

ARTICULATED VALUES, AFFECTING FIGURES:
LIBERAL TOLERANCE AND THE RACIALIZATION OF MUSLIMS/ARABS

by

MITRA RASTEGAR

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2012

© 2012

MITRA RASTEGAR

All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the
dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Patricia Ticineto Clough

Date

Chair of Examining Committee

John Torpey

Date

Executive Officer

Hester Eisenstein

Samira Haj

Supervision Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

ARTICULATED VALUES, AFFECTING FIGURES:

LIBERAL TOLERANCE AND THE RACIALIZATION OF MUSLIMS/ARABS

by

Mitra Rastegar

Advisor: Professor Patricia Ticineto Clough

This dissertation analyzes the relationship of articulations of tolerance and sympathy in US liberal media and activist discourses towards Muslims and Arabs to the process of racialization of Muslims and Arabs. These discourses produce “Muslims/Arabs” as racialized category, even as they emphasize the diversity within this category. Building on the work of scholars who have argued that anti-Muslim/Arab racism produces a homogenous Other locked into a cultural heredity, I argue that this cultural determinism actually works at the level of the population rather than the individual. I use “population racism” to refer to the racialization of Muslims/Arabs as a distinct, yet internally differentiated population perceived as having a specific distribution of characteristics. The coherence of this racialization process is evident in the relative consistency with which Muslim/Arab individuals are assessed, as more or less trustworthy or threatening, in relation to a particular set of interconnected variables. These variables include religiosity/secularism, views on gender and/or sexuality, views on tolerance, and perceived alliance with “Western” interests and values. Representations of sympathetic or tolerable Muslims/Arabs contribute to this racialization because they legitimize, reinforce, and circulate these variables of assessment.

This analysis is based on four case studies of distinct media events where particular figures of tolerable or sympathetic Muslims/Arabs are constituted and contested: 1) *New York*

Times human interests stories on Muslim/Arab Americans in the six months following the September 11, 2001 attacks, 2) the reception of an Iranian woman's memoir, Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, about teaching Western literature in Iran, 3) Western lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activist responses to the executions of two youths in Iran, and 4) center-left media responses to a campaign against Debbie Almontaser, founding principal of a New York Arabic/English-language public school. I consider how narratives, images, and words associated with Muslims/Arabs resonate with particular histories, sensibilities and assumptions. These circulate in an affective media milieu to produce forms of identification with and disaffiliation from Muslims/Arabs, along with different assessments of trustworthiness or threat.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation in the loving memory of my aunt, Ameh-joon Fariba, who despite being taken too soon, brought this world so much joy.

Acknowledgements

I have been lucky to have a committee made up of scholars whose wide-ranging intellectual and political work has served as an inspiration for me. Thank you to Hester Eisenstein, Samira Haj and Patricia Clough. A special thank you to my tireless advisor, Patricia Clough, who gave me the freedom to pursue my own interests and then pushed me to think beyond my horizons.

At the CUNY Graduate Center I found an amazingly supportive and mutually respectful atmosphere among graduate students, both within the Sociology Department and outside. My peers, at the Graduate Center and elsewhere, offered close readings and critical feedbacks of my work at various stages, including Elizabeth Bullock, Jeffrey Culang, Kim Cunningham, Chad DeChant, Andrew Greenberg, Antonia Levy, Nada Moumtaz, Soniya Munshi, Sara Pursley, Catherine Sameh, Rachel Schiff, Andrea Siegel, Kara Van Cleaf, and Craig Willse (my apologies if I have forgotten anyone!). Karen Gregory, who over years of writing together has read more versions of my work than perhaps anyone, kept bringing a fresh lens and new insights. For friendship, political wisdom and graduate school solidarity, I especially want to thank Andy Greenberg, Soniya Munshi, Polly Sylvia, and Craig Willse. Rati Kashyap deserves accolades for keeping the department running smoothly.

I found a highly collegial and vibrant intellectual community through a Fellowship from the Center for Place, Culture, and Politics under the direction of Neil Smith. During our seminar on “Geopolitics and Insecurity,” I was inspired to see how our differences could generate such productive conversations. I also benefited from critical feedback of anonymous reviewers and of participants at various conferences, including especially the “Engaging Islam” conference organized by Elora Chowdhury and Leila Farsakh at University of Massachusetts-Boston.

I thank Mehri and Hassan Nahvi, who in being extremely loving and devoted grandparents, gave me the mental space and emotional freedom necessary to do my dissertation. I also thank Melissa and Kevin Guzman who in running Small Idea School have created a loving community in which to raise engaged, conscientious and happy children.

I have been lucky to have such a large and loving family, who spanning continents and cultures have been central to leading me to the questions I raise here. They, more than anyone, have taught me the value of a tolerance of deep-seated differences that comes from a space of love and respect. I especially want to thank my immediate family: Darius, for his quiet generosity; Kamran, for treading many paths before me and sharing the wisdom that came with that; and my parents, for their principles, for pushing me in just the right ways, and for their unwavering support.

For their commitments, inspiration and political astuteness, I thank a fierce group of women whom I have had the privilege to get to know over the last two years: thank you for keeping things complicated. There are countless other people who though less directly connected to this dissertation have enriched my life in so many ways, including especially Nancy Agabian, Laura Meyers, Lesley Oram, and Erin Small. They and others not named here have touched me with their brilliance, creativity, commitment and warmth.

To the person to whom I owe the most, who in believing in me has kept me sane, happy, hopeful, and directed through it all: even when we have been lost in the trees, it has been a beautiful journey. And Soheila, how can such a little person capture so much of my heart? It is impossible for me to express just how much you both mean to me.

Contents

Introduction

Tolerance and Sympathy as Racializing Discourses 1

Chapter 1

Profiling Muslims/Arabs, Producing Populations: Post-9/11 *New York Times* 41

Human Interest Stories

Chapter 2

Empathy, Authenticity and Orientalism: Reconfiguring Divides Through Reading 87

Chapter 3

Emotional Attachments and Secular Imaginings: Western LGBTQ Activism 127

on Iran

Chapter 4

Affective Attacks, Liberal Defenses and Producing the Moderate Muslim/Arab 163

Conclusion 216

Bibliography 241

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1. Cultural Racism vs. Population Racism	18
Table 1. <i>New York Times</i> Articles on Muslim or Arab Americans (in 6-month periods)	42
Table 2. Right-Wing Press Coverage of KGIA/Almontaser (number of articles per month)	186
Table 3. Center-Left Press Coverage of KGIA/Almontaser (number of articles per month)	186

Introduction

Tolerance and Sympathy as Racializing Discourses

A decade after the attacks of September 11, 2001, there is intense and volatile anti-Muslim sentiment expressed across the United States and freely circulating in the media. This increasingly hostile public discourse must be contextualized in relation to a global “war on terror” that has many fronts. Military interventions led by the United States in Muslim-majority countries have caused hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths.¹ US government tactics have included extended imprisonments of enemy combatants, torture, extraordinary renditions, and targeted killings. In the United States, the government has targeted Muslims and Arabs with the threat and reality of extensive surveillance, raids into homes and businesses, entrapment, indefinite detentions, and mass deportations. Furthermore, in this time period, bias-motivated violence against those perceived to be Muslim or Arab has remained high and, compared to the months following the 9/11 attacks, today people are more likely to say that Islam encourages violence more than other faiths.² While the state has justified its actions in terms of a need to preempt a growing “terrorist threat” supported by “rogue” states, these actions gain legitimacy from and reinforce a perception that Muslims and Arabs as a category of people are particularly susceptible to irrational, animosity-driven, violence. In this context, arguments by right-wing activists that cast all Muslims as likely enemies, arguing that many apparently “moderate” Muslim Americans are partaking in a “stealth jihad” to undermine US society, have found fertile ground in the broader media context. In particular, national media controversy over the Islamic

¹ For example, see Burnham et. al. (2006), which estimates over 650,00 excess deaths in Iraq as a consequence of the war, the majority of them due to violence, most commonly gunfire.

² Reports of “anti-Islamic” hate-crimes collected by the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting program spiked in 2001, but remained between 3 and 7 times higher in the following 7 years, than they had been in the 6 years before 2001 (Peek 2011, 30). For polling data see PewResearchCenter (2011) and Nisbet et. al. (2009).

cultural center in downtown Manhattan foregrounded the strength and appeal of a growing movement organized against Muslim Americans. This generalized anti-Muslim sentiment has been effectively harnessed to partisan ends, for example, in the argument that President Barack Obama is a Muslim,³ demonstrating that Islam has become a fluid sign that has multiple resonances in a society that continues to privilege an implicitly Christian whiteness.

Today, it may seem obvious that the attacks of 9/11, which led to an unprecedented loss of civilian life in an attack on US soil, along with the successive wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, would perpetuate a conception of all Muslims and Arabs as potentially aligned with “the enemy” and threatening. However, as Sherene Razack (2008) has argued, such a position naturalizes racism against Muslims and Arabs rather than situating it both in historical context and in relation to “the *ongoing* management of racial populations” (6). Furthermore, if memory serves us, in the immediate aftermath of the attacks and in the years since there have been prevalent, if not always predominant, discourses of tolerance and sympathy directed to Muslims and Arabs in the United States and abroad, which distinguished between the majority of Muslims and Arabs and the “terrorists.” Indeed, those concerned about the recent increase in explicitly racist discourses have referred positively to the period after the September 11 attacks when President Bush took care to distinguish between Muslims and “the terrorists” and between true Islam and a politicized and extremist Islam.⁴ This dissertation analyzes such discourses of tolerance and

³ The campaign dating to before the 2008 elections to brand the Christian Obama a stealth Muslim has had greater success and in the summer of 2010, almost 1 out of 5 Americans said that he is a Muslim, while another 2 out of 5 were unsure of his religious affiliation (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2010).

⁴ See, for example, Azar Nafisi speaking on a program discussing the controversy surrounding the Park51 Islamic cultural center, said, “I remember after 9/11, President Bush at that time went to the mosque... And that is the whole point about America, isn’t it? The best weapon we in America have against that kind of terrorist mentality is not to become like them” (ABC 2010). CNN host Suzanne Malveaux also evoked Bush in this way when questioning Pamela Gellar, one of the main opponents of Park51, saying, “President Bush made this point time and time again, when he reached out and said look we got to go after those who attacked Americans on 9/11, al Qaeda, certainly not moderate Muslims and not the faith of Islam. That there is a distinction, there is a difference, and if people don’t

sympathy towards Muslims and Arabs from 2001 to 2008—discourses that identified moderate and patriotic Muslim and Arab Americans worthy of tolerance and Muslim victims abroad worthy of sympathy—to analyze their relationship to the broader process of racialization of Muslims/Arabs. Rather than finding these discourses to be an effective counterpoint to anti-Muslim/Arab racism, I argue that these discourses have in fact been part and parcel of the racialization of Muslims/Arabs.⁵

Bush was one of the most prominent proponents of a notion that Muslims as a whole should not be blamed for the attacks when he spoke on Sept. 18, 2001 at the Islamic Center in Washington, D.C. proclaiming, “Islam is peace.” Bush’s speeches in the weeks following the attacks purportedly dispelled misunderstandings that non-Muslims may have about Islam, while also symbolically welcoming Muslims into the “American” fold. Muslim American organizations and spokespeople stood by and applauded the president’s efforts to demonstrate that Islam was not the source of the attacks and that Muslims also condemned these attacks. However, these speeches also set forth a specific approach to understanding Islam’s relationship to the war on terror by claiming that there is a true Islam to be discovered and defended. Indeed, they focused public debate about the causes of terrorism on the level of religion, ideology and belief, even while claiming that “true” Islam is not the problem. Therefore, it is not surprising that in this period, there was much conversation about what Islam “is” and “is not,” sales of the Qur’an increased greatly, and a common refrain among defenders of Muslims—first articulated by President Bush—was that the 9/11 attackers had “hijacked” this great religion.

understand it, it’s out of ignorance or misunderstanding. How do you counter that point, even if President Bush said what you’re saying is not true?” (“06-06-10 Pamela Geller” 2010).

⁵ By “racialization of Muslims/Arabs” I mean the production of “Muslims/Arabs” as a racial category that references those perceived to be Muslim, Arab or Middle Eastern, regardless of their self-identification. I will discuss this further later in this chapter.

While in the past Arab Americans, and arguably Muslim Americans, had been a largely invisible minority, in the weeks and months following the 9/11 attacks, they became a sudden focus of public attention that mixed hostility and suspicion with curiosity and even sympathy (Naber 2000; Cainkar 2002; Jamal and Naber 2008). While there was a dramatic increase in bias-motivated violence against those perceived to be Muslim or Arab, these attacks also gave rise to condemnations, and calls for cross-cultural dialogue and tolerance. The media reported on non-Muslim or Arab Americans coming forward to express compassion and solidarity, for example, organizing escorts for Muslims afraid to go about their daily business for fear of harassment. In one survey of Detroit-area Arab Americans, one-third of respondents reported receiving an act of solidarity or kindness from a non-Arab/Muslim (Jamal 2009, 12). Many media sources portrayed Muslim and Arab Americans for the first time, in many cases representing them as horrified by the attacks and loyal to the country. Religion scholar, Diana Eck (2001), noting the outpouring of support from thousands of people following the murder of a Sikh man, wrote, “Statistically, one would have to say that benevolence outweighed backlash” (xvi).

Articulations of sympathy for Muslims abroad who now became individuals to be saved from the tyranny of local despots, also proliferated. While different categories of people were cited, such as the Afghan or Iraqi people in general, or the Kurds in Iraq in particular, an immediate and persistent focus has been on Muslim women presumed to be in need of liberation. In November 2001, Laura Bush gave the first presidential radio address by a first lady, focusing on Afghan women whose situation she said epitomized the threat the Taliban posed to the West. Such a discourse builds on a long-standing view that modernization in Muslim-majority societies requires the replacement of existing gender and sexual norms with “Western” ones. Historically, this perspective has been evident in scrutiny of such practices as veiling, gender segregation,

homosociality, and same-sex sexuality in various Muslim-majority countries by both Western observers and native elites intent on modernization (see, eg, Moallem 2005; Massad 2007; Najmabadi 2005). Western liberal feminists have mobilized in the name of global sisterhood to address the “plight” of Muslim women and in the process constituted themselves as already-liberated women (Naghibi 2007; Hirschkind and Mahmood 2002). Today, neoconservative advocates of military intervention, such as Bernard Lewis and Daniel Pipes, have argued that the most significant differences between “Western” and “Islamic” civilizations are not with regard to politics, but norms around gender and sexuality.⁶

As such, feminist scholars have been correct to describe the Bush administration’s claims to be liberating Afghan women as cynical (Eisenstein 2009; Hunt 2006; Zine 2006). However this discourse of sympathy also appealed greatly to many liberals who were critical of the war on terror. Feminist and leftists bookstores put up displays of books on the plight of Afghan women, easily recognized by their distinctive blue burqas. Since, there has been an unprecedented emergence of Muslim women’s voices into the public arena. Countless books, fiction and non-fiction by insiders and outsiders, have been published on the lives of Muslim women (see, eg, D. Ahmad 2009), with a spate of memoirs by Iranian women. Furthermore, among these were many intimate works written by articulate women creating new forms of connection across divides and countering an image of Muslim women as merely a homogenous group of voiceless and passive victims. As such this sympathy was also important in creating a Western liberal positionality in relation to the war on terror, one that saw itself as aligned with neither the Bush administration, nor with a Muslim enemy.

⁶Lewis (2002) has said, that the status of women in Muslim societies is “probably the most profound single difference between the two civilizations” and Pipes (2008) has said, “the deepest differences between Muslims and Westerners concern not politics but sexuality.” See also this line of argument in Inglehart and Norris (2003) which based on views about divorce, gender equality, abortion and gay rights as measured in the World Values Survey, argue that the fundamental basis of the “clash of civilizations” is regarding gender and sexual liberalization.

Such discourses of tolerance and sympathy towards Muslims/Arabs have presented an image that often cuts against a notion that Muslims/Arabs are necessarily antimodern, backward, irrational and violent. On the surface these discourses belie a racial thinking by arguing that there is diversity among Muslims and Arabs who are not a homogenous Other. However, what emerges in these discourses of tolerance and sympathy is in fact a more variegated form of racialization. This racialization still takes the category of Muslim/Arab to be meaningful, indicating that Muslims/Arabs must be assessed in relation to a distinct set of characteristics and variables. These variables generally include their relationship to religion and secularism, to questions of gender equality and sexual freedom, and to a discourse of tolerance that presents the problem of tolerance itself as central to the war on terror. More broadly speaking, Muslims/Arabs must constantly be measured in terms of their relationship to the “West,” only deemed acceptable if they are demonstrably “patriotic” and/or aligned with what are deemed Western values and interests.

In this introduction I lay out the basic framework from which I analyze the relationship of discourses of tolerance and sympathy to anti-Muslim/Arab racism. I begin by arguing that racism and racialization is an appropriate and constructive framework for understanding the production of the category of Muslims/Arabs and the marginalization of people who have been associated with that category. Next, I outline my conception of discourses of tolerance and sympathy, their centrality to liberal self-conceptions, and how these discourses are implicated in the delineation of particular subject positions, while also circulating images, words and emotions that affectively modulate populations in relation to the war on terror. Then, I describe my methodological approach and particularly my use of discourse analysis via a case study methodology to analyze the racialization of Muslims/Arabs via discourses of tolerance and sympathy. Finally, I conclude

with a sketch of the four following chapters which each addresses a different case study looking at the racialization of Muslims/Arabs in primarily US media contexts, moving from articulations of tolerance toward Muslims/Arabs in New York to articulation of sympathy toward Muslim victims in Iran.

Why Racism?

After the 9/11 attacks, the phrase “Muslims and Arabs” entered the lexicon as a shorthand to describe individuals and communities that, through religion and/or ethnicity, had become associated with the 9/11 attackers and with the problem of “terrorism” more broadly, thereby becoming objects of what many described as a “backlash.” This terminology, while developed to indicate the non-equivalency between the two terms (ie not all Arabs are Muslims and most Muslims are not Arab), actually partially encapsulated the conflation of highly diverse ethnic, religious and national categories that has produced a new phase in the racialization of those perceived to be “Muslim” or “Arab.” As a concept seeming to refer to particular identities, there is a problematic non-parallelism in this terminology in that it addresses some in terms of a highly diverse religion and others in terms of a diverse ethnic/linguist category spanning over two dozen countries. This terminology also does not capture everyone who was affected by the post-9/11 “backlash,” such as Sikh Americans, Iranian Jews or secular, non-practicing/believing “Muslims.” However, I use the terminology, “Muslims/Arabs,” to encapsulate a racialization process that has conflated and reduced diverse cultures, languages, and religious beliefs into a categorical Other. That said, my argument is that while an overarching conception of “Muslim/Arab” difference has produced this category, there has also been acknowledgment of and interest in diversity within this categorization. As such, “Muslim/Arab” has not in fact been produced as a homogenous Other. Rather there has been a flexible and fluid form of racialization

that has drawn creatively from a constellation of stereotypes, associations and narratives. Furthermore, while the concept of Muslims/Arabs became predominant in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and has remained in many ways salient, there has been a trend toward a racialization that focuses on Muslims in particular through a specific conception of an “Islamic” threat. This latter observation raises the question of whether it is really accurate to describe this as a process of racialization. Would it be more accurate to reference a problem of religious intolerance that is rooted in differences of religious and cultural beliefs and practices? Or given the centrality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and other political conflicts in the Middle East, could we argue that the heart of the issue is actually one of sincere political differences? Why speak of racialization at all?

In making a case for racialization as the proper framework of analysis, I first argue for a shift from a concept of race as primarily a mis-reading of “nature” or “biology,” to a concept of race as primarily a mis-reading of “culture,” which has increasingly been deemed to encompass and determine politics.⁷ I follow many scholars in describing the racialization of Muslims/Arabs primarily in terms of a belief in a cultural determinism, rather than biological determinism. However, in contrast to these scholars, I advocate another shift in this analytical framework. Rather than seeing this determinism as functioning at the level of the individual, locking individuals into a “cultural heredity” from which there is no escape, I argue that this determinism actually is perceived to function at the level of the population, such that Muslims/Arabs as a population are determined to contain within them a particularly distinct distribution of risk. As such, exceptional individuals may be able to escape this cultural heredity, to at least temporarily cross the divide from “them” to “us,” but as members of this racialized population they are still

⁷ None of this analysis is meant to indicate an acceptance of an actual opposition between “nature” and “culture.” I would also note that the racialization of many other categories of people has not been solely in terms of perceptions of biological difference but also perceived to be manifest at the level of cultural practice.

associated with a presumed greater statistical risk of being a particular type of threat. As such, while there is an appearance of an escape hatch, one that would seem to indicate that this is not a form of racialization, this escape hatch is elusive and unstable.

The argument of some scholars that “racism” is not the most appropriate concept to apply to the process of marginalization experienced by Muslims and Arabs is rooted in a particular domestic US racial history. For one thing Muslims and Arabs do not fit clearly within the recognized framework of US racial politics, evidenced in part by the Census categories. Muslims encompass people who can be categorized by any “race” – eg, Asian, African American, white, etc. Furthermore, Arab Americans, along with other people of “Middle Eastern” ancestry, have long had an ambiguous relationship to whiteness, having won in the early part of the 20th century the right to be considered “white” in order to be eligible for US citizenship (Samhan 1999). Furthermore, although less true of more recent immigrants, Arab Americans (and South Asians) have historically tended to have a high socioeconomic status (Love 2009), leading to a narrative of successful assimilation (Suleiman 1999). Perhaps because Arab and Muslim Americans are still so much associated with Arabs and Muslims abroad, Shryock (2008) argues that both Arab and Muslim Americans are actually *outside* a US racial hierarchy and racial politics. Rather, he argues that their marginalization is a product of international politics and “in relation to political boundaries and presumed loyalties” (91-92), rather than racism based on perceptions of biological difference. Speaking in more broad terms, Fredrickson (2002) similarly makes a distinction between racism based on notions of “race in the genetic sense,” and what he says is more prevalent today, discrimination against various groups throughout the world based on “authentic cultural and religious differences” (145).

I challenge these formulations' stark distinction between racism as a perception of a flawed concept of "natural" differences and other forms of discrimination and inequality based on what they present as more substantive "political" or "cultural" differences. Political conflicts and forms of domination, including histories of internal and external US colonization and imperialism, have always been intrinsic to the process of racialization. Also, as Fredrickson himself describes, the first prisms through which racialization occurred was religion, where religious identities became deemed immutable; indeed, a focus on physical traits to identify races was actually a later historical development. Furthermore, these types of arguments disregard *how* political or cultural differences are constructed—why are some seen as legitimate differences of opinion based on different perspectives and interests, while others are naturalized as age-old intractable conflicts, based on irrational and immutable attachments? Those who object that a focus on the cultural difference of Muslims/Arabs actually refers to more "authentic" differences ignore how, by whom and in the service of what some cultural differences are deemed meaningful and consequential, while other aspects are not. Today, we see that various conceptions of intractable cultural and religious differences are at the heart of most representations of the war on terror, whether they are conceived of as a conflict between "Islam" and "the West," or as manifest in conflicts between Sunnis and Shias, or between "antimodern" and "promodern" forces *within* Islam. Furthermore, these discourses about Muslims/Arabs are not simply a politically contingent discourse reflecting a specific post-9/11 conflict, but rather build on much longer histories of US political, cultural and economic engagement with the Middle East.

Perceptions of Muslims and Arabs are shaped by a long history of US cultural depictions. Indeed, "the Orient" lived in the 18th century imagination through the widely-read King James

Bible and *A Thousand and One Nights* (Little 2008). In the 19th century US Christians' travelogues about the Holy Land also shaped perceptions, as Arab inhabitants were alternately taken to represent life in biblical times or perceived as woefully backward as a result of Ottoman rule and the influence of Islam (McAlister 2005). Considering the range of 20th century media depictions we see a repetition of various negative stereotypes of Arabs, who are depicted as camel-riding savages, exotic harem women, oil-rich sheikhs, duplicitous leaders, secluded veiled women, religious fanatics, and hostage-takers, hijackers, suicide bombers and other types of terrorists (Belkaoui 1978; Ghareeb and American-Arab Affairs Council 1983; Shaheen 2001, 1984; Kamalipour 1995; Said 1997; Michelak 1988). Stereotypical depictions of Arabs, as Stockton (1994) demonstrates in his analysis of political cartoons, built on and referenced images of Africans as savages and of Jews as duplicitous and morally depraved.

Notwithstanding many repeated themes, the focus of these depictions shifted over time and in relation to various international conflicts. For example, while 1920s films often included Arabs as buffoons or as sexualized savages, by the 1970s and 1980s, Arabs were more likely to be portrayed as the enemy in the form of rapists, terrorists, fanatics and Nazi collaborators (Michelak 1988). Also, some international conflicts, such as the 1988 Palestinian intifada and the first Gulf war actually produced an increase in sympathetic portrayals (Zaharna 1995; Daniel 1995; Palmer 1995), demonstrating that the complicated dynamics of sympathy and objectification were already in play. While the association of Arabs and Muslims with "terrorism" dates back to early narratives about Palestinian response to Jewish immigration to Palestine in the 1930s (Little 2008), the Iranian hostage crisis became a major media event that, for the first time, made "Islamic terrorism" a direct threat to the United States (McAlister 2005). This association between Muslims and Arabs and terrorism was further strengthened by the

hijacking of TWA flight 847 by Lebanese Shiite gunmen and President Reagan's declaration of a war on international terrorism. This broader cultural backdrop demonstrates some of the continuities in perceptions of Muslims and Arabs from the pre- to post-9/11 period.

The association of Muslims and Arabs with these negative stereotypes, and increasingly with terrorism, had direct repercussions for Muslims and Arabs in the United States, who, long before 9/11, found themselves the objects of scrutiny and hostility at particular moments of crisis or conflict. Indeed, a narrative about Arab American assimilation erases a more complex history where Arab Americans have at times been targets of racist violence and racial profiling by state and non-state entities (Gualtieri 2008; Abraham 1994). Following the Oklahoma City bombing, for example, many in the media quickly argued that Muslim terrorists were to blame, and Muslim Americans became victims of bias-motivated attacks and mosques were the target of drive-by shootings, vandalism and bomb threats (Linenthal 2001). Furthermore, the perceived threat of Muslim/Arab terrorism has not only justified US interventions in the Middle East, but also had significant repercussions for Muslims and Arabs in the United States whose political activism was constructed as associated with terrorism and therefore subjected to surveillance and criminalization.⁸ Indeed, much of the framework for the “backlash” that Muslims and Arabs experienced after 9/11, including the government's violation of their civil liberties,⁹ was well in place before the day of the attacks.

⁸ For example, in the “L.A. 8” case beginning in 1987 which ensnared seven Palestinian and one Kenyan immigrant in a twenty-plus year legal battle (which they ultimately won), over the activists' support of Palestinian causes (Weinstein 2007).

⁹ The 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act had significant repercussions for Muslims and Arabs, among other immigrants, making support of the humanitarian activities of foreign organizations deemed “terrorist” groups a crime regardless of intent or knowledge, and allowing the use of secret evidence in special courts to deport non-citizens accused of being “terrorists.” The law also dramatically increased the number of noncitizens who were detained indefinitely, because they were ordered deported to countries—like Iran, Iraq, Laos, Vietnam, or Cub—with whom the US did not have diplomatic relations (American Civil Liberties Union 1999). One shift, in the post-9/11 context is the extent to which the violation of civil liberties in the name of anti-terrorism can now be extended to US citizens.

Therefore, it is clear that conceptions of Muslims/Arabs in the post-9/11 period are not simply contingent on a particular political (or, as some would see it, cultural/religious) conflict but rather build on a longer history of highly biased perceptions of and policies towards Muslims/Arabs. However, given the fact that Muslims/Arabs do not fit easily into the framework of US racial categories, scholars have had to modify existing theories of race and racism, taking steps away from a notion of race as connected primarily to a perception of particular bodily traits. Omi and Winant (1994) define race as “a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies” (55). However, they also note that race is “an unstable and ‘decentered’ complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle” (55). Love (2009) expands a notion of “physical appearance” to include not only bodily characteristics (phenotype, facial features, etc.), but also dress (turban, hijab), and accent. However, Love’s analysis begs the question of why racialization must be connected to the body at all; cannot an Arabic name or pronouncement of national or religious identity function similarly to a headscarf or a beard?

Etienne Balibar (1991) moves away from a conception of racism as based on a notion of biological heredity or a reading of the body, to what I refer to as, “cultural racism.” He describes how an initially antiracist discourse that rejected notions of biological difference became focused on cultural differences as the intractable bases of existential conflicts producing, what he calls a “differentialist racism” or “racism without races.” Writing about the French relationship to its Arab immigrants, he notes that the process of de-colonization that has led to the “the division of humanity within a single political space” (21) thereby destroying some borders, necessitated the creation of others. This racism, at least in its early articulations, focuses not on human superiority or inferiority but rather on “the harmfulness of abolishing frontiers [and], the incompatibility of

lifestyles and traditions” (21). As such this racism gives lip service to an antiracist notion of the validity of cultural diversity, but it also naturalizes racist conduct as inevitable “‘interethnic’ conflict.” Biology comes in as an instinct for survival that leads to aggression between cultures. Balibar says that racism towards Arabs in France takes this form because of a perception that an Islamic worldview is incompatible with being European. Therefore, religion can serve as the source of an immutable and insurmountable difference that forms the basis of this racism.

Many other scholars drawing on Balibar, describe anti-Muslim/Arab racism in the United States in terms of the racialization of culture, religion, ethnicity and nationality. As Jamal (2008) says,

The racialization of Arabs and Muslims is not simply contingent in the phenotypical differences; rather, this racialization of difference is driven by a perceived clash of values and exacerbated by cultural ethnocentrism. This process of ‘othering’ is based on assumptions about culture and religion instead of phenotype. (119)

Joseph and D’Harlingue (2008) argue that, “the organization of racial investments through other categories, such as religion, ethnicity, and nation, have the effect of racializing religion, ethnicity and nation” (230). Naber (2008) similarly argues, those “perceived as ‘Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim’ were rendered as inherently connected to a backward, inferior, and potentially threatening Arab culture, Muslim religion, or Arab Muslim civilization.” (280). To be clear, these scholars do not argue that physical appearance is no longer relevant to a process of racialization, but rather that it has lost its centrality, being only one of a range of axes through which the racialization of Muslims/Arabs occurs. This racialization takes an essentialized notion of culture to produce an absolutist divide between us and them. As Balibar describes it, culture can “function as a way of locking individuals and groups a priori into a genealogy, into a determination that is immutable and intangible in origin” (22). Cainkar (2008) argues that this anti-Arab/Muslim racism sees cultural and religious difference as “*innate characteristics* held by

all members of a *group*” (48). Razack (2008) similarly describes a process of “casting out” where Muslims have been evicted from the Western political community as a result of a racial thinking that “divides the world between the deserving and undeserving according to descent” (8). As such all these scholars agree that although the source of difference may not be deemed biology, the difference is nevertheless conceived as innate, and therefore determinant of all individuals encompassed by that racial category.

While such a racism is on display in many context, an analysis of discourses of tolerance and sympathy points to a more subtle form of racism that does not actually produce a clean divide between “us” as non-Muslim/Arab Westerners and “them” as Muslims/Arabs who are inherently incompatible with the “West.” Therefore, while Razack is correct that “the idea that modern, enlightened, secular peoples must protect themselves from premodern, religious peoples whose loyalty to tribe and community reigns over their commitment to rule of law” (10) is central to this racialization process, this differentiation occurs not solely between “Westerners” and “Muslims/Arabs” but also between Muslims/Arabs, producing some as modern and others as premodern or antimodern. Furthermore, these differentiations among Muslims/Arabs do not always occur through an absolutist binary of good Muslim/bad Muslim, in Mamdani’s (2004) terminology, but at times through a production of *gradients* of difference. Therefore, while discourses of tolerance and sympathy do at times challenge a concept of immutable cultural heredity by portraying individuals who traverse such cultural divides, this does not make these discourses antiracist. These discourses still articulate a cultural determinism, yet one that does not operate at the level of the individual, locking each Muslim/Arab into a particular destiny. Rather this cultural determinism functions at the level of the population, a Muslim/Arab

population that is conceived of as containing a set of tendencies and characteristics, and therefore a distinct distribution of threat.

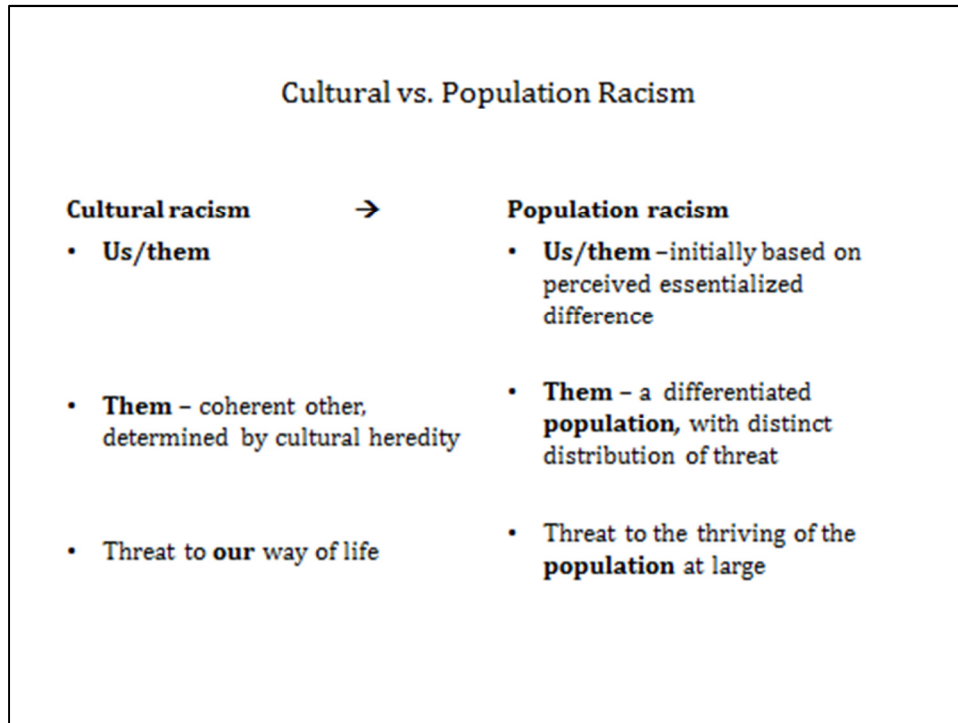
Therefore, I supplement the concept of cultural racism with the concept of “population racism,” which I take from Patricia Clough (Clough 2009, 2008; Clough and Willse 2010). Population racism sees the racialized other as an internally differentiated population, with an uneven distribution of capacities and risks that can be assessed through analysis of interacting variables. In the 19th century, as Michel Foucault (2007) has described, the science of demography and statistics created a new object of biopolitical governance, the population, which it revealed to “possesses its own regularities” . The population is no longer thought of simply as that which “populates” a territory, as the manpower that ensures the wealth and power of the state, or as a collection of subjects of rights. Rather the population becomes, as Terranova (2007) describes, “a dynamic quasi-subject constituted by a great number of variables (natural and artificial, in as much as a population is one with the environmental milieus that constitute and affect it)” . The population is akin to a natural phenomenon that must be allowed to follow its own laws and so it cannot be controlled, but can be manipulated through calculated analysis and interventions into its milieu. This manipulation is in the service of the maximization of the life of the population as a whole. However, as Foucault describes, death enters the calculus of biopolitics when racism produces a fragmentation in the population, requiring the elimination of those deemed to be threats to the conditions that allow the population as a whole to thrive. Here there is a parallel to Balibar’s conception of cultural racism as based on a view of cultural difference of the other as an existential threat to “our way of life.” With population racism though the threat need not be seen in terms of a cultural challenge; rather the threat is in the undermining of the economic, political, and cultural conditions that are deemed to be necessary

for the thriving of the population as a whole. Indeed, the 9/11 attacks and the threat of terrorism more broadly are deemed not only a threat to “our” values, but also to our economy, a threat that was seen as more pernicious and potentially debilitating.

While racism produces a fragmentation of the population, what produces the *particular contours* of this fragmentation and determines which elements of a population are on this or that side of the fragmentation? Clough and Willse (2011) argue, “population offers a shifting back and forth from race as a matter of a known visible body or perception to race as a possibility of becoming part of a population that is itself ever in the process of being assembled, a population assembling in the immediate feeling of distributed life capacities or affective intensities” (6). Therefore, depending on how a particular threat is conceived, different populations can be produced at different moments, and depending on which variables are deemed most central, different individuals can be brought into a racialized population at different moments. That said, the particular historical paradigms that produce the variables we use to measure populations do produce certain relative stabilities in the racialization of populations. Indeed, this fragmentation is still often based on the binary opposition of us and them, one that can be produced through cultural racism. As such, a binary construction of the rational, modern West versus an irrational, backward (Muslim/Arab) East remains central in defining the contours of this particular racialized population. However, the concept of population racism as I am using it accounts for how Muslims/Arabs can be racialized, even as they themselves are presented as highly diverse. Indeed, population racism produces a “them” that is *also* an internally differentiated population, one that is analyzable in terms of a distribution of characteristics, capacities and threats. What defines the population is not their inherent homogeneity, but the presumed distribution of characteristics that requires that they be assessed in terms of a specific set of variables. The

racialization is produced less through the homogenization of Muslims/Arabs than through the stability and consistency of a set of variables through which all Muslim/Arab individuals must be assessed to determine how representative or unrepresentative any individual is in relation to the population as a whole.

Figure 1. Cultural Racism vs. Population Racism



We can begin to explore the dynamic between cultural racism and population racism in considering how Samuel Huntington’s (1993) controversial “clash of civilizations” thesis, one of the clearest articulations of cultural racism, was rhetorically challenged and reformulated by the Bush administration. Huntington’s thesis (which I will address in more depth in Chapter 2) is that the world is divided into civilizations with immutable and intractable differences and that the Islamic civilization in particular is a significant threat to the Western civilization. In contrast, President Bush, along with many others, argued that the clash is in fact *within* Islam. Bush positioned “enemy” interpretations of Islam as perversions of true religion, while presenting the

United States as a place of tolerance where all religions, including Islam, may coexist peacefully and without the distorting incursions of politics. Why would the Bush administration resist a construction of the enemy as defined along the simple lines of religion? For one thing, this rhetorical shift protected the United States from charges of religious prejudice or conducting a war against Islam, which was important to gaining broad support for the war. Moreover, a more fluid and flexible formulations of the enemy was geopolitically useful. It is noteworthy that while the Bush administration insisted the enemy was not “Islam,” it did not limit its definition of the enemy to a particular movement (eg, al Qaeda or the Taliban) or even a set of nations (eg, the “axis of evil”). Rather, the enemy was a product of a perversion of “Islam,” creating a malleable and ever-expanding category that could be identified with specific nation-states or regions but also as part of diffuse and dynamic global networks that could potentially include almost anyone. Nevertheless, by maintaining a focus on the enemy’s uses of Islam, this discourse still presented some aspect of religion, even if deemed its perversion, as a core determinant of the current geopolitical context, thereby maintaining the United States as largely external to the source of conflicts.

This approach is also manifest in state discourses and policies toward its Muslim/Arab minorities. Indeed, many scholars have highlighted that within the United States, the “war on terror” has corresponded with the simultaneous intensification of incorporation and exclusion of Muslims, Arabs and South Asians into the nation (Howell 2003; Puar and Rai 2004; Moore 2002; Cankar 2009). For example, as Baker and Shryock argue in their introduction to the findings of a study of Arab Americans in Detroit,

It is obvious... that Arab and Muslim Americans have been singled out for intense discipline and scrutiny. In Detroit, this treatment includes selective programs of surveillance, deportation, and detention without due process, presumptive freezing of financial assets, vandalism, and personal insults.... At the same time, however, and in

direct response to the post-9/11 crackdown, great efforts have been made in Detroit to include, protect and accept Arabs and Muslims as full members of American society.... Since the 9/11 attacks, Detroit has seen the establishment of the Arab American National Museum; the expansion of Arab American community organizations; the election and appointment of Arab and Muslim citizens to political office; the new partnerships between Arab American civil rights organizations, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the US Department of Homeland Security; the creation of Arab American and Islamic studies programs in area universities; and the founding and expansion of at least a dozen new mosques. (Detroit Arab American Study Team 2009, 16)

While the process they describe may, on first blush, seem remarkable and contradictory, in fact incorporation and exclusion are two sides of the same process of management and regulation of a racialized population. This is most starkly clear in the fact that many Muslims who have actively cooperated with the police and the FBI have simultaneously been subject to intensive surveillance by these same entities (Sullivan 2011; Powell 2011). However, this is not to say that some of these forms of incorporation might not represent practical and political gains for some members of these communities. The larger point is that both the processes incorporation and exclusion are informed by a racialization of Muslims/Arabs as a population of risk.

Fredrickson (2002) has argued that whenever an “escape hatch” exists that allows for entry into the mainstream, for example through religious conversion or cultural assimilation, the marginalization in question should be thought of as a form of intolerance rather than racism. We might ask whether an “escape hatch” of religious, political or cultural conversion does exist for Muslims and Arabs? Discourses of tolerance seem to imply that there are good Muslims worthy of tolerance, that some (perhaps exceptional) individuals are patriotic, abide by Western values or have in fact crossed the civilization divide. As such, these discourses might imply a fissure in race thinking, an opening through which some Muslims and Arabs may be able to lay claim to equal citizenship. My analysis in the following chapters suggests otherwise, that even when Muslims/Arabs are deemed acceptable, tolerable, sympathetic, that they never lose their

association with Muslims/Arabs as a population, implying that they continue to retain the potentiality of threat associated with that population. As a result, they are consistently judged by different standards and continue to be susceptible to being deemed a threat if they should fail to abide by a (not entirely stable) definition of an acceptable Muslim/Arab. This is not simply a product of the “success” of more explicit racism, but rather is internal to the dynamics of discourses of tolerance and sympathy and how they delineate the tolerable or sympathetic Muslim/Arab.

Tolerance and Sympathy: Liberalism and its Others

Liberal supporters of pluralism, multiculturalism and diversity have a strong investment in seeing themselves as tolerant and sympathetic, even more so in a context where Muslims/Arabs have been the victims of wars, egregious infringements of civil liberties, and negative media representations. Furthermore, the framing of the 9/11 attacks as an attack by intolerant terrorists motivated by a religious ideology has also reinforced a commitment to the values of liberalism and secularism. However, while liberalism sees itself as providing the framework in which individuals have the freedom and liberty to retain their religious and cultural beliefs, it also has a particular conception of acceptable religion and culture. Therefore, while liberals present tolerance as necessary to the protection of individual autonomy and personal liberty, they articulate a very specific notion of the acceptable, tolerable and sympathetic, notions that are often framed as articulations of universal values. Furthermore, discourses of tolerance and sympathy also produce liberalism’s Others through articulating a distinction between the subjects and objects of tolerance and sympathy, which becomes evidence of the liberal’s cultural or civilizational superiority.

While in this introduction I have referenced the Bush administration's use of discourses of tolerance, this dissertation in fact deals with discourses of tolerance and sympathy produced by more avowedly liberal and secularist sources. While not being values or dispositions that are unique to liberalism, tolerance and sympathy have been very important to articulating a sense of what it means to be "liberal." As Richard Rorty (1991) describes, liberals see themselves as having a unique capacity to appreciate all cultures, and to encounter, tolerate and sympathize with the culturally different:

Our bourgeois liberal culture... is a culture which prides itself on constantly adding more windows, constantly enlarging its sympathies. It is a form of life which is constantly extending pseudopods and adapting itself to what it encounters. Its sense of its own moral worth is founded on its tolerance of diversity. The heroes it apotheosizes includes those who have enlarged its capacity for sympathy and tolerance. Among the enemies it diabolizes are the people who attempt to diminish this capacity, the vicious ethnocentrists. (204)

The expansionist liberalism that Rorty describes is one that seeks to see and know the Other (adding windows), to feel for the Other (enlarging sympathies) and to even organically assimilate into the Other (extending pseudopods and adapting itself). It is the liberal's flexibility, malleability, not to mention mobility, that constitute his or her own sense of morality and identity. This tolerance toward difference is one that blends into—rather than being opposed to—sympathy. Tolerance is not reserved for that which offends and must be tolerated for the sake of civility, but rather is on a continuum with sympathy. Tolerance prepares the liberal to be open to difference such that sympathy may be possible. A sympathy that allows the liberal to move freely into the other's culture, as an immersive experience, appears to be the goal. However, there is a limit to this tolerance and sympathy as the ultimate enemy of the liberal is the "vicious ethnocentrist."

What Rorty's account does not highlight is that liberalism has long had a fraught relationship to culture and religion, which it has considered as oppressive tradition that constricts individual choice and therefore autonomy and liberty. Indeed, as Wendy Brown (2006) has argued, liberalism is a culture that sees itself as cultureless, specifically, lacking the restrictive norms and values that delimit life in "traditional" cultures. Nevertheless, as Rorty makes clear, liberalism is also defined by its ability to appreciate and adapt to other cultures which are dependent on its tolerance and sympathy. Therefore tolerance allows the presumably cultureless liberal to pick and choose among various traditions and cultures based on one's individual preference. However, liberalism misapprehends both itself and religious traditions like Islam. As Samira Haj (2009) points out, *both* liberalism and Islam are most usefully conceived of as "traditions" or,

discourses extended through time, as a framework of inquiry rather than a set of unchanging doctrines of culturally specific mandates... tradition refers not simply to the past or its repetition but rather to the pursuit of an ongoing coherence by making reference to a set of texts, procedures, arguments, and practices. (5)

When conceived in such terms, it becomes clear why analysis of Islamic traditions from a liberal position that does not recognize Islam as itself a structured mode of inquiry fails to capture the complexity, dynamics and possibilities for change from an Islamic perspective. Also, just as liberals are unlikely to heed critiques raised from within an Islamic tradition, this analysis raises questions about the usefulness of lodging critiques of Islamic beliefs or practices from a liberal position, rather than seeking to engage Islamic forms of reason and inquiry.

Indeed, rather than engaging other cultures on their own terms, liberalism alternately opposes, tolerates, and appropriates other cultures, while failing to recognize how liberalism itself is a culture that allows and disallows particular subject formations through repressive and productive powers. Indeed, Talal Asad (2003) has argued the heart of liberal projects is a

violence that eliminates particular practices, meanings, and forms of life, which is justified in the service of protecting liberal values. This universalizing agenda is intimately connected to the rise of capitalism, expressing market-based conceptions of choice and freedom and seeking to eliminate “oppressive” traditions in order to create liberals in its stead. As Hester Eistenstein (2009) has demonstrated liberal feminism has acted as a “solvent” dissolving particular social and economic relations in order to create unfettered “autonomous” individuals. This conception of women’s liberation that has focused especially on women’s entry into the paid workforce has been highly compatible with the forces of neoliberal globalization, making women available for low-wage work. As such, liberalism cannot be understood as simply a force that expands individuals’ options, making all cultures available, but rather has been complicit with the destruction of particular ways of life.

Nevertheless, Rorty’s notion of tolerance and sympathy as key to liberal self-conceptions is useful to understanding the centrality of discourses of tolerance and sympathy to producing a liberal positionality in relation to the war on terror. It is insufficient to understand discourses of tolerance and sympathy as merely an alibi for the self-interested actions of neoconservatives such as President Bush and his allies who framed their military and economic incursions in terms of “liberation,” because such discourses were also integral to the predominant positions *against* the war on terror and continued to shape this more oppositional discursive terrain. Indeed, tolerance and sympathy are the predominant positive modes of relating to Muslims/Arabs in public discourse. Although leftist activists tend to prefer to articulate their relationships to allies in terms of solidarity, such discourses rarely enter more mainstream arenas, and as Amit Rai (2002) points out even calls for solidarity often depend on evocations of sympathy. Furthermore, these liberal discourses of tolerance and sympathy play an important role in relation to the

broader discursive context; by identifying the terms in which the Other is deemed worthy of tolerance and sympathy, these discourses delineate and reinforce particular measures of acceptability.

Tolerance and sympathy each have a distinct history in relation to liberalism. Tolerance has played a central role in liberal political philosophy for example in the writings of John Locke (2003), Immanuel Kant (1999) and John Stuart Mill (1997), and has been important to questions of institutional, especially state and religious power, and thereby intimately tied to the rise of Western secularism. Following the bloody 16th and 17th century wars of religion, tolerance was promoted as essential to the establishment of peaceful coexistence among different religions in Europe. Indeed, it was an experience of intense Christian intolerance – one that does not have a parallel in Islamic history – that led to the calls for tolerance as necessary to coexistence and to the forms of secular governance that are deemed unique to the West (Zagorin 2003; Hashemi 2010). As a result, early liberal arguments for tolerance and secularism were intertwined, seeking to transform the relationship of the church to heretics, of churches to each other and of state power to religion and to the state's subjects. Tolerance was defended as the only means of protecting individual moral autonomy, allowing individuals to follow their own conscience where it did not interfere with state security or the rights of others. However in more contemporary culture, tolerance has shifted from primarily the realm of state power, to a question of how individuals treat each other, as a value to be inculcated in the liberal subject. Sympathy by contrast has been more closely associated with articulations of a public morality, social movements and cultural trends. As Rai argues in his analysis of 18th and 19th century British colonial and domestic relations, articulations of sympathy were integral to abolitionism, colonialism and domestic labor movements, political ends that in some senses were at odds with

each other. Furthermore, while discourses of sympathy historically have been less connected to conceptions about governing and state structure, they have been articulated by state actors to indicate an emotional and moral connection to the public, such as in Bill Clinton’s response of “I feel your pain” to an audience member in a debate, or even to imply a particular moral framework for policy prescriptions, such as with George W. Bush’s “compassionate conservatism.”

Considering the dictionary definitions of each concept¹⁰ we see stark differences that imply that tolerance and sympathy are not applicable in the same scenarios, but in practice tolerance and sympathy have moved closer together, at times becoming intertwined. Tolerance should only arise in context of disapproval, while sympathy implies a feeling *with* that may be a form of approval. Tolerance is usually conceived in political philosophy as the withholding of one’s disagreement, disapproval or dislike of particular practices, beliefs or categories of persons (Mendus 1999). Indeed, the question of tolerance should not arise where the object elicits approval or merely indifference. By contrast, sympathy begins with a notion of similarity and of shared experience, especially a shared “emotion, sensation or condition.” One definition of sympathy is “approval,” which would negate the necessity for tolerance. Both tolerance and sympathy have corporeal elements that seem to point to different bodily experiences. Tolerance

¹⁰ The *Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary* (Pearsall and Trumble 1995) defines *tolerate* as:
1 allow the existence or occurrence of without authoritative interference. 2 leave unmolested. 3 endure or permit, esp. with forbearance. 4 sustain or endure (suffering etc.). 5 be capable of continued subjection to (a drug, radiation, etc.). 6 find or treat as endurable. (1516)

Sympathy, by contrast, is defined as:
1 a the state of being simultaneously affected with a feeling similar or corresponding to that of another. b the capacity for this. 2 (often foll. by *with*) a the act of sharing in or responding to an emotion, sensation, or condition of another person or thing. b the capacity for this. 3 (in *sing.* or *pl.*) compassion or commiseration; condolences. 4 (often foll. by *for*) a favourable attitude; approval. 5 (in *sing.* or *pl.*; often foll. by *with*) agreement (with a person etc.) in opinion or desire. 6 (*attrib.*) in support of another cause (*sympathy strike*). (1461)

can refer to the capacity of the body as an organism to endure suffering and tolerate interventions. Sympathy on the other hand is an affective and sensual experience, one where in taking the place of (or embodying) the other, the sympathizer seeks to share in the sensations and emotions of the other.

Nevertheless, in looking more closely at the changing applications of these concepts we see how they have moved closer together, in part through a shift in a conception of sympathy that not only emphasizes identification, but also differentiation. Marjorie Garber (2004) in her genealogy of the word sympathy argues that sympathy as “a condition of equality or affinity,” was initially distinguished from compassion, which implies “inequality, charity, or patronage” (23). However, sympathy has since become almost interchangeable with compassion, both concepts creating a strong distinction between the sympathizer and the sufferer. Garber notes that it was with this shift that the concept of “empathy” emerged which again sought to reestablish a notion of affinity and feeling with, however now through a self-conscious act of “projecting one’s personality into the object of contemplation” (24). Therefore sympathy has alternated between being an expression of sameness, of a feeling *with* another, and an expression of difference, or a feeling *for* another who is marked off as the sufferer. As sympathy has moved towards maintaining a difference between the sympathizer and the Other, it has moved closer to a notion of tolerance that also depends on and rearticulates an essential difference as the basis of the relationship between the subject and the Other. Here we see the potential affinity between both these discourses and different forms of racism.

While tolerance has always implied a clear power differential between the one who tolerates and the one who is tolerated, this shift in the concept of sympathy has meant that sympathy also often expresses a power differential between the sympathizer and sufferer. It is

clear in the definition of tolerance that it only applies when the subject has the power to decide whether to “allow” or “leave unmolested” the object of tolerance and that tolerance is always granted in relation to individuals or groups of lesser power. While sympathy would seem to function differently, as Rai cogently says, sympathy is “a way of establishing affinities as relations of power” (57). Therefore, sympathy not only aims to create social cohesion, but also reinforces and reproduces difference and inequality. As Rai says in considering particular conceptions of sympathy in Western philosophical and aesthetic discourse,

there must be at least two, non-identical subjects of sympathy: the active, often empowered and privileged sympathizer, and the seemingly passive, disempowered and suffering object of sympathy... an essential difference of subjectivity and physical space is basic to sympathy. But agency is limited to the cognizing subject, or... the judging, disciplining spectator; the agency of the object seems hardly ever considered. (57)

While the sympathizer seeks to identify with or take the place of the sufferer, and in that sense efface or challenge the difference between the two (perhaps including the inequality and injustice at the source of the suffering), the act of sympathizing depends on a distance and differentiation that is also reinforced and reproduced.

This distinction between the subject and object is even more strongly articulated through an association of the ability to tolerate or sympathize with a superior cultural standing. Rai argues that although in British history sympathy is seen as a universal human attribute, a specific rationalized and masculinized form of sympathy also came to be seen as the basis of a bourgeois Western culture and civilization. As such, the congruent emergence of sympathy with both British humanitarianism and a new racism is telling, where a sympathy for the suffering of the Other goes hand-in-hand with a feeling of superiority of the sympathizer as the agent of change and the carrier of civilization. Similarly, Brown describes how a notion of the tolerant West, as opposed to an intolerant Islamic East based on an essentialized concept of cultural differences,

has reinforced a notion of a civilizational divide. In this respect both discourses can reinforce a civilizational thinking that is at the basis of cultural racism, one that is implicit in Rorty's equation of bourgeois liberal culture with tolerance and sympathy.

Finally, the compatibility of discourses of tolerance with cultural racism has increased as it has shifted, with the rise of multiculturalism in the United States in the 1980s, from seeing the objects of tolerance as the beliefs and practices of autonomous individuals, to being the essentialized identities and cultures of individuals associated with subnational groups (Brown 2006). This tolerance discourse is also part of a general shift toward the culturalization of politics, where political, economic and social conflicts are viewed through the prism of culture, and as a result of cultural differences (Mamdani 2004). As such discourses of tolerance are compatible with cultural racism, where both assume the existence of immutable and intractable cultural difference that must be either tolerated or excluded. However, in my analysis, I also find that since articulations of tolerance are often dependent on ambivalent evocations of feelings of sympathy and identification, this discourse is not always as absolutist as the framework of cultural racism implies.

From Governmentality to Control

In my analysis I describe a process of racialization that rests on an assumption of (and reinforces) an us/them divide, but that also circulates in less clearly exclusionary and more variegated forms. While it is clear that discourses of tolerance and sympathy articulate a power differential between the subjects and objects of these discourses, in their actual production they also produce other forms and gradients of inclusion and exclusion. In particular, these discourses have long been a component of governmentality that disciplines subjects and normalizes populations through processes of defining who is included and who is excluded. At the same

time, these discourses increasingly articulate a statistical conception of population, which conceives the population as a distribution of risks, while being disseminated through a media that has broader material effects, modulating and moving populations through affective means that are oriented primarily toward capturing momentary attention, rather than enforcing particular norms or excluding particular populations. As such discourses of tolerance are not only associated with governmentality, but also with control, a formation of power that is much more distributed and fluid, less focused on stable identities and absolute forms of inclusion or exclusion. While the contemporary historical era is generally described as manifesting a shift from discipline (or governmentality) to control, discipline continues as a predominant mode of power in particular spaces and in relation to particular populations even as control becomes more prevalent.

As Brown and Rai have respectively argued, both tolerance and sympathy have been bound up with governmentality, being discourses of power that produce particular subject positions and buttress state legitimacy. Foucault's (1991) concept of governmentality articulates a shift from state power as residing in and emanating from the sovereign, to a power of governance that operates through numerous state and non-state apparatuses throughout society. As such he conceives of a state power that is not only found in the law's threat of violence, but also in techniques of knowledge production and population administration that draw on and operate through various ostensibly nonpolitical realms, such as "civil society" institutions and disparate scientific, religious and popular discourses. Governmentality operates both through subjectifying individuals and normalizing and managing large numbers, constituted as populations. These are processes that essentially operate through a dynamic of inclusion/exclusion, where various techniques aim to produce a large-scale abiding by the norm.

Rai argues that sympathy as a liberal sentiment arose in relation to governmentality in the late 18th century, because it enabled and legitimized disciplining and securitizing populations, “marking off populations in need of benevolence,” while also producing liberal subjects as good citizens, acting in the national (and imperial) interests. Brown makes a similar argument saying that tolerance talk, “produces and positions subjects, orchestrates meanings and practices of identity, marks bodies, and conditions political subjectivities.” (4) As such both discourses of tolerance and sympathy can be understood as producing particular manageable populations.

In addition to disciplining subjects and normalizing populations, these discourses of tolerance and sympathy affectively circulate emotional images, words and ideas, modulating different populations with various political and social effects. In this affective media milieu, discourses of tolerance and sympathy are articulated through the circulation of emotions that trigger particular responses. I understand *emotions* and *affects* as related concepts on a continuum, where emotions tend to be narratively and linguistically structured responses to an interpretation of a situation, while affects tend to be unstructured and felt as intensities of the body (Ngai 2005). It is often through emotional articulations that the unstable and shifting parameters of us/them, and the gradients of difference among “them,” are produced. Emotions are neither uniquely individual nor universal expressions, but rather are products of histories and norms that express social and cultural realities (Ahmed 2004). Indeed the parameters of the acceptable Other are articulated through emotional forms of boundary-drawing. As I have argued, at one end of the spectrum, tolerance and sympathy can both begin from a point of identification and similarity. While Ngai (2005) also describes the possibility of contemptuous tolerance, she notes that it is reserved for those deemed to be of no significance; therefore, in the current political context, we would not expect to see its expression in relation to Muslims/Arabs.

