

**CITIZENSHIP, RACE, AND NATIONALISM IN  
CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH-CANADIAN NEWSPAPER  
REPRESENTATIONS OF MUSLIMS, ARABS, AND SOUTH ASIANS**

by

Wendy Naava Smolash  
Masters of Arts in English, University of Guelph, 2004  
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in English, Trent University, 2002

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
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## APPROVAL

**Name:** Wendy Naava Smolash  
**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy  
**Title of Thesis:** Citizenship, Race, and Nationalism in Contemporary English-Canadian Newspaper Representations of Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians

**Examining Committee:**

---

**Dr. Peter Dickinson**  
Professor of English  
Graduate Program Chair

---

**Dr. Jeff Derksen**  
Senior Supervisor  
Associate Professor of English

---

**Dr. David Chariandy**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Reader  
Associate Professor of English

---

**Dr. Proma Tagore**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Reader  
Independent Scholar

---

**Dr. Larissa Lai**  
Internal Examiner  
Assistant Professor of English  
University of British Columbia

---

**Dr. Yasmin Jiwani**  
External Examiner  
Associate Professor of Communication Studies  
Concordia University

**Date Defended/Approved:**

---

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## Abstract

This dissertation critiques national English-Canadian newspaper representations of Muslims, Arabs and South Asians in the context of national narratives about Canada. I explore these tensions in the context of Canadian Literary Studies as a cultural field, exploring the gap produced in the encounter between Canadian literary narratives of nation and actual immigration regimes that produce expanding categories of precarious citizenship status within Canada. Because I approach newspaper texts as narrative, this dissertation weaves together Race Theory, Frames Theory, and the literary practice of reading against the grain to critique newspaper representations in *The Globe and Mail*, *The National Post*, and, where relevant, two Vancouver newspapers that contain significant discussion of the national: *The Vancouver Sun* and *The Province*. It examines discourses of race and nation in four case studies: Project Thread, the Toronto 18, Security Certificates, and the sanctuary story of Laibar Singh, and juxtaposes these national narratives with critiques of legal citizenship structures emerging within the contemporary migrant justice movement. Bringing Race Theory to bear on news framing within these national media texts, I explore the ways in which the racialization of human bodies within naturalized social hierarchies informs the dominant frame in each case study, and the ways in which contestations of hegemony emerge in the struggle to establish frames. This struggle over framing, which shapes and is shaped by the material realities of the country, reveals tensions over the very definition of nationally resonant concepts such as Multiculturalism, Citizenship, Immigration, or the meaning of Canada.

**Keywords:** Race Theory; Canadian Literature; Nation and Nationalism; Citizenship; Frames; Multiculturalism; Immigration; Security; State; Neoliberalism; Canada; Migrant Justice; Newspapers; Media; National Post; Globe and Mail; Vancouver Sun; Vancouver Province; Project Thread; Toronto 18; Security Certificates; Laibar Singh; Sanctuary

Dedicated with deep gratitude to  
Tom-Pierre Frappé-Sénéclauze and Myka Tucker-Abramson,

to my family

and to all of my teachers, present and past

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All oversights and inconsistencies remain the responsibility of the author.

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**Introduction:  
We Stand on Guard Against Thee:  
Race, Citizenship, and Canadian Newspapers**

*“Culture will always work through its textualities –  
and at the same time [...]textuality is never enough”  
– Stuart Hall, “Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies”*

I know that I speak for Members on all sides of the House today in offering to Japanese Canadians the formal and sincere apology of this Parliament for those past injustices against them, against their families, and against their heritage, and our solemn commitment and undertaking to *Canadians of every origin* that such violations will never again in this country be countenanced or repeated.

-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, House of Commons debates,  
22 September 1988 (emphasis added)

The first time I read that famous passage, while I was writing my Master’s thesis, the words that stood out for me in Prime Minister Brian Mulroney’s 1988 apology to Japanese Canadians were ‘of every origin.’ What those hard-won words meant to me then was that although this apology was specifically to Japanese Canadians for the way they were treated, an important gain of that specific struggle was a win not only for Japanese Canadians, but for all of us who call this country home. In the future, or so I believed, *all people*, regardless of race, culture, ethnicity, nationality, would be protected from the kind of structural, systemic racism that characterized the governments’ treatment of those deemed threatening others in Canadian society during the war years.

In many ways, Mulroney’s words, and the warnings that resonate through them, signify today just as they did then. While the targeted communities have changed, citizens

deemed outsiders within the nation are still – or are once again – targeted for discrimination based on racialized markers of identity, such as names, appearance, or religious practice. Five years later, however, revisiting these words as I write my PhD dissertation, I am suddenly struck by the weight of a different word, which until recently escaped my awareness. The phrase ‘Canadians of every origin’ takes on a different resonance as the italics dance and relocate before my eyes. Faced with the glittering generalities that slid so easily past my senses half a decade ago, today my eye hits a new snag in ideological space: the word *Canadians*. In the intervening years since this famous apology, legal citizenship has ossified and become more exclusive, as the numbers and categories of people deemed non-citizens in Canada has expanded. What do Mulroney’s words mean in the context of today’s increasingly exclusive citizenship laws, that allow expanding numbers of people in to the country to work and live, but do not grant the protections of citizenship? Are Canada’s non-citizens not also to be protected from racism and discrimination? To say this another way: while racism against citizens, and calls for inclusivity for all citizens, continues to be an important and contentious struggle, legal citizenship status constitutes the new horizon of contemporary questions of justice and of inclusion in the national Canadian imaginary, whether in mass media or in literary texts.

The struggle to win equality for racialized identities within the field of Canadian Literary studies, and within the Canadian imaginary, has challenged and in many ways shifted the boundary of inclusion, but new exclusions have arisen as the state responds to and absorbs calls for equality. For Canadian literature scholars a vital gap exists in our debates over Canadianness, an erasure that tests the limit-point of any category called *Canadian Literature* or *Canada*: that is, legal citizenship. To be clear here, I am not saying that possessing legal citizenship automatically confers social or cultural inclusion or belonging; it

does not. As Will Kymlicka notes, “There are many forms of cultural exclusion, and they interact with common citizenship in different ways. [...] Various other groups [...] have historically been excluded from full participation in the national culture [...] despite possessing the common rights of citizenship” (173). While I do not wish to conflate citizenship with belonging,<sup>1</sup> I would like to note the ways in which the kinds of social belonging that are a site of struggle for racialized citizens and cultural workers within Canada are now also a key location of struggle for non-citizens within Canada, and that this struggle plays out in specific ways that both overlap with, and differ from, the ways belonging and cultural inclusion play out for racialized citizens. In this way, legal citizenship status, and its increasingly ossified exclusions of people who live in Canada, operate *both* as a ‘hard’ set of rights (or lack thereof), and as cultural exclusion; as I will explore further, the legal and the cultural faces of citizenship status are mutually constitutive and intertwined. Although laws and cultural paradigms of belonging continue to shift, to give way *and* to ossify under pressure, their new forms are as unjust as the explicitly race-based legal exclusions of the past, and just as unjust as the cultural/social exclusions of the present. Based in legal citizenship status and reaching deeply into the social and the ideological, these new exclusions are difficult to theorize because they are embedded in an existing discourse of inclusion and plurality that masks the “actually existing” realities of legal citizenship in the neoliberal state.

To illustrate, I would like to open by juxtaposing two statements that appear in a recruitment advertisement on the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) website. In

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<sup>1</sup> The four citizenship rights that Will Kymlicka’s discusses, rights that build social integration within “differentiated citizenship” in democratic countries (168) are useful here: in addition to the traditional civil, political, and social citizenship rights considered necessary for national integration with differentiated citizenship, Kymlick proposes a fourth, cultural citizenship (174), in which ‘minority’ cultures maintain and develop their cultural identity, in turn transforming the dominant culture, rather than merely being ‘tolerated’ within it.

its hiring call, CSIS states that it is an “equal opportunity employer” and simultaneously requires applicants to be “Canadian Citizens” (CSIS). Discussions of equity hiring aside – for they are not the point of this dissertation – the very possibility of this juxtaposition invites a question: how can these two statements coexist? What contemporary social reality allows citizenship status to remain the naturalized boundary of exclusion – particularly in light of the hundreds of thousands of non-citizens who make their lives in Canada on a long-term or permanent basis? In questioning the naturalization that allows these two statements to coexist on the CSIS website, I wish to argue that, while racialization and exclusion of citizens remains a very important concern, citizenship today constitutes one of the last frontiers (and I use that term consciously) of socially acceptable exclusion from the national imaginary, even as non-citizens form a large and growing constituency within Canadian society. The simultaneity of these two movements, one of increased inclusion (of non-citizens) and one of exclusion (from citizenship rights), are not coincidental; their relationship represents the contemporary manifestation of state control over (largely) racialized and economically marginalized bodies, identities, voices, and cultural imaginings. Citizenship and its implications are, thus, becoming an increasingly prominent preoccupation of our times. I would like to treat this CSIS recruitment call as an entry point into a discussion of a parallel process taking place in discussions over citizenship and national identity in Canadian literary debates.

First, to clarify terms: *status* in a Canadian immigration context (to distinguish it from the context of Aboriginal Status) refers to legal permission to live and work in the country. The notion of long-term “precarious status” refers to a spectrum of precarity that calls into question simplistic binaries of ‘citizen/non-citizen’ (Walia “Increasing” 1, Goldring et al 1). Goldring writes:

precarious status is marked by the absence of any of the following elements normally associated with permanent residence (and citizenship) in Canada: (1) work authorization, (2) the right to remain permanently in the country (residence permit), (3) not depending on a third party for one's right to be in Canada (such as a sponsoring spouse or employer), and (4) social citizenship rights available to permanent residents (e.g. public education and public health coverage). (241)

Forms of precarity include the 90,000 people per year assigned various categories of “temporary worker” status (CIC), a subjugated status that fills a particular labour market niche determined by the state, while denying citizenship rights and, increasingly, barring the path to eventual citizenship (Sharma, “On Being”), in a context in which basic human rights are contingent on citizenship status. Sharma observes in *Home Economics: Nationalism and the Making of Migrant Workers in Canada* that the number of migrant workers admitted annually whom the state considers ‘destined’ for eventual citizenship has inverted since the 1970s. In 1973, 57 percent of all workers entering the country were given landed status; by 2004, only 35 percent received landed status, while 65 percent of workers entering the country were not ‘destined’ for eventual citizenship (117), a complete inversion. In addition to these migrant workers on temporary employment authorizations, the concept of “precarious status” also refers to the social position of *non-status*, (also referred to as *out of status* in Canadian law, and frequently as *illegal* in the popular media): the estimated 200,000-500,000 people (Goldring et al, “Migratory” 252) living in Canada who, having usually arrived on a short-term visa, stay on to create a life, work, have children, and form lasting relationships, but are not granted full legal protections by the immigration apparatus. Hence, they exist in a precarious state, rendered vulnerable to labour market exploitation. As Sharma, Walia, Goldring and others observe, these forms of precarity are rapidly expanding under current neoliberal citizenship regimes. Taking into account these forms of precarity exposes a vital limit in contemporary Canadian Literary theorizing and representation.

## Canadian Literary Studies and Precarious Citizenship

Discussions of justice and equality in the Canadian cultural project have enlarged the boundaries of national culture to argue for the inclusion of racialized citizens' theorizations, literatures, and aesthetic norms as *Canadian*. However, this fight for inclusion, germinated as it was in an earlier cultural and political landscape, hinges on attempts to claim a piece of *Canada* or to affirm the *Canadianness* of multiple racialized people and communities. We cannot underestimate the importance of critiques within this mode that opened up space, and that continue to struggle, for non-white and non-Anglo-European voices and aesthetic practices within the English Canadian canon. This canon, as is well known, was originally built upon a cultural nationalist framework manifested, for instance, in Northrop Frye's 1965 *Conclusion* to the *Literary History of Canada* or Margaret Atwood's 1972 *Survival*.

Vital critiques challenged and expanded the reductive visions of "Canada" in that early canon. The critical recognition in the 1980s and 1990s of so-called ethnic anthologies point to emerging challenges and marked a period of profound shifts, struggles over national literary and cultural identity whose reverberations remain important. As Smaro Kamboureli writes in this period, "As the great number of ethnic anthologies and authors illustrate, ethnic literature is simply not emerging now; it is the critics who have just discovered it" ("Canadian" 13).<sup>2</sup> Linda Hutcheon and Marian Richmond's 1990 Anthology *Other Solitudes*

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<sup>2</sup> Kamboureli writes of this 'first wave': "Canadian ethnic anthologies, which began appearing with great frequency in the early 1980s, constitute the first consistent compilation of ethnic literature. Just a few examples of anthologies that illustrate the manifold and complex ways in which ethnicity is represented, as well as the ambivalent relations between official multiculturalism and ethnic literary discourse, are: *Harvest: An Anthology of Mennonite Writing in Canada 1874-1974*, edited by William De Fehr, et al. (1974); *PaperDoors: An Anthology of Japanese-Canadian Poetry*, edited by Gerry Shikatani and David Aylward (1981); *Hispanic Canadian Literature*, a trilingual anthology edited by Diego Marin (1984); *Other Voices: Writings by Blacks in Canada*, edited by Lorrin Elliott (1985); *A Shapely Fire: Changing the Literary Landscape*, edited by Cyril Dabydeen (1987); *Transplanted Lives: Dutch-Canadian Stories and Poems*, compiled by Hendrika Ruger (1988); *Italian-Canadian Voices*, edited by Caroline Morgan DiGiovanni (1984); *Chilean Literature in Canada*, a bilingual anthology edited by Naín Nómez (1982); and *Yarmarok: Ukrainian Writing in Canada since the Second World War*, edited by Jars Balan and Yuri Klynovy (1987)" ("Canadian" 14-15).

sought to “recall and revise” the designation of Canada as bilingual or bicultural, invoked by the title’s reference to Hugh McLennan’s *Two Solitudes*. This groundbreaking anthology sought to “challenge [...] a hierarchy of social and cultural privilege” in Canadian literature (2). Smaro Kamboureli’s 1996 anthology *Making a Difference* reflected, and helped to produce, “the changed – and changing – state of cultural affairs in Canada” (*Making* xix), marking and helping contribute to a key moment in “Canadian literature’s overhaul” (xiii). The 1994 *Writing Thru Race* conference broke open these questions, and fundamentally altered the way national literary culture could be understood. Meanwhile, Dionne Brand’s 1994 book of essays *Bread out of Stone* foregrounds the relationship between Canadian culture and white European masculinity when Brand recounts her experience as a jury for the Governor-General’s Award for poetry (Brand 129). Roy Miki’s 1995 essay “Asiarcy: Making Space for Asian Canadian Writing” critiques dominant assumptions about the ‘universality’ of *aesthetic* norms by pointing to their basis in European literary aesthetics as taught through the traditional literary canon. His work called into question the underlying assumption that Canadian aesthetic values should be grounded in white European literary traditions.<sup>3</sup> He writes:

Assimilationist assumptions, mostly unspoken, [...] and the ideology of white, male, European-based values still reigns in literary institutions, in granting bodies, and in decision-making areas of the publishing world. In a climate where difference is pressed into sameness, and where “universality” implies white perceptions [...Publishing] still requires conformity to dominant representations, to socially determined “tastes,” and to transparent literary expectations that govern what gets to be judged of “national significance”

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3 As Miki observes at the time, the older and already very established writer Dorothy Livesay could intend her poetic radio play “Call My People Home” as a “documenting” of the Japanese Canadian expulsion - yet Japanese Canadian voices were not yet invited to shape the public narrative as full members of Canadian society and Canadian literary production. Livesay, Atwood and others, however well-intentioned, at the time envisioned Japanese Canadians as “others” within the polity (as “Japanese” rather than “Japanese Canadian”), granted limited space only when their stories made sense within already-dominant cultural dialogues. Miki’s work successfully foregrounded and critiqued these assumptions, calling into question notions of ‘universality’ that were the dominant narrative about literary merit at the time.

and “of consequence” – reinforced as they are by an elaborate system of awards, rewards, media privileges, canonization, and ultimately, institutionalization. (*Broken Entries* 109)

In addition to working to change the conditions of publication and reception for writers of colour and Indigenous writers in Canada, the work to transform the Canadian literary canon was, and continues to be, deeply committed to the project of transforming the broader Canadian imaginary – and the *material realities* of the country – through changing the cultural landscape, the world of representations. This kind of expansion reshaped the Canadian canon to include writing by and about ‘other’ Canadians who had been largely excluded from full participation in national dialogue about literature and Canadian culture. New identities were made publicly available through this critical and creative work.

It has become increasingly apparent that as racialized subjects (from multiple, internally heterogeneous, different communities) were fighting for inclusion in this national identity, throughout the late 80s and the 90s, the state was shifting under their fingers.

Larissa Lai writes:

The state in which some of us were fighting for our rights [...] was changing its shape in the midst of and through that struggle. Just at that moment when it looked possible that the voices repressed by the old (not-quite) democratic state might be admitted into that old (not-quite) democratic state, the old (not-quite) democratic state began to morph into the neo-liberal state we have today. (121)

At the same time that a pluralist literary vision of Canada began to win key victories in the cultural sphere, the state itself absorbed and redeployed this new, expanded multiculturalism for its increasingly neoliberal ideology, internally and externally.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> As Jennifer Scott and Myka Tucker-Abramson argue, in this period, while small presses were shut down or swallowed up by conglomerates, and independent bookstores lost out to Chapters/Indigo, the tropes of Multiculturalism, Identity, and Diaspora became increasingly accepted and celebrated. This nexus of big business and cosmopolitan nationalism is most clear in the Giller Prize’s emergence and its subsequent



In response to successful calls for equality, a shift was taking place – the shift which constitutes my focus here – in which this neoliberal turn pitted “Canadians” (identified here as those who possess legal citizenship status, as well as those who sit comfortably within the ideological position of a “Canadian” identity) against a growing category of disenfranchised non-citizens: those with precarious or no legal status, including those in the growing legal category of non-citizen workers, who are kept in a long-term borderland within the nation-state itself, situated on the lowest rungs of the economy and kept in a state of permanent precarity.

These rapid shifts to the state apparatus have created a gap between the material realities of the state, and contemporary discussions of the national, particularly in debates over justice within a Canadian literary context. Thus, in *Broken Entries*, in a discussion of Makeda Silvera’s “Caribbean Chameleon,” Miki stresses the injustice of “woman in black polka dot pantsuit” (126) being treated as an alien by border guards. In Miki’s argument, her claim to fair treatment and inclusion is not, or not primarily, her humanity, or her time spent living on this land, or her hours of work, or her community ties, but the fact of her “having landed papers” (126). This naturalization of rights based on legal status, which was necessary as a form of claim-making in its cultural and political moment, today risks reifying the growing exclusions represented by contemporary citizenship regimes. Miki’s argument, emancipatory with regard to an earlier regime, may mask the ways in which class, which traditionally bifurcated<sup>5</sup> the ways people could access citizenship (as, for instance, skilled or unskilled workers), today increasingly offers citizenship only to those with class privilege and

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partnership with Scotiabank. The “Canadian values” that the Canadian nationalist left were fighting for, and the “value” of ethnic diversity that early critics of the explicitly racist white nation-state fought for before that, were swallowed up and spat out as the market values of multiculturalism. These values were espoused and exploited by partnerships between capitalist publishing conglomerates, booksellers, and the Scotiabank Giller Prize. (Scott and Tucker-Abramson 14).

<sup>5</sup> Thank you to David Chariandy for providing this insight.

denies it entirely to those without. If the ‘woman in black polka dot pantsuit’ were returning to Canada today after her visit to Jamaica, all else being equal, she would most likely be doing so on a temporary work permit rather than with landed status, no matter how long she had made Canada her home.

Miki’s *Redress* touches on these shifts to the nation-state that had already begun by Mulroney’s famous 1988 apology, with the coming of the Free Trade agreements and neoliberal revisioning of the meaning of Canada (323-325). Miki also explores these shifts, as well as the impact of the Japanese Canadian redress movement on other movements for redress of historical wrongs, in the interview “After Redress.” However, these discussions do not follow that line of reasoning to its logical next step: to consider the cultural import of new bureaucratic technologies of exclusion. The appeal to rights based on place of birth, which has become so vital to Canadian Literature as a field post-redress, situates *citizenship* rights as a prerequisite for *human* rights, a claim which no longer makes sense in light of expanding modes of precarity. Miki writes that in order to become equal members of Canadian society, Japanese Canadians had to “read themselves into [the Canadian] nation as ‘citizens,’” to “situate themselves in the narrative of nation-building [...] through the rights and responsibilities of citizenship” (323). Similarly, he writes of the terrible injustice faced by Japanese Canadians treated as enemy aliens – by specifically claiming rights “in this place of birth” (29). This mode of claim-making takes on new meaning in light of neoliberal state policy that *prevents* the children of long-term migrant workers from being born here, by *preventing migrant couples from being together in Canada*, even when individual parents work here as

so-called temporary labour for years on end.<sup>6</sup> New state and capitalist responses to the same old desire for exploitable labour find ways to circumvent the “problem” of birthright for those the state today deems desirable for hard cheap labour, but undesirable for citizenship.

The categories that lead to eventual citizenship are shrinking and becoming more difficult than ever to use, while those that lead to work *without* citizenship have expanded significantly in the very period when Canadian citizenship was reinventing itself as race-blind. Sharma writes, “on the one hand, the Canadian government removed explicitly racist restrictions on immigration from the South in 1967 through regulatory changes. On the other hand, in 1973 the NIEAP was introduced, which served to deny some people access to Canadian entitlements while recruiting them to work in Canada” (“On Being” 428).

Capitalist modes of accumulation, and the exploitation facilitated by legal citizenship, rely profoundly on one another. In “Transient Servitude: Migrant Labour in Canada and the Apartheid of Citizenship,” Walia writes:

In Canada, migrant worker programmes involve being tied to the importing employer; low wages, often below the official minimum, and long hours with no overtime pay; dangerous working conditions; crowded and unhealthy accommodation; denial of access to public healthcare and employment insurance, despite paying into the programmes; and being virtually held captive by employers or contractors who seize identification documents. It is their temporary legal status that makes migrant workers extremely vulnerable to abuse [...] Migrant workers thus represent the ‘perfect workforce’ in an era of evolving global capital-labour relations: commodified and exploitable; flexible and expendable. [...] Canadian migration policy is the result of a perfected system of social control, containment and expulsion. (“Transient” 72)

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<sup>6</sup> A typical example is the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), which does not allow the spouses of migrant farm workers to come with them to Canada, and which requires workers to return to their home countries for four months each year in order to deny them residency in Canada – even though workers live in Canada for up to eight months out of the year, in many cases returning to the same employer each farming season for years or decades. (Walia, “Transient,” Paz, “Harvest”)

At the same time, the production of the category of the non-citizen within Canada is produced through both legal and textual cultural imaginings, as Sharma observes in her analysis of parliamentary debates (“On Being” 427). Thinking with Sharma, and considering not only migrant workers but all forms of precarious status in Canada, we wish to argue that state practices are important not only in their direct material effects, but in their relationship to ideological complacencies and naturalizations that are mutually constitutive of laws and state policies. Claims made for justice and inclusion must now be understood in light of the kinds of traction they gain and give up within the state’s newer neoliberal paradigm. Given our emphasis on citizenship rights, Canadian literary discussions must now grapple with the implications of this ‘actually existing’<sup>7</sup> citizenship. Therefore, in addition to discussing representation of *citizens* racialized as Others in Canadian nationalist narratives, this dissertation propose that denaturalizing representations of the *non-citizen* in Canada, taking the lead from the theorizing produced within the migrant justice movement, is urgently needed.

### **Race, Class, Status: Old and New Racisms**

As I say above, Canadian literary criticism as a field urgently needs to respond to the precarious forms of citizenship status created by the neoliberal state. In this context, the theories and knowledge emerging from within the grassroots migrant justice movement are instructive, and bring any debate over who can *claim* Canada as their own into sharp relief – putting the idea “Canada” itself into question. Canadian literary criticism must now grapple with the growing precipice formed by the proliferation of legal categories of non-status and precarious identity through laws and programs such as the Live-In Caregiver Program, the

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<sup>7</sup> Thanks to Jeff Derksen for suggesting the term in this context.

Seasonal Agricultural Worker's Program, NAFTA, the Security and Prosperity Partnership, the Safe Third Country agreement, "Fortress North America" policies, as well as Western-led militarization and economic instability that displaces increasing numbers of people while hardening borders against human movement. To ground this analysis, it is necessary to observe the ways in which the border, in the shape of Canadian Border Services Agency agents, or demands to produce identification or submit to late-night interrogations, follows people into school, work, shopping malls and public streets (No One Is Illegal-Toronto, "Stop the Raids," "Deportation Canada"), and into the homes, living rooms and bedrooms (Quan) of people with precarious status who make their homes in Canada. Though the details of how this legal social control takes place have taken on new forms, the ideological work of the Canadian literary apparatus today normalizes (and has the power to contest) contemporary relationships of exploitation, as older representations did for older exploitative forms.<sup>8</sup>

In this neoliberal context, to resist injustice by mobilizing a discourse of birthright and status inadvertently ignores the mistreatment of the growing numbers of people who live in Canada without the protections of citizenship or even of landed status. These forms of precarity (Goldring et al.) are an increasingly prominent mode of control (Walia, "Increasing") within the contemporary state apparatus, and are naturalized by the storying of racialized non-citizens as outsiders in the national imaginary, in representations that are, I propose, both continuous and discontinuous with already-established discourses of citizen outsiders, such as we see in the representation of the Toronto 18 and the discourse of the homegrown terrorist. These categories inform and pull at each other, and I will explore their

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<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of the continuities between today's migrant labour practices and historical forms of slavery and indentured servitude, see Harsha Walia's "Transient Servitude: Migrant Labour in Canada and the Apartheid of Citizenship."

overlaps and tensions in the body of the dissertation. The category of the “migrant worker,” Walia writes, meets the need of capital and justifies exploitation by situating non-citizens as less human than citizens (“Increasing” 15), while “exalting” and continually reproducing a certain kind of or idea of the citizen – as more liberal, more compassionate, more rational than its imagined Other (Thobani). The existence of the critiques of legal citizenship structures emerging from within the migrant justice movement trouble any claim-making that still relies on a naturalized idea of citizenship rights. Thus, Canadian Literary studies as a field must explore the cultural implications of the contemporary migration apparatus for our understanding of the limits of representation, narrative, and critique.

