a figure continues to be relevant in this historical moment. Such a study could also consider whether the figure of the Acceptable Muslim emerges at particular times and in specific contexts, in times when the Western settler state has a greater need for reinforcement of its ideological goals.

Second, based on one of the stated limitations of this study, an important area of further study could investigate the figure of the Muslim – both the Muslim Other and the Acceptable Muslim – in other forms of media (digital, blogs, art, music, audio-visual, social media, etc.). These other media sites and vehicles would be important sites for further study and analysis. Does the figure of the Acceptable
Muslim appear as prominently in other forms of media (especially in those forms of media that are less regulated and controlled by the dominant elite)? A study of other forms of media can illustrate whether the Acceptable Muslim circulates in other forms of media, if so, what are the characteristics of such a figure in these media, and the political and ideological implications (if any) of such a figure?

Third, as I note above, one of the limitations of this dissertation is its lack of attention to French-language media in Quebec. An area for further study is to examine French-language media in Canada (particularly in Quebec). Such a study would nuance and extend the current project in which the figure of the Acceptable Muslim is predominantly South Asian, and who falls into the sub-categories of Secular Muslim and Multiculturalist Muslim. An analysis of the French-language media, public and political discourses would consider how the different colonial, historical, political and social contexts of Quebec shape the figure of the Acceptable Muslim (if such a figure exists, and if so, whether the figure is, as I hypothesize, a francophone Arab), and would provide a fuller picture of the Acceptable Muslim in the Canadian context.

Fourth, in light of some scholarship pointing to the presence of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim (usually referred to as a moderate Muslim or secular Muslim) in other contexts, it would be useful to consider this figure in non-Canadian contexts. Such a study could consider whether Acceptable Muslims in other contexts shares similar characteristics to the figure analyzed in this dissertation, and how analysis of such a figure is nuanced by different historical, political, social, economic and cultural contexts.

My analysis in this dissertation concentrates on the underlying conditions and ideological implications of the figure of the Acceptable Muslim in a specific time (2005-2014) and a specific place (English Canada). Further study could extend these findings, building analyses to other times and spaces, in
order to consider whether there are specific conditions that prompt the emergence of the Acceptable Muslim, or whether such conditions transcend specific time periods, media, languages and spaces.

**Conclusion**

Situated at the fault lines of legitimate Canadian citizenship, Acceptable Muslims are important tools in the arsenal of a Western, secular, multicultural nation-state such as Canada and, as such, they are centrally implicated in the reinforcement of whiteness at the heart of the national imaginary. These are the native informers who speak with authenticity about Muslims, but who do so in a language that is intelligible to the dominant elite. The Acceptable Muslim needs to see herself (and articulate herself) through the lens of the dominant elite, even if they (like Multiculturalist Muslims) do not completely identify with this lens. Dabashi (2011) suggests that native informers are “…white-identified to the bone” (p. 80), an appellation I would apply to Secular Muslims, if not completely to Multiculturalist Muslims. Absolutely formative to the narratives and perspectives of Acceptable Muslims, therefore, is the white gaze, a gaze from which there is no escape, one which is rendered invisible yet so authoritative in Canadian political, public and media discourses. Such Acceptable Muslims are read and recognized in the national psyche as tolerable and assimilable subjects and are granted conditional inclusion in the nation. Through their presence and prominence, Acceptable Muslims stand as sentries at the “psychic borders” (P. Butler, 2014) of the nation, reaffirming (yet rendering invisible) these boundaries, and mask the reality that these boundaries remain as racialized as ever.

Through their performances of public loyalty to the nation-state (and to the fantasy of white space undergirding the national imaginary), Acceptable Muslims perform the imperial dance of authenticity, and inclusion, standing on guard to ensure that the boundaries of the nation are not breached by the racial, unassimilable and intolerable Other. The conditional inclusion granted to the Acceptable Muslim is never certain – it is always tenuous and must continually be reinscribed in order to continue to be recognized as acceptable. The Acceptable Muslim must therefore stand on guard to safeguard
her place in the nation, lest she lose her (conditional) inclusion by a slip, a unwarranted critique, or expression of unacceptable words, behaviours or actions. She must, therefore, stand on guard that her words and actions do not betray her Muslimness (or her critique of Canadian policies, norms or processes), that she is not mistaken for the Muslim Other, and thereby lose her “toehold on respectability” (Fellows and Razack, 1998, p. 349) in the Canadian national imaginary.
References


Crowley, Brian Lee. (2013, September 14, 2013). Quebec's charter is wrong on execution, not principle. *The Ottawa Citizen*.


Fatah, Tarek and Raheel Raza. (2007, October 29, 2007). Reasonably accommodated; It should be a simple matter for Muslim immigrants to settle in to Canadian society. *The Ottawa Citizen.*


Khan, Sheema. (2008c, August 7, 2008). Do we have two-tiered citizenship in Canada? The Globe and Mail.


Raza, Raheel and Tarek Fatah. (2009, July 28, 2009). This is not domestic violence; If we are to stop honour kilings in the West, we must see them for what they are. *The Ottawa Citizen.*


Shehabuddin, Elora. (2011). Gender and the Figure of the 'Moderate Muslim': Feminism in the Twenty-First Century. In Judith Butler and Elizabeth Weed (Ed.), The Question of Gender: Joan W. Scott's Critical Feminism (pp. 102-142). Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.


Zine, Jasmine. (2017, May 9, 2017). "Let's worry more about violent Islamophobes -- and less about writers who fear being called 'Islamophobic'. *National Post.*

Appendix

Appendix 1: Codes for Media Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Includes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
<td>‘Limits of Multiculturalism’, accommodation, ‘our values’, secularism, citizenship, polygamy, religious freedom and sexuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Veiling and dress issues</td>
<td>Veils, hijabs, burqas, niqabs, Muslim women’s clothing, security re: veil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The ‘Triad’</td>
<td>Honour killings, threatening Muslim men, imperilled Muslim women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Canadian ‘extremism’</td>
<td>Toronto 17/18, Khwaja, Kher, and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Shari’ah law and arbitration</td>
<td>Both Ontario and international</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Quebec ‘reasonable accommodation’</td>
<td>Niqab/burqa bans, hijab issues, Hérouxville, YMCA, Quebec Charter of Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Immigration and inclusion</td>
<td>Related to the integration (the ‘Other’ and ‘good’ immigrants’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Incarcerated Muslim men</td>
<td>Arar, Abdelrazik, Khadr, and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Security certificates</td>
<td>Includes Anti-terrorism legislation (Canadian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>War against Terror International</td>
<td>Wars against Iraq and Afghanistan, and related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Human Rights, Islamophobia and Racial profiling</td>
<td>Hate speech, Islamophobia, racial profiling, Ground Zero mosque, torture, Guantanamo and anti-terrorism legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>International (Global South)</td>
<td>Asia, Africa, S. Pacific, M. East (Arab Spring, Israel, Palestine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>International (Global North)</td>
<td>Europe (West &amp; East) and US. Political, social, cultural and economic issues; includes the Danish cartoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Gender (not veiling)</td>
<td>Gender but not veiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Cultural Representations</td>
<td>Little Mosque on the Prairies, fiction, conferences, films, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>‘Moderate Muslim’ or ‘Moderate Islam’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>General, other or miscellaneous</td>
<td>General articles, demographics of Muslims, Canadian Muslims and misc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>Unknown or unrelated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>