Disgust is on the other end of the spectrum, marking the negative emotional boundary of tolerance, past which is the intolerable (Ngai). Therefore, circulation of emotions, such as fear of terrorism, disgust at particular “Islamic” practices, and sympathy for the suffering of victimized Muslims, interact to produce malleable and shifting conceptions of who is more or less tolerable, and who is more or less sympathetic

A conception of discourses of tolerance and sympathy as a component of population racism also captures a shift in the formations of power where control, rather than discipline, is becoming predominant, depending in part on the affective modulation of populations. Hardt (1995) describes control as a diffusion of disciplinary logics across society where the disciplinary logics of the prison, the schools, and the family have each been generalized such that they pervade all realms of society. As he says, “Social space has not been emptied of the disciplinary institutions; it has been completely filled with the modulations of control” (35). While the disciplinary functions of interpellation, education and socialization do not completely disappear, there is a shift toward identities that are flexible and fluid, where control operates at the level of populations which it modulates and measures as bodies and bodies of data (Clough 2003). This flexibility and multiplicity does not destroy social hierarchies but rather results in “hypersegmentation” (Hardt 1995, 37). As Clough (2003) says,

There is a shift from representing the individual subject in terms of communities of belonging to subsuming human life in statistical populations in order to stratify these populations in terms of distributed chances of life and death, health and morbidity, fertility and infertility, happiness and unhappiness, freedom and imprisonment. (361)

In particular, these discourses of sympathy and tolerance cannot solely be understood in terms of a politics of representation, but also in terms of how they operate affectively and emotionally to move and modulate publics while producing particular measurements of populations. Therefore, my analysis considers not only how meaning is constructed in the media, but also how this

affective circulation of emotions, information, images and words stirs and moves some populations while also facilitating and distributing the task of measuring and monitoring other populations.

Methods

I study the process of the racialization of Muslims/Arabs via discourses of tolerance and sympathy with a particular focus on the emotional and affective elements of these discourses. Discourse analysis is based on the assumption that discourses are constitutive of the social world and produce particular effects in relation to the broader social, historical context and relations of power (Phillips and Hardy 2002). Since discourses are not unified but rather fragmented, internally contradictory and contested, their effects are also multifaceted. Analysis of discourses in contexts of crisis or disruption (such as, the post-9/11 period) or arenas of great contestation (such as, the topic of tolerating Muslims), can be especially productive in elucidating the assumptions upon which social practices are based (Phillips and Hardy 2002, 68-70). The realm of representation has long been recognized as an important component of the racialization process. Omi and Winant (1994) describe racial formations as articulated through various “racial projects” that link the social structural and representational: “A racial project is simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines” (56). Balibar (1991) describes racism as a set of “practices, discourses and representations in a network of affective stereotypes” which produces two “communities”: a community of racists and the objects of racism who “find themselves constrained to see themselves as a community” (17-18). Furthermore, representations and discourses are a particularly important component of the racialization of Muslims/Arabs in a context where Muslim and Arab Americans make up a very small proportion of the population

and so many other Americans' relationship to and perceptions of them and Muslims and Arabs in general are more likely to be shaped by the media than by personal experiences.

This study is structured around four case studies analyzing separate events where a discourse of tolerance or sympathy was articulated in relation to alternately Muslim/Arab Americans and Muslims abroad. Case studies are a qualitative sociological approach that are appropriate to the process of theory development (Eisenhardt 1989; George and Bennett 2005). They are a particularly useful methodology for research seeking to analyze “both a particular *phenomenon* and the *context* within which the phenomenon is occurring” that involves using “multiple sources of evidence—converging on the same set of issues” (Yin 1993, 31-32). Each case focuses on distinct media events where a particular figure of the tolerable or sympathetic Muslim is constituted and/or contested. In particular, the cases address: 1) the production of the new category of the tolerable Muslim/Arab Americans through human interest stories in the immediate post-9/11 period, 2) articulations of sympathy for Iranian women via the circulation of discourses in relation to a highly influential memoir by an Iranian woman, 3) a highly sympathetic campaign by Western lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activists in response to perceived antigay persecution by the Iranian government, and 4) discourses of tolerance in relation to a high-profile Muslim and Arab American woman who was the object of a right-wing orchestrated smear campaign. These cases span the years of the Bush administration, from 2001 to 2008, while my conclusion will briefly discuss some developments since President Obama's entry to office.

These cases move between New York City and Iran, seeking to understand the ways in which the “here” and “there” are constituted in relation to each other. New York was a major location of the 9/11 attacks and is a city that prides itself on being diverse, cosmopolitan and

tolerant of difference, with a significant Muslim and Arab communities. Iran is a focal point not only because of its position of significance since 9/11 as a potential military target, dubbed an “axis of evil” nation and a nuclear threat, but also because of the formative role Iran has had in shaping conceptions of Islam since the Iranian Revolution and especially the Iran Hostage Crisis (Gerges 1997; McAlister 2005). This contrast is productive, because often Muslims in the United States and Muslims abroad are constructed as opposing or contrasting with each other, while at other times it is the connections across geographies that become important to constructing ideas of each. Indeed, it is almost impossible to understand the racialization of Muslim/Arab Americans without an understanding of how they are constantly measured in relation to the perceived threat of Muslims/Arabs abroad.

While the first two cases deal with “older” and slower media, specifically the newspaper and the memoir, the latter cases cannot be understood without a consideration of digital media environments, where speed and circulation have intensified. They therefore lead me to grapple with a shift in this period toward a digital media experience that is increasingly integrated into all aspects of our lives. In all cases, emotions are central to making distinctions among various levels of threat or drawing boundaries between reconfigured conceptions of us/them. In some cases it is “our” articulated emotions towards “them” that produce the boundaries of acceptability; in other cases “their” emotional responses become an important variable for assessment of their degree of trustworthiness or threat. In the latter two cases, emotions and affects also become central to consideration of the speed with which certain judgments are made and information circulates.

The Cases

Despite the overlaps between tolerance and sympathy that I have described, in my analysis discourses of tolerance tend to refer to Muslim/Arab Americans as an internal US minority whereas discourses of sympathy tend to refer to Muslim/Arab victims in Muslim-majority countries. Nevertheless, articulations of tolerance for Muslim/Arab Americans often do rely on the production of a feeling of sympathy for them, for example as victims of hate crimes or of right-wing attacks. On the other hand, discourses of sympathy towards Muslim/Arab victims do not solely rest on feelings of identification but also on forms of differentiation and distancing. Still, the distinction between these two types of discourses is meaningful and they each produce slightly different conceptions of us/them. Discourses of tolerance articulate a more ambivalent and assessment-oriented population racism, where the question of who is or is not a tolerable Muslim is always under question. Discourses of sympathy articulate a more strongly-delineated distinction between us and them, where even though sympathetic Muslims are made to be “like us” traversing a cultural or civilizational divide, their victimization becomes proof of the persistence of that divide. In each case, however, we see both an articulation of an us/them distinction that is central to cultural racism, and some degree of differentiation among “them” that is central to population racism.

The coherence of this racialization process is evident in the relative consistency with which Muslims/Arabs are assessed in relation to a particular set of variable, which are repeated from case to case and become the means of assessing degree of trustworthiness or threat. These variables are repeated in each of my cases, although different variables take a more or less central role in each case. The variables emerge from conceptions of an “Islamic” difference and stereotypes about Muslims/Arabs that are evident in more pure cultural racist conceptions of

us/them. In particular, Muslims/Arabs are assessed in terms of how they are perceived in relation to the following oppositions: religion/secularism, gender equality/gender oppression (or sexual liberation/sexual oppression), tolerance/intolerance, and aligned with the West/aligned with the (Islamic/Arab) East. Therefore, those who are deemed more tolerable and sympathetic are demonstrated to be aligned with a particular conception of Western modernity perceived to have privatized religion, liberated women, created sexual freedom, and promoted tolerance. To the extent that Muslims/Arabs can demonstrate that they are aligned with these values and this conception of Western modernity, they can be deemed (relatively) acceptable. As such, this discourse consistently reinforces an assumption that the West is aligned with these values, while at least some articulations of Islam are very much at odds with them. Therefore, the overarching measure of Muslims/Arabs is their articulation of an alliance with “the West” that requires a distancing from or a critical engagement with other, presumably more threatening Muslims/Arabs.

In Chapter 1, “Profiling Muslims/Arabs, Producing Populations: Post-9/11 *New York Times* Human Interest Stories,” I argue that discourses of tolerance that do seem to challenge cultural racism by suggesting that many Muslim/Arab Americans are worthy of tolerance and sympathy, put into play a population racism. I focus on *New York Times* human interest stories about Muslims and Arabs in the six months following the attack, a formative period and arena for these discourses of tolerance. While these stories dispel an image of Muslims/Arabs as a unified homogenous community, they produce Muslims/Arabs as a distinct, yet internally differentiated population. As human interest stories, published in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, emotions come together with other variables to produce a series of profiles of Muslims/Arabs, such as the fearful “traditional” woman, the patriotic “traditional” man, and the

angry “modern” woman. These profiles function much like the law enforcement profile, telling readers what they must attend to and measure in order to assess an individual in relation to the population’s distribution of risk.

In Chapter 2, “Empathy, Authenticity and Orientalism: Reconfiguring Divides Through Reading,” I consider the Western discourse produced by and in relation to *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi, a memoir about teaching Western literature in postrevolution Iran, published in 2003 on the eve of the invasion of Iraq. The wide appeal and particular reception of this work demonstrates how it was experienced as a challenge to cultural racism by creating feelings of connection and commonality across borders. Iranian women are made to be sympathetic Muslims who are not merely victims, but also intelligent and engaged individuals struggling to achieve moments of freedom in a patriarchal and totalitarian society. The reception of this work demonstrates how gender and religiosity function to create new conceptions of us/them, by making women available for modernization and westernization, while religious men become retainers of cultural difference. As such, this work demonstrates the emergence of a more subtle neo-Orientalism, which challenged an absolutist formulation of cultural racism, by using appreciation of Western culture as a measure to redraw the boundaries of us and them.

Chapter 3, “Emotional Attachments and Secular Imaginings: Western LGBTQ Activism on Iran” is an analysis of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) activist responses to what they described, despite conflicting evidence, to be the homophobic executions of two “gay” teenage boys in Iran in July 2005. I consider how a narrative of Islamically-ordained antigay persecution, which was articulated through particular emotional responses of love, fear and disgust, resonated with the liberal secular imagination of the activists. These “gay” Iranian victims, in contrast to Iranian women of *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, are not depicted so much as

individual agents available to modernization and westernization, but rather as an internal contradiction demonstrating Islam's inherent violence and incompatibility with "human nature." Western civilization, depicted as tolerant of homosexuality, therefore becomes a superior cultural form that is compatible with essential human diversity, thereby producing a more rigid and oppositional concept of civilizational difference.

In Chapter 4, "Affective Attacks, Liberal Defenses and Producing the Moderate Muslim/Arab," I consider controversy surrounding the founding in 2007 of a Brooklyn, NY, Arabic/English language school created by Debbie Almontaser, a widely-respected "moderate" Muslim and Arab American woman. I analyze the relationship between the right-wing generated controversy and the liberal responses to that controversy, demonstrating how contestation over the figure of the "moderate" Muslim/Arab was used by various outlets to capture momentary audience attention in a saturated media market. While right-wing outlets used the power of Arabic words to intensify their attacks at particular moments, center-left media sought to represent themselves as the arena of civil discourses and reasoned debate. Therefore, even though the center-left media eventually did come to Almontaser's defense to reassert her status as a "moderate," it did so more in the service of demonstrating its own tolerance, than defending her and the school from those who successfully attacked them. Moreover, this defense consistently reinforced population racism, by reiterating the variables by which all Muslims/Arabs must be assessed and representing Almontaser as an exception to this population.

Based on these case studies of US discourses, this dissertation analyzes the contours of racialization of Muslims/Arabs through often emotional discourses of tolerance and sympathy that circulate in a highly affective media milieu. My analysis considers how narratives, images, and words that are associated with Muslims/Arabs resonate with particular histories, sensibilities

and assumptions and circulate to produce different forms of identification or disaffiliation, and different assessments of degree of trustworthiness or threat. Through this analysis I demonstrate that discourses of tolerance and sympathy produce a racialized Other, although one that is not necessarily determined by a biological or cultural heredity at the level of the individual. Rather, these discourses produce a racism that sees the racial Other as an internally diverse population. While the population is delineated through its association with cultural difference, this cultural difference is understood to manifest unevenly in the racialized population. As a result the racialized population is presumed to have a distinct distribution of characteristics which require that each individual be assessed in relation to a specific constellation of variables. Therefore, individuals may be deemed exceptions to their racialized population and able to cross a “civilizational” divide. Nevertheless, even when Muslims/Arabs are determined to be tolerable or sympathetic, these discourses produce them as racialized Others that continue to be judged in relation to the racialized population, making them vulnerable to suddenly being transformed from a sympathetic or tolerable Muslim into a potential threat.

Chapter 1

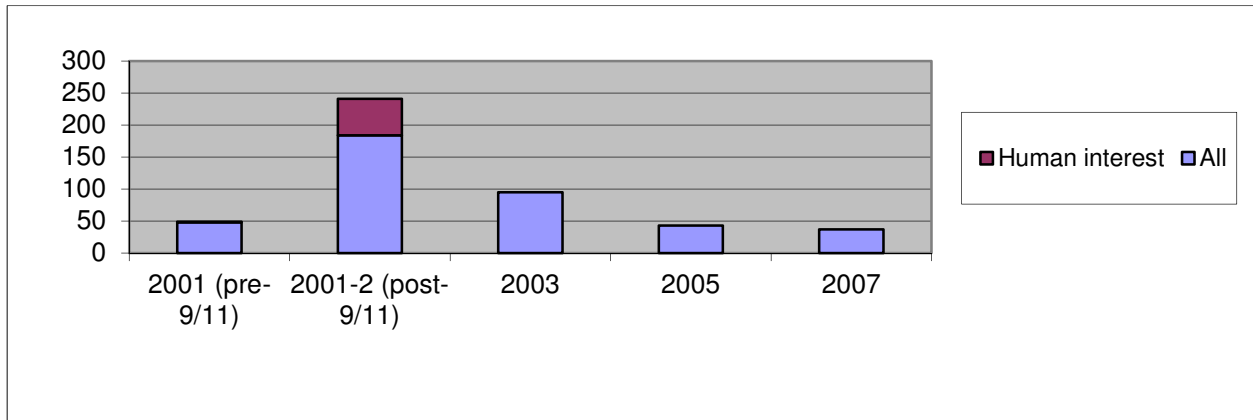
Profiling Muslims/Arabs, Producing Populations: Post-9/11 New York Times Human Interest Stories

In the hours, days and weeks following the September 11, 2001 attacks, Muslims and Arabs in the United States found themselves to be not only the objects of scrutiny and anger but also of interest, curiosity and sympathy. Even as reports of bias-motivated vandalism, harassment and violence against those presumed to be Muslim and/or Arab proliferated (Cainkar 2004),¹¹ there were also many reports of people reaching out to Muslim or Arab communities to make connections and offer support. Many articulated an interest in understanding Islam better and getting to know Muslims and Arabs living in the United States. As such, this period was formative in the production of discourses of tolerance and sympathy in relation to Muslims and Arabs in the United States. In New York City and nationally, the *New York Times* coverage reflected and contributed to this shift in public discourse, as clearly demonstrated in a comparison of its publishing patterns in the 6 months before and after the 9/11 attacks. The *Times* published almost five times as many articles about Muslim and Arab Americans in the period after the attacks as before, including about 60 human interest articles profiling Muslim and Arab communities and individuals in the United States, as compared to just one such article in period before the attacks (see Figure 1). This reportage was part of the paper's extensive and highly lauded immediate post-9/11 coverage. This unprecedented level of coverage of US Muslims and Arabs brought new attention to previously largely invisible communities (Naber 2000), describing their experiences of double-victimization as a result of both the attacks and the ensuing "backlash," and also their condemnations of terrorism and proclamations of patriotism.

¹¹ In the week following the 9/11 attacks, the Council on American Islamic Relations documented 645 "bias incidents and hate crimes" against those perceived to be Muslim, Arab or South Asian reported. They documented 1717 such incidents in the 6 months following the attacks and 325 in the next 6 months (Cainkar 2004)

As such they paralleled and built on President George W. Bush’s call for Americans to tolerate the patriotic Muslims among them and contrasted with more explicitly racist discourses.

Table 2. New York Times Articles on Muslim or Arab Americans (in 6-month periods)¹²



While some scholars have emphasized that immediate-post-9/11 representations of Muslim and Arab Americans have been largely sympathetic, since they humanize these communities through intimate portrayals, describe their victimization especially in the form of hate crimes and discrimination, and emphasize their patriotism (Weston 2003; Nacos and Torres-Reyna 2007), a number of others analyzing similar sources emphasize their work in producing Muslims and Arabs as an Other (Brennen and Duffy 2003; Joseph and D’Harlingue 2008; Oh 2008). Joseph and D’Harlingue (2008) are the most critical, arguing that *New York Times* articles present Muslim and Arab Americans as a homogenous community and a racial Other that is unusually religious, intimately tied to their home countries and to Muslims abroad, who in turn are portrayed as a monolithic, and fanatically religious, mass. By contrast, Weston argues that many newspapers have profiled communities in ways that emphasize the diversity of Arab

¹² The number of articles about Muslim or Arab Americans went from 49 articles in the six months before the 9/11 attacks to 241 articles in the six months following the attacks. By comparison, the number of articles addressing those identified as Muslim or Arab Americans in the *New York Times* would decrease in the years to come, for example being 95 in the six months surrounding the Iraq invasion in 2003 (and the publication of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* addressed in Ch. 2), 43 in the summer of 2005 (when the executions of the Iranian boys addressed in Ch. 3 occurred) and 37 in 2007 (during the period of controversy surrounding the Khalil Gibran International Academy, addressed in Ch. 4). I did not analyze the number of human interest stories in the 2003, 2005, or 2007 time periods.

Americans. These different readings of many of the same sources signal the inadequacy of a focus on simply determining whether Muslims and Arabs are by and large portrayed as a diverse, patriotic Americans or as a homogenous racial other. Rather, it is the combination of these portrayals, of the patriotic Muslim and the racial other, that together are productive of a more multifaceted and complicated form of racialization.

Indeed, these stories acted as a specification and extension of the logic of racial profiling proliferating throughout society, in the form of risk analysis and preemptive criminalization. Cultural racism, referring to a racism based on a concept of cultural incompatibility rather than biological inferiority, would imply that these human interest stories may at times be antiracist because they present Muslims/Arabs as highly diverse, including individuals who seem to traverse cultural divides and challenge a notion of being locked in an immutable cultural heredity (Balibar 1991). However, by thinking in terms of population racism, it becomes apparent how these stories as a whole contribute to producing a Muslim/Arab population that is both distinct from the population at large and internally differentiated. The description of this population's internal diversity also produces a set of variables for assessment of risk that facilitate a more differentiating form of preemptive criminalization.

The human interest stories are not solely representational, telling unique stories of individuals and communities, but rather aim to be representative, representing and delineating a population through these highly varied stories. They produce a racialized Muslim/Arab population through three separate elements: 1) they delineate the racialized population from the population as a whole reaffirming a binary conception of us/them; 2) they represent the racialized population as diverse and internally differentiated along various lines that can be statistically delineated, thereby producing a distribution of different "types" of Muslims/Arabs;

3) they attune readers to particular interacting variables of interest necessary to assessing the degree of threat specific types of Muslims/Arabs pose, thereby producing a set of “profiles.” These variables include not only such traditional sociological ones as gender, sexuality, religiosity, class, ethnicity, and immigrant/native status, but also the intimate emotional expressions that these stories highlight, which become a powerful variable for measuring degree and form of patriotism, or conversely of threat.

While these stories reinforce the coherence of the concept of Muslims/Arabs as a population, they present this population as internally differentiated along particular variables, which interact with each other to produce various profiles of Muslims/Arabs. The *profile*, as Jasbir Puar (2007) describes, is an informational, affective and ocular/visual assemblage which “disperses control through circuits catching multiple interpenetrating sites of anxiety” . In these human interest stories, profiles of Muslims/Arabs are produced through an assemblage of statistical, demographic and geographical knowledge (the informational), emotional articulations of those profiled (the affective), and images that emphasize a reading of the body through the presence or absence of markers of religious and racial difference (the visual). While the genre of the human interest story is oriented to making readers sympathize and identify with those portrayed, specific stories in fact produce different emotional responses. These emotions, as Sara Ahmed argues, “create the very effect of the surfaces and boundaries that allow us to distinguish an inside and an outside in the first place....” (Ahmed 2004, 10), producing boundaries that distinguish degrees and forms of affiliation and disaffiliation and mark gradations of difference. In these stories, articulated emotions emerge in relationship to the interactions of variables, such as gender, religiosity, ethnicity, immigrant/native status to mark degrees of rationalism or irrationalism, backwardness or modernity, trustworthiness or threat and produce a gradient of

differentiation among Muslims/Arabs. Most commonly, emotions interact with gender and conceptions of “traditionalism”/“modernity”—articulated in large part through measures of religiosity—to produce particular profiles of Muslims/Arabs. These profiles include the traditional victimized woman as object of tolerance; the traditional patriotic man as barely tolerable; the politically ambivalent traditional Muslim as potential threat; the modernized woman as angry challenger to her culture and religion; and the modernized man as empathetic humanist able to cross all divides.

These stories in fact relate to two different populations, a racialized population and a reader population, highlighting Clough’s point that, “probabilistic measuring of sociological methodology shifts from merely representing population, even making population, to modulating or manipulating the population’s affective capacities....” (Clough 2009, 50). On the one hand, these stories represent and make a racialized and internally differentiated population of Muslims/Arabs. On the other hand, they modulate and manipulate a “public” (Terranova 2007), in this case the *New York Times*’ readership, by attuning them to what variables must be considered in order to assess individuals in relation to this racialized population. In other words, human interest stories produce profiles that tell readers what variables they must attend to, measure and value in order to assess an individual in relation to the population. These profiles of Muslims/Arabs then serve as an interface between the racialized individual and the racialized population by producing a means of assessing each individual in relation to an uneven distribution of characteristics, capacities, and threats throughout the population.

In what follows, I begin by delineating the preemptive logics of racial profiling proliferating in the post-9/11 context, which are justified and refined, rather than contradicted, in discourses of tolerance, including the human interest stories. Next I consider the specificity of

the medium of interest here, the post-9/11 *New York Times* human interest story, positioning it in relation to the broader post-9/11 media context and in relation to other forms of media and genres of news writing to highlight the importance of these human interest stories in the production and circulation of discourses of tolerance and sympathy in relation to Muslims and Arabs. Then I analyze the human interest stories themselves, first, describing how they delineate a broadly-defined racialized population of Muslims/Arabs as distinct from the general population. Second, I demonstrate how a positive relationship of this population to the state attests to the state's tolerant and protective role, providing justification for its racial profiling practices. Third, I demonstrate how human interest stories refine, rather than challenge, this racial profile by attuning readers to a set of interacting variables to measure degrees of trustworthiness and threat distributed through the racialized population of Muslims/Arabs.

The Logics of Racial Profiling

I think a person who is Arab should be questioned if they get on a bus or plane or go in a government building... You don't want to be afraid of Arabs, Iranians and other foreign people. But how do you differentiate and figure out which one is the bad one from those who love freedom and our country?

Kathy Komlance quoted in Verhovek (2001)

These *New York Times* human interest stories were published at a moment when there was a new anxiety that long-standing law enforcement antiterrorism strategies had failed and that racial profiling, however crude, might provide the only means of protecting the nation against future attack. Such fear was buttressed by reports that information available about the 9/11 hijackers called into question the existing profile of the suicide bomber as a young man facing economic hardship who is quickly indoctrinated into Islamic militancy (Wilgoren 2001a). Rather, as the *New York Times* noted in a Sept. 15, 2001 article, these hijackers were middle

class, sometimes older, men with educations, who had spent years in training for their mission, mingled with secular society and even drank alcohol. The tone of the quoted terrorism experts shifts from befuddlement to fear and horror as they describe a possible implication that a widespread hatred of the West may be leading to, as one says, “a moment in history that has an evil and a horror to it that’s sort of akin to what Hitler was able to crystallize around him” (Wilgoren 2001a). Despite the shocked and horrified tone of the article, a 1999 report by the Library of Congress on “The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism” makes clear that there never has been a unitary “terrorist” profile, even if particular patterns were discernible in particular movements; moreover, Osama bin Laden was believed to be recruiting highly skilled professionals for sophisticated missions (Hudson 1999). Nevertheless, the notion that the terrorist profile had been disrupted powerfully reverberated with the notion that 9/11 marked a complete break with the past, necessitating a reassessment of the value and validity of racial profiling. Indeed, racial profiling, which had previously come under great criticism as the police practice of disproportionately stopping cars driven by African American and Latino men, now became defensible with respect to Muslims and Arabs (Verhovek 2001; Davis 2001; Public Agenda 2002).¹³ While in a post-civil rights moment the production of an enemy category along blanket racial, ethnic and/or religious lines was difficult to justify, many liberals expressed general antipathy for the policy while arguing that this moment called for an exception to be made in the name of national security. They argued that racial profiling was justifiable as a temporary measure until more targeted security measures could be developed and any suffering of Muslims or Arabs was a minor sacrifice relative to the mortal threat of terrorism—and even some Arab Americans came forward to agree (Verhovek 2001; Malti-Douglas 2002).

¹³ For example, in a Jan. 2002 poll by Public Agenda, a majority of those polled said there is no excuse for law enforcement looking at African Americans with greater scrutiny or suspicion, while 78% that in the case of “people with Middle Eastern accents or features” such treatment was understandable or valid (Public Agenda 2002).

Racial profiling as a law enforcement tactic is based on what Fitzgibbon (2007) describes as the interconnected approaches of risk analysis and preemptive criminalization, emerging in the wake of the displacement of social welfare provisions focused on rehabilitation of criminals with a security apparatus focused on the management of risk. Pre-emptive criminalization is, “a process in which the activation of criminal justice responses, normally consequent upon the committing of criminal acts by individuals, increasingly takes an anticipatory form... based upon the expectation that individuals are likely to commit criminal acts in the future...” Risk analysis is the practice, “of responding to individuals by allocating them to groups categorised in terms of the statistical likelihood of committing certain types of acts” (Fitzgibbon 2007, 128). Fitzgibbon describes these law enforcement strategies as producing institutional racism by encouraging the use of race as a way to categorize individuals in terms of risk that they will commit a crime in the future. Rather than aiming to prevent the future criminal act by addressing its causes, preemption takes an increased probability of criminal activity as impetus for intervention, interruption or even instigation.¹⁴ Clough has argued that statistics and probability work not to predict and prevent future events based on past experiences, but rather to deploy a future in the present “to assure or agitate affectively” (Clough 2009, 53). The proliferation of the logic of racial profiling is clear in the Bush administration antiterrorism measures following the attacks, including the detentions of over 1,200 primarily Muslim, South Asian and Middle Eastern noncitizens, selective application of deportation orders against Muslim and Middle Eastern noncitizen, and investigatory interviews targeting 5,000 non-citizens from specific mostly Muslim-majority countries (Volpp 2002). Some have argued that quantitatively the government response was

¹⁴ One example of preemptive law enforcement practice is the FBI practice of entrapping young Muslim men by planting agent provocateurs in mosques to instigate and facilitate terrorist attacks so that “terrorists” may be arrested. A future potentiality that otherwise might not have come to fruition is brought into the present in order to preempt that future (see, eg, Center for Human Rights and Global Justice 2011).

relatively restrained, for example, in historical comparison to the internment of Japanese and Japanese Americans during World War II (Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2009). However, de Genova (2007) points out that the larger effects of these policies was to produce broad swaths of migrants, including US citizens, as “detainable” and “deportable” racialized suspects, “in which indefinite imprisonment without charges or legal recourse is always an already immanent prospect” (439).

Corresponding with widespread acceptance of racial profiling, was a new public gesture toward the inclusion of Muslims and Arabs in the United States. In particular, President George W. Bush’s discourse about Islam and Muslims changed dramatically in this period as he described Islam as a great and peaceful religion, American Muslims as the true practitioners of a religion that had been “hijacked” by the “terrorists,” and the United States as being on the side of Muslims and of civilization against terrorism and barbarism (see, eg, Office of the Press Secretary 2001b). In contrast to earlier White House communications, 9/11 precipitated an unprecedented public recognition of Muslims in the United States, whom the president began to refer to as, “American Muslims.”¹⁵ This discourse presented Muslims as hardworking, tax-paying, and patriotic citizens, and the United States as a land of tolerance and religious freedom. Indeed, as Collet (2009) argues this portrayal of the United States as on the side of “universally accepted standards of human dignity (such as pluralism, tolerance and freedom – of expression, of religion, etc.)” (467) was a key element of framing the war on terror as a war for “civilization” and against barbarism. As such it served to distinguish the United States from its enemy through its commitment to the values of tolerance and religious freedom (Brown 2008), while also articulating a particular formulation of Muslim American religiosity that was closely aligned

¹⁵ See e.g., the President’s Ramadan greeting two months after the attacks (Office of the Press Secretary 2001c) which addressed “American Muslims,” as compared to a holiday greeting in March, 2001, which was addressed to an external, global “Muslim” community, distinct from “Americans” (Office of the Press Secretary 2001a).

with patriotism.¹⁶ At the same time, there seem to have been broader effects of these choices including a public articulation of positive feelings for US Muslims. While six months before the attacks 45% of Americans had favorable views of US Muslims, two months after the attack this number increased to 59%. Most notably, the increase was even more pronounced among conservative Republicans (ie, likely supporters of President Bush), going from 35% to 64% (Silk 2003, 79). As Silk notes, “it is a remarkable thing to mobilise a society against an enemy defined largely in religious terms while enhancing the reputation of the domestic adherents of the religion in question” (79). The discourse of tolerance articulated by President Bush and amplified and expanded upon in the media was likely in part responsible for this shift in perspective; at the same time this more favorable perspective did not pose a contradiction to the use of racial profiling in the administration’s antiterrorism approaches.

Indeed, the *New York Times* human interest stories on Muslim and Arab Americans reflected these dual components of the Bush administrations’ policies and discourses. These stories not only modeled a tolerant and sympathetic disposition to Muslims and Arabs but also specified and explicated the racial logic at the heart of the administration’s policies and the call for racial profiling. Specifically, *New York Times* human interest stories were a kind of corrective to crude racial profiling that equally targeted all Muslims and Arabs in the United States as potential terrorist threats, but one that refined, rather than contradicted, the racial logic at the heart of racial profiling. These stories answer the question posed at the beginning of this section, “how do you differentiate and figure out which one is the bad one from those who love freedom and our country?” (Verhovek 2001). In particular, these stories produced a set of profiles of more

¹⁶ These discourse foreshadowed the US State Department attempts in the years to come to present a vision of American Islam that is both compatible with US patriotism and can make claims to being a truer form of Islamic practice, arrived at under the conditions of religious freedom in the US This conception of American Islam has been used to justify US policies in the war on terror and has even offered itself as a model of Islam compatible with modernity, capitalism, and liberalism that should be emulated in Muslim-majority countries (Rastegar 2008).

and less trustworthy or threatening Muslim and Arab Americans, profiles that could supplement and refine the terrorist profile, providing information about geographic distribution and demographics, dress and appearances, and emotional responses to the 9/11 attacks of various types of Muslims/Arabs. As such these profiles serve a similar function as the law enforcement profile in identifying those presumed to have a higher (or lower) probability of committing terrorism in order to more effectively preempt such threats.

Affecting Human Interest Stories

On September 13, 2001, the *New York Times* published a series of brief pieces providing snapshots of community responses to the attacks from around the country. The centrality of emotions and the complicated positioning of Muslim and Arab Americans are clear in this relatively understated set of pieces. Running under the headline, “Fellow Americans Opening Hearts, Wallets and Veins,” (Kilborn 2001) the pieces were accompanied by a large photograph of a woman, attractive yet modestly-dressed in long sleeves and a headscarf, looking thoughtful and serene. The juxtaposition of the headline and the image of a visibly Muslim woman casts her as a “fellow American” and the cropping of the photograph and her posture suggest that she may be about to pull out her wallet or roll up a sleeve, as such manifesting the heartfelt responses of her fellow Americans. However, reading the pieces, identification with the woman, or the woman’s identification with “us” becomes more complicated and ambivalent. The articles report on the almost-spontaneous expressions of solidarity, commonality, and unity emerging from the heartland for victims of the attacks. The need to feel, to give, to act, is expressed over and over in reports of compulsive television watching and expressions of a desire to “do something.” There is an outpouring of generosity, as individuals donate large sums of money (Kilborn 2001) and stand in long lines to donate blood (Janofsky 2001). Teary-eyed firefighters express feelings of

devastation at the loss of life in New York (J.W. Fountain 2001b). Some vent anger by buying pistols and visiting shooting ranges (Harden 2001a). Fear is exacerbated by a feeling that the enemy, responsible for an attack deemed worse than Pearl Harbor (Steinberg 2001), is unknown and elusive and may strike again (Clines 2001).

At the same time, there emerges a need to understand those among “us” that are being cast as some kind of relation to this enemy. Here, as a woman seeming to embody “Fellow Americans”, but as a visibly religious Muslim, she is affiliated with and disaffiliated from both “fellow Americans” and the terrorists. The relationship to the “terrorists” is further emphasized in the caption quoting her: “I’m Arab, but if the Arabs did it, then I’m ashamed. But if some Arabs did it, you can’t say all Arabs are bad.” Her feminine shame marks her as one of them, as part of this monstrous Arab family, but she calls for others to see her as not “bad,” rather as a tolerable Arab. While the article (Bradsher 2001) describes her anger at the attackers and desire that they be brought to justice, her feelings of shame that the attack may have been at the hands of Arabs expresses a sense of collective responsibility.

While the human interest story generally seems to involve a sympathetic identification with the profiled individual, articles about Muslims and Arabs must be understood in relation to this affectively-saturated media milieu in the six months following the September 2001 attacks. The spectacular attacks, captured in real time and replayed on television, that targeted major institutions of US global hegemony, resulting in thousands of civilian deaths were quickly cast as an attack on “American” and “Western” values and freedoms by Muslim enemies willing to die in the service of their cause. A reeling New York City, its downtown area covered in the ash from the fallen towers and the people who had perished there, became a source of identification across the country and New York City mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, was dubbed by Oprah Winfrey

“America’s Mayor” (Economist 2005; Haller 2001). Expressions of sympathy and solidarity circulated from around the country and the globe, as all of “us” came to feel like victims, New Yorkers and Americans. On the one hand, the attacks disrupted the empathy fatigue that is commonly ascribed to audiences immunized to the horrors regularly represented in the media. On the other hand, the media was all the more saturated with emotions, including horror, anger, vengeance, fear, sympathy, camaraderie, love, and pride. Sympathy first and foremost focused on those most directly victimized by the attacks, especially the dead or injured, and their families. Nevertheless, the media also portrayed many secondary victims of the attacks, including Muslim and Arab Americans victimized by not only the attacks but also a “backlash,” the latter of which subject them to increased suspicion, scrutiny, and violence, especially at the hands of other Americans. Muslims and Arabs therefore came to public attention in a context of too many victims, too many images, and too much emotion. Whatever sympathy human interest stories elicited for Muslims and Arabs, that sympathy mixed with many other emotions that were also circulating in this time period.

The media took on the role not only of conveying the experiences of those affected directly and indirectly by the attacks, but actually acted as a medium for a national mourning process centered around a narrative of movement from victimization, fear and shock to heroism and pride (Kitch 2003). Journalists set aside airs of objectivity and neutrality presenting themselves as part of the collective and taking on different forms of journalism such as, “journalism as tribute, journalism as homage, journalism as witness, journalism as solace, and journalism aspiring to art” (Schudson 2003, 39). Television reporting shifted quickly from an initially restrained and professional tone to a more explicitly jingoistic, repetitive coverage thin on analysis; on the other hand newspapers and newsweeklies provided much more in-depth

investigation and analysis (Carey 2003) filling the newspaper's "traditional role as provider of analysis and extended information" (Zelizer and Allan 2003, 7).

Because of the shift in the role of the media, "soft" human interest stories focusing on the personal and emotional experiences of individuals, families and communities gained in status, conveying the emotional experience of the nation and offering means of creating new forms of national identification. While "hard" news stories are supposed to dispassionately convey the facts of events of broad import, what is valued in the human interest story are the intimate details of life, that are said to vividly bring the reader into a new world and create an emotional connection. In the prestige press, "soft" human interest stories are generally considered of lesser news value than "hard" news stories because they do not abide by the highly touted journalistic values of objectivity and balance. Nevertheless, human interest stories have a circulation value as their popularity among a broad readership has been used to create an economic advantage in a competitive media market. Therefore, these articles in a very literal way circulate emotions and this circulation is driven in large part by the economic imperative of media outlets. In the immediate post-9/11 context, human interest stories played an important role in articulating the emotional experiences of individuals, communities and "the nation" in relation to the attacks and its aftermath. While many post-9/11 stories transmitted the trauma, shock, fear, and anger of the directly victimized and re-cast them as national experiences, stories focusing on Muslim and Arab Americans demonstrated the currency of the concept of tolerance in this time period which served to counterpoint the explicit racism also circulating in the media and throughout society.

In particular, the *New York Times* set the standard that many other dailies sought to emulate (Carey 2003). The *New York Times* has long been viewed as the standard bearer of

journalistic excellence, as a reliable news source striving for objectivity and “the paper of record” writing history in the present. Immediately after 9/11, it created a special advertisement-free section called “A Nation is Challenged,” which Carey describes:

In the section, coverage of the attacks and their aftermath in Afghanistan and elsewhere were centralized. Stories appeared, for the most part thorough and reliable, on every conceivable aspect of the chronicle. The paper threw unimagined resources into the coverage, writing not only about the attacks themselves, the suspected perpetrators, the whereabouts of Osama Bin Laden, the nature of the threat from al-Qaeda, and the response of the Bush administration but the human drama within: ‘What Muslims think,’ ‘How American Muslims were coping,’ ‘How the skyscrapers were built,’ ‘How anthrax was spread,’ and dozens of tales of grief and suffering in the city. Best of all was the decision to expand the obituaries beyond the famous and celebrated to include every person confirmed dead whose family wanted an obituary. The ‘Portraits of Grief’ section detailed in unique and intelligent ways the lives of ordinary people and gave the suffering meaning in personal terms. This was no [76] act of ‘do-good’ journalism but a response to the actual life of the city... All of this reflected and organized a useful sense of solidarity and a quickened recognition of the value of public workers. (75-6)

This coverage was highly lauded (Zelizer and Allan 2003; Carey 2003) earning the paper a record number of Pulitzer Prizes in 2002 (Perez-Pena 2009). Schudson has argued that the paper’s reportage, “was little short of miraculous in covering the terrorist attacks and their aftermath intensely, humanly, and in large measure fairly.” (Zelizer and Allan, 37).

While the *New York Times* was not at all unique in publishing articles about the experiences and perspectives of Muslim and Arab Americans, I focus on this paper because: 1) it is a national New York-based paper that prints both stories of national import and those which have particular interest in the New York metropolitan region; 2) it is widely respected and therefore influential; 3) it is considered a center-left news source and has more liberal readership than the other high circulation national dailies, with only 33% of its readership identifying as “conservative,” as compared to 68% of the readership of both *USA Today* and *The Wall Street Journal* (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010); 4) its coverage of Muslims and Arabs in the United States was extensive including approximately 240 articles, over 60 of which I identified as

human interest stories.¹⁷ So I surmise the paper would connect the experiences of Muslims and Arabs to both the local and national experiences of the attacks, to do so from a more liberal (ie, tolerant, cosmopolitan) perspective, and to be influential in relation to broader public discourses and public opinions. As such, I see these articles as being highly formative in the production of this new discourse of tolerance and sympathy addressing Muslim and Arab Americans, which has been key in the production of a more variegated and differentiating form of racism.

While *New York Times* human interest stories present many in-depth and often sympathetic portraits of Muslims or Arabs living in the New York metropolitan area and around the country, both more “positive” and “negative” portrayals contribute to the racialization of Muslims and Arabs. Firstly, these stories begin from an assumption of the analytical coherence of the concept of Muslims/Arabs (and occasionally “Middle Easterners”) and reproduce this coherence through stories that delineate this population from the population at large. These stories claim to be representative of Muslim, Arab and Middle Eastern communities broadly speaking, a claim that is buttressed through references to demographic data that together produce a statistical and informational representation of this population. Secondly, these stories justify policing by emphasizing the tolerant and protective role of the state in relation to Muslims/Arabs. Thirdly, the racial profile is refined through these human interest stories which present a set of interacting variables, especially religion/religiosity, gender/gender norms, and emotional responses to the 9/11 attacks, that become the means to assess the degree of threat or

¹⁷ My data was collected via a search of the *New York Times* via LexisNexis. Searches terms used were “Arab,” “Muslim,” or “Islam” within two words of the terms “America,” “United States,” “US,” “US,” “USA,” “USA.” (when relevant, terms were entered such that longer words including the specified term would also be included: e.g., “Arab” would include, “Arabs,” “Arabic,” and “Arabian.”) Additional searches were done to cull articles on Arabs and/or Muslims in the US regarding the topics of detentions and racial profiling. Articles were deemed human interest stories if the opening paragraphs and other portions of the article included significant discussion of the personal experiences or perspectives of Muslim or Arab individuals or communities. While not all these human interest articles were solely devoted to profiling an individual or community, all included voices and images from the lives of Muslims or Arabs in the United States, bringing their perspectives to readers. Of 241 total articles found in this time period, 60 were deemed human interest stories and were included in this analysis.

trustworthiness of members of this population. The racialization of Muslims/Arabs is indicated by the consistency of the variables used to assess them, rather than the homogeneity of the representation. These variables emerge from a particular conception of an “Islamic” threat, which sees Islam as particularly resistant to secularization, oppressive to women, and incompatible with Western values. Therefore, the internal diversity of this population does not challenge the analytical coherence of the category of Muslims/Arabs, which is always still associated with this potential threat.

Representing a Population

New York Times human interest stories produce a data set about a distinct and analytically coherent population, despite the fact that this population is alternately defined in relation to a religion (Islam), an ethnicity (Arab), and a geographical region (the Middle East). These stories often take the pairing of Muslim and Arab for granted not acknowledging that most Muslims are not Arab and that many Arabs (especially in the United States) are not Muslim. They also do not explicitly interrogate where this interest in Muslims and Arabs has come from, as a result naturalizing the attention that has suddenly fallen on these communities. Many earlier pieces (see, eg, Sengupta 2001) begin from the interest in documenting the experiences and perspectives of “Muslims and Arabs” almost using the terms interchangeably. For example, one article ostensibly about an Arab American community in Yonkers, NY that is described as predominantly Christian, includes quotes and images from various South Asian Muslims associated with the local mosque, which is not predominantly Arab (Worth 2001). Another article about perspectives on the air strikes in Afghanistan switches headlines from one page to the next, first referring to “New York Muslims” and second to “Arab Neighborhoods,” even though the piece is based on interviews of a somewhat haphazard collection of individuals,

including a Pakistani American law student, an Arab Muslim business owner, several Afghan men associated with a Queens mosque, and an Afghan professor (Wakin and LeDuff 2001).¹⁸ In belying an assumption that there is a coherence to the conception of “Muslims and Arabs,” these stories carve out this population from the population at large.

This representation of the population in part takes place through a mapping of the geographical distribution of Muslims and Arabs focusing on particular cities, neighborhoods and streets identified as ethnic enclaves having large population of Muslims or Arabs. Articles focus particularly on neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens, with visible concentrations of Arabs and Muslims, and Jersey City and Paterson, NJ, which have large Arab populations and have been associated with the WTC attacks in 1993 and 2001, respectively, and also on large communities of Arab Americans in Dearborn and Detroit, Michigan. Again and again, the stories take readers down the streets, to visit mosques and commercial establishments, and to hear about experiences of harassment and violence, along with condemnations of the attacks and proclamations of loyalty to the country. They are shown the police officer stationed outside, ostensibly protecting, but also policing, the community. The reporter speaks to men who work in stores, restaurants and gas stations, holding apparently typical “immigrant” jobs, or men who are imams or members of local mosques. Less frequently reporters speak to women who are mothers, wives, students, teachers or social service providers. The mosque is presented as the center of these communities, and a highly gendered embodied religiosity is represented in repeated images of men praying and of women in headscarves. A gender-segregated Islam becomes the defining attribute of this community, and both gender and religion emerge as significant variables in assessing this population.

¹⁸ Indeed, the choice of interview subjects and headlines seem to imply that the reporters or editors actually believe that all Muslims, or at least all South Asian (ie Pakistani, Afghan) Muslims are Arab.

However, the *Times* coverage is broad-sweeping and varied and for every stereotype that is reinforced repeatedly in these articles, there seems to be at least one article that in some way challenges or adds nuance to the stereotype. While many pieces focus on South Asian and Arab Muslims, a number of articles portray other Muslim communities, especially African Americans and Latinos, and other Arab communities, such as Christian Arabs. While many articles portray individuals who are parts of “ethnic enclaves,” living or working in neighborhoods centered around a mosque or an Arab business district, some portray small, isolated communities, such as in Laramie, Wyoming, or individuals not associated with such enclaves, such as Manhattan-based artists. While many articles focus on apparently traditional and religious Muslims, such as members of a local mosque or students at an Islamic school, one article argues that secular Muslims are the majority of US Muslims. The repeated images of men standing or kneeling in prayer or of women wearing headscarves are counterbalanced by occasional portrayals of secular Muslim men and women who are described in reference to such “secular” practices as yoga and shopping. Nevertheless, these counterpoint articles cannot eliminate the associations that are articulated in the majority of pieces that tend to represent Muslims and Arabs as strongly religious and tradition-bound communities that are not entirely assimilated into the United States, even if they articulate an immigrant narrative of opportunity, gratitude and patriotism. Therefore, the diversity of Muslims and Arabs presented in these stories is in large part in the service of making the overall portrayal *seem* representative.

Furthermore, human interest stories draw out portraits of particular types of Muslims or Arabs in the service of representing a swath of this population, and demographic data is presented to make quotes garnered from a handful of individuals representative of a broader subpopulation. For example, an article about a mosque in Long Island is said to reflect the

experiences of 70,000 Muslims in Naussau and Suffolk County and another piece on tensions in one mosque in Queens is said to reflect the feelings of New York's 20,000 Afghans. The cumulative effect of these statistics is to produce a population that is distributed by particular variables, such as geographic concentration, ethnicity, institutional affiliation (military, schools, etc.), and religious affiliation. We learn that there are about 300,000 Arabs in the Detroit area (Wilgoren 2001e), 65,000 Arabs in New Jersey (Nash 2001), 20,000 Arabs in Westchester County, New York (Worth 2001), 5,000 to 10,000 Muslims in the Raleigh-Durham area (Goodstein 2001c), and 22 Muslim families in all of Wyoming (Egan 2001). We learn that African-American Muslims are 25 to 40 percent Muslims in the United States (J. Fountain 2001), Latino Muslims number anywhere from 10,000 to 25,000 (Wakin 2002; Nieves 2001a), and about 25,000 people a year convert to Islam in the United States (Wilgoren 2001b). While there are at least 4,000 Muslims in the military (Goodstein 2001a), there are 88,000 students enrolled in private Islamic schools in the country (Bahrapour 2001), and 150,000 households in the United States that receive Al Jazeera, the Arabic-language news station that broadcasts from Qatar (Harden 2001b). We also learn, based on mosque attendance, that the vast majority of the estimated four to six million Muslims in the United States appear to be secular (Goodstein 2001d), but that the number of Muslims "vocally distancing themselves from conservative Islam... is probably a small minority" (Wakin 2001a). These numbers appear embedded in articles about the experiences and perspectives of particular individuals that then come to represent these subpopulations that together produce a racialized population of Muslims and Arabs made up of a range of variables. They also produce a data set about Muslims/Arabs as a geographically distributed population, made up of people of different ethnicities, who must be

assessed in terms of their disposition to conservative gender norms and forms and degree of national, political and religious affiliation.

While these stories do not produce a homogenous image of Muslims and Arabs as a unified and singular “community,” they nevertheless produce an internally differentiated population that is distinct from the population at large. These articles represent some of the diversity of Muslims and Arabs in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, geography, age, religiosity, and so on. This diversity both serves to affirm the representativeness of the overall portrayal and repeats particular variables of interest, reinforcing a notion that Muslims and Arabs must be assessed along particular lines. Even when articles acknowledge some of the enormous diversity encompassed by the categories of Muslim and Arab, they still retain a coherence to the conception of Muslims/Arabs, which itself is never interrogated or questioned.

The (Racially Profiling) State as Protective and Tolerant

The logic of racial profiling that is constitutive of the state’s relationship to Muslims/Arabs is rarely highlighted or critiqued in these human interest stories. Rather the dominant narratives revolve around a notion that state actions are motivated by a desire to offer protection and to promote tolerance. More specifically, these stories describe police officers stationed outside mosques and Arab neighborhoods, the FBI knocking on individuals’ doors asking questions, responses to FBI plans to conduct interviews of 5000 Muslim/Arab noncitizen men, the experiences of Muslims in the military and the travails and uncertain futures of post-9/11 detainees. While each of these topics raises slightly different questions in relation to the role of the state, the state is generally presented as seeking to protect Muslims and Arabs from bigots who would do them harm and to protect Americans in general from terrorists through whatever means at its disposal. It is also presented as tolerating the practices of a religious minority

community and including Muslims and Arabs in its antiterrorism efforts. While sometimes the state's actions are faulted for violating the rights of particular individuals, these actions are counterbalanced by an articulated need to aggressively pursue terrorists; while particular Muslims and Arabs may experience anxiety, inconveniences and even great hardships, they are by and large shown as being treated with respect and tolerance by the police, FBI and the military. Furthermore, Muslims and Arabs themselves are presented as benefiting from not only the protection offered by the state, but also their inclusion in the state apparatus through military or police service, that also attest to the patriotism of these communities.

Initially in these stories the relationship of the state to Muslims and Arabs is encapsulated in the image of the police officer stationed outside of a mosque, an Arab shopping strip or residential neighborhood (Purdy 2001; Rather 2001; Sengupta 2001; Wakin and LeDuff 2001; Zhao 2001). In a context of increasing reports of bias attacks, the police embody a state discourse of tolerance, protecting Muslim and Arab communities against those presented as isolated intolerant bigots. For example, one article describes a police officer's personal quest to reach out to Muslims. He drives around Queens in search of a mosque where he conveys his message that, "No one should feel bad... We are after evil. We are not after your religion. We don't want revenge; we want justice" (Zhao 2001). Echoing President Bush's rhetoric of true religion versus evil, the officer articulates his power by assuring this community that they are worthy of tolerance. However, as another piece about Muslims' responses to the air strikes in Afghanistan highlights, these police officers serve a double-function, not simply protecting, but also policing these communities. The article creates a visual parallel between attacking Afghanistan, represented on the first page through a map of the country denoting military targets, with the policing of Muslims/Arabs in the United States, represented on the second page through a

photograph of a police officer “patrol[ing]... one of the city’s biggest Arab neighborhoods,” where a woman, two men and a boy are walking wearing identifiably Islamic dress. This visual parallel created between the international and domestic “fronts” of the war on terror contradicts the ostensible message of the article that documents the support of New York Muslims for the war on Afghanistan.

The double function of the police in protecting and policing this community is noted more explicitly in other pieces, but none of these very explicitly address the question of racial profiling. One piece for example includes an off-hand comment of an Arab deli owner who says his store was visited by two police officers, “They said there was a threat to blow up the store. Maybe they just wanted to look around and see if we had any bombs here...” (Worth 2001). Another piece, “Michigan Officers Fear Pressures of US Plan,” (Wilgoren 2001c) about a community police station in an Arab district in Dearborn, Michigan, describes the ambivalent feelings of an Arab American officer hired to improve relations with the community, who now must participate in a federal initiative to interview 5,000 men from primarily Muslim-majority countries. The officer says that he is worried about how the government selected these names, but also notes in references to fellow Arab Americans, “As much as I love them, they can be my enemies, too, because they can’t mold me how they want to mold me. I’m still the police”(Wilgoren 2001c). This quote highlights that the officer’s loyalty must ultimately lie with the state and with his *policing* duties that can make other Arab Americans into “enemies.” Although the Arab American officer expresses some concern about the targeting of Arabs and Muslims, neither this piece nor others addressing the interviews delve into the issue of racial profiling. For example, the final piece in this series, “Questioning with a Powder-Puff Edge” (Wilgoren 2001d), describing the interviews themselves, presents them as collegial, non-

threatening, repetitive, and seemingly ineffective. The main question readers are left with is not whether subjecting this category of people to such government scrutiny was justifiable, but rather whether such unfocused, broad-sweeping interviews were a waste of time. A government official gets the last word, saying one does not get answers unless one asks questions, however no government official is asked to provide a justification for selecting these specific 5,000 men for interviewing.

The articles that most directly deal with the issue of racial profiling, telling the stories of predominantly Muslim and Arab men who have been detained, sometimes for months and often on minor visa violations, highlight the seemingly unlucky coincidences that led to the arrests, but rarely the centrality of the logic of racial profiling behind the government's targeting. The arrests, detention and deportation of the "9/11 detainees" in the three months following the attacks affected at least 750 non-citizen men, most from New York and New Jersey (Office of the Inspector General 2003). While these stories of the often clearly unjust hardship that individuals face offer some critique of the government policies, they do not critique racial profiling per se, but rather imply that the racial profile needs to be specified further to better identify potential terrorist threats. One lengthy piece published on Nov. 25, 2001, offered seven different experiences of detentions, primarily of Arab and Muslim noncitizen men, but also of two US citizen men of Palestinian descent (detained, then cleared, for apparently suspicious-looking passports) and one (Jewish) Israeli woman (detained and deported for working while on a tourist visa) (Wilgoren 2001f). While these portraits bring to life the real hardships faced by these individuals, their targeting is framed as being a result of government response to "resumes suspiciously like those of the 19 hijackers" during an "extraordinary situation." For example, the introduction of the article speaks of, "men traveling the country with large amounts of cash and

box cutters, and those who sought information on crop-dusters and flying lessons on large jets.” It also speaks of individuals drawing scrutiny as a result of making a plane reservation at Kinkos or visiting a department of motor vehicles at the same time as a hijacker. However, in many of the cases actually described, the reasons for the detentions are less clear, involving a selective enforcement of often previously-unenforced immigration laws and, sometimes, sealed secret evidence. More to the point, what is never explicitly noted is that in most cases, suspicion in large part is rooted in the individual in question being a Muslim, Arab or South Asian man; otherwise these “similarities” were not similarities at all or else a much larger numbers of people would have been rounded up. Furthermore, even the defense of these individuals comes from the perspective that there is a special connection between Muslims/Arabs and the terrorists, as highlighted in a quote by an ACLU attorney that, “this is alienating the very community whose confidence and support is critical to a successful investigation” (Wilgoren 2001f). Rather than countering a race-thinking that groups large and diverse communities with these particular 19 men, the argument becomes that the government needs to fine-tune its racial profiling mechanism to better distinguish between Muslims or Arabs who are potential allies, sources of information and threats.

A particularly sympathetic human interest story on a detainee is an article entitled “Who is this Kafka that People Keep Mentioning?” about the experiences of a doctor branded “Dr. Terror” in the media and detained for 13 days primarily because he shares a common Saudi last name with two of the hijackers. However, this piece reiterates the basic logic that it is appropriate to treat Muslims and Arabs by a different standard of evidence and only asks whether the government is being too aggressive and therefore potentially violating “legal principles, like individual rights and due process, that Americans hold dear” (Sontag 2001). It

also quotes one the detainee's statement, "What I went through was not fun. But in another country, I might be in jail for four years and nobody would know." These statements produce an opposition between values "Americans hold dear" and "another country" (Saudi Arabia?) where such values are flagrantly violated. This makes such violation of civil rights in the United States not a reflection of US culture or values, and erases the United States' longer history of promoting such political repression abroad by supporting such regimes. Of the seven human interest articles on detainees, only one voices the opinion of advocates who say a questionable form of racial profiling is at the heart of these policies, a position that is counter-balanced by a spokesperson for an anti-immigration think tank, who justifies selective enforcement against Muslims as both warranted and un concerning because it targets law-breakers (Lewin and Niebuhr 2001). Another piece ends with the unquestioned statement of a Justice Department spokesperson who says that although mistakes may have been made, they have "no interest in detaining people who are not a threat to us" (Drew and Miller 2001). The purity of intentions stands as an alibi and implicitly contrasts with the intentions of the terrorists, which is understood to be the slaughter of innocent people (Asad 2007). In framing the violation of civil rights as an unintended consequence of an aggressive pursuit of terrorists, these profiles further articulate a distinction between the violence of the US state and the violence of its "enemies."

Finally, in these human interest stories, the military, an institution being mobilized to war, plays a central role in not only demonstrating the patriotism of Muslim and Arab members of the military, along with their families who express pride in their military service, but also establishing the tolerance of the state in relation to Muslims and Arabs in the United States (Goodstein 2001a; Jehl 2001; Kilgannon 2001; Sachs and Harden 2001; Wakin 2001b). The military is presented as a multicultural institution accommodating and protective of religious

freedom (Goodstein 2001a; Jehl 2001; Kilgannon 2001). One cadet compares his experiences in the military favorably to the “icy attitudes and sideways glances” a friend of his received in the quintessential liberal community of Berkeley, California (Kilgannon 2001). There are repeated references to the idea that interest in Islam that “has come with more support than hostility” (Niebuhr 2001), for example three Muslim West Point cadets describe respectful conversations with their peers who have been curious to learn more of their religion and cultures (Kilgannon 2001). All of the members of the military profiled are supportive of the war in Afghanistan and almost all¹⁹ describe no conflict in their experiences as both Muslims and members of the military. At the same time the military itself becomes a civilizing institution, where a woman is not only in training to become a Muslim chaplain, but when she completes her training will be the highest ranking Muslim chaplain in the military. As such the military is presented as both purveyor of tolerance toward Muslims, and an institution that brings gender equality to a religion that is deemed to be governed by gender oppression.

Measuring Emotions, Assessing Risk

Considering these human interest stories more broadly we see that the stories themselves work to refine, rather than contradict, the racial thinking at the heart of the state’s policies. These stories delineate a US Muslim/Arab/Middle Eastern population distinct from the broader population, one that is internally differentiated, but that can be assessed in relation to specific variable. These stories produce a set of profiles that facilitate such assessment by acting as an interface between the individual and the population. Each profile refers to a particular assemblage of variables, such as gender, religiosity/secularism, class, relation to Muslims/Arabs abroad, and emotional responses to the 9/11 attacks, and attunes readers to how to assess the

¹⁹ Only one article (Jehl 2001) notes some ambivalence in this regard, describing a Navy chaplain who says that he could not support a war on Muslims, but supports the war on Afghanistan as a war against terrorists.

degree of trustworthiness or threat in relation to each profile. The particular profiles that emerge in these pieces include the fearful traditional woman, the patriotic traditional man, the ambivalent traditional Muslim/Arab, the angry modern woman and the tolerant modern man. “Traditional” here refers to a constellation of characteristics such as, being religious; being a first generation immigrant; holding a working class or immigrant niche job; and/or associating strongly with a Muslim/Arab community. “Modern” refers to having characteristics such as being non-religious or deemphasizing religious practice; holding upper-middle class or “professional” job; and/or not associating strongly with a Muslim/Arab community.²⁰ Some of these profiles will emerge again in later chapters, especially Chapter 2, on a “modern” woman seeking to challenge the oppression of women in Islam, and Chapter 4, on a “traditional” Muslim woman who becomes the object of sympathy after she is victimized by a right-wing campaign.