In a discussion of W.H. New’s *Literary History of Canada* in her 1994 essay “Canadian Ethnic Anthologies,” Smaro Kamboureli puts her finger on an argument that was to provide the groundwork for a new generation of critics:

Despite his intention to destabilize what “Canadian” signifies, New’s examination of the Canadian literary tradition still succumbs to the pitfalls of a certain nationalism that does not leave much room for discussing seriously the contributions of “other” Canadians. (13)

This statement raises an analysis that is still in many ways essential today. However, some 15 years later, the ‘Canadian’ invoked in the expression ‘other Canadians’ used above has become a more complicated term with which to resist these exclusions. This argument was radical under a specific regime of exclusion, and is still important, in that racialized citizens continue to be excluded from full cultural participation.<sup>9</sup> However, with the proliferating categories of precarious status in place today, in which increasing numbers of people are included in the country’s economic and social life without citizenship status, relying on this

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<sup>9</sup> Thank you to Christine Kim, Jeff Derksen, and David Chariandy for several important conversations that significantly strengthened this aspect of my argument throughout the dissertation.

appeal to ‘Canadian’ identity with its implicit core of legal citizenship rights naturalizes the state’s transformed modes of control. In so doing, it masks a new front to the struggle for equality for people of colour in Canada. As Cynthia Dewi Oka and Alison J. Ayers write, “the struggle for sovereignty problematic espoused by left-nationalists [...] inadequately frames effective resistance to continental integration” (25); the authors cogently observe the need to “question the progressive and solidaristic ethos of a nationalist politics based on the forcible exclusion and expulsion of increasing numbers of people” (46).

While the importance of these battles for equality for all citizens within the national imaginary cannot be underestimated, particularly since they are still ongoing, I want to foreground the ways in which, while working to expand the definition of what is ‘Canadian,’ some of the best writing of the multicultural turn also inadvertently reifies and naturalizes *Canada* as a legal apparatus and as an entity of law and enforcement. In light of the state’s response to these calls for inclusion, and the neoliberal turn, these discourses have been redeployed to camouflage the growing exclusions and violence perpetrated by the neoliberal state and its legal citizenship bureaucracy. As literary theorists, we must grapple with the *cultural* implications of these *legal* shifts in the nation-state, as they relate to the growing non-citizen identity in Canada.

Those who are today situated by dominant state discourse as outsiders within the nation are thus positioned in *both* old and new ways. They are positioned by the markers of race we are accustomed to thinking about, such as skin colour and other familiar signs of race that have nothing to do with genetics, such as names, styles of dress, religion, or facial hair. In addition to these ways we are accustomed to thinking about racialization in the Canadian context, however, the category of the migrant or the non-citizen has now also become a racialized one in public discourse. People who enter into or are interpellated by

this subject position are racialized by this process, are denied the protections that accrue with citizenship, and are naturalized as less human than those with citizenship status, a dehumanization that, as Sherene Razack observes employing Agamben's conception, positions certain *kinds* of human beings within a state of exception, a place in law where the law does not apply and where due-process protections are limited (*Casting* 29). This expulsion is an expansion and reconfiguration of racial profiling, in which 'having a profile' – i.e. the very fact of *being* a Muslim or Arab young man, a certain kind of social position and life history – is increasingly enough to justify the withdrawal of basic rights. As Razack argues based on Said's premise, "The terrorist as monster draws on a number of Orientalist images [...] monster terrorists lie forever beyond the law, and through them we become accustomed to the idea that there should be places where human beings have no rights" (29). In this dissertation, therefore, I explore racialization both of citizens and of non-citizens, and examine both the continuities and the discontinuities of those representations.

Explicit references to race are no longer part of immigration law, which today employs formal equality in its language. However, the desire for exploitable sources of labour expresses itself in the real application of the laws. In a sense, the racialized nature of Canadian immigration law has gone subterranean in immigration discourse. It has become an undertow that pulls racialized working class and poor people into specific locations not only within immigration law, but also within the national imaginary. The category of the Migrant Worker, Walia writes:

maintain[s] the sanctity of racialized cultural identities and the purity of national identity by legalizing the 'foreign-ness' of migrant workers, which then feeds into the racist cycle required to dehumanize them and declare them 'illegal' or 'undesirable' in order to justify their deplorable conditions. ("Increasing" 15)



In these important ways, when I speak of the position of racialized non-citizens in this dissertation, I am in fact always speaking about both gender and class, since these operate in interlocking and intersecting ways (Jiwani, *Denial* xii; Razack, *Looking*),<sup>10</sup> an intersection that is naturalized in today's Canadian immigration system.

Indeed, it is vital to observe the profound ways in which gender, class, and race are bound up together. Yasmin Jiwani writes:

Racialized and gendered violence are interconnected and interlocking. When one is privileged as an explanatory framework, it is often at the expense of the other, and vice versa. Further, these interlocking structures of domination certify that the ensuing violence is framed, understood, and responded to differently, all in the interests of retaining the basic structure of power and privilege of White dominance. (*Denial* xvii)

These representations are relational and intersecting and must be understood as such. The very power to name while remaining unnamed is a function of dominance. Jiwani writes: "In the dominant media, strategies of exnomination, naturalization, and universalization become the tools whereby dominance is affirmed as the normative frame of reference and whereby explanations that privilege race thinking are proffered as having the most explanatory value" ("Doubling" 59). Thus, categories of identity in media representations, both those that are named and those that are not named, rely profoundly on one another and structure one

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<sup>10</sup> Within the hierarchies of dominance that structure Canadian society, violence against racialized women and girls is differentially represented based on the social position of those involved: situated as individualized deviance when the perpetrator is whitened, and as evidence of the atavistic or 'problem' nature of racialized communities when the perpetrator is racialized (*Denial* 42, 87). Within the logic of "masculinist protection" that situates citizens as subordinate to state "protectors" (Young 22), racialized men are simultaneously positioned in a feminized relation of power in relation to the state, as defenceless and weak, reliant on the state for protection and governance (Jiwani and Dakroury 1). This structural racism positions racialized women experiencing violence in a fraught position with regard to naming and working to end violence against them, including mediated violence, because the larger structures of dominance within Canadian society impact and shape patriarchal violence within given racialized communities, and thus constrain the ways naming violence is received both within the dominant society's representative schemas and institutional structures, and within racialized communities thus represented (*Denial* 21). For more on the intersecting nature of gender and race in Canadian news media representations, see Doreen Indra's "The Invisible Mosaic: Women, Ethnicity and the Vancouver Press, 1905-1976."

another within systems of dominance. As Sherene Razack argues, the imperiled Muslim woman, the barbaric Muslim man, and the White civilized European are stock-in-trade figures of media representation, that come out of long Orientalist traditions, and that rely on one another (Razack, “Imperilled”). In order for the Muslim man to be constructed as a terrorist Other, the Muslim woman is constructed such that she is either a passive victim who requires rescue from Muslim men (Mohanty 57; Young 20; Razack, *Casting*; Jiwani, “Helpless” 728, *Denial* 188), or can be condemned as just as ‘dangerous’ as Muslim men (*Denial* 188).

Indeed, these gendered, racialized categories of identity and the social hierarchies that engender them are all intertwined. Capitalist modes of accumulation, and the exploitation facilitated by legal citizenship (which is itself structurally raced and gendered) rely profoundly on one another, and are naturalized by cultural representation that takes as an unquestioned foundation the centrality of legal citizenship in questions of belonging. Therefore, in addition to discussing representation of *citizens* racialized as “others” in Canadian nationalist narratives, I propose that denaturalizing representations of the *non-citizen* in Canada is urgently needed. In particular, critiquing popular cultural narratives of the “stranger danger” (Ahmed 4) flavour of the decade, the bogeyman of the post 9-11 era – narratives about Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians, whether as *terrorist threats*, *homegrown outsiders* or *undesirable* border crossers – is vital.

### **Case Studies and Methodology**

Keeping this context in mind, in this dissertation I analyze and critique print news representations of Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians (distinct, internally heterogeneous, and overlapping categories, often fused in media representation) in relation to national (and

nationalist) newspaper narratives of *Canada*. Specifically, this dissertation includes an introduction, a methodology chapter, a conclusion, and four case study chapters that examine coverage of those situated as outsiders within the nation-state in national discourse, both citizen and non-citizen: Project Thread, the Toronto 18, Security Certificates, and the Sanctuary story of Laibar Singh. The Project Thread, Toronto 18, and Security Certificates chapters analyze the Enemy Within frame at work, while the chapter on Laibar Singh's sanctuary case explores a frame at play that rests on notions of *illegality* and Canadian compassion, which intersect in important ways with the concept of non-citizens as threats to the dominant culture, and with discourses of criminality, undesirability, and risk.

The first two case studies compare two sets of media coverage in the national Canadian newspapers: the 2003 Project Thread detentions of twenty-four South Asian men wrongly accused of being a 'terrorist cell,' and the 2006 arrests of Canadian citizens and permanent residents under Antiterrorism law, a case which has come to be known as the Toronto 18. The next chapter builds on this analysis by examining newspaper narratives about Security Certificate detainees during the course of hunger strikes by detainees Hassan Almrei and Mohammad Mahjoub between June 24 and September 24, 2005. Instead of examining the role of citizenship in terms of difference or multiculturalism, these chapters explore news narratives about citizenship in their complicity with state violence that is physical as much as epistemological. Cultural analysis can contend with physical violence in teasing out the relationships between national discourse – represented here by the newspapers – and state enforcement, represented by the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA), Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and other policing bodies such as the Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams (INSET). Bringing together racialization in both national and state ideology brings

into relief the ways in which racialized categories are not based on phenotypical or genetic reality but are socially produced and contingent on temporal and ideological context; Japanese Canadians, for instance, are now popularly positioned within a restrictive model minority discourse, while Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians are the new enemy suspects in national narratives, made visible via a security discourse that racializes their bodies and criminalizes their communities, and justifies changes to the state structure. With this intersection in mind, I read these media stories as narratives that, open to literary analysis, pry open and critique Canada's dominant national security discourse.

As we have seen, borders are much more than geographical demarcations. The concept of the border works as an organizing metaphor that contains and regulates not just the actual people, goods, or traffic of various kinds of flows, but also the collective *idea* of the nation. Metaphors of a "brown tide" (Santa Ana, Morán, and Sánchez 1) seeking to 'flood' over the border, of mythologized others who want access to what 'we' (for some unexplored reason) possess, mobilize powerful discourses that build social cohesion among strangers who share citizenship, despite whatever actual interpersonal relationships may or may not exist between disparate members of the imagined nation. Furthermore, as Anna Pratt writes in *Securing Borders*, with the shift from a liberal to a neoliberal state, increasing discursive links exist between discourses of refugee claims, and those of crime-security. Pratt writes:

By the twenty-first century, immigration penalty in general and the practices of detention and deportation in particular had come to be governed through crime-security [...] the crime-security nexus and linked neoliberal preoccupations with risk and fraud have converged upon refugees in particular and troubling ways. A process has taken place in which the primary importance of identifying and protecting the refugee, the deserving victim 'at risk,' has been deemphasized and made contingent in the first instance on identifying and excluding the undeserving, possibly deceitful, and likely criminal 'risky' refugee claimant. (Pratt 2)

Coming after the terrorism stories, the Laibar Singh chapter highlights this nexus in contemporary neoliberal discourse between *security risks*, *criminality*, and *undesirability*, which brings into relief the ways in which these seemingly disparate stories are part of what Foucault would call a “carceral continuum” (*Discipline* 303), as I examine further in the conclusion. I explore the ways in which the conceptualization of ‘Canadians’ as inherently compassionate, rational, fair, and ethical are, paradoxically, simultaneously upheld and undermined in nationalist discourses. Indeed, as the case studies demonstrate, the particular ways that ‘Canadian identity’ is held up – as a location of compassion and justice – to justify uncompassionate and unjust treatment of non-Canadians who live within Canada, who are situated as less compassionate, less rational, less progressive, and therefore dehumanized, undermine those very claims to ‘Canadian values.’

I will examine the ways contested narratives and identities play out in and challenge the national imaginary in each case study, via a critique of newspaper representations in *The Globe and Mail*, *The National Post*,<sup>11</sup> and (in the Laibar Singh chapter) two Vancouver

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<sup>11</sup> *The National Post* grew out of the Financial Post and caters to Canada’s economic elite; its introduction as a second national newspaper in 1997 marked the reintroduction of openly partisan news in Canada. The weekday circulation of *The National Post* is 252,000. *The Globe and Mail* describes itself as “Canada’s National Newspaper, offering readers from coast to coast unparalleled national, international and business reporting, analysis and commentary.” It is thus popularly understood to operate with a standard of objectivity and media ethics. Its website states that *The Globe and Mail* “deliver[s] Canada’s best, deepest coverage of major national and international events – occasions when Canadians gravitate to *The Globe and Mail* for its comprehensive approach to significant happenings.” The “mandate” of the paper, according to its website, is as follows: “*The Globe and Mail* believes [...] that only an informed public can defend itself against power seekers who threaten its freedoms. Our mandate remains unchanged. We will continue to be the definitive national newspaper and to cover the country with insight and perspective”(22-3). It has the largest weekday circulation, with 1,325,000 readers. However, the national newspaper is in fact also a business paper, targeting an elite audience, as the website elaborates: “Each week, millions of quality readers experience *The Globe* through our award-winning newspaper, magazine, and Web sites. And, they’re not just anybody. They are the most sought after demographic with money to spend plus they are the most well educated, influential, and affluent Canadians. PMB’s latest newspaper readership data for 2006 confirms that *The Globe and Mail* dominates the national market and is enhancing the high-quality profile of its readership. [...] Additionally, the latest PMB 2006 data also demonstrates that Report On Business magazine with an average issue readership of 1,445,000 is Canada’s most read business magazine, providing the best reach to Canada’s most powerful and prosperous.” A sidebar reinforces this message, citing advertiser-friendly statistics: “Each weekday, *The Globe and Mail* reaches more Canadians with personal incomes of \$75 000 or more than any other newspaper in Canada.” (History)

newspapers that contained significant discussion of the national: *The Vancouver Sun* and *The Province*. As the Methodology chapter explains, because I am exploring newspaper narratives as story, and approaching newspapers as my ‘text,’ in this dissertation I weave together close reading, semiotic critique, Race Theory, and Frames. The concept of frames, which I will explore further in the Methodology chapter, allows for a foregrounding of the ways in which the struggle over hegemony plays out in newspaper narratives. Frames constrain the ways a given story can be understood, not by telling people which ‘side’ of a debate to take, but by defining the terms of the debate and the available ‘sides.’ As I will explore further, they (usually implicitly) ascribe causes, place blame, and propose solutions, all the while limiting the selection of what scope of possible realities, what options, can even be *thought about*. Through this process, frames shape and naturalize specific meanings of the terms they employ – in this case, terms relevant to national discussions about Canada and powerful with regard to state structures, such as *Multiculturalism*, *Immigration*, or the very concept of *Canadian identity*. They do so by granting increased salience to certain aspects of reality, and decreased salience to other aspects, so that the available ways to think about reality are limited and constrained before a debate can even take place. The battle over hegemony is thus waged in the struggle to establish and maintain dominant frames in news narratives. Grounding my analysis in the literary methodology of close reading and reading against the grain, while bringing Frames Theory to bear on these texts, I will juxtapose these newspaper narratives to the alternate frames mobilized by those being represented and/or the community groups that supported them, via media releases and public statements. I look at, contrast and compare representation of both non-citizens and of citizens/permanent residents, exploring the internal logics of each of these discourses and the interplays between them.

## Foundations

Before the analysis of specific news texts, I would like to offer some vital context – historical, political, legal, and personal – that underpins the analysis in the later chapters. First, I would like to respect the important tradition of writers and researchers situating ourselves with regard to the subjects we write about. As Edward Said famously argues, based on a Gramscian premise, “no one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of his life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or from the mere activity of being a member of society” (10). Thus, what is known is always informed by the subject position of the one who does the knowing. In coming to this critique, then, I wish to recognize my positions as a Canadian born into citizenship status, as whitened,<sup>12</sup> as an academic writing within an institutional setting that supports this work, and (although it is not the language of my ancestors) as Anglophone (i.e. a native speaker of English). The current social position of Ashkenazi Jews is also relevant. As light-skinned Europeans, Ashkenazim are situated as the normative Jewish identity and thus benefit from white privilege within a Jewish cultural context, in some ways displacing the knowledge and normativity of Jews of colour (Sephardic, Mizrahi, Beta Israel/Falasha, Hispanic/Latino, multiracial, convert, etc.). Simultaneously, Ashkenazi Jews in North America are generally situated within whiteness.

These forms of privilege, while they may be productive conceptually, protect me from being forced to perceive or confront many kinds of oppression if I so choose. These structural forces that systematically position human beings within society actively apply unearned privilege to those of us on the benefit-accruing side any given relationship,

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<sup>12</sup> Thanks to David Hudson for providing this term, which succinctly expresses the observation that the category of racialized whiteness, in all its material power, is always already a construction inscribed upon bodies in a contingent performance of race, rather than corresponding to phenotypical bodily qualities in any stable or fixed way.

including the privilege of not having to see what I don't want to see. That is not to say that I am somehow unable to perceive oppression, or that abdicating responsibility is an ethical option; structural oppression is a two-sided coin and the extent to which we benefit from privilege is the extent to which we have choice about whether to be participants in its maintenance; therefore we can and should choose to notice, and work for change.

On the other hand, I come to this writing from a liminal position within Canadian discourse, as a Jew, and in my father's working-class family, of the first generation born in Canada, and the first generation to attend university. This side of the family survived the Nazi Holocaust, spent years running and hiding to survive, and finally escaped as refugees. As my grandfather liked to say, he left Europe with "ten dollars in his pocket"; they also (and this was less often spoken of) left Europe missing children, parents, and siblings. Thus, an immediate family history that includes living memories of genocide, and a sense of collective history that includes being positioned as the racial other within European societies at various historical moments, provides a paradigm that informs a sensitivity to the power of an authoritative discourse that acts to darken and disempower minorities. These were the stories I was raised on and the history that I learned in a Jewish elementary school, where *never again* – for us or for anyone – was a mantra. This upbringing informs a commitment to solidarity with others who, here and now, currently occupy the shoes once worn (and made) by my father's family as working class Jews in Europe.

There exist, as well, long Jewish traditions both of exegesis and of questioning received knowledge and authority: indeed, of questioning everything, vociferously and with passion. The word *Israel* literally means "wrestles with God"; the religious intellectual lineage that informs my secular critique places a high value on rigorous intellectual debate as a means to apprehend revealed truth in all its contradictions and complexities. In writing this



dissertation, then, I am also claiming my own culture's centuries-old traditions: critical and close textual analysis, open ethical debate, and the ethical obligation to question, and resist, unjust uses of power or authority. In addition to these influences, a childhood spent as an Anglophone in Québec, and in the working class, urban immigrant neighbourhood of Côte Des Neiges in Montréal, and a conception of this 'difference within' as 'Canadian,' encoded by a Trudeau-era primary education, shaped my path to an antiracist perspective. These early experiences are further nuanced by four years in migrant justice organizing in Victoria and Vancouver, which profoundly shaped my perceptions, and inform a commitment to solidarity both in terms of personal relationships and in theoretical critique.

This social position and these relationships profoundly shape what and how I write – when I let them. The expectations of academic discourse within a given field also constrain (positively and negatively) writing within that field, as I will explore further in the conclusion.

Patricia Williams writes:

What is 'impersonal' writing but denial of self? [...] It is ruse, not reality [...] The object of such ruse is to empower, [to] generate respect and distance [...] at the expense of one's relation [to] others. [...] The other thing contained in the assumption of neutral, impersonal writing styles is the lack of risk. It is not only a ruse, but a warm protective hole to crawl in, as if you were to throw your shoe out the front door while insisting that no one's home. (Williams 92-3)

Furthermore, as Sandra Harding writes in the introduction to *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader*, "the more value-neutral a conceptual framework appears, the more likely it is to advance the hegemonous interests of dominant groups, and the less likely it is to be able to detect important actualities of social relations" (6). Indeed, as she observes, "commitment to an objectivity defined as maximizing social neutrality [is] not itself socially neutral in its effects" (5). Contemporary Feminist Standpoint Theory paradigms render apparent that the

neutral observer voice in certain modes of academic research is a chimera, a ‘ruse’ in Williams’s terms, a rhetorical strategy that grants authority to the speaker, rather than any kind of material reality. While precision, textual and archival meticulousness, integrity, and careful attention to detail in our analyses are vital for good scholarly work, as I hope the situating of my social position makes clear, it does not thus follow that it is ever possible to speak from any kind of neutral position. The very fact of our existence in society provides us with frameworks of knowledge and shapes what we do and don’t have to notice, at times in brutally concrete ways. To claim objectivity when describing ideology’s operation within a national imaginary is to claim a neutral lens, and if Foucault shows us anything, it is that perceptions of what makes for truth are based on who has the power to shape what is “within the real,” or “*dans le vrai*” (Foucault *L’Ordre* 36). Newspaper representations are powerful in that they are naturalized and therefore require denaturalization in order to perceive them more accurately, particularly when one is subject to them, as we all are who belong to this imagined nation.

Thus, and with Benedict Anderson, I wish to note that any nation-state is an imagined unity, and that “we” in the above paragraph is a fraught term. This dissertation speaks to the cracks in the national discourse, speaks to the ways culture operates and constructs itself, to the ways it reifies and reinforces ideas of coherent nationhood. In this spirit, I begin with the assumption that these naturalized texts are difficult to perceive, and attempt to gain some amount of distance, to attempt to denaturalize this idiom while operating from a position within the culture, by employing the tools provided by the theorists outlined in the methodology chapter. Rather than applying a quantitative methodology, I wish to learn a *way of seeing* through these methodologies, a way of analyzing the cultural discourse present in the newspapers. In that sense this dissertation both operates

within, and talks back to, the culture. The body chapters provide a cultural critique of this material, using a way of seeing garnered through theoretical engagements.

As a result, the analytical methodology that I rely on primarily is the practice of close textual analysis, or close reading, regularly employed in English Literature as a discipline. I wish to treat newspaper discourse as a narrative that both represents and acts on reality, and to analyze its ideological content as one could a work by Margaret Atwood or Susanna Moodie. At the same time, I wish to explore what Frames Theory can bring to a literary analysis of the newspapers, because Frames Theory as a conventional media analysis methodology is a useful tool with which to apprehend the working of hegemony in news texts. Through this flexible and interdisciplinary methodological approach, which relies on careful attention to textual detail but does not attempt to provide a ‘neutral’ analysis – because that concept of neutrality is inherently flawed – I hope to access notions of identity that produce – and perhaps challenge – the Canadian social imaginary.

Furthermore, key to this thesis is the belief that any study undertaken within the discipline of the Humanities is more interesting and compelling if it tells readers something about the world around us: if it makes us see ‘home’ – this country – more clearly: a purpose which is also familiar to the student of literature. As Chandra Talpade Mohanty argues, “home” is always and already not what we think it is, because it is predicated on the invisibility of the histories of others who have a home in the same theoretical, demographic, or geographical location (Martin and Mohanty 294). *Canada and the West* are two such ideological homes. I use the term *West*, for instance, as an already-troubled discursive construction that encompasses a set of linked signifiers connoting false binaries – including such notions as whiteness, goodness, civilization, or rational thought – rather than designating an absolute category or geographical location.

Also, I would like to offer a brief reflection on the inclusion of poetry within the body chapters of the dissertation. The poetic form, while not traditionally ‘academic,’ appears to me to be a necessary and concurrent form of writing that emerged alongside the writing of this dissertation. In a project that focuses on the ways in which language becomes shut down, restricted by cognitive categories produced and constrained by dominant frames and state-produced ideological categories, the freedom that becomes possible in poetry creates an additional counterpoint to the dominant frames analyzed in each body chapter. It offers another mode of resistance: to the restrictive language of the news texts and to the neoliberal flattening of meaning.

### **Defining Terms: Nation-States, Postcolonial Theory, Race**

I would also like to take a moment to lay out some of the problematics of terminology relevant to this research, such as *nation*, *state*, *settler*, *colonial*, and *postcolonial*, in the context of the Canadian nation-state. Without delving too far here into contemporary theorizations of the nation-state or dialogues in Race Theory, which I explore in more depth in the methodologies chapter, I would like in this section to offer a succinct overview of the meanings and cultural mobilizations of terms such as *of colour*, *white*, *negatively* and *positively racialized*, and other markers of race identity, mainly in order to situate the terms that I’ve chosen to use for the purpose of this dissertation, such as *racialized* and *whitened*.

Colonialism and postcolonialism/postcolonialism, two terms relevant to this work, are important terms worth defining as a starting point. Colonialism as Ashcroft et al. note in *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* describes the practice of imperial powers establishing settlements on distant territories, which was a prominent form of exploitation between the colonial ‘centre’ and the colonized ‘periphery’ for about 400 years (Ashcroft et al. 40), ending

officially with the waves of decolonization that took place over the 20th century, most intensely in the 1950s and 1960s. It was a system of economic, material, political, cultural and ideological domination:

The colonialist system permitted a notional idea of improvement for the colonized, via such [paternalistic] metaphors as parent/child, tree/branch, etc. which in theory allowed that at some future time the inferior colonials might be raised to the status of the colonizer. But in practice this future was always endlessly deferred. (Ashcroft et al. 41-2)

The term *postcolonial* has come to refer to “the various cultural effects of colonization” (Ashcroft et al. 168) and is thus not strictly chronological in meaning. Colonialism’s effects – economic, cultural, ideological – continue after the formal independence of the former colonies; colonial relationships are expressed in the very borders and modes of governance of the postcolonial states thus established, in the cultural and economic relations of dominance between the former centres of empire and former colonies, and in cultural production of all kinds; this continuing relationship is sometimes referred to as *neo-colonialism*.

