Victims, Terrorists, Scapegoats: Veiled Muslim Women and the Embodied Threat of Terror

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Veiled Muslim women have been the subject of immense social, cultural and political scrutiny in the West, following the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 (9/11). Canada and the United States (US) have seen drastic increases in violence against veiled Muslim women, particularly after the December 2015 San Bernardino shooting in California. This act of terrorism and the escalation of gendered, Islamophobic violence against veiled Muslim women, suggests that veiled women have been implicated in the pathologically violent, neo-Orientalist narratives traditionally inscribed on male, Muslim men post-9/11.

Neo-Orientalism, however, should not be understood as a departure from Edward W. Said's *Orientalism*. Rather, as Mohammed Samiei argues, neo-Orientalism should be understood within a globalized framework as a reconstitution, redeployment and redistribution of traditional Orientalist discourse (1148). Samiei observes that the ideology governing the dualism between the West and Islam has changed dramatically since Said's publication in 1978. Not only has the position of Islam "moved ever closer to the centre of world politics," more recent events such as "acts of terror in the name of Islam, particularly noticeable in 9/11 and subsequent terrorist operations in the West," have positioned the West and Islam within a framework of globalization, which requires a supplementary understanding of traditional Orientalism (1148). In this framework, deterritorialization and interconnectedness function as two "basic rudiments of the concept," where territory, central to Said's *Orientalism*, "no longer constitutes the whole of 'social space' in which human activity takes place," and where "distance or space undergoes compression or 'annihilation'" through the interconnectedness of different peoples and communities (1148). Neo-Orientalism, therefore, emerges as a paradigm that addresses the evolution of traditional Orientalism in an era of globalization. It considers the impact of globalization on our understanding of the dualism between the West and Islam, which has increasingly become more opaque through processes of deterritorialization and interconnectedness. With the emergence of a globalized landscape in the West, distinctions between a geographically and culturally isolated Orient and Occident are now obfuscated. While the ambiguity of these previously, clearly defined distinctions have indeed resulted in contestations and objections to globalization, the central aim of this

paper is to locate and understand those consternations in the West as manifestations of racism and Islamophobic violence, particularly as they pertain to veiled Muslim women.

This paper argues that the general discourse surrounding veiled Muslim women circulates in a paradoxical purgatory, a push-and-pull between traditional, Orientalist tropes of submissive and subservient Muslim women, on the one hand, and neo-Orientalist tropes of threatening, terrorist, veiled Muslim women on the other. As veiled women have entered the legal, political and public discourse on terrorism as potential terrorist bodies through the cultural apparatus of the mainstream news media, they have become primary targets of Islamophobic violence in the West. By using the San Bernardino shooting as a case study, and by limiting the case study to Tashfeen Malik's involvement in the attack as a veiled Muslim woman, this paper further argues that Malik's act of terrorism destabilized the conventional discourse of terrorism as a racialized, heteronormative and hypermasculine construct.

Prior to examining the role of the mainstream news media in the recent escalation of gendered, Islamophobic violence in the West, it is imperative to briefly locate the ideological underpinnings of newsworthiness within a framework of systemic racism. Yasmin Jiwani argues, "the news media shape public opinion by defining issues, setting the agenda, framing the parameters of debate, and providing us with the very categories of language by which to make sense of the issues" (37). As intermediaries between newsworthy events and the public's consumption of those events as newsworthy stories, the mainstream news media possess the power to frame newsworthiness by exposing, ignoring or concealing the systemic racism that is part of the newsmaking process.

The corporatization of the mainstream news media, which Noam Chomsky most notably identifies as a process of soliciting advertisers as "the 'patrons' who provide the media subsidy" (16), must also be understood as part of a cultural apparatus that is ideologically grounded in the invisible power of whiteness. The news media along with other dominant media work together "to represent a symbolic image of the nation" (Jiwani 37), a symbolic image of whiteness that perpetuates stereotypical representations of racialized minorities as "criminals, unassimilable immigrants, undeserving Others, those who don't fit the ideal normative standards, and those who do not belong to the nation" (37). If, indeed, what creates revenue streams for the media are advertisers who generally prefer "to avoid programs with serious complexities and disturbing controversies that interfere with the 'buying mood'" (Chomsky 17), it is virtually impossible to separate the corporate news media from the racist ideological groundwork that dictates its newsworthy representations of race.

The financialized and racialized logic that drives processes of newsworthiness and newsmaking for public consumption, is a reflection of the racialized logic that implicates veiled Muslim women in the discourse of "Islamic terrorism." Karim H. Karim argues that the image of terrorism represented by western media "has been so

completely enmeshed with Islam in the dominant Northern discourses that even Christian Middle Easterners involved in violent confrontations are presented as being Muslim" (80). Associations between terrorism and Islam that are sustained by the cultural apparatus of the news media, reify the dominant, hegemonic ideology, which often shapes public opinion and discourse. Karim asserts that since the cultural apparatuses of the dominant media have repeatedly depicted Islam as an enemy to the West, Islam has come to embody and represent the primary source of terrorism in the West (80).