“Traditional” Women as Fearful Victims

The traditional and religious Muslim woman donning a headscarf emerges especially in earlier stories documenting the “backlash” against Muslims and Arabs, as the embodiment of the victimization and fear in these community. Fear and victimhood sticks most strongly to these women because of their status as women, as Muslim women, and particularly as headscarf-wearing Muslim women. Women also tend to be more sympathetic victims because of perceptions of the oppression of women in Islam. As such, in a period of increased reports of hate crimes, including the murders of five men—three of whom were neither Muslim nor Arab and none of whom was both (Ahmad 2002)²¹—it is tolerance and sympathy for the Muslim woman in particular that becomes the articulation of US tolerance against such bigoted violence.

²⁰ This typology is not intended to suggest that there is a correlation between the characteristics in each of these constellations, but rather to bring to the surface that the articles emphasize characteristics of individuals in ways that make them fit such an implicit typology.

²¹ Two were Sikh Indians, one was Hindu Indian, one was a (Muslim) Pakistani, and one was a Christian Arab.

However, despite the evocation of sympathy in this focus on the fear and victimization of these women, there is not a single article that focuses primarily on one of these women, as there are for both “traditional” men and “modern” men and women.

This fear is more broadly captured in headlines such as “Arabs and Muslims Steer through an Unsettling Scrutiny” (Sengupta 2001), “Uneasy Times for Muslims on Island” (Rather 2001), “For Arab Americans a Time of Disquiet” (Worth 2001) or “Sadness and Fear as a Group feels Doubly at Risk” (J. Fountain 2001). While articles do speak of attacks on South Asian, Arab and Muslim men, on their businesses, and on mosques, Muslim/Arab men are presented as generally going on with their daily lives. Rather, the headscarf-wearing Muslim woman is noted over and over in early pieces that describe the scrutiny and fear experienced by Muslim and Arab communities. Initially it is her relative absence in public that is noted, such as in a Sept. 13 article:

In Cobble Hill, Brooklyn, during the peak late-morning shopping hours, just a few women visited stores in their long gowns and veils. Usually, on such a sunny morning, they would have been everywhere. But word had gone out across the country for women in hijab, as the identifying veil is called in Arabic, to stay in. (Sengupta 2001)

There are several reports of harassment of and attacks on such women, including an incident of a man driving his car over a curb towards a woman of Pakistani descent and telling her “I’ll kill you” (Rather 2001). Although articles also describe harassment experienced by men, fear is more generalized among Muslim women who debate removing their headscarves, staying home or continuing to wear them in public out of pride in their faith (Worth 2001; J. Fountain 2001; Lee 2001). For example, one article begins by describing a male store owner experiencing an incident involving two men cursing him and threatening to bomb his store (Worth 2001). Although he is “shaken,” and responds by saying, “we love the flag just as much as they do,” throughout the rest of the article articulations of fear are associated with headscarf-wearing women, with three

separate references to women's fear of going into public wearing a headscarf. Even when articles speak of the scrutiny that has been focused almost exclusively on men from Middle Eastern countries by the federal government, including FBI plans to interview 5,000 such men, they speak not of fear, but rather of "worry" that is said to be rooted in lack of trust in government as a result of coming from authoritarian police states, rather than the credible fear about actually being detained or deported by the US government (Winter 2001).

Indeed, repeated close-up images of Muslim women in headscarves and of men standing or kneeling in prayer, in small and large groups, seem to stand in for a traditional Muslim/Arab community. Even the single article that describes an apparent bias-related slaying of an Arab American convenience store owner, focuses on articulations of support from non-Muslim/Arab neighbors and not on the personal responses of Muslim/Arab men; however these men are referenced primarily through an image of men praying in front of a coffin (Nieves 2001b). There is a stark contrast in these of religiously-marked women and men which are intimate in very different ways, focusing on women's emotional life displayed in their facial expressions, while watching from a little more distance men's intimate act of prayer. Islamic religiosity is visually represented as highly gender segregated and unequal, with men participating in an active, communal practice, while women seem to be subjected via the headscarf to the oppressive strictures of their religion and to scrutiny of many other Americans. The headscarf is a highly contested object viewed by some feminists as the embodiment of Muslim women's inferior status (see, eg, Lazreg 2009), and as such, is already associated with Muslim women's victimhood. As a result victimhood sticks to this sign and the victimhood of the entire community also becomes articulated through the fear experienced by the headscarf-wearing woman.

A particularly clear example of how headscarf-wearing women come to embody the victimization of Muslims, Arabs and others is in an article primarily focused on arguing against interpersonal “racial profiling” by noting that individuals’ appearances do not necessarily fit their actual ethnic heritage. Discordantly, on first appearance the article appears to be about the fear of veiled Muslim women. It is entitled, “Trying to Soothe the Fears Hiding Behind the Veil” (Lee 2001), is accompanied by a cartoon image of a woman in traditional dress (headscarf and a long overcoat) surrounded by two much larger men who seem to be a soldier and a sailor, and opens with the image of the fearful headscarf-wearing woman:

She refuses to remove her scarf.

But Efraha, a Muslim woman who lives in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn, is still afraid because she has heard stories of women in hijab (Arabic for veil) who have been attacked and called names. It was Efraha’s fear that made her ask that her last name not be given in this column. She will not ride a subway or a bus. And it is a reflection of her fear that where she works, the Arab-American Family Support Center in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn, has made a list of volunteer escorts for women, like her, who are afraid. (Lee 2001)

Opening with a single sentence paragraph noting a woman’s refusal to remove her headscarf, the next paragraph uses the word fear or afraid four times in as many sentences. However, the rest of the article does not describe a single other headscarf-wearing woman, but rather generalizes this fear to anyone who experiences “everyday racial profiling.” It argues against such interpersonal biased practices by describing a number of examples of individuals whose appearances do not seem to fit their actual ethnic make-up (for example, a non-Arab, multiracial man who is mistaken for Arab, or an Arab woman who has blue eyes and blond hair). Although the argument does not apply to these headscarf-wearing Muslim women, it is the fear of this figure that provides emotional weight to the argument.

Conversely when articles speak of Muslims’ positive experiences, the ability of women to wear the headscarf freely and without fear becomes a marker of US tolerance. A profile of

Muslim students describe college as a context where these students are able to find community and develop a stronger religious identity. The article particularly emphasizing the experiences of women choosing to wear hijab as part of their identity-formation, is accompanied by three images, all of young women in headscarves. The article ends by emphasizing religious tolerance in the United States as a unique context that allows for this self-exploration and religious expression, the final paragraph quoting a young woman as saying, “You can practice your religion the way you want... Because nothing is forcing you into it” (Goodstein 2001b). Therefore the headscarf is both a sign of the fear of Muslims/Arabs and conversely of the religious tolerance of this country.

Articulation of fear interacts with gender and religiosity to produce the headscarf-wearing woman as a fearful victim who is the embodiment of the fear of the community in general and is worthy of tolerance. For all the mentions of the fear of such women and the images of headscarf-wearing Muslim women, there is not a single article that profiles one such woman in depth. They become the primary recipient of a tolerance that holds its object at some distance. These representations by and large parallel Bush administration discourses about headscarf-wearing women, a discourse of paternalism and protectivism (Office of the Press Secretary 2001b). Similarly, the tolerance of Americans is established by protecting these women from scrutiny and allowing a space in which they may practice their difference, as long as it remains unthreatening.

“Traditional” Men as Emphatic Patriots

By contrast profiles of “traditional” Muslim and Arab immigrant men focus less on their fear of victimization than on their articulations of patriotism. Of course such articulations are in part a response to the increased scrutiny and fear that resulted in “imperative patriotism” (Salaita

2006). These human interest stories seem to parallel the sudden proliferation of flags flown in Muslim/Arab neighborhoods mentioned in numerous articles (Worth 2001; Wakin and LeDuff 2001; Purdy 2001; Sengupta 2001), acting as a shield against scrutiny and suspicion, yet one that often fails to actually protect these communities. As men, especially as Muslim/Arab men, victimization does not stick to them as it does for traditional Muslim/Arab women. Rather these men's gender, ethnicity and religion makes them most suspect because they most closely fit the profile of the 9/11 attackers who were all Muslim and Arab men. These men become mirror images of the terrorist, articulating a vociferous patriotism that is the direct opposite of the anti-Americanism of the terrorists. While they are deemed worthy of tolerance, that tolerance is contingent upon this articulated patriotism and distancing from communities or politics that might put that into doubt. However, the passion with which the patriotism is articulated seems to point to a fundamental irrationalism that produces a kernel of doubt. As such these men retain an undercurrent of threat which continues to associate them with the terrorist, despite and perhaps because of their strongly articulated patriotism.

In these pieces, the traditional and patriotic Muslim, Arab man is often a first generation immigrant who has achieved some degree of success in this country, becoming a testament to the notion of the United States as the land of opportunity. In "A Family, Both Arab and Arab-American, Divided by War," Baher Shaarawy, patriarch of an immigrant family settled in Bayonne, NJ, is both a victim of the attacks—he worked in an office in the World Trade Center where he lost twenty-nine of his co-workers—and a patriotic American (Sachs and Harden 2001). His patriotism is very strongly evidenced: he feels "blessed" to be an American citizen, displays framed invitations to the inaugurations of Presidents Clinton and Bush in his home, has a son in the Marines, and "wholeheartedly support[s] the war" in Afghanistan. Mr. Shaarawy has

even cut off ties to his relatives in Egypt (they are also profiled in the article as a counter-point), with whom he has otherwise been close, because he disagrees with their opposition to the war and critiques of US foreign policy. As such, he does not even retain any social relations that might cast doubt on his patriotism. This patriotic passion also mirrors his religious devotion, as he is pictured with his wife, wearing a large headscarf and loose-fitting clothing, in contrast to his non-headscarf-wearing female relatives in Egypt.

Similarly, in “Carrying 27 Years of Civic Passion to the Mayor’s Office,” we meet the newly-elected Mayor of Wayne, Michigan, Abdul or “Al” Haidous, a first-generation immigrant from Lebanon, who has made a living as the owner of a family-run grocery store, and says that he is “living the American dream” (J.W. Fountain 2001a). Quoting Haidous as saying, “the greatest country on this earth is the United States of America” and “you get what you put in life,” the reporter notes that his subject says, “a million clichés.” However, it seems that these clichés are sincerely-felt: “there is a resonance in his voice and a glint in his eyes that says maybe this guy is the real deal.” The reader senses the distance the reporter feels from his subject in this need to note that his choice of language belies a certain excessiveness, even extremism. While patriotic extremism in an Arab immigrant may initially seem counter-intuitive, in another respect it maintains a particular stereotype of Arabs as emotional rather than rational. While stereotypically these feelings are said to be directed to a home country and/or religion, here they are presented as more “appropriately” directed to the United States, thereby counter-balancing what might otherwise be deemed a threat.

The process of this transfer of emotional connection and identification is most clearly presented in a profile of an Egyptian immigrant who has achieved his American Dream as an actor playing the roles of terrorists in various Hollywood blockbusters, in “Terrorist From

Central Casting Has Hard Lessons to Teach.” However, even after gaining such success the actor is presented as susceptible to the draw of Islamic radicalism. The article describes a several year period in the mid-1990s, when the actor decided to join his local mosque in order to find out more about “radical Islamic fundamentalists” for his roles but in the process, he says, “I fell in love with” the community and, his wife says, “He got a little fanatical for a while” (Goodstein 2001e). The members of the mosque, although “not terrorists,” are presented as susceptible to being recruited to be “freedom fighters” in Afghanistan (although we are not told if any actually were). The actor’s own susceptibility to falling in love with the mosque community serves as an analogy for the “young idealistic Muslims” who might not only join such a community, but also be recruited to an anti-American “holy war.” Ultimately though, the actor’s love finds a more appropriate object: “I love this country because I didn’t always have it... Freedom, food, water that is clean, Constitution – these are not things I take for granted” (Goodstein 2001e). While his inclusion of food and water point to economic and developmental conditions that do not usually get articulated in discourses about US exceptionalism, these references are quickly overshadowed by the more familiar tropes of “Freedom” and “Constitution.” His patriotic love of the United States is further established in his current project, a documentary he is making on Muslim militants’ recruitment efforts in the United States. As such, readers are assured that the transfer of his affection has been complete and he is no longer a threat.

In these profiles of traditional Muslim/Arab men, excessive patriotism, a patriotism that was in fact demanded of them, seems to indicate a more primordial, emotional and irrational form of affiliation. This exaggerated patriotism is presented as a product of a need to have a strongly-felt identification with a larger community. While in these cases, these men articulated that emotional connection with the United States, an irrationalism seems to be at the heart of the

identification producing a potential threat. These men seem like switches that can be flipped (and in the third profile is flipped). Their emotionalism is their vulnerability that produces a lack of trustworthiness. Should these men articulate any ambivalence about their relation to the United States, they are easily transformed from patriots to threats.

Ambivalence as Threat

Indeed, in other human interest stories, when individuals deviate from these particular scripts and criticize the international role of the United States or doubt the culpability of the Taliban or bin Laden in relation to the 9/11 attacks, their ambivalence about the predominant narratives about the war on terror produces a threat. Although human interest stories are intended to introduce readers to different experiences and perspectives, these moments of questioning or doubt do not become opportunities for exploring the sources of such different perspectives, the evidence for them, or their implications. Differing or unusual perspectives are never taken seriously as a reason for questioning the dominant narratives. Rather they become markers of difference, specifically the dual loyalty and conflicting attachments of Muslims and Arabs that makes it difficult for them to fully integrate into the United States. In a moment where Ari Fleisher had warned that Americans, “need to watch what they say, watch what they do” (Krugman 2004), the distinction between opinions and actions, between dissent and treason, was actively being blurred. Therefore this unexplained and unexplored difference of opinion is easily read as a source of threat, marking as potential threats traditional Muslims/Arabs who do not strictly abide by the gendered narratives of victimization and patriotism recounted above and especially who do not completely disassociate themselves from Muslims/Arabs abroad.

While the question of competing loyalties emerges generally and ambiguously in earlier pieces, later pieces highlight clearly that *some* Muslims and Arabs seeming to have excessively

strong ties to Muslims and Arabs abroad. One such early piece is a fairly sympathetic article profiling communities in Paterson and Teaneck, N.J., “For Arab-Americans, Flag-Flying and Fear,” which begins with the story of an Arab man whose godson who worked in the World Trade Center is missing. The third paragraph however shifts slightly saying, “If the terror was perpetrated by people who hate America – and celebrated by others dancing in the streets – Arab-Americans have felt compelled to say that much more strongly that they love America. Yet, it’s often mixed with sympathy for the politics, while not the terrorism, of Arabs in the Middle East.” (Purdy 2001). While Arabs in the Middle East are cast as clearly threatening, the status of Arabs in New Jersey is less clear, as they are both affiliated with and disaffiliated from the Middle East. Speaking in broad brushes about the New Jersey communities, the reporter does not draw strong distinctions among Arabs in the United States.

However in later articles we see a clearer sedimentation of the idea that *some* Muslim and Arab Americans tend to have excessively strong loyalties to their counterparts abroad. Profiles of New York mosques and Islamic schools particularly focus on how individuals in these institutions are connected to Muslims abroad. In a number pieces on mosques, reporters describe some individuals’ doubts about the guilt of bin Laden and the Taliban. For example, in one article on a Long Island mosque published two weeks after the attacks, a female member of the mosque says of the Taliban, “they haven’t really proved they are terrorists and all they are doing is following their religion more stringently than the average person does” (Rather 2001). An assertion by a single individual that is clearly contrary to the dominant US narrative is simply reported without further exploration of what this woman really means, what evidence she provides and what the larger implications of her statement are. Does she support the Taliban and what does that support entail or is she pushing against what she considers an unfair

characterization of the Taliban? Without any further exploration and because of an equivalency created between the Taliban and bin Laden, who was quickly deemed responsible for the attacks, such statements were likely read by many as support for terrorism.²² Another article, “Afghans at Queens Mosque Split Over bin Laden,” profiles a very patriotic leader of an Afghan mosque in Flushing, Queens who is in conflict with a small contingent of Taliban supporters whose views are indicated second-hand because they refuse to be interviewed (Filkins 2001). Although there are members of the mosque who are critical of both the US-led war and of the Taliban, the article emphasizes the distinction between the flag-waving imam and the Taliban-sympathizers, those who in Bush parlance are “with us” or “against us”, largely ignoring the mosque members who are critical of both of these positions.

Another piece entitled “The 2 Worlds of Muslim American Teenagers” (Sachs 2001), superficially has the form of a humanistic effort to give voice to a misunderstood minority, but gives little context or information for understanding the statements it quotes from students of a private Islamic school in Brooklyn. The article brings together fears of volatile teenagers, of unassimilated immigrants and of an Islamic threat to create a portrayal of an incipient threat that exists throughout the country. The students are represented as torn and confused by their presumed dual loyalties to Islam and to the United States, and likely aligning themselves with Islam. As the second paragraph says,

To be young and Muslim in the United States today...is to be consumed by causes abroad and removed from politics at home, to feel righteous and also confused, to alternate between gratitude and resentment toward the world outside their classrooms.

²² Even among more sympathetic readers these refusals to comply with a patriotic script are read as concerning. For example, one letter-writer who expresses concern about the increased scrutiny of Muslims, goes on to say that the Long Island mosque member was undermining efforts to “draw a sharp distinction between Muslims and the Taliban” and unappreciative of the standard of justice that she enjoys in the United States, but is denied those living under the Taliban (Silverstein 2001). As this letter indicates, this woman’s statements become representative of Muslims in general and associated with lacking the patriotic appreciation of the United States that is increasingly mandatory for all Muslims.

A stereotype of volatile teens is made all the more threatening because of these teens' ties to Islam and especially Muslims abroad. In particular, she quotes the teens as saying they might refuse to take up arms against other Muslims and would be willing to follow a true Muslim leader elsewhere, should one emerge. This threat is more strongly associated with male students; an image of two serious young men accompanied with a caption restates this statement of refusal to fight a Muslim country, while a smaller image of three headscarf wearing young women, smiling and talking to each other does not note any concerning perspectives. While the article describes these students as "like other immigrants" in being tied to their homelands, these ties are presented as sinister in that these teens are said to have "empathy for the young Muslims around the world who profess hatred for America and Americans." Although the author notes that they "may not be a scientific sampling of Muslim American youth," she suggests that their viewpoints are widely shared. As such a profile of an Islamic school becomes a story about the incipient threat of Muslim American teens who are too attached to Muslims abroad.

Human interest stories therefore treat Muslim/Arab Americans as part of a broader global population of Muslims and Arabs that is seen as homogenous, anti-American and dangerous. As a result, the strength of association with Muslims/Arabs abroad becomes a significant variable for assessing the threat level of Muslims/Arabs in the United States. Articulations of political positions or religious affiliations that emphasize solidarity with Muslims/Arabs abroad are particularly threatening, all the more so when they are held by "traditional" Muslim/Arab. However, any association with Muslims/Arabs abroad is suspect unless it is clearly articulated to be an association that promotes US interests and values.

Gendered Exceptions: Angry Rebels and Empathetic Humanists

In contrast to “traditional” Muslims and Arabs, a number of human interest stories profile “modern” and “exceptional” individuals living independently outside ethnic enclaves (often in Manhattan), having a secular or privatized relationship to religion, and practicing a particular consumer lifestyle that marks them as well-integrated into US society. These men and women are able to articulate a more subtle form of patriotism, manifested particularly through their acceptance of a dominant discourse about US tolerance and Islamic intolerance. Women, in particular, are presented as rebels who express anger at both terroristic violence and sexism that they see as rooted in strains of Islam. Anger, rebellion and challenge become their predominant emotional mode as they become responsible for reforming their religion. Men, by contrast, can escape the specificity of their religious and ethnic identity, articulating an empathy and tolerance that crosses such divides and produces a universal humanism. While such exceptional individuals are very emotional, they are not excessively tied to their religious, ethnic or national identities. Rather their emotions are presented as directed in more universal registers, as a response to the human tragedy of 9/11. As such they are presented as taking more “nuanced” positions, neither Islamophobic, nor uncritical of the religion, neither excessively patriotic, nor unappreciative of particular American values. While challenging a cultural racism that sees all Muslims/Arabs as necessarily religious, these profiles consistently reinforce a notion that culture or religion is at the heart of the emerging conflicts.

An article entitled, “Moderates Start Speaking Out Against Islamic Intolerance,” (Wakin 2001a) lays out one version of such an exceptional “modern” Muslim, which it terms a “moderate” and begins by describing in emotional terms,

Outrage, it seems, has helped shatter the silence.

After years of quietly watching a harsh, puritanical strain of Islam enter America, many moderate Muslims are speaking out in favor of a more tolerant form of their faith. They are emboldened by their sense of anger at the Sept. 11 attacks and embarrassed by what they see as a distorted version of their religion. (Wakin 2001a)

“Moderate Muslims” alternately described as “progressive,” “liberal,” “tolerant,” and “modernist” are defined as those who speak out against “extremist,” “Wahhabi,” “rigid,” or “traditionalist” Islam. Moderates are presented as exceptions and outliers who probably constitute “a small minority” of Muslims in the United States. The article delineates the characteristics of this subpopulation as predominantly female, young, assimilated and educated. The battle against restrictive cultural, especially gender, norms is a central issue. For example, one woman describes her experience with a conservative mosque that “told her husband to grow a beard, rid their home of their television set and keep [her] at home. She was ordered to cover her head.” She concludes, that Muslims in the United States, “need to realize there are really extremist elements that need to be countered openly.” The article conflates such experiences of Muslims in the United States with images and stereotypes about Islam abroad, speaking of a “tyrannical form of Islam that is not only present in [moderate Muslims’] lives, but also exists as images in the minds of non-Muslims – the veiled woman who cannot drive, the harsh punishments, the anti-Jewish rhetoric.” This “extremist” and “tyrannical” form of Islam in the United States is said to be a result of the influence of a Saudi Arabian Wahhabism, also described as the inspiration for Osama bin Laden. As a result there is a conflation of the September 11 attacks, and “Islamic terrorism” more broadly, with expressions of religious conservatism in the United States. This produces a collective culpability among “traditional” Muslims for the 9/11 attacks, associating religious orthodoxy and cultural conservatisms with terrorism, a sentiment articulated in the closing lines of the article by a professor of Islamic

studies who says, “Progressives and modernist Muslims are telling the traditionalists, ‘Your hands are dirtier than this.’”

These themes are further explored in an intimate human interest story entitled “A Daughter of Islam, and an Enemy of Terror,” about Aasma Khan who is a lawyer and the founder of Muslims Against Terrorism (Finn 2001). While her formation of Muslims Against Terrorism is clearly a “patriotic” act, the emotional weight of the article lies in its descriptions of the intimate aspects of her life as an (almost) typical, cosmopolitan New Yorker. We meet her barefoot and bare-headed in her upper Manhattan apartment that is mostly empty due to a divorce, where her prayer rug is rolled up in the corner, but not used as regularly as she would like. Described as having been a “citified, New Age Muslim who shopped at Ikea, [and] skated in Central Park” before 9/11, she has now become “an angrily articulate advocate intent on” reclaiming her religion from the terrorists. Her anger, evident in her “clenched fist” gives way to other emotions, her eyes welling up with tears as she explains that while she initially feared bigotry from other Americans, now, as someone who dares speak the truth, she fears becoming the target of Islamic extremists. She garners sympathy as an independent, secularized Muslim woman, one who has been moved by the attacks of 9/11 to make a personal contribution in the war on terror for which she is deemed particularly well-positioned. Despite her emotionalism, her patriotism does not seem to be overly exaggerated or put on, but rather is confirmed by a combination of her consumer lifestyle, her secularized/privatized religiosity, and her alignment with a particular war on terror discourse of opposing intolerance.

In contrast to “traditional” Muslims, these “modern” Muslims are able to engage with Muslims and Arabs abroad in ways that are not deemed threatening, because they become vehicles for the transmittal of “Western” values. For example, an article entitled, “Stitch by

Stitch, a Daughter of Islam Takes On Taboos” (Sheets 2001), about Egyptian-born artist now living in Manhattan, begins with her explanation: “What is going on now politically is like a mirror of what has always gone on in myself, because I am a hybrid of the West and the East. It’s a clash between civilizations that of course don’t understand each other.” (Sheets 2001).

Although using the terminology of “clash of civilizations” that implies an inherent conflict between Islam and the West, the artist argues that in fact cultural hybridity is possible. However, she rejects hybridity that does not prioritize Western norms, for example, describing as “ludicrous” Egyptian clothes based on Western styles but modified to conform to Islamic concepts of modesty. Rather, she presents herself as the vehicle for a positive cultural hybridity, describing, for example, how her “strictly religious” family has come to appreciate her sexually explicit art, which includes images of women lifted from pornography. The article concludes with the statement that she now believes that perhaps art can change the world “a little bit.” The modern Muslim woman becomes an agent of change who challenges Islamic norms through representations of women’s sexuality.

In contrast to such women, the modern, secularized man is able to more fully transcend such cultural and religious identifications, as indicated by the title of one article, “Strains on a Man and the City, Distilled in 10 minutes” (Richardson 2001). This piece presents an even more implicit form of patriotism through a deeply sympathetic portrayal of Moukhtar Kocache, a Lebanese American curator who lost a friend on 9/11 and whose office, formerly in the World Trade Center, is now contained in a purple folder. Mr. Kocache is presented as a “typical” Manhattanite who likes yoga and in-line skating and has a slightly cynical and conflicted relationship with his therapist. His secularity is established by the fact that he “barely know[s] the basic principles of Islam,” and his individualism, by the fact that he doesn’t associate very

much with Arab-identified organizations. The piece focuses mostly on his personal trauma and distressed emotional state, noting that having grown up in war-torn Lebanon, he knows “how to laugh and cry at the same time.” The article concludes with a story that it says, “is so New York,” an experience that Mr. Kocache had on Sept. 12 when he found himself in the presence of a police officer and middle-aged woman speaking Hebrew to each other. His initial discomfort gave way after he joined in the conversation (he speaks Hebrew also) which continued in Arabic and subsequently ended with a hug from the woman and a hand shake from the police officer. For him, this experience was “beautiful” and “is what makes it possible for all of us to live together.” Mr. Kocache emerges as cosmopolitan, universalist, and humanist able to cross deep political divides and this New York moment attests to the tolerance that is the basis of the city. While Mr. Kocache is never explicitly presented as patriotic, he is presented as already aligned with American values as secular, individualist and tolerant. He is the only Muslim/Arab able to transcend his religion and ethnicity, to bridge the particular to the universal, and to embody both the suffering and the tolerance of the city.

Conclusion

Rather than following a culturally racist logic of seeing Muslims/Arabs as a homogenous other, these stories demonstrate an interest in differentiating within this Muslim/Arab population, challenge a notion that individuals are locked in a cultural heredity. As a manifestation of population racism these stories do produce a separation between an us and a them (defined especially in relation to Islam), never challenging the assumption that Muslims and Arabs have a unique relationship to the attacks that must be interrogated. However, they also describe diversity and variation in this racialized population, a variation that then becomes a set of variables for assessment, that readers must become attuned to in order to assess the degree of

threat that various types of Muslims pose. In particular, these stories depict “traditional” Muslims/Arabs as objects of a tolerance, if they are fearful or exhibit patriotism, or intolerance, if they are too strongly associated with Muslims/Arabs abroad. “Modern” Muslims/Arabs, on the other hand, are portrayed in more intimate and emotionally resonant ways, that makes them objects of identification or sympathy. Also, their associations with Muslims/Arabs abroad are not deemed threatening because both the combination of their characteristics and emotional reiteration of a discourse of tolerance make them already aligned with the “West.” While my explanation has focused on particular profiles, the actual objects of assessment are the variables (such as gender, religiosity, class) that come together to produce a profile. As such, these variables can come together in different combinations, the associations and meanings of particular variables can change and assessments of particular profiles can also shift.

There is a continuity between the racial profile, the law enforcement profile, and the human interest profile. More specifically, these human interest stories maintain the logic of risk analysis and preemptive criminalization at the basis of the racial profile and the law enforcement profile. They refine, rather than challenge, the crude and inefficient racial profile, that sees all Muslims/Arabs in the United States as potential terrorist threats, producing a set of profiles of Muslims/Arabs that consist of informational, visual and affective/emotional elements. Informationally, references to geographic and demographics distribution of particular Muslims/Arabs produces various statistically-demarcated subpopulations of Muslim/Arab that must be assessed along particular variables of interest. Visually, repeated images of Muslims and Arabs attune readers to particular characteristics and variables, especially in relation to religiosity, gender and emotions. Affectively stories focus on Muslims and Arabs emotional responses to the 9/11 attacks as a measure of form and degree of national affiliation and loyalty.

More specifically, articulated emotions interact with variables, such as gender and religiosity, to produce gradients of differentiation among Muslims and Arabs and marking degrees of rationalism or irrationalism, backwardness or modernity, and trustworthiness or threat.

Chapter 2

Empathy, Authenticity and Orientalism: Reconfiguring Divides Through Reading

In the years following the September 11 attacks, discourses of tolerance towards Muslims/Arabs in the United States found their corollary in the proliferation of interest in and sympathy for the Muslims/Arabs in Muslim-majority countries. In particular, there was a proliferation of memoirs by Iranian and Iranian American women²³ which coincided with US wars on neighboring Afghanistan and Iraq, justified in part as humanitarian acts of liberation. The most successful of such recent memoirs, *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books* by Azar Nafisi, was released in the United States in March 2003, the month of the US-led invasion of Iraq and a year after President George W. Bush dubbed Iran a part of the “axis of evil” in his state of the union address. The memoir has been read by US and other English-language press as a humanistic portrait of the intimate lives of Iranian women in the context of the daily oppression of the Islamic republic. Nafisi’s experience of teaching canonical Anglophone literature in postrevolution Iran is understood to show how the “universal” values of these works allow Iranian women a space in which to experience moments of liberation in an otherwise repressive and stultifying environment.

²³ These included: in 2003, the graphic memoir about the Iranian Revolution, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, by Marjane Satrapi, the story of growing up in California, *Funny in Farsi*, by Firoozeh Dumas and *Wedding Song: Memoirs of an Iranian Jewish Woman* by Farideh Goldin; in 2004, Satrapi’s sequel *Persepolis II*, Roya Hakakian’s *Journey From the Land of No*, about her experiences during the Iranian Revolution within the Iranian Jewish community, and *An Enduring Love: My Life with the Shah*, the memoir of the wife of the overthrown shah, Farah Pahlavi; and, in 2005, *Lipstick Jihad: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America and American in Iran* by Azadeh Moaveni and *Even After All This Time: A Story of Love, Revolution, and Leaving Iran* by Afschineh Latifi. I know of no similar works published by Iranian or Iranian-American men. Of the other Iranian women’s memoirs, only Satrapi’s *Persepolis* has approached the kind of visibility and sales that *Reading Lolita in Tehran* has in the US, although proving less commercially successful (Jones 2004; Figs 2003), and garnering more mixed reviews than Nafisi’s memoir.

I consider the publication and release of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* as an event which has been productive of a discourse of sympathy that reformulates the Orientalist divide of West and East or us and them. This discourse, produced through both the memoir and the broader media reception of the memoir, undermined a notion that all individuals are locked into their inherited culture at the basis of cultural racism, reformulating the Orientalist divide into one between promodern Iranians, able to appreciate the “universal” values imparted through Western cultural sources, and antimodern Iranians, susceptible to violent strains within Islam. Nafisi’s notion of reading as a means of creating empathy is key to a reformulated conception of us/them that is more subtle and flexible, thereby available to be taken up by a wide range of political interests. In particular, the memoir evokes the idea of empathy for Nafisi’s female study group students who both stand in for Iranian women in general and are revealed to be fundamentally like “us.” This empathy superficially authenticates the memoir as representative of the views of a broad range of Iranian women, although the authenticity of the memoir is more substantively located in the fact that it tells a story that ultimately rings true to the Western readers’ ears. Furthermore, empathy serves another role, offering a means of distinguishing us from them, in terms of those capable of (and therefore worthy of) empathy versus those who are not. This new formulation of the Orientalist binary maps onto gender and religiosity, resulting in an image of unempathetic, religious, non-Westernized men as the oppressors of all women, who therefore are made open to Western culture as a source of liberation. As a result, while the memoir offers a challenge to a pure cultural racism that sees culture as wholly determinant of individuals, it reinforces an image of a threat that is uniquely Islamic, contrasted to a Western culture associated with empathy, imagination, democracy and freedom.

My analysis focuses on the memoir itself, critical reception of the memoir, and media coverage of the memoir and Nafisi, along with lay reception of the work as demonstrated in online reader reviews and discussions. My analysis centers particularly on approximately 60 reviews, interviews and articles published in the approximately year and half following the publication of the book in US and other English-language Western newspapers, magazines, and trade publications that discuss the memoir or Nafisi (compiled via Lexis Nexis and Academic Search premier databases).²⁴ I supplemented these reviews with an analysis of reviews by amazon.com users, focusing on the 30 reviews rated “Most Helpful” by other users,²⁵ along with less systematically-gathered blog posts and comments on online book group discussion forums. I also consider Nafisi’s public statements as the memoir has given her a platform from which to speak, regularly giving talks and being a commentator on news programs. Therefore I analyze the memoir itself and consider how material from the memoir is repeated, amplified, misrepresented or supplemented in the press, to consider how the memoir has been read and interpreted in a Western context. Indeed, the preexisting conceptions of the Middle East and Islam highly mediate how the work enters and is reproduced in the larger discursive context.

The problem of the reception of the work must be considered in relation to the fact that it is a transcultural text marketed as a memoir, but that also presents itself as social history, literary criticism and, arguably, fiction. This genre bending allows Nafisi to speak with her own personal voice and yet potentially seem to represent Iranian women in general through her students and others. Such memoirs that seek to represent the lives of Third World subjects to a Western audience must be understood as produced in a field constituted by asymmetrical relations of

²⁴ While the vast majority of reviews (43) I analyzed were in US-based publications, a number were published in other countries: United Kingdom (6), Canada (4), Australia (2) and New Zealand (1).

²⁵ At the time of compiling these reviews (September 2011) a total of 410 reviews were posted on amazon.com’s *Reading Lolita in Tehran* webpages for the 2003 and 2008 edition of the book. Of the 30 top-rated reviews, 24 of them were written in 2003 or 2004.

power. Pratt (1992) speaks of how through some transcultural texts “colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer’s own terms,” involving “partial collaboration with and appropriation of the idioms of the conqueror” (7), but also being inventive and dialogical and posing a challenge to dominant conceptions. My analysis considers what role the memoir’s reinforcement of and challenges to preconceived notions about Muslims have in relation to anti-Muslim/Arab racism.

The memoir describes Nafisi’s experience as a professor of English-language literature in Iran from the time of the 1979 Iranian revolution until 1997, when she and her family emigrated to the United States. From a prominent secular family, Nafisi left Iran at thirteen, studying in Europe and the United States, and returned to Iran as a professor following the overthrow of Mohammad Reza Shah. The memoir is divided into four parts framed in relation to specific novels and writers. The first and last sections, “Lolita” and “Austen,” describe the private study group Nafisi held from 1995-1997 with seven female students, focusing on how their lives were controlled by the regime. The second section, “Gatsby,” focuses on the period immediately following the revolution and the ideological battles fought within Nafisi’s classroom and the universities, and the third, “James,” describes the period of the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88) and entrenchment of the new regime. Throughout, Nafisi’s classroom discussions of these works serve as a means to analyze the aftermath of the revolution.

In the following analysis, I begin by describing the wide appeal of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* across a political spectrum and how the work has helped to make Nafisi a respected commentator on a broad range of topics. I will then consider the apparent contradiction between Hamid Dabashi’s argument that Nafisi’s memoir corroborates Samuel Huntington’s clash of civilizations thesis and Nafisi’s own argument regarding cultures. I will lay out my argument for

how the memoir and its reception in the media produce a modified Orientalist divide, specifically one that presents Iranian women as capable of crossing this cultural/civilizational divide, while religious Iranian men are locked into their cultural heritage and incapable of change. In the following sections, I specify that the work produces this modified us/them binary by: 1) evoking a feeling of empathy for Iranian women which superficially authenticates the memoir as representing the lives of Iranian women in general; 2) creating of a new divide between empathetic “us” versus the unempathetic “them” which map onto gender and religiosity; and 3) by presenting political Islam (distinguished from Huntington’s Islamic civilization) as a unique threat to freedom that is particular to Muslim societies and is manifest in the actions of religious Muslim men. My conclusion considers the appeal and flexibility of this reformulated Orientalism and its relationship to cultural racism and population racism.

Broad Appeal: Text and Spokesperson

Reading Lolita in Tehran was distinguished from other memoirs about women in Muslim societies in its wide and varied appeal, bridging the high-brow and middle-brow,²⁶ the conservative and the liberal. It was almost universally praised by critics, while also having very strong sales and becoming very popular among book clubs. By October 2005 *Reading Lolita in Tehran* had sold close to a million copies (“National Sales” 2005),²⁷ an astronomical number for a book that, as Random House’s senior vice president for marketing notes, is “not an easy book”(Salamon 2004). It spent 113 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list (2006) and, in 2005, was the 6th most borrowed nonfiction title in libraries (Miller 2005). In April 2004, *Reading Lolita in Tehran* was the second best-selling book on college campuses (2004); it has

²⁶ Keen (2007) says that, generally speaking, mass appeal and strong sales is a marker of low-brow status, strong reviews by critics is a marker of high-brow status, while being read by many book groups is a marker of middle-brow status.

²⁷ By October 2008, the sales figures were approaching 1.3 million ([Mechling 2008](#))

also been anthologized in at least one popular university text book (Rowe 2007) and has served as the freshman summer reading book at numerous colleges.²⁸ In part because *Reading Lolita in Tehran* deals with a reading group, the memoir has been successfully marketed to book clubs,²⁹ and a book club discussion guide was included in the 2008 paperback edition of the memoir. Indeed, even nine years after the release of the memoir, I found numerous examples of book clubs that are selecting it as a reading ("Morristown Book Club" 2011; "Hudson Height" 2011; "SLAC: Sparks Book Club" 2011; "Events" 2011). The book has also been translated into 32 languages and rights have been sold for a movie adaptation.

Reading Lolita in Tehran's appeal to diverse audiences also seems to be reflected in its sales patterns. Of its 2005 sales through September, about two-thirds were in the suburban market and a quarter in the urban market. Regionally the book sold the most in Middle and South Atlantic regions and in the Pacific region, with much lower sales in all other regions, including the Northeast and the center of the country ("National Sales" 2005). As such the sales of the book do not align clearly with particular political lines, cutting across red state/blue state divides. Also, despite stronger suburban sales, I have seen the memoir on display at several independent New York City bookstores (St. Marks Bookshop, The Strand and Labyrinth (now, Book Culture)) several years after its release, in at least one case, for over a year.

Reading Lolita in Tehran's success has been remarkable in part because as a book about a very politicized subject it has appeal to both liberals and conservatives, from feminists and women's studies professors to avowed neoconservatives.³⁰ It received accolades from such high-

²⁸ Hay (2008) and Rowe (2007) report that the book was the freshman reading selection at Connecticut College, Mount Holyoke College, Oglethorpe University, Ramapo College of New Jersey, Wake Forest University, Case Western Reserve University, McKendree College, and the University of Montana–Missoula.

²⁹ The first line of the back cover is a quote from Geraldine Brooks that begins "Anyone who has ever belonged to a book club must read this book."

³⁰ Donadey and Ahmed-Ghosh (2008) report that the book is assigned in many women's studies courses.

profile feminists as Susan Sontag and Margaret Atwood, while receiving a highly laudatory praise from Bernard Lewis, an Orientalist scholar who coined the term “clash of civilizations” and inspired Bush’s “Liberation Doctrine.”³¹ Many scholars have noted Nafisi’s professional connections to neoconservatives as an indicator of her political positions,³² although Nafisi, for her part rejects the label and, despite earlier equivocation on the issue, has declared that she opposed the war in Iraq.³³ Nevertheless, the work’s appeal to liberal audiences is also evident in the fact that the movie project is headed by Participant Productions a film company that pairs its socially-conscious films—such as, “An Inconvenient Truth,” “Syriana,” “North Country” and “Food Inc.”—with social action campaigns. Similarly, individuals with strikingly different political orientations, from the conservative George Will to the liberal Ellen Goodman, have drawn on the memoir’s representation of Iran in their writings (see, eg, Will 2004; Goodman 2003). For example, one reviewer drawing a parallel between the Iranian and US government repression following 9/11 quips, “No doubt someone is now writing a memoir titled Reading Lolita in Tehran in Berkeley.”(Hurwitt 2005)

³¹ Lewis is noted in Nafisi’s acknowledgements as the person who “opened the door” (Nafisi 2003a, 346) and he provided a praising blurb on the back cover of the book, calling it “a masterpiece.” A *Wall Street Journal* article describes Bernard Lewis as the “intellectual father of the Bush administration policy of Mideast transformation,” crediting his “Liberation Doctrine” as being as influential as George Kennan’s containment doctrine in the Cold War (Kempe 2005).

³² Nafisi’s program, the Dialogue Project has received funding from the Smith Richardson Foundation, a major funder of the neoconservative American Enterprise Institute, and Nafisi also received funding from the conservative Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation for Sisterhood is Global Institute workshops in Tehran in 1996 (Saljoughi 2008; Rowe 2007). Nafisi’s colleagues at Johns Hopkins SAIS have included Fouad Ajami and Paul Wolfowitz, who served as dean of the school. Nafisi’s earlier publicist, Eleana Benador of Benador Associates, was the former director of Middle East Forum (which is now headed by Daniel Pipes). Benador Associates is a key neoconservative marketing agency that has represented many ardent supporters of the war in Iraq and of confrontation with Iran, including Richard Perle, James Woolsey, Michael Ledeen and Michael Rubin. Nafisi has since changed publicists, and is now with Steven Barclay Agency whose clients are a largely literary and liberal crowd, including Tony Kushner, Frank Rich, Amy Tan, Marjane Satrapi, and NPR hosts Terry Gross and Ira Glass. Nafisi says that she made the change because she wanted an agent that dealt with literature and not politics (Byrne 2006).

³³ Byrne (2006) reports that Nafisi opposed the war in Iraq, although, I have not encountered any clear statement to that effect. On the other hand, Nafisi did publish a piece in March 2003 in the *New Republic*, which implies that the war may be justified. In the piece, entitled “They the People: Our abandoned Muslim Allies,” Nafisi describes an Islamist threat that is victimizing Muslims around the world and says, “to win this war, the Americans need the courage of their convictions, the belief that the Declaration of Human Rights is not a Western conspiracy to impose its values upon others.”

The memoir has also helped to make Nafisi herself a public persona. Audi in an effort to market itself to “affluent and educated potential buyers” convinced Nafisi to participate in its ad campaign under the moniker “Never Follow.” (Salamon 2004). Nafisi has also had much appeal with National Public Radio (NPR), PBS and *New York Times* audiences. The memoir’s first major press coverage in the month of its release included an interview on NPR’s Fresh Air with Terry Gross and an in-depth *New York Times* profile. Nafisi went on to appear on numerous national and local NPR programs, from Weekend Edition and All Things Considered to Studio 360 and the Connection, in addition to PBS’s NOW with Bill Moyers and the NewsHour (see, eg, Abbott 2004). Perhaps most remarkable about these NPR/PBS spots is the broad range of topics Nafisi has been called upon to speak about: not merely her book or her personal experiences in Iran, but on arts and literature in general; on human rights in Iran, women’s status under Islam and US foreign policy; and on broader “humanistic” issues, especially the theme of empathy.

Nafisi’s role as a spokesperson for human rights in Iran, emphasizing the relationship of culture to human rights is remarkable given that, as a scholar of English literature, Nafisi’s sole expertise on the topic seems to emerge from her personal experience of living under a repressive government. For example, Nafisi spoke in April 2005 at the New York Democracy Forum, where National Endowment for Democracy president, Carl Gershman, described her as, “uniquely qualified to speak to American audiences about advancing human rights and democracy. She understands the universal desire for freedom not only because she is a keen student of great literature, but also because she has taken great personal risks in pursuit of basic human rights.” Nafisi’s legitimacy in speaking on this topic also emerges from her position as a Visiting Professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), a

prestigious graduate school in international relations created “to train members of the diplomatic corps and a variety of other government services, including positions in the intelligence communities” (Rowe 2007, 256). At Johns Hopkins she was for several years also the Director of The Dialogue Project, which sought to “promote—in a primarily cultural context—the development of democracy and human rights in the Muslim world” (“Dialogue Project” 2005). Since 2009, she has been the executive director of Cultural Conversations which provides a space, “independent of a specific political agenda,” (“Cultural Conversations” 2011) to focus on the relationship of culture to politics and policy formation. Therefore Nafisi has become identified with a particular political project of using “culture” to promote democracy and human rights, despite her own insistence that culture should not be understood simply through the lens of politics.

In a context of a war on terror focused in large part on a threat associated with Islam, the memoir’s depiction of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a totalitarian society is compelling for many readers. However, Nafisi is able to garner the interest of audiences for whom such a simple association between Islam and totalitarianism might raise concern about Islamophobia. As Mona Simpson writes, in her very positive review, “some American Persians and Arabs may be concerned with whether Nafisi is ‘good for the Muslims,’” but she assures the reader that this is not a problem, as “Nafisi has an essentially romantic nature, and nowhere is it more apparent than in her politics.” Similarly, Nan Levinson in a review in *Women’s Review of Books* makes a point to note that, despite the potential, the book does not “collapse into a combination of Oprah’s book club, girl-victim lit, and Orientalism” (Levinson 2003). In particular, she emphasizes two themes in the memoir as important to preventing this collapse: that stories and imagination offer one a means of constructing a world and living in it, and that empathy, as

demanding by a good novel, allows one a means of seeing another's humanity. Therefore, it is how the book demonstrates the presumed universal experience of reading, through a representation of Iranian women sharing in this experience, that prevents it from becoming a clichéd image of victimized women. However, as I will demonstrate below, at the same time that these women are incorporated into a new "us" through this "universal experience" those who are represented as incapable (and unworthy) of empathy become a new "them," in a more sophisticated formulation of the orientalist divide.

Clash of Civilizations or Common Humanity?

[One goal of the book was] to address the question of breaking down boundaries. I wanted to show how a girl who has never left the Islamic republic of Iran, who has never seen the US or France or England, can, through these books, connect with places she has never been to. And then not only connect with them but interpret them in a way that feels fresh. That, I think, is how we become equal to one another—if we can interpret and imagine those we have never seen. So that was the main purpose of the book.

Azar Nafisi (2008, 354-55)

Nafisi's representation of the memoir's goal as "breaking down boundaries" seems in contrast to Hamid Dabashi's (2011) argument in *Brown Skin, White Masks* that Nafisi's work serves to corroborate Samuel Huntington's clash of civilization thesis, thereby legitimizing "neoconservative ideology in the American empire" (15). Dabashi notes that while Francis Fukuyama marked the demise of Soviet communism in 1989 by declaring the triumph of Western liberal democracy, that in 1993 Huntington filled the void left by declaring Islam as the new global threat to the West. The "clash of civilizations" that Huntington (1993) describes takes "culture" rather than ideological or economic differences to be the most fundamental divisions of humankind. For Huntington, these differences based on "history, language, culture, tradition and, most important religion" (25) are exceedingly difficult to change. He argues that Western

civilization is unique and its “ideas of individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state, often have little resonance in Islamic, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, Buddhist or Orthodox cultures” (40). For Huntington, who is unapologetic in his support of Western hegemony, the clash is a struggle for values and power. While civilizational differences do not necessarily lead to violent clashes (indeed, he argues, we should seek the goal of tolerant coexistence), Huntington presents Islamic civilization as being particularly prone to violence against other civilizations, saying, “Islam has bloody borders” (35). Huntington’s thesis is one of the most pure versions of cultural racism, suggesting that an analysis of the reception of Nafisi’s memoir will illuminate the relationship of discourses of sympathy to cultural racism.

Nafisi, by contrast, very explicitly takes to task the notion that the values Huntington ascribes to Western civilization have “little resonance in Islamic... cultures.” Nafisi’s memoir seems to offer the means to connect individuals from different “civilizations,” by bringing to light a “common humanity,” and challenging Huntington’s notion that there are essential unbridgeable differences between “the West” and “the rest.” More specifically, Nafisi focuses on empathy as a force that allows people to connect and experience a commonality across boundaries. Nafisi (2005) argues that fiction provides particularities necessary to resist reductive generalizations and that with curiosity and empathy the reader comes to walk in the another’s shoes and to find that, “we all, essentially, as human beings, want the same things.” More specifically, her call for empathy for the characters in the books she and her students discuss is easily seen as a call for US readers to empathize with the women in Nafisi’s memoir. However, empathy also serves another function in the memoir becoming a tool for differentiation between us and them, specifically as those capable of empathy and not, and those worthy of empathy and

not. As such, while the memoir breaks down some boundaries, often by presenting the Other as “want[ing] the same things” as “we” do it creates new ones in its stead.

Arguably, Nafisi’s memoir is more closely aligned with Bernard Lewis’ conception of Islam, which distinguishes between different Muslims and different traditions in Islam or as Mamdani (2004) terms it, “good Muslims” and “bad Muslims.” This allows Lewis to justify the Iraq war as bringing to Muslims a democracy that they in fact do desire, while also portraying Islamism as a totalitarian movement that spans a vast geographical area, has broad support, and poses a threat comparable to that of Nazism in pre-World War II Europe (Kempe 2005).

Mamdani is highly critical of both Huntington and Lewis, locating the fallacy of their analyses in their conceptions of violence as emanating from discrete territorially-based “cultures,” ignoring a much more dynamic history of cultural and political interaction and interpenetration. In particular, what is effaced is the history of US intervention in and militarization of the Middle East and South Asia—such as the United States’ promotion of divergent and often competing “Islamist” movements (including in Iran) as part of its efforts to gain power in the region during and since the Cold War. This “culture talk” distracts from this broader history while focusing on cultural differences as the primary source of conflict.

Many feminist scholars have also critiqued various forms of culture talk, in particular in Western colonialists and liberal feminist discourses about third world women in need of liberation from patriarchal traditions imposed by third world men (see, eg, Mohanty 1991; Abu-Lughod 2002; Spivak 1988). Contrary to a sociological understanding of gender norms and structures as being rooted in various interconnected socioeconomic, political and cultural factors (Moghadam 2003), this reductive understanding sees the status of women in Muslim-majority societies as primarily being rooted in Islamic beliefs and culture. Culture in and of itself is

understood as the cause of women's status, even as anthropologists advise that cultures are hybrid and dynamic and are more appropriately seen as that which requires interpretation and explanation, rather than that which explains (Osanloo 2009). For example, many analyses of the situation of women under the Taliban in Afghanistan ignored the factors of militarization, poverty, the drug trade and social disintegration, granting all explanatory power to the concept of "Islamic fundamentalism," while never exploring the diversity and complexity of Islamist politics (Hirschkind and Mahmood 2002). Bahramitash (2005) drawing from this feminist scholarship describes Nafisi as an "Orientalist feminist" arguing that works like hers "essentialize Islam as a religion and portray Muslim women only as victims" (223). I argue that the power of Nafisi's work however derives from the fact that in some ways it actually challenges a notion that Islam *per se* is the source of women's suffering and that Iranian women are simply voiceless victims, while nevertheless rearticulating a more subtle culturalist image of the sources of oppression in Iran.

Discourses that justify the war on terror have often emphasized Muslim diversity, drawn on anthropological, historical and contextual knowledge, acknowledged political and economic grievances, or let "the Other speak" (Rudy 2007, 38). As such, they have often incorporated an aspect of Edward Said's rejoinder to Huntington's clash of civilizations theory: that the clash is within, rather than between, civilizations (Mamdani 2004: 21). Said (2003) argues "To emphasize the differences between cultures and civilizations... is completely to ignore the literally unending debate or contest... about defining the culture or civilization within those civilizations, including various 'Western' ones. These debates completely undermine any idea of a fixed identity..." (79). *Reading Lolita in Tehran* in one respect seems to be about such a "debate or contest" within Iranian society. However, these women's engagement with Western

literature still articulates a strong distinction between “Western” and “Islamic” cultures, while also emphasizing a particular preferred directionality of influence from West to East. These cultures stay more or less discrete and coherent, while it is individuals (women, especially) who are able to cross these cultural divides. At the same time, a distinction is drawn between privatized and personal relationships with Islam and the politicization of Islam. Therefore, rather than essentializing all Muslims as individuals, the racism of these discourses manifests most clearly in what Rudy calls a “misapprehension of Islamism,” seeing legitimate grievances as resulting in disproportionate and irrational responses from Muslims—if only a small minority of them—who then demonstrate a uniquely antimodern element of Islam (40). Complexity, historicism and contextualization may be allowed to enter the analysis but not to undermine a coherent conception of the “Islamist” threat. As a result, terrorism and other forms of “irrational” “disproportionate” violence become a peculiar problem of Muslims, even if not all Muslims are guilty of them.

Therefore these discourses reconfigure the oppositional conception of us/them articulated in cultural racism, by redrawing the boundaries of who can appreciate Western culture. While the memoir undercuts a notion that *all* Muslims are backward and threatening, it depicts violence and oppression in Iran as a result of an irrational and incomprehensible permutation of Islam. The threat of irrational violence is identified with Islamism, which is perceived as rooted in some characteristic of Islam, and therefore associated with Muslims as a population. A group that is identified as a small minority in one context can be transformed into a much larger threat in another and potentially the majority of Muslims in still another. Therefore, while culture is presented as not necessarily determinant or inescapable at the level of the individual, at the level of the population, Islam seems to lead to predictable problems. Furthermore, there is an

increasing perception, which Nafisi (2004) articulates on her Dialogue Project website, that “Islamism has become the biggest threat to the development and survival of democracy in the world today.” In this light, *Reading Lolita in Tehran* becomes a warning to the rest of the world about the potential consequences of a threat unique to a Muslim population, one that is cloaked in a message about identifying and sympathizing with Iranian women, who share the same desires and values that “we” have.

Evoking Empathy: Authenticating Orientalism

[a novel is] a sensual experience of another world. If you don’t enter that world, hold your breath with the characters and become involved in their destiny, you won’t be able to empathize, and empathy is at the heart of the novel.

Azar Nafisi (2003a, 111)

While *Reading Lolita in Tehran* is not a novel, but rather a memoir, Nafisi’s repeated emphasis on the theme of empathy evokes for the reader a feeling that they should empathize with the individuals portrayed in the memoir, especially the seven women participating in Nafisi’s private reading group. Compared to other media, it is actually difficult to create empathy in a reader because, first, “the act of reading... takes a longer time than seeing someone in distress. Second, reading requires more mental effort; and third, the technology of prose puts psychological distance between the sender and receiver” (Keen 2007, 108). Indeed, Nafisi’s memoir does not immerse readers in the lives of her students, whose stories are told in a fragmented manner, and maintains some distance between the reader and Nafisi herself, who is represented primarily in her role as a professor. While a true empathy may be lacking, Nafisi makes many motions towards representing the lives, hardships and perspectives of different women, which become important to broadening the scope of the memoir. The feeling that one has heard from a range of women, with whom one ought to empathize, authenticates Nafisi’s

assessment of the Islamic republic as representative of the views of most women in Iran. As such the idea that readers feel empathy for Nafisi's students establishes that the memoir is not simply a story of one unrepresentative and "Westernized" woman in Iran, but rather the story of Iranian women in general. Furthermore, empathy is made to demonstrate "our common humanity" in part by showing that these women are very much like "us," wanting the same things we do.

While Nafisi's self-representation in the memoir does not attempt to hide her difference from other Iranians this difference serves to make Nafisi one who can bridge "West" and "East" for both her readers and students. Butz (2001) notes, an informant who seeks to make an account of their culture that sounds authentic to a Western ear must understand the expectations of the listener and therefore occupies "a liminal position of looking in from the outside in order to speak out from the inside." Saljoughi (2008) argues that Nafisi in fact enhances her outsider status, "staging whiteness" in order to distance herself from racialized Muslims so that readers can identify with her as their guide in Iran. Indeed, Nafisi describes her years studying in the United States and Europe and notes her family's elite background—her father was mayor of Tehran and her mother a member of parliament. She also describes how many colleagues feel she does not fit in (88): one is taken aback by her unfamiliarity with some religious men's practice of not shaking hands with women (98), and a friend describes her as "very American" (175). Many articles also note Nafisi's exceptionality, calling her a "secular cosmopolitan teacher" (Feely 2004), describing her as overly "intellectual" (2004; Salamon 2004), and noting her family background and her Western education (Allen 2003; Levinson 2003; Rumbelow 2004).

The authentication of Nafisi's account of Iran, despite her outsider status, rest in part on her representation of her students as a highly diverse group who are a cross-section of Iranian

society, and secondly on making Nafisi a privileged guide who has access to the intimate feelings and perspectives of her student, which when presented to the readers are meant to create moments of empathetic identification. Although all of her female study group students are university-educated and proficient in English, characteristics not shared by the majority of Iranians, Nafisi says she is proud to have brought together “such a mixed group, with different and at times conflicting backgrounds, personal as well as religious and social” (11). However the only clear diversity among her students, who are all Muslim, is their degree of religious observance. Nevertheless, reviewers emphasize that the students are diverse (Abbott 2004; Basu 2003; Warren 2003; Ryan 2003; Emerson 2003), that they are “traditional, religious, modern, secular, progressive, conservative” (Warren 2003) and belong “to different classes and social backgrounds” (Guppy 2003). By emphasizing that these students are a cross-section of Iranian society, their stories can become proof of “what life was like for women under this regime” (Stoffman 2003). Although Nafisi does not speak as an “average” Iranian woman, her memoir is invested in describing the lives of “diverse” women under the Islamic republic through their stories. Nafisi describes the study group as an attempt “to prevent ourselves from falling victim” to the crime of having “our” stories taken from “us” (Nafisi 2003, 41) and, in an article, she emphasizes the importance of “telling our own story, not letting others tell it...” (2003). Indeed, the memoir portrays many aspects of her students’ lives, sketching their backgrounds, personalities and life challenges, describing their banter and disagreements within the study group, retelling their stories and experiences and even imagining her students in other aspects of their lives. However, Nafisi does not erase herself or her authoritative voice from her descriptions of other women, putting into question a reading of her as speaking for anyone but herself.

Nafisi's representation of these women has the form of taking the exotic and oppressed and making it both familiar and liberated. This is particularly evident in her manner of introducing her study group students through a ritual of "unveiling." Nafisi's first chapter describes these women through two photographs, one where the women are wearing government-mandated *hijab* (Islamic dress) and the other where most have taken off these scarves and overcoats. It is only in the second photograph, Nafisi writes, that "[e]ach has become distinct" (Nafisi 2003, 4). Reviewers are taken with these images and highlight this unveiling process, either through the two photographs (Rumbelow 2004; Lyons 2003; Levinson 2003) or by referencing Nafisi's line (5-6) that upon entering her home, the women, "shed their mandatory veils and robes and burst into color" (Guppy 2003; Shanahan 2004; Warren 2003; Hewett 2003; 2004; Hook 2003; Basu 2003; Sismondo 2003; Ryan 2003; Larson 2003). In these accounts, the mundane activity of taking off their outerwear, something women in Iran do regularly, becomes associated with Nafisi's living room and with the process of individualization. In the memoir, Nafisi says, "they took off more than their scarves and robes. Gradually each one gained an outline and a shape, becoming her own inimitable self" (6). Reviewers similarly describe unveiling as a process whereby the women "emerge as individuals" (2004), revealing "vivid personalities" (Hook 2003) and shedding "their inhibitions, speaking openly" (Sismondo 2003). Many reviewers emphasize the individuality of each of these women, for example, the amazon.com review rated most "Helpful" by others (534 of 572 users), written by "Ronald Scheer 'rockysquirrel'", references Nafisi's argument about empathy in the novel, to say: "Here the individual personalities and histories of each come to the fore, and we get a glimpse (as in fiction) into personal worlds experienced intensely under circumstances that have nearly robbed them of their identities." Other amazon.com reviewers similarly refer to Nafisi's

students as “several thoughtful, feeling, fully unique individuals” (“Michael Melcher”) or women who have “the same hopes and dreams as women throughout the world ... [who] each developed her own brand of courage throughout” (“A Customer”).