A central concern of postcolonial theory is to explore the implications of groups (cultures, nations) who successfully fought for liberation from colonization using arguably colonial forms (such as the nation-state, the novel, or racial epistemologies) to create new futures. Frantz Fanon’s anti-colonial writing, along with thinkers such as Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabha, and Sara Ahmed, is central to the work to challenge and theorize the colonial project during and after the formal colonial period, as well as to theorize the continuing impacts of colonization on the formerly colonized peoples, not least of which is ‘neo-colonial’ cultural domination and resistance to it. For many scholars it is not advisable nor perhaps possible to undo history, to return to some idealized, nostalgic, or ‘primitive’ way of life – for the very notions of ‘the primitive’ are, as Fanon

notes, colonial reflections/creations. Colonialism, Fanon argues in *The Wretched of the Earth*, “turns its attention to the past of the colonized people and distorts it, disfigures it, and destroys it” (149). He writes, “these mummified fragments [...] now consolidated, signify [...] negation, obsolescence, and fabrication. Culture never has the translucence of custom” (160). At the same time, several theorists argue that not only were forms of these supposedly European inventions already in existence in the pre-colonized areas of the world, but also that in their new contexts, the colonial forms are changed, are actively hybridized, altered, syncretized, and adapted by the colonized people, and are indeed not the same colonial forms that were imposed by the colonizer.

Colonial Discourse Theory emerged initially in the field of Literature as a means of critically analyzing the texts of the colonial era with an eye to power/knowledge. To simplify somewhat, Colonial and Postcolonial Theory are concerned with the roles that textual production plays in subjugation and domination on the one hand, and in resistances, rereadings, and subversions on the other. Text viewed as discourse is intimately tied to the production of reality and of ways of knowing the world in which one lives. This is particularly relevant in the study of the relationships between colonizer and colonized, and between the cultural ‘centres’ and the neo-colonialism of the ‘postcolonial’ era that ensued. Postcolonial theory thus encompasses the critique of cultural relationships and cultural imperialism both *during* the formal colonial era *and* in the neo-colonial relationships that are still in play after the end of formal colonization over the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The focus on colonial and postcolonial critique loses some of its momentum in academic discussions when a shift in emphasis occurs towards examinations of the fate of the Westphalian nation-state. While the contemporary theorizations of the nation-state are explored in greater depth in the methodologies chapter, it is useful to sketch a brief overview

here. Theorizations of the nation-state, both on the right and the left, in the 1990s proposed that national governments were “losing ground” to transnational corporate bodies (Ohmae 214). It appeared for a time that we were moving into a postnational world. More recently, theorists have observed that rather than disappearing or weakening in the face of globalized capitalism, nation-states appear to be strengthened and transformed under neoliberal capitalism. Critics of the 'death of the nation-state' thesis observe that nation-states and national borders are increasingly used to control the movement of workers, while allowing free movement for capital, thus creating exploitable labour forces. The globalized “flows” that were thought to characterize a more open, flexible world (Appadurai) have turned out to be, as David Harvey has observed in his *Brief History of Neoliberalism*, a way for economic elites to reconsolidate wealth after the rise of the left in the 1960s and 1970s temporarily closed the gap somewhat between rich and poor, at least in the developed world. This consolidation of power in the hands of the “transnational capitalist class” (Sklair) has specific implications for the immigration and citizenship apparatus that is a core focus of this dissertation. In this vein, Nandita Sharma writes:

Rather than viewing national governments as having lost control over the “domestic” or “national” space, a reorganized regulation of the international migration of labour along with a revamped nation building project has been part of how processes of globalization have been organized in Canada. (“On Being” 417)

In Canada as elsewhere, the past two decades have in fact seen a profound reorganization of national laws by the elite in each nation-state, which uses the nation-state – its borders, laws, and citizenship apparatus – to the benefit of capitalist elites in a globalized economy, as I will explore in the methodologies chapter.

Since this dissertation deals with the Canadian nation-state as a primary focus of inquiry, it also seems appropriate to define those important terms, *nation* and *state*. Since I will explore this theoretical framework more fully in the methodologies chapter, here I will provide just a basic summary to set the stage. Nations, as Ernest Renan observed in 1882, “are something fairly new in history” that emerged after the collapse of earlier forms of social organization, such as “republics, municipal kingdoms, confederations of local republics [city-states and] empires” (43). Contemporary nations, Renan argues, formed in part from the ruins of earlier family dynasties and intermarriage due to conquests by various waves of invaders (46) which had little to do with what we today might understand to be nations. The “defining feature” of modern nations such as “France, Germany, England, Italy, and Spain,” is not natural, primordial, or even rooted in the conquest of a shared land at the nation’s beginnings, but rather is “the fusion of their component populations” (Renan 44) and the “forgetting” of earlier identities (45).

Cultural grouping and even race do not provide bases for primordial origins of nations: “the truth is that there is no pure race and that to make politics depend upon ethnographic analysis is to surrender it to a chimera” (48). Traditional European ethnic nationalism, however, holds that nations and states are “naturally” coterminous. Although different scholars posit the origins of nations at different moments, and the linking of nations to states at yet other possible moments, the fused nation-state concept in a European context became possible through a series of legal changes. The 1648 Treaty of Westphalia was a step towards the nation-state system, but the actual creation of what is today recognized as the Westphalian nation-state system did not take shape until much later. The 1814-1815 Congress of Vienna that agreed on the settlement of Europe after the Napoleonic wars made nation-states legally possible, but it was not yet an indication of a



nation-state system, because its agreements and land exchanges were based not on nationalism or irredentism but on the restoration and strengthening of hereditary or family dynasties (such as the Habsburgs). The major shift to irredentism takes place between the Congress of Vienna and the Treaty of Versailles. The 1919 Treaty of Versailles, part of the Paris Treaties that ended the First World War, established a system of nation-states that resembles, more or less, the nation-states of the contemporary world (although the specific borders would change shape again). The colonial powers tried to establish the borders of what came to be nation-states within Europe after the fall of the Empires; they also carved up Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and large parts of East and South Asia. The borders established within Europe were relatively stable until WWII; the states thus formed outside Europe remained under colonial rule until the period after WWII and through the 1950s and 1960s, during the wave of decolonization and national liberation movements around the globe. The theorization about this formation and changing nature of nation-states, and the discussion over whether the nation-state structure is now weakening or transforming under neoliberalism, is explored in depth in the methodologies chapter.

In the contemporary Canadian context, in a state ostensibly based since the 1970s on notions of civic rather than ethnic nationalism, ethnic nationalisms take on interesting forms that overlap, clash, and reinforce one another under, within, and pushing across the edges of the Canadian state. For instance, despite the official narrative of multiculturalism, structural assumptions about the normalcy of white British/Scottish/Irish-based Canadian culture are still at the centre of the brand of hard-nosed Canadian nationalism that arises in moments of tension, such as the challenge to naturalized hegemonic ideas about the border represented by Laibar Singh's sanctuary case. At the same time, other forms of nationalism and diasporic identity arise at the substate level, at times forming resistance to state hegemony and to this

understanding of Canada as inherently dominated by white Anglo cultural and political institutions; each in their very distinct ways, the separatist movements of Québec or Haida Gwaii, Acadian and Black Acadian nationalism, Métis nationalism in the history of the Red River Rebellion, Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont, or other Indigenous nationalisms across Turtle Island such as the Mohawk nationalism expressed at the blockade at Six Nations or the resistance to oil company incursions in Wet'suwet'en territory, are but a few of many, many possible examples. Diasporic links to other existing nation-states also constitute another kind of substate nationalism, in the form for instance of Ukrainian nationalism, Zionism, or Hindutva. Local diasporic support for national liberation movements in other countries forms yet another kind of substate nationalism, such as Tamil, Palestinian, or Basque nationalism as it manifests in places like Toronto or Montreal.

Other terminology employed in this dissertation picks up on ongoing discussions over the language of race and racialization. While I will go into greater detail about Race Theory as a discipline in the methodologies chapter, it seems useful here to offer a brief definition of the terms used in the dissertation. Terms such as *of colour*, *white*, *negatively* and *positively racialized*, and other markers of race identity each have their own history and usefulness within specific contexts, and have changed with context and will likely continue to change – just as understandings of race itself shifts and changes. Any theoretical work dealing with race can only use the terms most suited to the social and political moment in which the work is produced, with full awareness that the terms will take on different meanings yet again. Thus, the language of *people of colour* for instance, emerged in a US and Canadian context, out of the solidarity movements of the 1980s and 1990s, when racialized organizers and academics needed language that would capture the commonalities (most notably in shared experiences of discrimination) shared by people in the US and Canada who

otherwise have many different cultural and ethnic backgrounds that can't be reduced to the black/white binary previously common in the US. *People of colour* as a framework facilitates meaningful coalition building between people from multiple different backgrounds whose primary commonality may be the experience of racism and exclusion. This language also arose in part to offer a framework that identifies people positively, by what they are or identify as, rather than in reference to what they are not or in reference to whiteness (as in the term *non-white* to refer to racialized people of all different backgrounds). It was also in part a response to the earlier language of *coloured people* employed during and after slavery and segregation, with all its violent, patronizing connotations. The language of *of colour* also emerged within a more essentialist mode, which has since been nuanced by, for instance, race theorists such as Stuart Hall.

Hall's famous essay "New Ethnicities" examines the enunciation of non-essentialist racialized identities as a form of resistance to British nationalist racism. With regard to culture, Hall is both Marxist and Foucauldian:

My own view is that events, relations, structures do have conditions of existence and real effects, outside the sphere of the discursive; but that it is only within the discursive, and subject to its specific conditions, limits and modalities, do they have or can they be constructed within meaning. Thus, while not wanting to expand the territorial claims of the discursive infinitely, how things are represented and the 'machineries' and regimes of representation in a culture do play a *constitutive*, and not merely a reflexive, after-the-event, role. (Hall 443)

Writing at the height of Thatcherism, Hall observes a shift in British politics, in which this understanding of representation as constitutive of identities comes to play a larger role.

Instead of fixed notions of race, Hall proposes the concept of ethnicity, not in the usages of British white nationalism (446) or in any essentialist sense, but in a sense that "acknowledges the place of history, language and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity, as

well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual” (446). He proposes a “decoupling” of the concept of ethnicity from “its equivalence with nationalism, imperialism, racism and the state [...] points of attachment around which [...] English ethnicity has been constructed” (447) and under which it becomes hegemonic under Thatcherism. This cultural work can happen, Hall argues, in part through a retheorizing of Derrida’s notion of *différance*, in which words or concepts “defer” meaning via relationship to other words or concepts that are “different” from them; the endless deferral elicits an endless sliding of signifiers through binary oppositions and hierarchies (Derrida 17). Hall’s usage of *différance*, however, like that of many feminist and postcolonial theorists, “cannot be defined exclusively in terms of an infinite sliding of the signifier [...] if we are concerned to maintain a politics” (447). Through this concept, he argues, Black cultural workers can theorize a “politics of ethnicity predicated on difference and diversity” (447) in which there can be “a recognition that we all speak from a particular place, a particular culture, without being constrained by that position” (449). This understanding of subjectivities, as powerful discourses that can be mobilized for political effect rather than as essentializing categories of identity, has become highly influential and informs my understanding here.

For the purpose of this dissertation then, I’ve chosen to use two contemporary terms, *racialized* and *whitened*, through which I intend to balance two needs: one, to recognize the constructedness of any racial or ethnic identity, which is always a very powerful social construction with real material impacts, rather than biological or genetic reality. Two, to distinguish between the position of those who benefit from white skin privilege and those who are situated as racial others within Canadian and much of Western society, without resorting to rigid essentialism or biological determinism, and without naming racialized

people only in negative terms, as defined against a presumed white centre. This language of *racialized* and *whitened*, I hope, can play the same roles (both emancipatory and critical) that terms such as *of colour* and *white* play, while incorporating a non-essentialist framework into the language itself. To be clear here, both whiteness and race are powerful social constructions in the ways I employ them in this dissertation, constructed through intersecting nexuses of class, race, gender, culture, and citizenship, and always infused with discursive, and contested, struggles over hegemony. Furthermore, the language of *racialization* can be mobilized, as Stuart Hall suggests, for emancipatory ends, without needing to fix human beings into essentialized categories of identity.

### **Legal Context: Immigration Law and the State Imaginary**

Notions of the Canadian “us,” so central to the newspaper analyses in the following chapters, are always shaped by (even as they shape) legislation that limits who can enter Canada and on what terms people can live here. While many laws impact who can enter and how, for the purposes of this dissertation, two main laws that pertain to these newspaper analyses are *The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)* and *The Anti-Terrorism Act*.

The *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* has a long history in Canada, bound up with the history of legal citizenship. The very idea that certain human beings are legally deserving of what Giorgio Agamben calls a “political life” (127) on the lands we call Canada is surprisingly recent. Viewing the early *Immigration Acts* as iterations or repetitions, designed to create a new reality and imprint it or mark it upon the land and the people, brings into relief the ways in which the imaginative production of subject positions allowed this emerging state to assert its legitimacy. When the first *Act Respecting Emigrants and Quarantine* was passed in 1859 (*Act 1859*) – which was, at the time, British law – a policy of free entry to Canada

was, at least on paper, normalized. A close reading of the early *Immigration Acts* reveals that naturalized identities of exclusion emerged later than the notion of Canada, but before the idea of the citizen or the border were imagined in law. The idea that only some kinds of people should be able to land on these shores, or that we should have a border to govern and control movement of human beings, is thus relatively new, and the concept of the citizen, the border, and formal legal exclusion in a Canadian context is newer still. This very first *Act Respecting Emigrants and Quarantine* contains no absolute exclusions at all; the categories of identity mentioned are in a requirement to report the numbers of people sailing to Canada who are “lunatic, idiotic, deaf and dumb, blind or infirm, stating also whether they are accompanied by relatives able to support them” (art. 8), which suggests that these passengers must be reported; economic discrimination (‘relatives able to support them’) appears to be the determining factor rather than physical ability itself.

Over time, the various iterations of this *Act* reveal themes of inclusion and exclusion, and – more importantly – of *controlled inclusion* of those hierarchized within the emerging state apparatus as more or less desirable for membership in the emerging “vertical mosaic” (Porter) of the national imaginary. The *Immigration Act* acts as a creation of a system of knowledge that builds a social order: marks the physical land and the physical bodies of human beings connected to this emerging imaginary. In the period just before and after confederation, the period that saw enormous growth in the immigration apparatus and in the numbers of immigrants, this discourse was codified into legal narrative. The language of the *Acts* shifts over this period of profound transformation of the Canadian cultural landscape: the transition between 1866 “Emigrants” and 1910 “Citizens.” While Canada does not yet exist as a self-governing nation-state during this period, the idea of the national was emerging, shaping and shaped by these laws. The *Immigration Acts* helped structure emerging

notions of the national, which would in turn have implications for the national literature and the state imaginary.

The first act to have a focus on “immigration” rather than “emigration” was the *Immigration Act* of 1869, which also contained no explicit exclusions but was rather focussed on bringing settlers to Canada to secure the land base. The preamble to the 1869 *Act* clearly states its goals “concerning the settlement and colonization of uncultivated lands, as bearing on Immigration” (1869, “preamble”); in other words, it was an act that – at least in its language – attempted to bring people here, not exclude them. Reading the law in this way suggests that formal race exclusions are relatively new, not integral to the idea of Canada as it first emerged; the idea of Canada as an exclusive nation-state is thus not primordial, as it might sometimes appear – it is in fact quite recent and contingent. The initial law had few if any legal exclusions, in part because naturalized categories of exclusion were not referenced in explicitly racial language,<sup>13</sup> but in part also because the emerging state structure, initially established and expanded under Clifford Sifton’s time as Minister of the Interior (1896 to 1905), was influenced by the classical economic principle that free movement of people was required for the free market to function.<sup>14</sup>

Concurrently, common sense might dictate that the idea of the *citizen* – once it did appear – emerged first, and that those deemed Other emerged as a secondary function of citizenship. In fact, a close reading of *The Immigration Act* in its early iterations reveals that the explicit exclusions of ‘race’ – so naturalized in the Canadian cultural imaginary of the first half of the twentieth century – emerge alongside and even *prefigure* the development of the

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<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of the ways naturalized identities of exclusion operated in this period without recourse to explicitly racial language, see Robert A. Huttenback’s *Racism and Empire: White Settler and Coloured Immigrants in the British Self-Governing Colonies: 1830-1910*.

<sup>14</sup> This section was developed as part of a conference paper for TransCanada Three written in collaboration with Jennifer Scott and Myka Tucker-Abramson; conversations with them inform the critique here.

language of “citizen” (1910 art. 2.f) “domicile” (1910 art. 2.d) or “border” (1910 art. 32). The 1906 *Act* – which does not contain *any* reference to ‘citizen’ or ‘border’ – already contains 14 categories of “those liable to exclusion” (1906, art. 71), but no explicit category of inclusion, only a vague reference to “any person who has previously resided in Canada” (1906, art. 2). Some of the language of class exclusion in this 1906 *Act*, such as the requirement for certain “classes” of migrants to possess set funds to enter, functioned as race exclusions in their application – again, before any such thing as a ‘citizen’ existed – and companion laws such as the *Alien Labour Act* or the *Chinese Immigration Acts* did explicitly the work that *The Immigration Act* engaged in more coded ways. The first three *Acts* do not explicitly mention race: only in the 1910 *Act* does the word “race” (1910 art. 37) first appear, as a discretionary measure allowing exclusion based on possession of an unspecified amount of money based on the “race” of the immigrant; this *Act* contains the first rounds of some of the most infamous and virulent race laws, those mainly concerning racialized British Subjects who legally had the right to travel anywhere in the British Empire: the continuous journey regulation (1910 art. 38.a, 39),<sup>15</sup> the prohibition of those deemed “unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada” (1910, art 38.c), and a reference to the *Chinese Immigration Act* (1910 art. 79) which was then in force. Only in the 1910 *Act* do we see for the first time the two now-familiar categories of “citizen” and “person having domicile in Canada” (a precursor to today’s ‘permanent resident’) as categories of inclusion; at the same time, the 1910 *Act* expands upon the 1906 categories of exclusion, and dedicates a full section to “Prohibited Classes,” even providing a subheading to that effect.

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<sup>15</sup> For a detailed discussion of the importance of the Continuous Journey regulation and its relationship to the history of South Asians in Canada, see Ali Kazimi’s documentary film *Continuous Journey*, as well as Norman Buchignani, Doreen Indra, and Ram Srivastava’s *Continuous Journey: A Social History of South Asians in Canada*. For more on the history of Sikhs and South Asians in Canada, see chapter five.



While several exclusions were thus already established by the 1869 and 1906 *Acts*, these were carried out without recourse to any reference to the idea of the “citizen” or to the “border,” (1910, art. 32) which only appeared in the 1910 *Immigration Act* after Sifton instituted physical border checkpoints along the ossifying Canada-US border to control immigration by road and rail. Canada only gained the right to formally assign citizenship in the 1940s, long after these exclusions were already present. The *Acts*, viewed as iterations, thus indicate two important things: first, that the early establishment of the national imaginary – which was more contingent than today’s naturalized national narratives might suggest – had no legal exclusions, and second, that once categories of legal inclusion emerged, they relied profoundly on their Other, rather than existing as independent categories of identity with primordial right to this land. The *Acts* thus established hegemony over the land they marked, and helped legitimize the emerging national imaginary as they naturalized the idea that only certain kinds of people should be allowed to come to this land. This legal imagining occurred through the creation and proliferation of legal identities that would profoundly shape the cultural imaginary. This reading reveals that ways in which immigration law has always created cultural categories of identity, and thereby played a mutually constitutive role in the production of culture itself.

Categorizations by race, nationality, ethnicity, or “favoured nations” were removed from *The Immigration Act* in 1967, and the points system was introduced to take its place; today, formally neutral immigration categories exist, such as the Skilled Worker category, Family Class, and Investor and Business Classes, but formal equality does not equal

substantive equality (Abella).<sup>16</sup> In the years since the 1967 *Act* was enacted, and increasingly with the passing of the 2001 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, categories of precarity have both shifted and proliferated. These include a growing “range of precarious, or less-than-full, [citizenship] statuses in Canada” – that rely on the “*legal production of illegality*” (Goldring et al. 4, emphasis added). As Anna Pratt writes in *Securing Borders*, with the shift from a liberal to a neoliberal state, discourses about refugees are also now entangled in a “nexus” of “crime-security” (2). This is not just the case with refugee claims, but marks a shift in the entire discourse of immigration and citizenship itself. This legal shift produces new cultural categories and new terrains of cultural struggle. From the 1970s to the present, we have seen a period of rapid expansion and transformation of legal categories of inclusion-exclusion through a shift in emphasis to criminality and risk.

The language of “crime-risk” is just one of the ways in which the proliferation of categories of precarious citizenship has naturalized itself. In *Home Economics*, Nandita Sharma discusses Canada's creation of the Non-immigrant Employment Authorization Program (NIEAP), which in 1973 created a category of the non-citizen worker; as Sharma observes, this category has rapidly expanded in recent years (Sharma 117). The expanding categories of precarity in Canada means that any discussion of Canadian identity must now grapple with the reality that non-citizens, denied the usual human and social rights associated with citizenship, constitute a permanent, state-produced feature of the *cultural* landscape. These expanded categories of precarious citizenship within the nation-state cannot be read

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<sup>16</sup>The points system, whereby potential immigrants apply to come to Canada as skilled workers, implements a formal equality whereby people are evaluated based on factors such as their education level; access to funds considered necessary for establishment (at least \$9,420 for an individual, and up to \$23,994 for a family) (“Application for Permanent Residence: Guide for Provincial Nominees” CIC); whether they speak English or French, and how well; whether they have a trade or profession in one of the classes deemed needed by the country on the National Occupation Classification list; recent full-time work experience in Canada; family already in the country; or a letter indicating a job offer.

separately from the supposedly expansive cultural citizenship of Canada and Canadian literature. In other words, while the definitions of Canadianness assumed in Canadian literary and critical contexts may appear to be constantly expanding and opening, they also mask new and growing exclusions. Read together, these expansions and contractions tell a different story about Canada than the welcoming liberal narrative. A story about increasing the categories of culture available for consumption (Scott and Tucker-Abramson 14) and the bodies available for labour, but not increasing rights or access for those thus excluded, whether from *social* institutions (health care, unemployment insurance, legal eligibility for arts council grants), or *cultural* ones (narratives and storytelling – and actually *receiving* arts council grants, publication, promotion of cultural work).

Keeping this new landscape in mind, it becomes vital to examine the contemporary ideological interplay between legal structures and cultural production. The point is not just that new exclusions exist, but rather that laws produce cultural categories, and the literature that inscribes those categories into the national imaginary then helps naturalize those laws. Therefore, it is vital to explore the interplay between the laws that make possible a permanent temporary category of people who live with ‘precarious status’ within Canada, and the field of Canadian Literature as it is institutionally practiced, in understanding the meaning of “Canadian” identity.

*The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)* replaced *The Immigration Act* in November 2001 (Macklin 384). This current iteration of the *Act*, as well as *The Antiterrorism Act* that was passed in December of that same year were, in embryonic form, already under consideration before September 11, 2001, but both pieces of legislation were made more powerful and brought in much more quickly in response to the attacks in the United States

(Macklin 84, Mosley 436). *The Antiterrorism Act* curtails freedoms for citizens as well as having ramifications for non-citizens.<sup>17</sup>

### ***The Antiterrorism Act and Detentions Without Charge***

Critics of Canada's *Antiterrorism Act*, such as University of Toronto Law professors Kent Roach and Audrey Macklin, argue that the Criminal Code already contained the necessary laws to protect Canadians against terrorist acts; in particular, the provisions of *The Emergencies Act*, introduced on the heels of Mulroney's apology but ignored in the post-9-11 climate, were designed to provide protection from violent crimes including terrorist violence (such as the bombing of buildings) while preventing the abuses of power the Canadian state committed during WWII from recurring. *The Antiterrorism Act*, however, introduced into criminal law new terrorism-related criminal charges that had not previously existed, instead of relying on the provisions of *The Emergencies Act* or the Criminal Code. Anna Pratt writes: "The *Antiterrorism Act* dramatically expanded the powers of laws enforcement and national security agents to target, monitor, arrest, and detain without warrant Canadian citizens on the basis of suspicions relating to terrorist activity" (Pratt 3). The charges introduced under *The Antiterrorism Act* are directly relevant to the case study on the Toronto 18, since the accused in that case are citizens and permanent residents, so were charged under Antiterrorism laws the *Act* introduced into the criminal code. In addition to introducing new charges, the *Act* expanded "police [powers] to investigate terrorism. They are now able to engage in electronic surveillance [...] for up to a year, as opposed to the normal sixty-day period [...] They also do not have to inform a person subject to such surveillance for up to

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<sup>17</sup> For a detailed breakdown and analysis of *The Anti-Terrorism Act*, the *IRPA*, and the ways these laws work together, see Kent Roach's September 11: Consequences for Canada. For further discussion of the ways the post-9-11 climate generates spaces of exception via an expansion of racial profiling practices, see Razack's *Casting Out*.

three years” (*September* 36-37). Employing what many critics argue is a vague, “imprecise definition of terrorism” (Macklin 393), the *Act* also allows for “warrantless, preventative detention (s.83.3(4))” of citizens for up to 72 hours instead of the previous limit of 24 hours (393). As I explore further in the conclusion, it would be a mistake to view these expanded powers of surveillance and enforcement as affecting only those supposed ‘outsiders’ targeted by nationalist discourses. Instead, they represent a deepening of the ‘carceral’ that regulates the entire social order, and thus have significant import for both citizens and non-citizens, and throughout the social hierarchy that structures Canadian society.

Even as we keep in mind this weakening of the rights of citizens under *The Antiterrorism Act*, it is important to distinguish between the ways border regimes apply to citizens and non-citizens. Detentions without charge in Canada are not new and were not introduced by *The Antiterrorism Act*; indeed, immigration detentions are a routine part of immigration processes under the *IRPA*, since would-be immigrants can be detained indefinitely pending deportation at the discretion of border guards. The regular detention process carried out by border guards under *IRPA* is relevant here to three of the case studies: Project Thread, Security Certificates, and the sanctuary case of Laibar Singh, since these detentions and deportations were all handled under *IRPA*. Indefinite detention pending deportation has been routine for years, without the need for Security Certificates or any other special legislation. Indeed, regular, everyday immigration detentions are a hidden fact of life in every major Canadian city; every airport in the country has holding cells and hidden investigation rooms where migrants are interrogated and held, and detention centres exist in all the major cities including Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa. People can be detained in these ways at the discretion of border officials, and do not need to be considered security risks.