The fabrication upon which such beliefs are built have repeatedly been disproven by studies. For example, Bourque *et al* point to the ineffectiveness of profiling Muslims as potential terrorists, and conclude that the probability that a Muslim was a terrorist in 2006 was less than 0.06 per cent (65). Reem Badhi observes that as exacerbated narratives of Islamophobia and "Islamic terrorism" intensify, so do prejudices that fuel populist fear and heighten the general public's suspiciousness of Arab and Muslim bodies (315), contributing to the ongoing hate crimes against Muslims in Canada and the US. In news media representations of terrorism in the West, where, as Karim explains, configurations of terrorism and Islam are so entwined that it is difficult to divorce one from the other, the representation of Muslims is reductively linked to narratives of victimization, violence and/or terrorism. Jiwani echoes a similar sentiment as she argues "that most news about racialized groups tends to focus only on their involvement in conflicts and conflict situations," a result of "the general absence of racialized bodies of colour in elite circles," including those belonging to the cultural apparatus of the mainstream news media (39). Since Islam frequently enters news media discourse alongside associations of terrorism, the general discourse on terrorism is entangled with the general discourse on Islam in the West. In this way, Islam loses some of its value as a system of religion adhered to by millions of people, and morphs instead into an ideological catalyst and scapegoat for acts of terrorism.

Framing the Veiled Muslim Body for Punishment

The recent escalation of violence against veiled Muslim women reveals a hegemonic consternation with veiled bodies, one that parallels what Sherene H. Razack and Jacques Derrida describe as the host/guest relationship. Razack explains the relationship as one that is based on practices of racial exclusion and inclusion. The hosts are the "original citizens…who bear an organic relationship to citizenship" (122), whereas the guests are foreign immigrants "whose first obligation is gratitude to the hosts…and praise of the host culture" (122). As guests, foreign immigrants can never truly belong to the nation, since membership to the nation is premised on white, settler bloodlines (122). Hence, foreign immigrants are invited to participate in the nation without ever belonging to the nation. When the nation as "home" experiences violence at the hands of those it considers its

guests, however, the relationship between the hosts and the guests becomes strained and volatile. Derrida describes this volatility as follows: "[a]nyone who encroaches on my "at home," on my ipseity, on my power of hospitality, on my sovereignty as host, I start to regard as an undesirable foreigner, and virtually as an enemy. This other becomes a hostile subject, and I risk becoming their hostage" (53-55). In order to avoid the possibility of becoming hostages in their own "home," hosts, in turn, take guests hostage on the basis of their foreignness, using racial, ethnic and/or cultural differences as the determining factors. If hosts have a "moral basis to instruct and to determine the conditions of daily life, while guests are always in a position of respecting the morality of the household" (Razack 122), then wearing a veil in the host nation, or rejecting the call to unveil, is interpreted as a refusal to conform to the morality, values and politics of the hegemonic "home."

The narrative of veiled Muslim women as guests within the nation who refuse to appease their hosts by assimilating undergoes a dramatic shift with the involvement of veiled Muslim women in recent acts of "Islamic terrorism" in the West. Hayat Boumedienne, a converted, veiled Muslim woman, who was not directly involved in the January 2015 Charlie Hebdo shooting in Paris, France, emerged in mainstream news media discourse as a 'more radical' subject and terrorist than Amedy Coulibaly, her husband, who was directly involved in the shooting (Tapper *et al*. 2015). In contrast to Boumedienne, however, Malik's involvement in the San Bernardino attack was direct in that she was one of the active shooters. Similar to the discourses surrounding Boumedienne's veiled body, Malik became the subject of a discourse that narrativized her as a more dangerous subject and terrorist than Syed Rizwan Farook, her husband (Housley; Ahmed). As isolated as these female terrorist incidents are in the long history of terrorism—Islamic, Christian or other—veiled Muslim women have become scapegoats for a neo-Orientalist discourse on terrorism, which views their bodies as active, dominant agents of terrorism rather than as passive, inferior subjects in need of rescue by western men and women.

The acceleration with which such discourse is disseminated by the news media to the general public for consumption, has, intentionally or unintentionally, contributed to the increase of Islamophobic violence that habitually follows news coverage of "Islamic terrorist" events in the West. Data provided by the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) indicates that there were approximately twenty hate crimes committed against Muslims and Muslim institutions in 2014, four of which targeted Muslim women (NCCM). By the end of 2015, however, the same year in which Boumedienne and Malik were involved in acts of terrorism in Paris and San Bernardino, there were nearly sixty hate crimes targeting Muslims and Muslim institutions, more than half of which specifically targeted veiled Muslim women (NCCM). Engy Abdelkader observes a similar pattern of Islamophobic violence in the US, following the attacks in Paris and San Bernardino. Abdelkader argues that "Islamophobia reached a fever pitch…in the