The veil is read as robbing women of their individuality and humanity; it becomes associated with uniformity and lack of enlightenment. Only when the women are unveiled are they seen as able to express their true and unique selves, becoming knowable to both themselves and a Western audience, making unveiling a prerequisite to feeling empathy for these women. The Islamic republic’s mandatory veiling policy is represented as the ultimate erasure of the self, while Nafisi seems to offer a unique space of freedom in which these girls can reclaim their individuality and present their true selves. One review concisely expresses this sentiment, saying, “She reveals a country populated not by anonymous veiled figures, but funny, often bitchy, fiercely curious women” (Rumbelow 2004). This statement highlights Nafisi as the agent who “reveals,” offering Westerners a view into Iranian women’s lives and, more significantly, humanizing the previously “anonymous veiled figures.” It also demonstrates that humanizing happens in large part by making familiar or “like us” described in terms of US colloquialism (“bitchy”). Nafisi’s memoir and the responses of reviews participate in the long history of politicization of Iranian women’s veiled or unveiled status (Moallem 2005), opposing the Islamic regime’s construction of a “culturally authentic Muslim woman” (Zahedi 2007), with the unveiled woman of Nafisi’s living room who is presented as one step closer to being “liberated” into a Westernized, liberal, autonomous subject.

This point is also made in an interview with Nafisi (published in “A Reader’s Guide” in the 2008 edition of the book) where she speaks of her hopes for readers:

They can empathize with women in Iran because when they read about women living in Iran, they realize that those women are not very different from the women living in the

States—they both dream about a future for themselves and for people around them; they fall in love, are jealous, are betrayed, love music, love poetry, love to hold hands. (Nafisi 2008, 360)

As such, Nafisi's memoir seems to offer a means of creating identification between its primarily Western readers and women in Iran. However, as is exemplified by this list, while empathy is said to demonstrate other women "are not very different" in the memoir it often seems to *depend* on a feeling that they are like "us," in this case participating in "the same" emotional and romantic activities that "we" do. This list and much of the memoir elides the likely differences in women of different cultures: for example, that poetry has a very different social value and function in Iran than in the United States, and that in Iran holding hands is a common nonromantic act between two women or two men (which is not as easily practiced in the United States). Rather than making the everyday aspects of Iranian cultural life visible, Nafisi erases these which both makes these women more familiar and makes the hardships that they experience seem more foreign, inexplicable and arbitrary.

More specifically, the evocation of empathy happens through repeated references to how Nafisi's students reveal their intimate selves to her, telling her their personal feelings and desires. For example, Nafisi describes how she gave each student a "private diary" where they were to write for her about how the readings related to their "personal and social experiences" (Nafisi 2003, 18). She says of her living room that it had a "fairy-tale atmosphere," where all were "free to discuss our pains and joys, our personal hang ups and weaknesses..." (57) and repeatedly states that her students shared their secrets with her (6, 58, 60). The memoir, however, also acknowledges Nafisi's distinction and distance from her students and leaves gaps that highlight the limits of these representations. Nafisi is "Dr. Nafisi," in contrast to her students, whom she calls "my girls" (although many of them are in their 30s, some are married, and some are

parents). Also, disagreements between her religiously-observant students and her most flamboyant student are marked more by meaningful silences and disapproving glances than by a full airing of differences. While Nafisi refers to herself as her students' confidante, these silences point to what cannot be known about the students through Nafisi as narrator. Nevertheless, reviewers highlight the notion that the study group was a space of sharing secrets (Larson 2003; Simpson 2003), and do not explore these silences or the distance between Nafisi and her students. For example, one reviewer says that the women shared, "their private beliefs and their struggles with anger, anxiety, loss, confusion, fear and self-loathing" (Hewett 2003).

However, as a close reading of even praising accounts demonstrate, the memoir is more successful at making one feel that they ought to care for these women, than at producing, as Nafisi says, a "sensual experience of another world [where you] hold your breath with the characters and become involved in their destiny." Indeed, the actual success of the memoir in creating empathy for these women has been debated and many readers complain that the memoir failed to make them connect with Nafisi's students. For example, one very highly rated (253 of 308 users rated as helpful) amazon.com review, "Jessica Ferguson 'threelittlebirds'" says:

It is truly beyond me how this book has touched so many readers ... Overall, Nafisi details her bourgeois lifestyle in war-torn Iran where she occasionally lives vicariously through those who had lives much more directly affected by the war and the political climate, and constantly lives vicariously through her outdated and overrated books and lesson plans.

Others similarly complained "The characters are one-dimensional... I never came to care for any of the group's members as they were portrayed" ("T. Kelly") or "I wanted to see more of the unveiling and the metamorphosis fiction has upon the women Nafisi gathered together" ("Stacy Allen 'Stacy A'"). One reviewer describing her own book group's reaction says they found "the story of the women in Nafisi's discussion group and how each experiences Iran under an

oppressive regime” the most interesting aspect of the memoir, but “there wasn’t enough of it.” (“ST ‘st27”). Therefore, both in praise and in critique readers saw that creating empathy for Nafisi’s students was a central task of the memoir, although one that many judged unsuccessful.

Interestingly, even those who felt that the memoir failed to make them care for Nafisi’s students (or Nafisi herself) did not question the validity of the main arguments of the book with regard to Iran. This suggests that the evocations of the idea of empathy for Nafisi’s students only superficially authenticates Nafisi’s account of Iran, while the substantive authentication comes from the fact that Nafisi’s story rings true to most of her Western readers. Nevertheless, the *idea* that the reader does or should empathize with these women makes one feel that they are getting a representative account of Iranian society, which is experienced as similarly oppressive by a diverse range of women who in their hopes and desires are like “us.” The empathy that Nafisi’s students feel for fictional characters parallels the empathy that readers are supposed to feel for Nafisi’s students, in both cases referencing a human bond across cultures, one that is said to be associated with democracy. Furthermore this empathy allows the reader to feel that their animosity toward political Islam emerges from a concern for the lives of women like Nafisi’s students, and a recognition that these women simply want the “same” freedoms “we” want, rather than a cultural bias. As such, it offers liberals, who are hesitant to castigate Muslims as a whole, a more refined vision of the potential danger of some form of Islam.

Gendered Empathy: Victims and Villains

In fact the authenticity of the memoir’s account is less successfully established through an actual feeling of empathy created for Nafisi’s students, than through the reformulated orientalist binary that Nafisi presents. Butz argues that authenticity is attributed to the native informant who is perceived as an appropriate and authoritative source and tells “the appropriate

story in a way that sounds authentic to a Western ear” (184). Ultimately, it is the story that Nafisi tells, and reviewers’ interpretation of that story, that legitimates the work as an “authentic” and “representative” view of postrevolution Iran. It is a story that rings true to the ears of its readers, posing only a few challenges to their preconceived notions and allowing them to maintain their “flexible positional superiority” as Westerners (Said 1979). While Nafisi does challenge aspects of the Orientalist binary between East and West, she does so by reconfiguring it into antimodern and promodern Iranians, mapping onto two overlapping parameters: gender and religion/secularism. Women are constructed as overwhelmingly the victims of state violence and oppression, thereby inherently more open to the ideals of liberal democracy and freedom. Religious men are constructed as supporters and beneficiaries of these policies and secular men the passive witnesses, only secondarily affected through women. Similarly, by erasing many of the repressive and corrupt aspects of the secular shah’s government, politicized religion, or Islamism, becomes constructed as the source of all the current government’s repressive policies. Empathy plays a role in producing each of these distinctions: some individuals (Iranian women) are presented as capable of and worthy of empathy and others (religious Iranian men) as lacking in empathy and therefore not worthy of it either. At the same time, Western cultural sources are represented as producing an empathy essential to democracy, while we might surmise that the absence of democracy in Iran is a result of a lack of empathy in the culture.

A central aspect of this reconfigured Orientalist binary is a focus on gender oppression in Iran. The often disturbing stories of Nafisi’s students produce a strong distinction between her male and female students and the experiences of Iranian men and women more broadly. These stories themselves are intended to produce empathy, or at least sympathy, for Iranian women by detailing their travails and dramatizing their hardships at the mercy of an apparently irrational

totalitarian state singularly focused on their oppression. Reviews refer to these stories often in the form of a list of decontextualized and incomprehensible horrors. This gender distinction is further emphasized by representations of men in the memoir who rarely elicit much sympathy. In particular, religious and prorevolution men are represented as self-centered and self-important, incapable of empathizing with anyone else, as demonstrated by their reactions to the novels they are reading in Nafisi's university classes.

One of Nafisi's main points, that the Islamic republic is a totalitarian regime that invades one's personal sphere and takes away one's individuality, is represented in highly gendered terms. Nafisi presumes a universality of the experience of being a woman in a woman's body projecting her own experience onto other women. For example, she imagines her students' lives outside their study group, in one instance, describing a student leaving her home and walking outside, "She doesn't walk upright, but bends her head toward the ground and doesn't look at passersby. She walks quickly and with a sense of determination..." (26). Describing the streets as a "war zone" where women can be harassed or arrested at any moment, Nafisi asks, "How much does this experience affect her? Most probably, she tries to distance her mind as much as possible from her surroundings" (27). As one unenthusiastic amazon.com reviewer notes, "By page 28 I had written myself this note, 'Okay, we get it – the regime is individuality crushing and bad – especially towards women who feel forced to live double lives – one in public, one in private....'" (Jessica Ferguson "threelittlebirds"). Late in the memoir Nafisi exclaims, "Living in the Islamic republic is like having sex with a man you loathe... you make your mind blank—you pretend to be somewhere else, you tend to forget your body, you hate your body" (329). Numerous reviewers directly quote the first half of this statement, reading it as an uncompromising condemnation of the regime (Guppy 2003; Rumbelow 2004; Harris 2004;

Stewart 2003). This powerful image is of Iranian women as wholly victimized and dominated by the state, without possibility of resistance (except by making “your mind blank”). Furthermore, by (hetero)sexualizing the experience of state control, Nafisi plays on the idea of Middle Eastern societies being fundamentally (and uniquely) centered around men’s sexual control of women’s bodies.

Despite acknowledging that the government’s assertion of control also extends to some aspects of men’s lives—including descriptions of executions and imprisonments carried out against men and women—the power struggles within the memoir are generally portrayed as men acting against women. Through stories about her students’ experiences and lives, Nafisi produces a large litany of incidents, emphasizing the gendered nature of these oppressions. While Nafisi holds up women’s rights as the barometer of freedom in Muslim-majority societies—and indeed in all societies³⁴—her conception of what are the essential components of women’s rights is very selective. In particular, as already described, Nafisi gives inordinate space and emotional weight to the issue of veiling, presenting it as epitomizing the state’s incursion on and violation of individuality. Even where she expands her focus to other concerns, this list still is skewed to a specific liberal conception of individual freedoms, with many stories of women in particular being reprimanded or arrested for their dress, acting “inappropriately” in public, socializing with people of the opposite sex, or being involved in political activities. Comparable regulation of men, who were also arrested and punished for violating these types of laws, is almost never described. On the other hand, she hardly discusses any socioeconomic concerns and gives little

³⁴ Nafisi says, in an interview published in “A Reader’s Guide” of 2008 edition of the memoir, “One aspect of the Islamic republic that comes in the name of religion is confiscation of religion and the use of it as an ideology. Women have now become the canaries in the mine in Iran, as well as in many Muslim majority societies. If you want to know how free a society is, you look at its women (in this country, too, women, gays, and minorities are the canaries in the mine) because they symbolize individual rights, which are the most dangerous thing for a totalitarian state.” (366)

information about how these grown women are making ends meet, what their educational and occupational goals are, and to what extent they are meeting them. Nafisi gives little context for understanding where these restrictions come from, which are legal enforcements of widely-accepted (and contested) social norms, and which are more purely arbitrary expressions of power.

The general tone of most (but not all) reviews is that control of women's bodies has been *the* major oppressive government policy, similarly constructing Iran as a static place where the state successfully and consistently asserts total control over women's lives. In reviewers' descriptions of conditions in Iran, executions, imprisonment, and cultural prohibitions that are experienced by both men and women are referenced much less than policies, such as mandatory veiling, that apply only to women. Doing an analysis of 26 randomly selected reviews that mention different forms of oppression caused by the Iranian government, I found that of the total 131 references to oppressive conditions in Iran, only 24% were applicable to both men and women. Of the 99 references to women's oppressive conditions, 37% referred to restrictions on dress, makeup or accessories, 18% described regulation of women's behavior in public regarding interacting with non-related men, eating apples or ice cream, running, shouting or laughing, 15% referenced state violence against women and 14% referred to family law and other legal changes that affected women. Therefore, these reviews further skewed Nafisi's representation in favor of restriction over bodily appearance, which in their focus on a particular conception of modesty emphasize the forms of control that are most commonly associated with Islam.

Reviewers' representations often made these restrictive controls even more incomprehensible and horrifying. For example, one reviewer writes:

Here, young women are often rounded up for humiliating virginity checks at local clinics. Girls can be married off at the age of 9, and in the rare case of a divorce, men always get

custody of the children.... [T]he Revolutionary Guard ... routinely reprimand and arrest women for eating fruit 'too suggestively,' or laughing in public, or wearing bright-colored socks. (Lyons 2003)

Each of the examples cited has a connection to the memoir, yet in this decontextualized and simplified form they appear even more senseless and horrifying. The reviewer has generalized specific stories—of a student and her friends being arrested and given a virginity tests and of students being reprimanded (not arrested) for the way they ate their apples—into patterns that (using the present tense) appear to persist to this day. He also has robbed these incidents of their emotional content, the former of which was told through tears and the latter with fits of laughter. Furthermore, in these brief references, these descriptions efface a much more complex and dynamic situation for women in Iran. For example, while the legal age of marriage did decrease under Ayatollah Khomeini, the actual proportion of women under 20 who marry is much smaller today, less than one fifth, as opposed to the majority of women a few decades ago (Moghadam 2003, 138). In fact, one of Nafisi's students has been divorced more than once, in contrast to the reviewer's argument that divorce is rare. Custody laws do favor the father, although there are situations in which a mother can gain custody.

Indeed, many reviewers make claims about the repressive Iranian government that are exaggerated and do not seem based on the memoir itself. These include, that Nafisi's teaching is "punishable by up to 76 lashes" (Weaver 2004); that "In Tehran reading Jane Austen can earn you a beating"; that Nafisi's female students "all endured regular strip searches" (Rumbelow 2004); that women outside their homes were required to be escorted by a male relative (Warren 2003); and that some of Nafisi's students experienced "forced arranged marriages" (Ryan 2003). Reviewers read Nafisi's descriptions of oppressive policies as confirmation and reiteration of their own view that Iran is uniquely oppressive to women. The repetition of these policies in list

form makes them appear even more inexplicable as they become increasingly removed from their context and lived reality. Through this repetition, reviewers help confirm a prevailing view that religious Muslim men, in this case acting through the state, are motivated by a singular desire to oppress women. Women are thereby rendered wholly victimized by religion and therefore open to “secular” “Western” values.

One of the most remarkable aspects of representations of the state repression of women in both the memoir and reviews is the absence of any acknowledgement of the significant changes over time, giving a sense of a monolithic state that once in power was able to exert complete control over women, while also being utterly resistant to any challenges. While it is true that in the immediate aftermath of the revolution, the state attempted to push women out of workplaces and educational institutions, imposed strict rules on gender segregation and modesty in public, and reversed the legal gains women had made especially in the realm of family law, there was also a great deal of resistance from women regarding these changes. Indeed, the state gradually reversed course on many of these changes as a result of not only this resistance, but also larger social and economic forces that had already led to the women’s entry into many aspects of public life, the need to include women in certain public roles (as doctors and teachers) to enforce gender segregation, and the important public role of revolutionary women who were able to move up the ranks within the government and legitimate their claims within an Islamic discourse about women’s high status in society (Esfandiari 1997; Osanloo 2009). Furthermore, despite the inordinate focus in the memoir and reviews on regulation of women’s appearance and of gender segregation, there is no reference to the many contexts where such articulated norms of gender segregation are violated (for example, men and women are segregated in buses but can sit pressed up against each other in shared taxis) and have become an arena of daily public

resistance to the regime through choices in how one dresses and presents oneself. Rather than such an image of a dynamic society, the impression readers get is of a monolithic and totalitarian state.

This state then becomes embodied in Nafisi's male prorevolution students who seem to demonstrate how a lack of empathy is at the foundation of the state's oppression of women. Ironically, while Nafisi speaks of the importance of recognizing the complexity of all individuals, and lauds the novel's ability to do so, her memoir is striking in the disparity in how it represents Nafisi's female as opposed to male students. Indeed, her representations of her male students, especially those who are religious and supportive of the regime, are highly unsympathetic, failing to represent the complexity of these individuals. These men, primarily defined by their inability to feel empathy for others, are made analogous to the villains in novels who are identified by their "lack of empathy" noting that such characters are unable to engage in "true dialogue" and are incapable of "tolerance, self-reflection and empathy." (268). Specifically, Nafisi's male university students are represented as outspoken defenders of a simplistic prorevolutionary position. They have "discovered an absolutist refuge called Islam" (2003, 103); they are irrational and unreasoned, given to "strident objections" (194) and "childish outbursts" (240); and they obstinately oppose Western cultural products as immoral and part of a Western assault on Islam (126). In an even broader brush, her study groups' male family members are described as among "a series of male villains" (70). In contrast, in her university class it is two non-political female students who most vocally defend their readings of Western literature and are said to represent the silent majority of the class. Strikingly, the views of female students who actively supported the revolution are never described. Rather, a "radical" female student who initially appears unsupportive of Nafisi (94), years later informs her how much she enjoyed *The*

Great Gatsby, implying that ultimately being a woman in Iran is more compatible with appreciating Western novels than supporting the revolution. Two notable exceptions to this gender divide are Nafisi's "magician," a reclusive former professor and confidante, and her student Nima. These two men's difference from all other men can only be explained by their secular and Westernized ways—they do not express religious beliefs and are highly educated and literate in Western arts and literature. While religious women and women who supported the revolution can apparently be "enlightened" through Western literature, the same does not seem to hold for religious or revolutionary men.

As a result of this depiction, empathy then becomes as much a way of experiencing commonality with another as a way of distinguishing between others. As one reviewer notes, "Empathy...she tells us is the key to human understanding, in life as in fiction. 'Evil lies in the inability to see others.' The human soul survives the onslaught of evil 'through love and imagination'" (Radji 2003). A negative amazon.com reviewer, "Matt," makes the double-role of empathy even clearer saying, "the meat of the volume's much-talked-about literary criticism is the claim (repeated ad infinitum) that literature is inherently democratic, representing and empathizing with all its characters (except for those characters who are really Khomeini in disguise)." Therefore, while the articulation of empathy in relation to this memoir is often based on a perception that "they" are just like "us," a lack of empathy becomes a means of identifying the "threat," in the form of religious and revolutionary Muslim men. In particular, Nafisi's lack of empathy (ironically) for her male revolutionary students, and her argument that they along with the revolutionary leaders were particularly lacking in empathy, serves to distinguish between "us" and "them," in this reconfigured binary.

Therefore gender, in part through the device of empathy, serves as a tool for dividing “us” from “them.” However, rather than a feminist analysis that links gender oppression to a complex of cultural, socioeconomic and political factors, she presents it as almost entirely a result of the actions of a totalitarian regime, acting in the name of Islam. As such the victimization of women becomes a measure of the threat to individual freedoms posed by Islam or Islamism more broadly. Nafisi expands on this point in her speech at the New York Democracy Forum, where she speaks of two cities she loves, Tehran and Washington, D.C., both being victimized by the same threat: in Tehran, “it becomes a crime to look the way I do. I could be flogged and jailed even despite the openings that we talk about right now” and in D.C., “every moment, you are now reminded that this building, or that monument, is a soft or a hard target.” (Nafisi 2005). In a context where Islamism is presented as the most significant threat to freedom in the world, Iranian women—and perhaps a handful of secular Iranian men—are placed on the side of the West, in that they share an experience of being threatened and victimized by Islamists.

Reorienting Orientalism: Islamist Oppression/Western Liberation

In this reformulation of the Orientalist binary, a variant or perhaps perversion of Islam, at times referred to as “Islamism” in Nafisi’s other writings, becomes the source of oppression in the Islamic republic. While Nafisi notes that the Islamic republic does not reflect the views of all Muslims in Iran, and that in fact many of her (female) religious students felt the regime was violating their religious beliefs, her representation locates the repressive aspects of the government in the politicization of Islam. This happens, as already noted, in part through an almost exclusive focus on policies enforcing rigid norms of modesty in relation to women, norms presented as emerging from an imposition of Islam. It also happens through Nafisi’s elisions

regarding Iranian history that create an impression that the period before the revolution was one of great freedom and progress, ignoring the repressive aspects of the shah's regime and the continuities between the shah's regime and the Islamic republic. In this context, Nafisi presents the Western novel as offering moments of liberation for these women, while there seems to be an absence of sources of resistance coming from Iranian society and culture. Therefore even though Nafisi's criticism is most directly against what she depicts as a totalitarian regime that has politicized Islam, the absence of indigenous sources of resistance and liberation implicates all of Iranian society and Islam in general.

The opposition between secularism and religion is bolstered through an erasure of most of the crimes of the secular Western-supported shah regime. Although Nafisi was critical of the Pahlavi regime as a student activist, she does not describe any substantive grievances she had with the regime, only saying that people were seeking more freedom. Other than the shah's imprisonment of her father,³⁵ there are no references to the highly repressive and corrupt aspects of his government,³⁶ or the shah's CIA-backed reinstatement after the rise of the nationalist Prime Minister Mossadeq. Nafisi also does not describe the shah's ostentatious lifestyle or his neglect of the problems of illiteracy, poor rural infrastructure and the trauma of mass rural-urban migration (Esposito 1984). Rather, she emphasizes her distance from the Iranian student movement she joined, saying she "was more of a rebel than political activist" (Nafisi 2003, 85) and describes prerevolutionary Iran as having "laws that were among the most progressive in the world regarding women..." (27).³⁷

³⁵ Bahramitash (2005) reports this arrest was for embezzlement, rather than political reasons.

³⁶ As Esposito says, "although friends of the regime were rewarded lavishly and enjoyed the good life, its critics were silenced through surveillance, harassment, arrest, torture, and even death" (1984, 126).

³⁷ This overstatement focuses on a few legal reforms that had had limited impact on most women's lives, creating "no genuine change... in the status, social relations, and/or conditions of everyday life for the majority of Iranian women" (Tohidi 1991, 256).

The story of the revolution, as Nafisi tells it, is one of a modernizing prerevolution Iran that is dragged into the past by unpopular, anti-West, antimodern leaders. Nafisi presents the Islamic republic as coming “in the name of the past” (Nafisi 2003, 262) and yet lacking any cultural foundations, imposing “its relentless fictions on us” (67). While she expresses some ambivalence about whether religion per se is to blame, saying, “[w]as this the rule of Islam?” (67), she denounces the regime as totalitarian, arbitrary and senseless, terms that she does not use to describe the shah regime. She ignores the continuities between the shah’s regime and the Islamic republic in terms of some of their highly repressive policies. This omission is significant because it sees the actions of the Iranian regime as solely an expression of politicized Islam, rather than being in part a continuation of modern state-making that the shah had initiated (this topic is addressed in greater detail in Chapter 3). Also not mentioned is the role of the United States in maintaining the shah in power, including through the 1953 coup of the democratically-elected nationalist Prime Minister Mossadegh, or in extending the devastating Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s—by being a major economic and military supporter of Saddam Hussein, while also sending arms to Iran— and thereby facilitating Khomeini’s further consolidation of power. Indeed, Nafisi’s association of democracy with Western literature effaces the many ways in which US engagement with Iran has obstructed the development of democracy there.

Although Nafisi’s sincere distress at the aftermath of the revolution is understandable, especially given her social and class position in Iranian society, it is striking that in looking back she does not seriously consider why the discourse of the victorious revolutionary leaders held appeal to many Iranians, including many of her university students. Presenting Khomeini as coming in the name of “the past,” she says, “Our society was far more advanced than its new rulers” (262). This “past” stands in for a concept of an immutable unchanging “tradition” that

Haj (2009) has critiqued. As Haj has argued, Khomeini's appeal must be understood in how he engaged with a dynamic Islamic tradition of inquiry that had resonance in the broader society; rather than "cynically manipulating the past," his arguments were about "relating the tradition to the present" (197). Because Nafisi presents the revolutionaries as monolithic, she is very dismissive of the reform movement that arose in the 1990s and more broadly of the notion that any kind of meaningful reform is possible within the existing regime. She favorably quotes a student who describes President Khatami as a "nicer jail warden" (318). Indeed, as one reviewer notes, "Nafisi maintains that despite the rise of 'reformists' mullahs under President Khatami, the fundamental attitudes of the regime remain unaltered" (Stewart 2003). Nafisi is not only similarly dismissive of "Islamic feminists" as "a contradictory notion" (262)³⁸ but also does not describe the significant political activism of Iranian women in general, both secular and religious.³⁹ Therefore, there appear to be no possibilities for positive change within the context of an Islamic republic.

Reviewers find Nafisi's depiction of the Iranian history, which deemphasizes violence done in the name of secular modernization, conducive to a reading of Islam or Islamism as the major determinant of the oppressive conditions in Iran. While some reviewers acknowledge that the shah was authoritarian and note that his father, before him, mandated women take off the *hijab*, they tend to reiterate Nafisi's notion that prerevolution Iran was generally a freer place for

³⁸ Such activists have in fact made some important legal gains, such as a 1992 divorce law that entitled women to payment for housework, and have partaken in a lively public debate on women's rights, particularly through an active women's press (Mir-Hosseini 1996). Moghadam has written cogently on differing views on the implications and tenability of "Islamic feminism" (Moghadam 2002).

³⁹ In contrast to the memoir's almost complete lack of references to Iranian feminists and activists, Nafisi says in an interview that predates the book, "I have a history to go back to. I don't need to go back to Mary Wollstonecraft or all these Western feminists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries here. I have my own models" (Nafisi, Ravich, and Tahir-Kheli 2000, 36). She goes on to argue that the revolution invigorated activism both among privileged women who had lost so much, and among traditional women who were forced out onto the streets by the revolution, "and once they had tasted freedom they didn't want to go back" (41). Such analysis of the aftermath of the revolution is largely lacking in *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. More recently she has also begun mentioning human rights activists, such as Shirin Ebadi.

women (Sismondo 2003). One reviewer makes the plainly inaccurate claim that the period before the revolution was “50 years of emancipation... [when] half the workforce was female” (Guppy 2003).⁴⁰ Another says that although the shah was authoritarian, “women inclined to modernity prospered” (Salamon 2003). A perception of the Pahlavi regime as more conducive to women’s well being misrepresents the situation of women in both periods, which, since the revolution, has improved markedly in socioeconomic terms, despite significant—and contested— setbacks in other realms.⁴¹

Reviewers also contrast the Islamic republic with the West as presumably wholly secular and freedom-promoting, reinforcing their existing perceptions about the West. Another article describes Nafisi’s exile to the United States as “opt[ing] for a life where private faith hasn’t been hijacked for political means, and where private life isn’t subordinated to public policy” (Saidi 2003), ignoring how many arguably private issues, such as reproductive health, are highly politicized in the United States. This Manichean vision of the world is further highlighted by one reviewer statement, “The lot of women under sharia law mystifies us in the liberated West. It seems so terrifyingly and illogically restrictive” (Harris 2004). For reviewers, Nafisi’s focus on the arbitrary and “irrational” nature of the Islamic republic is understood as a direct consequence of its religious identification. Rather than focus on the undemocratic nature of both the Islamic republic and the shah regime, Islam becomes the source of the repressive policies in Iran.

⁴⁰ Women’s share of the labor force in 1976 was a mere 13.8 percent. This figure declined over the next 20 years to 12.7 percent (Moghadam 2003, 204, 211). Neither figure includes the many women who have worked in the informal economy.

⁴¹ Some facts that complicate a vision of the Islamic republic as wholly anti-woman include: significant increases in the literacy rate to 80.4% for the population over 6 years old, and 75.6% for females over 6, in 2001, “massive government’s investment in public education,” (“At a Glance” 2005) and a university population that is more than half female (“Students at Universities” 2005, “Students of Islamic” 2005); improvements in the health infrastructure that have led to dramatic decreases in fertility, maternal mortality and infant mortality rates (“At a Glance” 2005, “Iran: Human Development Index” 2005); also significant increases in life expectancy; and women’s continued presence in the political and economic realms, making up 4.1% of the parliamentary members, 13% of the administrators and managers and 33% of professional and technical workers (“Iran: Human Development Index” 2005).

However, some readers, such as this amazon.com reviewer, “J. Marren ‘jtm497’” are careful to indicate that it is not Islam per se that is at fault but a particular usage of it:

Just as Christianity has in the past been hijacked by those seeking political power, an excuse for war, or to cover up wrongdoing, so too is Islam being hijacked by men with a political agenda. This is a worthwhile and very timely book for those seeking a more sophisticated understanding of the Islamic world.

Another amazon.com reviewer, “Dianne Foster ‘Di’” says succinctly, “Ms Nafisi... reveals how a civilized nation slipped into madness as the result of a ‘religious’ movement.” However, even a notion that the problem is not Islam per se—as it is practiced by Nafisi’s grandmother or some of her female students—but rather Islamism, presents a monolithic vision of political Islam, erasing the possibilities for change within a regime identified with Islam. This dismisses the transformations that have occurred in Iran and sees a complete transformation to a secular political model as the only option.

Nafisi’s memoir does offer some challenges to preconceived notions about Islam and Iranian history. Indeed, the lack of information about Muslim-majority societies in general almost makes it inevitable that any fairly accurate depiction would challenge some preconceptions, whether relatively trivial or more significant. For example, commenters on book club message boards noted that they had not realized that many women in Iran remove their required robes and headscarves when entering a private space, that women could attend university and get an education, or that before the Iranian revolution the country was under secular rule. The last point, while one that solidifies a secularist perspective, also undercut readers’ assumptions of a society that for all times had been under a “medieval” Islamic rule. As such, the memoir challenges readers’ assumption that a government akin to the Islamic regime is simply the inevitable form of governance in any Muslim-majority society. Indeed, the broader context of deep ignorance about Iran and other Muslim-majority societies means that a book like

Reading Lolita in Tehran could be experienced as a revelation, one that does challenge one's prejudices about Muslims. However, what the memoir never challenges, but rather consistently reiterates is the unique threat of political Islam and the unique value of Western culture.

In this context of repressive Islamic laws, Western novels are presented as offering moments of liberation through imagination in a context where the regime seeks to invade women's personal sphere as mechanisms for consciousness-raising. For example, Nabokov's *Lolita* is read as a statement against the totalitarian mindset, manifested in both Humbert and the Islamic republic, while Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* serves as impetus for the study group to discuss the possibilities for happiness in their relationships with men. Nafisi also uses their discussions to argue that because a good novel "shows the complexity of individuals..." and provides the reader with multiple perspectives, it is by nature democratic (2003, 132). Reviewers understand the memoir as "about the universality of great Western literature" (Stoffman 2003) saying that Nafisi shows the "power of western literature to cultivate democratic change and openmindedness" (Hewett 2003). This argument that the novel elicits empathy for all of its characters and is in function democratic, allows Nafisi a literary means of reinforcing the "superiority" of the West.

Although Nafisi does show, as one reviewer says, that "Western culture" is "widely admired and treasured in many Muslim countries" (Yardley 2003) she gives her audience little reason to admire and treasure any aspect of Iranian culture, whether Iranian arts and literature or the meaning-making aspects of daily life in Iran.⁴² Indeed, there seems to be little within Iranian culture to foster democracy or to resist the revolutionaries who are presented as believing that, "Democracy itself is bourgeois and frivolous" (Saidi 2003). Nafisi actually casts the

⁴² In speeches given since the publication of the memoir, Nafisi has taken to evoking Persian writers, not just the classic poets of Rumi and Hafez, but also Forough Farokhzad and Iraj Pizishkzad, which although fairly superficially-referenced, do hint at a broader Iranian cultural context that is barely referenced in the memoir.

antidemocratic nature of Iranian society in broad cultural terms. She follows a claim about the “democratic nature” of the novel with the disputable assertion that “the realistic novel was never truly successful in our country” (187) (see Massombagi 2005). Indeed, rather than consider any modern Persian novels, there is only one Persian work discussed in the memoir, *A Thousand and One Nights*, which is read, “as an allegory about the trapped situation of women” (Stoffman 2003). Nafisi does not mention, let alone discuss, the many creative works by Iranian authors or filmmakers active during this period, including many women.⁴³ In fact in describing the regime’s censorship policies she says, “We lived in a culture that denied any merit to literary works” (25). More broadly speaking, her students’ stories give little indication that other aspects of their lives bring them joy or means of resistance. At one point she wonders about her students’ home lives and “the traumatized mother, the delinquent brother, the shy sister” emphasizing the gendered and oppressive qualities she associates with these homes (58). Iranian society seems to offer little in the way of resistance, becoming associated only with sexism and oppression. Although *Reading Lolita in Tehran* spans an almost 20-year time frame, with the exception of certain very dramatic changes in relation to the revolution or the war with Iraq, the situation of women from the time after the entrenchment of the regime to the conclusion of the memoir are presented as fundamentally unchanged and marked by persistent and pervasive hopelessness.

As a result, Nafisi’s study group becomes a *unique* opportunity to achieve freedom from oppression. Reviewers describe Nafisi as “a courageous English professor” (Larson 2003), a “rebellious intellect” (Curiel 2004), and one who risked imprisonment or worse to bring her students subversive literature (see, eg, Saidi 2003; Rumbelow 2004; Sismondo 2003; Harris 2004). The study group is described as “a refuge and place of transgression,” (Guppy 2003) “an

⁴³ Such women include writers Simin Daneshvar, Shahrnush Parsipur, and Moniru Ravanipur and filmmakers, Tahmineh Milani, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad and Puran Derakhshandeh.

air pocket in the suffocating atmosphere of the Islamic revolution” (Goodman 2003), and a place that “made their sterile and frightening lives more bearable” (Ryan 2003). It is “an escape to a true republic where they are all able to discover another reality – themselves” (Allen 2003) and a place where “masterworks of literature in English ... open up an inviolate private space for personal feelings in the face of state control” (Stoffman 2003). While the broader effectiveness of these modes of resistance is called into question by Nafisi’s ultimate decision to leave Iran, this appears less an indictment of the relevance of Western literature, than an indication of the pervasiveness of the regime’s coercive apparatus. Furthermore, Nafisi’s more narrow promotion of Western literature as creating a private space for imagination and consciousness-raising can remain apparently relevant. Ultimately, reviewers read Nafisi as creating for her students an apparently unique protected space and gives them otherwise unavailable tools of subversive imagination as resistance. In contrast, Iranian society and culture seem to offer no challenge to the revolutionary rulers, who are defined monolithically by their religious ideology and presented as violent, irrational, backwards, and singularly focused on the oppression of women.

Conclusion

The highly uncritical and positive reception of this memoir among a wide range of audiences can be understood in terms of how the work challenges a pure cultural racism that sees all individuals as locked in to a particular cultural heredity, while at the same time reiterating, in a modified form, an opposition between “the West” and “Islam.” While Nafisi challenges a wholly monolithic understanding of contemporary Iran, she ultimately reframes the predominant Orientalist binary—of the “West” as modern, rational and dynamic and opposed to an “East” that is static, irrational, and antimodern—into one of promodern Iranians versus antimodern Iranians. Nafisi’s representation of women as victims of state violence in Iran becomes a key component

of asserting this binary, opposing a monolithic and barbaric Iranian state to the empathy and democratic ethos that she argues is implicit in the (Western) novel and appreciated by her female students. Women's status as victims becomes opposed to religious men's complicity with or support of the state, and women invested in modernizing are opposed to these men seeking to return to a "mythic" Islam through the politicization of the religion. Although Nafisi seeks to deterritorialize the desire and possibility of democracy and social freedom, in direct contradiction with Huntington, her association of such conceptions solely with Western cultural sources maintains the "flexible positional superiority" of the West, which is indicative of Orientalist thought (Said 1979).

Even as this memoir challenges a pure cultural racism, it contributes to a population racism by reinforcing a particular set of conceptions about how to determine who are the more and less threatening Muslims. In this reformulated binary, Iranian women are shifted from the position of "them" to a position of "just like us," a notion that the memoir reinforces by superficially evoking feeling of empathy for these women. This notion of empathy, along with the particular focus on forms of oppression deemed most absurd and "Islamic," encourages the reader to project their own befuddled and horrified responses onto Iranian women. This produces an inability to imagine other possible perspectives, values or desires among Muslim women, making suspect those who do not fit this profile of the liberalized and liberatable Muslim woman. At the same time, these women's lives become proof of the unique threat of Islamism to both women and liberal values in general, a threat that is considered peculiar to Islam and therefore associated with Muslims as a population. This representation may produce sympathy for Muslim women who are just "like us," but also encourages an assessment of all Muslims in terms of this grave threat deemed to be a unique potentiality of the Islamic religion.

Chapter 3

Emotional Attachments and Secular Imaginings: Western LGBTQ Activism on Iran

In July 2005, news and images of the public hangings of two Iranian teens, Ayaz Marhoni and Mahmoud Asgari, in the city of Mashhad, Iran spread via the internet with a report that they were executed for homosexuality. The disturbing images quickly circulated among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer⁴⁴ (LGBTQ) activists in the United States and Europe who responded with statements of protest. Soon, however, it became clear that the claim of homophobic persecution was based on a faulty translation and the youths had been charged with the rape of a 13-year-old boy. A fierce debate ensued among a small group of activists as some remained adamant that the youths were likely executed for being gay, while others argued that the deaths should be protested upon grounds of opposition to the torture and execution of juvenile offenders. Despite this controversy, the interpretation of the executions as state-sanctioned homophobic violence seemed to only gain in power as the images circulated, LGBTQ activists organized international protests, and expressions of sympathy proliferated.

Why does the suffering of some become cause for outrage and protest, while the suffering of others is ignored, and why do some victims become objects of sympathy and remembrance while others remain unknown? In the context of the war on terror, responses among “Western”⁴⁵ audiences to the suffering of those perceived as “Muslims/Arabs” have been highly differentiated, exemplifying both ends of this spectrum of possibilities. I consider this

⁴⁴ Although the vast majority of key participants were gay men, this term reflects the identities of organizations and the fact that the identities of individuals who participated in circulating the information via the internet is not necessarily obvious but expresses an affinity with LGBTQ politics.

⁴⁵ I use the term “Western” to refer to activists who appear to be primarily based in the US and U.K. However, some activists were clearly from other parts of the world, and discourses on the internet are not always easily sourced. However, the “Western” identity here also refers to a particular construction of the “West” as distinct from Islamic cultures that is evident in these discourses. I also used “Western” as distinct from Iranian, despite the existence of Iranian American and British communities, as I largely exclude diasporic Iranian discourses from my analysis.

case where the pain and suffering of two Iranian youth elicited a dramatic outpouring of protest and remembrance among a group of Western activists in order to interrogate a liberal, secular politics of sympathy that has been productive of anti-Muslim/Arab racism. I am less interested in assessing the evidence for or against the notion that the youths were executed for consensual homosexual acts than understanding how an apparent consensus that they were gay developed despite significant reasons for doubt. I argue that in order to understand how this consensus developed we need to consider how the images, in combination with an interpretation of antigay persecution, resonated emotionally with the secular sensibilities of activists. As Saba Mahmood has argued: “While it is common to ascribe passion to religion, it would behoove us to pay attention to the thick texture of affinities, prejudices, and attachments that tie us... to... a secular worldview” (2008, 451). Similarly, Ann Pellegrini has called for analyzing, “secularism as a structure of feeling that constructs and privileges particular subjectivity, social belonging and social knowledge” (2009, 212). Although secularism sees itself as cerebral and reasoned, it has an emotional and affective dimension that is important in shaping responses to suffering, in this case delimiting the responses of activists to the executions.

The executions, when interpreted as homophobic persecution, resonated with a secular imagination that sees an opposition between the secular and the religious and affirms a liberal conception of the individual as an autonomous subject that can and ought to choose its culture and religion. This secular imagination has become complicit with an anti-Muslim/Arab racism that sees Islam as antiseccular and illiberal, and therefore prone to uniquely irrational and antimodern violence. When framed as a case of homophobic persecution, as Islamic repressiveness versus Western freedom, this case positions LGBTQ activists as aligned with the values of properly secularized “Western civilization.” This framing integrates LGBTQ activists

into the story of clashing civilizations at the heart of the war on terror, affirming their patriotism, even while many of them maintain their liberal antiwar stance and affirm their liberal sentiment of sympathy for Muslim victims. Through a story of homophobic persecution, these sympathetic victims became paradoxically an example of commonality, in the form of a universal LGBTQ experience, and of difference, in the form of a “civilizational” (ie, cultural and religious) divide between a violently intolerant “Islam” and a progressively more tolerant “West.” An unsecularized Islam is made determinant of what is deemed barbaric state violence that affirms an essential, intractable “civilizational” difference. This conception of difference is at a basis of cultural racism against “Muslims/Arabs,” which sees individuals as determined by an immutable cultural heredity. While in this case, sympathy for and identification with the “Muslim” victims seems to cut against cultural racism, this sympathy is based on and reinforces a notion of Islamic difference that resonates with a secular imagination and reaffirms such racism.

Therefore, I refer to the youths as “sympathetic Muslims” not to describe their religious beliefs or practices, but rather their racialization into the category of “Muslim,” given that sympathy for them depends on their status as part of an Islamic culture that makes them into particular kinds of victims. When identified as “gay” victims of Islamic homophobia the youths become objects of sympathy, however a sympathy that is articulated through both an identification of the youths as “like us” and differentiation of them as victims of an irrational and backward religion. However, the conception of “gay” identity as universal, unchosen, and natural, makes the youths “like us” not as a result of a choice to “Westernize” but because their fundamental existence is deemed incompatible with Islam. As such they become proof of the universalism of Western liberalism and secularism, which (contrary to Islam) is deemed compatible with the diversity of “human nature.” Therefore, such cases of LGBTQ persecution

strongly resonate with an essentialized conception of cultural and civilizational difference that is central to cultural racism that delineates “us” from “them.” However, these have also produced tolerance/intolerance of homosexuality as another variable of population racism that assesses the level of threat or trustworthiness of specific Muslims/Arabs.⁴⁶

A secular imagination has been central to how such civilizational differences are conceived and therefore intimately connected to the articulation of anti-Muslim/Arab racism. Secularists are drawn to and moved by stories of suffering that reproduce an oppositional relationship between the secular and the religious. Increasingly this opposition has been conceived as between “the West” and “Islam,” a religion presented as highly resistant to modernizing and secularizing forces (Lewis 2002). In a secular worldview, non-secularized religion is seen as a threat to the values of rationality, individuality, self-determination, progress and freedom. While secularized religions that are entirely confined to the private realm are often deemed acceptable as sources of personal guidance and comfort, non-secularized religions are understood to be threatening because they are seen as communitarian, bound to the past, resistant to reason and maintained through violence. Therefore some secularists claim to have no problem with Islam per se, if properly secularized and privatized, but simply oppose expressions of Islam in politics. However, they fail to recognize that both the liberal secularism that they advocate and various forms of Islam are cultural traditions, that are products of particular histories. Liberal secularism is not a culturally neutral expression of a universal rationality and, conversely, Islamic traditions are not devoid of rationality, but both traditions include processes of inquiry

⁴⁶ For example, in the Netherlands, a video produced by the Ministry of Aliens Affairs and Integration includes images of gay men kissing as part of a message to potential immigrants that the Netherlands is a “free society” where “violence,” “female circumcision” and “honour killing” are forbidden (Mausse 2006, 122). Similarly, one response to the controversy surrounding the 2010 New York City Islamic cultural center, discussed further in the Conclusion, from Fox New commentator Greg Gutfeld was to announce the opening of a gay bar next door as a test of the tolerance of the Muslim planners (Bolcer 2010).

that emphasize the use of reason to engage with authoritative texts (eg, the Constitution, the Qur'an) in different historical contexts in order to reassess predominant values, beliefs and practices (Haj 2009). This secular imagination's association of religion with irrationality results in the expression of a particular abhorrence at what is deemed religious violence, while violence in the name of the secular ends that is often more far-reaching and devastating rarely elicits similar responses (Asad 2003). As such, this discourse fails to articulate the linkages and continuities between "secular" and "religious" violence, even when both are expressions of the modern centralized state.

In the years following the 9/11 attacks, a range of political projects and interests on the left have converged in an increasingly impassioned defense of secularism. In the United States, LGBTQ activists have long had an interest in excluding religious perspectives from public discourse given their history of political battles with the Christian right.⁴⁷ Furthermore an interpretation of the "war on terror" as a "clash of fundamentalisms" (Ali 2002) has represented secularization on both sides as necessary for peaceful coexistence. Although Iran has not previously been of central concern in LGBTQ activism, it has been a symbol of failed secularization since 1979, with the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini seen as marking the re-entry of religion into the global political sphere (Casanova 1994). This secularist perception of Iran is distinct from George W. Bush's at times religiously-inflected framing of Iran as part of the "axis of evil" which reinforces a Christian worldview of good versus evil and built on his earlier references to a "crusade." Nevertheless, secularist concerns about the relationship with Iran has dovetailed with the Bush administration's interest in presenting Iran as a state sponsor of "terror" with nuclear ambitions that are a major threat to Western security. More recently, the Israeli

⁴⁷ While I see an affinity between Western LGBTQ and secular politics, my analysis does not assume that LGBTQ identities or discourses are always necessarily "secular." For an interesting exploration of this question in the Israeli/Palestinian context, see Gold (2010).

government has explicitly articulated gay rights in Iran, as a key issue around which to garner support for Israel in its geopolitical struggle against the Iranian regime (Ravid 2009). Therefore, despite a general post-9/11 political malaise on the left (Cvetkovich 2007, 460), there has been an increasing incorporation of a normative patriotic queerness that is intimately bound with racist imperialist projects as expressed through what Jasbir Puar terms “homonationalism” (Puar 2007). Therefore, a secular imagination that reinforces a particular interpretation of the executions of these two Iranian youths, while also muting responses to the many other deaths in the war on terror, has become a tool for sifting among populations in favor of normative *Western* LGBTQ subjects, who have been further incorporated into the nation.

In what follows, I begin with an overview of the initial controversy among LGBTQ activist regarding how to respond to the news and images of the executions and the emerging broader consensus. I also consider how this case has come to overwhelm a more nuanced understanding of the social and legal regulation of sexuality in the Iranian context, coming to stand in for the experience of being “gay” in Iran. I then provide a theoretical framing for considering how emotions and affects shaped responses to produce a particular interpretation of the executions that resonated with activists’ secular imagination. Next, I analyze the specific processes by which a particular interpretation emerged in relation to three emotions: love, fear and disgust. Finally, I conclude with a consideration of the broader implications of my argument in relation to both the question of solidarity and the complicity of liberal/left politics with anti-Muslim/Arab racism.

The Case

The executions of Marhoni and Asgari would not have gained the attention they did without the devastating photographs that accompanied the release of the story. The initial Farsi-

language report of the executions from Iranian Students' News Agency included three photographs, showing 1) the two youths being interviewed by journalists, 2) one of the two youths, blindfolded, being escorted by a guard and an executioner, and 3) two hooded executioners placing nooses around the heads of the youths. Other circulated photographs showed the teens hanging from the nooses and images of the crowd gathered to watch. The teens had been detained fourteen months earlier; they had received a sentence of 228 lashes for drinking alcohol, disturbing the peace, and theft, and a sentence of death for a crime that would become the center of controversy. At least one and probably both of the youths were under eighteen at the time of their arrests (Ghaemi and Bochenek 2005) and their executions were protested in Iran on the grounds of opposition to the death penalty for minors by Nobel-Peace-Prize winner Shirin Ebadi (Chicago Tribune 2005).

As Richard Kim (2005) describes in his analysis of the initial spread of news of the executions, a core group of LGBTQ activists were quickly divided over the precise meaning of the photographs. OutRage!, a British LGBTQ rights group, posted the initial, much-circulated report that the youths were executed “for the ‘crime’ of homosexuality” (2005). However, Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission soon raised questions, noting that the original Farsi-language article named the crime “*Lavat beh Onf*” or “homosexual act by coercion,” which a Mashhad newspaper specified as the rape of 13-year-old boy at knifepoint. OutRage! responded that the rape charges were fabricated, citing as its sources unnamed Iranian dissidents and the National Council of Resistance of Iran, a group described as “discredited” by historian Janet Afary and a “cult” by historian Ervand Abrahamian (Kim 2005). Doug Ireland, blogger and journalist for the New York City weekly paper, *Gay City News*, also continued to call the executions instances of antigay persecution and reported

extensively on it. He cited Afdhere Jama, editor of a US-based queer Muslim e-zine, who claimed his informants in Iran said that the youths were lovers, arrested following an incident of sexual relations with several boys. HRW's LGBT Rights Program director, Scott Long, in turn argued that fabrication of the rape charges was largely implausible and that no one had been able to verify Jama's claims (Long 2006b). Given the lack of certainty, Long advocated focusing on the well-documented violations of human rights, including torture (for the lashings), execution of minors, and the death penalty more broadly.

Despite this year-long, murky and at times personally-charged debate,⁴⁸ a growing consensus emerged among a broader group of LGBTQ activists that Marhoni and Asgari were executed for their homosexuality. On the one-year anniversary of the executions in July 2006, events to protest the hangings of "two gay teenagers" (2006) were held in approximately twenty-seven cities around the world (Petrelis 2006b; Ireland 2006b). The protests were endorsed by international organizations (such as the International Lesbian and Gay Association), by local and national organizations in the United States, Europe (including the UK, Netherlands, Ireland, Italy, Austria, among others) and Latin America, and by many prominent LGBTQ activists, academics, and artists in the United States (Ireland 2006b). This consensus was also evidenced by a range of creative responses that presented the youths as gay teens, including a 2006 album dedication by the Pet Shop Boys, several YouTube videos (including one that has garnered over 200,000 views), an award-winning opera entitled "Edalat Square" performed in Houston, Texas in 2008 and 2009, and a play entitled "Haram Iran" performed in Chicago in 2008 and Los Angeles in 2010 ("Under the Pale" 2006; "To Mahmoud Asgari" 2008; "Vista Festival" 2009; "Haram Iran" 2009). As one astute journalistic analysis of the protests said, "The force of the

⁴⁸ See the July 27, 2006 issue of *Gay City News* covering various perspectives in the debate.

images, for many gay people, has cut through any doubt about their particular meaning” (Kennicott 2006). Such an interpretation also eventually became prevalent in the non-LGBTQ press (Penketh 2008; Democracy Now! 2008); the *New York Times*, which in 2005 had described the executed youths as “two young men convicted of sexually assaulting a 13-year-old boy,” in 2007 called them “two gay teenagers” (Fathi 2005, 2007).

While, for many, these executions were clearly a case of persecuting two “boys in love,” for other activists, doubts about this specific case were overridden by a feeling of certainty that others have been executed for consensual same-gender relations in Iran. Indeed, there have long been isolated reports from Iran of executions of men on charges of sodomy. The numbers of such executions are wildly divergent, with many activists referencing an estimate attributed to Homan, a Los Angeles-based Iranian LGBTQ organization, of 4,000 executions of homosexuals since the Iranian revolution (Petrelis 2006a), while the International Lesbian and Gay Association has estimated 800 executions for sodomy in the period between 1979 to 1997, although noting that most of these also involved other charges such as pedophilia or murder (Afary 2009, 287). Despite these difficulties in documenting such cases, activists can point to Iran’s legal code which makes sodomy a crime punishable by death. The law requires either confession or the eyewitness testimony of four men, a standard that former President Khatami deemed so stringent to argue that such executions should be almost impossible (“President Khatami” 2008). However, human rights organizations report that in practice this standard is overridden either by a coerced confession or a standard “the knowledge of the judge,” where a judge may deductively arrive at a ruling based on existing evidence (International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission 2009). Therefore while there are doubts about the facts of this case, the Iranian government can treat cases of consensual sodomy extremely harshly, including through

application of capital punishment. What is not as clear is whether the death penalty has been used as part of a concerted campaign against consensual same-gender sexual relations.

Furthermore, this emphasis on Iranian legal codes and reports of executions says relatively little about the place of same-gender sexual relation in Iranian society. While a full exploration of this question is beyond the purview of this chapter, a cursory review of some literature on the subject points to a more complicated situation than suggested by the reports of Western activists. Janet Afary (2009) describes a postrevolutionary context where gender segregation and a strong tradition of homosociality has created a context where same-gender sexual relations are at times deemed safer than extramarital heterosexual relations, are broadly tolerated, and are not translated into a “gay” or “lesbian” identity. Afsaneh Najmabadi (2008) has found that more so than fear of criminality, social expectations, especially the pressure to marry, are responsible for restricting the lives of individuals in same-gender relationships in Iran. Even an Iranian LGBTQ organization that supported protests of the Mashhad executions, when asked about the “atmosphere of constant fear” Iranian gays face in a 2005 interview, responded with a nuanced and historicized description:

The GLBT situation in Iran has changed over the past 26 years. The regime does not systematically persecute gays anymore, there are still some gay websites, there are some parks and cinemas where everyone knows that these places are meeting places for gays... Having said that, the Islamic law, according to which gays [*sic*] punishment is death is still in force but it is thought not much followed by the regime nowadays. (Alekseev 2005)

When the question was reiterated, the respondent describes a lack of information about sexuality as the “biggest problem” facing LGBTQ Iranians (Alekseev 2005). Relatedly, Rostam Pourzal (2007) reports that military draft exemptions have been granted to thousands of men claiming to be active homosexuals and points out that in a recent CBC documentary, many self-identified gay Iranians chose to show their faces on camera. Anthropologist Pardis Mahdavi (2009)

describes a “sexual revolution” in Iran where her predominantly urban middle and upper class informants report engaging in illegal activities, such as premarital and extramarital sex, group sex parties and same-gender experiences, one of whom explains, “We are not homosexual, we are not heterosexual. We are just sexual” (135). Western LGBTQ activists working on this Mashhad case rarely hint at such complexities that would lead them to better contextualize these executions and to question the applicability of a Western model of gay liberation that emphasizes identity politics and visibility.

While this is not the only case garnering Western activist outrage at the apparent executions of sexual minorities by the Iranian state,⁴⁹ (International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission 2009) the images of these executions have come to serve as a shorthand visual representation of what it means to be “gay” in Iran. For example, a Google images search for the terms “gay Iran” six years after the executions (on September 22, 2011), resulted in images of the Mashhad executions appearing as 11 of the top 15 results. These images were also 29% of the top 163 images (the next most common images were depictions of Ahmadinejad (12%) and of nooses or hangings (10%)). More significantly, the responses to the case demonstrate that the images in combination with a narrative of homophobic persecution affirm a particular liberal secularist conception of the role of religion in Iranian society and government. As such, my point here is not to question whether persecution of consensual sexual relations occurs in Iran, but rather to demonstrate why this particular image of “sympathetic Muslims”

⁴⁹ Western activists also mobilized in 2007 in response to the death sentence of Makwan Moloudzadeh, who was accused of raping three teenage boys when he was himself 13 years old. Ultimately Mouloudzadeh was executed despite the fact that the plaintiffs recanted their statements and a judge issued a stay of execution. A number of instances of executions for sodomy have since been reported by human rights organizations; for example the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (2009) reported of at least 11 men, including a number who were under 18 at the time of the arrests, who were given death sentences on the charges of sodomy between 2007-2009. In addition, high profile asylum cases such as that of Pegah Emambakhsh and Mehdi Kazemi in the UK have focused on the threat of execution in Iran and garnered significant activist attention.

was so powerful, deeply resonating with a secular imagination that has come to shape liberals' and leftists' responses to Muslims/Arabs more broadly. As a result, I have not given significant attention to the responses of diasporic Iranian LGBTQ activists, some of whom protested the executions. These individuals' responses are shaped by a somewhat different terrain than what is the object of my analysis. While the testimony of such diasporic individuals often lent authenticity to the portrayals of Iran by Western activists, their responses would have to be analyzed in relation to not only their experiences in Iran, but also the problem of garnering asylum in Western countries and their dependence on Western LGBTQ activists for support, that combine to create particular parameters for legibility within a Western context. Rather, I focus almost exclusively on the responses of Western LGBTQ activists to the executions. Specifically, I analyze how these activists ascribed a particular conception of gay identity to the boys in order to foster identification with them, how they connected the feeling of terror captured in the photographs to a range of other fears associated with the United States and Iranian contexts, and how they separated state violence perceived as rooted in religion from secular forms of violence, thereby effacing the continuities and commonalities between the two.

Emotional Images, Affective Media and Secular Imaginings

In order to explore the process by which a particular interpretation of the executions took hold and moved activists to action, I explore the interplay of emotions and affects in producing a resonance with a predominant liberal secular imagination. As noted in the Introduction, emotions refer to narratively and linguistically structured responses to an interpretation of a situation, while affects are unstructured and felt as intensities of the body (Ngai 2005). Furthermore, emotional responses to this case must be understood as products of histories and “investments in social norms” (Ahmed 2004, 56), building on a history of highly differentiating sympathetic

responses to colonized “Others,” while resonating with particular liberal secular norms. Furthermore the primary medium of engagement with the case, the internet, operates through affective means, attuning to, inciting, intensifying and speeding the circulation of emotions. While emotional narratives expressing love, fear and disgust were integral to producing a feeling of sympathy for the executed boys, the internet facilitated a swift and affective circulation of the images and soundbites about the executions which further reinforced this interpretation as a “felt truth.”

As also noted in the Introduction, sympathy has shifted from being an expression of a feeling *with* another to an expression of feeling *for* another, who is marked off as the sufferer (Garber 2004, 23). Therefore there is a dynamic tension in expressions of sympathy that tends to create both identification and differentiation between the sympathizer and victim (Rai 2002). In the Mashhad case, activist sympathy for the two youths demonstrated such a tension between identification and differentiation. The executions were seen by many LGBTQ activists as an opportunity to expand the perimeter of their identification and the frontier of activism against homophobia. However, this identification was also marked by a differentiation, as the Islamic character of the Iranian state was deemed the source of murderous homophobia, while Western contexts were assumed to be consistently less homophobic. As such, the emotions evoked by a narrative of homophobic persecution reflected secular assumptions about the threat of non-privatized religion and also a view that “Islam” and “the West” are inherently conflicting “civilizations.”