Official grounds for detention are a belief on the part of border guards that there is a flight risk, danger to the public, or disbelief in the identity of the claimant. In practice, the discretionary nature of the rules means that Canadian Border Services Agency guards have the power to detain anyone they choose, for any reason they choose: how much money people are carrying, their stated purpose for entering, or the wrong kind of name or face. An estimated 12,000 people are deported each year by CIC and CBSA; Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) statistics indicate that at any one given time, an average of 455 people across Canada are detained under the *IRPA* (No One). This number includes approximately 20 minors, detained in Canada at any given time, in prison conditions and in some cases, actually in prisons (ibid).

### **Security Certificates**

Since one of my case studies deals with the Security Certificate process, some attention is needed to explaining this phenomenon. As I will explore further in Chapter Four, in addition to the ongoing normalization of detentions without charge as part of the regular immigration bureaucracy, a special process exists as part of the *IRPA* for non-citizens that CSIS deems ‘security risks.’ On the basis of a secret CSIS recommendation, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and the Solicitor General of Canada sign a certificate that allows for the indefinite detention without charge or trial of any non-citizen, pending deportation. While it differs in its details and scope, this process echoes in certain important ways the now well-known Orders-In-Council employed during World War II to detain and uproot Japanese Canadians and others deemed enemies within the nation-state, in that the discretionary signatures of a few officials behind closed doors are sufficient to justify violence against people who are denied a process by which to know the accusations or

defend themselves. The Security Certificate process is not new to the post September 11, 2001 era; this process existed in Immigration law previously, but was strengthened and expanded under *The Antiterrorism Act* and the *IRPA*, as I explain in Chapter Four. This chapter examines newspaper coverage of Security Certificates during hunger strikes by two of the detained men who were held at the time in solitary confinement at the Metro-West detention centre in Toronto.

### **“Different faces and names, variations on the same theme”?**

Visions of Canada are always contested; they are always a site of struggle. Work by creative, cultural, and political workers in the national imaginary remains fraught, and writers continue to make difficult choices and take risks to narrate a non-hegemonic vision of reality, in the face of pressures – in the worlds of publishing, awards, funding agencies, and mass media – to write ‘happy multicultural stories’ or ‘scary security narratives’ for popular consumption. Ethnic identity, as viewed through the paradigm of official multiculturalism (Kamboureli, *Making* 3), silences and homogenizes knowledge that is uncomfortable or inconvenient within a national ideology attached to notions of “white civility” (Coleman 1). This larger exclusion that is an implicit assumption in nationalist debates comprises even those Others who are, in fact, *us* – those who have lives, families, years of work, and histories within the boundaries of this construct called *Canada*, including growing numbers of people without citizenship, who live and work in our communities but will never gain basic rights if the structures of legal citizenship, and the physical violence they engender, are not addressed and changed. These new exclusions suggest that Kogawa’s character Naomi may speak prophetically in *Obasan*: “And no doubt it will all happen again, over and over with different faces and names, variations on the same theme” (Kogawa 199).

The modern nation-state by its very nature entails violent exclusions, and a neoliberalism that *Obasan's* Naomi would never have been able to imagine has extended this phenomenon. Today, as during World War II, national newspaper narratives are complicit in state violence. They are complicit when they position racialized migrants in a binary as either silent workers not worthy of news or as frightening front-page terrorists, while citizens racialized as Muslim, Arab, or South Asian signify potential threats in news narratives, always at risk of being pushed to the edge of belonging in moments of tension.

### **Historical Precedents: “The Enemy Within”**

As Kogawa, Miki, and others remind us, there is, of course, a history of positioning enemies within the nation-state as racially Other, and a significant degree of continuity exists between newspaper narratives from both world wars that prefigure contemporary representations, and today's narratives of the outsider and the enemy threat. The narrative similarities across time and in such different circumstances suggest that the stories we tell, see, and hear in newspaper discourses are governed as much by their own internal logic as they are by any reflection of a presumed outside world. It can help denaturalize the contemporary discourses about Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians to juxtapose these contemporary readings with some of the language from previous moments of global political conflict.

*The War Measures Act* was enacted in 1914 in response to the threat of the Great War. The *Act* was used to suspend numerous civil liberties and “permitted overriding the normal operation of the federal system” (Peppin 131). Echoing in some ways the current *Antiterrorism Act*, as well as the US *Patriot Act*, and the security certificate provisions of the *IRPA*, *The War Measures Act* allowed the executive (i.e. Cabinet and the Prime Minister) to



make important decisions without requiring recourse to Parliament; Orders-in-council, signed by a few officials, could allow for the registration and “preventative detention” of people deemed alien enemies in both World Wars:

Citizenship, the right to hold property, freedom to contract, the right to bring a civil suit, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of association, *habeas corpus*, equality before the law, due process, the right to a fair trial, the presumption of innocence, and the rule of law itself have all been denied in greater and lesser measure under *The War Measures Act*. (Peppin 131)

Yurij Luhovy’s National Film Board film *Freedom Had a Price* states that between November 1914 and June 1920, nearly 9000 “enemy aliens” were interned in 24 camps from Nova Scotia to British Columbia. In addition, roughly 88,000 had to register as enemy aliens, and were required to report to the police and pay monthly fines, under threat of detention.

Those who were unwilling or unable to pay monthly, or who could not find work (often as a result of racial hostilities towards them) were interned in what are now national parks, towns, and military bases. Many were subjected to forced labour. Internees during World War One did a considerable amount of the work of nation-building: they cleared, drained, and cultivated land, expanded training grounds for troops, doubled the size of the training base at Petawawa, and built internment camps, some of which laid the foundations for towns such as Kapuskasing or Banff. Use of internment labour provided for the development of the BC park system with minimal cost to the government; internees were utilized by the Dominion Department of Agriculture to clear land for experimental farms and for roads. The CPR used them to clear forest back 50 metres from the tracks, in order to prevent train sparks from starting forest fires, and to give passengers on the trains a clear view of the mountains. Many of the restrictions on members of these groups were not lifted until a year after the end of the war, when public and government concern shifted towards suspicion of

Bolsheviks and Communists, which remained a primary focus of government and media attention in the interwar years. During World War Two, the entire Japanese Canadian community of the Pacific coast experienced a now famous expulsion from the coast. Nearly 800 of the uprooted Japanese Canadians were interned between 1939 and 1945, and assets such as fishing boats and houses were sold off by the government and applied to the cost of the internments and relocation, without compensation. Internment and restrictions on the movement of Japanese Canadians remained in place for several years after the end of the war, and after the end of such restrictions on other “enemy alien” groups (Keyserlingk 63). Knowledge of this injustice entered widespread public discourse in part due to Joy Kogawa’s work of fiction, *Obasan*, and to the successful Japanese Canadian redress movement. While Japanese Canadians received by far the most severe treatment, due to their position at the time as yet less assimilable into white Canadian identity than the other “enemy alien” (63) groups (such as Germans), during the same period, according to official numbers reproduced in *On Guard for Thee*, approximately 850 people deemed “pro-German” – people of German, Ukrainian, Finnish, Jewish (refugees), Hungarian, Mennonite, and other “enemy origins” – were interned, as well as 632 “Italians,” 133 “Communists,” 27 “N.U.P.” (“National Unity Party,” the Quebec-based fascist group led by Adrien Arcand), and 2 “Miscellaneous” individuals (Keyserlingk 63). These internees were a mix of Canadian citizens and residents, and of prisoners and refugees sent from Europe; Montreal Mayor Camillien Houde was among them, interned for his anti-conscription stance and alleged support for fascism.

Meanwhile, during and between both wars, newspapers such as *The Globe* (the predecessor to *The Globe and Mail*) demonized these communities, in language that may strike a contemporary reader as both comical and surprisingly familiar. Such news representations

produced and played into public fear that “enemy aliens” lurked in every corner, waiting to “blow up bridges” (“Intern All” 5) and “munitions plant[s]” (“Suspect Alien” 12), to intercept information, and to disrupt the war effort. In wartime articles, suspicions are routinely privileged such that they take on the impression of fact, such as in this *Globe* article dated July 1, 1915:

Dynamite Stolen from Cobalt Power House:

Activity of Alien Enemies is Feared, as Austrians Were Dismissed from Mines

Cobalt, June 30. - Much excitement has been caused in this district by the discovery that eight full cases of dynamite have been stolen from the old Hargraves powder house which the Drummond Fraction Mining company was using at Kerr lake. This is the powder house from which powder was stolen previously. The theft is generally attributed to the activity of alien enemies, although nothing has been discovered to authenticate this belief. It can scarcely be that so much powder was stolen for peaceful purposes. It is regarded as a peculiar coincidence that a number of Austrians have recently been discharged from the mines. There are a considerable number out of work, and they are regarded as a menace. Almost at the same time two bags full of explosives were found on the mill creek stream between Halleybury and Cobalt. The discovery was made by boys who were camping there for the summer. (1)

The fact that ‘nothing has been discovered to authenticate’ the accusation does not prevent *The Globe* from publicizing ‘generally’ held opinions and fears, or from vaguely describing ‘Austrians’ as ‘a menace,’ or from hypothesizing that ‘it can scarcely be that so much powder was stolen for peaceful purposes.’ While this article may easily read as absurd from our perspective nearly a century later, it is important to remember that it passed for serious news during the crisis of wartime.

This discourse also had significant concrete impact on those targeted; the article's reference to the dismissal of “Austrians” from work is indicative of the role the newspapers, as disseminators of public discourse, played in shaping events as well as describing them. The public mistrust that both shaped and was further fostered by these media discourses

during both wars is connected to the dismissal of members of these communities from work. They often found it difficult if not impossible to find new employment (Dreisziger 8). Responding to, and circulating, news from the front, this newspaper discourse demonizes the enemy and stimulates public fears of enemies within the nation. A 1917 article quoting speeches in the House of Commons describes newly-naturalized Canadians as “alien enemies... gathering nightly in the little huts and schoolhouses in the West, devising ways and means of doing up this country and this government. We all know that this enemy is fighting and plotting [...] in this country [...] if you lock them up, if you intern them, they are ready to mob anybody who has anything to do with them. I've seen them in the pens in this country” (“Col. Currie’s” 13). It goes on to attack the suggestion that German Canadians should have equal rights, describing this suggestion as “pandering to” the enemy; the article denounces the “wooden [i.e. Trojan] horse that has been saddled and prepared, and inside of which we find 40,000 or 50,000 votes” (13) of enemy aliens who intend to undermine the war effort. A 1918 article, “Aliens Here a Real Problem,” argues ominously that “the matter could not be dealt with only for the duration of the war[, but] has to be dealt with to settle the matter for all time to come [...] It would not do merely to intern aliens or conscript them, for at the end of the war [...] they would flood the labour market” (2). As this example indicates, the enemy within is produced as dangerous not only to the war effort, to the stability of the country and government, but also as competition, as a threat to the discursive ‘real’ citizens’ ability to attain employment. The depiction of ‘aliens’ in ‘pens,’ as a ‘mob,’ and as hordes gaining entry in a Trojan horse, posing as friends, paints a picture of less-than-human throngs seeking to destroy the nation’s stability through underhanded means.

During World War Two, the term *enemy alien* gives way somewhat to the more popular term *fifth columnists*, which first emerges during the Spanish Civil War when a general

in Franco's army advancing upon Madrid with four columns of troops declares that he has a fifth column within the city (Oxford 681). The term is used to describe covert organizations of enemies posing as innocent members of society, while sabotaging the war effort from within and waiting to aid the enemy openly when the time is ripe. As in the first War, these 'enemies within' are suspected of everything from "spreading rumours" to sending the Nazis "complete maps of all strategic places in Canada, including power houses, railway terminals, important harbours, and plants producing essential war material" ("How" 6). Fearful news discourse early in the war calls for various measures to deal with suspected fifth columnists, including revocation of citizenship, internment, deportation ("Drastic" 4), and the death penalty ("Death" 5). In a 1940 article, during a wave of heightened tensions in response to Italy's joining the Axis forces, the RCMP reassures readers that it "is in complete control of the situation" ("Guard" 2), and that all fifth columnists are "under surveillance" or "interned" ("Guard" 2). Citizens are encouraged to call or write to the RCMP with any information about fifth column activity they suspect in their neighbourhoods ("Mail" 4). Indeed, people in this period are interned in some cases on the grounds that "neighbours' denunciations made them dangerous agents" (Keyserlingk 55). Arguments in this news discourse ask whether these "immigrants" of non-British "stock" are suitable for entry to Canada, for instance in a *Globe and Mail* letter dated June 4, 1940, "Why So Many Germans?" which asks, "Where did they go and what are they doing here? [...] Is it a sound Immigration policy that brings more Germans and other Europeans to Canada than settlers of British stock?" (6). This language indicates the ways in which, even when the "enemy" is a light-skinned European, racialized anti-immigrant sentiment dovetails with, and sometimes takes the form of, expressions of fear about the enemy within. "Settlers" of British "stock" (i.e. British immigrants) were depicted as readily assimilable into the national fabric, instantly

becoming Canadians. Meanwhile, “immigrants” (i.e. non-British immigrants) occupy a permanently “alien” position within the nation.

As ideas about race shift and change with the emergence of new categories of identity and the shifting boundaries of whiteness, the same old narratives pick up new subjects and take on new physical details. In semiotic terms, notions of bodily darkness intersect with depictions of the enemy, such that enemy status confers at once a body perceived as darkened,<sup>18</sup> and a meaning of racially inassimilable within Canadian society. Evocation of racial “stock” invokes notions of “blood,” mobilizing powerful social myths about racial purity. That “Germans and other Europeans” are depicted as less assimilable indicates racial differentiation between the “stock” of British settlers and of other, less discursively pure groups. An article depicting a “German fifth columnist” who escaped from a camp in Northern Ontario describes his “dark steel-grey hair,” and “dark sallow complexion,” along with other frightening features such as his “square head,” and “protruding jaw” (“Find Transmitter” 2). “*The Hamilton Spectator* referred to the city’s Italians as ‘by far the largest foreign minority in a city essentially populated by Europeans of varying nationalities’” (Cumbo 102), indicating that people of continental “European” origins were conceived of as “foreigners” within the nation. *The Spectator* wrote of the Hamilton Italian community that “terrorism [is] the weapon of savages and uncivilized people, and such barbarous practices [...] only shame the races who countenance them” (Cumbo 105;

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<sup>18</sup> While the category of Whiteness shifts over time, and emerged at a specific historical moment, such that (Irish, Italian, Jewish, etc.) bodies that are today situated (more or less, depending on context) within Whiteness were not always so situated, that does not mean that Whiteness is an infinitely expanding category. Indeed, the very consolidation and expansion of Whiteness serves to ossify new modes of dominance. Jiwani writes: “skin colour as the basis of identification also suggests the degree to which one can pass or is unable to pass into dominance. Thus, while the Irish were whitened at [a] particular historical juncture in the history of the South, can the Somalis be so Whitened today? I would argue no, and here I base my rejection on the history of colonialism, the corporeality of race as a marker of identification that is visible and, through its visibility, used strategically and tactically to maintain White dominance” (12).

emphasis added), demonstrating that notions of the meaning of *race* have shifted, in particular with regard to the status of Italians in Canada since this time. Today we see a more expansive, and yet more rigid, notion of whiteness taking primacy over older race identifications that attached *race* to *nation* and *nation* to *state*, in which ‘British’ was one race, ‘Italian,’ ‘German,’ or ‘Hungarian’ different races, and ‘Japanese’ or ‘Chinese’ as yet another, further racialization, garnering worse treatment the further one’s physical body was situated from the British ideal that lay at the root of Canadian national identity. Despite these shifts in usage and conception of racialization, it is interesting to observe consistencies in the ways newspaper narratives represent those deemed racialized ‘enemies within.’ In many ways, these older representations prefigure and inform contemporary ones, for instance in the language of secrecy, of ‘hiding’ in one’s ethnic group, and hence of the perceived danger represented by racialized features, whether these be biological race markers such as skin colour or cultural markers of race such as clothing, language, religion, food, or facial hair.

With this history in mind, I would like to return to the question of interlinkages among immigration, the national imaginary, law, and newspaper narratives. Macklin writes,

While many look to the criminal law to *protect* us from the enemy within, I urge us to attend to the law’s role in *producing* the alien within [emphasis added]. The history of this country gives one ample reason to worry about the extent to which an abstract, collective security will be purchased through the infliction of tangible insecurity on particular individuals and communities. (399)

I wish to attend to the same question with regard to our national newspapers as they represent bodies produced for public consumption under these laws. Newspaper discourse, as a complex apparatus which creates and reflects both public opinion on the one hand, and the actions of political leaders on the other, plays a central role in constructing and maintaining this Otherness, which is, and should be, contested from multiple directions.

To close, I would like to return to a term that I use often in this dissertation, in order to complicate it, even though I continue to employ it: *community*. I'd like to reflect for a moment on this term, in its forms such as *racialized and migrant communities*, or *community organizing/ers*. Even as I employ this term, I wish to draw attention to the fact that it is not a simple referent. Any 'community' is really multiple communities, subsets of community, tensions between different communities. Every supposed 'community' also has fuzzy edges, people who might fit a given identity category, but who are not embedded in 'community' life, people who choose to remain outside formalized 'community' spaces or networks, people who do not identify primarily via this category of their identity, or who are not fully embraced by it; people whose identities (identity being always multiple and intersecting) grant access to – and exclusion by – multiple kinds of space, or only allow partial belonging, or partial acceptance of the self within 'community' spaces. Furthermore, any 'community' depicted in the media will grapple with the flattening that this process entails, so will struggle over the definitional power granted by accessing the public with any sort of sanctioned voice that can be situated as 'representing' a 'community' voice or perspective. These tensions, which can be masked, oversimplified, or misrepresented in mediated representations and public discourse, bring into relief the ways that the seemingly smooth concept of *community* is actually very hilly terrain indeed, crisscrossed with rivers and valleys, with isolated areas and conformist centres of power. As Sumayya Kassamali observes in "Solidarity in Islamophobic Times": "There is no such thing as *the* community voice. Not only are there multiple voices, but a hierarchy of ethics and truth among those voices. It is therefore incumbent upon us to listen carefully" (15).



## Chapter One: Methodology

In this chapter, I provide the theoretical context for the dissertation, including ongoing debates on the nation-state and nationalism, Race Theory traditions that inform my analysis, an explanation of the concept of Frames in news media, and the tension between realist and poststructuralist paradigms in news media critique. This chapter also outlines the multidisciplinary methodological approach I will be taking in the case studies, and identifies a set of methodological tensions that inform the dissertation. Since I approach newspaper stories as narrative, the methodology is grounded primarily in literary textual analysis, while the useful concept of frames allows for a foregrounding of the ways hegemony operates in these narratives.

This analysis takes the newspaper narratives as a form of popular storytelling and examines them using close reading much the way you might analyze a fictional representation: a book, a movie, a play. The goal of this mode of analysis is denaturalization of the narrative; the basic research assumption is that this analysis takes place from a position of fluency with and within a naturalized discourse, rather than from the position of an outside observer. The hybrid methodology in this dissertation offers a twofold innovation to the practice of close reading: one, as I have mentioned, is to bring the concept of Frames to bear on a literary analysis of newspaper texts based in denaturalization and reading against the grain. The other is to explore the ways in which racialization acts as a feature of the frame, as I explain below, and as I will explore further in the case study chapters.

While I employ selected quantitative analysis in order to support specific arguments, I do not make claims to objectivity or neutrality, because any such claims are inherently flawed. My primary method is thus a literary analysis of the narratives present in these newspapers, employing Frames Theory, Race Theory, and reading against the grain, with the goal of denaturalizing these narratives that are so close to the skin. Juxtaposing the dominant narratives in the news stories to the discourse produced by those being represented and/or their supporters, via press releases and public statements, allows for a denaturalization of the dominant frame in each case study. I will also open up discussion over the important institutional constraints upon academic research that makes claims, implicit or explicit, to ‘helping’ racialized people and non-status people, a productive tension with important nuances that I will unpack further in the conclusion.<sup>19</sup>

## **Nation-States and Nationalism**

A look at scholars of nationalism who explore the emergence of the modern nation-state can bring these discussions of Canadian nationalist discourse into sharper focus, by foregrounding the relative youth and contingent nature of the Westphalian nation-state

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<sup>19</sup> As stated above, for the purposes of this dissertation, I have chosen to situate this critique within literary studies, using close reading and ‘reading against the grain’ to tease out the narratives that shape the news content, because this methodology makes possible a particular kind of space for unpacking the ways racialization operates within news frames. For parallel conversations that use other methodological approaches, please see Frances Henry and Carol Tator’s *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-Language Press*; Yasmin Jiwani’s *Discourses of Denial: Mediations of Race, Gender, and Violence*, “Helpless Maidens and Chivalrous Knights: Afghan Women in the Canadian Press” and “Mediations of Race and Crime: Racializing Crime, Criminalizing Race.” See also Jiwani and Mary Lynn Young’s “Missing and Murdered Women: Reproducing Marginality in News Discourse,” Sherene Razack’s discussion of security certificate detainees in  *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics*, Jenny Burman’s analysis of Adil Charkaoui’s Security Certificate case in “Absence, ‘Removal,’ and Everyday Life in the Diasporic City,”; John Miller and Cybele Sack’s “The Toronto – 18 Terror Case: Trial by Media? How Newspaper Opinion Framed Canada’s Biggest Terrorism Case”; Karim Karim’s “Making Sense of the ‘Islamic Peril’: Journalism as Cultural Practice,” Minelle Mahtani’s “Representing Minorities: Canadian Media and Minority Identities,” Sunera Thobani’s discussion of the Maher Arar case in *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*; Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Nisha Nath’s “From Deportation to Apology: The Case of Maher Arar and the Canadian State,” and the additional works cited entries for: Jiwani, Karim, Steuter and Wills; Fleras and Kunz; and Greenberg.

structure. Nations themselves, which are much older than states and emerged over a longer period of time, are not primordial or natural but are contingent political formations. Nations, as Ernest Renan observed in 1882, “are something fairly new in history” (43). Contemporary nations, Renan argues, formed in part from the ruins of earlier family dynasties and intermarriage due to conquests by various waves of invaders (46) which had little to do with what we today might understand to be nations. The “defining feature” of modern nations such as “France, Germany, England, Italy, and Spain,” is not natural, primordial, or even rooted in the conquest of a shared land at the nation’s beginnings, but rather is “the fusion of their component populations” (Renan 44):

Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation, which is why progress in historical studies often constitutes a danger for [the principle of] nationality [...] No French citizen knows whether he is a Burgundian, an Alan, a Taifale, or a Visigoth” (45).

Countering the view of ethnic nationalism that holds that nations and states are “naturally” coterminous, Renan argues that cultural grouping and even race do not provide bases for primordial origins of nations: “the truth is that there is no pure race and that to make politics depend upon ethnographic analysis is to surrender it to a chimera” (48).

Scholarly opinion varies on when nations first emerged, and posits the linking of nations to states at a range of possible moments. Contemporary nation-state theorists, however, generally agree that the modern, irredentist nation-state and its concomitant nationalist culture is always a retroactive construction. In *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm, for instance, argues that “modern and contemporary historians [are] highly relevant to that comparatively recent historical innovation, the ‘nation,’ with its associated phenomena: nationalism, the nation-state, national symbols, histories and the rest” (76). As Hobsbawm points out in his discussion of French and German nationalism, nationalism’s

extreme forms require an Other to facilitate “definition of the nation”; the nation defines itself “in terms of its enemies” (Hobsbawm 82). This argument opposes primordialist views of the nation-state in which nation and state are seen as natural convergences, in which nations themselves are envisioned as eternal, unchanging aspects of human existence, and – importantly for our purposes – in which national literatures are understood as “passive reflections” (Corse 9) of national spirit, which is viewed as a “naturally occurring phenomen[on]” (Corse 9).

Although Ernest Gellner describes modern nationalism as “neither universal and necessary nor contingent and accidental, the fruit of idle pens and gullible readers” (Gellner 11), he adds that “[t]he nationalist principle requires that the political unit and the ‘ethnic’ one be congruent” (45), which is not, as primordialists would have it, simply a natural or inevitable mode of social organization:

It is, in this [the nationalist] view, simply ‘natural’ that people should wish to live with their own kind, that they should be averse to living with people of a different culture and, above all, that they should resent being governed by them. This is perhaps the commonest of ‘theories’ of nationalism: in one sense it is barely a theory, because it treats the principle as something inherent in human nature, or the very principles of social organization, so obvious as not really to require any explanation. (Gellner 7)

As Gellner argues, *all* modern nation-states are in fact a recent development on the global stage, not ‘inherent in human nature’ and not waiting to emerge since the primordial beginning. Etienne Balibar argues that the histories of nations are, in fact, presented in the form of narratives, which *attribute* to nations “the continuity of subject” (Balibar and Wallerstein 86) even as they construct the national subject based on a necessary Other. The emergence of a given nation is seen to “awaken” an identity that was latent throughout history, representing “a destiny” (86). Furthermore, the nation’s “personality” is understood

to be singular and different from that of all other nations (87). This, however, is “a retrospective illusion,” (86) as Balibar argues; however much it has real effect, it remains a reaching back of a modern social formation into the primordial past. As these quotations indicate, the modern nation-state is indeed a relatively recent development, despite nationalist claims. “It is widely agreed that the nation-state is a modern Western construction. It can be further argued that the gradual ascendancy of the nation-state beginning around 1800 in the West was a function of colonialism” (Miyoshi 731). Indeed, as I mentioned in the introduction, the modern nation-state as a dominant form of social organization only became legally possible after the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and the current global system of nation-states did not emerge until after World War II, through the period of global decolonization that formed new states (Miyoshi 730), which also created the conditions under which core states would remain dominant over those of the economic periphery (Balibar 91).