wake of the November 15th Paris terrorist attacks and then the mass shootings in San Bernardino, California on December 2nd the same year" (34). She suggests that in the lead up to the 2017 American presidential election, the intensification of Donald Trump's "Islamophobic political vitriol" (34), which included a call for "shutting down mosques" (36), contributed to the upsurge in anti-Muslim violence. Abdelkader draws particular attention to the month of December 2015, the month of the San Bernardino attack, as the one that saw a record number of Islamophobic acts of violence occur. Compared to the two Islamophobic attacks that occurred nine months earlier, at the outset of the presidential election campaign season, the month of December 2015 saw approximately fifty-three reported Islamophobic attacks (36). In his analysis of hate crime data collected outside the US in the same month, in cities such as Toronto, Canada and London, England, Brian Levin observes corresponding increases of anti-Muslim violence (23). It is during this time that we see the forging of a neo-Orientalist discourse in the mainstream news media, which begins to inscribe terrorist potentiality and culpability on Malik's veiled Muslim body, as well as other veiled Muslim bodies. News headlines such as "Is Tashfeen Malik a New Kind of Female Terrorist?" from *The Daily Beast*, and "A Rarity in U.S., Female Attackers Nothing New Abroad" from *CBS News*, suggests that although Malik and other veiled Muslim women may represent the new "face" of terrorism in the US, they have always been major actors of "Islamic terrorism" abroad.

The framing of veiled Muslim women in mainstream news media discourse, outside the US and prior to the San Bernardino attack, is taken up by Bandar Al-Hejin in his discourse analysis of *BBC News*. Al-Hejin references Christopher Allen's and Jørgen S. Nielsen's 2002 "Summary Report on Islamophobia in the EU after 11 September 2001," where Allen and Nielsen conclude that the hijab became "the primary visual identifier as a target for hatred, with Muslim women being routinely abused and attacked" (35). In his analysis of discursive strategies used by *BBC News*, Al-Hejin notes that the term "hijab" is a "key semantic macrostructure" deployed in twenty-eight per cent of headlines or leads referring to Muslim women (30). Al-Hejin also notes that "war" acts as another key semantic macrostructure, where Muslim women are depicted as victims in approximately seventy-two per cent of leads and headlines (29); as suicide bombers with agency in about seven per cent of leads and headlines (29); and as suicide bombers without agency in five per cent of leads and headlines (29). The recurring association between the hijab and Muslim women in articles from *BBC News*, evokes an implicit relationship between the hijab and the victimization of Muslim women who wear it. Leads and headlines that reference the hijab in terms of its "perceived benefits or normalcy" appear in less than one per cent of news articles in *BBC News* (37). As part of a semantic macrostructure in which word associations reveal an organized, heteronormative and patriarchal system of representation, veiled Muslim women are represented as either victims of violence or as perpetrators of violence. In the case of

the latter, however, Al-Hejin observes verbal patterns in news media discourse that point to a lack of female agency. Verbal patterns in articles from *BBC News* describe Muslim women as female suicide bombers who are "being *used*, *deployed*, and *sent*" to terrorize nations by male terrorists (28). Al-Hejin argues that their "predication as mere 'tools' trivializes their role as self-determined social actors" (28). Veiled female suicide bombers are therefore not only represented as instruments of Islamic patriarchal authority, but also as instruments of the hegemonic and heteronormative framing processes of the mainstream news media. The neo-Orientalist narrative of the agentic, veiled female terrorist in the West, materializes in news media and public discourse with the appearance of Boumedienne in Paris, but is concretized as a discourse through Malik's attack in San Bernardino.

Prior to the Charlie Hebdo and San Bernardino shootings, agency for "women of the non-preferred races" (Thobani 109) was reserved and restricted to their culturally and biologically reproductive bodies. Muslim veiled women, in this regard, were viewed as (un)agentic vehicles with the capacity to culturally reproduce violence against the nation's cultural and racial purity, using their biologically reproductive bodies to produce other, potential, "Islamic terrorist" bodies. Sunera Thobani writes that "women of the non-preferred races were marked for particular exclusion from the nation, their sexuality and fertility defined as a specific threat to the nation's purity" (109). The perceived fertility and fecundity of Muslim women to biologically reproduce stereotypical representations of dangerous, Muslim men post-9/11, identified their bodies first as literal and metaphorical instruments of procreation, whose duty was not to directly inflict violence against the nation, but to indirectly propagate "Islamic violence" against the nation by reproducing male bodies that can. Confining Muslim women to these Orientalist tropes, antagonistic yet physically non-violent, meant that it was Muslim men—and still is in some cases—who initially suffered the brunt of Islamophobic violence. But it is important to recognize, as Thobani explains, that the "fecundity of immigrant women as a threat to the nation" (117) is not merely a perception; it is praxis, historically ingrained in the state's social programs aimed at the welfare and "reproduction of British social and familial mores…understood to be indispensable" (116). This form of violence against Muslim and other immigrant women who fail to reproduce the nation's indispensable British mores—while perhaps imperceptible to the whiteness of the nation—has always been present and palpable to immigrant and racialized women. Although Muslim men, post-9/11, may easily conjure images of "Islamic terrorism" in national imaginaries, lurking and operating secretly within the nation for an opportune time to strike against the nation, the agency of racialized, immigrant women, and veiled Muslim women in particular, has been traditionally perceived as a consequential by-product of their biological bodies. In other words, their agency is not a product of their own volition but an involuntary by-product of their biological constitution. In adhering to Orientalist tropes, the bodies of veiled Muslim women were viewed as unlikely and/or incapable of

committing an agentic act of hypermasculine "Islamic terrorism." Instead, veiled Muslim women remained locked in an Orientalist, patriarchal and sexist discourse, which reduced their bodies to compliant, reproductive vessels used by more dominant, "Islamic" men to impose their hypermasculine violence.