The process by which the youths were produced as sympathetic Muslims was also shaped by how emotional responses circulated via the medium of the internet. Ahmed describes objects as becoming “sticky,” accumulating associations, meanings and emotions through their

circulation, a process that is much more discernable in today's media milieu (Ahmed 2004, 11). In particular, the internet has an affective power that perpetuates a doing that feels good in itself, regardless of meaning or effect. Puar has argued that, "Mobility, motility, speed and performance function as primary erotic and addictive charges of modernity. Clicking the 'send' button is the ultimate release of productivity and consumption, and dissemination, the ultimate form of territorial coverage and conquest...." (Puar 2004, 532). LGBTQ audiences faced with the horrifying images and story via an internet that facilitated rapid responses felt a sense of urgency and responsibility to act. They could quickly "forward" an email, cut and paste a form letter or post a response on a blog or a YouTube video. The sympathetic response also absolved the actor of further responsibility to question or contemplate, placing the onus on the recipient. As such, internet activism has an affective agency that feeds itself through movement, points of connection, and repetition. In this case, it was this entire process by which the story and photographs circulated, resonated emotionally, and moved people to action that made it exceedingly difficult to unstick the story of antigay persecution from the images.

While I understand the strength, persistence and continuing production of this response as intimately connected to the forms of circulation that the internet facilitates, the rest of my analysis will focus primarily on the emotional responses to the case. In particular, I focus on the resonance between three types of emotional responses and a predominant liberal secular imagination about gay identity, Islam, and violence. These were: 1) *love*, or feelings of identification with the "gay"—and therefore presumably innocent—victims who were expressing their individuality against religious mores, 2) *fear*, or feelings of sympathetic terror for what the youths experienced at the hands of religion, resonating with many other fears articulated in Western LGBTQ experience and in the war on terror, and 3) *disgust*, or feelings of revulsion at

violence that could be seen as religious in source and therefore wholly distinct from Western secular forms of violence. Through these three emotional responses identification and differentiation with the sympathetic victim were produced in a manner that resonated with a liberal secular imagination that has come to undergird one version of a cultural racism that sees an essential civilizational difference as marking off “Muslims” from “Westerners.”

Love and (non-traditional) Community

An image posted on Andrew Sullivan’s blog in July 2006 shows a protester at a demonstration in New York City on the one-year anniversary of the executions (Sullivan 2006b). In the image, a young handsome man is holding up a large, carefully-drawn black and white picture of Marhoni and Asgari. In the drawing the two are standing side-by-side with their eyes covered by blindfolds, as in the images of their executions; however rather than nooses around their necks, the drawing shows them with a flower arrangement across their chests. The sign reads “We Remember You,” and the serene expression on the young man’s face seems to reiterate this idea. Through this image, just as in narratives and other responses to the executions, two forms of love, the love of the romantic couple and the love of a non-traditional community, are articulated to produce a feeling of commonality between the sympathizers and victims. More specifically, the Mashhad case is repeatedly rendered a story of forbidden love, rather than forbidden sex. This love then is presented as a proof of their innocence, which appears to be necessary to establishing that they are sympathetic victims. Their love also comes to be proof of their “gay” identity, resonating with an increasingly normative normalized Western gay identity that emphasizes the love of the romantic couple. In turn the boys’ gay identity produces a feeling of identification and love in the LGBTQ audience and brings them into the fold of a “global” LGBTQ community, in opposition to the boys’ traditional community. This incorporation is

based on a conception of a natural and universal gay identity, one that is not chosen and yet is supposed to nurture a liberal autonomous subject who can choose. In line with a liberal secularist imagination about religion and traditional culture, a “natural” homosexuality is found to be incompatible with a religion and culture that fail to accept “human nature.” Therefore this interpretation of the two youths as executed for a gay love affair is not simply a product of the identity politics of LGBTQ activists but also resonated more broadly with a liberal secularist imagination about how romantic love that violates traditional religious norms is one of the purest expression individualism and freedom.

In activists’ responses to the executions, the supposed love of the two youths for each other acts as an alibi, attesting to their innocence and making them sympathetic victims. This was apparent in statements such as, they were “two fun loving teenage kids who were in love and who had never harmed anybody” (Forbes 2006, 62) or “these boys were not pedophiles.... They were kids who found love.... They were victims of a hate crime and of state-sanctioned murder” (2006). By pairing the claims that the youths were in love and that they were innocent, they imply that these are mutually exclusive—that one could not both be in love and participate in a rape. In a YouTube video entitled “To Mahmoud Asgari and Ayaz Marhoni with sorrow” which has received more than 16,000 views, that emphasizes the viewers’ identification with the boys, their presumed love and innocence is central to creating that identification (“To Mahmoud Asgari” 2008). The text (somewhat awkwardly) explains that the two youths were executed “for the reason they had made bold to love each other.” Then as a seeming acknowledgment to the doubts raised about this interpretation, it asks, “if you had been them,” would it matter “for what purpose” you/they were executed? However the lack of mention of the rape charges clarifies that it does matter. Their status as two boys in love assures their innocence and the possibility for

identification, potentially far beyond LGBTQ audiences. Therefore sympathy appears to be reserved for victims with whom one can identify, and identification is based in part on the victims' innocence, which is established by describing the teens as in love.

The focus on Marhoni and Asgari as two boys in love, rather than two boys convicted of particular sexual acts, resonates with an increasingly normative conception of the Western gay subject, that emphasizes romantic love and coupledness, rather than sexual expression and sexual liberation. This is part of a broader shift in the goals of Western LGBTQ activism toward a politics of normalization, particularly through the legitimization of the love of the romantic couple in same-gender marriage rights. This notion that the two boys were in love, originating from the reports of a single US-based reporter, that said they were a couple who were seen attending "gay" parties, was also reinforced by the narrative power of such a Romeo and Juliet story of young, forbidden and fatal love. Although all versions of the alleged crime involved at least one other boy, the repeated reference to the youths as "gay teen lovers" implied that their purported relationship to each other, and not to the other boy, was the reason for their execution. The simple fact that *two* youths, pictured standing side by side at the gallows, were executed has been crucial in reinforcing this narrative. The photographs function to remove the third boy from the frame of the story, and in combination with reports that they were "gay" quickly evoke a narrative about what happens when gay love is exposed in a place like Iran.

These two spatially and culturally distant people were made close via statements of protesters and reconstructions of their lives; they were made identifiable as the kid next door or as interchangeable with the audience. As Ahmed (2004) notes, love produces the feeling of identification and the character of likeness and, for activists, the youths' presumable gay identity overcomes the obstacle of their difference. Even where aspects of Marhoni and Asgari's

difference are noted, narratives about them also mix in details that seem to emphasize how ordinary and recognizable they were. For example, while Forbes (2006) notes that they were two lower-middle class Iranian youths of Arab descent, he also describes that they had expensive taste in clothing and that one of them was a fan of Michael Jackson. As Long says identification with the youths as “gay” was a key component of LGBTQ responses to this case, saying, “the most important thing ‘we’ saw in ‘them’ was that they were ‘gay’: they were like *us*.... [they] wanted what ‘we’ wanted and did what ‘we’ did; they were part of the family” (Long 2009, 130). This identification was expressed clearly in responses such as that of R. Timothy Brady who wrote an opera about the youths, saying, “I’m gay — that could happen to me. It doesn’t matter that they’re Iranian or they’re half way across the world, it still really hit home” (“Emory Student’s Opera” 2007). Furthermore, Western LGBTQ activists, acting as a community of witnesses, are shown to feel a love for their persecuted brethren whom they welcome into the fold of the community as victims of homophobia that threatens all LGBTQ people. This love also served as an alibi for the activists attesting to their purity of intention and disassociating them from the racism of the war on terror discourse that they nevertheless were reinforcing.

Cases of persecution of “gay love” have powerful resonance in liberal secular imagination beyond LGBTQ identity politics, as activists set themselves apart from “traditional” communities in that they claim to create a liberating space in which the youths could escape the restrictions of religious and cultural communities. As such, this discourse has become central to the reiteration of a civilizational difference between the “West” and “Islam.” In a liberal secularist worldview individual agency and freedom are expressed in part through the rejection of the restrictions of traditional community. Romantic love, as an expression of individual desire against cultural expectation, especially in “traditional” societies, is seen as both a pinnacle of

self-determination and a challenge to the social structures. As Elizabeth Povinelli has said, liberals see their societies as organized around love, rather than “lust, tribalism, race, kinship, or religion,” although they note that love can happen in other societies “*in spite of* their constraints and distortions of the subject” (Povinelli 2006, 177). From this perspective, “We hear that love creates a higher civilizational form even though it happens only between two people. We hear that love changes history....” (Povinelli 2006, 177-178). In this framework, expressions of same-gender love are all the more powerful as forms of individual self-determination because they are seen as an even greater challenge to “traditional” societies, particularly those ruled by “irrational” religion. However, there is a particular gay subject that emerges from these narratives that cuts against such a conception of self-determination, as someone whose sexuality is natural and stable, emergent in youth and determinant of a particular identity. Therefore, the choice is simply not to repress one’s sexuality, whereas one’s identity as “gay” is natural and not a choice. A natural homosexuality is opposed to an Islam that is deemed incompatible with human nature, and therefore not only illiberal but unnatural and perverting.

This narrative serves to oppose a Western culture that is deemed to allow and foster a natural love, to an Islamic culture that restricts human expression and metes out death to those in love, as demonstrated by signs of London protesters reading, “Stop Death Penalty for Love.” In this context it is easy to see that the story of the execution of two teenagers charged with the crime of raping a thirteen year-old boy was not as emotionally compelling because it does not produce as sympathetic a victim or sufficiently set “Islam” apart. In the United States, there is much antipathy for juvenile offenders who can be tried as adults and are serving life sentences at increasing rates (Schworm 2005; Liptak 2005). In 2005, the United States, along with China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, accounted for 95% of executions worldwide and until 2005 the death penalty

could be applied to juvenile offenders in the United States (2006; Totenberg 2005). While the ban on executing individuals for crimes committed under the age of eighteen has been deemed by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to be so widely accepted as to be “a norm from which no derogation is permitted,” (Templeton 2000, 1190) activists focused protest on the more questionable assertion that the youths were executed for being gay. Indeed, there were many other grounds that activists could have drawn upon to oppose the executions, for example, that the Iranian judicial system is highly flawed and rarely abides by its own or international standards of evidence and that the punishment of lashings and execution was disproportionate to the alleged crime of rape. However, the narrative of execution for love resonated with a liberal secular imagination and brought Western conceptions of LGBTQ identities into a discourse about the backward nature of Islam.

Their Fear, Our Fear

Those walking down the street in Washington D.C.’s gay neighborhood of Dupont Circle in July 2006, were likely to come across a very disturbing set of images. On the eve of the one-year anniversary of the executions, in preparation for demonstrations being held in cities across the country and world, Lambda Rising, an LGBTQ bookstore placed two large reproductions of the images of the executions in their store window, under the banner “Iran stop killing gays.” The first image showed Marhoni and Asgari standing side by side as the nooses were placed around their necks and the second image showed them, dying or dead, as their bodies were swinging by the ropes. Also posted was a large sign with a quote by “‘Mashi,’ a 24-year-old gay activist in Iran,” which read, “Isn’t it time that all homosexuals around the world rise up and come to our defense?” These images of executions were made part of the urban landscape, where one walking down the street comes face-to-face with two young men facing their imminent

deaths. What kinds of feelings does this evoke in the viewer? How does this experience reverberate and resonate with other experiences, histories and associations?

While the emotion of love serves to create sameness and identification with the youth, fear powerfully connects and differentiates the Iranian and US contexts, as the story circulates different types of fear for different bodies. The narrative power of the images in creating a sympathetic fear in the audience and evoking associated fears is of central importance to the power of this story. Indeed, if the photographs had not existed, doubts about the cause of the executions likely would have led many to cease to be interested in the story. The photographs provided powerful material for depicting violent and barbaric “antigay” persecution that many assumed must be occurring in Iran. The fear of Marhoni and Asgari is palpable in the sequence of photographs, in part because their faces are visible and emotionally communicative. In the first photograph, they are crying and distressed as they speak with the journalist. This allows for a “sympathetic communication” (Gibbs 2002) where their tears might elicit the tears of a viewer. Furthermore, as Ahmed notes fear “involves *anticipation* of hurt or injury” (Ahmed 2004, 65) in the future and the anticipation of the two teens’ imminent deaths is captured with gut wrenching clarity in these photographs. The fear amplifies as they are blindfolded and walked toward the gallows, and becomes overwhelming as the nooses are slid over their heads and around their necks. This fear, although a private experience of terror not fully imaginable by the viewer, “opens up past histories of association” (Ahmed 2004, 63). The viewer projects his or her own fears onto these youths’ experiences: fear of death, fear of homophobic persecution, fear of religious homophobia, or fear of the threat of Islam. These fears also resonate with the secularist perspective that when religion is not confined to the private realm, it will necessarily become a source of oppressive conformity and irrational violence.

The narrative power of the photographs is clear in the fact that they have inspired so many narrative renditions of the executions, including at least two theatrical pieces, a number of YouTube videos, and various written pieces. Combining the photographs with narrative, music and even photographs from other executions, activists were able to maximize sympathy for a cause. For example, the YouTube video noted above ("To Mahmoud Asgari" 2008), demonstrates how images, especially of the human face, along with music, work to intensify and modulate emotional responses (Gibbs 2002, 338). With a soundtrack of mournful string instruments, it uses simple black screens with white text, interspersed with photographs from the executions and elsewhere. It begins by evoking the viewer's perspective and life experience, specifically as a young person: "Remember.../ when you were fourteen years old/ when you were 16..." Then transposing Marhoni and Asgari into the frame and walking the viewer through their executions, the video seeks to make the viewer feel the terror they felt, capitalizing on the narrative power of the photographs which allow for a step-by-step recreation of the executions. The youths' terror is dramatically heightened through mournful music that turns shrill at the moment of the executions. The viewer feels sick to the stomach.

Indeed, other YouTube videos and a lengthy examination of the case by Simon Forbes of Outrage! also extensively narrativize and make visceral the experiences of the executions. In these renditions, photographs from other contexts, especially one that dates from three years prior to the executions of a young man in an audience weeping as an older man looks at him with concern (Iranian.com 2002b), is used to more viscerally capture the horror of the experience. Forbes integrates this photograph into his narrative without noting that it is from another context, describing the moment after the hangings begin, "Many cheer while others look on silently in fear. A brother of Mahmoud begins screaming." This image, which is from a September 29,

2002 public hangings of men convicted of abducting, raping and robbing women, was also used in two YouTube videos ("Under the Pale" 2006; "Real Execution" 2009), one of which added another image from the same 2002 hanging, showing a ruggedly handsome blue-eyed convict awaiting execution, implying that he too was executed for being gay.⁵⁰ While such embellishments to this powerful visual narrative hardly seem necessary, they point to an interest in depicting fear and terror of the executions in ways that can be vicariously experienced, through the experience of anticipation and of the pain of viewership.

The fear that Marhoni and Asgari experienced as they faced their deaths was at times connected to all Iranians, described by Peter Tatchell as living in "a gigantic prison," (2005) but more commonly linked to the presumed all-encompassing fear defining the lives of Iranian sexual minorities. In the period following the executions, Doug Ireland reported extensively on police entrapment, arrests and violence against men seeking sexual relationships with other men in Iran, saying that the fear he perceived from "gay" Iranians, "surpasses by far anything encountered covering dissident movements behind the Iron Curtain" (Ireland 2005b). His accounts are detailed and horrifying, portraying a police state that appears to be singularly focused on setting traps for men seeking to find each other through the internet, and then arresting, abusing and, in some cases, raping them. He describes the resulting community fear as leading individuals to taking unusual measures to go about simple tasks, for example, describing a man seeking to communicate with Western journalists as dressing in full facial veil, traveling for a day to an internet café, where he communicated via a newly-created instant messaging account. He concludes, "It is that scary. People are rightfully scared for their lives" (Ireland 2005b). While Ireland's accounts of internet-based police entrapment are plausible, they are not

⁵⁰ The images were originally published by Iranian.com (2002a, 2002b).

linked to the larger context of police surveillance that has waxed and waned in Iran over the past many decades and has targeted many different categories of people. They also fail to note that police entrapment and abuse of LGBTQ people is not a phenomenon unique to Iran, but also has been practiced in many Western contexts. Finally, an account of Iran as a totalitarian society ruled by fear obfuscates a much more complicated situation in Iran, where people have struggled against and often found ways of evading such surveillance, policing and abuse. As such, there is an explicit disassociation from the Iranian context which is presented as wholly oppressive, without opportunities for resistance.

Despite this explicit disassociation from the Iranian context, there is also an implicit resonance articulated in a fear of homophobic violence that is perceived to cross various borders. Even as the West is represented as progressively more tolerant, the executions evoke another past, one that is written into the consciousness of Western LGBTQ people who have feared being “outed,” having their livelihood taken away from them, or being victims of homophobic violence. One protest organizer said, “For gay people, I think all of us have a fear of being killed, and of being killed for who we are,” and that he sees Marhoni and Asgari as being “executed for something you see in yourself” (Kennicott 2006). As such these photographs touched on an “emotional memory” (Gibbs 2002, 339) many LGBTQ viewers seemed to have, striking them as a possibility that they had been spared, only by the luck of birth. Furthermore, this case had some parallels to reactions to the murder of Matthew Shepard, in Laramie, Wyoming, a white gay college student. As Loffreda (2000) describes, many outside LGBTQ activists felt a need to speak on behalf of Shepard, expressing a “sense of ownership” about the case, while also constructing the context and source of the violence as vastly different and other and, as such, not

a reflection of the country's true values.⁵¹ Therefore reactions to the Mashhad executions built, in various ways, on responses to many other cases of anti-LGBTQ violence that have been documented in the United States and elsewhere.

Finally, the fear encapsulated in the photographs was also generalized and amplified to be a fear experienced by all Americans, or Westerners, in the face of what is deemed an Islamic threat. The war on terror which, as Pellegrini points out, is said to be waged against a *feeling*, is also invested in producing fear, making it a “war of terror” (Pellegrini 2009, 210). Ahmed notes that fear is exacerbated when the object of fear is lost, which leads to the entire world becoming fearsome, saying, “The loss of the object of fear renders the world itself a space of potential danger” (Ahmed 2004, 69). In the war on terror, a war where (until the 2011 killing of Osama Bin Laden) the presumed leader of the September 11 attacks was said to have absconded in the mountains of Afghanistan and the source of the attacks has been said to be a slippery set of worldviews, fear's object has been lost and generalized. By contrast, the fear felt by Marhoni and Asgari is tangible, comprehensible and clear. There are villains and accomplices: the executioners stand behind them, the government administrators escort them, the journalists compliantly interview them, and the crowd watches. These two are incredibly alone, vulnerable, and helpless. This story concretizes the object of fear, and gives a form to the floating generalized fear circulating in the war on terror, thereby making it temporarily more manageable.

This fear of Islam, a fear that seems to be shared by so many different categories of people and not simply LGBTQ individuals, is also palpable in the photographs because these individuals seem to embody this conflict in their physical appearances which associated the villains more strongly with racial stereotypes about Muslims/Arabs. The two youthful, clean-

⁵¹ Interestingly, Loffreda's (2000) analysis highlights another parallel between these cases, describing a media that were “a closed loop feeding off their own energies” (13) where the dominant narrative was produced through the repetition of particular ideas and images.

shaven and clean-cut boys, whose eyes are covered but faces are otherwise visible contrast starkly with the men who surround them, with their thick brows and facial hair, or with scarves and masks covering their faces and heads. The guards and executioners are easily seen as a manifestation of the irrational, intolerant and murderous Muslims that are responsible for the “Islamic terror” also being unleashed on the “West.” By contrast, we rarely see images of executioners in the United States—or their victims’ corpses—so that images of executions in Iran create a stark difference between “here,” where the death penalty is an abstract concept to be debated, and “there,” where the terror that such executions perpetuate on individuals and broader populations is vicariously experienced.

However, this fear does not stay concrete long, but becomes part of the free-floating fears of the war on terror. For example, in a sweeping statement Lawrence D. Mass, co-founder of the Gay Men’s Health Crisis, argues that “fanatical Islam,” “that blew up the great Buddhist statues of Afghanistan,” is the greatest threat to gay people; that “Iran has truly become an evil empire”; and that Ahmadinejad, like Hitler, “must be stopped by any means necessary” (Mass 2006). Mark Green, candidate for NY State Attorney General, speaking at a protest similarly placed the executions at the center of an age-old Manichean struggle, “History is an eternal contest between hate and hope. Right now hate is winning in the Middle East” (Osborne 2006). Such associations are also implicit in the numerous references of activists to Iran as an Islamo-fascist state (Ireland 2005a; OutRage! 2005). This type of rhetoric generates a malleable fear that quickly moves from referent to referent, from Iranian gays to Western gays, from Buddhists to Jews, and from the Middle East to the United States and beyond. As such the photographs come to stand in for a stark Islamic difference that produces such a wide range of intolerances, hatreds and barbaric forms of violence. Fear produces an amorphous and malleable “enemy” that is highly productive

in a context of a war waged on many international and domestic fronts, through both policing and military techniques. The fear of these two boys becomes the fear of anyone who sees themselves on the other side of this supposed battle against Islamic intolerance, one that is further articulated in disgust at a violence deemed particularly “Islamic.”

Our Moral Disgust

When the images of the hangings went up last year on the Internet, he printed them out and put them up near his desk. He says that all the friends he’s shown the pictures to have had “a shift in consciousness,” a realization that they live sheltered lives, that evil exists in the world and that despite the vast cultural difference between Iran and the United States, there have to be moral absolutes. And killing children for homosexuality is one thing that is absolutely wrong.

Philip Kennicott (2006) “Pictures from an execution come into focus.” *Washington Post*, on a protest organizer, a self-described antiwar leftist.

In contrast to the emotions of love and fear, disgust acts primarily to create a line of differentiation and separation. Moral disgust was a quickly articulated response to the executions of Marhoni and Asgari, often in conjunction with anger. As Ahmed notes, anger at the status quo is basic to the work of many social justice movements. Disgust, on the other hand, indicates a revulsion, a recoiling but one that works in tandem with desire. We move towards an object, only to be revolted and recoil from it; we are both intrigued, must see it, but cannot look too long. In this case, disgust kept the photographs circulating, as objects of fascination and horror, while creating an absolutist response to Iran that disallowed contemplation about the sources of state violence and strategic alliance building in response to it. Disgust at the photographs may be in response to the mutilation of human bodies but it more often seems to indicate a moral response to what is seen as a form of depravity. Although the photographs lack what are often deemed particularly gruesome qualities—visibly broken, bloodied or disfigured bodies—they remain very disturbing. This may be because they remind us of the frailty of the human body and how

easily life can be taken from it. Moreover, a secularist disgust was expressed in response to the “barbaric” and “uncivilized” violence that LGBTQ activists described as a “result of religious prejudice and hatred,” (Osborne 2005) a case of “religious puritanism gone mad,” (Ireland 2006d) or indicative of “the new medievalism that is modern Iran, where the barbarism of Sharia law holds sway...” (Tatchell 2005). In their responses, LGBTQ activists imagined a uniquely barbaric Iran doling out religiously-rooted violence to gays and lesbians.

In a secularist worldview, barbarity is usually ascribed to societies of the past where violence is believed to be uncontrolled, gratuitous, spectacular and public. In modern societies, by contrast, violence is supposed to be centralized in the state, calibrated precisely to a purpose, avoiding unnecessary physical pain, and kept out of public view. As Asad (2003) has described, this contrast emerges from the shift that Foucault identified from premodern sovereign power to modern disciplinary power. While sovereign power depends on unapologetic and theatrical displays of the tortured or executed body, modern disciplinary power depends on normalization of the body via more pervasive everyday practices. However, as Asad clarifies, torture, suffering and violence do not necessarily diminish in modern societies but rather must be hidden and/or justified by a calculus of means-ends proportionality. Rejali (1994) demonstrates that in fact the use of torture and executions by the Islamic republic in Iran cannot be explained as primarily a result of a reinstatement of the Islamic penal codes, but rather is continuous with the practices of torture and executions of the secular and modernizing regime before it. For example, executions by the various methods described in the Qur’an are either not allowed (eg, being thrown from a high tower) or quite rare (eg, stoning to death). Rather most executions are by firing squad or less frequently hangings, both of which were introduced in the late 19th century in a move to Westernize the penal codes (Rejali 1994). Furthermore, the ultimate interest of the state is

actually held above Islamic standards, by a doctrine of “necessity” (which Rejali describes as analogous to the European conception of the “reason of state”) which allows a judge to supercede Islamic standards of evidence using modern forms of proof and allows the state to waive Islamic considerations in context of threat or overriding necessity.

While Iranian state violence exhibits many characteristics of modern disciplinary power, this case powerfully reverberates with conceptions of “premodern” violence. Rejali notes that while punishments identified with Islam constitute a very small proportion of state violence, they do occur. In particular, public executions and flagellations, which Rejali points out are applied to a range of “delinquencies” and not simply ones forbidden by the Qur’an, are used to reinforce social norms and to establish the government’s Islamic and revolutionary credentials. Indeed disgust at this case was in large part a response to the theatrical and public nature of the executions (“executions staged as entertainment” (Ireland 2006c)) and the use of “gratuitous” pain that does not seem calibrated to the ends: Marhoni and Asgari were reportedly executed by a slow and painful hanging by strangulation and had already received severe corporal punishment. Therefore even without the claim that Marhoni and Asgari were executed for being gay, the photographs disturbed secular sensibilities about violence. However, the gratuitous character of the violence was even more pronounced when the executions were seen as instances of “killing children for homosexuality” (Kennicott 2006), thereby appearing in the minds of activists to be a perfect case of “barbarity” that was absolutely reprehensible and could be completely separated—temporally, culturally, politically and emotionally—from most modern forms of violence.

In addition, when understood as instances of antigay violence condoned by the onlooking crowd, the executions evoked a US history of “irrational” mob violence and bigotry: the

lynching of African Americans, particularly in the South, often documented in photographs that reinforced white power. Indeed, the noose has become such a symbol of racial hatred that its display may be deemed a hate crime (Fears 2007), making Ireland's choice of image accompanying his stories on Iran—a picture of the country's map with a noose hanging over it—all the more alarming. Indeed, as noted earlier, the noose and images of hangings have been greatly associated with conceptions of what it means to be gay in Iran. Of course racial and homophobic bigotry are recognized to be characteristics of many modern societies and, in this respect, Iran is brought into modernity, usually via analogies to fascism and communism. This is apparent in the description of Ahmadinejad as a present-day Hitler (Mass 2006), references to an antigay “pogrom,” and the repeated descriptor for the Iranian state as “clerical-fascist” (Ireland 2005a) or “Islamofascist” (2005). The concept of *Islamofascism* in particular has become a flexible label connecting a vast array of apparent threats from the “Islamic” world, as various as Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas and Al Qaeda. The term implies that it is not Islam per se, but rather an ideological perversion of Islam, which is at the root of the threat. Nevertheless, rather than understanding the actions and grievances of each state or organization in terms of their varied historical and geopolitical contexts, the term implies that ideology and belief alone, originating in some form of Islam, are at the root of conflicts with these threats.

By contrast, the US state-perpetuated violence at Abu Ghraib, also deemed “disgusting” by many in the West, received a different set of responses within the LGBTQ press. LGBTQ activists were very critical of the torture at Abu Ghraib, but their criticism carefully delineated who was responsible and accounted for the circumstance of their actions. While the Bush administration argued that the guards involved in the “abuses” were a few “bad apples,” (Neilan 2004), LGBTQ activists specified the Bush administration, its occupation of Iraq and the

homophobia of the military as causes of the sexualized torture (Meenan 2004; 2004; Schindler 2004; Sullivan 2006). On the other hand, they rarely connected the Abu Ghraib torture to the use of torture in US history predating the Bush administration, as perpetrated by the CIA-run School of Americas (Rothschild 2004; Klein 2005), or to similar abuses in US prisons today (Cusac 2004). Indicative of such amnesia, is Faisal Alam's statement that, "The sexual humiliation of Iraqi detainees represents the worst moral and ethical crime in US military history post-World War II" (Alam 2004). For many LGBTQ activists faced with the violence at Abu Ghraib, the Bush administration itself became the exceptional "bad apple" in US history.

Furthermore, the types of personalized sympathy and acts of remembrance that Marhoni and Asgari elicited were virtually absent in responses to the suffering of Abu Ghraib victims. Sympathy for Abu Ghraib victims almost never began from the position of imagining oneself in their place, but rather emphasized the victims' difference, including their presumed homophobia that was said to make the torture all the more unbearable. The many reasons for this lack of identification are too complex to consider here but certainly include the hypersexualized degradation of the presumably heterosexual Abu Ghraib victims, as opposed to the desexualization of the presumably gay Mashhad victims. Indeed, whereas Marhoni and Asgari were normalized into a particular Western gay identity as the young gay couple in love, the Abu Ghraib victims were racialized and pathologized into an Arab homophobic heterosexual masculinity. The Abu Ghraib victims were never made one of "us" but rather came to indicate the shameful actions of "our" fellow countrymen who needed disciplining and disavowal in order to reassert the legitimacy of the Western position. Therefore, sympathies were often identified with the United States, as commentators carefully positioned themselves as patriotic,

supportive of most soldiers in the US military, and distressed that the US cause in the war on terror may have suffered (Meenan 2004; Schindler 2004; Sullivan 2005).

While both the Abu Ghraib torture scandal and the Mashhad executions elicited disgust, this disgust associated differently with conceptions of the United States and Iran. Violence emerging from secular democratic states, even when condemned, is rarely seen as reflecting an essential attribute of secular state power. By contrast the executions of Marhoni and Asgari, because they violated particular secular sensibilities, resulted in a moral disgust that requires complete rejection and separation. While responders to Abu Ghraib were obsessed with determining responsibility and causality, the reasons for the executions in Mashhad were seen as transparent, perpetrated by a unitary Iranian government motivated simply by religious homophobia.

Conclusion

In a particularly introspective article, Katha Pollitt (2008) made some interesting observations about the place of Islam in the liberal secular imagination. Describing her initial outrage at the news that Harvard University had allotted women-only gym hours at the request of a group of Muslim women students, she then considers why this relatively innocuous accommodation had garnered such a passionate response from her. Noting that she had reacted to the associations she has with Islam as “violent, oppressive, sexist,” she remarks, “[t]hat is what living in our time does to you: intelligent people go in a flash from ‘Art history major wants to work out in peace’ to ‘What about those gays they executed in Iran?’” Pollitt here describing her own experience with the affective processes I have been exploring inadvertently highlights the place of the trope of the executed “gay Iranians” in today’s Western secular imagination. Such “terrible crimes against women, gays and secularists” are for Pollitt the unquestionable instances

where outrage at a “violent, oppressive, sexist” Islam is completely justified (Pollitt 2008).

Indeed, the question of “gay rights” in Muslim-majority societies has become a lightning rod issue that can anger and mobilize broad constituencies in Western countries.⁵² However, I have argued that even when it comes to such apparently obvious cases we need to consider how secular assumptions and sensibilities delimit perceptions of and responses to them.

In this case, LGBTQ activists insisted on presenting the executions as instances of homophobic persecution by an Islamically-motivated state and organized protests focused on identifying the youths as gay lovers, and homosexuality in Iran, as an issue requiring more visibility. This response foreclosed other possibilities for activism and social change. For one thing, suggestions such as Scott Long’s, that in the Iranian context the rights of sexual minorities would be more effectively protected through “struggles for privacy, women’s rights, and an end to executions,” (Long 2006a) fell on deaf ears. In addition, the broader problem of the use of the death penalty in Iran faded into the background. Although there was a dramatic spike in executions in Iran (their numbers almost doubled to 177 in 2006, and reached almost 300 in 2007 (BBC News 2006, 2007, 2008)), when President Ahmadinejad spoke at Columbia University in September 2007, he was questioned only about the execution of homosexuals (Washington Post 2007). Few commentators noted that his response included not only a denial of homosexuality in Iran, but a lengthy defense of Iran’s use of the death penalty. This dramatic expansion of the death penalty certainly cannot be explained in terms of the persecution of same-gender sexuality or the Islamic character of the state. However, secularists’ focus on rooting out what they perceive as religious violence meant that they overlooked this larger story, one that in fact connected the Iranian and US contexts.

⁵² For example, in Israel/Palestine, a notion that Israeli tolerance of LGBTQ individuals contrasts greatly with Palestinian intolerance, has been put to the service of justifying Israeli occupation, as described by Amireh (2010).

In looking for state violence rooted in Islam per se, liberal secularists are led astray when they do not consider that Iranian state violence is often rooted in secular concerns around perceived threats to security and sovereignty. It is not to say that religion is never used to justify state violence in Iran or elsewhere or that the religious legitimacy of the state is never a factor in its persecution of individuals. However, to read state violence as primarily religious in origin is to misunderstand the role of the state, which is in large part to guard its own sovereignty. As such, even if Marhoni and Asgari were executed for consensual sexual relations, this tells us little about *why* exactly it happened. A deeper understanding of the specific context around which the case arose is necessary to understanding and effectively responding to it. In particular, we need to understand what worldly problems, what perceived threats to security, are being addressed by the executions of these two boys. As a result it becomes necessary to think of their executions in relation to the specificity of the Iranian repressive state apparatus.

The assertion of a “gay” identity that needs protection is a projection of a Western model of liberation that is not at all attuned to such specificities. The emphasis on sameness, while a powerful method of moving Western LGBTQ audiences and therefore an attractive tool for Iranian activists as well,⁵³ is not strategically-tailored to the goal of improving the lives of sexual minorities or eliminating the death penalty (or simply its biased application) in Iran. It focuses primarily on increasing visibility and recognition of these youth as persecuted “gay lovers,” while ignoring that visibility and “outness” are not universally-shared barometers of equality in struggles for sexual freedom (see, eg, Hochberg et al. 2010, 605). Similarly an assertion that this

⁵³ See this framing in a moving statement by an Iranian gay activist, cited in Ireland (2006a). He says, “You who live serenely and comfortably on the other side of Iran’s frontiers, be aware that those who think and feel and love like you do in Iran are executed for the crime of homosexuality, are assassinated, kidnapped, and barred from working in offices. You have festivals, and they prisons. You select Mr. Gay of the Year, but they don’t even enjoy the right to have gravestones. Be fair and tell us what difference there is between us and you. Isn’t it time that all homosexuals around the world rise up and come to our defense?”

is an example of Islamically-rooted intolerance of same-gender sexuality is not only ahistorical, but fails to recognize that in practice it is through the overriding of Islamic standards of evidence that the prosecution of such individuals occurs, for example, via forced confessions and the standard of deductive reasoning of the judge. Furthermore, the assumption of Islam's inherent incompatibility with same-gender sexuality leads to a politics of rescue that sees "escape" via asylum claims as the only viable option. A more effective approach would connect the legal status of same-gender sexuality and the daily experiences of sexual minorities with other struggles and movements against social bias, oppressive laws, and state violence. While the strength of the repressive Iranian state apparatus is undeniable, even more so today after the squelching of the 2009 election protests, there are many existing movements that aim to protect social freedoms, women's rights, privacy, and due process rights. In a context where gay identities are largely not part of the cultural repertoire and a degree of invisibility, or discretion, is necessary for the social tolerance of same-gender sexualities, it is through the success of such movements that a space for the expression of same-gender sexuality is most likely to be protected.

While liberal Western politics presumes itself to be secular and therefore rooted in rational argument rather than emotions, LGBTQ activist responses to the Mashhad case demonstrate otherwise. Indeed, secular sensibilities are expressed and reinforced through the circulation of emotions and affects. While emotion and reason work in tandem to move people to political action, the internet, an indispensable activist tool that facilitates the rapid circulation of information, also proliferates emotional and affective responses that can overwhelm more reasoned debate. As such, an ascendant internet technology, a construction of an Islamic threat, and a secularism that has become defensive in the face of religion's resurgence in the public

sphere, have led to the profound influence of secular emotions and attachments in liberal and left politics today. More specifically, uninterrogated liberal secular sensibilities can blind us to complexities and make for responses that are both intellectually deficient and politically ineffective. In this case the clearest practical effect of Western LGBTQ activism was not to expand the space in which same-gender sexuality could be expressed in Iran (indeed the effect might have been the opposite), but rather to further legitimize a Western LGBTQ identitarian politics through its resonance with a liberal secular imaginary and war on terror discourse of “a clash of civilizations.” As such, this discourse has mobilized Western LGBTQ rights in the service of producing a stronger distinction between a presumably tolerant, modern, secularized West and a presumably intolerant, antimodern and religious (Islamic) East, at the basis of both cultural racism and population racism.

Chapter 4

Affective Attacks, Liberal Defenses and Producing the Moderate Muslim/Arab

...both parents and teachers have every right to be concerned about children attending a school run by someone who doesn't instinctively denounce campaigns or ideas tied to violence.

A school bearing the name of the poet and painter should teach children about peace, not war-mongering, and principals should understand the difference.

Randi Weingarten, President, United Federation of Teachers, referring to Debbie Almontaser, founding principal of Khalil Gibran International Academy, in a letter to the *New York Post*, August 9, 2007

I know the woman. She's worked for the city in a variety of capacities. She's very smart. She's certainly not a terrorist.

Mayor Bloomberg announcing Almontaser's resignation from her position as principal of Khalil Gibran International Academy, August 10, 2007

Ms. Almontaser left a clear, public record of interfaith activism and outreach across the boundaries of race, ethnicity and religion. Her efforts, especially after Sept. 11 attacks, earned her honors, grants and fellowships. She has collaborated so often with Jewish organizations that an Arab-American newspaper, *Aramica*, castigated her earlier this summer for being too close to a 'Zionist Organization,' meaning the Anti-Defamation League.

Ms. Almontaser has twice been profiled on Voice of America as an accomplished Muslim American. Her son, Yousif, spent several months on rescue efforts at ground zero as a member of the Army National Guard. Four of her nephews and cousins have served in the United States military in Iraq.

Samuel G. Freedman "Critics Ignored Record of Muslim Principal" *New York Times*, Aug. 29, 2007

The Khalil Gibran International Academy (KGIA), first announced in February 2007, was to integrate the teaching of Arabic language and culture into a standard college-preparatory curriculum for middle through high school grades, and was modeled on the over 60 dual-language schools and eleven culturally-themed schools (E.W. Green 2007), already existing in

the New York public school system. The school, conceived as focused on increasing tolerance and understanding among a diverse student body, was compatible with discourses of tolerance that articulate intercultural and interfaith “dialogue” as a primary solution to conflict, especially in the post-9/11 context.⁵⁴ Its founding principal, Debbie Almontaser, a Muslim and Arab American educator of Yemeni descent, known for her interfaith activism bringing Muslim, Jewish and Christian communities together in the wake of 9/11 was deemed by many an exemplary “moderate” and the perfect individual to lead the school. However, a media-generated controversy surrounding the founding of KGIA culminated in the resignation of Almontaser following the publication of a highly critical *New York Post* article, in early August, less than a month before the opening of the school. As a result of Almontaser’s resignation and an abdication of support from the Department of Education, the school has since faced significant difficulties and failed to achieve its primary goal of becoming a dual-language school (Nevel 2011).

The *New York Post* article leading to the resignation of Almontaser quickly produced a view, in the words of the teachers’ union president Randi Weingarten, that Almontaser is “someone who doesn’t instinctively denounce campaigns or ideas tied to violence” (Weingarten 2007). In the *Post* article headlined, “City Principal is ‘Revolting’,” Almontaser was represented as explaining the multiple meanings of “intifada,” in response to a question about an unrelated organization’s T-shirt bearing the words “Intifada NYC.” The notion that Almontaser condoned violence was however antithetical to her very public professional and personal work, as noted by Samuel Freedman above.⁵⁵ What was reported over and over again as her “defense of the T-

⁵⁴ Here there are significant parallels with the conception of the Islamic cultural center, Park51, which I will discuss in the Conclusion of this dissertation.

⁵⁵ Notably, although unsurprisingly, no one has taken her family ties to the military as a sign that she condones violence.

shirts” or her “failure to condemn” the use of the word *intifada* led many key allies to withdraw their support of Almontaser’s role in the school. How was it possible to so quickly cast as unacceptable a politically well-respected public figure who was seen by many as an exemplary “moderate” Muslim/Arab American? Indeed, Bloomberg’s tepid defense of Almontaser, “she’s certainly not a terrorist,” marked just how close this exemplary “moderate” had come to being transformed in the eyes of many into a “terrorist.” In this chapter, I analyze the relationship of the center-left media’s discourses of tolerance, as exemplified in assertions of Almontaser’s status as a “moderate” Muslim, to the concerted right-wing campaign against Almontaser and the school, in order to examine how these discourses relate to the racialization of Muslim/Arab Americans.

With a shift back to the figure of the Muslim/Arab *American*, it is useful to revisit the concept of population racism as a means of examining differentiations made in the media among Muslim/Arab Americans. As I argued in chapter one, while population racism is undergirded by a more absolutist conception of race, which delineates one “population” from another, population racism actually allows for a great deal of variation *within* a racialized population. Seeing a racialized population as a distribution of different characteristics, capabilities and risks, each individual may be differently assessed in relation to that population, which therefore can be represented as diverse. Nevertheless, the coherence of the racialized population is articulated through *the consistency of the particular measures or variables* used to assess whether one is a more or less typical member of that population. In contrast to my analyses in chapters two and three of representations of sympathetic Muslims abroad, specifically women and “gays” in Iran, what we find is a much more variegated and assessment-focused orientation to Muslims/Arabs in the United States. In particular, as I argue in section one, while liberal discourses of tolerance

argue that at least some Muslim/Arab Americans are “moderates” worthy of tolerance, the question of *who* is a moderate Muslim has been very contested both within liberal and right-wing discourses. The variables of interest generally include an individual’s relationship to US patriotism, to Muslims/Arabs abroad, to religion/secularism, to gender/sexuality, and to discourses of tolerance that have made tolerance/intolerance a main axis of the conflict between the “West” and some form of “Islam.” While liberal discourses assess some or even most Muslim/Arab Americans favorably in relation to these variables, right-wing discourses draw upon the same parameters of assessment to question this moderate status. Therefore, they share an assumption that there is a greater distribution of particular threat among Muslims/Arabs warranting a specific form of scrutiny. As a result, when Almontaser was associated with a “risky” characteristic she was quickly, if only temporarily, transformed into a potentially dangerous figure that must be excluded from a legitimate public role.

Furthermore, in a media milieu that is shaped by the need to capture momentary attention of distracted audiences, the right uses various strategies for focusing attention on particular variables of assessment. Right-wing papers alternated between different forms of coverage and non-coverage of what they recognized as a potential controversy to concentrate attacks at particular moments in time for maximum effect. These periods of concentrated attack then used highly charged accusations, associations, and words to cast doubt on the moderate status of Almontaser, creating the context in which it was possible to quickly transform her from an exemplary “moderate” to a potential threat. Today’s highly fragmented, sound-bite driven and affective/emotional news media, is particularly compatible with population racism, because population racism can be articulated quickly and affectively through the evocation of specific, distinct variables that require little explanation. Framing questions and headlines attune

audiences to that which must be assessed and assessments are made quickly along particular variables to determine one's status and degree of threat. However, narratives do not disappear, and, as I address in the first section of this chapter, narratives about Almontaser and the school are important in explicitly articulating the parameters of how they should be judged. Therefore population racism can be both articulated through narratives, and disaggregated into the evocation of distinct variables that are affectively produced, measured and circulate in a fragmented media milieu.

For both right-wing and center-left media, the question of who is or is not a "moderate" Muslim/Arab proved a useful point of contention in capturing audience attention, although in different moments, through different tactics and to different ends. Section two explores the temporality of different media's engagement with the story to demonstrate an interaction between the goal of garnering audience attention in a saturated media-market and ideological interests or political ends. Each New York City newspaper's engagement with the story reflects a distinct coming together of the problems of audience attention and ideological interests, which is also reflected in how each paper uses emotions and affect to garner audience attention. Section three demonstrates specifically how the right-wing media produced confusion, incredulity and fear about Almontaser and KGIA, in part through the use of Arabic language words, such as *jihad*, *madrassa* and *intifada*, circulating efficiently in print media and through the internet via headlines and sound bites, and casting doubt onto her status as a moderate Muslim. I suggest that these words are like images that Terranova has argued do not function as representations of the truth in the media, but rather as "bioweapons" that infect everything with which they come into contact. My final section further elucidates the role of the figure of the moderate Muslim in the center-left media, not so much as a figure to be defended from attack but rather as a victim of

shameful right-wing racism that allows liberals to establish their own tolerance. Rather than meaningfully countering the right-wing attack, the center-left media represented itself as an arena civil and reasonable debate about the “substantive” issues of the controversy, while at the same time pointedly ignoring the central conflict that led to Almontaser’s resignation. Because it shared the assumptions of right-wing media about the need to assess Muslims/Arabs in relation to particular variables, it did not challenge the framework that undergirded the rights’ attack, even if it did at times challenge specific assessments the right made with regard to Almontaser. Therefore the figure of the moderate Muslim as an object of tolerance was put to service to establish center-left media as an essential component of a pluralist public sphere of civil discourse and debate, key to the functioning of democracy, even though this case demonstrates the effective closure of such an arena.

My analysis is based on a broad range of widely-accessible print and internet-based sources, considering both “mainstream” sources and sources that catered to particular communities or niche audiences.⁵⁶ I did not conduct interviews because the object of my analysis is not the interpretations or strategies of the actors involved, but rather how liberal discourses of tolerance about the moderate Muslim/Arab American contribute to population racism.⁵⁷ As such,

⁵⁶ I surveyed media coverage about the school and Debbie Almontaser in a wide range of “mainstream” media reaching broad audiences available on the World Wide Web and via online databases (e.g., Lexis Nexis), including the major New York City papers (*New York Post*, *New York Sun*, *Daily News*, and *New York Times*), other major US and world newspapers, and transcripts and clips of radio and television sources (e.g., WNYC, NPR, CNN, Fox News). I also surveyed many more specialized sources, included right-wing blogs that purport to monitor Islamic extremism (e.g. DanielPipes.org, MilitantIslamMonitor.org, PipelineNews.org, Atlas Shrugs, JihadWatch.org), neighborhood newspapers (e.g. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, *Brooklyn Paper*), newspapers serving Arab or Jewish communities in New York (e.g., *Aramica*, *Jewish Week*), the websites of opposing and supportive grassroots organizations (e.g., Stop the Madrassa, Communities in Support of Khalil Gibran International Academy, Arab Women Active in the Arts and Media), education-focused websites (e.g. Edwize, InsideSchools.org) and progressive media (e.g., *Democracy Now!*, *Colorlines*).

⁵⁷ In contrast, Naamah Paley (2010), based on her role as a participant-observer and her interviews of some key activists, analyzes the controversy over KGIA as a reenactment of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through diasporic Arabs, Muslims and Jews, arguing that the controversy reflected two different forms of Jewish engagement with Muslims and Arabs in the United States: confrontation versus dialogue. While her explanation points to an important dynamic at play for Muslim and Arab American community activists, in focusing on the role of the media in

when I refer to the statements of defenders or supporters of the school I am referring to the discourse of support in media outlets, rather than the actual views of activist and community-based supporters; certainly the latter were more diverse, nuanced and complex than what was generally emphasized in the media and many public statements by these activists were never given their due in the media. While my analysis is informed by all of the material I surveyed, my interest in the relationship of broad-reaching discourses of tolerance to the media-initiated right-wing attack led me to do a more focused analysis of the New York City press. In particular, I focused on the main local/city papers involved in attacking Almontaser and the school, the *Brooklyn Paper*, the *New York Post*, and the *New York Sun*, and the two center-left publications that provided the most extensive and significant coverage of the controversy, specifically, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* and the *New York Times*.

Population Racism and Frameworks for Assessment

Since 9/11, the slight woman in a hijab had emerged as a prominent advocate in the Muslim community for reaching out and working with other faiths. After the attacks her son, an Army Reserve officer, served as a rescue worker at Ground Zero.

Among other things, Almontaser had invited hundreds of Jews and Christians to her own home in the wake of the terrorist attack to help defang fear and anger towards Muslims. She had joined social action groups, such as We Are All Brooklyn, an inter-ethnic initiative supported by JCRC, to combat hate crimes in the dense, mixed neighborhoods of that borough. She had trained with ADL's anti-bias program, A World of Difference, to become a better facilitator for diversity and inter-group dynamics in the public schools.

Larry Cohler-Esses, *New York Jewish Week*, 8/17

Both defenses and critiques of Almontaser and the school focus on a similar set of concerns, belying a shared set of assumptions about Muslim/Arab Americans as a distinct,

producing (not simply reporting) the controversy, I demonstrate that the power of both attacks on and defenses of Almontaser and KGIA do not *only* derive from how they resonate with the fears, hopes and perceived interests of Jewish Americans in relation to Israel. Rather they are articulated in a broader language of American values and of an Islamic threat that is central to understanding the racialization of Muslim/Arab Americans more broadly.

racialized population. Indeed, liberal defenses of Almontaser as a “moderate” Muslim/Arab made her associated with, yet exceptional to, a racialized population that requires special scrutiny. While more broadly speaking a “moderate” is usually an individual deemed closer to the “center” in a left-right political spectrum, for Muslims/Arabs, the political distinction is understood to be between pro-United States “moderates” and anti-United States “extremists.” While the concept of the “moderate Muslim” ostensibly distinguishes some Muslims by their “moderate” theological positions, religion is assumed to be implicated in and by one’s political perspectives, making interdependent a set of religious and political positions to create a specific delineation of that which is acceptable. The narrowness of this category is demonstrated by how assessments often take conservative or orthodox theological perspectives to be signs of “anti-Americanism,” and place political criticism of the United States by Muslims/Arabs on a continuum with violence against the United States. Therefore, those who fail to be deemed “moderate Muslims” are likely to be seen as anti-American threats. As such, usage of the concept of the “moderate Muslim” reinforces an idea that Islam has a particular and unique problem with violent religious extremism and that Muslims/Arabs are a distinct population that deserve a different level of scrutiny.

In the case of Almontaser and KGIA, this is evidenced by the fact that defenses, liberal critiques, and right-wing attacks all focused on similar variables in seeking to establish whether or not Almontaser is a moderate and whether or not the school is an acceptable project. The main areas of contention included, on the one hand, the issues of tolerance and patriotism, and on the other hand, the issues secularism and gender equality. Discourses of tolerance that see cultural intolerance as a major source of today’s conflicts have become one articulation of patriotism and loyalty to the interests of the United States in the war on terror. The argument that tolerance of

cultural difference is a key solution to post-9/11 conflicts and that as such the school serves an important function in promoting peace were countered by arguments that multiculturalism produces dangerous separatism or that Muslims/Arabs were seeking to enforce their incompatible culture on US society. Whatever positions one took, there was agreement that culture itself was a primary object of concern. Similarly while defenders of the school tried to establish that the school would be secular in part by distancing it from Muslim American community and highlighting the project's many interfaith supporters, the school was presented by critics as likely becoming a space of proselytization of Islam, often referenced through the image of a hijab-wearing woman or girl. Therefore defenses of the school, liberal ambivalence about the school and right-wing attacks on the school were largely focused on the same variables, evidencing a common conception of a racialized "Muslim/Arab" population.

KGIA, a school presented by a Department of Education spokesperson as, "right for the times" (Bosman and Medina 2007) clearly was envisioned as addressing a particular post-9/11 context through its thematic focus. The school was not only to teach Arabic language and culture, but also presented itself as teaching cross-cultural understanding and tolerance, saying, as Almontaser did, that students would become "ambassadors of peace and hope" (Elliott 2008b). As Joel Levy, of the Anti-Defamation League, said in a letter to the *New York Sun*, "The school's Arabic language requirement, combined with conflict resolution and international diplomacy training, opens the possibility of creating a well-informed generation of leaders." This image of the school's role built on Debbie Almontaser's reputation as "a moderate active in interfaith groups," who "organized peace rallies and urged tolerance after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001" (Bosman 2007b). In particular, both Almontaser and the school are often described as "building bridges" between communities in order to "promote greater understanding" (Frost

2007a). The bridge metaphor implies that cultural formations are distinct and separate, but that it is possible to make linkages that create “understanding.” Cultural differences are seen as both meaningful and “bridgeable” and conflicts are seen as rooted in cultural misunderstandings that can be corrected through education. The school’s supporters also argued that tolerance of cultures is explicitly separated from and opposed to “politics,” which is said to be outside the purview of the school. The following quote from Lena Alhusseini, executive director of the lead community sponsor of KGIA, the Arab American Family Support Center, exemplifies this argument:

The more people learn about what the vision of the school is, the more they see it has nothing to do with politics. It’s about tolerance, giving students a new language skill they can use in many international fields such as finance, and giving them a rigorous education. (Frost 2007b)

Rather than presenting the school as an arena of critical engagement with multiple and competing political perspectives (a notion that Almontaser presents in an early interview, but that is otherwise largely absent in defenses of the school), tolerance becomes based on simply “a deeper understanding of different cultures” to the exclusion of “politics.” This notion of a school focused on tolerance of culture, rather than on politics, that is intended to produce global workers and world leaders reinforces a notion that Muslims/Arabs’ cultural differences—or at least misunderstandings originating from these—are a major cause of conflict in the post-9/11 era.

Despite supporters’ explicit attempt to delink the school from “politics,” the school is also defended in relation to a particular set of politics, specifically as a potential resource to the United States in the war on terror. This form of patriotism is partially referenced through the school’s association with particular individuals. For example, Almontaser’s patriotism is highlighted through reference to her many family members who have served in the US military. Similarly, a profile of a board member of the school emphasizes his patriotism as a (Christian)

Arab American who has been the head of the Brooklyn Republic Party and has worked with the Defense Department (Wolff 2007). However the specific role that the school might play in the war on terror is also cited by defenders. For example, one article describes a letter of support Almontaser reads at a public meeting from an Army Sargent serving in Iraq who argues that “American society desperately needs this bridge to Arabic language and culture.” He cites his own Arabic language skills as humanizing him in the eyes of Iraqis (Andreatta 2007b). Indeed, the argument that the school could contribute to a US victory in the war on terror is significant enough to outweigh liberal ambivalence, as articulated in an article by New York University historian, Jonathan Zimmerman,

... we should scrutinize any new Arabic program to make sure it’s teaching in an evenhanded fashion. There is a war going on, and there are people who want to kill us. Enemies of America should not gain a voice in our public school curriculum.

But there’s no reason to think that the Gibran academy would turn patriotic Americans into Al Qaeda sympathizers. In fact, to win the war on terrorism, we’re going to need many more people who know Arabic, get the difference between Sunnis and Shiites and understand the complex culture of the Middle East. (Zimmerman 2007)

In line with discourse of tolerance, not only language skills, but also knowledge of cultural differences, becomes essential to successfully fighting the war on terror. Nevertheless, as Zimmerman explicitly notes, the simple fact that the school is Arab-identified means that it requires a different form of scrutiny than other schools.

While the school’s defenders argued that the school would both mitigate conflict by teaching tolerance of cultural differences and provide the necessary education in Arabic language and culture for winning this war, the school faced criticism from self-identified liberals in relation the problem of cultural difference. In particular, some liberals argued that the school would promote Muslim/Arab separatism rather than assimilation into an “American” identity. For example, Richard Kahlenberg in the *New York Times* began by distinguishing himself from

other critics with the notion that “there are liberal reasons for vigilance.” He then questioned whether students would graduate from the school “with a strong grasp of America,” arguing that schools must instill in children an American identity that is necessary “to hold society together.” Khalenberg was careful to not identify this problem as unique to Muslim/Arab immigrants, drawing analogies to Africentric schools of the 1980s.

By contrast, right-wing opponents took this criticism one step further, identifying a threat unique to the Arab—and, in their view, Muslim—character of the school. Indeed, they refused the disaggregation of culture, religion and politics, but rather argued that these were intimately intertwined for Muslims/Arabs in the form of a coherent anti-American ideology. For example, Alicia Colon (Colon 2007) referring to the Lebanese Christian namesake of the school, wrote “the school is going to misleadingly be called the Khalil Gibran International Academy, as if we’re stupid enough to believe that the school will only be teaching Arabic language and not Islamic culture.” Asking, “Have we learned nothing from the Netherlands about the danger of pandering to multiculturalism?” Colon exclaimed, “We’re bending over backwards to appease those sympathetic to individuals who would destroy us again” (Colon 2007). The right-wing perspective was that Muslims/Arabs must not be given any power with which they can enforce their values deemed incompatible with and dangerous to the “West.” Furthermore, while right-wing critics often articulated strong support for Arabic-language instruction as necessary to the war on terror, they argued that such projects required strict scrutiny. They then discredited the school through an attack on Almontaser, presenting a wide range of highly questionable evidence⁵⁸ to establish the notion that she was un-patriotic, with associations with dangerous

⁵⁸ This evidence—cited in Pipe’s (2007a) article which also circulated widely in other venues, including blogs, articles and news interviews—included: a truncated quotation used to demonstrate that Almontaser was a “9/11 denier” because it (falsely) implied that she did not believe that Muslims or Arabs were responsible for the 9/11 attacks; her receipt of an award from the New York chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations, an

Muslims/Arabs. Therefore Muslims/Arabs are consistently assessed in relation to their patriotism and their relationship to the question of cultural difference. Whether arguing for tolerance, assimilation, or confrontation, all seemed to agree that cultural difference between Westerners and Arabs/(Muslims) is the primary fault line that must be addressed in the war on terror.

The other major area in which supporters and critics addressed the school was its relationship to US secularism. One common line of defense of the school was that, “the school will teach college preparatory courses and history of the Arabic people, not Islam, and that a majority of Arab Americans are Christians” (Dickter 2007). Indeed, both supporters and the Department of Education felt the need to reiterate the obvious, that as a public school, KGIA would abide by the same secular standards as all New York City public schools. Furthermore, defenders often emphasized that the school would not be exclusively serving the interests of the Muslim community, noting that many Arab Americans are Christian, that the school is open to everyone and was intended to serve a half non-Arabic speaking student body, and that the school had support from a wide range of interfaith organizations. One piece of evidence often cited to emphasize the school’s non-Islamic orientation was the fact that it was named after a Christian Arab American, Khalil Gibran who was the author of the best-selling 1923 work *The Prophet*.⁵⁹ This name not only places Arab Americans squarely within a broader US history that is often unrecognized, but also cuts against the equation often made between Arab and Muslim identities.

organization which has been an object of significant attack and which Pipes describes as a “foreign-funded front organization”; Almontaser’s suggestion, similar to that of many other commentators, that US foreign policy had a role in producing the 9/11 attacks and that the New York Police Department was using questionable entrapment tactics in Muslim communities in Brooklyn, as proof that she is unpatriotic. In another *New York Sun* (2007) editorial, Almontaser’s refusal to respond to a reporter question on whether Hezbollah or Hamas were terrorist organizations was presented as evidence of her sympathies for these groups.

⁵⁹ Gibran is said to be the third best-selling poet of all time, for his work *The Prophet*, the US edition of which has sold 9 million copies (Acocella 2008).

For example, Anthony DiMaggio argues that critics ignore “the school’s non-Muslim roots,” reasoning:

Why the administrators of the school would have consciously chosen Gibran as an inspiration for an “Islamic school” is never explained in media debate (and why would devout Muslims enroll in a school named after a Christian poet expecting to get an Islamic education anyway?). (DiMaggio 2007)

Supporters also often sought to emphasize that the school would serve a diverse student body, saying “it’s a school for everyone” (Frost 2007b), in part by noting the highly diverse list of supporting organizations. For example, one article identified, “Lutheran Medical Center, Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, MSI Net, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and many more,” emphasizing recognizably Christian and Jewish organizations. In particular, the Anti-Defamation League’s (ADL) support for Almontaser and the school (Levy 2007) often became a central piece of evidence in the argument that the school would not proselytize Islam (Dickter 2007; Levy 2007). Ironically, despite these attempts, some who defended the school, did so in terms of it being a school that would teach “Islamic culture,” as did former Mayor Edward Koch (Bosman and Medina 2007; see also, Geberer 2007b).