Despite its contingent and relatively recent emergence, the nation-state (and its apparatus, guards, laws, borders, as well as museums, schools, galleries, and culture) is powerful as an ideology, an institution, and as lived experience, both for those living within the protecting embrace of a nation-state identity and for those excluded by those figurative and physical borders, or caught in the borderland created by an “unnatural boundary” (Anzaldúa 3), such as that described by Gloria Anzaldúa between Mexico and the United States. The nation-state, Balibar argues, literally produces the national subject, through the institutions of the family and the public education system (93). Acting as ideological state apparatuses in Althusser’s configuration, these institutions inculcate in national subjects the national language, which Balibar views as one of the forms that bonds individuals together, continuously, into “the weft of a collective narrative” (93). Through language taught in the

education system, Balibar writes, “the ‘external frontiers’ of the state [...] become ‘internal frontiers’ [...] imagined constantly as [...] an internal collective personality [that] enables us to inhabit the space of the state as a place where we have always been – and always will be – ‘at home’” (95).

However, shared language, which is necessary to “relativize” (Balibar 95) and thus merge the different ethnicities out of which a nation is initially made, is not necessarily adequate to forge common identity. A further, more indelible demarcation of collective belonging is necessary, and Balibar argues that race, in the form of “fictive ethnicity,” offers this possibility:

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

Thus, the idea of the ethnic nation as ‘emerging’ – latent, inevitable – out of a historical slumber is a retroactive imagining, fostered by modern states to naturalize claims to land. Are recent transformations, in which corporations can determine the immigration needs of the nation-state or the fiscal policy of individual state governments, an indication that the nation-state is weakening under globalization? For a time in the mid-to-late 1990s, the idea that the nation-state was losing authority was widespread. Kenichi Ohmae wrote in 1996: “in terms of real flows of economic activity, nation states have already lost their role as meaningful units of participation in the global economy of today’s borderless world” (214).

While many critics disagreed with Ohmae’s assessment of the benefits of leaving behind a state imagined as obsolete, the argument that states were losing ground to a globalized economy was widespread. Susan Strange in 1996 expressed the popular anxiety

over whether national governments were losing the capacity to govern in the face of the international market economy; Ian Angus, in *A Border Within*, argued similarly that “corporations [...] are increasingly gaining leverage over nation-states” (42). However, as many theorists argue, neoliberalism has not weakened but instead has transformed nation-states. Indeed, as David Harvey argues, neoliberalism creates “the paradox of intense state interventions and government by elites and ‘experts’ in a world where the state is supposed not to be interventionist” (Harvey 69). The actors in the global economy depend profoundly on nation-states: “in contrast to neoliberal ideology, in which market forces are assumed to operate according to immutable laws [...] neoliberal restructuring projects [are embedded] insofar as they have been produced within national, regional, and local contexts” (Brenner and Theodore 349). Nation-states under neoliberalism, rather than weakening, actively become more fluid for capital, for goods, and for a “transnational capitalist class” (Sklair). Meanwhile, they become increasingly rigid and impenetrable for people of the global south and for laborers. Bob Jessop describes the many ways in which a neoliberal state is in fact, not a weakened state, but a restructured one:

Neoliberalism promotes market-led economic and social restructuring. In the public sector, this involves privatization, liberalization, and imposition of commercial criteria in the residual state sector; in the private sector, deregulation is backed by a new juridicopolitical framework that offers passive support for market solutions. This is reflected in: government measures to promote ‘hire-and-fire,’ flexitime, and flexi-wage labor markets; growth of tax expenditures steered by private initiatives based on fiscal subsidies for favored economic activities; measures to turn welfare states into means of supporting and subsidizing low wages and/or to enhance the disciplinary force of social security measures and programs; and a more general reorientation of economic and social policy to the private sector’s ‘needs.’ [S]ocial partnership is disavowed in favor of managerial prerogatives, market forces, and a strong state. (Jessop 462)

The Canadian nation-state understood within a Keynesian-Westphalian formulation is indeed undergoing profound alteration, but it is not on its way out of the global political

arena. Instead, national laws enact the purported undermining of the state's strength, so the nation-state can hardly be said to be weakening. "From this perspective, the Keynesian-Westphalian frame is a powerful instrument of injustice [... It] protect[s] the governance structures of the global economy, which set exploitative terms of interaction and then exempt them from democratic control" (Fraser 10). In Canada, to name a few examples, immigration laws *enacted at the level of the national* have internally transformed the nation-state, such as a law that allows multinational corporations to bring "executives [and] managers" across national boundaries as intra-company transferees,<sup>20</sup> while those in the lowest echelons of the working world are simultaneously prevented from crossing borders freely through increased state militarization of the border and increasingly rigid immigration laws. The collective identities of corporate executives and management may align with transnational spatialities *defined* by corporations, for the benefit of corporations; yet these identifications and the physical mobility – or lack of mobility – that corporations require are actively sheltered by nation-state structures. These state structures generate mobility options for wealthy business-class migrants as they limit mobility for working class migrants under the transforming logic of neoliberalism (Ong).

In the face of these restructurings, popular and theoretical constructions of the Canadian nation-state in the field too often still naturalize literary production in Canada within a nation-building mandate. As I explored in more detail in the Introduction, within a nationalist framework calls for an expanded canon are characterized by arguments for inclusion of those born in Canada or naturalized through state bureaucracy. The political climate – the legislation, the immigration and refugee system, as well as hegemonic social

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20 A legal website advising potential employers states: "in today's global economy, executives, managers, and those with specialized knowledge in multinational firms must be able to travel and work freely. Canada's immigration laws recognize that, and have specific provisions for Intra-Company Transferees" (Lowe 1).



truths and common sense – has shifted so that birthright is not, now, the horizon of the struggle for equality nor for inclusion of the most marginalized among Canada’s racialized minorities. The economic desire for cheap labour remains in place, and a transformed legal and social apparatus is in place to provide it; as always, racism shifts into different forms and needs new responses, as I will explore further.

### **Race Theory, Literary Analysis, and Canadian Newspapers**

In their interplay with official narratives about who is and is not Canadian, national newspaper narratives mobilize and normalize racialized signs of otherness to legitimate national security discourses, and are thus, I argue, complicit with state violence. Analyzing them thus offers an intervention into present discourses of security, race, whiteness, and belonging. Rhetorical patterns in media coverage bring into dramatic relief not only how contemporary material realities have refigured the role of citizenship in the Canadian state, but also how Canada’s racialized national discourses legitimate new realities of state violence. Passports and identity documents produce variously racialized bodies that add a new layer to traditional modes of inscribing national membership on human beings. Race, that shifting, slippery set of categories with very real material implications, which informs and is informed by media narratives, and which is itself a marker of belonging or exclusion, is increasingly fused with legal identity in ways that further racialize non-citizens within the Canadian context. In the contemporary moment of overheated security discourses, racialization once again marks the human body as a visible sign, an Other that can be recognized – and positioned as dangerous outsider – on sight. As Razack observes, these processes push racialized people into “terrifying world” of the camp, the colony, and the detention centre,

places in which the rule of law does not apply (*Casting* 28). In what follows, I explore the Race Theory methodologies that inform this critique.

Race Theory as a field is somewhat unusual (and also quite ordinary) in that many of its core theorists did/do not consider themselves part of a unitary, coherent, or disciplinary field of study. Fields understood by their writers variously as philosophy, colonial and critical discourse analysis, critical legal studies, postcolonial theory, feminist theory and others are all in a sense subsumed under the more recent and quite broad label of Race Theory, a label which is not uniformly or homogeneously employed. In addition to playing freely across disciplinary boundaries, debates that can be understood as part of Race Theory have also spawned several of their own subfields of knowledge, such as Subaltern Studies and Diaspora Studies. These debates cross oceans as well as national and state boundaries. Indeed, some race theorists, as I will explore, re-imagine and reinforce the boundaries of states, of nations, and of 'racial' identities, while others disregard or disavow such boundaries entirely. The choice to subsume all of these fields (which include quite large and freestanding areas such as Postcolonial Studies) under the broader umbrella of Race Theory is a newer practice that is still taking shape and is only one of several available frameworks.

The Race Theory that I employ in this dissertation is strongly influenced by the meeting Stuart Hall describes between racialized thinkers theorizing race (which includes Black American thinkers such as W.E.B. DuBois or Frederick Douglass as well as Colonial and Postcolonial theorists such as Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, or Sara Ahmed) and the Euro-American cultural studies traditions such as postmodernism, poststructuralism or French feminism (Hall 443). This relationship between (what is now called) Race Theory, and (a largely white) cultural studies tradition, is not an easy one. As Hall notes in 'New Ethnicities,' it is:

A theoretical encounter between black cultural politics and the discourses of a Eurocentric, largely white, critical cultural theory which in recent years, has focused so much analysis of the politics of representation. This is always an extremely difficult, if not dangerous, encounter. (Hall 443)

With Hall's warning in mind, I would like to situate the foundations of Race Theory in the writings of racialized thinkers such as W.E.B. Du Bois and Frantz Fanon. While race scholars certainly do pick up (and critique, reject, or bend to their purposes) influential arguments by white European thinkers such as Marx and Freud, or poststructuralists such as Derrida or Foucault, the theorizing on race does not owe its foundations to these analyses even though the exigencies of academic infrastructure may position the debates this way. People who theorize the racialized relations of society have done so without necessarily learning from white scholars about race, even if they come to similar conclusions. And often, the conclusions, or the force and the impetus with which the arguments are arrived at, is quite different when approached from the subject position of white scholars than it is when people marginalized by racism critique the same phenomena. Derrick Bell articulates this tension in his description of the early reception of C.R.T. in legal studies:

A major critique [...] urges critical race theorists to tell stories that are "accurate." The authors seem unaware of the bizarre irony in their pronouncement that "we know of no work on critical Race Theory that discusses psychological or other social science studies supporting the existence of a voice of colour." They do not tell us what such a study would look like, and why centuries of testimony by people of colour regarding their experiences, including individuals like Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, Charles Wright, and Toni Morrison, are not measure enough. (Bell, cited in Delgado and Stefancic 900)

The very conventions of the distanced academic voice can prevent critics from understanding what they are reading, as Bell points out: "The narrative voice, the teller, is important to critical race theory in a way not understandable by those whose voices are tacitly deemed legitimate and authoritative" (900). The interaction Hall observes between

Black cultural politics and poststructuralism fuels a poststructuralist Race Theory such as that of Hall, Paul Gilroy or David Theo Goldberg, and it is this long and many-voiced tradition that I am calling Race Theory, and that is the primary influence on my work.

### **Mark of Cain/ada: Racialization, State, and Nation**

This merger between an older essentialist analysis and the poststructuralist critique of discourse as productive, and not merely reflective, of social relations, is central to my research. As Michel Foucault argues in *Discipline and Punish*, “[T]he ritual that impose[s] punishment” is also “the ritual that produce[s] the truth” (42); visible marks on the human body “constitute a sign” (46). Similarly, visible signs on human bodies produce both guilt in the public eye and truth. In the contemporary political moment, signs of race that position subjects as *Muslim*, *Arab*, or *South Asian* (three entirely distinct, heterogeneous, though overlapping categories) act as Foucauldian markers of guilt and suspiciousness when they circulate in the public sphere, producing – through the very racialized visibility of certain bodies – an ‘enemy’ for public consumption. Racialized imagery thus acts as a ‘mark of Cain,’ in much the way African-American poet Phyllis Wheatley invokes when she writes that “negroes black as Cain” (1) were seen in her day as marked by “a diabolic dye” (1) – literally marked and naturalized as ‘evil’ by their darkness, like Cain in the Old Testament. As punishment for Abel’s murder, God marks the skin of Cain’s forehead, a mark that protects Cain from harm even as it exiles him. Since *to be racialized* (as the verb form itself suggests) is to be positioned by and within a complex set of discourses, racialization constitutes a process – albeit one that is often actively chosen and mobilized consciously. It is a means of affixing a mark or a way of reading the body – and not a fixed or a priori identity.

Racialization shapes how human bodies are perceived, and, to echo Foucault, inscribes

meaning on the human body, marks the body with a particular value. The identities of those who enter into a racialized discourse are reconstituted by these inscriptions; for instance, immigrants who leave home communities, in which their embodiment may be the norm, and become racialized within Canada, are transformed by this migration in space and in raced identity. Many people thus situated in Canada consciously choose to identify as *racialized* or *of colour* as a means of gaining agency, and in this way to struggle over who can shape hegemonic representations in the national imaginary.

In the contemporary moment, this mark of Cain is also the mark of Canada, for when human beings are interpellated by state security discourses, the state receives (the perceived) protection from this act of racialization, and enacts the harm against its br/other, as I will explore further. The state is no longer content to contain difference through ideological means, as was perhaps the case when Smaro Kamboureli explored media discourses of multiculturalism in “Sedative Politics.” In that context, and only by excluding examination of the relationship of the Canadian state to Indigenous people, it may have been possible to say that “violence here is not to be understood so much in a physical sense as in the sense of a virulent politics” (84). New material realities, including deep changes to the state, and a deeper understanding of prior realities, have moved us beyond the possibility of productive discussion of citizenship or multiculturalism that does not grapple with physical violence. These new realities include widespread militarization and hardening of borders with a growing global economic divide that displaces increasing numbers of people; massive changes to the immigration system such as legislation that drastically increases the number of migrant workers brought into developed countries to work without granting the rights of citizenship; a violent enforcement system for noncitizens in the rise of enforcement arms

such as the Canadian Border Services Agency<sup>21</sup>, and the concurrent rise of a transnational migrant rights movement with a strong base in Canadian cities. In this context, notions of citizenship (or diaspora) as a “mode of belonging” or a “style of residence on earth” (Robbins 3) now appear to ignore the brute material reality of armed border agents, removal orders, and hidden deportation centres in airports and cities across the country. Academic discussions of citizenship must now respond to these realities. Concepts such as cosmopolitan citizenship (Ong; Robbins), consumer citizenship (Canclini), and diasporic citizenship (Cho; Grewal; Kamboureli; Kaplan; Laguerre), as well as notions such as global citizenship (Schattle) and corporate or market citizenship (Ohmae) must all be understood in light of these material realities. Discussions of identity and difference, of “narrative[s]” and “counternarratives” (Kamboureli, “Sedative Politics” 93), or of the possibilities and limits of multiculturalism(s), are reconfigured when the state abandons even the appearance of a cooperative mode. Cleared of responsibilities to non-citizens – and even in many ways to its citizens, as we have now seen in numerous instances, most visibly in the 1000 people rounded up in Toronto at the G8/G20 protests in June 2010 – the state’s ideological gloves come off and brute physical force becomes plain; the enforcement and overt racism that Indigenous peoples have always known at the hands of the state now become the reality for an expanding group of people,<sup>22</sup> and it is these material realities we must contend with.

Like other forms of oppression, overt racism in Canada is not new but is one stream of discourse among many, that has shifted, retreated, and returned at different historical moments. The work to establish a dominant frame in any specific news story, and the

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21 The CBSA was formed in 2003 and ratified in 2005, combining personnel from the enforcement branch of Citizenship and Immigration, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and the (former) Canada Customs and Revenue Agency

22 Thank you to Phillipa Ryan for providing this insight.

struggle to shift the larger terrain in which frames resonate and take root, are the descendants of this history of struggle over racism in this country. Kamboureli, for instance, notes the “disavowal” of multiculturalism – in its mode as code for non-Anglo-Saxon incursions into the Canadian imaginary – that has been present ever since the inception of Official Multiculturalism as a state policy (84). The intensity of the brand of public critique of multiculturalism that pitches a coded “diversity” against an implicitly white “dominant culture” has returned and even accelerated significantly in recent years (Chariandy 819), revealing a blunt racism in public discourse that had retreated in the 1990s. This blunt racism plays out in many subtle and not-so-subtle ways in both popular debates and in law and enforcement. In the context of the contemporary Canadian state, the time when we could productively “divorc[e] citizenship from the nation-state” (Cho 472), from its legislative and executive context, discussing it primarily in terms of difference or cultural practice, has largely passed, if it ever existed.

By positioning media producers – such as newspaper editors and journalists – as narrative agents, we as producers of creative and critical work can hold the media accountable for their narratives. This allows us to see the media as another type of cultural text, governed by similar rules of business, and with similar political potential as literary texts within the Canadian publishing apparatus.<sup>23</sup> In the Canadian cultural context, for example, many creative workers have opened up spaces of resistance through textual interventions. To name just a few, the poetics, fictional and critical work of Roy Miki, Wayde Compton, David Chariandy, Hari Sharma, Sadhu Binning, or Dionne Brand, each in their own ways question and challenge accepted norms about *Canada*. Textual practice can de-legitimize and call into question state violence by creating spaces of critique and resistance through literary

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<sup>23</sup> Thanks to Myka Tucker-Abramson for proposing this connection.

and textual production; media texts share this potential. Like critical media production, critical literary work is kept alive via an alternative (generally small-scale) publishing apparatus, and seeks to make meaningful inroads into corporate publishing.

On the other hand, literary texts can also work to reinforce hegemonic notions of the nation and may win prizes and recognition in doing so. In prizewinning works of fiction, Canada is at times depicted as an innocent country, a refuge, where racist violence is rare and manifests as residual individual acts of ignorance, rather than in systemic and structural ways. In this vision, portrayed, for instance, in Anne Michael's *Fugitive Pieces*, Canada is "a crayon, when everything [elsewhere] had been written in blood" (248). This hegemonic notion of Canada sets up an illusory innocent, rational-liberal national space that can then be threatened by a sense of incursion by 'irrational' and 'violent' others. This discourse of innocence is ironically employed to exclude, and enact violence upon, those Others deemed less rational and less innocent than discursive Canadians, and therefore less deserving of the protections of citizenship.

National security narratives, whether literary or media-based, mediate this false sense of fear, which can be reinforced or challenged in national discourses. My hope in reading media narratives by employing a methodology inspired by literary analysis is that the example set by literary scholars and critical cultural workers, poets, and fiction writers, who regularly grapple with the power of narrative and discourse and with the responsibilities this power entails, may inspire discussion about the roles of mass media texts. Just as literary texts can play multiple roles in relation to the state, whether hegemonic, libratory, or both, I propose that we explore the ways in which media texts can be, though are not necessarily, complicit with state violence. Through this process, which can help render the familiar unfamiliar, it becomes possible to ask the important question of whose material interests are served by the



naturalized discourses present in newspaper texts, and to ask media producers to account for their complicit if not instrumental role in legitimizing the state's racialized security apparatus.

### **The Poststructuralist Turn and The Limits of Textual Interventionism**

Although, as mentioned above, I treat these newspaper texts as narratives, the post-structuralist assumption that interventions into language are homologous with interventions into material conditions is not enough. In "Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies," Stuart Hall addresses this tension, which I wish to keep in mind:

I want to insist that until and unless cultural studies learns to live with this tension, a tension that all textual practices must assume – a tension which Said describes as the study of the text in its affiliations with "institutions, offices, agencies, classes, academies, corporations, groups, ideologically defined parties and professions, nations, races, and genders" – it will have renounced its "worldly" vocation. That is to say, unless and until one respects the necessary displacement of culture, and yet is always irritated by its failure to reconcile itself with other questions that matter, with other questions that cannot and can never be fully covered by critical textuality in its elaborations, cultural studies as a project, an intervention, remains incomplete. If you lose hold of the tension, you can do extremely fine intellectual work, but you will have lost intellectual practice as a politics. I offer this to you, not because that's what cultural studies ought to be, or because that's what the Centre managed to do well, but simply because I think that, overall, is what defines cultural studies as a project. Both in the British and the American context, cultural studies has drawn the attention itself, not just because of its sometimes dazzling internal theoretical development, but because it holds theoretical and political questions in an ever irresolvable but permanent tension. It constantly allows the one to irritate, bother, and disturb the other. (284)

Just as we might earthquake proof an old building rather than demolish it, however, we can salvage and reinforce certain arguments from the poststructuralist turn, and test their relevance to contemporary realities. I am reminded here, for instance, of Foucauldian arguments about Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*, which anchor state violence in the material reality of the human body through an examination of the ways in which signs of punishment by the state literally mark and produce the body as guilty. Regardless of the

personal or private self-definitions of the character so marked, the visibility of punishment by state power produces the guilty body, at once creating a particular identity and creating public knowledge of the visible clarity of guilt.

In *The Scarlet Letter* this mark famously takes the form of the letter A on the breast of the protagonist, marked there by patriarchal state authority as a badge of shame, a visual marker of guilt that (initially) produces the protagonist's status as "adulterer" (Savoy; Sweeney). In other works, the visible marker of guilt and shame takes the form of race markers: for instance, the character of Joe Christmas in William Faulkner's *Light in August* is produced as racialized and hence debased by a pair of "shoes, black shoes smelling of negro: that mark on his ankles the gauge definite and ineradicable of the black tide creeping up his legs, moving from his feet upward as death moves" (339). By virtue of association or juxtaposition, the 'mark' of heavy 'black shoes' situates the ambiguous body of Faulkner's protagonist in a racialized position, which produces his identity as a less worthy human being than the novel's whitened characters, and marks him publicly as guilty of a murder committed earlier in the novel. Racialization, which is a contingent and context-specific process that writes race onto human bodies rather than operating in some absolute or biological way, acts similarly as a signifier of guilt and suspiciousness in public narratives. Viewing newspaper stories as this kind of narrative allows for a thematic exploration of their tropes and visual language, without quantifying the content.

Until recently, the pluralist narratives of Canadian multicultural civility provided a thin veneer over racist notions of the nation-state, and it may have been possible to engage in an intervention at the level of discourse alone in that temporality. Our contemporary moment of discursive crisis brings the physical violence attached to security discourse into prominence. In this new context, any basic rights to physical safety (themselves eroding

under neoliberalism) adhere only with citizenship, yet nation-states and the forces of global capitalism are shifting to push many more people into forced migration, to create a permanent category of sub-citizens available for exploitation. It has become necessary for Canadian Literature as a field to do more than critique narratives of recognition, assimilation, difference, and exclusion, or to discuss citizenship as a social, cultural, or ideological phenomenon. Discussions that focus primarily on the ideological aspects of citizenship (such as multiculturalism, difference, or citizenship as a social and cultural experience) without grounding them in legal and violent state actions are not adequate. We now must deal with ‘actually existing’ citizenship, including racialized barriers to that citizenship, and with physical violence carried out against people, including those in Canada, denied legal membership in the national community. So long as these legal and coercive structures remain in place, more is needed than sharing space within an exclusive national imaginary or its institutions. Including more voices within this construct would not by itself dismantle the exclusions that are at the very base of the nation-state as dominant social organization of the ‘modern’ world, which is reinforced in important ways, rather than merely weakened, under neoliberalism, and is naturalized by nationalist newspaper narratives. It has become necessary to challenge ‘actually existing’ citizenship structures: a violent immigration bureaucracy that can bring the borders quite literally into malls, into elementary schools, and into people’s bedrooms, indeed bringing borders into the most private areas of human life, as the four case studies explored in this dissertation remind us. The neoliberalizing state and the physical violence it legitimates is itself in need of address.

## Frames

An innovation offered by this dissertation is the combination of a close reading methodology informed by Race Theory and semiotics, with the concept of the news frame that is more commonly employed in media analyses. Literary analyses that traditionally employ close reading have not, as of yet, employed the concept of Frames to explore the ideological content of texts; a combination of this Communications concept with literary close reading practices, and reading against the grain, can help expose underlying assumptions and binaries that limit and shape newspaper narratives. If newspapers are a popular form of storytelling, they are subject to the kinds of narratives and literary modes that we are accustomed to seeing in fictional works; hence, close reading can unpack and denaturalize the world views in these texts. At the same time, since news texts deal with realist representations, framing is a useful concept for further unpacking the ways the struggle over hegemony plays out in these popular stories.

This liminal perspective brings into relief the ways in which the paradigm that traditionally situates Frames Theory within a quantitative nomothetic analysis is constrained by (often unspoken) assumptions of researcher neutrality as a desired or even possible goal. This research genre is not, however, essential to the use of Frames Theory. Employing Frames within this nomothetic quantitative paradigm is mainly a legacy of the history and context within which Frames Theory developed into its current form; I wish to lift Frames Theory from its contemporary association with a nomothetic quantitative paradigm, in order to fully develop the potential of the concept for a close reading of news as story.

In order to employ the concept of Frames in the body chapters below, a definition of the concept and a brief summary of the development of Frames Theory is useful. The development of the concept of the news frame in media research is usually first attributed to

Erving Goffman's *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Goffman didn't operationalize his theory, focusing more on defining frames conceptually, much as I will do in this dissertation. Goffman argues that principles of organization, or frames, govern how events or situations are presented, defined, and understood in communication processes. Roughly the cognate of the notion of a *false dichotomy* in philosophy, frames shape the possible ways a debate can progress, or constrain the available ways a given event or issue can be understood, all while masking the framing and presenting the impression of a free and unfettered debate. Frames highlight some aspects of a story and minimize others, thus limiting the way a given story or issue can be produced and understood, at times delimiting even the way participants in mediated events understand their own participation.

Later thinkers (notably Gamson) combined Goffman's analysis with Gramsci's argument, mentioned earlier, that all human beings exist within social positions that limit and shape how we can understand, and thus represent and produce, social reality. The combination of a Gramscian approach to hegemony with Goffman's observations about news frames as organizing reality foregrounds the idea that hegemony is never closed or complete but is always a site of contestation; in the case of frames, the struggle is over who gets to define the terms and boundaries within which public debate occurs; elite state actors, such as government, police, or corporate public relations sources, are systematically granted privileged access to media framing, but their hegemony is never total, and the power to set frames is mitigated by many factors, not least of which is the preferred framing of news producers themselves. The struggle in media contexts is thus not over which of the limited positions produced within a given framing are deemed "right" or "wrong," but rather over the very framing of the debate, the selection of what scope of possible realities, what options, can even be *thought about*. In Gaye Tuchman's conception, "the news frame

organizes everyday reality” (Tuchman 193); frames are “an essential feature of news” (193) in the linguistic sense. Frames, which Todd Gitlin argues make intelligible and “organize the world” (Gitlin 7) are simply part of the daily routines and practices of news production; they are “largely unspoken and unacknowledged” (7). Thus, frames shape the content that circulates in the public sphere “not by telling people what to think, but telling them what to think about and how to think about it” (Greenberg 4). In short, the news frame organizes reality.