Steve Garner and Saher Selod use racialization as a concept that allows one "to make sense of the fact that regardless of physical appearance, country of origin and economic situation, Muslims are homogenized and degraded by Islamophobic discourse and practices in their everyday lives" (17). In this nuanced understanding of racialization, where the concept of race "is never finished, never stable, never precisely defined" (13), Garner and Selod deploy the logic that "religion can be raced" (13). For Garner and Selod, Islamophobia is "a set of ideas and practices that amalgamate all Muslims into one group and the characteristics associated with Muslims…are treated as if they are innate" (13). Associations between Islam and terrorism in the mainstream news media buttress Islamophobic ideology and practices, which interprets violence and terrorism as intrinsic characteristics belonging to all Muslims. This homogenized form of race thinking in the West refuses to acknowledge the distinctions within Islam as a religion, and the many racial, ethnic and cultural distinctions between Muslim communities. The process of homogenization serves to further propagate the West's Islamophobic ideology, central to the War on Terror, and central to the exclusion of Muslims from a national identity. Selod re-articulates Thobani's claim that the state plays a vital role in the process of racialization and exclusion by situating differences in race, religion and ethnicity as "barriers to social membership and a sense of belonging in America" (81). Because of the ongoing "application of terrorism to Muslim bodies," and because these barriers also reflect "important characteristics of citizenship," Muslim populations in the West "are rejected from inclusion in a national identity" (81). While this is true for some nations in the West and less true for others, Muslim populations and communities are increasingly defined by a misguided understanding of "their religious identity, making their national identity invisible, insignificant and irrelevant to the rest of society" (82). As participants in Selod's study in the US reveal, "being a Muslim—regardless of nation or origin—produced the assumption that one was not an American, but also somehow anti-American and a potential threat to society" (83).

The attack in San Bernardino seems to have impressed upon the nation the racialized notion that Malik, and other veiled Muslim women, can harness and exercise the same threatening power and potential as racialized Muslim men. Borrowing from Michael Omi's and Howard Winant's racial formation theory, Selod writes, "[r]acialization is a process of racial formation…where racial categories are constantly created, occupied, transformed and destroyed within specific political, social and economic contexts" (79). The processes of racialization that reemerged following the attack in San Bernardino divorced the personal experiences and realities of veiled

Muslim women from the racialized violence inflicted on their bodies. As Selod observes, "Muslim American women who wore the hijab were often put in a position of having to defend their status as an American when they were out in public. Muslim women who wear the hijab have become a target for public ire towards Muslims" (83). Veiled Muslim women were all of a sudden thrust into occupying the imagined profile of what Thobani calls the religio-racial enemy; a profile previously consisting only of "fanatic and hypermasculine Muslim men who were constituted as terrorizing the nation with their inborn propensity to blow up buildings and planes, and indeed, even their own bodies" (236). As Selod suggests, Islamophobic violence in everyday life is paradoxically gendered. The visibility of veiled female bodies marks them simultaneously as potential terrorist threats to the West and as identifiable targets of Islamophobic violence in the West. As Barbara Perry points out, "[w]hile the veil is often taken as a sign of submissiveness, it is also taken as a sign of Islamic aggression. So, if women are not characterized as exotic, or as oppressed, especially when they are veiled, they are represented as mysterious, dangerous and threatening" (83). In this paradoxical space, veiled women are seen to simultaneously embody diametrically opposed positions of submission and aggression, an artificially imposed symbiotic relationship in which Orientalist perceptions of the former embolden neo-Orientalist perceptions of the latter. While these views identify veiled women as threats to the West, perhaps on a par with Muslim men, they also identify them as weaker and less resistant sites of everyday, Islamophobic violence in the West. But if we are to understand why veiled Muslim women, instead of men, experience the brunt of Islamophobic violence, we must look beyond their veiled bodies.