Nevertheless, both liberal and right-wing critics raised serious doubts about the secular status of the school based on an argument that the Arabic language has a particular relationship to Islam that makes secular instruction of the language exceedingly difficult and unlikely. From a liberal perspective, law professor Noah Feldman writing in the *New York Times Magazine* dismissed the notion that the school would teach Arabic language and culture, without also proselytizing Islam:

... Islam will presumably be taught – it would be educationally indefensible to teach Arab civilization without including it – and enrollment seems likely to include Muslim students in disproportionate numbers... Khalil Gibran... seems poised to teach religion as a set of beliefs to be embraced rather than as a set of ideas susceptible to secular, critical examination (Feldman 2007)

While Feldman acknowledges what many other critics do not, that schools can teach about religion without proselytizing, he argues that this is highly unlikely simply because of his (unfounded) assertion that the student body will be “disproportionately,” presumably meaning majority, Muslim. He never explains why if the school is majority Muslim—as many schools are majority Christian—students cannot be taught particular histories and cultures, including about the role of religion, from a secular perspective. Later, in a mirror image of DiMaggio’s argument regarding the school’s name, Feldman suggests that the name is an intentional obfuscation of the school’s truly “Muslim” character. This argument is akin to that of right-wing attackers who consistently argued that the school planners are intentionally obfuscating their true (Islamist) goals. Feldman nevertheless goes to pains to demonstrate that he is not isolating the school because it is Arabic-identified by directing similar criticism against a Florida Hebrew-language charter school.

However Feldman’s argument bears striking resemblance to the argument made by Daniel Pipes, although Pipes insists that it is not just religion, but a politicized religious ideology of Islamism, that will infiltrate the school system. His main thesis, quoted and circulated broadly in the media, is that “Arabic-language instruction is inevitably laden with pan-Arabist and Islamist baggage” (Pipes 2007a). In support, he points to a motley of evidence such as one organization’s purported view that “non-Muslims learning Arabic [is] a step toward eventual conversion to Islam” and a study that compares Algerian students taught in French as opposed to Arabic, purporting to find that “Arabized students show decidedly greater support for the Islamist movement” (Pipes 2007a). This highly decontextualized evidence that bears little relevance to the specific context of KGIA implies that culture, religion, and politics are intimately intertwined for Arabs, such that the study of the Arabic language necessarily implies a

rigid set of political and religious beliefs that are antithetical to Western values and interests. Furthermore, much like Feldman's re-reading of the reason behind the naming of the school, Pipes and other right-wing critics reframe the highly diverse interfaith support of the school to indicate nefarious ends. In particular, a common critique of the school was that the advisory board Almontaser had gathered to do outreach for the school was made up of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim clergy, along with an ethical culturalist, and therefore belying the school's religious (ie, Muslim) character (see, eg, Pipes 2007b). Ironically, a move likely intended to protect the school by demonstrating that it had interfaith support and so was not exclusively representing the interests of Muslims, was used to argue the opposite.

The question of the school's relation to religion is often articulated through the image of the headscarf-wearing woman. Indeed, the headscarf was broadly recognized as powerful in garnering audience attention, as demonstrated in one report describing the press's reaction to a parent of a student on the day of the school's opening: "Handou, who emigrated from Morocco nine years ago, wore a sky-blue hijab and, as a dozen reporters backed her up against a school wall, held an impromptu press conference of her own" (Rubinstein 2007b). Between such images and the image of Debbie Almontaser, as a headscarf-wearing woman, the relationship of the headscarf to US society becomes an arena of debate. On the one hand, a particular narrative of Almontaser's decision to wear the headscarf as a believing Muslim woman emphasizes the notion that choice and freedom of religion are central US values. For example, one early article notes that she has, "spoken in interviews about her embrace of Muslim customs, including wearing a hijab, and how she was a part of the American melting pot" (Bosman 2007b) making the headscarf (or hijab) an expression of personal choice and a marker of American multiculturalism. However, there was also much ambivalence about the headscarf among liberal

supporters of the school. Richard Bernstein (2007) in his defense of the school, argues that while Almontaser has a right to wear the headscarf, as a religious symbol, that her decision to do so “is probably a mistake” because it is also “a symbol of political Islam or ... of the oppression of women...” Right-wing critics by contrast were much more definitive about the meaning of the headscarf and manipulated Almontaser’s image to perpetuate a notion that the school is threatening. For example, a much-commented-upon blog post compares pictures of Almontaser wearing different styles of headscarf to argue that she had undergone “An Extremist Hijab Makeover” in order to hide her true Islamist intentions (as if make-overs are not almost expected of women seeking to enter high-profile public positions) (“Khalil Gibran Principal” 2007). Furthermore concern about the secular nature of the school itself is often articulated through reference to the clothing of Muslim women. One Brooklyn parent’s quote in the *New York Sun* raised the concern that “the school population would end up becoming mostly ‘girls in burkas’” thereby threatening the secular nature of the school (Garland 2007a).⁶⁰ Almontaser as visibly-religious Muslim woman who is also a community leader challenges a notion that the headscarf is necessarily a symbol of women’s oppression, while also placing her choice to wear it in a discourse of exceptional US religious freedom. However, the headscarf is represented by others as demonstrating the incursion of religion into public life and thereby remains potent symbol of a potential “Islamic threat.”

While supporters highlight aspects of Almontaser’s record and life that make her seem exceptional to her community, opponents focus on demonstrating the ways in which the school and Almontaser are contrary to the values of patriotism, tolerance and secularism. However, all

⁶⁰ Interestingly, a comment posted on the *Sun*’s website (at <http://www.nysun.com/comments/23568> ([accessed Oct. 8, 2011](#))) under the parent’s name on the day of the article’s publications apologized for the “girls in burkas” reference which it said “was taken out of context” and “quoted and re-quoted,” while also restating that her key concern is about “publicly funding a school focusing on one set culture that happens to prize religion.”

parties focus on assessing Almontaser and the school in terms of the same variables. The manipulation of various evidence to respond to these variables of assessment is particularly striking in the fact that the same material, such as the name of the school or the members of the school's advisory council, is taken to have opposing significance by different parties. Indeed, even simply Almontaser's self-presentation as a moderate is taken to be evidence that she is attempting to hide radical beliefs. As such, while there is significant debate about how to assess Almontaser and the school, there is broad agreement that Muslims/Arabs must be assessed in terms of very specific characteristics, thereby reinforcing population racism.

The Temporality of Media Attacks, Defenses and Debates

In the post-9/11 context, KGIA's Arabic language and culture theme contained the potentiality of controversy within its conception even before any significant critiques were lodged against it. Indeed, much early media coverage of the school, even when not describing the critiques of the school's theme, nevertheless referenced a likelihood of future controversy. However, different media outlets dealt with this potentiality differently. Media outlets which would prove most pivotal in attacking Almontaser did not choose to capitalize on this potentiality from the beginning of their coverage. Similarly, the media outlet which lodged the most far-reaching "defense" of Almontaser did not do so until over eight months after she had resigned from her position, when such a defense could do little to alter the outcome of the controversy. In this section, I examine the temporality of different forms of engagement with the school controversy. Through this I trace a timeline of engagement, but more importantly, demonstrate how this engagement was a reflection of not only particular right-wing or liberal ideological interests but also an (economic) interest in garnering audience attention.

More specifically, to analyze different approaches to capturing audience interest and attention, I consider patterns and inconsistencies in coverage within and across media venues. I find that while local Brooklyn papers provided regular coverage of the controversy over a longer period of time, likely reflecting the fact that any controversy over local schools was of interest to their audiences, the coverage of the story by city papers is much more sporadic and episodic. While right-wing blogs engaged in a ceaseless attack on the school from very early in the controversy, right-wing papers were more likely to begin with neutral and even some positive portrayals of the school, concentrating their negative coverage at particular moments. Right-wing city-wide papers were more likely to publish opinion pieces on the school that aimed to generate controversy, while the single left-of-center city paper, the *New York Times*, only published opinion pieces after the most severe attacks had taken place. These differences in coverage can be explained by the interaction of ideological positions with differing strategies of garnering audience attention particular to each paper. While the right-wing media saw the school as a potential source of controversy to be harnessed to greater effect—both in terms of audience attention and political consequences—through focused attacks, the center-left media did not function as a counter-point to that attack. Rather it approached the controversy largely retrospectively, long after the central battles had been lost, to generate sympathy for the victimized moderate Muslim.

Most initial press coverage, from March through May 2007, focused on a conflict between some parents and the Department of Education regarding the location of KGIA. An announcement that KGIA would open in a building housing a public elementary school, PS 282, garnered strong protest from PS 282 parents who complained that housing elementary school students with middle and high school students posed safety problems, and that KGIA would take

away much-needed space and resources from PS 282. This controversy received much coverage from Brooklyn papers and from the *New York Sun*, with some coverage from other papers. While the controversy had little relation to the specific thematic focus of the school, it offered the press the opportunity to introduce the concept of the school and pique audience interest in it. Some early articles referenced a *potentiality* of controversy regarding the theme before reporting on any critiques (see, eg, Garland 2007c).

However, during this period, a group of bloggers⁶¹ that describe themselves as monitoring Islamic extremism began attacking the school's thematic focus on Arabic language and culture. These blogs approached the school in a mode of full-throttled attack, persistently identifying what they deemed questionable characteristics, associations, and statements of those connected to the school and presenting one argument after another against it. Over the next year, the blogs served as an arena for the collection, testing and refinement of arguments, evidence and styles of presentation before broader dissemination in more mainstream venues. They provided long tracts of analysis, with a wide range of evidence, rehearsing arguments that would provide the basic building blocks of the attacks that right-wing newspapers would lodge. Most prominent among the bloggers was Daniel Pipes, a Harvard Ph.D. who has marketed himself as an expert on Islamic extremism, is founder of Middle East Forum, a think tank focused on “promot[ing] American interests in the Middle East and protect[ing] the Constitutional order from Middle Eastern threats,” (Middle East Forum no date) and Campus Watch, which has led campaigns against academics critical of Israel. As a columnist for the *New York Sun*, Pipes was also a direct

⁶¹ These blogs included MilitantIslamMonitor.org, PipelineNews.org (which published dozens of articles by Beila Rabinowitz and William Mayer on the school), Atlas Shrugs penned by Pamela Gellar (see Barnard and Feuer 2010), JihadWatch.org by Robert Spencer, author of *New York Times* bestsellers *The Truth about Muhammad*, *Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion* and *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)* (Rendall et al. 2008), and DanielPipes.org, the blog of neoconservative commentator Daniel Pipes.

link between bloggers and the New York papers, and would pen a number of highly critical and much-quoted columns regarding the school.

The local Brooklyn papers, the *Brooklyn Paper* and the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, also served an important early role, articulating the range of more “mainstream” negative and positive positions in relation to the school. On March 17 the *Brooklyn Paper*, a weekly publication, printed the first sensationalistic article on the school, under the front page headline “Holy war!” (Rubinstein 2007a). While most other sources reporting at this time made clear that most parents did not object to the school’s theme, this article began with an ambiguous quote from the PTA president, “We’ll lose space, we’ll lose services, and we’ll lose safety...” and then quoted a letter sent by one set of parents raising objections to the school’s theme. While the paper would soon pull back from this approach, perhaps as a result of strong negative responses from its readership reflected in a heated letters-to-the-editor section, it continued to more subtly present the school in negative light. In particular, it gave significant space to the arguments of those who opposed the school’s theme in both news articles and through letters to the editor. By contrast, *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* gave voice not only to the concerns of parents opposing the location of the school but also to supporters of KGIA. For example, their second article on the school quoted at length an explanation that the school would serve a diverse student body and teach tolerance, rather than promote any political or religious perspectives (Frost 2007b), running with a side-bar human interest profile of a prominent board member, a “patriotic,” Republican, Christian, Lebanese-American man (Wolff 2007). As these two papers make clear, the terms of debate regarding the school were already very clear. Attacks were in terms of sensationalistic associations with Islam (ie, “Holy War!”) or insinuations about the riskiness of the population

being served by the school, and defenses of the school were in terms tolerance, multiculturalism, and patriotism.

In contrast to these local papers that immediately began engaging the question of the school's theme, early coverage about KGIA in the *New York Sun* and the *New York Post* did not betray any strong opposition to the school even though these papers would prove pivotal in attacks on Almontaser and the school. This moderation in approach is striking given that the *New York Sun*, a 5-year old neoconservative weekly paper, with a small but influential readership, was known for campaigns against critics of Israel, including Muslim/Arab public figures.⁶² Furthermore, the *New York Post*, a right-wing tabloid owned by Rupert Murdoch with the 5th largest circulation of all daily papers in the United States, would eventually publish the article that would lead to Almontaser's resignation.⁶³ Nevertheless, the papers each began covering the school controversy with neutral and even positive portrayals of the school, for example, describing parents' concern about loss of school space and resources (Garland 2007c) and emphasizing the most parents did not object to the school's theme (Andreatta 2007a). However, when coverage in each paper shifted toward a more negative angle, it did so in a way that sought to concentrate and intensify reader attention.

When analyzing the patterns of coverage in terms of both number and types of articles, we find that the *Sun* and the *Post* each went to some effort to present themselves as neutral or objective news sources through its everyday coverage of the story, but that these appearances

⁶² The *New York Sun* was an upstart newspaper that published from 2002 to 2008 (although no longer publishing, the paper still has a web presence). Led by Seth Lipsky, the neoconservative former editor of the Jewish weekly, *The Forward*, the *Sun* presented itself as the right-of-center counterpoint to the center-left *New York Times*. The *Sun's* circulation was always small (in 2007, it sold 13,000 and freely distributed 85,000 papers per day (Sherman 2007)) however it was regarded as having greater influence than indicated by these numbers. The *Sun* demonstrated its influence in its campaigns that effectively targeted those they deemed critics of Israel, such as the Ford Foundation, for their funding of Palestinian NGOs, a number of Columbia University faculty, and professors Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer for their book, *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy* (Sherman 2007). Pipes was a regular contributor to the *Sun*.

⁶³ The *New York Post* had a circulation of 725,000 papers per day in 2007 .

were set aside during periods of concentrated attack. Furthermore, each paper focused its attacks on the school at different periods of time—the *Sun* in late April and May and the *Post* in August—implying that these attacks were as much oriented toward garnering audience attention as accomplishing a political end. The *Sun* published two scathing critiques in late April/early May, which helped to produce a spike in media coverage of the school controversy in a broad range of venues in May. By contrast, the *Post* published a handful of fairly neutral news articles and even an article describing support of KGIA in this period. In August, however, the *Post* would prove to be the primary instigator in the event that would lead to Almontaser’s resignation and following her resignation continued to publish a barrage of negative articles that focused audience attention on the issue for a short period of time (see Table 2 and Table 3).

Therefore, rather than simply responding to the school from a consistent ideological position, these papers alternated everyday and positive portrayals with concentrated negative coverage to produce moments of intense reader attention with specific political effects. This is demonstrated in part by each paper’s willingness to publish fairly positive articles about the school, at times written by the same reporters who penned negative portrayals of the school. For example, only a week after the *Brooklyn Paper*’s “Holy War” headline, the same reporter published a profile of the poet and novelist Khalil Gibran, who it described as a “fitting” namesake of the school who, “embodied the notion of dual identity, published in both English and Arabic, and was an early advocate of the emancipation of women” (Rubinstein 2007b). This piece may have been part of the paper’s attempt to establish itself as an unbiased source, also

Table 2. Right-Wing Press Coverage of KGIA/Almontaser (number of articles per month)

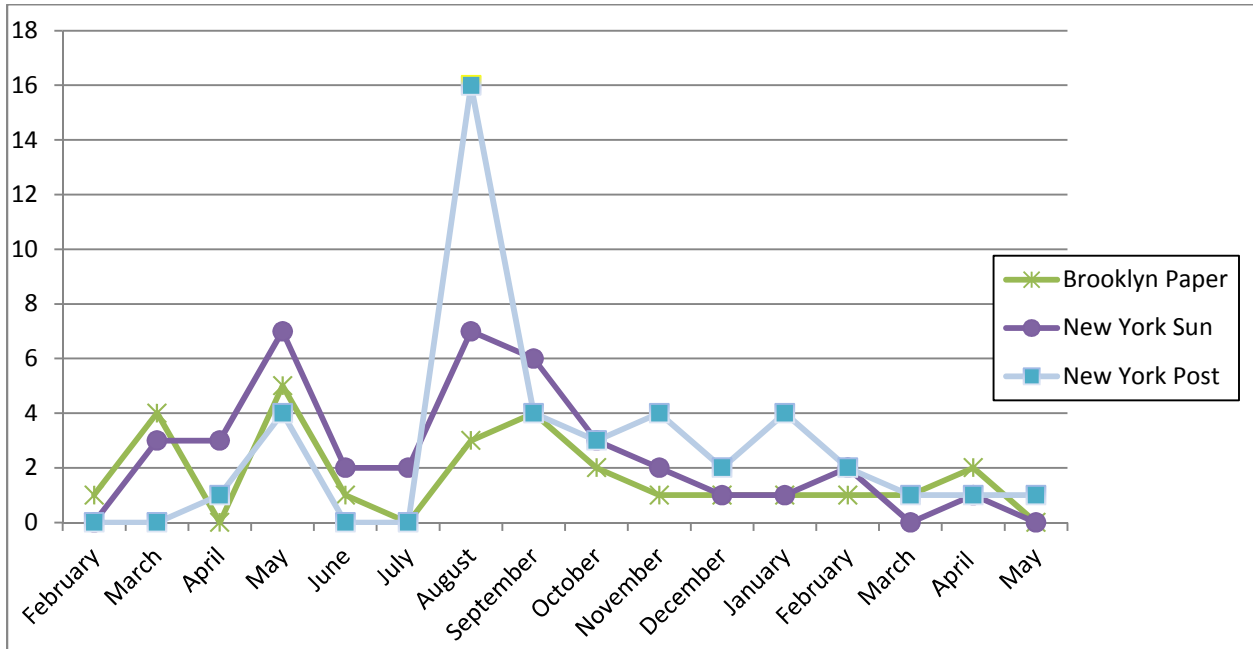
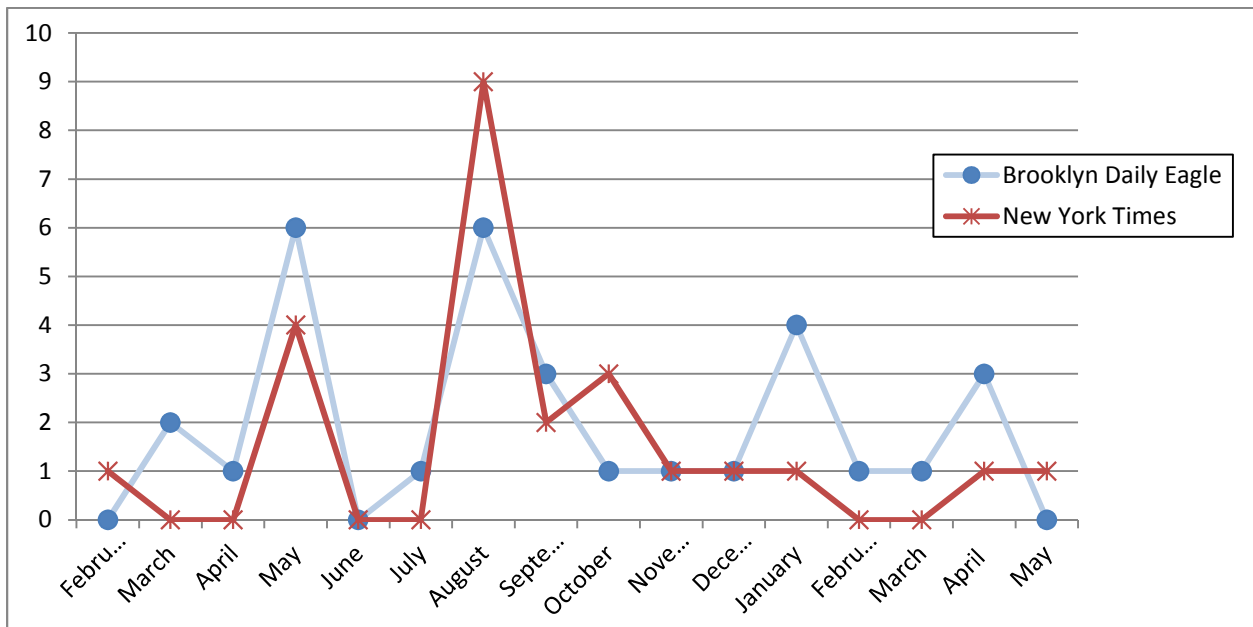


Table 3. Center-Left Press Coverage of KGIA/Almontaser (number of articles per month)



reflected in the editors’ defensive responses to letters criticizing the paper’s coverage. The *Sun*’s first article on the school, while noting some critiques of the school, primarily represented it in the positive terms of its supporters: that KGIA would focus on culture not politics, was named

for a Lebanese Christian, had the support of a diverse organizations, would contribute to making Arabs feel more “at home” in New York, and was led by a woman whose son served in the US military and has worked towards developing understanding across difference (Garland 2007b). Indeed, much like liberal defenders, these articles associated the school with patriotism, tolerance, and (less commonly) gender equality. As such each paper allowed a range of views to be represented, even as these more positive portrayals were quickly overshadowed by negative pieces that would get intense circulation. I will now focus on the two periods in which this occurs: May and August, 2007.

In late April and early May the *New York Sun* published two scathing critiques of the school, linking it to an Islamist threat, and generated significant discourse about the school in a range of media. While the first critical opinion piece the *Sun* published about KGIA was relatively reasoned in tone, framing its critique in terms of the problem of “separatism” rather than the Arabic-language focus of the school (Wolf 2007a), a month later, the same author’s tone changed dramatically, referencing, “Islamists who see the potential of a mini-madrassa in Park Slope” (Wolf 2007b). This shift foreshadowed two key critiques that the *Sun* would publish in the following two weeks: Daniel Pipes’ “A Madrassa Grows in Brooklyn” (Pipes 2007a) and Alicia Colon’s “Madrassa Plan is Monstrosity” (Colon 2007). These two pieces would come to serve as the reference point for the main arguments of the opposition to the school.

Pipes’ and Colon’s pieces had the effect of producing a significant spike in coverage about school in May, which now brought together conflicts over the school’s location with criticisms of the school’s thematic focus. The *New York Sun* contributed to this increased coverage itself, publishing seven pieces on the school in May. These included an editorial (2007) defending the paper’s choice to publish Pipes’ and Colon’s pieces and repeating many of

allegations against Almontaser⁶⁴ and another opinion piece by Pipes arguing that parents opposed to the school's location were too politically correct to give voice to their "true" fear that the school posed an Islamist threat. By contrast, the *Post* had little role in fomenting controversy around the school, as already noted, publishing its very positive portrayal of the school at this time (Andreatta 2007b). Nevertheless, the *Sun*'s critiques did generate increased media coverage, including some defenses of the school, in many venues. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* published an editor-authored opinion piece strongly condemning those attacking the school and presenting a (confused) defense of the school, analogizing it to various religious schools (Geberer 2007b). In addition, the *Sun* published a letter in early May from the New York Regional Office director of the Anti-defamation League, Joel Levy, expressing the organization's strong support for Almontaser and for the school (Levy 2007). There were also more ambivalent defenses of the school and Almontaser in other sources, such as the *International Herald Tribune* (Bernstein 2007). The *Daily News (New York)* published various opinion pieces by academics, presenting both ambivalent support (Zimmerman 2007) and a "liberal" critique of the school (Ravitch 2007), in addition to running an editorial arguing that the school will foster Arab "Balkanization" (2007). The *New York Times* while now turning its attention to the controversy, running various news articles including its first in-depth piece about what it called a "test of tolerance—and its limits" (Bosman 2007b), did not publish any editorials or opinion pieces. Rather, it presented itself as merely a neutral outside observer reporting on each side's perspectives.

In August, the catalyst for renewed focus on the controversy came in the form of the *New York Post* article, based on an interview of Almontaser that ostensibly documented her view of the "Intifada NYC" T-shirts. The notion that Almontaser had "failed to condemn" the T-shirts

⁶⁴ While not editorializing against the school, the paper took the opportunity to argue that a vouchers-based system would solve such conflicts.

and the concept of intifada circulated quickly via not only editorials and opinion pieces but also news articles, in both right-wing and center-left media sources. The *New York Post* lodged an out-an-out campaign against Almontaser, contributing to an atmosphere of incredulity, horror and condemnation that led to her resignation. It published a total of sixteen articles in the month of August—more than any of these venues in any month—including four highly critical editorials. However it also continued its attacks on her well past the time of her resignation, publishing nine of the sixteen articles after her resignation, maximizing the story’s capacity to garner audience interest and attention. On the other hand, by September the *Post*’s coverage decreased dramatically, publishing just three articles in the next month. As such, the *Post*’s attack was swift and fierce but also relatively brief, maximizing the story’s ability to capture short attention spans and quickly move audiences to particular political effect.

In response to the resignation, the *New York Times* published within two weeks three opinion pieces related to Almontaser and the school. Suddenly the paper, which had initially sought to appear as a dispassionate outside observer, emerged as an arena of debate presenting a range of perspectives—two articles criticizing the school’s theme and one defending Almontaser—in an “objective” tone that purported to reject fear-mongering and racism. Eight months later, in April 2008, the *Times* published an in-depth and highly sympathetic article about the controversy, documenting how Almontaser became the object of a concerted right-wing attack which eventually had significant repercussions for her and KGIA. However, at this point, the debate that determined the fate of Almontaser and the school was largely over and the battle for Almontaser’s vision of the school had already been lost. Nevertheless, despite their absence from the debate in the more formative periods, the *Times* was able to harness liberal displeasure

at the type of attack Almontaser had suffered and emerge as the arena of civil discourse and debate.

While the school had received some national news media coverage, this had been sporadic and primarily confined to editorial commentary shows, such as Glenn Beck (CNN), Hannity and Colmes (Fox News) and Michelle Malkin (Fox News). However, on the day of the school's opening CNN ran nine separate segments on the school, beginning in the morning and continuing into the evening. These segments gave significant airtime to opponents, especially to Pamela Hall of Stop the Madrassa, complaining that public funding was going to a religious school and claiming that the Department of Education was refusing to release the school's curricula. One segment opened with, "Well, you've never seen a school like the one that we're about to visit. It specializes in everything Arabic, the culture, Islam, that is scaring a lot of folks in New York" (CNN 2007b), while another segment was introduced: "Reading, writing, radical Islam?" (CNN 2007d). Following this day-long barrage of news about the school, the topic was almost completely dropped (only addressed again in a single brief interview with Almontaser in August of 2008), demonstrating a lack of interest in actually determining whether any accusations lodged against the school would be substantiated. Indeed, racialized fear of Muslims/Arabs was simply a means of garnering and focusing audience attention.

Each media venue, and especially each newspaper, served a different but significant role in the controversy, harnessing audience attention at different moments and to different effects. Short attention spans require an attack not be drawn out too long, but rather be produced to have effects. Each source that attacked the school followed a different temporality. The right-wing papers most involved in attacking KGIA and Almontaser, concentrated their attacks at particular moments for maximum effects, garnering the most audience attention and having the greatest

political impact. The *New York Times*, the single city-wide center-left paper similarly took the controversy to be one that offered an opportunity for concentrated audience attention, however one that happened after-the-fact as a retrospective lament about the ability of the right to lodge such anti-Muslim/Arab attacks, rather than as a counter-point to that attack. I turn now to the particular affective power of the right's attacks and will return to center-left coverage of this controversy in the final section of this chapter.

The Right's Affective Attacks

Let those who think jihad and intifada are nice terms – let them take those terms and shove it. Stop parsing the language.

Jeffrey Weisenfeld, CUNY Trustee, quoted in Chandler and Cohler-Esses (2007)

In post-9/11 linguistics, the word 'intifada' became, even in the bluest city of a blue state, an explosive device.

Robert Hirshfield (2007), "A Principal Ousted for What She Didn't Say: A Post-9/11 Story," *National Catholic Reporter*

While the right's opposition to the school was often articulated in terms similar to liberal critics, these attacks focused also on the demonization of Almontaser as a person and the circulation of affectively powerful words associated with Almontaser and KGIA. In addition to substantive arguments against the school, right-wing attackers used highly suggestive, associational and affective modes of attack. Right-wing sources focused attention and created strong emotional responses at particular moments through the use of words that drew attention to the Arabic, and purportedly Islamic, character of the school. In particular, the language of Arabic itself, which the school was created to impart on its students, became a highly manipulatable weapon. Furthermore, charged language and hyperbolic claims had the ability to circulate

broadly, often repeated as framing questions or examples of critiques of the school in mainstream and liberal sources. Many liberals viewed the rights' response as irrational and hysterical, but as Irvine (2008) argues,

Overt emotion is not only increasingly acceptable but seemingly required in contemporary politics, where it conveys righteous solidarity and demands state intervention. Contemporary Western societies consider feelings the core of the self; they are constructed as a site of truth and ethics. Hence feelings, as Michel Foucault has argued, are 'the main field of morality,' ... Because of its cultural authority, public emotion can pressure politicians, police, media, and other regulatory agents to respond to fierce community battles. (2)

The right claimed to express an authentic emotional response of horror and outrage to an existential threat, while liberals were represented as stymied by political correctness and unable to defend their own interests. These attacks were successful in building on and eventually transforming ambivalence, as expressed in many liberal critiques *and* defenses of the school, into a moral panic based on the accumulation of highly suggestive associations with the school. These associations resonated with variables of concern with regard to Muslim/Arab Americans and a particularly powerful variable of concern in this case became the question of connections to Muslims/Arabs abroad. Early attacks created a general feeling of unease and suspicion that provided the context in which Almontaser could quickly be transformed into an unacceptable figure when she was represented as deviating from the script and role of a "moderate Muslim."

The campaign against Almontaser, similar to other media-generated campaigns against moderate Muslims, aimed to create doubt about her true beliefs and loyalties, casting her "moderate" appearances as a calculated façade intended to hide her truly Islamist views. Almontaser's significant public track record offered a body of information available to manipulation. Highly selective and decontextualized information about Almontaser—some fairly accurate and much not—was constantly repeated to reinforce a feeling that there was something

untoward about her affiliations, statements and behaviors. In particular, scrutiny of Muslim/Arab organizations with whom she had any connections was used to create a chain of associations leading to the Saudi government, Hamas, or Hezbollah, represented as “Islamic terrorists.” Almontaser’s foreignness and her duplicitousness was suggested in the right-wing media’s use of her birthname “Dhabah” in such a way that suggested that “Debbie” was an alias; the usefulness of this tactic to increase attention is suggested by the fact that the *Post* only did so in the period immediately surrounding the “Intifada NYC” T-shirt controversy in August. While the right claimed that it focused on Almontaser because there was relatively little information available about the school, the ability to paste an image onto an argument, especially the image of a headscarf-wearing Muslim and Arab woman, greatly increased their ability to associate the school with a perceived threat of political Islam. In the face of liberal discourses casting Almontaser as an exceptional moderate Muslim, the repetition of evidence suggesting that she had personal and organizational ties and political sympathies connecting her to “questionable” categories of Muslims/Arabs abroad cast doubt on the claim that she was truly a moderate.

Another tactic used by the right-wing media was to deploy highly affective words, especially Arabic words, to cast the school and Almontaser as not only connected to a foreign culture, but connected to a shadowy and obscure threat, only knowable to a select group of experts. Images and words (in headlines, captions, and sound bites), become powerful tools for garnering audience attention. Terranova argues that images no longer serve to represent some truth of which the audience must be convinced, but rather become “bioweapons”:

It is no longer a matter of illusion or deception, but of the tactical and strategic deployment of the *power of affection* of images as such. It is no longer a matter of truth or appearance, or even of the alienating power of the spectacle as ‘opium of the masses’, but of images as *bioweapons*, let loose into the informational ecology with a mission to infect. (Terranova 2007, 142)

Building on this notion, I argue that some words, in this case words taken from the Arabic language and deployed against projects associated with Muslims/Arabs, can be as evocative, affective and infectious as images and circulate more efficiently in print media. These words, such as jihad, madrassa, intifada are not only defined along lines that associate Muslims/Arabs with violence, terrorism, irrationalism, and backwardness, but also themselves become a force that infects everything with which they are associated. These words gain their power from stereotypes associated with Muslims/Arabs but have become detached from specific narratives to function somewhat independently in garnering audience attention and producing a swift assessment. Arguments about the true meaning of a word or the intentions of those associated with the word are ineffective in depleting the force of the word. These words are both transparent, in that there can be no argument about their meaning, and impenetrable, as foreign, unfamiliar, and resistant to reinterpretation. Even when a word is described as being misinterpreted or misapplied it can still do the work of infecting and repelling. Therefore, even when it is recognized by many that the school and Almontaser will likely never pose a threat to the United States, these words make associating with the school and Almontaser a risky endeavor.

Despite their vastly different meanings and usages in Arabic, such words were used very similarly to affiliate the school and Almontaser with Islam and violence. While there are many words and phrases that have come to function this way (eg, *sharia*, *fatwa*, *allahu akbar*, and others less commonly such as, *dhimmi*, *taqiyya* (see Elliott 2011)), in this case, three terms that became central to representations of the school and Almontaser were jihad, madrassa and intifada. Jihad is a multifaceted religious concept that refers to struggling in the path of God, and can encompass a duty to take up arms under specified circumstances (A.A. Ahmad 2009);

madrassa is the Arabic word for school that can refer to various types of educational institutions, both secular and religious; and intifada is a secular concept literally meaning “shaking off” used to refer to uprisings or rebellions, including two major periods of Palestinian resistance, via both nonviolent and violent means, to Israeli occupation (1987-1993 and 2000-2005). Despite these different meanings, because of the particular history of usage of Arabic words in the United States, these words almost automatically connote violence and terrorism, becoming one-word distillations of the stereotype of the violent Muslim extremist.

While the usage of these words depends on particular meanings or interpretations of them, above and beyond questions of meaning, these words also become linguistic weapons, or “bioweapons,” against Muslims/Arabs. These words travel quickly, repeated in sound bites, headlines, framing questions and captions, capturing momentary attention; rather than being processed simply as an interpretation, their usages pack a particular set of associations that trigger powerful emotions. On the first level, these words racialize as Muslim/Arab the institutions and people with whom they are associated, immediately raising the particular variables of assessment deemed relevant for this population. However, they also already make the assessment, through words that are almost inevitably associated with both Islam and violence – and particularly what is called “Islamic terrorism.” Since widespread usage of some of these words – like jihad – might dampen their ability to garner attention and trigger fears, we see an alternation between more common and broadly accepted Arabic terms and newer, less familiar terms. Unfamiliar words, that combine letters in unusual patterns while referencing seemingly unique and unusual concepts, create feelings of confusion and disease. As new words are introduced they fall into an assemblage of concepts all seeming to be elaborations on different aspects of Islamic extremism and violence. These words attest to the expertise of those using

them, as those who are knowledgeable about this shadowy threat and able to confidently describe it using “expert” language. Furthermore, the use of Arabic distances the particular concepts from equivalent or parallel ones in the English language, separating the Islamic tradition from other more familiar ones with which it is connected, most notably Christianity and Judaism. For example, the use of the term “Allah” obscures the fact that it is simply the Arabic-language word for “God” used by both Muslim and Christian Arabs; furthermore, the news media often emphasizes the usage of the phrase “allahu akbar” (meaning, “God is great”) in contexts of militancy and violence (for example, in headlines about the Fort Hood shootings (Soltis, Greene, and Gregorian 2009)), further connecting Islam to violence, despite the phrase’s very common and diverse usage among Muslims. Similarly jihad is rarely linked to the Christian concept of a “just war,” *intifada* is rarely connected to the revolutionary history of the United States, and *madrassa* even when defined as simply the Arabic word for school, continues to pack another set of unsettling associations.

Initially the school was termed a “jihad school” by right-wing bloggers to indicate that it would both proselytize Islam and promote Islamic extremism (see, eg, Rabinowitz 2007). Indeed, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* article led with the question “‘Jihad School’ or ‘School for Everyone’?” (Frost 2007a). Jihad, here understood crudely as a Muslim holy war against non-Muslims, has become one of the central concepts of the war on terror and the term “jihadist” has become a broadly acceptable term for any Muslim who advocates or resorts to violence in the service of a cause identified with Islam.⁶⁵ However, before long the concept of the “jihad school”

⁶⁵ A wide range of scholarly and popular books published on “jihad” and “jihadism” demonstrates the broad legitimacy and usage of these terms: Gilles Kepel’s *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (2002), Fawaz Gerge’s *Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy* (2006), Walid Phares’ *The War of Ideas: Jihad Against Democracy* (2008), Jarret Brachman’s *Global Jihadism: Theory and Practice* (2008), Marc Sageman’s *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-first Century* (2008), Farhad Khosrokhavar’s *Inside Jihadism: Understanding Jihadist Movements Worldwide* (2009), and Reza Aslan’s *Global Jihadism: A Transnational Social Movement* (2010).

was replaced by the term *madrassa*. Despite simply meaning school in Arabic, it has been used in the English-language media to reference conservative Islamic schools, as clear in the following definition posted on PBS's website for its program, "Frontline:" "A *madrassa* is an Islamic religious school. Many of the Taliban were educated in Saudi-financed *madrassas* in Pakistan that teach Wahhabism, a particularly austere and rigid form of Islam which is rooted in Saudi Arabia" (Frontline 2011). While *madrassa* was technically the correct Arabic word to refer to the school (although the choice to call KGIA an "academy" was intended to avoid that usage (Paley 2010)), authors who used the term often clarified that they meant it to refer to a conservative Islamic school, in part because they could not assume that audiences knew the meaning of the word. As such, *madrassa* had the benefit of being slightly more unfamiliar, thereby capturing attention. However, the word was also associated with a recent January 2007 controversy over presidential candidate Barack Obama who was accused of having attended a *madrassa* while a child in Indonesia, demonstrating how the term had already developed a particular role in casting individuals as stealth Islamists (2007a).

The word *madrassa* was first put into circulation in a few key articles that associated it with particular polemical and highly affective sound bites to make suspicion about the school seem common sense and acceptable. For example, headline of Daniel's Pipes's article "A *Madrassa* Grows in Brooklyn" produced a shock by placing the familiar (Brooklyn) with the unfamiliar, foreign and seemingly dangerous. A single line in this piece became an oft-repeated sound bite, making the hyperbolic claim that "Arabic-language instruction is inevitably laden with pan-Arabist and Islamist baggage," even as Pipes also claimed in the article that Arabic language instruction is important and necessary to the war on terror. Alicia Colon's "*Madrassa*

Plan is Monstrosity” was also frequently cited by other sources (see, eg, Frost 2007a), including the following reference to the article’s conclusion:

How delighted Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda must have been to hear the news - that New York City, the site of the worst terrorist attack in our history, is bowing down in homage to accommodate and perhaps groom future radicals.... I say break out the torches and surround City Hall to stop this monstrosity. (Colon 2007)

Although Colon risked alienating some readers in her excessive language that brought up the image of the lynch mob, this language also guaranteed that her words would be circulated widely, bringing to the fore an apparently disturbing irony implied by the idea that a “madrassa” will be built in New York. In these circulating sound bites, even those who might not initially oppose the school can come to feel this as a discordance, expressed in a question like, why should “they” have a school (maybe even a “madrassa”) in New York, where so many were victimized by 9/11?⁶⁶ The term madrassa was put to use even more with the formation of an organization called Stop the Madrassa, with Daniel Pipes on its advisory board, which became the voice of the “grassroots” opposition to the school, receiving wide media coverage.

The power of an Arabic word to dislodge an entire narrative about a person became clear in the central event that led to Almontaser’s resignation. Here the word functioned not simply as a label that associated Islamic violence with Almontaser and the school but actually served as an affective tool to assess the moderate status of Almontaser. This event revolved around a T-shirt, which bore the words “Intifada NYC,” produced by AWAAM (Arab Women Active in Art and Media) an activist organization of young Arab women very tenuously connected to Almontaser (the organization sometimes rented space from an organization on whose board Almontaser sat). Ironically, in the T-shirt’s logo, we see a similar bringing together of elements from different

⁶⁶ The strength of this idea was demonstrated even more a few years later in the horror elicited by the idea of what was called, by its critics, “The Ground Zero Mosque.”

contexts to capture attention; however rather than a “madrassa” in Brooklyn, the T-shirt seems to reference an “intifada” in New York City. These T-shirts were produced for a particular audience, presumably primarily Arab Americans who were more likely to see intifada both as a general concept and as the legitimate uprising by the Palestinian people in opposition to an illegal Israeli occupation. However the logo was then unleashed in a media context where a wholly negative interpretation of intifada quickly congealed around the word, one that was based on an image of illegitimate Palestinian violence against Israeli civilians and that corresponds to the much circulating stereotype of Islamic terrorists.

Specifically, on August 6, 2007, the *Post* published an article based on an interview it had conducted with Almontaser⁶⁷ in which it claimed that she had, “downplayed the significance of the T-shirts...” which “glorify Palestinian terror.” The article entitled, “City Principal Is ‘Revolting’: Tied to ‘Intifada NYC’ T-Shirts” combines reporting with editorializing, presenting an interpretation that soon shaped the consensus view about Almontaser. The article quoted Almontaser at length as saying,

“The word [intifada] basically means ‘shaking off.’ That is the root of the word if you look it up in Arabic,” she said.

“I understand it is developing a negative connotation due to the uprising in the Palestinian-Israeli areas. I don’t believe the intention is to have any of that kind of [violence] in New York City.

“I think it’s pretty much an opportunity for girls to express that they are part of New York City society... and shaking off oppression.” (Bennett and Winter 2007)

While there has since been evidence to indicate that this was a misrepresentation of what Almontaser said in the interview,⁶⁸ I focus on how the available information circulated at that

⁶⁷ Although Almontaser insisted she had no knowledge of the T-shirts, the *New York Post* pressured the Department of Education to have Almontaser grant an interview.

⁶⁸ In contrast to the *Post*’s presentation of this as a defense of the T-shirt, Almontaser says that she never spoke directly about the T-shirts, but was responding first to a question about the “origins of the word intifada” and later to

time. While the article represents Almontaser as defending the T-shirts, the quote is actually about the term intifada and what the intentions of the girls seem to be in using it. Almontaser acknowledges the “negative connotation” of the term while also giving the youth organization the benefit of the doubt regarding its usage, suggesting that they understood the term differently. In the following weeks, responses to Almontaser either represented her statement as a gaffe, an error in judgment that does not truly represent her, or as akin to a slur, demonstrating deep-seated prejudice. There was little debate over the meaning of the word intifada and almost no consideration of the possibility that the youth organization might not take the term to be synonymous with terrorism.⁶⁹ Furthermore, whether the statement was deemed a gaffe or a slur, most agreed that Almontaser should step down from her position as principal of the school.

Despite an apology⁷⁰ in Almontaser’s name released the evening of the article taking responsibility for the statement and pointing to her record of work to demonstrate her opposition to violence, the outcry to the article was persistent and harsh. The apology failed to change responses because the question posed by the *Post* reporter was read as an affective test of Almontaser, a way to assess whether she truly was the moderate Muslim she presented herself to be. No apology could transform the fact that she was deemed to have utterly failed that test,

the reporter’s depiction of the girls as advocating terrorism (Elliott 2008a; Medina 2007c). Although Almontaser did not speak to the press in the month following her resignation, Larry Cohler Esses (2007) on August 17 recounted this version of events based on other sources who had spoken with Almontaser.

⁶⁹ Indeed, the *Post*’s report cast the organization in terms that made defense of it exceedingly difficult, reporting that its founders were active in Al Awda, a grassroots organization advocating Palestinian right of return, which the article claimed “is an active supporter of terrorist groups Hezbollah and Hamas.” Here, through a chain of associations, Almontaser is again cast as somehow connected to Hezbollah and Hamas, and therefore “terrorists.”

⁷⁰ The apology read, “The use of the word ‘Intifada’ is completely inappropriate as a t-shirt slogan. I regret suggesting otherwise. By minimizing the word’s historical associations I implied that I condone violence and threats of violence. That view is anathema to me and the very opposite of my life’s work. I have spent most of the last two decades working with religious and community leaders to build intergroup understanding and to promote non-violent solutions to conflict.” Almontaser has since demonstrated that the apology issued was in part contrary to her wishes. While she sought a clarification of what she had said, which had been misrepresented in the *Post*, the Department of Education insisted that she simply apologize for what the *Post* had reported her to have said. See the series of emails demonstrating this published by the *New York Times* at

http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20080428_EMAILS_1.pdf

showing herself to be sympathetic to the perspectives of Muslims/Arabs deemed beyond the pale. There were calls for Almontaser's resignation and rallies planned outside the office of the Schools Chancellor. Everyone seemed to agree that the meaning of intifada is obvious and that the only proper response to the word was an immediate, or as Weingarten put it an "instinctive," denunciation. The *Post* presenting Almontaser's quotes as an indication of her true beliefs, ran a series of articles that also demonstrated the effective use of words to vilify. Andrea Peyser began an Op Ed, "How many ways can you define 'suicidal'? The school hasn't even opened yet. But the hijab-wearing principal of a taxpayer-funded school founded especially for Arab students has issued a fatwa against the kids of New York" (Peyser 2007). She also insisted that the meaning of intifada "is as clear as the hole in the ground in lower Manhattan." The *Post* editorialized, "Now, if Dhabah Almontaser is going to be as disingenuous about something like this, why should New Yorkers believe her claim that 'you won't find religious or political indoctrination or anti-Americanism' at her Khalil Gibran school?" (2007). A representative of Stop the Madrassa said that the T-shirts indicate that KGIA "will advocate terrorist violence" (E. Green 2007), and politicians echoed this view, for example, Councilman Peter Vallone, Jr. said "This shirt should read, 'I promote terror and hate on a daily basis, and all I got for it is this lousy T-shirt'" (Burston 2007). Many explicitly called for Almontaser to resign and others also argued that the school should be closed. Indeed, one of the most damaging responses came in the form of a scathing letter to the *Post* from the Randi Weingarten, President of the Teacher's Union and a former supporter, which expressed concern about a principal who "doesn't instinctively denounce campaigns or ideas tied to violence" (2007). Ignoring Almontaser's apology, Weingarten made her failure to "instinctively denounce" intifada a litmus test of acceptability.

Others insisted that Almontaser's statement was a serious error in judgment but not necessarily one that indicated a support of terrorism. More measured in tone, were the concerns raised by Jewish-identified supporters of the school. The *Sun* reported that Joel Levy of the ADL said Almontaser's comments were troubling, "The word intifada has a very specific meaning, and it's the violent uprising in the Palestinian territories... We can't ignore that." (E. Green 2007). Others, such as the director of American Jewish Committee and Rabbi Andy Bachman separated their views on the school and Almontaser from their views on the T-shirt, which they resoundingly agreed deserved condemnation (E. Green 2007). Bloomberg in his radio announcement of Almontaser's resignation, most clearly articulated a notion that her statement was simply an error in judgment: "I know the woman. She's worked for the city in a variety of capacities. She's very smart. She's certainly not a terrorist. She really does care... she's not all that media-savvy maybe, and she tried to explain a word rather than just condemn" (Bosman 2007c). Reiterating a view that the word required that one "just condemn," Bloomberg presents the resignation as a pragmatic matter for the sake of the school, rather than an act of giving into anti-Muslim/Arab bias. His defense of her as "certainly not a terrorist" (in fact, most opponents of the school never called her a terrorist, *per se*) intended to indicate a lack of bias on the part of the city, only reiterated just how much the figure of the terrorist haunts Muslim/Arab Americans, who as a racialized population are constantly assessed in relation to the problem of "Islamic terrorism."

Indeed, the set of associations packed into the attacks on Almontaser were made clear by the consistency with which apparent errors in reporting always cast Almontaser and the school in worse terms than even the original *Post* articles did. For example, a *Daily News* article described Almontaser as having resigned "after a published report tried to link her to a militant Islamic

group” (Siemaszko and Zambito 2007). A very common mistake among commenters on the websites of various news agency is to describe Almontaser as having a much closer relationship to the T-shirts, for example wearing them. Glenn Beck similarly said that Almontaser (who he described as a “devout Islamist”) had “supported and sanctioned the sale of T-shirts to young girls that read ‘Intifada New York’,” adding “Interesting choice of school uniforms, I guess” (CNN 2007e). Kyra Phillips, a reporter on CNN, mentioned that the school was now disassociated from “that woman who was wearing the T-shirt that was the principal”(CNN 2007c). Furthermore, there is an assumption of interchangeability of these Arabic terms and that they all reference irrational Islamic violence. For example, an article, in the *Brooklyn Paper*, by the reporter who had consistently covered the story, describes Almontaser as having resigned, “after she defined the word ‘jihad’ as ‘struggle’” (Rubinstein 2007b). Even more explicit is a reader comment by “anthony4” posted in response to a *Washington Post* article on August 4, 2007, “Perhaps I am confusing the word [intifada] too much with jihad. As far as I can tell they boil down to the same thing, Muslim rage against any perceived slight (ie killing a nun because of a Mohammed cartoon)” (Shulman 2007).

As live words with various meanings, associations, connotations and usages these words are available to various forms of manipulation. This manipulation is on clear display in a September 26, 2007 interview with an Almontaser supporter, then-Councilman John Liu, on Fox’s *Hannity & Colmes* (Fox News Network 2007). In response to Liu’s objection to the use of the term *madrassa* in the introduction to the segment, Sean Hannity says, “Well, I did not say that word. But the fear of the community – see, we have a problem with extremists that believe in *intifada* in this battle, in this holy war, and *jihad*.” Even as Hannity distances himself from the usage of the term “*madrassa*,” he brings forward a range of other terms in a list that highlights

how much their differences are unimportant. When Liu seems to flummox Hannity by repeatedly asking whether he opposes all dual-language schools and pointing out that “madrassa” is written on the screen, Hannity bursts out with a nonsensical phrase, “Intifada. Intifada.” Like a bomb meant to eliminate any critical thinking, he throws the word into the scuffle and ducks back. Alan Colmes, the liberal in the duo, comes to the rescue, clarifying that he at least has no problems with teaching Arabic, and explains, “I used the word madrassa, because I understand madrassa means ‘school.’” Defending the “accurate” usage of the word, Colmes demonstrates just how flexible these words are in bending to the needs of the moment, which maximizes their circulation. As such, they are very effective “bioweapons” circulating broadly in a range of discourses, while infecting those associated with them. Furthermore, these words often become tools for assessment of Muslims/Arabs, as positions on the meanings and usages of terms, such as jihad, sharia and intifada, have become a source of scrutiny. As a result, although a white media commentator, like Colmes, may be able to disassociate himself from racism by articulating the “correct” definition of madrassa, Muslim and Arab Americans’ attempts to reclaim, or even simply define, these words has become evidence of anti-Americanism and extremism.

Liberals’ Tolerance / The Right’s Shame

There has been no ‘debate’ going on here, only racist bullying. American media commentary has been hijacked by pundits who have zero commitment to intellectual debate of issues, and even less commitment to understanding the nuances that come along with learning about foreign cultures and languages.

Anthony DiMaggio, "The Right-Wing's War on the Gibran Academy: Arabic as a Terrorist Language," Aug. 30, 2007, *CounterPunch*

In contrast to the right’s emotional, associational and affective mode of attack, liberal commentators sought to present themselves as the voice of reason, dispassionately considering

the merits of opposing perspectives to arrive at a rational position in relation to the school. With titles like, “Arabic school’s critics are the true zealots” (Zimmerman 2007), and “‘Madrasa’ in New York: Hysteria trumps reason” (Bernstein 2007), many liberals accused the right of irrational zealotry and hysterical racism. However, their defenses of Almontaser and the school also asserted the particular variables of assessing Muslims/Arabs contributing to the swift defamation of Almontaser, by excluding more complex understandings of Muslim and Arab American experiences and perspectives. Indeed, while liberal voices in the media were willing to critique the bulk of attacks on Almontaser, they kept some distance from central elements of these attacks, especially with regard to the “Intifada NYC” T-shirt incident. Although many community members and activists came forward to defend Almontaser in the months following her resignation (Howard 2007; Communities in Support of the Khalil Gibran International Academy 2007; "Open Letter" 2008), these voices were largely excluded from the mainstream media. With time, as more evidence emerged to indicate that Almontaser’s words had been misrepresented, more liberal voices articulated shame at the right-wing campaign against her. The *New York Times*’ April 28, 2008 front-page article and multimedia website was the culmination in this slow shift in perceptions of Almontaser, largely clearing Almontaser’s name and laying blame for her demise on the right-wing campaign against her. The *Times* emerged as a responsible media outlet providing objective analysis and competing viewpoints, while correcting misinformation. However, rather than address the context that allowed for the swift defamation of Almontaser in the eyes of people across the political spectrum, the paper put into circulation the image of the “moderate Muslim” victimized by a shameful right-wing attack in order to reproduce in its liberal readership a feeling of its own tolerance.

In particular, what has been excluded from discussion in the center-left media has been the fact that the defamation of Almontaser depended on the delegitimization of the political perspectives of many Muslim and Arab Americans, especially (although not exclusively) with regard to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. While neoconservative right-wing campaigns seek to delegitimize any critiques of Israel, including those lodged by non-Arab Christians and Jews, the racialization of Muslims and Arabs casts their criticism of Israel as indicative of their general intolerance, and their solidarity with Palestinians as indicative of their sympathies for “Islamic terrorism.” As such, these views become of concern not only to Israel’s defenders, but to *anyone* concerned about the “threat of Islam” in the United States. Therefore while the strength of the pro-Israel lobby and of supporters of Israel, especially in New York City politics, were a significant factor in responses to Almontaser’s quoted statement, her speedy defamation was also a result of how the figure of the “Palestinian terrorist” resonates with the broader racialization of Muslims/Arabs as susceptible to religious fanaticism, intolerance, and violence. Indeed, this, as much as a pro-Israel bias, explains why the center-left media depicted the “Intifada-NYC” T-shirt controversy in terms that implicitly legitimized outcry against Almontaser. While the specificities of the Palestinian Intifada were of concern to some, the legitimacy of the outcry rested more broadly on the way in which intifada could be made to easily fall into a constellation of concepts that defined Muslims/Arabs as prone to irrational and barbaric religious violence, as is demonstrated by the interchangeability, for many, of the terms intifada and jihad.

Even ostensibly neutral news coverage in center-left media betrayed a particular reading of the concept of intifada that implied Almontaser had clearly erred in not simply condemning it. For example, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported:

Rather than immediately denounce the shirts, Almontaser initially tried to explain that ‘intifada’ literally means ‘shaking off’ and the shirts represented women ‘shaking off’

oppression. As the political implications became clear, however, she condemned the T-shirt's apparent connection to Palestinian terrorism. [my emphasis] (Frost 2007c)

The *New York Times* similarly referred to Almontaser's "attempt to explain away the term intifada on the shirts" (Bosman and Medina 2007). It also reported in multiple news articles that Almontaser had "defended the word 'intifada' as a T-shirt slogan" and described intifada as having "come to be associated with Palestinian attacks on Israel" (Bosman and Medina 2007; see also, Bosman 2007c; Bosman 2007a; Medina 2007d, 2007a, 2007b). Even after Almontaser made a public statement on October 16 (which the *Times* published on its website (Medina 2007c)), explaining that her statement was not about the T-shirts, but largely a response to a question about the origins of the term intifada,⁷¹ the *Times* continued reporting the controversy in the same terms.

Furthermore, even the various opinion pieces that were critical of attacks on Almontaser did not come to her defense in relation to the interview. The single *Times* article defending Almontaser published in the weeks following her resignation largely sidestepped the controversy surrounding the T-shirts, calling it a "pre-text for her ouster" (Freedman 2007). Another piece in the *New York Jewish Week* lauded by many as documenting the unfair attacks on Almontaser, referred to a "disastrous interview in which Almontaser failed to denounce [the] T-shirts..." (Cohler-Esses 2007). Similarly an editorial in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* referred parenthetically to Almontaser's "unfortunate, misinterpreted 'intifada' statement" without any further

⁷¹ In the statement, Almontaser says, "During the interview, the reporter asked about the Arabic origin of the word 'intifada.' I told him that the root word from which the word intifada originates means 'shake off' and that the word intifada has different meanings for different people, but certainly for many, given its association with the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, it implied violence. I reiterated that I would never affiliate myself with an individual or organization that would condone violence in any shape, way, or form. In response to a further question, I expressed the belief that the teenage girls of AWAAM did not mean to promote a 'Gaza-style uprising' in New York City" (Medina 2007c).

explanation (Geberer 2007a). While slightly more sympathetic in tone, these statements continue to suggest that Almontaser's statement deserved condemnation.

Strikingly, no New York City newspapers actually presented the central issue in this controversy, which by contrast was briefly described in a *Washington Post* article,

At core in the debate is a linguistic disconnect. The word “intifada” crystallized in its current Arabic meaning during the first Palestinian uprising in the late 1980s and early '90s. It is seen by many Arabs as a valid term for popular resistance to oppression, while for many English speakers it has come to conjure images of violent attacks on civilians. (Shulman 2007)

While hardly a defense of the perspective of many Arab Americans,⁷² this piece at least articulated that a fundamental difference in interpretation of an international conflict was at the heart of this matter. By contrast center-left New York City sources belied an equation of intifada with unjustified violence which foreclosed any possibility of discussion about the word, its literal meaning in Arabic *or* its political meanings for different communities. By repeating horrified condemnations from various commentators these sources also contributed to making the actual political perspectives of Muslim and Arab Americans on the concept of intifada not only taboo, but a sign of terroristic sympathies.

When Almontaser's reputation was eventually restored—following many months of protests from supporters seeking her reinstatement, an unsuccessful lawsuit against the city and the hiring of a different permanent principal for the school—it was through the argument that the *New York Post* had misquoted her in relationship to the “Intifada NYC” T-shirts and that she

⁷² By contrast, another much more positive representation of the Palestinian intifada was in a World Socialist Website piece on the controversy, which described, “The Intifada, which began at the end of 1987, was a popular uprising by the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza, involving mass demonstrations, strikes, civil disobedience. It was provoked by conditions of grinding oppression and the brutal destruction of the basic rights of the Palestinians under Israeli military occupation. To transform any positive reference to these events as tantamount to advocacy of terrorism—and the failure to condemn such a reference as an offense punishable by the loss of employment—represents a sinister attempt to suppress any political challenge to the policies pursued by Israel and Washington in the Middle East” (Light 2007).

actually was the moderate Muslim she claimed to be. The *Times* published on April 28, 2008 what presents itself as a “definitive” piece correcting the historical record and resuscitating Almontaser’s tarnished reputation. The article by Andrea Elliott (2008b) entitled “Her Dream, Branded a Threat,” appeared on the front page of the paper, above the fold, with an image of Almontaser surrounded by her supporters. It continued on a two-page spread, which included additional photographs, a timeline of major events, and a reference to additional materials on the website. The website includes videos of opposing viewpoints on various issues, and a more detailed time-line, with additional photographs and links to primary source documents (Elliott 2008a). The website also has a reader comments section in which 482 comments were posted within 36 hours of the article’s release and could be ranked by other readers. Offering this space for reader comments, the website appears to be an active civil forum for discussion, and producing an unscientific poll via these comments, it creates an appearance of reflecting “public opinion.” The article gives significant space to perspectives on various sides, giving voice to both Almontaser and her opponents, especially Pipes, thereby appearing balanced. Nevertheless, in describing Almontaser’s personal life, work and involvement with the school project, the article provides substantial evidence against most of the accusations made against her and the school. Therefore the article appears to be not only thoroughly documented and reliable, but also a correction of the record on Almontaser, who is presented as a victim of a right-wing smear-campaign. However, there are some significant gaps in the article, which defends Almontaser in large part by making her exceptional to her community, rather than examining how her connections to her community made her vulnerable to these attacks. It also roots her defamation solely in the attacks by Pipes and his allies and leaves largely unexplored the intifada

controversy itself and how it was possible for Almontaser to so quickly lose the support of many key allies.