Famous examples of intentional framing include the language of *tax relief* that was cooked up by Reagan-era White House publicists who insisted that all communication with the public employ this language instead of the term *tax cuts*. As George Lakoff argues in *Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*:

A basic principle of framing, for when you are arguing against the other side: Do not use their language. Their language picks out a frame —and it won't be the frame you want. [...] On the day that George W. Bush arrived in the White House, the phrase *tax relief* started coming out of the White House. [...] Think of the framing for *relief*. For there to be relief there must be an affliction, an afflicted party, and a reliever who removes the affliction and is therefore a hero. [...] Taxation is an affliction. And the person who takes it away is a hero, and anyone who tries to stop him is a bad guy. This is a frame. [...] It is remarkable. I was asked by the Democratic senators to visit their caucus just before the president's tax plan was to come up in the Senate. They had their version of the tax plan, and it was their version of tax relief. They were accepting the conservative frame. The conservatives had set a trap: The words draw you into their worldview. (Lakoff 1)

Another prominent example of framing, easy to spot because it was not uniformly applied and was thus less successful in claiming a hegemonic position, was the language used by the Bush administration during the response to the subprime mortgage crisis and ensuing financial crisis that emerged in October 2008. Initially the government and media called the mass infusion of government funding a *bailout*; this language became the dominant frame for

a time. However, as the media ran alarmist headlines about socialism taking over the USA and the failure of free market capitalism – as the idea of government ‘bailing out’ corporations interacted with the existing ideology of the corporate media – government spin doctors within the Bush administration proposed that *rescue plan* was a more appropriate framing of government interventions into the financial crisis. This frame attempts to mitigate the language of a *bailout* for events which included the nationalization of banks and massive state infusions into the corporate sector. Bush and government publicists switched to *rescue plan*, but media outlets were uneven in their application of the new language, since a dominant frame of *bailout* had already been set. News reports reveal a humorous competition between, and sometimes blending of the two frames, as in the headline “U.S. House to Vote on Bailout Rescue Plan” (Reuters).

As these examples demonstrate, rather than telling people *what* to think about a given issue, the news frame attempts to constrain or shape the available sides of an issue, or to set the invisible foundations of thought (usually in the form of an explicit or implicit false dichotomy) upon which opinion on a given topic rests. It attempts to define and delimit the available sides of an issue, to ascribe blame, and propose remedies, within a limited scope of possibility. In another example, the terms “pro-choice” and “pro-life” each attempt to frame the abortion question, with mixed success. “Pro-choice” attempts to situate the options as a question over a woman’s right to control her own body, and “pro-life” attempts to frame the question as one over the life or death of the foetus. These attempts at framing are so transparent that neither is successful at claiming a hegemonic position; when frames are rendered invisible, and naturalized, as they are in the coverage of the case studies in the body chapters of this dissertation, they can be much more powerful and dangerous.

Goffman's work has been interpreted and adapted in numerous ways by scholars of political communication, social movements, and media. The notion of Frames as it is developed by these later scholars offers an operationalized approach to Goffman's vision of Frames, which has been used in a number of ways in media analysis. For instance, Gamson, in "Goffman's Legacy to Political Sociology" summarizes Goffman's contributions to the field of Frames Theory in relation to the shaping of political consciousness, as well as Micromobilization, or the study of encounters and group mobilization. Gamson explores the way in which Goffman's Frames Theory can offer what he calls a more precise model for engaging with Gramsci's notion of hegemony in specific media contexts. The process of framing is thus envisioned as a contested location of struggle: legitimating dominant frames can be broken or denaturalized by alternative mobilizing frames, such as the injustice frame frequently employed by social movements.

Robert Entman's 1993 article "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm" was influential to the development of Frames Theory in its contemporary uses within Communications Studies as a discipline. It synthesized the disparate and transdisciplinary uses of Frames Theory in use at the time, to create what the author calls a "coherent" model of how frames become embedded in texts, how they manifest in communication, and how human consciousness is affected by the framing of information. Working within a nomothetic paradigm, Entman proposed to organize Frames Theory from what he called a "fractured paradigm" or "scattered conceptualization" (Entman "Toward" 51), into a "coherent" (51) social science methodology. Entman defines frames as selection practices which build increased salience for certain "bits of information" (53) in a communicative text, rendering them more noticeable or memorable, or assigning importance to the highlighted features of reality. Culture, he argues, is the "stock of commonly invoked



frames” (53) exhibited by most people in a given social grouping. Frames can promote or shape definitions of problems; diagnose causes; make moral judgments; and/or suggest remedies.

Entman, influentially, argues that there are different locations or types of frames. In “Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Incidents,” Entman divides frames into *media frames*, “attributes of the news itself” (Entman “Framing U.S.” 7) that shape media content, and *individual frames*, the frameworks or “information-processing schemata” with which individual readers interpret and absorb media messages and make sense of the world (7). Texts, Entman argues, contain frames, which are “manifested by the presence or absence of certain key-words, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments” (“Toward” 52). However, the reader can receive the text with a similar or with a different set of frames than that of the text producer (who may consciously or unconsciously encode them) or from the frames in the text itself.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the presence of frames in a given text does not automatically guarantee their influence on audiences, although a (considerable) degree of influence on audiences is argued successfully in several examples of previous studies Entman cites. Frames theorists also divide frames further into cultural frames, which are the stock of ideas and images shared among members of a culture, and producer frames, the knowledges and ways of thinking of news producers. Several frames theorists argue that producer frames, media frames, individual frames and cultural frames are linked, if in a contingent and contested way. This

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<sup>24</sup> This understanding of the different types of frames is a rough cognate of Stuart Hall’s notion of “encoding” and “decoding” of media texts, in which audiences are understood to participate *actively* in meaning creation. Hall’s conception theorizes the agency of the “decoding” subject, who does not passively accept the codes of the producers or of the text, but can “decode” in either a “dominant-hegemonic,” a “counter-hegemonic,” or a “negotiated” fashion, all three of which are perceived of as active roles. (“Encoding/Decoding”)

struggle for hegemony that takes place within the battle over framing is particularly important because “typically frames diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe” (“Toward” 52, “Cascading” 417); in other words, the dominant frame offers a set of implicit assumptions about what the problem is, who is to blame, and what should be done. Hence, media frames can have a significant impact on subsequent action.

More recently, in his work on the cascading activation model of framing, Entman argues that frames cascade down from elite actors. “The ability to promote the spread of frames is stratified; some actors have more power than others to push ideas along to the news and then to the public” (*Projections* 9). As Entman argues in “Cascading Activation: Contesting the White House’s Frame After 9/11”:

To reach frame parity, the news must offer a *counterframe* that puts together a complete alternative narrative, a tale of problem, cause, remedy, and moral judgment possessing as much magnitude and resonance as the administration’s. Availing themselves of such diverse, clashing, and equally well-developed understandings, a democratic citizenry can in theory freely and intelligently choose. As already suggested, frame parity is the exception, not the rule. More frequently, frame contests [fall] somewhere between complete frame dominance and a degree of contestation. (418)

Thus, frames are set by elite players and cascade down through actors with varying degrees of power to spread them; they can percolate up as well (*Projections* 12), but this occurs much more rarely.

Dietram Scheufele’s 1999 article “Framing as a Theory of Media Effects,” which also works within the nomothetic paradigm, is credited with popularizing a comprehensive model of frames research that systematizes the field to “operationalize” (105) what he calls the previously “fragmented” (103) approaches to Frames Theory in the field of political communication. The article provides a classification system of previous framing studies. The author categorizes previous studies along two dimensions: the type of frame considered

(media or audience frames) and the way frames are operationalized in each study, as either dependant or independent variable. Despite the scientific, nomothetic discourses employed by these studies, Framing is a flexible concept in that it can be employed either in a nomothetic quantitative study using external benchmarks, or (as I do here) in a close reading approach that analyses the ideological content of a given set of literary texts.

Frames can thus be used fluidly as a conceptual framework, useful to research that relies on close reading methodology and that rejects objectivist assumptions, scientific discursive practices, or the availability of a neutral voice. An understanding of the operation and power of frames in shaping public perception is vital for media critique, in the production of alternative frames, and in the attempt to introduce counter-hegemonic frames into circulation in dominant discourse. The media work undertaken by community organizations often has to struggle against dominant framings of race and the nation in Canada, such as those explored by the race theorists discussed above. This proactive re-framing (or pre-emptive framing in some cases) is nearly impossible to do without consciously constructing a preferred frame to circulate (rather than becoming trapped into advocating from within an already-framed position, as Lakoff suggests).

An awareness of what frames are usually at play in the media, and what kinds of frames might effectively gain traction in response, is vital to this ability to engage effectively with the mass media.<sup>25</sup> When it comes to challenging racism in the Canadian cultural and political landscape, the incredible power of official discourses<sup>26</sup> and the mass media to impose and circulate dominant frames, and to silence, ignore, or simply not understand

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<sup>25</sup> For a cogent discussion of the possibility of changing the frame, see Yasmin Jiwani's discussion of the structural nature of violence, and the social hierarchies that undergird it, in the *Discourses of Denial* chapter "Reframing Violence."

<sup>26</sup> For additional discussion of the factors that shape newsworthiness, please see John Hartley's *Understanding News*, Noam Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent*, and Entman's *Projections of Power*, among others.

counter-hegemonic frames put forward by organizers, is of great consequence, because a major part of the battle in any given conflict undertaken in the public sphere, such as those in the four case studies, is waged over how a given debate will be framed in popular discourse. As Jiwani notes, “the narrative structure [in news] activates previous representations, which then ground and inform the meaning of current representations” (*Denial* 37). These practical questions of tactical and strategic media work by those engaged in the long-term struggle for social change are vital because the national media’s representations of a given conflict are always embedded in the popular frames that shape and define what it means to be *Canadian, racialized, a migrant, a refugee, etc.*

### **News, Nation, Race, Frame**

While government and elite sources are systematically granted increased authority in news discourses, their management of the dominant frame is not absolute. Various non-elite actors also compete to establish the dominant frame; the ‘side’ that succeeds in shaping the frame ahead of the curve of media discourses and state PR has the possibility to push the government, popular will, and even the communities being represented (Indra 553), in particular directions that impact the immediate outcome and long-term effects of a given campaign or a longer-term movement for social change. Because national crises engender a crucial window of relative conceptual openness, before official narratives become ossified as dominant frames, alternate frames – if offered quickly, and if they are effective at ‘making sense’ by *pushing at* already-existing paradigms – can gain some amount of traction within the mediasphere. In order to intervene in this way, speed is essential, and thus an understanding of existing frames that come to play on new stories is vital. Thus, here I have attempted to

explicate the ways framing operated in previous case studies, in order to offer additional knowledge that can help inform effective framing in future cases.

The frame that became dominant in the first three case studies in this dissertation presents a binary, in which the possible ways to understand the story are bifurcated into guilt or innocence. The narrative elements of the story (dangerous terror cell, brave and capable police, re-establishment of safety for Canada, more money for security) are situated within this limited binary, in which the only ways to think about the relevance of this story is in a debate over whether the accused are or are not terrorists. The mobilization of widespread public support for the detainees, and the possibilities for shaping public debate, were constrained by existing determinants that affected what was possible when the alternate discourses hit the ground of both the media's own frames, and the cultural frames that constrain what media producers can or are willing to say. Other frames, such as structural racism/oppression/injustice,<sup>27</sup> while they were available and did make inroads into public dialogue, fell largely outside the dominant newspaper frame; these structural arguments that seek to widen the frame were by and large situated as lacking salience within the episodic news genre.

In concrete terms, the newspapers aren't in a position to discover guilt or innocence. In the absence of this capacity, whatever evidence is at hand becomes folded into the binary. Physical features associated with race come to circulate in a semiotic signification system that locks in to the guilty/innocent binary of the Enemy Within frame. Here I'm combining the notion of a signification system with Foucault's idea in "The Spectacle of the Scaffold" that visible signs of guilt are produced by a public spectacle of apprehension and punishment,

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<sup>27</sup> News discourse is structured episodically, a format which inherently inhibits representation of structural and systemic violence. See Fleras and Kunz for additional discussion of this phenomenon as it shapes coverage of structural and systemic racism in Canada.

and I'm combining this Foucauldian concept with the Race Theory insight that race is a powerful social construction that marks the body with real material effects, rather than any *a priori* or essential phenotypical quality. In "New Ethnicities," Hall posits race as "a politically and culturally constructed category, which cannot be grounded in a set of fixed trans-cultural or transcendental [...] categories and which therefore has no guarantees in nature" (443). Representation, for Hall, has "a formative, not merely an expressive, place in the constitution of social and political life" (443). As I discussed previously, he proposes a reclaiming of the concept of ethnicity, which can take place, Hall argues, through a retheorizing of Derrida's notion of *différance*. This conceptualization of race as a discourse possessing powerful social effects, rather than an essentialist category, allows for an exploration of the ways racialization plays out in the news narratives. For Foucault, the spectacle of apprehension and of punishment – the visual spectacle of being hung upon the scaffold in the public square – acts as *evidence* of guilt: the spectacle marks the human body with the obviousness or visual clarity of guilt. In the case of Laibar Singh, those race markers come to signify within a binary that asks whether Singh 'deserves compassion' (to maintain the 'compassionate nature' of the Canadian system) or 'deserves deportation' (to maintain the 'Canadian rule of law'). As an Other within the state, racialization situates him outside the 'us' that deserves protection and dignity. In the case of Project Thread, the Toronto 18, and Security Certificates, the spectacle of the detention process, and the visible signifiers of race (including non-phenotypical markers such as names, clothing, language, or religion), become folded in to this guilty/innocent binary of the Enemy Within frame and expand the power of the 'carceral' to regulate normativity and deviance throughout the social order.

## **Realism and Poststructuralism in Media Representation**

Thinking with Hall, I have said above that interventions into textuality, while necessary, are not enough. I would like to explore the tension between realist and poststructuralist paradigms, as they are employed in communications research about news media representation. In broad strokes, *realist* paradigms in studies about news (different from the meaning of ‘realism’ in literature) presume that news media can be viewed as a mirror or reflection of real life, and measured against an assumed external reality, or against external benchmarks, to check for accuracy or distortion. *Realism* is used in this way to mean that there is a knowable external reality that exists prior to discourse (such as the identity of a *Muslim* or a *terrorist*), and that media reflects this known external reality. In contrast, poststructuralist approaches to news media (in their purist forms, or to simplify) argue that there is no social reality prior to representation, that all identities are *produced* discursively. In this dissertation I have chosen to employ a process of denaturalization that, like Hall’s approach, situates itself somewhere in between the realist and poststructuralist camps; without wanting to ‘expand the territorial claims of the discursive infinitely,’ as Hall suggests, I work from a basic assumption that texts and representations plays a constitutive role, producing social realities rather than merely representing events after the fact.

## **Who Benefits, Who Decides? The Limits of ‘Claims to Help’**

In closing, I wish to raise questions, to be dealt with more thoroughly in the conclusion, about the social contradiction between academic work such as this dissertation that makes claims (implicit or explicit) to helping racialized people or non-citizens, and the critiques of academic claims to help emerging from non-status and racialized migrant justice organizers writing about those same representations. To be clear, this is not to be a

comparison between an oversimplified dichotomy of *experience* and *theory*, because theorists working within academia can share the life experience of racialization or of grappling with the immigration apparatus, while racialized and non-citizen community organizers also routinely *theorize* their own community organizing. Indeed *producing theory* is a core part of organizing work when it is done well and as part of long-term struggles. Rather than create any false dichotomy between *theory* and *experience*, this analysis examines the articulations, interactions, and relationship between diverse kinds of knowledge-producing *space*: community and academic spaces that produce theory about ‘racialized migrants’ with an (implicit or explicit) claim to help have different rules and operate with different constraints of the knowable and the sayable. In the conclusion, I will explore the ways in which these knowledge-producing spaces (such as literature departments, Canadian Literature conferences, academic and journalistic publications, non-governmental organizations, and grassroots organizations) operate according to different discursive rules and social expectations about appropriate and inappropriate speech. A related axis, which is largely a question of genre expectations, consists in the tension between the authoritative voice of a researcher striving for neutrality, which is often the normative voice in content analysis studies of news media, and the more self-reflexive voice of an author speaking from *within* an acknowledged cultural imaginary and fluent in its norms and signs. Even as people and ideas move between these different kinds of space, it remains that within academic knowledge-producing spaces, context-specific professionalization requirements and social codes produce certain kinds of speech and limit others. Roy Miki notes the effect: “much of the opposition to the exclusionary effects of English and CanLit studies has come from this constituency external to the university – in critiques and texts transported by various indeterminate routes across institutional borders from social and cultural movements



enmeshed in daily resistance to racism” (*Broken Entries* 167). This tension within academic work seeking to contribute to antiracist movements cannot be reduced, as it often is, to “issues of critical appropriation, insider-outsider knowledge and experience, and tokenism” because this, Miki argues, “neutralize[s the problem] through a binaristic framework of assumed social and race hierarchies” (169). This is a vital consideration in any academic research that seeks to ‘help’ or participate in a larger social movement.

## **Chapter Two: “A Suspected Network of Muslims”: the Project Thread Case as Narrative Primer**

In the summer of 2003, front-page headlines declared that a terrorist cell had been thwarted in Canada. The RCMP and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) conducted a joint operation called Project Thread, in which a group of students from Pakistan and India were detained at gunpoint in a house raid, linked by immigration fraud involving the defunct Ottawa Business College. Nineteen men were detained in their beds early on the morning of August 14, and a handful more turned themselves in and/or were detained during the following weeks. The men were held without charges at the maximum security detention centre Maplehurst Correctional Centre for periods ranging individually from weeks to months. As non-citizens, the men were held without charges or trials under *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)* regulations without recourse to the provisions in *The Antiterrorism Act*. They were not charged with any offense, for *IRPA* allows indefinite detention of any non-citizen pending deportation. None were tried before a judge in a court of law, for adjudicators at immigration hearings need not be judges or lawyers. A grassroots coalition – the Threadbare coalition – arose that supported the men; this coalition mobilized several counterdiscourses, including a title that responded to the government’s name for the investigation by drawing attention to the ‘Threadbare’ nature of the ‘Project Thread’ accusations. However, the coalition did more than refute government accusations, or argue for the men’s innocence. The Threadbare coalition’s public statements also seek to mobilize

an alternate frame that draws attention to the structural injustice in the Canadian immigration system and to the specific forms of racism that have (re)emerged in national discourse about Canada in the post-911 era. Despite this alternate frame that the Threadbare coalition offered to the media, the dominant frame in both *The Globe and Mail* and *The National Post* was set by the RCMP and CIC, and positions the debate as a binary question of whether the men are or are not guilty of planning terrorist acts. While it is not surprising that government and police sources were able to set the frames employed by the news media, it is nonetheless instructive to critique the frame that this process produced, and to situate it in contrast to other available frames that the media chose to downplay and ignore. Critiquing state-generated frames opens up cognitive space that the dominant frame seeks to shut down, which is vital because the dominant frame, left unchallenged, can sometimes come to shape even the ways those involved in a story understand their participation; my hope is that articulating the alternate frames generated by community organizers, and remembering how they operated, may be useful in future cases.

The Enemy Within frame was ossified in the national dialogue about the detentions; this framing funnelled all other arguments into a limited binary of ‘guilt’ or ‘innocence,’ and directed public attention towards the threat to ‘Canada’ rather than the threat to detainees. Although the alternate *frame* offered by the Threadbare Coalition was not picked up as a dominant frame by the corporate media, the coalition’s argument that the men were *innocent* of terrorist ties did gain headway in public discourse, indicating that community organizing and advocacy has an important impact on the outcome of public events (Odartey-Wellington 1). The coalition also constituted a powerful instance of agency in the face of state repression. Although the corporate media did not circulate the alternate frames, public talks, independent publications, and a National Film Board documentary called *Threadbare* (Khan)

arose in response to the detentions and deportations and did directly address the frames mobilized by the coalition. Community organizers who worked on the Threadbare campaign formed a No One Is Illegal chapter in Toronto soon after these events, in part to address and challenge these very structural issues in the media and the immigration system.

My focus here, however, is not on these powerful social movements themselves – because the community organizers<sup>28</sup> involved are better situated to theorize their campaigns. Rather my focus is on the news media’s framing of the story. My goal as a media researcher is to unpack the media texts to see what kind of traction different available frames garnered in the corporate media. My hope in conducting this interpretive analysis is that a better understanding of the frames that were dominant in past cases may help lend insight into future scenarios; since speed matters when setting the frame for a new story, my hope is that understanding the ways frames operate in the Project Thread case may be useful for community organizers strategizing media campaigns in the future.

All of the accusations were dropped by the RCMP within weeks of the detentions as it became clear that government officials had grossly overreacted to questionable evidence that included fires in the kitchens of the students, the fact that they lived in sparsely furnished apartments, and their affiliation to a school, the Ottawa Business College, that supplied visas to students but then shut down, leaving the students with visas but no school to attend. The owner of the school, Luther Samuel, was never charged with fraud, and many other (non-Muslim) students registered at the Ottawa Business College were not interrogated (Shephard and Verma); nevertheless, a group of Muslim students was subjected to a media

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<sup>28</sup> The term ‘community organizer’ used here, which I complicate in the introduction, is a useful one inasmuch as it creates conditions that can unify and mobilize people to work for changes to the circumstances of their daily lives within existing social relationships. In this way the term ‘community organizer’ is often distinguished from ideas such as ‘activist,’ where ‘organizer’ denotes working within one’s social networks, such as family or existing spaces that are already forged as ‘ethnic’ communities within Canadian society.

storm. By the time the government concluded that the men were not, in fact, terrorists, the damage had been done: news media seized upon the unfounded accusations made by RCMP and CIC officials; the news, and the men's faces, travelled around the world. Most of the men were deported and the government never apologized – despite the significant alliance between citizens and non-citizens, who demanded that the government apologize not only to the detained men, but to Canadian Muslims in general, who were, the coalition argued, impacted by the case and the alarmist news coverage it generated.

When the case against the men fell apart within three months of the initial detentions, the story faded into news obscurity; its lasting impact lies in its contrastive power to make evident the news narrative itself, a narrative that, as we see in this case, shapes news coverage about terrorism stories. Reading the news stories in light of the men's innocence, a narrative becomes evident<sup>29</sup>: a dangerous terror cell is apprehended; the police and intelligence agencies are brave and capable; the country (in the abstract) is kept safe; more money is advocated to be spent on an ever-growing security apparatus. As I discussed in the methodologies chapter, whether racialization occurs in national print media or national literary texts, it can provide a cover and justification for the violence undertaken by state structures. Since the men were innocent of terrorism by all accounts including those of their accusers, the media coverage is an index of the narratives that emerge when the nation-state positions an Other, situated within an indeterminate legal zone of relative rightlessness, around which the constructed imagined community, the national sense of self, can cohere.

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<sup>29</sup> The fact that the news stories were largely structured within templates governing crime news shaped the narrative; for additional discussion of the genre of Crime news, please see Scot Wortley's "Misrepresentation or Reality? The Depiction of Race and Crime in the Toronto Print Media" and "Hidden Intersections: Research on Race, Crime, and Criminal Justice in Canada." See also Scot Wortley, Ross Macmillan, and John Hagan's "Just Des(S)Erts? The Racial Polarization of Perceptions of Criminal Injustice" as well as the works cited entries for: Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, and Roberts; Ericson; Ericson, Baranek, and Chan; Bennett; and Clayman.

The Threadbare coalition held talks and presentations about the Project Threadbare detentions, including a public panel in Toronto featuring one of the released detainees as well as lawyers and human rights advocates. Public talks and mobilizations provide the opportunity to access grassroots sources of information that can keep communities connected and can build alliances that skip the intermediary of the newspapers. In a sense, this coalition allowed community members to unplug from media messaging, and to build counter-hegemonic discourses less directly structured by the gatekeeping processes of commercial news production. This mobilization, therefore, created a space in which to mobilize an alternate frame that centred on the injustice of the detentions at gunpoint, on the injustice of the deportations, and on the inherent structural injustice of the Canadian immigration system, situating the detentions within a larger awareness of state repression of both people of colour and non-citizens. This analysis, when it hit the ground of the media discourses, however, became a much simpler argument for the men's innocence – and this argument did have an impact on the media's handling of the story.

As I explored further in the methodologies chapter, I engage in an interdisciplinary analysis of these news narratives, grounded in the literary practice of close reading and reading against the grain, that brings together Frames Theory, semiotics, and Race Theory to interpret the ways in which the physical appearances, names, and habits of these 21 Muslim men circulated in national public discourse, producing and circulating (intentionally or not on the part of news producers) a narrative of terrorist danger and a guilty/innocent binary that framed the ways this story could be represented. By comparing the news content that appeared in the national newspapers to the media releases produced by the Threadbare coalition, a coalition “of members of the Pakistani and south Asian communities, cultural organizations, immigrant and refugee groups, anti-poverty organizations, political groups,

faith groups, trade unionists, students, and concerned activists and individuals” (Threadbare Coalition) that arose to defend the men and call for a public apology, it becomes possible to critique the struggle over hegemony – a struggle that takes place largely in the attempt to establish and control the dominant frame – in national discourse.

Media releases from this coalition do more than argue that the men are innocent. They also explicitly address, and connect, two separate but interrelated issues: racism towards Muslim and South Asian *citizens* within Canadian society, *and* the injustice of the immigration system that denies rights to non-citizens in Canada:

In the face of increased targeting of Muslims and South Asians, coupled with state repression of community-based social justice organizing, Threadbare and its supporters must continue to strengthen existing networks and build new connections with people of color, immigrant communities, activist groups, and all other supportive constituencies. This struggle is crucial not only in gaining justice for these men, but in the long-term struggle waged by people of colour against racist state targeting and unjust immigration policy. (Threadbare Coalition)

As this quotation indicates, the coalition made important connections – and made them publicly – calling for unity and solidarity between citizens and non-citizens, Muslims of differing ethnicities and political stripes, people of colour from many different communities and identities, and social justice organizers across political lines. This is a significant moment of coalition-building, and these nuances were lost in the media representations of the story.