We must look to the source of Islamophobic violence itself, to the patriarchal hosts of the nation who harness its violent ideologies as a way of attempting to justify their gendered, Islamophobic violence. In so doing, we observe a radical desire for a return to traditional, Orientalist gender constructs. In targeting and attacking veiled Muslim women, these "foot soldiers in the war against terrorism" (Butler 77), contradict the notion of gender as "a key signifier of the civilizational superiority of the west" (Thobani 236) by engaging in acts of gendered, Islamophobic violence. The escalation of such violence post-San Bernardino, noted in cities across Canada, the US and Britain, may be better explained instead as a civilizational regression. Those responsible for the violence use it as a mechanism and means to control, subdue and punish veiled Muslim bodies, spurred on by the rise of a neo-Orientalist discourse of female "Islamic terrorism" in the West. Violence is used by the supervisors or hosts to remind veiled Muslim women of "their proper place as supplicants to the west" (237). The position taken up by the nation's "foot soldiers" on gender, however, is strikingly similar to the Orientalist perception of gender in Arab and Muslim societies, denounced by the West for their general "abrogation of women's rights," and their general "backwardness, [and] lack of democracy" (Said xix). By engaging in acts of violence

against veiled Muslim women in the West, these "foot soldiers" can no longer distinguish themselves from Orientalist stereotypes (or visions) of the Arab or Muslim Other. They can no longer ostensibly maintain the Orientalist position of western "preeminence" when it comes to gender as a key signifier of civilizational superiority between the West and Islam. In short, the "foot soldiers" in the West have come to embody the very Orientalist ideas about gender that were created for the Orient by western Europeans, and later Americans, as part of a sweeping cultural project and enterprise (4). It is not, as Perry suggests, the veil that merely signals weakness, oppression and vulnerability, which perpetrators in the West exploit as a way of punishing Muslim women "for succumbing to patriarchal pressures to remain concealed" (83). Rather, it is a hollowed out conceptualization of race, religion and, perhaps most notably, gender that incites and sustains the patriarchal violence against veiled women in the West. While the veil singles out Muslim women as potential victims of gendered, Islamophobic violence, it is the perceived weakness of their physical bodies that enables the "foot soldiers" to act out their patriarchal violence as a way of re-centering the nation's values and politics.

The process of re-centering the nation's values and politics also relies on a less obvious form of violence—an internalization of self-disciplining violence. In order to elucidate this process, I turn to Michel Foucault's description of Jeremy Bentham's design of the panopticon. Foucault describes the panoptic structure as an annular building along the periphery with a tower at the centre, the periphery constituted by a number of prison cells (200). The lighting and structural arrangement of the tower in relation to the peripheral cells induces "in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (201). The supervisor in the cental tower maintains invisibility, whereas inmates along the periphery constantly remain objects of information but never subjects in communication (200). Central to the invisible power dynamic of the panopticon is the notion that inmates constantly see the "outline of the central tower from which [they are] spied" (201), but never know whether they are "being looked at at any one moment" (201). Under conditions of potential and perpetual surveillance, Foucault suggests that inmates internalize the power relationship of the "see/being seen dyad" (202), and govern themselves accordingly by becoming "principle[s] of [their] own subjection" (203).

As such, we can imagine the panopticon as a symbol of the nation, not as the rigid, physical structure that Foucault describes, but as a symbolic representation of the invisible power dynamic and white settler ideologies situated at its centre. Bodies that cannot be placed within the racial or cultural purity of the centre as supervisors, are bodies that are designated to its surveilled periphery as inmates. If the nation's inmates adhere to its values and politics by visibly assimilating, the surveillance of their bodies is eased and a space for their inclusion is created. The inclusion of such bodies within the nation, however, is never quite permanent; it is invariably subject to a

degree of cultural slippage. As inmates or guests of the nation whose main duty is to appease its supervisors or hosts, any deviation from their assimilative duties can render their presence within the nation as adversarial and subject to physical discipline. Their inclusion is contingent upon satisfying the stipulations set out by the supervisors or hosts, achieved not only by being pre-emptively disciplined, but also by pre-emptively disciplining themselves. Baljit Nagra's and Paula Maurutto's recent study of borders and racialized identities in airports post-9/11, demonstrates that the "threat of potential 'Muslim terrorists' has become the strongest rationale for increasing regressive border policies throughout the global North, making the racial profiling and targeting of Muslim identity central to border management" (171). Participants in their study experienced more stops and searches at airports and land crossings because of the perceived Muslim-ness read on their bodies. Nagra and Maurutto determine that the ambiguity surrounding random checks allows border officials to avoid "serious scrutiny while maintaining institutionalized race-based practices" (177). This ambiguity also encourages acts of self-disciplining, by which several participants willingly removed physical markers of Muslim-ness, such as the hijab on women and beards on men, as a way of reducing their visibility as Muslims, and avoiding the scrutiny and surveillance that is read on their bodies otherwise. If we imagine the securitized space of the airport as the assimilative space of the nation, both demand an internalized, self-disciplining performance from visibly Muslim bodies. Those who fail to perform or comply experience the exclusionary consequences of rejecting the "nationally valued social and cultural preferences" (185).