A notion of Almontaser as an exceptional moderate Muslim is reinforced in the article's images and Elliott's description of Almontaser in relationship to various communities. The front page photograph of Almontaser shows her smiling with hands clasped in front of her, in the aisle of a beautiful church, the pews filled with predominantly white supporters giving her a standing ovation. The juxtaposition of this image of interfaith support for Almontaser with the one created by the right is emphasized by the caption, "Debbie Almontaser, labeled a 'jihadist' by some opponents, amid supporters at a church in Brooklyn in January." This notion is repeated in another image of Almontaser standing solemnly on the step so of City Hall flanked by multiracial and interfaith supporters, one holding a sign that reads, "The Torah and the Koran Both Teach Peace." While the establishment of the school was in part intended to serve Arab and Muslim American communities, the article emphasizes Almontaser's uniqueness and how some conflicts during the process created discord and distance between her and these communities. For example, describing an incident in which a local Arab American paper, *Aramica*, criticized Almontaser's work with the ADL, Elliott writes, "In just five months, Ms. Almontaser's image had been transformed. She was rendered a radical Muslim by one group and a sellout by another." The article disregards the fact that many Arab Americans actually criticized the *Aramica* piece (Assaf 2007), and presents the piece as a reflection of Arab discomfort with "Almontaser's ties with Jewish groups" despite the fact that *Aramica* raised complaints about the ADL's specific positions and fraught history in relation to Arab Americans (Faisal 2007). In effect Almontaser is presented as a moderate caught between two extremes: anti-Muslim right-wing critics and apparently anti-Semitic Arab Americans.

Furthermore, the *Times*' resuscitation of Almontaser as a moderate Muslim/Arab is in the service of demonstrating its own tolerance, in contrast to right-wing intolerance that is experienced as "shameful." In particular, Elliott's piece also gives a great deal of space to the views of Daniel Pipes and his allies, thereby placing blame for Almontaser's demise squarely on their campaign. Visually the paper represent these opponents as a small media-hungry fringe through an image of a white man and a white woman standing on the steps of City Hall, with a reporter's microphone awkwardly held out before them. In the video section of the website, each interview video clip of Almontaser or her supporters,⁷³ is counterposed by a clip of either Daniel Pipes or Jeffrey Weisenfeld, an adviser to the Stop the Madrassa Coalition and a trustee of the Board of The City University of New York. The article emphasizes that Pipes and others, such as David Horowitz, are increasingly focusing their attacks on "law-abiding Muslim-Americans" who they depict as "lawful Islamists" seeking to institute sharia and promote radical Islam by "working through the system," including the schools. Reader comments and blog posts demonstrate that readers are horrified by this type of thinking that incriminates virtually all Muslim Americans in a nefarious project to take over the United States. The most common response among sympathetic readers⁷⁴ posted on the *Times* website was to deem Almontaser a victim of a shameful witch hunt and to dissociate from Daniel Pipes and his allies by comparing their tactics alternately to the Japanese internment, historical anti-Semitism, the KKK and, most frequently, McCarthyism.⁷⁵ Blog posts similarly most commonly focus on Daniel Pipes as the

⁷³ These supporters are two members of Communities in Support of Khalil Gibran Academy, specifically, Donna Nevel, co-founder of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice and Center of Immigrant Families and Mona Eldahry, co-founder of AWAAM, the organization responsible for the T-shirts.

⁷⁴ I reviewed all comments which had been recommended by 10 or more readers (totaling 182 comments), and found that two-thirds of these comments expressed support of Almontaser and/or the school.

⁷⁵ These commenters also speak from multiple perspectives, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and one of the most common emotional responses is feeling ashamed. They argue that Arabic is not the same as Islam, that learning

chief villain in this story (see, eg, "Ruining People" 2008; "Pipes" 2008; "Discouraged" 2008; "Monday, April 28" 2008). As such the effect of the article is to deflect attention from the question of why this defamation was actually so effective and to ignore how exactly it was that so many of Almontaser's allies and colleagues came to believe that she was the source of the problem.⁷⁶

In particular, Elliott addresses the "intifada" controversy as primarily a result of the *Post*'s misrepresentation of Almontaser's responses to the interview questions, discounting how the broader racialization of Muslims/Arabs in the media, including the *Times*, contributed to her swift defamation. In addition to a detailed account of Almontaser's perspective on the interview, it offers as a validation of her view a federal judge's statement, made one month before the publication of the article, that Almontaser's words were "inaccurately reported by The Post and then misconstrued by the press." Indeed, given that the *Times* had up to now ignored Almontaser's account of being misrepresented (given in her October press statement), one wonders if it was this judge's assessment that finally created the space for representing Almontaser's side of the controversy. While the *Times* website does include a clip from Mona Eldahry, of AWAAM, the organization responsible for the T-shirts, which gives an explanation of the term *intifada* that largely disassociates it from the Palestinian Intifada, this is never mentioned in the written piece.⁷⁷ Also, while the *Times* piece describes how the *Post* article

Arabic is important given the current global context, as is learning multiple languages in general. They reference the double-standard applied to Muslims, as opposed to the Christian Right.

⁷⁶ One striking sign of Almontaser's redemption is that Randi Weingarten, one of the people whose criticism was most important in leading to her resignation, has said, "I deeply regret that my comments were used as a basis of continuing that treatment because Debbie is an incredible educator and a gift to the city... I think they [the DOE] probably set her up" (Wessler 2008). However she also has reiterated her position on *intifada*: "any word that could remotely, remotely incite violence is something that I think we as educators, and particularly as educational leaders, have to be very careful about" (Nathan-Kazis 2010).

⁷⁷ Eldahry's clip explains, "Intifada NYC for us is a term of empowerment. I mean, the word *intifada*, although... many Americans think of it as... violence, *intifada* is actually a word. It means awakening or to shake off. So Intifada NYC is sort of applauding the hard word of activists and organizers in New York who have done so much."

precipitated the Department of Education's pulling of support from Almontaser, it offers no analysis of why the *Post* article was so effective in hurting Almontaser's reputation. Reflective of this gap, not a single supportive reader comment I analyzed directly addressed the "intifada" controversy.

This controversial media event became an opportunity in more liberal media venues for the assertion of the values and presumed practices of pluralism. However, rather than creating an arena for critical engagement with the central accusations against Almontaser, and by extension against many Muslim and Arab Americans, the center-left media focused on reasserting an image of Almontaser as an exceptional "moderate" Muslim, distinguishing her from these communities and distinguish itself from the right-wing media attack on her. Indeed, when the *Times* defined the field of reasonable debate, it excluded not only the type of bald-faced lies and affective attacks present in right-wing sources, but also the actual perspectives and political views of many Arab and Muslim American. The absence in discourses of tolerance of substantive discussion of the unique experiences and perspectives of Muslims and Arabs made it impossible to imagine an alternative understanding of the concept of "intifada." Although Almontaser's quoted response provided a definition of intifada that acknowledged its association with violence, it was nevertheless broadly read as a "failure to condemn." This "failure" implied that she as a Muslim/Arab held some personal culpability for such violence that required her to distance herself from it. As such, even though Almontaser was widely regarded as a "moderate" Muslims, she was judged in relation to a Muslim/Arab population assumed to have greater association with violence. In turn, Almontaser's redemption was dependent on distancing her from Muslim and Arab American communities. Furthermore, this redemption was largely in the

She also points out that Almontaser was criticized for simply defining "intifada" in response to a reporter question asking for the root meaning of the word, not for defending the Palestinian Intifada.

service of creating a feeling that the *New York Times* and its liberal readers were tolerant Americans, engaged in civil discourse and debate, and disassociating themselves from the shameful, racist, right-wing attacks.

Conclusion

Both critics and defenders of KGIA and Almontaser in the mainstream media shared the assumptions of population racism that sees individual Muslims/Arabs as needing to be assessed in relation to the particular distribution of threat associated with the Muslim/Arab population. As a result, the figure of the “moderate” Muslim is part and parcel of this population racism, sometimes described as the “norm,” but increasingly represented as the “outlier” or exception among Muslim Americans. The moderate Muslim is a highly contested figure that encapsulates a tension in US war on terror discourses between articulating the United States as exceptionally tolerant and defining an enemy in terms of a religion and/or ethnicity. As a result it has also become a useful figure to be manipulated by both right-wing and liberal media to garner audience interest and produce moments of intense attention. While the specific assessment of a Muslim/Arab as moderate or not changes from context to context, the variables by which they are assessed are relatively consistent. These include religiosity/secularity, patriotism (often judged in terms of their associations with Muslims/Arabs abroad), relation to gender equality (and sexual freedom), and relation to discourses of tolerance.

Furthermore, highly affective words that encapsulate a particular threat most strongly associated with Muslims/Arabs—that of irrational, intolerant Islamically-motivated violence—function as both bioweapons and tools for assessing particular Muslims/Arabs. As bioweapons words such as jihad, madrassa, and intifada circulated quickly and broadly in the media, disseminating incredulity and horror at the idea of the school. Words are also compatible with an

assessment-oriented and variables-based population racism, because they offer a fast and flexible means of assessing the affective responses of individuals in relation to particular variables. In this case, Almontaser's quoted response to the "Intifada NYC" T-shirts functioned as such an affective assessment. While many of the right's claims initially seemed so outlandish as to not even warrant a counter-point, they accumulated around Almontaser and when there was an accusation that seemed to carry some credence, they provide an affective background into which that accusation could fall and stick. Since words are flexible and can change meaning and connotation from context to context, battles over literal meanings, intended meanings and connotations offer a space for the insertion of suspicion and doubt, or also for distancing oneself from overt racism.

Therefore, when it becomes useful to discredit a Muslim/Arab American, right-wing commentators represent deviations from the parameters of the "moderate" Muslim—parameters laid out most clearly in defenses of Muslims/Arabs in liberal media source—as evidence that an individual is intentionally obfuscating their true values and intentions and is therefore a potential threat. They also produce moments of attention and fear by unleashing the power of Arabic words, both less and more familiar ones that all come to reference a uniquely Islamic threat. Although liberal defenders may reassert that an individual is *truly* a moderate, these defenses rarely address the legitimacy of the framework for assessing Muslims/Arabs in relation to a racialized population. As a result, they simply become a means of representing themselves as an arena of civil debate, in contrast to the right-wing media. In effect, rather than a debate, both liberal and right-wing media sources use the figure of the moderate Muslim/Arab American as part of a broader strategy to momentarily garner the attention of distracted audiences in an affectively and informationally saturated media milieu.

Conclusion

While there have been some clear disruptions in the terrain of discourses of tolerance and sympathy in the three years since the events described in my final case study, there has also been much continuity. The election of President Barack Obama, while read by many as potentially leading to a break in Bush administration policies of the war on terror, failed to produce such a rupture, domestically or on a global level. Moreover, Obama's election has led to a right-wing backlash mobilized on a range of economic and cultural issues, one component of which has been an increase in the circulation of explicitly racist discourses about Muslims/Arabs. In particular, the idea that Muslims are actively partaking in dissimulation in order to appear "moderate" while they promote their "jihadist" cause is increasingly repeated in mainstream venues. In the face of this increasingly racist rhetoric, some liberals and leftists have organized responses in the name of protecting religious freedom, rearticulating Muslims' moderate status, and, in some cases, opposing racism. At the same time dramatic changes in the Middle East have led to an awareness of the widespread dissatisfaction with repressive and autocratic governments and the potential power of people's movements. Beginning with the 2009 postelection protests in Iran, dubbed the Green Movement, and continuing with the wave of rebellions and revolutionary movements in late 2010 to 2011 in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, and other parts of the Arab world, a new set of representations of Muslims/Arabs abroad have circulated in the US media. Indeed, much of the media coverage of the Green Movement and the Arab Spring challenged Western audiences to recognize the desire and ability of people's movements themselves to effect change. Nevertheless, Western responses to these movements also often reinforced old dichotomies, especially of religion versus secularism. For example, many commentators quickly cast the Green Movement in Iran as revolutionary, seeking the ouster of

the Islamic republic, despite protesters' focus on government accountability in relation to a flawed election.⁷⁸ Conversely, following the Egyptian revolution, many have focused fears on the role of the Muslim Brotherhood, as seeking to create a repressive Islamic regime, despite their insistence that they have no such intention. The disproportionate focus on the role of religion belies the persistence of an association of Islam with repressiveness and violence, despite the fact that many of these uprisings were against highly repressive secular governments.

This is not to say that these disruptions to dominant perceptions of Muslims/Arabs abroad are not significant but rather that there is a flexibility and durability to the variables of assessment that can maintain a continuity in how Muslims/Arabs are assessed even as the particularities of those assessments might change. In this concluding chapter I further expand on this point in my analysis of a high profile controversy surrounding a Muslim/Arab public project. I demonstrate the flexibility of these variables of assessment to show how discourses of tolerance presented as creating a space for moderate Muslims became a very effective weapon against them, while also highlighting the role of representations of Muslims/Arabs abroad in the racialization of Muslims/Arabs in the United States. Next I focus specifically on the relationship of the “here” (the United States) and the “there” (Muslim-majority countries) to draw out how these case studies on representations of very different contexts work together to produce a particularly dynamic and durable racialization of Muslims/Arabs. Finally, I conclude with some thought on the challenges that my analysis highlights for those seeking to counter, or at minimum not reproduce, this racism. In demonstrating the complicity of discourses of tolerance and sympathy with the racialization of Muslims/Arab, I challenge liberals and leftists to move beyond these frameworks to a politics that is more humble and questioning when it comes to

⁷⁸ In the years since the initial uprising, and with intense government repression, there has been a shift toward calling for the ouster of the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, but this was not part of the original demands.

one's own assumptions, sensibilities and visceral responses. While the temporality of the media and of activism is not always conducive to such a shift, it is essential that this feedback loop be interrupted and that different experimental, but conscientious, forms of activism emerge that seek to produce new sensibilities and different bodily responses.

Sympathy and Tolerance as Intolerance

The 2010 right-wing generated controversy surrounding a proposal to build an Islamic cultural center in downtown Manhattan, dubbed by opponents the “Ground Zero Mosque,” marked one of the most intense national controversies to date regarding the role of Muslim Americans in the United States. The location of the center named Park51,⁷⁹ several blocks north of the World Trade Center site, produced a national outcry that demonstrated not only the broad acceptance of the notion that Muslims in general are implicated in the 9/11 attacks, but the malleability of discourses of tolerance that were used by both defenders and opponents of the center. In line with the notion that the problem of tolerance was key to the post-9/11 conflicts, the planners described the space as created to foster interfaith and intercultural dialogue, understanding, and thereby peace. Opponents in turn used the concepts of sympathy and tolerance in various ways to cast the center as antithetical to such values. Opponents cast the center as, at best, insensitive to the families of victims of 9/11 and, at worst, a “victory mosque” where future terrorists would be trained. Muslims’ ostensible lack of sympathy (for the 9/11 families), lack of tolerance (towards a range of categories of people), and role in instigating other people’s intolerance (in proposing such a plan) were often cited as reasons they did not deserve tolerance. Therefore a discourse of tolerance was manipulated in various ways to both defend

⁷⁹ While the center was initially named Cordoba House to evoke a period of peaceful coexistence and cultural exchange among Muslims, Jews and Christians in Andalucía, when this name was recast by opponents as a reference to an Islamic conquest of Spain, planners renamed the center Park51.

and defame the center, demonstrating the durability and flexibility of this variable for assessing Muslims/Arabs.

Defenders of the plan emphasized a US history of religious tolerance to argue that the plan must be allowed to proceed. Furthermore, they emphasized the status of Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, the lead religious leader associated with the center, as a moderate Muslim who has promoted tolerance, and demonstrated himself to be a patriot. As a “man of peace,” Abdul Rauf presented himself in the terms that Bush had popularized through his statement “Islam is peace,” evoking and seeking to challenge the much more prevalent association of Islam with jihad as holy war. As defenders noted, Abdul Rauf is a Sufi (a presumably more spiritually-oriented and peaceful Islamic sect), a supporter of women’s rights (eg, his mosque is not segregated by gender), a patriot working for US interests (eg, he has been an international spokesperson for the State Department and has worked with the FBI), and a supporter of the State of Israel. He has presided over interfaith marriages and worked in interfaith contexts. He is an advocate for Islam’s compatibility with secularism and capitalism. His book, *What’s Right with Islam*, describes the United States as a country whose values make it an ideal place in which to practice Islam. As is clear from this list, defenders of Abdul Rauf relied on the same variables of assessment to prove him to be an acceptable Muslim that have been repeated in my four case studies.

In mirror image of defenders’ presentation of the center as a place of tolerance, many opponents emphasized the idea that Muslims themselves are intolerant, and therefore it is not necessary to be tolerant of Muslims. In particular, a prevalent notion that Muslims are not tolerant of other religions was emphasized, for example in signs that focused on Saudi Arabia, saying, “Show true tolerance: Build Churches in Saudi Arabia” or “You can Build a Mosque at

Ground Zero when we can build a Synagogue in Mecca.” This intolerance was also more broadly associated with a notion of Islamic violence, evoked, for example, in one sign that was mass produced and displayed by many participants at a New York City demonstration against the center, which simply read “Sharia” in apparently dripping red ink, giving the impression that it had been written in blood. Another sign at the same demonstration, read “Building a Mosque at Ground Zero is Like building a memorial to Hitler at Auschwitz” evoking the notion that Islam itself was responsible for the mass deaths of 9/11, has become the new fascism, and is therefore associated with anti-Semitism. These ideas also reinforce a notion that (Christian and Jewish) Americans are tolerant, and that the problems is with the center itself, demonstrated in a sign reading, “Eat Pray Love No Problem, Just Not in this Zipcode!” or “Imam RAUF, DO NOT lecture us about ‘tolerance.’ Our JUDEO/CHRISTIAN VALUES Give You FREEDOM!” These attacks cast the planners of the cultural center as connected with, complicit in and responsible for a very broadly-conceived “Islamic” intolerance and violence, from the attacks of 9/11 to the actions of distant regimes, while Christians and Jews are broadly tolerant, but within particular reasonable limits that Muslims are overstepping.

Some sought to specifically brand the Park51 planners as intolerant by “testing” their tolerance on issues that would seem unrelated to the center, but that demonstrated the importance of discourses of sympathy to Muslims/Arabs abroad to the racialization of Muslims/Arabs in the United States. Perhaps because Abdul Rauf passed so many of the tests of what is a “moderate” Muslim, Fox News commentator Greg Gutfeld (a married, heterosexual man), announced his plan to build a gay bar next door to the center, which he said would seek to cater to “Islamic gay men” by offering non-alcoholic beverages. While Gutfeld said that he believes they have the right to build the center, he seeks “to break down barriers and reduce deadly homophobia in the

Islamic world...” (Gutfeld 2010). After some effort, Gutfeld eventually received a response from the Park51 planners, saying “You are free to open whatever you like. If you won’t consider the sensibilities of Muslims, you are not going to build dialogue” (an argument similar to some made against the center). To this, Gutfeld responded, “It’s weird being educated in tolerance by an incredibly intolerant ideology. As long as gays and women are treated so poorly, how can they teach us compassion and generosity?” Further reinforcing an association of Islam with violent homophobia, a guest on his show, Steven Crowder, suggested names for drinks to be served at the bar, saying, “hey bartender, can I get a ‘Hang Me in the Middle of the Town Square,’ please” (“Red Eye” 2010). Through these responses that end with a reference to executions like the ones in Mashhad, Abdul Rauf is transformed from someone with conservative views on homosexuality, to someone who represent an “incredibly intolerant ideology,” to someone who is complicit in executions and thereby associated with a presumably uniquely Islamic violence.

This testing of Muslims/Arabs has taken many forms, but the issues of gender equality and more recently sexual freedom have emerged as particularly useful in branding Muslims/Arabs as unacceptable. A 2003 RAND Corporation publication entitled *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources and Strategies* set forth a multi-tiered taxonomy of Islam to assist policymakers in distinguishing and identifying Islamic interpretations that deserve state support from those that do not. Arguing that, “while it is possible for groups to dissimulate concerning their attitude to violence... it is really not possible for them to distort or deny their views on key value and lifestyle issues” (Benard 2003, 6). While the RAND Corporation focused on issues of gender equality, including beliefs on women’s dress, women’s participation in public life, polygamy, and whether men may beat their wives, as this example makes clear views on homosexuality have emerged as such a decisive “value and lifestyle” issue. Views on gender

and sexuality have become a crude test for antimodern and violent leanings, declaring huge portions of Muslims as potential threats. While there are many conservative Christians who object to homosexuality on moral grounds, for Muslims, such objections are read in a very different light. In this case, any response other than wholehearted embrace of the idea of the gay bar associates Abdul Rauf and the center with a violent homophobia that many assume is prevalent in the Middle East. As such, the controversy demonstrates the multifaceted ways in which depictions of Muslims/Arabs abroad directly impinge on those here.

More broadly the planners were accused of insensitivity to the pain of the families of the victims of 9/11. While this argument was articulated by the most explicitly racist opponents of the center, it became the framework for more “liberal” opposition to the center, for example by the Anti-Defamation League (Anti-Defamation League 2010). Abraham Foxman, national director of the ADL, justified the group’s opposition to the center by reference to the families of the victims of 9/11: “Their anguish entitles them to positions that others would categorize as irrational or bigoted” (Barbaro 2010). This argument not only ignored the fact that some 9/11 families came out in support of the center, but promoted a double standard, as the ADL would never suggest that victimization, at the hands of some Jews, is a valid reason to hold anti-Semitic perspectives.⁸⁰ Many supporters of the center expressed shock that the ADL had taken this position, seeing it as contradicting the organization’s mission to “fight[] anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry, defend[] democratic ideals and protect[] civil rights for all” (Anti-Defamation League 2011). A few months later, the ADL, without any recognition of the irony, announced its

⁸⁰ Krugman (2010) asked whether those pained by Jews running businesses or writing for national publications should have their feelings respected; Fareed Zakaria asked whether Palestinian victims’ anti-Jewish sentiment should be respected (“Cordoba 'Mosque'” 2010)..

formation of the Interfaith Coalition on Mosques, in alliance with various Muslims leaders,⁸¹ to respond to, “a disturbing rise in discrimination against Muslims trying to legally build or expand their houses of worship, or mosques, across the United States.” This distinction between defending a constitutionally-protected right to building houses of worship and opposing the center as “offensive,” obfuscated how the notion of offense depended on an assumption that all Muslims were associated with, and in a sense responsible for, the 9/11 attacks.

In an apparent attempt to undercut the power of this association and of the idea of the pain of the 9/11 families, former president Bill Clinton proposed a different way to defend the center. He said, that the planners could quell fears and objections if they simply announced that the center would be dedicated to all of the Muslims who died as a result of the 9/11 attacks, thereby articulating an opposition to terrorism and bringing to fore a commonality of experience. However, in calling, yet again, for Muslims to denounce the 9/11 attacks, this line of argument further reinforced a notion that Muslims in general are associated with these attacks, and in presenting victimization as a means of articulating belonging to the nation, it reinforced the moral exceptionalism of American suffering. Also, it is easy to imagine that such a proclamation would be represented by opponents as a dedication to the Muslim attackers who died on 9/11.

Finally, the notion that this center was aimed at producing interfaith understanding and tolerance was used against the planners by those who argued that the center itself was causing intolerance. As part of this reasoning, opponents drew on a notion of the “moderate Muslim” to pressure Muslim Americans to oppose the project. For example, Sara Palin tweeted on July 18, 2010, “Peace-seeking Muslims, pls understand, Ground Zero mosque is UNNECESSARY

⁸¹ As a member of this coalition, Akbar Ahmad, former Pakistani ambassador to the United Kingdom and Chair of Islamic Studies at American University, said on Sept. 27, 2010 segment on CNN about opposition to mosque in Murfreesboro TN, “I applaud Abe Foxman and the ADL, who have come out with a committee, a committee exclusively to defend and protect mosques throughout the United States of America, and I'm privileged to be a member of that committee” (CNN 2010).

provocation; it stabs hearts. Pls reject it in interest of healing” (SarahPalinUSA 2010). Others have similarly argued that if Abdul Rauf were the moderate he says he is, he would move the center in the interest of promoting peace and reconciliation. This line of argument works by turning the defense of Muslim Americans as “moderates” who seek to promote “tolerance” into a weapon against them, delegitimizing them by casting them as the *cause*, rather than the object, of the intolerance. Muslims/Arabs are thereby made responsible for not only their own intolerance, or the intolerance of all Muslims/Arabs across the world, but also for the intolerance of non-Muslims/Arabs directed against them. Building on Rey Chow’s (2002) argument that protest is socially and economically viable vocation of the “ethnic,” we might say that promoting tolerance has become the vocation of Muslim/Arab Americans.

Because the defenders of the center presented it in terms of its exceptionalism as a space that “heals” the “divides” created by 9/11 and produces a tolerance necessary to prevent such future violence it reinforced the precise discourse of tolerance used against them. As these discourses made very clear the concept of the “moderate” Muslim however is not a status earned over a lifetime or a reference to a particular set of theological or political positions that protects individuals from association with “terrorists.” Rather it is a contextually-determined stamp of acceptability. Not only is one’s status as a moderate always under question, but the measures by which one can be deemed a moderate are highly malleable and manipulatable. “Moderate” has become a label that sticks or does not stick to a person depending on how it fits within a larger constellation of ideas about the appropriate role of Muslims in US society, at a particular moment in time. For example, when, as in the early years of the Bush administration, there is an interest in demonstrating American tolerance, more Muslims/Arabs may find themselves deemed “moderates” worthy of tolerance. However, as the need to demonstrate US tolerance to

legitimate the war on terror faded, the label of “moderate” has become much less stable. Furthermore, as a flexible label, the threat of its removal disciplines Muslim subjects, and as a highly contested category, debate over its application draws attention and activates various publics. Therefore the circulation of the question of tolerance is part and parcel of the racialization of Muslims/Arabs as intimately connected to the problem of “tolerance.” Finally, the movement of images and conceptions of Muslim intolerance is highly productive, leading to Muslims/Arabs here as being read relation to the presumed problems of intolerance in various versions of “there,” whether Saudi Arabia, Palestine/Israel, or Iran.

“Here” and “There”

Monisha Das Gupta (2006) in articulating a need for Women’s Studies to incorporate analysis of imperialism into its domestically-focused race/class/gender framework, tells a story to illustrate the problem. She describes a presentation by an Iranian academic, Farideh Fahri, who was explaining the role of widows of martyrs in creating spaces for the women’s movement in postrevolution Iran. However, the audience’s responses to Fahri’s description of restrictions placed on women as “alternately amused and revolted” (132), demonstrated an inability to seriously question their own assumptions. As Das Gupta says,

The audience, some of whom were feminists, made its point by constituting and asserting a Western, modern, secular self for which the practices of the Iranian state were shocking, ridiculous, and unintelligible until some of the effects of these practices, like an increase in women in higher education, started to resemble what that self could identify as women’s liberation. (132-133)

As this example demonstrates, without an analysis of prevalent assumptions about modernity, secularism and rationality that undergird anti-Muslim/Arab racism, the broad circulation and resonance of particular conceptions of Muslims/Arabs cannot be understood or interrupted. From a different disciplinary perspective Ibrahim Aoudé (2006) makes a similar point saying that

Ethnic Studies must be brought together with Area Studies to analyze the racialization of Arabs in the United States. He says, “In the extant political and social environment, it does not make sense at all to study ethnic and racial minorities in the way that we have tended to do in the recent past, ie, by studying them within the confines of the United States” (149). This dissertation has sought to make its own, albeit limited, contribution to addressing this academic disjuncture.

While there are many different ways in which the domestic and global frames can be analytically brought together, this dissertation has placed side by side discourses about Muslims/Arabs “here” in the United States with those about Muslims/Arabs “there” in Muslim-majority contexts, to consider how they inform each other. While US racism is usually conceived in domestic terms, it is only since the 9/11 attacks that representations of Muslims/Arabs in the United States have proliferated. However, these representations refer to and build on conceptions of Muslims/Arabs in Muslim-majority countries (and also, in other parts of the world, such as Europe) that have a longer history. One of my assumptions going into this project was that racialization of Muslims/Arabs is produced through a dynamic interaction of representations in various contexts. While I have defined my “here” and “there” narrowly, as respectively New York City and Iran, the focus on a city associated with multiculturalism, diversity and tolerance and a country associated with Islamic rule and an Islamic threat, brings to greater relief specific dynamics in this discourse that I believe are central to how Muslims/Arabs are racialized through discourses of tolerance and sympathy. Indeed, the fact that Almontaser was born in Yemen (and not Palestine) or that Abdul Rauf was born in Kuwait (and not Saudi Arabia or Iran) were of less import than that they were associated with a Muslim/Arab population racialized through associations with places like Palestine, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

One distinction between discourses about “here” as opposed to “there,” is that more ambivalent and assessment-focused discourses of tolerance are predominant in relation to Muslims/Arabs in the United States, while a more strongly delineated us/them conception is produced through discourses of sympathy in relation to Muslims/Arabs abroad. This is in part a reflection of the fact that the war on terror has been a global war with overlapping, yet different, tactics addressing the domestic and international fronts. On the domestic front, closeness creates anxiety and the need to control and police, manifested in a cultural impulse to inculcate in individuals the ability to see and measure the threat. While this threat is largely perceived as originating, at least ideologically, over “there” it is also perceived to be active and hiding over “here.” Just as Americans are constantly reminded to be the eyes of the state and to monitor their surroundings for “suspicious activities or packages” (as announcements on public transportation repeat), discourses of tolerance have offered a range of interacting variables by which the trustworthiness or threat of particular Muslims can be measured. On the international fronts, by contrast, the US military, counter-intelligence and policing forces address a threat that is perceived as much more distant and indirectly threatening to US citizens. Therefore, discourses of sympathy produce a more stark line delineating “us” from “them,” in part by redrawing this line to bring some sympathetic Muslims over to “our” side. While these discourses produce identification with some Muslims/Arabs, this is in large part in the service of creating an enemy that is all the more malevolent, where a presumed opposition to Western values leads to extensive oppression and irrational, barbaric violence. This presumed barbarity justifies a by-any-means-necessary response and civilian casualties become faceless numbers of the, at best, already-victimized Other.

More substantively, my cases point to a repetition of particular variables of interest that circulate between “here” and “there” empowering those variables with particular associations and emotions, making them manipulatable measures that racialize Muslims/Arabs as a population with a distinct distribution of threat. If we revisit the profiles of Muslims/Arabs that I first highlighted in my analysis of *New York Times* human interest stories, we see that some of these profiles became enduring types that encapsulate a particular constellation of characteristics. In particular, the image of the modernized Muslim/Arab woman has been central to portrayals of Muslims/Arabs, emphasizing the question of the status of women to perceptions of Islam. Therefore this figure has a double-function, as both a profile of a trustworthy Muslim/Arab and as herself reinforcing particular variables of assessment, especially gender equality/gender oppression, and secularism/religion. In addition to Azar Nafisi, some other examples of prominent women who articulate anger at an Islam they see as having oppressed them as women and been an oppressive force more broadly are Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Irshad Manji. While each of these women has a slightly different take on the sources of the oppression, whether it is an essential Islam (as Hirsi Ali says), a stultified form of religion in need of reform (as Manji says), or a politicized form of the religion (as Nafisi says), they all consider current conflicts as rooted in a form of religion or ideology connected with Islam. A gay rights discourse in relation to Muslims/Arabs is a descendent of this feminism, becoming another force in drawing a strong us/them distinction through an identification and sympathy with some Muslims/Arabs, while producing another variable through which Muslims/Arabs should be assessed. While Chapter 3 focused on one particular case which has been pivotal in producing particular conceptions of the status of homosexuality in Iran, this discourse circulates much more broadly, in reports of murders of gay-identified men in contemporary Iraq (Williams and Maher 2009), and through

the strategy termed by many as “pinkwashing,” which has involved the use of a discourse about the persecution of Palestinian gays and lesbians to garner broad support for Israel as the protector of liberal values and sexual freedom in the Middle East (Puar 2010). In these cases the violence produced by the US occupation of Iraq and the Israeli occupation of Palestine are often sidelined by the horror at a violence deemed to originate primarily in Islam’s position on homosexuality. This again creates a strong distinction between the presumed values of “Western” civilization and “Islamic” civilization, even in contexts of intense Western-perpetuated violence. Through these narratives, the failure to support gender equality and sexual freedom become indicators of likely support for a irrational and oppressive violence.

The figure of the traditional religious woman and the traditional religious man that initially emerged in the *New York Times* as sympathetic victims, as vociferous patriots, or as ambivalent potential threats, are repeated in Almontaser and Abul Rauf. These figures are haunted by representations of the suffering of Muslims/Arabs abroad (such as women or gays who have been made part of “us” by discourses of sympathy), and continue to be judged by their relationship more broadly to Muslims/Arabs abroad (such as Palestinians, Saudis or the Iranian government who are constituted as “them” by discourses of sympathy). Defenders of Almontaser and Abul Rauf represented these individuals in positive terms in relation to many of the repeated variables of assessment, as purveyors of tolerance and understanding, as patriots, as supporters of gender equality, and as supporters of many US political positions. However in both cases, their continued association with a Muslim/Arab population, conceived in global terms, left them vulnerable to attack. The same variables used to defend them became weapons against them. Also their cases demonstrate that while there is a certain stability to the variables of assessment, the particular question of how to measure trustworthiness or threat in relation to those variables

can shift from context to context and over time. For example, initially discourses of tolerance, especially those associated with more conservative forces such as Bush's State Department, produced the hijab-wearing Muslim woman as the authentic Muslim who ought to be protected from bigotry to demonstrate US religious freedom. However, over the years, and especially in more liberal context, this same woman has through her visible marker of religiosity become associated with a greater likelihood of being a threat. This points to one broad shift in this time period in relation to "traditional" Muslim/Arab men and women, that religiosity itself has become more and more read as a marker of threat. Therefore, there is much space for manipulation of how these variables are interpreted.

Returning more specifically to the relationship of the "here" and the "there," what do representations of "here" do for the US-led war on terror "there"? As already mentioned, articulations of US tolerance for Muslims/Arabs in the United States were initially extremely important in justifying US military incursions and its broader war on terror, as a war for freedom and against intolerance. As this imperative of the war on terror decreased, in part in the entrenchment and normalization of the war on terror, and perhaps as a result of the election to the presidency of an African American Democrat with personal associations with Muslims, the claims for US tolerance has been eroded. Rather the intolerance and untrustworthiness of Muslims/Arabs in the United States has become the basis of justification of the war on terror and the threat has become more generalized to all corners of the globe, including especially internally to the United States.

Conversely, what do representations of "there" do for the surveillance and policing of Muslims/Arabs here as a racialized Other? As my case studies demonstrate, variables of assessment are more starkly articulated in representations of "there," which build on and

reinforce a long tradition of orientalism, that sees Western civilization and Islamic civilization as essentially opposed, even if some individuals are shown as capable of crossing that divide.

Because instances of violence of repressive governments in the Middle East can be associated with a cultural and religious difference, they become clear evidence of this distinction, making these variables of assessment all the more powerful when they are moved to the US context and applied to someone like Abul Rauf. Sexist or homophobic remarks may be deemed a reasonable part of a Christian Right worldview, but in the mouth of a Muslim come to indicate complicity with irrational, barbaric violence and a potential for terrorism. This discourse has even created a space in which a non-Muslim/Arab can express opposition to homosexuality, while also distancing themselves from a barbaric, homophobic violence presumed to be particular to Islamic contexts. By contrast, Muslims/Arabs are constantly assessed and reassessed in relation to these and other variables even when they have little relevance to their claims for inclusion; at the same time, these variables circulate and accrue meanings and associations that only strengthen their power and make them available for manipulation.

Responding to Racism

In this dissertation, I have delineated the ways in which discourses of tolerance and sympathy have participated in reinforcing the contours of anti-Muslim/Arab racism that is produced through readings of “here” against “there.” As such, it raises some questions about how liberals and leftists can resist being complicit in this process of racialization, including when they offer support to Muslim/Arab individuals and communities under attack. There are a number of activist groups working directly with and organizing in Muslim/Arab communities in the United States, especially responding to the persistent targeting of these communities by the state. These groups are doing important work and have much to say about the kind of bind in which

Muslims/Arabs have been placed and the type of interventions that are needed; I certainly do not mean to speak for them or to the broader issues they address. Rather, focusing specifically on the complicity of liberal discourses of tolerance and sympathy with anti-Muslim/Arab racism, I seek to draw out some of my observations to propose ways in which to interrupt this dynamic. After a brief consideration of a relevant limitation of this dissertation, I address the particular assumptions and narratives upon which these discourses of tolerance and sympathy rest, and then consider the implications of the particular affective media milieu in which they circulate.

Although this dissertation has focused on the racialization of Muslims/Arabs, none of this analysis is meant to imply that the general dynamics of this process have been unique to this category. Indeed, population racism is not particular to Muslims/Arabs but must be understood in relation to other racialized groups, who have found themselves assessed in relation to other particular sets of variables that produce internal divisions. This distinguishing within a racialized group is part of a dynamic with which every marginalized racial/ethnic group has had to face; this dynamic is related to the common dilemma of whether to articulate ones goals in terms of integration with US ideals and norms or in terms of a more fundamental critique of how those norms and ideals are created and for what exclusionary purposes they are mobilized. Indeed, such potential for integration has never been evenly distributed throughout any racialized population, and even those who have achieved success by the dominant standards are still marked as associated with the potential risks of the racialized population. Therefore, there is much to be gained from considering how other racialized categories have been produced as populations containing particular distributions of risk and threat and how other communities of color have responded to and challenged this form of racialization.

Notwithstanding this limitation, my findings suggest that the first line of defense against this anti-Muslim/Arab racism is to challenge the particular concept of culture at the heart of cultural racism that also undergirds population racism. In particular, we need to challenge the primary causal role given to coherently-conceived cultural entities that does not take account of political and economic struggles which produce various conflicts, while also shaping cultural responses. Indeed, as many scholars have articulated it is essential to reiterate that there are no civilization, no discreet self-contained cultural entities. Tolerance cannot be a tolerance for a “culture” as a whole, rather the granting or withholding of tolerance is always in relation to specific practices that are embedded in a larger political context of contestation and conflict. Furthermore, as Mamdani (2004) demonstrates in his analysis of the roots of the 9/11 attacks, terrorism cannot be explained as an expression of culture or even more specifically, religious extremism, but rather as he says, “terrorism is born of a *political* encounter.” (61). Similarly, as Haj (2009) has said,

Today’s Islamists and their actions have to be simply explained in the context of modern politics and institutions rather than as having originated in Islam or the Wahhabiya dynasty... The point is not to deny either the zealotry or the violence of any of these movements but to try and understand their violent actions not as something fixed and inevitable but as a product of historical events and social and political forces. (19)

We must insist on focusing attention on those political encounters that produce various forms of state and non-state violence. In line with this, we must challenge the presuppositions and sensibilities of liberal secularists that create different reactions to violence read as rooted in religion or religious ideology as opposed to the more pervasive secular forms of violence. This means challenging a binary opposition between Islamism (or Islam, as the case may be) and secularism, which sees the former as leading to irrationalism and violence and the latter as a precondition for rationality and freedom. Rather, it is necessary to note the linkages and

continuities between ostensibly religious and secular violence, and to recognize the particular pervasiveness of state violence.

Relatedly, we need to recognize the intimate interrelation between representations of Muslims/Arabs here and Muslims/Arabs abroad, and that a politically-calculated attempt to divorce the former from the latter is likely to fail for a range of reasons. Therefore it becomes essential to challenge representations of Muslims/Arabs abroad that not only legitimate military aggression and other war on terror tactics against Muslims/Arabs abroad, but also continue to shape responses to Muslims/Arabs here. This task is made all the more difficult because of the significant geopolitical interest of the United States and its allies in the Middle East, including the strength of the pro-Israel lobby that has focused to a large degree on reinforcing the legitimacy of the Israeli occupation in US discourses. In this regard many Muslims and Arabs find themselves in a particularly difficult position where speaking out on such topics can lead to not only political marginalization, but also loss of employment and even state repression, while remaining silent or even supporting US positions has also often not protected them. Therefore, it may be the task of other less vulnerable groups (although no one is fully protected from association with “terrorism”) to challenge these dominant perspectives, work that certainly many academics and activists are doing. The question remains however how to disseminate this work and circulate a different set of conceptions about the sources of violence and conflict and the goals of various political struggles in the Middle East.

Furthermore, it is essential that we refuse the constant assessments of Muslims/Arabs in relation to the particular set of variables that are repeated in my case studies. The most pernicious of these, because it has tended to be the most decisive in marking someone as trustworthy or a threat, is the question of loyalty to the United States or the “interests” of the

West. Refusing this type of assessment means refusing to protect someone in terms of their compliance with these measures. There are undoubtedly negative repercussions to refusing to participate in such tests, as Almontaser found when she refused to answer questions about her views on Hamas and Hezbollah. However, participating in these forms of assessment only reinforces their legitimacy and perpetuates the circulation of these variables of interest. Furthermore, on a practical level, as the Park51 controversy demonstrates, even being a pro-Israel, procapitalism, Muslims who is promoting the United States abroad, was not enough to mark Abdul Rauf as worthy of trust. Therefore, we must ask different questions and highlight different characteristics, ones that are outside the binaries of religiosity/secularism, gender equality/gender oppression, sexual liberation/sexual repression, patriotism/disloyalty and so on. That is not to say that issues related to these topics should never be up for discussion when they are of actual direct relevance, but that the oppositional constructs need to be challenged and that Muslims/Arabs should not be judged by different standards simply because they are Muslim/Arab. At the same time, some interesting discordances might appear if the variables of assessment used to judge Muslims/Arabs are creatively turned onto those circulating anti-Muslim/Arab racism. Ultimately, rather than focusing on representing particular Muslims/Arabs as worthy of tolerance, sympathy or even respect, we need to shift focus to the cultural assumptions that makes such assessments of Muslims/Arabs seem sensible, justifiable and necessary.

Finally, none of these intellectual interventions will make a difference if we are not also aware of the media milieu in which such discourses circulate.⁸² As my cases have demonstrated the media exhibits logics and dynamics that interact with political ideology to produce different

⁸² This is not to suggest that the media is the sole or primary locus of anti-Muslim/Arab racism or that addressing such racism can only focus on the media

effects. At the moment of this writing, less than 10 miles from my desk, there are protesters camped out at Zuccotti Park, “Occupying Wall Street.” In a time when the news media had become acclimated to ignoring most movements on the left—for example, giving inordinate coverage to a Tea Party conference with 600 attendees, while virtually none for a gathering of 15,000-20,000 progressive and leftist activists at the US Social Forum in Detroit, Michigan⁸³—the spectacle of taking over a public/private park, the dogged persistence of staying weeks on end, and the repetition of this act in cities around the country and the world, finally moved the media to pay attention. Through the opening created, there has been a shift in what can be said, what can be heard and what can be felt. Certainly there have been critiques justly lodged against the movement, especially from people of color, for its own perpetuation of certain dominant notions. However, the (at-least-temporary) rupture in media discourses is undeniable and the previously unthinkable is now being spoken aloud in the mainstream media. A website called “We Are the 99 Percent” (wearethe99percent.tumblr.com), which has widely circulated on the internet through Facebook and blog posts and provided material for the media,⁸⁴ has contributed to this shift by effectively bringing to life the pervasive and devastating effects of the current economic system. Composed of photographs each uploaded by a different person, usually showing themselves holding signs describing their economic difficulties as a result of student loans, unemployment, underemployment, and lack of access to affordable health care, it now has over 2,300 posts submitted over a two month period, and is still being actively updated. The

⁸³ As Fairness in Accuracy and Reporting found, “Across 10 major national outlets in the two weeks surrounding each event, the Tea Party got 177 mentions to the Social Forum’s three. (Per participant, the Tea Party got 1,500 times as many mentions)” (Hollar 2010).

⁸⁴ For example, the website has been described in articles in the *New York Times*, *USA TODAY*, *Deseret Morning News* (Salt Lake City), *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, MN), *The Leader-Telegram* (Eau Claire, Wisconsin), *Sunday News* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania), *The Merced Sun-Star* (California), and *The Hamilton Spectator* (Ontario, Canada), along with articles by the Associated Press. Many articles draw extensively from the content of individuals’ posts.

infectiousness of these different forms of participation builds on the viral nature of the media, opening up different spaces of participation and potentials for moving different publics to action.

What do we garner from this at least initial success of the Occupy Wall Street movement and how do we draw from it to interrupt the racialization of Muslims/Arabs via the media today? While, I do not pretend to have a complete answer to this question, I would suggest that at minimum we must supplement traditional activism and organizing with media-oriented activism that is more experimental, emotionally attuned, sensitive to temporality and pacing, aesthetically attuned, and therefore more capable of garnering attention and moving publics. That said, it is absolutely essential that activists be conscious of and creatively find ways to undercut how emotions, and especially resonances with particular liberal, secular sensibilities, have been used to perpetuate anti-Muslim/Arab racism. Clearly it is a challenge to find ways to circulate images and concepts about Muslims/Arabs that are not associated with the prevalent stereotypes and variables of assessment. Perhaps instead of focusing on Muslims/Arabs the variables of assessment can be turned onto “us”; by moving the variables in ways that associate them with new objects, we can undercut their power and demonstrate the speciousness of their apparently “unique” association with Muslims/Arabs. One could even see in the upswing of explicitly racist anti-Muslim/Arab sentiment an opportunity to produce such an intervention, one that resists falling into the traps of common defenses of Muslims/Arabs as exceptional moderates and victims of right-wing racism. This type of activism has some similarities to the work of *Adbusters*, the Canadian magazine that called for the Occupy Wall Street demonstration, which has long been partaking in “culturejamming,” a media-oriented activism that seeks to transform the flow of information and the ways meanings are produced. However, their primary focus on critiquing consumer culture and capitalist exploitation at times leads them to reproduce gender

and racial stereotypes to facilitate the circulation of images and ideas. This is the inevitable limitation of any activism that has a focused lens on a narrowly-defined issue, rather than seeking to understand and the highlight linkages between different forms of oppression.

Therefore it is also essential that activists emphasize linkages between forms of oppression to avoid reproducing them, while also increasing the potential for a coming together of issues and movements in synergistic ways. As such, responses to anti-Muslim/Arab racism also need to seek out and highlight the connections across forms of oppression in the United States, in relation to different manifestations of imperialism, and in relation to different state regimes of repression. For example, when US hikers, Shane Bauer and Josh Fattal, spoke to the crowd at Occupy Oakland on Oct. 18, 2011, three weeks after their release from an Iranian prison, both emphasized that solitary confinement was the most cruel part of their experience, as Bauer said a form of “psychological torture.” They in turn drew on their experience to articulate their solidarity with thousands of California prisoners who were on hunger strike, in part opposing the extensive use of solitary confinement. Bauer also noted that every day there are approximately 20,000 people in solitary confinement in the United States (Democracy Now! 2011). These statements undercut anti-Muslim/Arab racism by emphasizing the similarities in forms of state repression in Iran and the United States, while lodging a critique of US prison tactics, tactics which are regularly used against Muslim/Arab prisoners. A media-focused activism needs to find ways of maximizing such moments—when an unpredictable confluence of events creates an opening—in order to disrupt circulating associations and dominant narratives that reinforce racism and other forms of oppression.

This study of the productive role of discourses of tolerance and sympathy in the racialization of Muslims/Arabs has demonstrated a way of relating to Muslims/Arabs in liberal

media and activist discourses that already assumes them to be a population of risk, associated with a distinct threat. As such, even many apparent defenses of or articulations of sympathy for Muslims/Arabs contribute to the production of them as a racialized population. Therefore, such discourses often function more to establish “our” commitment to liberal values, than to challenge a conception of cultural determinism that undergirds this racism or to protect Muslims/Arabs who are facing attacks. By maintaining the circulation of particular variables of interest—for example when insisting that a particular individual is a supporter of tolerance, secularism, US foreign policy, women’s rights, gay rights, and so on—these discourses contribute to an assessment-oriented disposition towards Muslims/Arabs, where every Muslim/Arab is expected to prove him or herself along these distinct lines. Furthermore, these variables can function in highly fragmented ways, manipulated in a media milieu where the goal is audience attention, activation, or response. Images, soundbites and words associated with these variables circulate quickly and function as triggers, producing audience attention, and activating various responses. While narratives about the meanings of these variables continue to be important, increasingly the variables have been distilled into simply triggers that can operate without reference to a clear or contestable meaning, becoming all the more difficult to interrupt.

While the 9/11 attacks and the war on terror produced a new awareness and visibility of Muslim/Arab Americans, there were many continuities in the conceptions and stereotypes of Muslims/Arabs from the years, decades and perhaps centuries before, demonstrating that the racialization of Muslims/Arabs has been ongoing. As such rather than a rupture, we might think of 9/11 and the war on terror as producing an intensification, one that has been supported by a media milieu that is all the more segmented, fragmented and fast. Therefore, we can expect anti-Muslim/Arab racism to persist, even if the war on terror were to come to an apparent end

(although there is no reason to believe this will happen in the foreseeable future). However, by such a point in time, the racialization of Muslims/Arabs may be so normalized through a regime of assessments distinguishing the “more” and “less” threatening, that the opportunities to interrupt it may be even fewer and farther between. For that reason, it is essential that now, in a period of continued contestation over these categories, associations, and their implications, that we find ways of disassembling and challenging anti-Muslim/Arab racism, including the racism produced through discourses of tolerance and sympathy. Furthermore, we need to recognize anti-Muslim/Arab racism as part and parcel of a US white (Judeo?)-Christian supremacy and Western imperialism perpetuated in large part by the logics of neoliberal globalization. As such, we can expect these struggles against racism to be ongoing.

Bibliography

- "06-06-10 Pamela Geller vs Imam on CNN Sunday Morning Part 1." 2010. YouTube video posted by "DoctorAvrington". June 6, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTcHUkSKZxQ> (accessed Oct. 13, 2011).
- Abbott, Charlotte. 2004. "Book Lovers of the World Unite; Will Reading Lolita in Tehran Become One of the Year's Biggest Book Club Reads?" *Publishers Weekly*, Jan. 26, 106.
- ABC. 2010. "This Week with Christiane Amanpour." Oct. 3, <http://abcnews.go.com/ThisWeek/week-transcript-holy-war-americans-fear-islam/story?id=11786745> (accessed Oct. 23, 2011).
- Abraham, Nabeel. 1994. "Anti-Arab Racism and Violence in the United States." In *The Development of Arab-American Identity*, edited by Ernest N. McCarus, 155-214. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2002. "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others." *American Anthropologist* 104 (3):783-790.
- Acocella, Joan. 2008. "Prophet Motive: The Kahlil Gibran Phenomenon." *The New Yorker*, Jan. 2. http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2008/01/07/080107crbo_books_acocella (accessed Oct. 8, 2011).
- Afary, Janet. 2009. *Sexual Politics in Modern Iran*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Ahmad, Ahmad Atif. 2009. *Islam, Modernity, Violence, and Everyday Life*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ahmad, Dohra. 2009. "Not yet Beyond the Veil: Muslim Women in American Popular Literature." *Social Text* 99 (2):105-131.
- Ahmad, Muneer. 2002. "Homeland Insecurities: Racial Violence the Day after September 11." *Social Text* 20 (3):101-115.
- Ahmed, Sara. 2004. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge.
- Alam, Faisal. 2004. "Shock and Awe Has Become Terrorize and Disgust." *Gay City News*, May 13. http://gaycitynews.com/site/index.cfm?newsid=17005520&BRD=2729&PAG=461&dept_id=568864&rfti=8 (accessed May 21, 2009).

- Alekseev, Nikolai. 2005. "An Interview with Gay Activists in Iran." International Lesbian and Gay Association, July 26.
http://www.ilga.org/news_results.asp?FileCategory=9&ZoneID=3&FileID=681
 (accessed Aug. 6, 2009).
- Ali, Tariq. 2002. *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity*. London: Verso.
- Allen, Paul. 2003. "International Politics: Through the Veil: Paul Allen Is Intrigued by a Book Club with a Difference: Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Story of Love, Books and Revolution by Azar Nafisi." *The Guardian*, Sep. 13, 13.
- American Civil Liberties Union. 1999. *Analysis of Immigration Detention Policies*. Aug. 18.
- Amireh, Amal. 2010. "Afterward." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16 (4):635-647.
- Andreatta, David. 2007a. "Brooklyn School in Space War." *New York Post*, April 10, 7.
- . 2007b. "Iraq GI Salutes City Arab School." *New York Post*, May 28, 14.
- Anti-Defamation League. 2010. "Statement on Islamic Community Center near Ground Zero." July 28. http://www.adl.org/PresRele/CvIRt_32/5820_32.htm (accessed Oct. 15, 2011).
- . 2011. "About the Anti-Defamation League." <http://www.adl.org/about.asp?s=topmenu> (accessed Oct. 15, 2011).
- Aoudé, Ibrahim. 2006. "Arab Americans and Ethnic Studies." *Journal of Asian American Studies* 9 (2):141-155.
- Asad, Talal. 2003. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- . 2007. *On Suicide Bombing*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Assaf, Aref. 2007. "Questioning Motives?" American Arab Forum, July 18.
http://www.aafusa.org/questioning_motives.htm (accessed Sept. 4, 2011).
- "At a Glance: Iran (Islamic Republic of): The Big Picture." 2005. UNICEF.
<http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/iran.html> (accessed Nov. 20, 2005).

- Bahramitash, Roksana. 2005. "The War on Terror, Feminist Orientalism and Orientalist Feminism: Case Studies of Two North American Bestsellers." *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 14 (2):221-235.
- Bahrampour, Tara. 2001. "Where Islam Meets 'Brave New World'." *New York Times*, Nov. 4, EL22.
- Bakalian, Anny P., and Mehdi Bozorgmehr. 2009. *Backlash 9/11: Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans Respond*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Balibar, Etienne. 1991. "Is There a 'Neo-Racism'?" In *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, edited by Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, 17-28. London: Verso.
- Barbaro, Michael. 2010. "Debate Heats up About Mosque near Ground Zero." *New York Times*, July 30.
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/31/nyregion/31mosque.html?_r=2&sq=adl&st=cse&scp=2&pagewanted=all (accessed Oct. 30, 2011).
- Barnard, Anne, and Alan Feuer. 2010. "Outraged, and Outrageous." *New York Times*, Oct. 10.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/10/nyregion/10geller.html?scp=1&sq=Outraged,%20And%20Outrageous&st=cse> (accessed Oct. 11 2011).
- Basu, Moni. 2003. "Books: Literature Provides a Sliver of Freedom." *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 4, 4C.
- BBC News. 2006. "Mid-East Executions Are Condemned." April 20.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4925922.stm (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- . 2007. "Tehran Killers Hanged in Public." Aug. 2.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6927434.stm (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- . 2008. "Iran to Limit Execution in Public." Jan. 30.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7217509.stm (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- Belkaoui, Janice Monti. 1978. "Images of Arabs and Israelis in the Prestige Press, 1966-74." *Journalism Quarterly* 55:732-738.
- Benard, Cheryl. 2003. *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources and Strategies*. Santa Monica, Calif: RAND Corporation.
- Bennett, Chuck, and Jana Winter. 2007. "City Principal Is 'Revolting' - Tied to 'Intifada NYC' Shirts." *New York Post*, Aug. 6, 7.

- Bergen, Peter, and Swati Pandey. 2005. "The Madrassa Myth." *New York Times*, June 14. <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/14/opinion/14bergen.html> (accessed Oct. 8, 2011).
- Bernstein, Richard. 2007. "'Madrassa' in New York? Hysteria Trumps Reason; Letter from America." *International Herald Tribune*, May 7, 2.
- Bolcer, Julie. 2010. "Gay Bar Proposed Next to Ground Zero Mosque." *The Advocate*, Aug. 10. http://www.advocate.com/News/Daily_News/2010/08/10/Gay_Bar_Proposed_Next_to_Ground_Zero_Mosque/ (accessed Oct. 13, 2011).
- Bosman, Julie. 2007a. "Head of City's Arabic School Steps Down under Pressure." *New York Times*, Aug 11, 1.
- . 2007b. "Plan to Open an Arabic School in Brooklyn Arouses Protests." *New York Times*, May 4, 1.
- . 2007c. "Under Fire, Arabic-Themed School's Principal Resigns." *New York Times*, Aug 13. <http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/08/10/under-fire-arabic-themed-school-principal-resigns/> (accessed Oct. 8, 2011).
- Bosman, Julie, and Jennifer Medina. 2007. "How a New Arabic School Roused the City's Old Rivalries." *New York Times*, Aug 15, 1.
- Bradsher, Keith. 2001. "Shock and Anger among Arab-Americans." *New York Times*, Sept. 13, A19.
- Brennen, Bonnie, and Margaret Duffy. 2003. "'If a Problem Cannot Be Solved, Enlarge It': An Ideological Critique of the 'Other' in Pearl Harbor and September 11 New York Times Coverage." *Journalism Studies* 4 (1):3.
- Brown, Wendy. 2006. *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- . 2008. "Tolerance as/in Civilizational Discourse." In *Toleration and Its Limits*, edited by Melissa S. Williams and Jeremy Waldron, 406-441. New York: New York University Press.
- Burnham, Gilbert, Riyadh Lafta, Shannon Doocy, and Les Roberts. 2006. "Mortality after the 2003 Invasion of Iraq: A Cross-Sectional Cluster Sample Survey." *The Lancet* 368 (9545):1421-1428. doi: 10.1016/s0140-6736(06)69491-9.