Since the government and RCMP fully rescinded the accusations, this story represents a test case, that reveals the narrative structures and framing present in media discourses about threatening Others within the nation-state, a narrative naturalized within existing discourses of nation, security, and otherness, and that has little or nothing to do with the outcomes of the immigration hearings. It offers a primer that can be used to draw out the narratives in the other stories. As Gamson observes, Frames, as an operation of

hegemony in Gramsci's terms, are always contested, sites of struggle in the public sphere (Gamson 614). The Threadbare coalition mobilized alternate frames, seeking to alter the frame in news media. However, the capacity to successfully frame a debate when these moments of crisis occur requires quick apprehension of the ways framing works, of the impacts, potential effects, and potential traction of various possible emerging frames, and quick action to offer the frame that will both gain traction *and* have the desired effect. Usually, given existing structures of power, the dominant frame is set by officials and elite perspectives, but it is sometimes also possible for community groups to quickly analyze and establish – or at least muddy, or pull at the final shape of – the dominant frame, if conditions are right. Thus, a prior understanding of frames is useful in getting ahead of the media curve. Despite the injustice frame that was available, the dominant frame in the newspaper coverage of the Project Thread case is that of the Enemy Within. Other ways to understand that story that fell outside the dominant frame did occasionally appear, but were granted decreased salience in the news content; anything that does not signify as either 'guilty' or 'innocent' of terrorism – hence understood in relation to the threat to the state rather than the threat to the detainees – is not considered relevant or newsworthy in this narrative. The Threadbare coalition addressed this question of whose security is deemed relevant in the dominant frame, by pointing out the risk to the security of the detainees, in media releases, stating for instance that: "their only crime was to desire a better life. Nouman is afraid to go back to Pakistan now that the word 'terrorist' has been attached to his name. Returning will not only *jeopardize his security*, but the *security* of his two sisters" ("One Year Anniversary," emphasis added). This alternate framing – explicitly calling attention to the 'security' of the detainees – fell outside the available news discourse, for in the Enemy Within frame, the



tangible risk to the security of the detainees is given decreased salience. Only an abstraction called *national security* matters.

One initial pattern, which demonstrates the frame at work, emerges through the absence of this story at the time of the actual house raids and detentions: news of the detentions first appeared in the media *over ten days after* the police broke into the men's houses in the middle of the night and accosted them at gunpoint in their beds. The disappearance of (initially) nineteen people without a trace, taken by the state, did not inspire front-page (or even any) news in *The Globe and Mail* or *The National Post*, indicating that state violence against non-citizens is not considered newsworthy. The injustice of the immigration apparatus that arbitrarily detains people at gunpoint in their homes for the mere fact of being non-status – of lacking papers – was not considered newsworthy, as this delay reveals.

Instead, the story became newsworthy only after an “RCMP announcement Friday [August] 22 that 19 men arrested in the Toronto area are considered potential threats to national security” (Immen). The very timing of the story's appearance indicates reliance on official framing of what shapes perceived newsworthiness.<sup>1</sup> The delay cannot be attributed to an historic power blackout which also occurred later on August 14, for a *Globe and Mail* editorial of August 16 describing the news-gathering process underway before the blackout says that August 14 was shaping up to be a very slow news day. The list of important stories planned before the blackout (Greenspon A2) does not include the Project Thread arrests, even though they occurred very early that morning. Even on a slow news day, it seems, a violent raid at gunpoint is not on the news radar if it concerns non-citizens being detained. A critical look at this delay raises the question of whether wrongful arrest and preventive

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<sup>1</sup>Peculiarly, the timeline given in the stories mitigates the delay, saying that the arrests happened “last week” in stories that appear August 23 and 25, even though the arrests took place on August 14.

detention of people in Canada – essentially amounting to disappearances – are considered news items at all. If so, how could the newspapers remain unaware of such significant events as the disappearance of a large number of people in the Toronto area – the news capital of Canada – with indefinite detentions and no charges laid? Are immigration detentions a news item only if the detainees are seen as dangerous to ‘Canada,’ but not a news item if they are ‘merely’ ‘illegal,’ or if the harm is ‘only’ to the detainees?

Following *The Toronto Star* story of the RCMP announcement, the Project Thread detentions began to make front-page news in the national media. Headlines in *The Globe and Mail* and *The National Post* announced that a “terrorist cell” had been discovered and thwarted in Toronto (Freeze, Bell). *The National Post* ran a full-size front page image of the CN tower with the headline “‘Network’ Eyed Tower: RCMP” (Bell, “Network” A1). In large part due to the organizing efforts of community members, who held press conferences, published media releases, and advocated for the detainees, several items do appear over the course of the coverage that indicate that the men are not guilty of terrorism, and a smaller few raise the issue of civil liberties, generally within the larger frame of national security and the Enemy Within. “Case of 19 Terrorists Starts to Unravel” (“Case” A5) appears with a large headline and very large photo on August 30. “Suspect's Lawyer Protests” (“Protests” A10) appears September 6. “Terror Suspects Pose No Risk: Immigration Probe Rules Detained Men do not Threaten Canadian Security” (“Pose” A12) is on September 26 – and while this piece argues that the men are not terrorists, the frame remains in place, situating the debate as a question over guilt or innocence. “Detained Pakistanis Plan Suit Over Treatment” (“Suit” A14) runs October 11 with the subhead “Terror Probe Overzealous, Lawyer Says.” And a ‘poem’ by John Allemang, “The Sleeper Cell” (“Sleeper” F2), appears October 4 with the lines:

The key thing is an Arab name - / Without it, Justice goes all blind /  
Rejecting figments of the mind / demanding proof, not jumbled facts / for  
signs of terror's coming acts [...] And when we face no real threats / We'll  
make some up, with no regrets [...] "Crown's Court Case Crumbles"? Just as  
well. / We're frightened by this sleeper cell, / and feel much better that the  
guy / we locked up couldn't hurt a fly. (F2)

The genre of the poem, which acts as an entertainment break from the regular newspaper genres, allows the writer – like the court jester of old – to name issues that can't be stated openly in the supposedly 'neutral' space of hard news. While the poem reflects the mistaken impression allowed by the newspaper discourse that these men were tried in 'court' (rather than by appointed civil servants on the Immigration and Refugee Board), it does lament the lack of 'proof' and the sense that 'justice' is not 'blind' in detaining these men.

A number of these articles offer a competing frame focussed on the threat to civil liberties represented by the Project Thread story, including a column by Christie Blatchford entitled "Kafka Meets the Keystone Kops at Pakistani's Detention Review" ("Kafka" A17). A comment piece written by the national president of the Canadian Arab Federation, "9/11: Do You Know Where Your Civil Rights Are?" ("Civil Rights" A23) runs on September 11, the two-year anniversary of the World Trade Centre attacks. An opinion piece, "What Will it Take? Stamps of Approval?" ("What" A23), written by the national president of the Canadian Islamic Congress, appears with a large graphic on September 30 with the subhead, "Racial profiling has hung over Canadian Muslims since 9/11. It casts such a pall, Mohamed Almasry wonders if Canada should issue cards to identify 'moderate' Muslims. Sound repugnant? It should" ("What" A23). These few pieces all appear buried – on page 23, page 17 – and they are opinion pieces by external writers, granted less weight and authority than news stories or editorials.

Dominant frames are most often set by elite and official perspectives rather than by those most directly affected by a given story: in the Project Thread case, the narrative that shaped this content speaks in the voice of state agencies, not in the voice of detainees. An early article, for example, quotes “antiterrorism agents,” “Immigration Canada,” “the RCMP,” “an immigration officer,” “Ontario premier Ernie Eves,” “the Federal government,” “Provincial Security Minister Bob Runciman,” “a spokesperson for Solicitor-General Wayne Easter,” “federal officials,” and (vaguely, repeated three times) “authorities” (Freeze). That same article contains only *one* quotation speaking for the men, from a lawyer who says his clients are “being held on flimsy evidence,” which appears in paragraph eleven out of fifteen and still situates the story within a ‘guilty/innocent’ binary, arguing that the men cannot be proven guilty because the evidence is ‘flimsy,’ rather than that they have been the subjects of structural racism, or an unjust immigration system. Given the power of official sources to access the mouthpiece of the media, and the process of exnomination that situates state actors as neutral authorities, an inherent power imbalance is established in which the detainees and their supporters must battle with government and police – the very people and agencies that feature in the story *and* have a major stake in the representation – for hegemony via the establishment of the dominant frame. Arguments that directly critique the immigration apparatus and question “the settler state’s legitimacy in determining who can and cannot enter the country” (Fortier) were available to the media, mobilized by the coalition; however, the media largely ignored that alternate frame, since it does not ‘make sense’ within existing media frames and does not fit the episodic structure of news narratives, nor the exigencies of the crime news template with its focus on individual deviance.

Even as the accusations were being rescinded, the Enemy Within frame created a discourse of fear that situates *national security* as its primary focus: “Terrorism a Threat Here, Ontarians Say” (Immen A6), describes the accusations against the men without including a single quote from their lawyers or supporters. Instead it describes information from an “RCMP announcement,” and from the “document filed in a detention hearing [that] cited a pattern of suspicious behaviour.” This piece privileges the CIC and RCMP perspective that the men are ‘suspicious,’ linking an unrelated poll taken of Ontarians’ views on terrorism to “the arrest of 19 people last week as possible threats to national security” (“Poll” A2) in an index brief. The subsequent article, “Bin Laden Agents Among 19 Arrested, Lawyers Say” (“Bin Laden” A1) begins by quoting “Canadian government lawyers,” and then goes on to cite extensively from “newly released documents from [the] hearing,” and from “authorities” (A1) who accuse the men. Out of 23 paragraphs, 16 paragraphs source the government lawyers, “authorities,” “investigators,” or “the document” (A1) while only 7 paragraphs – which all appear in the inside page of the story rather than on the cover – source the men or their supporters. Friends of the detainees, such as their roommates, are included rarely in these early articles, and always within the context that the detentions came as a surprise, and that no one suspected the men of wrongdoing – a common trope that, through its juxtaposition with stories about the suspicious behaviour of detainees, marginalizes these concerns by situating the speakers as ignorant of the (implied) secretive plans of their friends or family members.

Headlines throughout the coverage stress the guilty/innocent binary; of the fifty news items in *The Globe and Mail* that mentioned the story or mentioned the men in that three-month period, thirteen had headlines that suggested in any way that the men were not linked to terrorism; most of these headlines were small and accompanied articles without

photos, situated visually as less important than stories with photos. All of the hard news headlines stressed guilt or innocence rather than the competing injustice frame. For instance, the headline “19 terror suspects arrested, fear grows of Canadian 9/11” (“Arrested” A1), reproduces the government frame in both its cover headline and inside headline, “Tip from Mexico led to men’s arrests” (A10), which lauds the actions of a Canadian immigration official. On August 27, the second time this story makes front-page news, the A1 headline reads: “Bin Laden Agents Among 19 Arrested, Lawyers Say” (“Bin Laden” A1). Only inside do readers learn that the “Allegations Bewilder [the] Suspects” (A14). Similarly, the article “Wanted man can’t turn himself in” (“Wanted” A1), on the cover September 2, stresses the accusation by beginning with the fact that the man is “wanted.” Only inside do readers see, “Suspect Not Linked to any Terror Groups, Lawyer Says” (A4), which still emphasizes the guilt/innocence binary, rather than granting salience to the injustice frame mobilized by supporters. This framed language in headlines continues throughout the coverage. Headlines such as “Preventing Terror” (“Preventing” A16), and “Immigration Jitters” (“Jitters” A22) privilege the view that the men – flattened into ‘immigrants’ (read here as code for an overdetermined concept that encompasses racialized citizens, new immigrants, and non-citizens) are potentially dangerous.

Even as the case “began to unravel” (“Students at Sham” A7), the risk to ‘Canada’ that the Enemy Within frame stresses remained the dominant focus of the coverage. Of the nine days in which this story makes cover headlines in *The Globe and Mail*, only two front page headlines indicate the possibility that the men might in any way be wrongfully detained. Of these two, only one, “Adjudicator Frees Suspect, Disputes Terror Scenario” (“Adjudicator” A1), offers any indication that the flaw might lie in the accusations themselves, in the government’s story, or in official intelligence-gathering. In that example,

however, the choice of word order still reveals implicit accusation in its focus on the “adjudicator[’s]” decision, rather than on the violence of the “allegations” (A6). The frame invites readers to question whether the actions of the adjudicator are appropriate in ‘free[ing]’ a ‘suspect,’ situated as potentially dangerous, as the term *suspect* suggests. The injustice committed against these men is not granted salience, even in this article about their innocence. The state is situated as incompetent, which implicitly reinforces neoliberal ideology that prefers governance, policing, and prisons to be managed by private companies.

Accusatory headlines circulate this frame even when they conflict with information from previous articles or from within the same article. For instance, the September 5 front-page headline story, “Students at Sham College Got Federal Aid,” has a large subhead, “The Terrorist Probe: HRDC Cash Flowed to People at a School Facing Allegations of Visa Fraud and an al-Qaeda Sleeper Plot” (“Students at Sham” A1). This prominent front-page headline story accuses the men of a secret “al-Qaeda sleeper plot” even though an in-depth story appears 6 days earlier stating that the case against the men has “unravel[led]” (“Case” A5) and that “the RCMP says there is no evidence that Canada’s national security is at risk” (A5). As this wording indicates, the risk to ‘Canada’ remains, however, the central concern granted increased salience in both stories. This piece, by focussing on the ‘risk’ to an abstraction invoked as ‘Canada’ (and exnominated as a whitened identity of authority) ignores the injustice faced by the detainees. Instead, the article’s focus on the ‘Federal Aid’ implies that the accused men, situated as *potential* terrorists, *could* have received funding from the government. This gross misrepresentation, proclaimed in large headlines on the cover, is quietly corrected near the end of a long article on page A10 the next day: “None of the individuals taken into custody were recipients [of the federal student loans], because foreign students are not eligible for government loans” (“Sham College Ran” A10). This piece of the

story is lost in the overriding communication that an “al-Qaeda sleeper cell” *may* have received funding from the Canadian government, figured as gullible and unsuspecting. The situating of the government as ‘not doing its job’ implicitly supports a neoliberal ideology of privatization of all state functions, rendering them yet further outside democratic control. The indignation implicit in this framing of the story naturalizes a dominant Canadian position that mobilizes existing public frames that scapegoat immigrants as ‘abusers’ of Canadian generosity, which act as cover for neoliberal restructurings of state programs such as education funding. As these examples demonstrate, accusations and fears of a terrorist threat, however tenuous, are more likely to make front page news than are stories that target the structural injustices in the immigration apparatus and their implications for Canadian society and people with precarious status in Canada. Since headlines – particularly front-page headlines – are the first and sometimes only access point for readers, they play a powerful framing role.

As I mention above, one cover article seems upon first read to contradict this trend. “‘All My Dreams Have Been Disturbed’: Arrested on Suspicion of Posing a Security Threat, Muhammed Naeem Says He Is an Unfortunate Victim of Circumstance” (“Dreams” A1) provides a sensitive, if formulaic, human interest narrative about one of the detained men. However, this article, that highlights the personal, individual impact of the arrests on the men, does not make any links to arguments about civil liberty or injustice. At no point does it suggest that authorities may have committed an injustice, or that Naeem might be the target of unjust laws. Instead, the story, which focuses entirely on one man's wrongful arrest – a medical student with class privilege more likely to resonate with audiences – says he is simply a “victim of circumstance” (A12) or of his own “bad judgment” (A12). Rather than offering any criticism of the structural process that detained the men, this story highlights



Naeem's difference from the other men and from other 'undeserving' or 'bad' non-status people: "Dr. Naeem was not one of the scores of economic migrants who come to Canada using bogus student visas, or who make refugee claims to prolong their stays, and then slip into the underground economy" (A12). Unlike the others, he is singled out and described as a legitimate student, caught in a web of bad circumstances and perhaps bad friends. The gross injustice facing migrants in Canada is entirely outside the frame, which instead naturalizes the opinion that the immigration system is 'inefficient' in its implied inability to stem the 'tide' of faceless brown Others seeking entry.<sup>30</sup> This depiction of the 'inefficient' immigration apparatus focuses public outrage in directions particularly amenable to the neoliberal restructuring of Canada.

The newspapers repeat the accusations against the detainees many times, reinforcing the frame. The men are depicted as "possibly an al-Qaeda sleeper cell" ("Adjudicator" A1), and as "suspicious figures" ("Student Pilot" A2); suspicions include the fact that "the men lived spartan lives, sharing apartments furnished with mattresses, computers and little else" ("Arrested" A10), that they "may have experimented with explosives" ("Bin Laden" A1) because they had "unexplained fires" ("Arrested" A10) in the kitchen, and that they "seemed to be interested in nuclear power plants [and] the CN tower" ("Adjudicator" A1). "Officials," the articles repeatedly state, "suspect the men of 'want[ing] to find out the measurements and schematics' of [landmarks] in Canada and the United States" ("Bin Laden" A1) and find it suspicious that "two men who told police they were taking a walk on the beach when officers stopped them at 4 a.m. in April near the power station turned out to be associates of the 19 men" ("Arrested" A1). The articles also repeat that the men lived

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<sup>30</sup> See Otto Santa Ana, Juan Morán, and Cynthia Sánchez's "Awash Under a Brown Tide: Immigration Metaphors and Print Media Discourse" and Otto Santa Ana's *Brown Tide Rising* for further discussion of the operation of this metaphor of the 'brown tide.'

together in groups – repeatedly referred to as “clusters” (“Adjudicator” A1) – “of four or five,” (“Arrested” A1), and that “After the September 11 attacks, an RCMP hotline received tips about them” (“Arrested” A10), which invokes wartime RCMP claims that denunciations, based on ethnicity, create suspiciousness. These numerous repetitions of official suspicions against the men serve to legitimize the framing, and work by picking up and reinvigorating old Orientalist notions of the dangerous Other hiding in the midst of ethnic communities, disguised by ‘blending in’ within ethnic groups situated as inherently threatening.

Due to the successful mobilizing to support the men, and developments in the immigration hearings, Canada’s most respected national newspaper soon begins to report that something is amiss in the allegations, and that the men are perhaps not connected to terrorism despite the detentions and government alarm. As *The Globe and Mail* begins to present the men’s side of the story, however, it nonetheless maintains the dominant frame. Even as several stories emerge that indicate that the men are not terrorists, the question still remains one of guilt or innocence. On one hand, the newspaper’s discourse continues to provide a higher profile to the accusations and suspicions, while on the other hand it allows official perspectives to set the terms of debate over a question of whether the men are, or are not, terrorists, drawing attention away from the social justice issues at stake that the Threadbare coalition mobilized in public forums and media releases. The result is that the concluding stories present Project Thread as a false alarm rather than as an injustice.

A number of the stories about the men appear adjacent to otherwise unrelated items about terrorism or images depicting Easterners as dangerous. For instance, a cover brief, “How Sham College Ran” (“Sham College Ran” A1), that describes “the college at the centre of [the] immigration-terror probe” (“Sham College Ran” A1) appears directly below

another brief, “Terrorist Manhunt On” (“Manhunt” A1) which announces that the FBI is on the prowl for “four terrorists, two [carrying] Canadian passports” (A1). Similarly, the cover story, “Students at Sham College Got Federal Aid” (“Students at Sham” A1), appears adjacent to “U.S. Terrorist Advisory Targets Canadian Flights” (“U.S.” A1), a story about a vague warning against terror issued by the United States government. The story “Tip From Mexico Led to Men’s Arrests” (A10) appears below “UN Bombing of Baghdad an Inside Job, U.S. Believes” (“Baghdad” A10), which says that UN headquarters security was infiltrated by Iraqi terrorists who helped attackers from within. The article “College Provided False Letters: Documents” (“College Provided” A4) appears next to an article about the Air India trial headlined “Air India Blast ‘for Sikhism’” (“Air India” A4) and an image of a victim’s family. This juxtaposition of elements creates a message that associates the men with old Orientalist narratives about easterners and terrorism, regardless of, or in addition to, the content of articles themselves.

In the absence of any way to determine guilt or innocence, other markers come to take on meaning within the frame. In the Project Thread coverage, connections – racialized ones – between Islam and terrorism are made explicitly again and again in *The Globe and Mail*, often in quotations arguing that the men are not terrorists, thus demonstrating the frame at work. For instance, “All My Dreams Have Been Disturbed” (“Disturbed” A1) quotes Muhammed Naeem who “insists he is not a terrorist, in fact is not political at all, and *not particularly religious*” (A12, emphasis added). “Case of 19 Men Starts to Unravel” (“Case” A5) notes in his defence that one of the men is “not religious. ‘Aqeel is a very nice guy, very helpful and friendly. He knows nothing about Al-Qaeda’” (A5) the article quotes, juxtaposing a statement about a detainee’s religion with a statement of his innocence as though the two are inextricably linked, constraining supporters to argue that the men are not

*religious* in order to argue that they are not *terrorists*. A parent of one of the men is quoted in his son's defense saying, "Our son is not involved in any political or religious causes" ("Bin Laden" A14). In line with Karim H. Karim's analysis, these connections between religion and terror link Islam to guilt, as though the fact of being religious Muslims would make the men suspicious. Religion, acting as a marker of race, thus becomes folded into the guilty/innocent binary.

Indeed, the discourse around inclusion and exclusion, linked to notions of race, religion, and 'national security,' finds its way even into articles which highlight the wrongs committed against these men. The article "Terror Suspects Pose No Risk" ("Pose" A12) quotes a lawyer for the men saying, "At what point does the right of an individual to have liberty trump the right of the public to be protected? We believe arresting someone on suspicion alone is not warranted. We need a higher standard of proof" (A12). This quotation, highlighted by the newspaper article in a pullquote, lays the debate at the feet of the commonly invoked conflict between 'individual' rights to 'liberty' and the 'right of the public to be protected.' However, other questions also need to be raised: doesn't 'the public' – which includes racialized and non-status people – need to be protected from the tremendous power vested in the state and its legal system? Doesn't 'the public' – regardless of which side of the race line we fall on – need to be safe from the dehumanizing effects of structural racism? Aren't these men members of 'the public?' If not, why not?

The juxtaposition of visual elements on the page contributes to this meaning. In an article that appeared when it first became clear that the men were not terrorists – "Adjudicator Frees Suspect, Disputes Terror Scenario" – the notion that the allegations might be faulty is not only relegated to page A6 and an inside column next to an ad that takes up most of the page, it is also juxtaposed with an otherwise unrelated story that

occupies a more prominent position across the top of the page, “Recent Arrests Raise Fears over Tower’s Vulnerability to Terrorism” (Muhtadie, “Recent” A6). Indeed, the two stories share one photo, of an accused man in an orange prison uniform looking downwards frowning. The article itself says that the allegations were “rejected” by the judge; that the man figured in the photograph, Mohammad Akhtar, is not a terrorist. However, his image, juxtaposed with the CN tower story, works visually to signify terrorist status, even though the content itself contradicts the image. As George Lakoff observes in *Don’t Think of an Elephant*, once a concept is invoked, it is difficult if not impossible to disassociate it from the context in which it has been raised (Lakoff). The article says that Akhtar’s accusations are being thrown out, but his image in an orange prison suit, looking down and visibly upset, the word “terrorist” repeated three times around his face, and the spectre of the CN tower’s vulnerability to attack (in an otherwise unrelated story) – all these combine to racialize his image and situate it within the Enemy Within frame, within the potential threat to the state rather than the threat to the detainees and to all those who ‘look’ like them.

Through this juxtaposition, the story, which says that the adjudicator “could find nothing at all to tie Mr. Akhtar to any kind of terrorist network or security threat” and calls “the government's allegations [...] a question of misrepresentation [...] ‘day to day immigration business’ that has somehow been manipulated into a national security threat” (“Adjudicator” A6), nonetheless gives readers a sense that the man is a danger to society by placing his decontextualized frowning image next to the repeated headline words ‘terrorism’ and ‘terrorist’ and raising the otherwise unrelated spectre of attacks on the CN tower. This juxtaposition further highlights the message that perhaps letting a ‘suspect’ out on bail is not in the public interest, given the suggested vulnerability of the tower and other important landmarks. This language of ‘day to day’ immigration business also reinforces the

guilty/innocent binary of the Enemy Within frame, normalizing the immigration apparatus while situating the violence carried out against these men as just ‘routine’ business.

The affective signification of the imagery in this racialized security discourse is fear of a ‘terrorist suspect,’ even though the actual situation described by the articles indicates that the risk of harm in this case was to the detainees themselves, who experienced the trauma of a midnight police raid and the dislocation of detention and deportation, not to mention international public shaming, loss of work prospects, loss of a marriage, and physical threats and attacks upon their return home (Shephard and Verma). Visual cues in the image, such as orange prison clothing, a day or two worth of facial hair, the exhausted expression on Akhtar’s face, and the downward angle of his glance, when combined with the surrounding text, further racialize this image within an Enemy Within frame. Similarly, a set of letters entitled “Preventing Terror” appears with a graphic of a giant hand, arm just visible in what looks clearly like a business suit (with wrist button and white sleeve under suit jacket), dropping a cage onto a tiny generic Eastern man in beard and turban (“Preventing” A16). Another group of letters, entitled “Living in Fear,” that describe the men as dangerous, appears with a graphic of a city skyline in which stands a building shaped like a stick of dynamite with a lit fuse (“Living” A16).

There is evidence to suggest that the alternate frame – mobilized by the community support around the men – was in fact available to news producers. The slippage in language between different stories suggests that multiple options were available. For instance, the photo caption for the image described above calls Akhtar “one of the 19 *terrorism suspects* held in Toronto” (“Allegations” A6, emphasis added). However, the same image appears, in black and white and less closely cropped, on August 30, accompanying the feature “Case of 19 Terrorists Starts to Unravel” (“Case” A5) which stresses the holes in the official story

about the men. The caption for this identical, but much larger, image describes Akhtar as “one of the 19 *men who were detained*” (“Case” A5, emphasis added). The slippage in choice of words, between ‘suspected terrorist’ and ‘man who is detained’ suggests that the injustice frame was available, even if it remained on the edges of the newspaper discourse. Unlike ‘terrorism suspect,’ ‘man detained’ leaves room for the possibility that the subject of the story may be the wrongful target of the state.