Malik and the San Bernardino Shooting: Post-violence and American Triumphalism

With over ninety-five per cent of mass shootings in the US committed by men, Malik's involvement in the San Bernardino shooting was described by the mainstream news media as an "anomaly" (Berkowitz *et al*.). Yet, as has already been noted, Malik and other veiled Muslim women became enveloped in a discourse of gendered Islamophobia and targets of gendered, Islamophobic violence. Claire Sisco King posits that, following 9/11, the gendered rhetoric etched onto the American imaginary was one of emasculation, as a "nation that was unable on 9/11 to protect its citizens from the terrorist attacks" (152). This type of gendered rhetoric regained intensity in the American imaginary as Malik, an "Islamic" female terrorist, imposed a more emasculating act of violence against the nation, one that not only broke the heteronormative and hypermasculine barriers of "Islamic terrorism" in the West, but one that also resisted the traditional, Orientalist tropes inscribed on Muslim women. As a way of restoring the nation's heteronormative order and recuperating from the emasculating act of terror in which the state was unable to protect its

citizens yet again, Malik's veiled and unveiled body became the subject of a discourse of American triumphalism.

Soon after the San Bernardino attack, the mainstream news media circulated photographic images of Malik's veiled body, conjuring images of the "bad" Muslim woman. Mahmood Mamdani locates the "good" Muslim/"bad" Muslim dichotomy in what he describes as two versions of "contemporary Culture Talk," a discourse that dates back to the end of the Cold War, and "claims to interpret politics from culture, in the present and throughout history, but neither version of Culture Talk is substantially the work of a historian" (27). As a vacuous representation of history, Mamdani identifies Samuel P. Huntington and Bernard Lewis as the "fathers" of contemporary Culture Talk. He designates Lewis as the one "who provides the intellectual support for the notion that there are 'good' as opposed to 'bad' Muslims, an idea that has become the driving force of American foreign policy" (31). Differentiating between Huntington's and Lewis' hypotheses, Mamdani writes, "[w]hereas Huntington had issued a clarion call for the West to get ready for a clash of civilizations, Lewis has a different point: the West must remain a bystander while Muslims fight their internal war, pitting good against bad Muslims" (31-32). Yet, as Mamdani notes, if Lewis provides the intellectual support for the "good" Muslim/"bad" Muslim dichotomy, Huntington provides the political support:

> Rather than wait for "good" Muslims to triumph over "bad" Muslims, as Lewis counsels, the Bush administration is determined to hasten such a civil war. If necessary, as in Iraq, it is prepared to invade and bring about a regime change intended to liberate "good" Muslims from the political yoke of "bad" ones. (32)

We can apply the understanding of this dichotomy to perhaps the most widely circulated image of Malik and Farook in the news media: the surveillance image captured by US Customs and Border Protection on 27 July 2014 at Chicago O'Hare International Airport.

In this image, Malik stands front and centre in what appears to be a chador with Farook in the background, donning a taqiyah and a beard. The wide circulation of this surveillance image reinforces the notion that "good Muslims are modern, secular, and Westernized, but bad Muslims are doctrinal, anti modern, and virulent" (32). The "good" Muslims are those whom Thobani calls "the anti-hijabis" (237), the ones who assimilate and "berate other ['bad'] Muslims for their cultural backwardness…for revealing such backwardness by wearing the headscarf, the chador, or the veil" (237). Mamdani, however, reminds us that the "good" Muslim/"bad" Muslim dichotomy is not quite fixed, and can collapse on itself in crisis situations and under political pressures. The central message behind the Bush administration's discourse post-9/11 was, as Mamdani points out, that "unless proved to be 'good,' every Muslim was presumed to be 'bad'" (22). Thus, with the circulation of the surveillance image of Malik and Farook—at an international airport of all places—one not only recalls the aerial nature of the terrorist attacks on 9/11, but one is also reminded of the dissipating "good" Muslim/"bad" Muslim dichotomy.

The recent escalation of violence against Muslims in the West reflects the arbitrariness of such collapsible, dichotomous categories. The attacks on Muslim women, children and men, as well as Muslim homes, institutions, and mosques, indicates a fragmentation of the "good" Muslim/"bad" Muslim dichotomy. Mamdani asserts that "[t]here are no readily available 'good' Muslims split off from 'bad' Muslims.... The presumption that there are such categories masks a refusal to address our own failure to make a political analysis of our times" (23).

The presumption that such bifurcating categories exist, even amidst the partial dismantling of them, fuels a politics of ethnic nationalism. The mass circulation of the surveillance image captured of Malik and Farook at the airport, operationalizes ethnic distinctions, particularly those related to veiled Muslim women. The violence that Malik inflicts against the nation not only inculpates veiled Muslim women in a discourse of "Islamic terrorism," but it cultivates a sense of imaginary, ethnic boundaries. As a permanent resident in the US with Pakistani citizenship, Malik's hostility and violence is also understood as a derivative of her foreignness and un-Americanness. On the other hand, as an American citizen, Farook's hostility and violence is understood, in part, as a consequence of being married to a foreigner rather than an American citizen. In fact, Malik was largely held accountable in news media discourse for Farook's radicalization. As *Fox News* reported, federal law enforcement investigators believed there was "a 'very serious' possibility that Tashfeen Malik…radicalized her husband and co-assailant" (Housley). *CNN* correspondent Brian Todd stated that "officials [we]re investigating whether Tashfeen Malik was the one who turned her husband into a radical" (Ahmed). The claim is exacerbated yet again by Christian Nwadike, Farook's co-worker, who told *CBS* that he believes Farook "married a terrorist" (Ahmed). These news media narratives reignited a discourse of ethnic nationalism, which situated the pretext for the domestic terrorist attack in San Bernardino outside the US, and on Malik's foreign body as a Pakistani citizen. As an American-born Muslim, Farook is seen, however marginally, as a domestic victim of foreign influence and radicalization. As a non-American citizen and veiled Muslim woman, Malik is viewed as the provocateur for an act of domestic terrorism that, according to a politics of ethnic nationalism, would have likely not occurred without her foreign intervention, influence and presence within the nation.