- Burston, Bradley. 2007. "Let Arabs Tell the Truth." *Haaretz*, Aug. 21.
<http://www.haaretz.com/news/let-arabs-tell-the-truth-1.227895> (accessed Oct. 8, 2011).
- Butz, David, and Kenneth I MacDonald. 2001. "Serving Sahibs with Pony and Pen: The Discursive Uses of 'Native Authenticity'." *Society and Space* 19:179-201.
- Byrne, Richard. 2006. "A Collision of Prose and Politics." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 53 (08):A12.
- Cainkar, Louise. 2002. "No Longer Invisible: Arab and Muslim Exclusion after September 11." *Middle East Report* 224:22-29.
- . 2004. "The Impact of September 11 Attacks on Arab and Muslim Communities in the United States." In *The Maze of Fear: Security and Migration after 9/11*, edited by John Tirman, 215-239. New York: New Press.
- . 2008. "Thinking Outside the Box: Arabs and Race in the United States." In *Race and Arab Americans before and after 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*, edited by Amaney Jamal and Nadine Naber, 46-80. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- . 2009. *Homeland Insecurity: The Arab American and Muslim American Experience after 9/11*. 1st ed. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Carey, James W. 2003. "American Journalism on, before, and after September 11." In *Journalism after September 11*, edited by Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan, 71-90. London: Routledge.
- Casanova, José. 1994. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Center for Human Rights and Global Justice. 2011. *Targeted and Entrapped: Manufacturing the 'Homegrown Threat' in the United States*. New York.
- Chandler, Doug, and Larry Cohler-Esses. 2007. "Tables Turn on Arab School Critics." *New York Jewish Week*, Aug. 24, 10-12.
- Chicago Tribune. 2005. "Nobel Laureate Condemns Hanging of 2 Teenage Boys." July 24.
http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2005-07-24/news/0507240331_1_shirin-ebadi-raping-teenage-boys (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- Chow, Rey. 2002. *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Chronicle of Higher Education. 2004. "What They're Reading on College Campuses." April 23.
- Clines, Francis X. 2001. "No Visible Enemy, and No Easy Answers." *New York Times*, Sept. 13, A19.
- Clough, Patricia Ticineto. 2003. "Affect and Control: Rethinking the Body 'Beyond Sex and Gender'." *Feminist Theory* 4 (3):359-364. doi: 10.1177/14647001030043010.
- . 2008. "The Affective Turn: Political Economy, Biomedica and Bodies." *Theory, Culture and Society* 25 (1):1-22.
- . 2009. "The New Empiricism: Affect and Sociological Method." *European Journal of Social Theory* 12 (1):43-61.
- Clough, Patricia Ticineto, and Craig Willse. 2010. "Gendered Security/National Security: Political Branding and Population Racism." *Social Text* 28 (4):45-63. doi: 10.1215/01642472-2010-010.
- . 2011. *Beyond Biopolitics: Essays on the Governance of Life and Death*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- CNN. 2007a. "CNN Debunks False Report About Obama." Jan. 22. http://articles.cnn.com/2007-01-22/politics/obama.madrassa_1_islamic-school-madrassa-muslim-school?_s=PM:POLITICS (accessed Oct. 8, 2011).
- . 2007b. "CNN Live Event/Special 8:00 PM EST." Sept. 4.
- . 2007c. "CNN Newsroom 2:00 PM EST." Sept. 4.
- . 2007d. "CNN Newsroom 3:00 PM EST." Sept. 4.
- . 2007e. "Glenn Beck 7:00 PM EST." Aug. 15.
- . 2010. "Anderson Cooper 360 Degrees 11:00 PM EST." Sept. 27.
- Cohler-Esses, Larry. 2007. "Jewish Shootout over Arab School." *New York Jewish Week*, Aug. 17, 1.
- Collet, Tanja. 2009. "Civilization and Civilized in Post-9/11 US Presidential Speeches." *Discourse & Society* 20:455-475.
- Colon, Alicia. 2007. "Madrassa Plan Is Monstrosity." *New York Sun*, May 1, 2.

- Communities in Support of the Khalil Gibran International Academy. 2007. "cisKGIA Statement: August 15, 2007." AWAAM: Arab Women Active in the Arts and Media, Aug. 15. <http://awaam.org/index.php?name=ciskgiastatement1> (accessed Sept. 11, 2011).
- "Cordoba 'Mosque': Fareed Zakaria Responds to ADL." 2010. YouTube video from an episode of *Fareed Zakaria GPS* posted by "amibidhrohi2006" Aug. 7, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0uuemEJDGU&feature=player_embedded (accessed Oct. 13, 2011).
- "Cultural Conversations: An Innovative Approach to Cultural Dialogue for Greater Insight and Influence in Policymaking." 2011. The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. <http://www.sais-jhu.edu/centers/fpi/culturalconversations/index.htm> (accessed Sept. 20, 2011).
- Curiel, Jonathan. 2004. "Iranian Rebel Made Room for 'Lolita'." *The San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb. 2, D1.
- Cusac, Anne-Marie. 2004. "Abu Ghraib, USA." *The Progressive*, July 19.
- Cvetkovich, Ann. 2007. "Public Feelings." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 106 (3):459-468.
- Dabashi, Hamid. 2011. *Brown Skin, White Masks*. London: Pluto.
- Daily News. 2007. "Culture in the Classroom." May 13, 30.
- Daniel, AnneMarie A. 1995. *U.S. Media Coverage of the Intifada and American Public Opinion*. Edited by Yahya R. Kamalipour. The U.S. Media and the Middle East: Image and Perception. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Das Gupta, Monisha. 2006. "Bewildered? Women's Studies and the War on Terror." In *Interrogating Imperialism: Conversations on Gender, Race, and War*, edited by Robin L. Riley and Naeem Inayatullah, 129-153. Gordonsville, VA: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Davis, Nicole. 2001. "The Slippery Slope of Racial Profiling." *ColorLines*, Dec. 15. http://colorlines.com/archives/2001/12/the_slippery_slope_of_racial_profiling.html (accessed Oct. 15, 2011).
- De Genova, Nicholas. 2007. "The Production of Culprits: From Deportability to Detainability in the Aftermath of "Homeland Security." *Citizenship Studies* 11 (5):421-448.
- Democracy Now! 2008. "Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Iran-Iraq Relations, Iran's Persecution of Gays and the Future of Israel-Palestine." September 26.

- http://www.democracynow.org/2008/9/26/iranian_president_mahmoud_ahmedinejad_on_iran (accessed Aug. 6, 2009).
- . 2011. "Freed U.S. Hikers Speak at Occupy Oakland, Express Support for California Prisoners on Hunger Strike." Oct. 18.
http://www.democracynow.org/2011/10/18/freed_us_hikers_speak_at_occupy (accessed Oct. 18, 2011).
- Detroit Arab American Study Team. 2009. *Citizenship and Crisis: Arab Detroit after 9/11*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- "The Dialogue Project: Who We Are." 2005. Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. <http://dialogueproject.sais-jhu.edu/index.php?PageName=aboutDP> (accessed Aug. 6, 2005).
- Dickter, Adam. 2007. "Hebrew, Arabic Schools Seen Stretching Boundaries." *New York Jewish Week*, Aug. 3, 11.
- DiMaggio, Anthony. 2007. "The Right-Wing's War on the Gibran Academy: Arabic as a Terrorist Language." *CounterPunch*, August 30.
<http://www.counterpunch.org/2007/08/30/arabic-as-a-terrorist-language/>.
- "Discouraged." 2008. The Mahablog, April 28.
<http://www.mahablog.com/2008/04/28/discouraged/> (accessed Sept. 3, 2011).
- Donadey, Anne, and Huma Ahmed-Ghosh. 2008. "Why Americans Love Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33 (3).
- Drew, Christopher, and Judith Miller. 2001. "Though Not Linked to Terrorism, Many Detainees Cannot Go Home." *New York Times*, Feb. 18, A1.
- Eck, Diana L. 2001. *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Now Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Economist. 2005. "Rudolph Giuliani: America's Mayor." July 28.
<http://www.economist.com/node/4221390> (accessed Oct. 4, 2011).
- Egan, Timothy. 2001. "Tough but Hopeful Weeks for the Muslims of Laramie." *New York Times*, Oct. 18, B1.
- Eisenhardt, Kathleen M. 1989. "Building Theories from Case Study Research." *The Academy of Management Review* 14 (4):532-550.

- Eisenstein, Hester. 2009. *Feminism Seduced: How Global Elites Use Women's Labor and Ideas to Exploit the World*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.
- Elliott, Andrea. 2008a. "Critics Cost Muslim Educator Her Dream School." *New York Times*, April 28. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/28/nyregion/28school.html> (accessed Sept. 4, 2011).
- . 2008b. "Her Dream, Branded as a Threat." *New York Times*, April 28, A1.
- Elliott, Justin. 2011. "Arabic for Right-Wingers." *Salon*, Jan. 16. http://images.salon.com/news/politics/war_room/index.html?story=/politics/war_room/2011/06/16/right_wing_arabic_glossary (accessed Oct. 8, 2011).
- Emerson, Gloria. 2003. "The Other Iran." *The Nation*, June 16, 11.
- "Emory Student's Opera Examines Gay Hangings in Iran." 2007. *Southern Voice*, April 6. <http://www.sovo.com/2007/4-6/localife/feature/6764.cfm> (accessed May 20, 2009).
- Esfandiari, Haleh. 1997. *Reconstructed Lives: Women and Iran's Islamic Revolution*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Esposito, John L. 1984. *Islam and Politics*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- "Events." 2011. St. Catherine University. <http://www.stkate.edu/schools/shas/year-of-liberal-arts/events.php> (accessed Oct. 15, 2011).
- Faisal, Antoine. 2007. "Zionist Organization Supports Gibran School Principal: ADL Support Could Affect School's Success!" *Aramica*, June 29-July 11, 4-6. <http://www.viewda.com/webpaper/aramica/> (accessed Sept. 15, 2011).
- Fathi, Nazila. 2005. "Rights Advocates Condemn Iran for Executing 2 Young Men." *New York Times*, July 29. http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/29/international/middleeast/29hangings.html?_r=1&scp=5&sq=asgari&st=cse&oref=slogin (accessed Aug. 6, 2009).
- . 2007. "Despite Denials, Gays Insist They Exist, If Quietly, in Iran." *New York Times*, Sept. 30. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/30/world/middleeast/30gays.html?ex=1348804800&en=db53eb2fbd101f01&ei=5124&partner=permalink&exprod=permalink> (accessed Aug. 6, 2009).

- Fears, Darryl. 2007. "U.S. Attorney Calls Noose Display 'Hate Crime,' Explains Lack of Charges." October 17. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/story/2007/10/16/ST2007101602369.html> (accessed May 8, 2009).
- Feely, Mary. 2004. "Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books, Azar Nafisi, Fourth Estate." *The Irish Times*, Feb. 21, 62.
- Feldman, Noah. 2007. "Universal Faith." *New York Times Magazine*, Aug 26, 13.
- Filkins, Dexter. 2001. "Afghans at Queens Mosque Split over Bin Laden." *New York Times*, Sept. 19, B10.
- Finn, Robin. 2001. "A Daughter of Islam, and an Enemy of Terror." *New York Times*, Oct. 25, D2.
- Fitzgibbon, Wendy D. 2007. "Institutional Racism, Pre-Emptive Criminalisation and Risk Analysis." *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice* 46 (2):128-144.
- Forbes, Simon. 2006. "Mashhad: Place of Martyrdom." OutRage! www.irqr.net/English/files/MASHHAD%20PLACE_OF_MARTYRDOM.pdf (accessed).
- Foucault, Michel. 2007. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977-78*. Edited by Michel Senellart, François Ewald and Alessandro Fontana. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, Michel. 1991. "Governmentality." In *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, edited by Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fountain, John. 2001. "Sadness and Fear as a Group Feels Doubly at Risk." *New York Times*, Oct. 5, B9.
- Fountain, John W. 2001a. "Carrying 27 Years of Civic Passion to the Mayor's Office." *New York Times*, Nov. 17, A11.
- . 2001b. "Tearful Firefighters Mourn for Brothers." *New York Times*, Sept. 13, A19.
- Fox News Network. 2007. "Hannity & Colmes 9:11 PM EST: Interview with John Liu." Sept. 26.
- Fredrickson, George M. 2002. *Racism: A Short History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Freedman, Samuel G. 2007. "Critics Ignored Record of a Muslim Principal." *New York Times*, Aug 29, B7.
- Frontline. 2011. "Analysis: Madrassas." PBS.
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saudi/analyses/madrassas.html> (accessed Oct. 8, 2011).
- Frost, Mary. 2007a. "Learning Curves: Proposed Brooklyn Arabic School Becomes Target of Media Campaign." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 9.
http://www.brooklyneagle.com/categories/category.php?category_id=27&id=11854 (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- . 2007b. "Park Slope School's Parents Protest Incoming Arab-Themed Upper School " *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 20.
http://www.brooklyneagle.com/categories/category.php?category_id=27&id=11854 (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- . 2007c. "Principal of Controversial Arabic-Themed Brooklyn School Resigns." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Aug. 10.
http://www.brooklyneagle.com/categories/category.php?category_id=27&id=14771 (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- Garber, Marjorie. 2004. "Compassion." In *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of an Emotion*, edited by Lauren Gail Berlant, 15-28. New York: Routledge.
- Garland, Sarah. 2007a. "Arab School to Face Scrutiny at Emergency Parent Meeting." *New York Sun*, May 14, 5. <http://www.nysun.com/new-york/arab-school-to-face-scrutiny-at-emergency-parent/54400/> (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- . 2007b. "New Brooklyn School to Offer Middle East Studies." *New York Sun*, March 7, 4.
- . 2007c. "'Screaming and Crying' Greet Arab School Plan." *New York Sun*, March 14, 2.
- Gay City News. 2004. "Pentagon Uses Gay Sex as Tool of Humiliation: Military Culture of Homophobia at Heart of Scandal." May 13.
http://gaycitynews.com/site/index.cfm?newsid=17005515&BRD=2729&PAG=461&dept_id=568864&rfti=8 (accessed May 21, 2009).
- Geberer, Raanan. 2007a. "Brooklyn Arabic School: Not 'Jew vs. Arab'." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 31.
http://www.brooklyneagle.com/categories/category.php?category_id=10&id=12879 (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).

- . 2007b. "Critics of Khalil Gibran School Unfairly Target Islam, Arabic Culture." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 14.
http://www.brooklyneagle.com/categories/category.php?category_id=10&id=12879
 (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- Gentzkow, Matthew, and Jesse M. Shapiro. 2010. *Ideological Segregation Online and Offline*. April 12: The University of Chicago, Booth School of Business: Initiative on Global Markets.
- George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Bcsia Studies in International Security. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Gerges, Fawaz A. 1997. "Islam and Muslims in the Mind of America: Influences on the Making of U.S. Policy." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 26 (2):68-80.
- Ghaemi, Hadi, and Michael Bochenek. 2005. "Human Rights Watch Letter to Iran's Head of Judiciary." Human Rights Watch, July 27.
<http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2005/07/26/human-rights-watch-letter-irans-head-judiciary>
 (accessed Aug. 6, 2009).
- Ghareeb, Edmund, and American-Arab Affairs Council. 1983. *Split Vision: The Portrayal of Arabs in the American Media*. Rev. and expanded ed. Washington, DC: American-Arab Affairs Council.
- Gibbs, Anna. 2002. "Disaffected." *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 16 (3):335-341. doi: 10.1080/1030431022000018690.
- Goodman, Ellen. 2003. "Will U.S. Remember the Ladies?" *The Boston Globe*, Sep. 7, D11.
- Goodstein, Laurie. 2001a. "Military Clerics Balance Arms and Allah." *New York Times*, Oct. 7, B1.
- . 2001b. "Muslims Nurture Sense of Self on Campus." *New York Times*, Nov. 3, B1.
- . 2001c. "Muslims See Acceptance and Scrutiny as Holy Month Nears." *New York Times*, Nov. 16, B1.
- . 2001d. "Stereotyping Rankles Silent, Secular Majority of American Muslims." *New York Times*, Dec. 23, A20.
- . 2001e. "Terrorist from Central Casting Has Hard Lessons to Teach." *New York Times*, Dec. 12, B8.

- Green, Elizabeth. 2007. "Arab School Principal Says She Regrets Intifada Remarks." *New York Sun*, Aug. 7, 3.
- Green, Elizabeth Weiss. 2007. "Klein Relieves Some Critics' Concerns About Arab School." *New York Sun*, May 16. <http://www.nysun.com/new-york/klein-relieves-some-critics-concerns-about-arab/54557/> (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- Gualtieri, Sarah M. A. 2008. "Strange Fruit? Syrian Immigrants, Extralegal Violence, and Racial Formation in the United States." In *Race and Arab Americans before and after 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*, edited by Amaney A. Jamal and Nadine Christine Naber, 147-169. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Guppy, Shusha. 2003. "Revolutionary Reading: A Group of Iranian Women Reminds Shusha Guppy of the Universality and Timelessness of Literature." *Financial Times*, Aug. 2, 33.
- Gutfeld, Greg. 2010. "Monday's Gregalogue: My New Gay Bar." Oct. 27. <http://www.dailygut.com/?i=4696> (accessed Oct. 15, 2011).
- Haj, Samira. 2009. *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Haller, Vera. 2001. "City Mourns at Stadium Prayer Service." *Newsday*, Sept. 23. <http://web.archive.org/web/20061109013723/http://www.interfaithalliance.org/site/apps/nl/content2.asp?c=8dJIIWMCE&b=172143&ct=147383> (accessed Oct. 4, 2011).
- "Haram Iran." 2009. <http://www.haramiran.com/> (accessed May 21, 2009).
- Harden, Blaine. 2001a. "A Day of Brisk Sales of Pistols and Ammunition." *New York Times*, Sept. 13, A19.
- . 2001b. "A Network for Arabs Presents Programming with Attitude." *New York Times*, Oct. 15, B10.
- Hardt, Michael. 1995. "The Withering of Civil Society." *Social Text* 45 (Winter):27-44.
- Harris, Samela. 2004. "Reading Lolita in Tehran." *The Advertiser*, Apr. 3, S13.
- Hashemi, Nader. 2010. "The Multiple Histories of Secularism: Muslim Societies in Comparison." *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 36 (3-4):325-338.
- Hay, Simon. 2008. "Why Read Reading Lolita? Teaching Critical Thinking in a Culture of Choice." *Pedagogy* 8 (1):5-24.

- Hewett, Heather. 2003. "A Woman Passionately Defends Books in a Repressed Land." *The Seattle Times*, Apr. 18, H40.
- Hirschfield, Robert. 2007. "A Principal Ousted for What She Didn't Say: A Post-9/11 Story." *National Catholic Reporter* 43 (36):15-15.
- Hirschkind, Charles, and Saba Mahmood. 2002. "Feminism, the Taliban, and Politics of Counter-Insurgency." *Anthropological Quarterly*. 75 (2):339-354.
- Hochberg, Gil Z., Haneen Maikey, Rima, and Samira Saraya. 2010. "No Pride in Occupation: A Roundtable Discussion." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16 (4):599-610. doi: 10.1215/10642684-2010-006.
- Hollar, Julie. 2010. "Tea Party vs. U.S. Social Forum: Mass Movements That Matter for Media—Round 2." *Extra!*, Sept. <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=4143> (accessed Oct. 15, 2011).
- Hook, Fiona. 2003. "Words of Freedom." *The Times*, Aug. 16, 18.
- Howard, Deborah. 2007. "KGIA Design Team Member Speaks Out." AWAAM: Arab Women Active in the Arts and Media. http://www.awaam.org/index.php?name=pagetool_news&news_id=7 (accessed Aug. 23).
- Howell, S. and Shryock, A. 2003. "Cracking Down on Diaspora: Arab Detroit and America's 'War on Terror'." *Anthropological Quarterly*. 76 (3):443-462.
- "Hudson Height, NY, NY, Book Club: Discuss Reading Lolita in Tehran." 2011. Meetup.com. <http://www.meetup.com/Hudson-Heights-Kick-Ass-Book-Club/events/20179361/> (accessed Sept. 15, 2011).
- Hudson, Rex A. 1999. *The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?* edited by Marilyn Majeska Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress.
- Hunt, Krista. 2006. "'Embedded Feminism' and the War on Terror." In *(En)Gendering the War on Terror: War Stories and Camouflaged Politics*, edited by Krista Hunt and Kim Ryzgiel, 51-72. Aldershot, England: Ashgate.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72 (3):22-49.
- Hurwitt, Sam. 2005. "Reading Memoirs About Tehran: A Steady Stream of New Chronicles by Iranian Women Offer Glimpses of the Islamic Republic." *East Bay Express*, Feb. 23.

<http://www.eastbayexpress.com/ebx/reading-memoirs-about-tehran/Content?oid=1076848> (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).

Inglehart, Ronald, and Pippa Norris. 2003. "The True Clash of Civilizations." *Foreign Policy* (135):63-70.

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. 2009. "Iran: Stop Executions for Sodomy Charges." Nov. 25. <http://www.iglhrc.org/cgi-bin/iowa/article/takeaction/globalactionalerts/1028.html> (accessed Oct. 2, 2011).

"Iran, Islamic Rep. Of: The Human Development Index: Going Beyond Income." 2005. United Nations Development Programme. http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_IRN.html (accessed Aug. 12, 2005).

Iranian.com. 2002a. "Photo of the Day (Payam Amini)." <http://www.iranian.com/PhotoDay/2002/September/hang2.html> (accessed Oct. 13, 2011).

———. 2002b. "Photo of the Day (Unidentified Boy Cries)." <http://www.iranian.com/PhotoDay/2002/September/hang55.html> (accessed Oct. 13, 2011).

Ireland, Doug. 2005a. "Hangings Awaken Long-Overdue Outrage " *Gay City News*, July 28. http://gaycitynews.com/site/index.cfm?newsid=17007131&BRD=2729&PAG=461&dept_id=568864&rfti=8 (accessed May 21, 2009).

———. 2005b. "Two More Executions Planned in Iran." *Gay City News*, Aug. 18. http://gaycitynews.com/site/index.cfm?newsid=17007221&BRD=2729&PAG=461&dept_id=568864&rfti=8 (accessed May 8, 2009).

———. 2006a. "Gay and Underground in Iran: Activist Faces Risk That 'No Physical Sign of Me Will Remain'." *Gay City News*, July 6. http://gaycitynews.com/site/index.cfm?newsid=17334235&BRD=2729&PAG=461&dept_id=568864&rfti=8 (accessed May 21, 2009).

———. 2006b. "Global Protests July 19 to Commemorate Hanging of 2 Iranian Teens (Updated)." July 28. http://direland.typepad.com/direland/2006/06/global_protests.html (accessed May 20, 2009).

———. 2006c. "Iran: Man Hanged for 'Sodomy' " *Gay City News*, Nov. 21. http://gaycitynews.com/site/index.cfm?newsid=17498299&BRD=2729&PAG=461&dept_id=568864&rfti=8 (accessed May 8, 2009).

- . 2006d. "Iran: Setting the Record Straight " *Gay City News* Aug. 3.
http://gaycitynews.com/site/index.cfm?newsid=17334368&BRD=2729&PAG=461&dept_id=568864&rfi=8 (accessed May 8, 2009).
- Irvine, Janice M. 2008. "Transient Feelings: Sex Panics and the Politics of Emotions." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 14 (1):1-40. doi: 10.1215/10642684-2007-021.
- Jamal, Amaney. 2008. "Civil Liberties and the Otherization of Arab and Muslim Americans." In *Race and Arab Americans before and after 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*, edited by Amaney A. Jamal and Nadine Christine Naber, 114-130. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- . 2009. "The Racialization of Muslim Americans." In *Muslims in Western Politics*, edited by Abdulkader H. Sinno, 200-215. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Jamal, Amaney A., and Nadine Christine Naber. 2008. *Race and Arab Americans before and after 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects, Arab American Writing*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Janofsky, Michael. 2001. "People in Need, and the Gift of Blood." *New York Times*, Sept. 13, A19.
- Jehl, Douglas. 2001. "A Navy Man and Muslim Reconciles Two Worlds." *New York Times*, Oct. 10, B6.
- Jones, Vanessa E. 2004. "A Life in Graphic Detail: Iranian Exile's Memoirs Draw Readers into Her Experience." *The Boston Globe*, Oct. 4, B8.
- Joseph, Suad, and Benjamin D'Harlingue. 2008. "Arab Americans and Muslim Americans in the New York Times, before and after 9/11." In *Race and Arab Americans before and after 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*, edited by Amaney A. Jamal and Nadine Christine Naber, 229-275. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Kamalipour, Yahya R. 1995. *The U.S. Media and the Middle East: Image and Perception, Contributions to the Study of Mass Media and Communications*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Kant, Immanuel, and Mary J. Gregor. 1999. *Practical Philosophy*. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Keen, Suzanne. 2007. *Empathy and the Novel*. New York: Oxford U Press.

- Kempe, Frederick. 2005. "Lewis's 'Liberation' Doctrine for Mideast Faces New Tests." *Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 13, A11.
- Kennicott, Philip. 2006. "Pictures from an Execution Come into Focus." *Washington Post*, July 20, C01. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/19/AR2006071902061.html> (accessed Aug. 6, 2009).
- "Khalil Gibran Principal Almontaser Undergoes PR Makover Switches Clothes and Headcovering in Attempt to Disguise Islamist Agenda." 2007. *Militant Islam Monitor*, April 16. <http://www.militantislammonitor.org/article/id/2823> (accessed Oct. 14, 2011).
- Kilborn, Peter. 2001. "Fellow Americans Opening Hearts, Wallets and Veins." *New York Times*, Sept. 13, A19.
- Kilgannon, Corey. 2001. "Muslims in Gray." *New York Times*, Nov. 25, WE1.
- Kim, Richard. 2005. "Witnesses to an Execution." *The Nation*, August 15. <http://www.thenation.com/article/witnesses-execution> (accessed Oct. 14, 2011).
- Kitch, Carolyn L. 2003. "'Mourning in America': Ritual, Redemption, and Recovery in News Narratives after September 11." *Journalism Studies* 4 (2):213-224.
- Klein, Naomi. 2005. "'Never Before!': Our Amnesiac Torture Debate." *The Nation*, Dec. 26, 11-12.
- Krugman, Paul. 2004. "Lifting the Shroud." *New York Times*, March 23. <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/23/opinion/23KRUG.html> (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- . 2010. "Bad for the Jews." *New York Times*, July 30. <http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/07/30/bad-for-the-jews/> (accessed Oct. 15, 2011).
- Larson, Susan. 2003. "Books About Books; War of Words and Eyre Apparent." *Times-Picayune*, Mar. 30, 6.
- Lazreg, Marnia. 2009. *Questioning the Veil: Open Letters to Muslim Women*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lee, Felicia. 2001. "Trying to Soothe the Fears Hiding Behind the Veil." *New York Times*, Sept. 23, CY1.
- Levinson, Nan. 2003. "Literature, as Survival." *Women's Review of Books*, July, 24.

- Levy, Joel J. 2007. "ADL Letter to the New York Sun." Anti-Defamation League.
http://www.adl.org/media_watch/newspapers/20070507-NYSun.htm (accessed Sept. 4, 2011).
- Lewin, Tamar, and Gustav Niebuhr. 2001. "Attacks and Harassment Continue on Middle Eastern People and Mosques." *New York Times*, Sept. 18, B1.
- Lewis, Bernard. 2002. *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Light, Steve. 2007. "New York City: Right-Wing Zionist Witch-Hunt Ousts Principal of New Arabic School." *World Socialist Web Site*, Sept. 1.
<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2007/sep2007/kgia-s01.shtml> (accessed Oct. 8, 2011).
- Linenthal, Edward Tabor. 2001. *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Liptak, Adam. 2005. "Serving Life, with No Chance of Redemption." *New York Times*, October 5, 1.
- Little, Douglas. 2008. *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945*. 3rd ed. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Locke, John, and Ian Shapiro. 2003. *Two Treatises of Government: And a Letter Concerning Toleration*. Rethinking the Western Tradition. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Loffreda, Beth. 2000. *Losing Matt Shepard: Life and Politics in the Aftermath of Anti-Gay Murder*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Long, Scott. 2006a. "Debating Iran." *Gay City News*, July 27.
http://gaycitynews.com/site/index.cfm?newsid=17334325&BRD=2729&PAG=461&dept_id=568864&rfi=8 (accessed May 21, 2009).
- . 2006b. "Human Rights Watch Memo on Iran 'Gay Killing'." Aug. 15.
<http://karmalised.com/?p=1569> (accessed May 21, 2009).
- . 2009. "Unbearable Witness: How Western Activists (Mis)Recognize Sexuality in Iran." *Contemporary Politics* 15 (1):119-136.
- Love, Erik. 2009. "Confronting Islamophobia in the United States: Framing Civil Rights Activism among Middle Eastern Americans." *Patterns of Prejudice* 43 (3-4):401-425.

- Lyons, Stephen J. 2003. "'Lolita in Tehran' Lifts a Veil on Oppression." *USA TODAY*, May 8, 5D.
- Mahdavi, Pardis. 2009. *Passionate Uprisings: Iran's Sexual Revolution*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Mahmood, Saba. 2008. "Is Critique Secular? A Symposium at Uc Berkeley." *Public Culture* 20 (3):447-452.
- Multi-Douglas, Fedwa. 2002. "Let Them Profile Me." *New York Times*, Feb. 6, A21.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. 2004. *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Mass, Lawrence D. 2006. "I Was Afraid to Speak out About Iran." *Gay City News*, August 23. http://gaycitynews.com/site/index.cfm?newsid=17099637&BRD=2729&PAG=461&dept_id=568864&rfti=8 (accessed May 7, 2009).
- Massad, Joseph A. 2007. *Desiring Arabs*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Massombagi, Asghar. 2005. "Being Lolita in Tehran: Azar Nafisi's Observations of Post-Revolution Iran from Olympian Heights." *Iranian.com*, June 30. <http://www.iranian.com/AsgharMassombagi/2005/June/Lolita/index.html> (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- Mausse, Marcel. 2006. "Anti-Muslim Sentiments and Mobilization in the Netherlands. Discourse, Policies and Violence." In *Securitization and Religious Divides in Europe: Muslims in Western Europe after 9/11: Why the Term Islamophobia Is More a Predicament Than an Explanation*, edited by Jocelyne Cesar, 100-142. Submission to the Changing Landscape of Citizenship and Security, 6th PCRD of European Commission.
- McAlister, Melani. 2005. *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000*. American Crossroads. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Mechling, Lauren. 2008. "Literary Noisemakers: In Shift, Publishers Issue Heavyweights for the New Year." *Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 20, W6. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122972564772222645.html> (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- Medina, Jennifer. 2007a. "Arabic School Ex-Prinipal Fights to Get Her Job Back." *New York Times*, Oct. 17, 3.
- . 2007b. "Manhattan: Principal of Arabic School Sues City." *New York Times*, Nov. 20, 5.

- . 2007c. "Principal of Arabic School Says She Was Forced Out." *New York Times*, Oct. 16. <http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/10/16/principal-of-citys-arabic-school-says-she-was-forced-out/> (accessed Oct. 8, 2011).
- . 2007d. "Protesters Seek Leader's Return to Arabic School." *New York Times*, Aug 21, 3.
- Meenan, Mick. 2004. "Torture in Iraq from Homophobia at Home " *Gay City News*, May 6. http://gaycitynews.com/site/index.cfm?newsid=17005479&BRD=2729&PAG=461&dept_id=568864&rfti=8 (accessed May 21, 2009).
- Mendus, Susan. 1999. *The Politics of Toleration in Modern Life*. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press.
- Michelak, Lawrence. 1988. *Cruel and Unusual: Negative Images of Arabs in American Popular Culture*. Washington, DC: ADC Research Institute.
- Middle East Forum. no date. "About the Middle East Forum." <http://www.meforum.org/about.php> (accessed Aug. 31, 2011).
- Mill, John Stuart, and Currin V. Shields. 1997. *On Liberty*. The Library of Liberal Arts. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Miller, Rebecca. 2005. "A Year of the Books Most Borrowed in U.S. Libraries." *LibraryJournal.com*, Dec. 15. <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6289897.html> (accessed Sept. 20, 2011).
- Mir-Hosseini, Ziba. 1996. "Stretching the Limits: A Feminist Reading of the *Shari'a* in Post-Khomeini Iran." In *Feminism and Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives*, edited by Mai Yamani, 285-319. New York: New York University Press.
- Moallem, Mino. 2005. *Between Warrior Brother and Veiled Sister: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Politics of Patriarchy in Iran*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Moghadam, Valentine M. 2002. "Islamic Feminism and Its Discontents: Toward a Resolution of the Debate." *Signs* 27 (4):1135-1171.
- . 2003. *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publisher.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1991. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." In *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, edited by Chandra

- Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres, 51-80. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- "Monday, April 28, 2008." 2008. Through the Looking Glass: A Chronicle of the Absurd, in Politics and Life, April 28. <http://thelookingglass.blogspot.com/2008/04/today-in-new-york-times-story-of-debbie.html> (accessed Sept. 3, 2011).
- Moore, Kathleen. 2002. "A Part of US or Apart from US?: Post-September 11 Attitudes toward Muslims and Civil Liberties." *Middle East Report* (224):32-35.
- "Morristown Book Club: 'Reading Lolita in Tehran'." 2011. Meetup.com. <http://www.meetup.com/Morristown-Book-Club/> (accessed Sept. 15, 2011).
- Naber, Nadine. 2000. "Ambiguous Insiders, an Investigation of Arab American Invisibility." *Journal of Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23 (1):37-61.
- . 2008. "Look, Mohammed the Terrorist Is Coming!" In *Race and Arab Americans before and after 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*, edited by Amaney A. Jamal and Nadine Christine Naber, 276-304. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Nacos, Brigitte Lebens, and Oscar Torres-Reyna. 2007. *Fueling Our Fears: Stereotyping, Media Coverage, and Public Opinion of Muslim Americans*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Nafisi, Azar. 2003a. *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*. New York: Random House.
- . 2003b. "They the People: Our Abandoned Muslim Allies." *New Republic*, March 3, 19.
- . 2004. "Introductory Essay." <http://dialogueproject.sais-jhu.edu/> (accessed Nov. 21, 2004).
- . 2005. "Women, Culture, Human Rights: The Case of Iran". Paper read at New York Democracy Forum: Foreign Policy Association, April, 20, at New York, NY.
- . 2008. "A Reader's Guide." In *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*, 349-378. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks.
- Nafisi, Azar, Samantha Ravich, and Tahir-Kheli Shirin. 2000. "Roundtable: Three Women, Two Worlds, One Issue." *SAIS Review* 20 (2):31-50.
- Naghibi, Nima. 2007. *Rethinking Global Sisterhood: Western Feminism and Iran*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Najmabadi, Afsaneh. 2005. *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2008. "Transing and Transpassing across Sex-Gender Walls in Iran." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 36 (3/4):23-42.
- Nash, Margo. 2001. "A Big Knife through My Heart': Middle Eastern Performers Face Slowing Business and Fears after the Terrorist Attacks." *New York Times*, Oct. 7, 10.
- Nathan-Kazis, Josh. 2010. "The Leading Jew in Labor Wears Pearls: As Teacher Layoffs Loom, Weingarten Takes Center Stage." *The Forward*, May 12.
<http://www.forward.com/articles/127978/> (accessed Oct. 8, 2011).
- "National Sales: Reading Lolita in Tehran". 2005. Oct. 9: Nielsen BookScan.
- Neilan, David Stout and Terence. 2004. "Bush Tells Arab World That Prisoner Abuse Was 'Abhorrent'." *New York Times*, May 5.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/05/international/middleeast/05CND-ABUS.html?scp=7&sq=bush%20responds%20to%20abu%20ghraib%20abuse&st=cse>
 (accessed May 21, 2009).
- Nevel, Donna. 2011. "The Slow Death of Khalil Gibran International Academy." April 20.
<http://gothamschools.org/2011/04/20/the-slow-death-of-khalil-gibran-international-academy/> (accessed Oct. 14, 2011).
- New York Post. 2007. "Joel Klein's Choice." Aug. 7, 26.
- New York Sun. 2007. "Brooklyn Arabic School." May 8, 8.
- New York Times. 2006. "Paperback Best Sellers: September 3, 2006." Sept. 3.
- New Zealand Herald. 2004. "Azar Nafisi: Reading Lolita in Tehran." Jan. 15.
- Ngai, Sianne. 2005. *Ugly Feelings*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Niebuhr, Gustav. 2001. "Ties between a Mosque Ad Fort Bragg Stay Strong and Neighborly." *New York Times*, Oct. 6, B8.
- Nieves, Evelyn. 2001a. "A New Minority Makes Itself Known: Hispanic Muslims." *New York Times*, Dec. 17, A1.

- . 2001b. "Slain Arab-American May Have Been Hate-Crime Victim." *New York Times*, Oct. 6, A8.
- Nisbet, Erik C., Ronald Ostman, and James Shanahan. 2009. "Public Opinion toward Muslim Americans: Civil Liberties and the Role of Religiosity, Ideology, and Media Use." In *Muslims in Western Politics*, edited by Abdulkader H. Sinno, 161-199. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Office of the Press Secretary. 2001a. "Eid Al-Adha, 2001." March 7. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/03/20010307-1.html> (accessed May 17, 2007).
- . 2001b. "'Islam Is Peace' Says President: Remarks by the President at Islamic Center of Washington, D.C.", September 17, 2001. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010917-11.html> (accessed April 27, 2008).
- . 2001c. "President's Message for Ramadan: Message from the President." November 15. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011115-14.html> (accessed May 17, 2007).
- Oh, David. 2008. "Arab Americans in the News: Before and after 9/11." *Ohio Communication Journal* 46:15-26.
- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 1994. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.
- "Open Letter from Educators in Support of the Khalil Gibran International Academy and Principal Debbie Almontaser to Michael Bloomberg and Joel Klein." 2008. Communities in Support of KGIA. <http://kgia.wordpress.com/2008/04/05/open-letter-from-educators-in-support-of-the-khalil-gibran-international-academy-and-principal-debbie-almontaser-to-michael-bloomberg-and-joel-klein/> (accessed Apr. 2, 2011).
- Osanloo, Arzoo. 2009. *The Politics of Women's Rights in Iran*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Osborne, Duncan. 2005. "Iran Executes Two Teens: Human Rights Groups Denounce Punishment as Anti-Gay, Barbaric." *Gay City News*, July 28. http://gaycitynews.com/site/index.cfm?newsid=17007132&BRD=2729&PAG=461&dept_id=568864&rfti=8 (accessed May 21, 2009).
- . 2006. "Mashad Hangings Anniversary Marked in Midtown Vigil." *Gay City News*, July 20.

- http://gaycitynews.com/site/index.cfm?newsid=17334306&BRD=2729&PAG=461&dept_id=568864&rfti=8 (accessed April 30, 2009).
- OutRage! 2005. "Execution of Gay Teens in Iran." July 27.
<http://www.petertatchell.net/international/iranexecution.htm> (accessed Nov. 10, 2008).
- Paley, Naamah. 2010. "The Khalil Gibran International Academy: Diasporic Confrontations with an Emerging Islamophobia." In *Islamophobia/Islamophilia: Beyond the Politics of Enemy and Friend*, edited by Andrew Shryock, 53-78. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Palmer, Allen W. 1995. "The Arab Image in Newspaper Political Cartoons." In *The U.S. Media and the Middle East: Image and Perception*, edited by Yahya R. Kamalipour, 139-150. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Pearsall, Judy, and Bill Trumble. 1995. *The Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary*. Second ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Peek, Lori A. 2011. *Behind the Backlash: Muslim Americans after 9/11*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Pellegrini, Ann. 2009. "Feeling Secular." *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 19 (2):205-218.
- Penketh, Anne. 2008. "Brutal Land Where Homosexuality Is Punishable by Death." *Independent*, March 6. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/brutal-land-where-homosexuality-is-punishable-by-death-792057.html> (accessed Aug. 6, 2009).
- Perez-Pena, Richard. 2009. "Times Wins 5 Pulitzers, for Coverage of War, Scandal, Art and the Campaign." *New York Times*, April 21, A23.
- Petrelis, Michael. 2006a. "Iran's Ex President Defends Killing Gays in Harvard Talk." Sept. 12. <http://mpetrelis.blogspot.com/2006/09/irans-ex-president-defends-killing.html> (accessed).
- . 2006b. "Reports, Pix from July 19 Cities." July 19. <http://mpetrelis.blogspot.com/2006/07/reports-pix-from-july-19-cities-this.html> (accessed May 20, 2009).
- Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. 2010. "Growing Number of Americans Say Obama Is a Muslim: Religion, Politics and the President." Aug. 18. <http://pewforum.org/Politics-and-Elections/Growing-Number-of-Americans-Say-Obama-is-a-Muslim.aspx> (accessed).

- PewResearchCenter. 2011. "Continuing Divide in Views of Islam and Violence." March 9. <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1921/poll-islam-violence-more-likely-other-religions-petering-congressional-hearings> (accessed).
- Peysner, Andrea. 2007. "Shirting the Issue - 'Sorry' Principal First Defends 'Intifada'-Wear." *New York Post*, Aug. 7, 8.
- Phillips, Nelson, and Cynthia Hardy. 2002. *Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction*. Qualitative Research Methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- "Pipes." 2008. Rubber Hose, April 28. <http://upyvernoz.blogspot.com/2008/04/pipes.html> (accessed Sept. 3, 2011).
- Pipes, Daniel. 2007a. "A Madrassa Grows in Brooklyn." *New York Sun*, April 24, 5.
- . 2007b. "The Real Arab School Fear." *New York Sun*, May 22, 5.
- . 2008. "Strange Sex Stories from the Muslim World." Nov. 3. <http://www.danielpipes.org/blog/2008/04/strange-sex-stories-from-the-muslim-world.html> (accessed Nov. 12, 2008).
- Pollitt, Katha. 2008. "Sweatin' to the Koran?" *The Nation*, April 28, 14.
- Pourzal, Rostam. 2007. "Let's Not Trivialize Discrimination in Iran." *Monthly Review*, May 22. <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2007/pourzal220507.html> (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- Povinelli, Elizabeth A. 2006. *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality*. Public Planet Books. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Powell, Michael. 2011. "Police Eyes Hovering over Muslims." *New York Times*, Oct. 17. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/18/nyregion/police-eyes-hovering-over-new-york-muslims-gotham.html?_r=1&scp=2&sq=new%20york%20police%20mosques&st=cse (accessed Oct. 17, 2011).
- "President Khatami and Homosexuals in Iran." 2008. YouTube video posted by "saman1357". Apr. 3, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H99du1-u2-o&noredirect=1> (accessed Oct. 13, 2011).
- Puar, Jasbir. 2010. "Israel's Gay Propaganda War." *Guardian*, July 1. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/jul/01/israels-gay-propaganda-war> (accessed Oct. 15, 2011).

- Puar, Jasbir K. 2004. "Abu Ghraib: Arguing against Exceptionalism." *Feminist Studies* 30 (2):522-534.
- . 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Puar, Jasbir K., and Amit S. Rai. 2004. "The Remaking of a Model Minority: Perverse Projectiles under the Specter of (Counter)Terrorism." *Social Text* 22 (3_80):75-104. doi: 10.1215/01642472-22-3_80-75.
- Public Agenda. 2002. "Half of Americans Say There Is No Excuse for the Racial Profiling of African Americans, but Two-Thirds Say Greater Scrutiny of Middle Eastern People Is 'Understandable'." <http://www.publicagenda.org/charts/half-americans-say-there-no-excuse-racial-profiling-blacks-two-thirds-say-greater-scrutiny-middle> (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- Purdy, Matthew. 2001. "For Arab-Americans, Flag-Flying and Fear." *New York Times*, Sept. 14, A14.
- Rabinowitz, Beila. 2007. "New York Set to Open Khalil Gibran 'Jihad' School - Connected to Saudi Funded Adc -Principal Won Cair Award." *Militant Islam Monitor*, March 10. <http://www.militantislammonitor.org/article/id/2755> (accessed Oct. 14, 2011).
- Radji, Parviz. 2003. "Keeping Faith in the Old Magic Amid New Repression." *Times Higher Education Supplement*, Sep. 19, 28.
- Rai, Amit. 2002. *Rule of Sympathy: Sentiment, Race, and Power, 1750-1850*. New York: Palgrave.
- Rastegar, Mitra. 2008. "Managing 'American Islam': Secularism, Patriotism, and the Gender Litmus Test." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 10 (4):455-474.
- Rather, John. 2001. "Uneasy Times for Muslims on Island." *New York Times*, Sept. 23, L18.
- Ravid, Barak. 2009. "Israel Recruits Gay Community in PR Campaign against Iran." *Haaretz*, April 4. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/israel-recruits-gay-community-in-pr-campaign-against-iran-1.274422> (accessed Sept.25, 2011).
- Ravitch, Diane. 2007. "Arabic School Fails the Test: A United City Demands We Educate Kids Together." *Daily News (New York)*, May 14. http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2007/05/14/2007-05-14_arabic_school_fails_the_test.html (accessed Sept. 4, 2011).

- Razack, Sherene. 2008. *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- "Real Execution :((Stop the Gay Crime, Iran!! :((". 2009. YouTube video posted by "darianpitesti". Feb. 28, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zL_zP2pHp3w (accessed Oct. 13, 2011).
- "Red Eye: Greg Gutfeld's Gay Bar - Part 2." 2010. YouTube video posted by "metalshadowoverlord". Aug. 13, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uf5AetlKvxI&feature=related> (accessed Oct. 13, 2011).
- Rejali, Darius M. 1994. *Torture & Modernity: Self, Society, and State in Modern Iran*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Rendall, Steve, Isabel Macdonald, Veronica Cassidy, and Dina Marguerite Jacir. 2008. *Smearcasting: How Islamophobes Spread Fear, Bigotry, and Misinformation*. edited by Julie Hollar and Jim Naureckas: Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting.
- Richardson, Lynda. 2001. "Strains on a Man and the City, Distilled in 10 Minutes." *New York Times*, Oct. 16, D4.
- Rorty, Richard. 1991. "On Ethnocentrism: A Reply to Clifford Geertz." In *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth: Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Rothschild, Matthew. 2004. "America's Amnesia." *The Progressive*, 24.
- Rowe, John Carlos. 2007. "Reading Reading Lolita in Tehran in Idaho." *American Quarterly* 59 (2):253-275.
- Rubinstein, Dana. 2007a. "Holy War! Slope Parents Protest Arabic School Plan." *Brooklyn Paper*. http://www.brooklynpaper.com/stories/30/11/30_11holywar.html (accessed August 1, 2011).
- . 2007b. "Media Descends on Gibran as Arabic School Opens." *Brooklyn Paper*, Sept. 8. http://www.brooklynpaper.com/stories/30/35/30_35gibranopening.html (accessed August 1, 2011).
- Rudy, Sayres S. 2007. "Pros and Cons: Americanism against Islamism in the 'War on Terror'." *The Muslim World* 97 (Jan.):33-78.

- "Ruining People Is Considered Sport." 2008. No More Mister Nice Blog, April 28.
<http://nomoremister.blogspot.com/2008/04/ruining-people-is-considered-sport-in.html>
(accessed Sept. 3, 2011).
- Rumbelow, Helen. 2004. "Pride, Prejudice and Defiance." *London Times* Feb. 21, 4.
- Ryan, Valerie. 2003. "Nonfiction Review Behind the Veil, an English Lit Class." *The Sunday Oregonian*, Mar. 30, G07.
- Sachs, Susan. 2001. "The 2 Worlds of Muslim American Teenagers." *New York Times*, Oct. 7, B1.
- Sachs, Susan, and Blaine Harden. 2001. "A Family, Both Arab and Arab-American, Divided by a War." *New York Times*, Oct. 29, B1.
- Said, Edward W. 1979. *Orientalism*. 1st Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books.
- . 1997. *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*. Rev. ed. New York: Vintage Books.
- . 2003. "Clash of Definitions." In *The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy*, edited by Emran Qureshi and Michael A Sells, 68-87. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Saidi, Janet. 2003. "Years of Reading Dangerously: Western Literature Takes on the Luster of Forbidden Fruit in an Islamic Republic." *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, Apr. 27, 8.
- Salaita, Steven George. 2006. *Anti-Arab Racism in the USA: Where It Comes from and What It Means for Politics Today*. London: Pluto Press.
- Salamon, Julie. 2003. "Professor's Rebellion: Teaching Western Books in Iran, and in U.S., Too." *New York Times*, Mar. 24, E3.
- . 2004. "Author Finds That with Fame Comes Image Management." *New York Times*, June 8, E1.
- Saljoughi, Sara. 2008. *Whiteness, Orientalism and Immigration: A Critique of Two Iranian Exilic Memoirs*. Master of Arts, Immigration and Settlement Studies, Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

- Samhan, Helen Hatab. 1999. "Not Quite White: Race Classification and the Arab-American Experience." In *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, edited by Michael W. Suleiman, 209-226. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- SarahPalinUSA. 2010. "Peace-Seeking Muslims." Twitter.com, July 18.
<http://twitter.com/sarahpalinusa/status/18858128918> (accessed Oct. 15, 2011).
- Schindler, Paul. 2004. "Rumsfeld Must Go: Homophobia at the Heart of the Matter " *Gay City News*, May 13.
http://gaycitynews.com/site/index.cfm?newsid=17005510&BRD=2729&PAG=461&dept_id=568864&rfi=8 (accessed May 21, 2009).
- Schudson, Michael. 2003. "What's Unusual About Covering Politics as Usual." In *Journalism after September 11*, edited by Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan, 36-47. London: Routledge.
- Schworm, Peter. 2005. "Study Faults Treatment of Juvenile Offenders: Detention as Adults Harmful, Report Says." *The Boston Globe*, March 14, B1.
- Sengupta, Somini. 2001. "Arabs and Muslims Steer through an Unsettling Scrutiny." *New York Times*, Sept. 13, A24.
- Shaheen, Jack G. 1984. *The TV Arab*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.
- . 2001. *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*. New York: Olive Branch Press.
- Shanahan, Noreen. 2004. "Reading Lolita in Tehran." *Herizons*, Fall, 39.
- Sheets, Hilarie M. 2001. "Stitch by Stitch, a Daughter of Islam Takes on Taboos." *New York Times*, Nov. 25, AR33.
- Sherman, Scott. 2007. "Sun-Rise in New York." *The Nation*.
<http://www.thenation.com/article/sun-rise-new-york> (accessed Oct. 14, 2011).
- Shryock, Andrew. 2008. "The Moral Analogies of Race: Arab American Identity, Color Politics, and the Limits of Racialized Citizenship." In *Race and Arab Americans before and after 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*, edited by Amaney A. Jamal and Nadine Christine Naber, 81-113. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Shulman, Robin. 2007. "In New York, a Word Starts a Fire; Arabic Educator's Brief Defense of 'Intifada' T-Shirts Makes Her a Target." *Washington Post*, Aug 24, A06.

- Siemaszko, Corky, and Thomas Zambito. 2007. "NY Minute." *Daily News (New York)*, Dec. 5, 14.
- Silk, Mark. 2003. "Islam and the American News Media Post September 11." In *Mediating Religion: Conversations in Media, Religion and Culture*, edited by Jolyon P. Mitchell and Sophia Marriage, 73-79. London: T & T Clark.
- Silverstein, Linda. 2001. "A Disquieting Remark by a Muslim Woman " *New York Times*, Oct. 7, 26.
- Simpson, Mona. 2003. "Book Group in Chadors: An Outstanding and Unusual Memoir of Post-Revolutionary Iran." *Atlantic Monthly*, June, 103-104.
- Sismondo, Christine. 2003. "Lolita, under the Veil." *Toronto Star*, May 4, D13.
- "SLAC: Sparks Book Club: Reading Lolita in Tehran." 2011. Salt Lake Acting Company. <http://www.saltlakeactingcompany.org/this-season/persian-quarter/232-slacsparks-book-club-reading-lolita-in-tehran> (accessed Oct. 15, 2011).
- Soltis, Andy, Leonard Greene, and Dareh Gregorian. 2009. "Muslim Major Screamed 'Allahu Akbar' before Slaughtering 13 at Ft. Hood." *New York Post*. http://www.nypost.com/p/news/national/muslim_major_screamed_allahu_akbar_XGrZPwVI9UdcxpV42AdnK (accessed Oct. 8, 2011).
- Sontag, Deborah. 2001. "'Who Is This Kafka That People Keep Mentioning?'" *New York Times Magazine*, Oct. 21, 54.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1988. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, 271-313. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Steinberg, Jacques. 2001. "'Worse Than Pearl Harbor,' and the Words Ring True." *New York Times*, Sept. 13, A19.
- Stewart, Rory. 2003. "Secret Texts: Reading Lolita in Tehran; a Story of Love, Books and Revolution." *New Statesman*, July, 53.
- Stockton, Ronald. 1994. "Ethnic Archetypes and the Arab Image." In *The Development of Arab-American Identity*, edited by Ernest McCarus, 119-153. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Stoffman, Judy. 2003. "For a Love of Books." *The Toronto Star*, Oct. 19, D01.

- "Students at Universities and Higher Education Institutes by Broad Field of Study, Sex and Academic Level." 2005. Statistical Centre of Iran. <http://www.sci.org.ir/index.htm> (accessed Aug. 12, 2005).
- "Students of Islamic Azad University by Broad Field of Study, Sex and Academic Level." 2005. Statistical Centre of Iran. <http://www.sci.org.ir/index.htm> (accessed Aug. 12, 2005).
- Suleiman, Michael W. 1999. *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Sullivan, Andrew. 2005. "Atrocities in Plain Sight." *New York Times*, Jan. 13. <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/13/books/review/books-sullivan.html> (accessed May 21, 2009).
- . 2006. "The Horrors Really Are Your America, Mr Bush." *TimesOnline*, June 4. http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/andrew_sullivan/article671385.ece (accessed May 21, 2009).
- Sullivan, Eileen. 2011. "NYPD Spied on City's Muslim Anti-Terror Partners." *Associated Press*, Oct. 6. <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5heoqOgiM81DyeVX9Jgh7H9xYTneA?docId=eae6c489a6d742f18329653e87bb084a> (accessed Oct. 15, 2011).
- Tatchell, Peter. 2005. "Far Left Collusion with Islamo-Fascism." Nov. 18. <http://www.petertatchell.net/international/islamofascism.htm> (accessed Aug. 4, 2009).
- Templeton, Erica. 2000. "Note: Killing Kids: The Impact of Domingues V. Nevada on the Juvenile Death Penalty as a Violation of International Law." *Boston College Law Review* 41:1175-1216.
- Terranova, Tiziana. 2007. "Futurepublic: On Information Warfare, Bio-Racism and Hegemony as Noopolitics." *Theory, Culture & Society* 24:125-145.
- "To Mahmoud Asgari and Ayaz Marhoni with Sorrow (Engl. Ver.)." 2008. YouTube video posted by "Lexlambda". Jan. 24, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPST9QnshJM> (accessed Nov. 15, 2008).
- Tohidi, Nayereh. 1991. "Gender and Islamic Fundamentalism: Feminist Politics in Iran." In *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, edited by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres, 251-267. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- "Top 100 US Daily Newspapers." 2007. http://www.burrellesluce.com/top100/2007_Top_100List.pdf (accessed Oct. 8, 2011).

- Totenberg, Nina. 2005. "Supreme Court Ends Death Penalty for Juveniles." NPR.org, March 2. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4518051> (accessed April 28, 2009).
- "Under the Pale Blue Sky." 2006. YouTube video posted by "xXEspirituXx". Nov. 7, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dgsZYA1mPY> (accessed May 21, 2009).
- Verhovek, Sam Howe. 2001. "Americans Give in to Race Profiling." *New York Times*, Sept. 23, 1A.
- "The Vista Festival." 2009. Opera Vista. <http://www.operavista.org/festival.php?show=operas> (accessed May 21, 2009).
- Volpp, Leti. 2002. "The Citizen and the Terrorist." *UCLA Law Review* 49 (5):1575-1599.
- Wakin, Daniel J. 2001a. "Moderates Start Speaking out against Islamic Intolerance." *New York Times*, Oct. 28, B5.
- . 2001b. "Thanksgiving in a Time of Fasting: In Brooklyn, Healing Rhythms of Ramadan." *New York Times*, Nov. 21, D1.
- . 2002. "Ranks of Latinos Turning to Islam Are Increasing." *New York Times*, Jan. 2, B1.
- Wakin, Daniel J., and Charles LeDuff. 2001. "Among New York Muslims, Support for U.S. Strikes." *New York Times*, Oct. 8, B1.
- Warren, Colleen Kelly. 2003. "In Iran, Women 'Shed Their Veils' to Worship Novel." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 1, F12.
- Washington Post. 2003. "'Do I Have Life? Or Am I Just Breathing?'" July 6, B03.
- . 2007. "President Ahmadinejad Delivers Remarks at Columbia University." Sept. 24. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/24/AR2007092401042.html> (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- Weaver, Teresa K. 2004. "Books: Iranian Writer Tends Literature's Flame." *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 25, 1M.
- Weingarten, Randi. 2007. Letter to Editor. *New York Post*, Aug. 9.
- Weinstein, Henry. 2007. "Final Two L.A. 8 Defendants Cleared." *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 1. <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/nov/01/local/me-palestinian1> (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).

- Wessler, Seth Freed. 2008. "Silenced in the Classroom." *Colorlines*, Dec. 3.
http://colorlines.com/archives/2008/12/silenced_in_the_classroom.html (accessed Oct. 8, 2011).
- Weston, Mary Ann. 2003. "Post 9/11 Arab American Coverage Avoid Stereotypes." *Newspaper Research Journal* 24 (1):92.
- Wilgoren, Jodi. 2001a. "After the Attacks: The Hijackers; a Terrorist Profile Emerges That Confounds the Experts." *New York Times*, Nov. 4.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/15/us/after-attacks-hijackers-terrorist-profile-emerges-that-confounds-experts.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).
- . 2001b. "Islam Attracts Converts by the Thousand, Drawn before and after Attacks." *New York Times*, Oct. 22, B10.
- . 2001c. "Michigan Officers Fear Pressure of U.S. Plan." *New York Times*, Nov. 17, B1.
- . 2001d. "Questioning with a Powder-Puff Edge." *New York Times*, Dec. 13, B7.
- . 2001e. "Struggling to Be Both Arab and American." *New York Times*, Nov. 4, B1.
- . 2001f. "Swept up in a Dragnet, Hundreds Sit in Custody and Ask, 'Why?'" *New York Times*, Nov. 25, B5.
- Will, George F. 2004. "The Iran Dilemma." *The Washington Post*, Sep. 23, A29.
- Williams, Timothy, and Tareq Maher. 2009. "Iraq's Newly Open Gays Face Scorn and Murder." *New York Times*, April 7.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/08/world/middleeast/08gay.html> (accessed Oct. 15 2011).
- Winter, Greg. 2001. "F.B.I. Visits Provoke Waves of Worry in Middle Eastern Men." *New York Times*, Nov. 16, B1.
- Wolf, Andrew. 2007a. "Out of Many, One." *New York Sun*, March 16, 11.
- . 2007b. "Where Radical Politics and Education Intersect." *New York Sun*, April 17, 3.
- Wolff, Sarah. 2007. "'Joining the East and West': Brooklyn Activist Building Bridges in Iraq Shares Vision for International School Here." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 20.
http://www.brooklyneagle.com/categories/category.php?category_id=18&id=11861 (accessed Oct. 11, 2011).

- Worth, Robert. 2001. "For Arab-Americans, a Time of Disquiet." *New York Times*, Sept. 30, WE1.
- Yin, Robert K. 1993. *Applications of Case Study Research*. Applied Social Research Methods Series. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Zagorin, Perez. 2003. *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Zaharna, R.S. 1995. "The Palestinian Leadership and the American Media: Changing Images, Conflicting Results." In *The U.S. Media and the Middle East: Image and Perception*, edited by Yahya R. Kamalipour, 37-49. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Zahedi, Ashraf. 2007. "Contested Meaning of the Veil and Political Ideologies of Iranian Regimes." *JMEWS: Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 3 (3):75+.
- Zelizer, Barbie, and Stuart Allan. 2003. "Introduction." In *Journalism after September 11*, edited by Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan, 1-26. London: Routledge.
- Zhao, Yilu. 2001. "Police Officer Visits to Reassure a Queens Mosque." *New York Times*, Sept. 22, B10.
- Zimmerman, Jonathan. 2007. "Arabic School's Critics Are the True Zealots." *Daily News (New York)*, May 9. http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2007/05/09/2007-05-09_arabic_schools_critics_are_the_true_zeal.html (accessed Sept. 4, 2011).
- Zine, Jasmin. 2006. "Between Orientalism and Fundamentalism: Muslim Women and Feminist Engagement." In *(En)Gendering the War on Terror: War Stories and Camouflaged Politics*, edited by Krista Hunt and Kim Rygiel, 27-49. Aldershot, England: Ashgate.