The police killings of Malik and Farook and the resulting triumph over their act of terrorism, signals a return to reductive binaries rooted in the masculinity and superiority of the West over the femininity and inferiority of the East. As one of the driving forces behind the full-circle return to a reinvigorated Orientalist discourse, Malik's body is seen to "invite" violence in similar ways that Said describes the geographical representations of the weak, or undeveloped regions of the Orient as being "viewed as something inviting [colonial] interest, penetration, [and] insemination" (219). The discourse surrounding Malik's body this time around, however, is articulated through the

visual, image-making apparatus of the news media. In this form of visual culture—which Nicholas Mirzoeff partly defines as "visual events in which information, meaning or pleasure is sought by the consumer in an interface with visual technology" (3)—Malik's deceased and unveiled body becomes a site of what I refer to as post-violence, a secondary violence administered against the body as a means of delivering a larger social, cultural and/or political message. The message, however it may be read or interpreted on Malik's deceased body, does not begin with the legally justified police killing, but, rather, with the way in which her already deceased body is unnecessarily violated after its death. In this context, the notion of post-violence attempts to understand some of the cultural and political implications that the image-making apparatus of the news media has on consumers of visual culture.

To clarify the idea of post-violence, I entreat the reader to peruse the visual footage and images captured by mainstream news media outlets, such as *ABC 7 Eyewitness News* and *Fox 10 Phoenix*, of the militarized police response to Malik's deceased body, which I will attempt to briefly summarize for the reader in some detail below. In the news media footage and images, militarized police officers in armoured vehicles surround Malik's and Farook's bullet-riddled sports utility vehicle (SUV). They approach Malik's already fatally incapacitated body inside the SUV with extreme caution, her body still posing a clear and present danger to the safety of the police. The heightened caution exercised by the police in their approach to Malik's body, is indicative of a racialized inclination to situate her veiled Muslim body within the narrative of the "Islamic" suicide bomber. Although Malik's deceased, veiled body is divested of the radical, agentic power necessary to commit an act of suicide bombing, it is nevertheless presumed to be weaponized because it is veiled. The veil, thus, does not represent a religious garment, but a garment that is used to conceal the presumed weaponization of her "Islamic" body. Achille Mbembe describes the weaponized body through the figure of the suicide bomber as follows:

> The candidate for martyrdom transforms his or her body into a mask that hides the soon-to-be-detonated weapon. Unlike the tank or the missile that is clearly visible, the weapon carried in the shape of the body is invisible. Thus concealed, it forms part of the body. It is so intimately part of the body that at the time of detonation it annihilates the body of its bearer, who carries with it the bodies of others when it does not reduce them to pieces. The body does not simply conceal a weapon. The body is transformed into a weapon, not in a metaphorical sense but in the truly ballistic sense. (36)

As Mbembe explains, the body becomes a weapon in the ballistic sense only by annihilating itself, by being transformed into a weapon rather than simply concealing one. For the police apparatus, however, the weaponization of Malik's veiled body as a presumed suicide bomber does not rest on the annihilation of itself. Instead, Malik's body and, chiefly, the veil, not only conceals the presumed weaponization on her body, it becomes a weaponized extension of her body, a symbol of cultural and corporeal annihilation in the West. The

presumption of corporeal danger inscribed on Malik's veiled body is embedded in a process of racialization, one that renders her deceased body as an ongoing threat, a potential trap she has set for her prey (36).

As a way of de-weaponizing the racialized threat written on and concealed by Malik's veiled body, the police engage in an act of unveiling. Her deceased body is unveiled for public consumption, the act consumed en masse through news media footage and images, where the following general sequence of events is observed: police drag Malik's deceased body out of the SUV with a catch pole, taking cover behind armoured vehicles; after extracting her limp body from the SUV, they allow it to collapse on to the street below; her body is unveiled, de-weaponized and declared safe by the police; and finally, white police officers emerge from behind their armour and stand guard over her deceased, bloodied, half-naked and unveiled body.

This specific sequence of events constitutes what I consider an act of post-violence, facilitated by the aforementioned processes of racialization that give it shape. In this case, the effectiveness of post-violence as a social, cultural, and/or political message delivered through the news media, relies on the image-making apparatus of the news media, which produces and disseminates the images for mass consumption. Unfortunately, one of the pitfalls with the production and dissemination of images in the news media is a propensity to process visual images as representations of objective truths or reality. The immediacy with which images reach their audiences for consumption, described by Mirzoeff as "a sensual immediacy that cannot be rivalled by print media" (9), seemingly reduces the misrepresentation that can occur in the traditional framing of news media narratives. But as Mirzoeff notes, "photography's claim to represent truth" has largely been dismissed in popular culture through manipulative technologies, or fictitious representations of reality (8). Although images as representations of reality have been cast in a shadow of suspicion and may "bear no resemblance to reality at all," they are still consumed by large audiences (8). Mirzoeff gestures toward the soap opera as the epitome of reality destruction on television—representations of an unreal reality—which, as "the most international visual format, command national attention in countries as disparate as Russia, Mexico, Australia and Brazil" (9). However, unlike the soap opera, the function of the news media is to report and represent, accurately or inaccurately, on events that are grounded in some form of reality. The immediacy with which news footage and images are delivered to mass audiences for mass consumption, in contrast to comparably, lengthy productions of other television programs, reduces the dismissal of news media footage and images as mere, suspicious representations of reality. If the audience believes it sees exactly what the news image-making apparatus sees when it sees it, then the footage and images presented for public consumption by the news image-making apparatus may be falsely interpreted as a representation of some objective truth or reality.

Conclusion

While the image-making process itself might exist in an ephemeral state of "unframed-ness," from the moment the image is conceived to the moment it is disseminated, the subsequent consumption of any news media footage and images are dictated by the traditional verbal and textual framing devices of conventional news media discourse. As a site of post-violence, news footage and images of Malik's deceased body not only elicits the visual consumer's existing political and cultural biases and subjectivities, but the verbal and textual framing devices built into traditional news media discourse can manipulate those biases and subjectivities, and bolster paradoxical narratives of veiled Muslim women. On the one hand, veiled Muslim women are subjected to a neo-Orientalist discourse that views their bodies as assertive, multifarious threats to western society. On the other hand, they are simultaneously subjected to traditional, Orientalist discourse that views their bodies as passive and docile sites of violence.

Out of these paradoxical narratives emerges a new but familiar narrative of American triumphalism, one that feeds on the social, cultural and/or political message delivered through the post-violence levied against Malik's body. The violence in post-violence ceases to be violence when the subject of violence cannot be imagined as a victim of violence. The footage and images of post-violence promulgated against Malik's veiled body, fails to register as violence in the national imaginary because her body—and others like hers—are excluded from the national imaginary. Bodies that willingly bring violence to the nation from outside the nation are bodies that cannot register violence in the national imaginary. Their violence is so monstrous and reprehensible that any violence done to them, no matter how egregious, is done to protect the nation against further emasculation. The post-violence imposed on Malik's body does not register as violence but as a necessary act that fulfills the narrative of American triumphalism, a reclamation and recalibration of the hegemonic and heteronormative order of the nation.

Yet, even in this real moment of terror, in the face of a reality that saw Malik and Farook shoot, wound and kill innocent people in San Bernardino, it is uncomfortable but difficult to ignore the imagery of domination, siege and occupation impressed on Malik's deceased and unveiled body. Even as a terrorist, it is difficult to ignore the dehumanizing post-violence inflicted on her body. This, of course, does not require the consumer of the news footage and images to sympathize or empathize with Malik's unredeemable act of terrorism; rather, it requires an honest realization that the post-violence imposed on her body is constituted and driven by processes of racialization. Take, for example, police dashboard footage released to the news media of the arrest of Dylaan Roof, the white, 21-year old shooter who killed nine black churchgoers at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Roof, who was considered armed and dangerous by police, was arrested without incident by a white police officer who approached Roof's driver-side

door with his firearm holstered, as most of the other officers casually stood by. In contrasting one police response to the other, we observe how processes of racialization create degrees of tolerance for dangerous, white bodies, while creating a xenophobic intolerance for dangerous, brown or Muslim bodies.

We know for certain that Malik's deceased, veiled body clearly posed more of an insidious risk to responding police officers than did Roof's armed, white body. We also know that processes of racialization have a tendency to influence the legal, political and public discourse on terrorism. One may ask why Malik's and Farook's mass shooting was identified as an act of terrorism while Roof's mass shooting was not? One may be even more inclined to ask why the recent vehicular attack in Charlottesville, Virginia on 12 August 2017 was not declared an act of terrorism, whereas the vehicular attack in Barcelona, Spain on 17 August 2017 was? The discourse on terrorism tends to proliferate the mainstream news media through various legal and political experts, who weigh in on the legal and political merits of terrorism without delving too deeply into the processes of racialization that help shape the discourse. Public opinion and discourse on terrorism is, therefore, tainted by the invisible power of whiteness that regulates and polices the discourse. By failing to directly address the deep-seated processes of racialization in the discourse of terrorism, we fail to recognize the ways in which legal, political and news media institutions are complicit in the frenzy that continues to feed violent forms of Islamophobia in the West.

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