The combination of elements on the accusatory page combines with the image of the orange prison uniform to darken the man on August 28, linking his body to notions of hate-filled terrorists via association with surrounding elements in relationship to the established dominant frame. The article says that “the case of the terrorists among us began to unravel almost as soon as the detention reviews began, with the RCMP and Citizenship and Immigration Canada distancing themselves from the idea that the men posed a clear threat to security” (A5). The sadness on the man’s face in the image on August 30 is produced in part by this text in the article that indicates his innocence. Both articles, however, situate the story within a guilty/innocent binary that grants decreased salience to arguments about injustice. The human interest angle is embedded in a guilty/innocent Enemy Within frame.

Similar effects are apparent in the images of the student pilot whose “flight route near the Pickering [...] nuclear power station” drew the attention of authorities. The August 26 article, “Student Pilot Ordered to Remain in Custody” (“Student Pilot” A2), which begins with the line “A Muslim flight-school student was deemed a possible security risk and ordered to remain in jail” (A2), shows an image of Anwar-Ur-Rehman Mohammed in which he appears very small, hand on chin, in a corner of the image, on a screen in a bank of video screens. His head is a dark blot in a dark image, his eyes and mouth are dark shadows. In contrast, the story “Terror Suspects Pose No Risk” (“Pose” A12) on September 26, which

states that the “Detained Men Do Not Threaten Canadian Security” (A12) shows four close up images of Rehman in tears, expressing a variety of emotions, in which his features are clearly visible in expressions of sadness or despair. Both of these perspectives, whether they attack or support the men, situate the story within the ‘guilty/innocent’ binary. Why does the accusatory page two article call Rehman “A Muslim flight school student,” and show images of him looking dark and featureless, while the page 12 article that states he is innocent calls him “a pilot from India” and shows sympathetic images of Rehman expressing sadness and a range of human emotion? The discursive connections, highlighted in these examples, between darkness and terrorism operate throughout the media discourse and contribute to the ‘guilty/innocent’ binary. This representation, as Stuart Hall or Judith Butler might remind us, does not rest on any stable raced body; rather, the performance of racialized identity in this image destabilizes the body represented and constitutes “a certain ethical violence, which demands that we manifest and maintain self identity” (Butler 41).

The framing of the story around questions of guilt or innocence rests on a presumption that the public is in danger, a presumption that is enforced via a pattern in which media texts invoke and generate ‘fears’ without providing a source for this fear. In the CN tower article, for instance, the headline states that ‘fears were raised’ without telling readers the all-important *who*. This oblique reference affirms what readers are already expected to know; that is, it recirculates the information that constitutes the knowable, or the real, within this reading community. It reproduces the argument that a generalized, exnominated (and implicitly whitened) national community feels fear and that the newspaper’s readers, as presumed normative members of this community, should be afraid. This mode of address, speaking to a national community and thus reinvigorating it, recreating one at each moment, reifies even as it racializes the positions of human bodies vis-



a-vis the imagined national community. While actual readers will, of course, differ significantly in their ‘decoding’ of this content (to invoke Hall’s formulation), based on their systems of knowledge and access to competing sources of information, the news frame present in the manifest content of the texts nonetheless signifies within, and activates, existing cultural frames: these men matter to ‘the public’ if they are guilty, and matter a little less if they are innocent. The state’s violence against them matters not at all, because it falls outside the dominant frame.

As mentioned earlier, this construction of Canada produces bodily signifiers of otherness that, in Foucauldian terms, act as visual signs that produce guilt – and otherness – in media representations, and contribute to the framing of the Enemy Within as a story *about* the guilt or innocence of the suspects, rather than about injustice in the immigration system, structural racism, or Islamophobia, alternate frames proposed by the Threadbare Coalition. In the contemporary public sphere, the racialization of ‘evil’ resonates with representations of Muslims and of those who are understood in this discourse to ‘look like Muslims’: Arabs and South Asians, whether Muslim or not. ‘Muslims’ as a (constructed, flattened, overdetermined) collectivity are marked by this, (to differing degrees), regardless of distinct values, cultures, or identities: as Edward Said notes in *Covering Islam*, ‘[T]he deliberately created associations between Islam and fundamentalism [in the mass media] ensure that the average reader comes to see Islam and fundamentalism as essentially the same thing’ (xii).

As mentioned above, *The Globe and Mail* published a small number of pieces questioning the validity of the accusations – arguing for the men’s innocence – and a smaller number critiquing the erosion of civil liberties evidenced by the men’s preventative arrests, the indefinite detentions, the lack of charges laid in the case, and the racialized inflections of the investigations. However, a thorough, detailed, specific analysis reveals that, although *The*

*Globe and Mail* played a role in arguing for the men's innocence, and was attributed in part with speeding their release, the articles and opinion pieces that support the men are not only vastly outnumbered and out positioned by an overriding message of guilt broadcast to the public, but also frame the defence within a guilty/innocent binary that weakens even those articles that support the men by constraining them to arguments about innocence and decreasing the salience of arguments about injustice. Other content that does appear, such as the opinion piece "9-11: Do You Know Where Your Civil Rights are?" ("Civil Rights" A23) are situated as less salient than the basic question of whether these men pose a danger to the public – whether they are guilty or innocent of terrorism. This overwhelmingly dominant message tells the story of dangerous "foreign" potential terrorists rightly apprehended by cautious Canadian officials and police forces in defence of (an undefined) national security – a false alarm from a system required to keep 'us' safe from this potential Enemy Within – rather than a violent and unjust immigration system designed to create instability and an exploitable underclass.

This discourse of fear excludes these men from membership in 'the public,' implicitly drawing a white line: an invisible, naturalized line in the snow between the 'us' that deserves protection, and everything outside that protected discursive space. However, in drawing this line, the situating of human beings as outside legal protections in fact disciplines all of us, as the expansion of the 'carceral' state manages deviance and social norms in differing ways and to varying degrees throughout the levels of the social order. This pattern, of referring to 'fears' with no attributed source, which, as I have suggested earlier, is continuous with the discourse about Enemies Within evidenced nearly a century ago, sends a message to readers that a ubiquitous, unspecified fear exists all around us, threatening the safe ideological space of the nation, at once dividing the exnominated 'self' from a demonized Other and

regulating normativity and deviance. The fear of the Other, in this role of regulating normativity, manages and polices citizens and non-citizens, to varying degrees based on our position within the social order. “Fear Grows of Canadian 9/11” (“Arrested” A1) the first headline reads. Where does that fear that “grows” reside? “Recent Arrests Raise Fears” (“Recent” A6), says another headline, but who feels those fears? The article “Student Pilot Ordered to Remain in Custody” (“Student Pilot” A2) states, “After the earlier proceedings, *much alarm flowed* after officials made a point of saying Mr Mohammed flew by the nuclear reactors” (A2; emphasis added). Another article states, “during this week’s detention hearings, unlike at others, the government did not utter the words that had so *worried the public*: ‘CN Tower’ and ‘al-Qaeda.’” (“Case” A5; emphasis added). This fear which has no specific location is thus everywhere and, the discourse suggests, should be felt by everyone – everyone, that is, who is allowed inclusion in the tenuous category of ‘the public.’ Foucault’s notion of the ‘carceral’ brings into relief the ways in which this ‘public’ is increasingly governed by normative modes of thought, behaviour, and appearance, modes of diffuse social control that cannot be viewed separately from these more ‘visible’ (because foregrounded) instances of increased surveillance and repression.

The shift in coverage evidenced in *The Globe and Mail* as the story progressed may well have contributed to raising public awareness about the men’s situation. A lawyer involved with the detainees, speaking at a public event in support of the men, thanked *The Globe and Mail* for its exposé about the questionable nature of the allegations and credited the paper for helping speed the men’s release. However, the shifting perspectives that appear in later items both highlight the obvious framing and sensationalism of the early articles, and also exist within the mitigating frame of the Enemy Within.

*The National Post* contains 32 items that mention the Project Thread arrests during the peak period of August, September, and October. Of the 32 items that mention the story during the peak period, 16 headlines stress the accusations against the men, and five headlines indicate that the men are not linked to terrorism. Alarmist cover headlines such as “Police Hunt Ringleader of Alleged Terror Cell: CN Tower Plot Suspected” (“Police” A1) or “‘Network’ Eyed Tower: RCMP: Raids Suggest Foreign Students had Scouted Landmarks, Tested Explosives, Task Force Says” (“Network” A1) stress the accusations and privilege official sources, disregarding the perspectives of the men, groups supporting them, or their lawyers. While *The National Post*’<sup>4</sup> coverage does occasionally include quotes by people supporting the men, a remarkable majority of the stories and headlines privileges the voices of police, immigration officials, or government representatives. Debate over civil liberties, racism, or injustice is almost nonexistent in these two papers even though such arguments were available in *The Toronto Star* and other public forums; this absence in the two national newspapers indicates the Enemy Within frame at work, situating certain members of the Canadian polity as more full members of the public than others.

*The National Post* articles exhibit errors and inconsistencies in fact-checking, indicative of the narrative that shapes the story. The cover story “‘Network’ Eyed Tower” (“Network” A1) lists the date of the men’s arrest as August 19 (A7), nearly a week late. The shared mistake made by both papers, indicating incorrectly that the arrests took place within the week prior to the break of the story, indicates that both papers may have been relying on

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<sup>4</sup>*The National Post* had fewer items covering the Project Thread arrests, which makes sense given that the news section of *The National Post* is smaller than that of *The Globe and Mail*. *The National Post* consists of a few pages of “hard” news followed by many sections of entertainment, business and market news. However, in addition to the continuous discourse that presents whitened bodies in images of happiness and comfort, and darkened bodies as dangerous, irrational, and/or tied to fundamentalism, *National Post* headlines such as “Dozens of Canadians Join Jihad” (“Dozens” A1) or “Islamic Group Funded Terror From Ontario: CIA” (“Group” A2) create a continuous narrative of stories about “enemies within” that runs throughout the paper’s discourse, dovetailing with and situating the paper’s thread of anti-immigration sentiment.

one official source (such as the oft-quoted ‘document used in a hearing’ that itemized government suspicions), either directly or indirectly through newswire stories or articles in other papers, for their cover stories about the men. Another error appears in the name of a secretary for the school. In the first reference, instead of simply stating her name, an article introduces the school’s secretary as follows: “an employee, *named as* Wilde West in hearing documents, worked to provide the documents regardless of whether tuition was actually paid, regardless of whether the student was actually taking a course” (“Defunct” A5; emphasis added). Another article simply introduces her as “Wilda West, who was admissions secretary at the school” (“Pakistani” A4); no mention is made of the earlier spelling error. The inconsistency in and of itself is relatively minor, and perhaps normal given the time constraints involved in putting together the news; however, those very time constraints make news discourse more reliant on available narratives, as is evidenced by the suggestion implicit in the wording of the first mention.

Perhaps more significantly, these errors mask the information that the men, as non-citizens, were not arrested or charged but were detained without charges under *The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*. Articles repeatedly refer to aspects of the immigration hearings (which, as I have indicated, are adjudicated by civil servants who are not necessarily judges or lawyers, and which are not conducted in courts of law) as though the hearings are trials, a narrative mode structured by the crime news template that governs many of these stories. One article mistakenly says that “Immigration *judges* ruled there were sufficient grounds to hold the Pakistani men” (“Man” A4) when in fact the adjudicators in the hearings are not judges at all – they are political appointees, public servants not required to have a prior legal background. The next paragraph reveals that the adjudicators are just “member[s] of the Immigration and Refugee Board” (A4). These members of the IRB are

given quasi-judicial powers by the *IRPA*. Another article states that “immigration officials *dropped charges* alleging [Anwar-Ur-Rehman Mohammed] was a national security threat” (“Man” A4; emphasis added) when no charges were ever laid. Yet another article says that the men “are to *appear in court* [...] for hearings to determine whether they should remain in detention” (“Accused” A6; emphasis added) when in fact none of these hearings took place in court. An opinion piece accusing the men tempers its vigilante tone with the line, “nothing has yet been proven, and all of the detainees are innocent until judged guilty” (“Sieve” A17), a truism of the crime news narrative that distorts the case itself: how can the men be judged guilty if they are never charged or tried?

Like *The Globe and Mail*, *The National Post* coverage refers to ‘fears’ and ‘concerns’ without attributing them to any source. An article says the “arrests sparked fears an Islamic extremist cell may have been plotting in Canada” (“Immigration” A2). Another article, about the student pilot, says he “prompted fears of terrorists flying a plane into an Ontario nuclear power plant” (“RCMP” A7). A caption for a large image of the Pickering nuclear power plant reiterates that the pilot “rais[ed] concerns about Canada’s vulnerability to a terrorist attack” (“Canadian” A4). Another reminds readers that the “allegations [...] have raised fears an Islamic terrorist ‘network’ based in Toronto was plotting attacks in Canada and the United States” (“Network” A1). Even the small article that states that the pilot is not deemed a terrorist after all introduces the story with reference to “flights [...] and fake documents [that] sparked fears of a terrorist cell in Canada” (“Man Who Flew” A4). The newspaper discourse repeats these diffuse ‘fears’ frequently, along with many repetitions of CIC and RCMP suspicions. The repetitions cement the Enemy Within frame, so that claims in their defence can only ‘make sense’ (in Foucauldian terms) if they argue that the men are innocent, excluding arguments about the injustice of an arbitrary immigration system, which

lies outside the frame. The detainees are thus positioned as a potential threat to those who sit within the protective discursive construction of ‘the nation,’ and yet, even those with the privileges of citizenship are regulated by these expanding state powers over human life. *The National Post* coverage circulates this message even as the officials involved in the case rescind the accusations.

### **A ‘Suspected Network of Muslims’: Race and the Enemy Within Frame**

In the absence of any way to determine guilt or innocence, race markers come to take on meaning within the guilty/innocent binary, and come to appear as evidence. Articles indicate that the men are suspicious because they “have connections to Pakistan’s Punjab province, noted for its Sunni Muslim extremism” (“Immigration Authorities” A2). Such details, many based on tangential hypothesizing by police and immigration officials, appear over and over again. These details overdetermine the meaning of other accusations, such as that the men were “caught” at the “Pickering nuclear power plant at night” (“Hearings” A4), that one man “flew over the reactor while training at a flight school” (A4), that “other[s] were linked to the theft of radioactive material” (A4), that “there were suspicious kitchen fires at apartments inhabited by the men” (A4) which repeats in many articles, morphed into an accusation that “the men may have been mixing and testing explosives” (A4) in the kitchen. CIC and RCMP officials do not explain how they make the leap from “kitchen fires,” by young men living on their own and learning how to cook, to ‘mixing explosives,’ yet this ‘evidence’ receives high-profile attention in many of the stories. Other repeated “evidence” includes the fact that “following the Sept. 11 attacks, neighbors called the RCMP to report suspicious activities at the [pilot’s home] in Markham” (“Police Hunt” A5). *The National Post* discourse focuses more intently on the men’s Punjabi residence than does *The*

*Globe and Mail*, making the connection repeatedly between perceived danger and immigration from discursive “terror-incubating”<sup>31</sup> regions with “large, militant Muslim populations” (Canada’s Terror Sieve” A17). In these ways, the news discourse is continuous with WWII alarmism about Enemies Within: accusations equal evidence, and ethnicity is a sign of danger.

The framing of the coverage within a guilty/innocent binary is largely the result of the prominence given to government and police sources. The article, “Canadian Arrests Mirror 9/11” (“Canadian” A4) begins, “An anti-terrorism probe that led to the arrest of 19 Pakistani men, including one who took commercial flight training over a nuclear plant, highlights security holes that should have been plugged after the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks, Ontario officials said” (“Canadian” A4). The article continues in similar fashion, quoting almost exclusively, and uncritically, from government and police sources. It reports information from the “Public Security and Anti-Terrorism Unit,” “Bob Runciman, Ontario’s Minister of Public Security,” “Federal investigators,” “Federal authorities,” “a document summarizing the case presented at immigration detention hearings,” “an immigration officer,” “authorities,” “James Young, Ontario’s Commissioner of Public Safety,” “Michel Cleroux, a spokesman for the Nuclear Safety Commission,” “Terrorism Specialists,” and “Mark Dunn, spokesman for Denis Coderre, the Federal Immigration Minister” (A4). The article only sources the men’s perspective in one paragraph, third from last, which cites a lawyer representing two of the men saying that the government is overreacting and acting out of racism (A4). This attempt to reframe the debate is situated within the larger frame: the potential threat to the public that drives a ‘guilty/innocent’ debate.

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<sup>31</sup> Please see Erin Steuter and Deborah Wills’ “Discourses of Dehumanization: Enemy Construction and Canadian Media Complicity in the Framing of the War on Terror” for a discussion of this imagery of *incubation*, which invokes horrific insects or animals.



The few articles that stress that the men are innocent still couch this message within the guilty/innocent binary. For example, the article “Third Terrorism Suspect Released on Bail” (“Third” A9) introduces the story with the lead “The investigation into a possible Canadian al-Qaeda sleeper cell suffered a setback yesterday when an Immigration and Refugee Board official ordered the release of one of the suspects, saying there was no evidence he was linked to terror” (A9). Why would the release of a man who is not a terrorist be a ‘setback’ to justice? The article, in a pattern common in *National Post* discourse, focuses on police suspicions about the man, especially as they relate to immigration issues, instead of stressing the questionable nature of the process: “He was set free despite evidence he took part in an insurance fraud scheme and obtained a student visa by submitting a fake letter he purchased from a bogus school called Ottawa Business College” (A9). The article is quick to criticize the Canadian immigration system, stating in the second paragraph that “Although Muhammad Naeem may have committed immigration fraud, that is ‘not unusual’ in Canada and immigration authorities failed to present a convincing case he posed a security threat, [the adjudicator] ruled” (A9). Immigration officials are thus presented as failing at their jobs, in a discourse that seeks to naturalize and strengthen a neoliberal logic that is already dominant in these news texts: by seeking to demonstrate the inefficiency of the state in holding these men, the newspapers implicitly argue that the government is inherently inefficient and ineffective, and hence does not need to exist or to provide services. The implicit claim behind this assertion is that government services can be performed more efficiently by private enterprise, such as private prisons, or private border and security services.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Thank you to Yasmin Jiwani for providing these insights.

Images in *The National Post*, as in *The Globe and Mail*, also contribute to this downplaying of the injustice frame mobilized by the Threadbare coalition, and contribute to the one-to-one linking of immigration issues to terrorism. The text of an article entitled “Investigators seize refugee ‘cheat’ sheets” (“Investigators” A14) reads, “so far no evidence has been released to support the government’s suggestion they may be members of an al-Qaeda sleeper cell” (A14), and “there was no mention of terrorism or national security yesterday at [the] hearing in Toronto” (A14). Nonetheless, the article runs an image of the power plant with the caption: “Members of the network were caught at 4:15 a.m. near the Pickering nuclear power plant last April” (A14). Perhaps the ideology of *The National Post* is revealed in a peculiar elision, repeated in a number of articles, that calls the men “a suspected network of Muslims” or “a suspected network of Pakistani men” (A14); this implied syllogism suggests that *The National Post* sees no need for distinction between the concepts *Muslim*, *Pakistani*, and *Terrorist*. The large cover story “‘Network’ Eyed Tower: RCMP” runs a dramatic image of the CN tower that takes up much of the page, even though the accusation that the men had anything to do with the tower is a minor portion of the story based primarily on official extrapolations from a general interest in “landmarks” (“Network” A1) attributed to the detained men. The sheer size of the image of the CN Tower, in conjunction with the alarmist headline, creates a sense that these immigration violations are frightening evidence of a possible vulnerability in Canada’s defenses against terrorist attacks, drawing together discourses of undesirability, criminality, and risk.

Notions of race fold into the meanings signified by images in the coverage. Several large photos of the men, such as those accompanying the headlines “21<sup>st</sup> Suspect Arrested in Terror Probe” (“21<sup>st</sup> Suspect” A13), “Police Investigate ‘Sleeper Cell’ as Two Terrorist Suspects Released” (“Police” A5), and “Hearings Begin for 19 Detainees” (“Hearings” A4)

are blurred and decontextualized, presenting the men as nearly featureless, with shadowed eyes and inhuman faces. Clearer images that accompany “Hearings Begin for 19 Detainees” show the men’s faces in difficult-to-read expressions of unhappiness or anger. These ambiguous expressions are reinscribed by surrounding elements, linking these men’s bodies to notions of hate-filled terrorists via their interaction with public frames; the very presence of images of criminality, the words ‘suspected terror cell’ at the top of the page, and the police surrounding the man in the video image, darken the bodies of the detained men and become folded in to the Enemy Within frame.

Rather than make any space for the critiques of the immigration system mobilized by the Threadbare Coalition, this article instead places blame on an immigration system imagined (with no evidence provided) as too accepting, too open; the construction, ‘immigration fraud [is] not unusual’ invokes outrage at the supposed laxness of the system, and equates false papers with potential terrorism. The perspective that the immigration system and its enforcement arm are inherently violent and unjust, presented to the media by the Threadbare coalition, was not ‘within the real’ of the media discourse, and could neither be represented nor understood. These passages instead draw attention to the idea that immigration officials ‘failed,’ in that they are to blame for lax laws, and for not putting together a solid enough case *against* the detained man. The purported ‘failure’ of the immigration apparatus in turn naturalizes neoliberal arguments for the privatization of state functions, advocating a privatization that renders them even further from democratic control. This article, which seems on the surface to be about the man’s innocence with regard to the accusations of terrorism, only quotes the man’s lawyer in paragraphs nine and ten out of 15. The lawyer of another accused man receives one vague sentence in the article:

“His lawyer [...] called the allegations ‘absolutely bald’” (A9). The entire rest of the article quotes from Immigration and police officials.

While *The Globe and Mail* narrative, reflecting the shift in the official story and the public mobilization, becomes more supportive of the men during the early part of September, *The National Post* narrative continues to run accusatory stories that stress the early suspicions about the men, even once the case unravels in the immigration hearings. Rather than reporting on the flaws that become more and more evident in the process of judging the men’s guilt or innocence, as *The Globe and Mail* does, *The National Post* runs headlines such as “Terror Case Against 31 [sic] to be Revealed” (“Terror” A6) on September 18, or “Police Investigate 'Sleeper Cell' as Two Terrorist Suspects Released” (“Police” A5) on September 29. These headlines continue to broadcast the view that the men are potentially dangerous, downplaying any questioning of the larger issues of injustice at stake.

As indicated earlier, a small number of items do appear which state that the men are innocent of terrorist intentions. However, these mentions are often mitigated. For instance, one article states, “Lawyers [for the men], conceded[e] that while their clients might be guilty of immigration fraud they were not terrorists” (“Hearings” A4). Another repeats this pattern, quoting an immigration consultant who says “that while Mr. Nouman might have violated Canadian immigration law by working here illegally and getting a visa extension by submitting a fraudulent letter, he is no terrorist.” Further down the article repeats the same juxtaposition: “Yes, they have overstayed their visas and they have broken the immigration laws, but they are not terrorists” (“21<sup>st</sup> Suspect” A13). These comments from lawyers for the men that say they are not terrorists are framed by comments focusing on the men’s accused immigration issues as though their immigration violations justify the arbitrary system that detained these men at gunpoint in the middle of the night, locked them up, publicly shamed

them, and then deported them with no reparations. The immigration system itself remains beyond reproach in this frame, thus associating immigration with a debased criminality rather than with the basic struggle to live a life like anyone else.

The Enemy Within frame thus folds in together, or collapses, ideas about race, Islam, and terrorism, in *The National Post* as in *The Globe and Mail*. The occasional quotes arguing for the men's innocence claim that they are not terrorists in part because they are "not particularly religious" ("Accused" A6). In *The National Post*, connections between Islam and terrorism most often form aspects of arguments against immigration, especially from "Muslim" "parts of the world" ("RCMP" A7). One opinion piece expressing this view, "Infiltration Projects Terrorists' Power" (Jonas A14), exhibits remarkable similarities to language dating from previous wars:

The forces of terrorism can't break through the West's perimeter defences – but this is a mixed blessing. If a belligerent can't project its power from outside the enemy's perimeters, it will concentrate on projecting it from inside by employing 'fifth columns' – i.e., agents who live among the population *disguised as visitors, students, or residents*. (A14, emphasis added)

This thinly-veiled piece of propaganda argues that all those who match the physical depiction of a terrorist are potential threats. The opinion piece goes on to state explicitly what much of the news discourse can only imply: "Whether or not the men detained last month will turn out to be al-Qaeda 'moles' – they must be presumed innocent, obviously, until proven guilty – sleeper agents for terrorist cells would behave much like this group of men" (Jonas A14). Therein lies the real danger, the real violence, in the Enemy Within frame: the harm enacted upon the bodies and spirits of all those who match the narrative depiction of a terror threat. As Razack argues, a danger in contemporary laws that place people within the 'exception' is that rather than committing, or planning to commit, a crime,

instead the fact of ‘having a profile’ (*Casting* 25), being a certain *type* of person, is itself sufficient to remove rights and to punish.

This piece offers the fig leaf that the men, because detained in Canada, are ‘presumed innocent until proven guilty,’ without stopping to question how that process of proving them guilty will take place within an immigration system that allows arbitrary detentions, and no court system, charges, or right to self-defence. Finally, arguing the futility of no-fly zones over public air space, the piece argues that

Confiscating airspace from pilots does little for Canada’s security. It’s like confiscating nail clippers from passengers [...] The threat [comes] from fifth columnists. It’s illegal aliens who pose a threat – less if they’re old ladies, obviously, more if they’re young men, and most if they’re Muslim fake-students attending bogus schools. [...] They’re a potential threat, whether flying over nuclear plants or delivering pizzas. (A14)

This explicit framing posits that the only way to keep ‘Canada’ safe is to keep ‘young Muslim men’ out of the country or detained. This blunt racism states openly what many other news items state obliquely. Non-citizens are thus racialized in this narrative by their lack of status, situated within a ‘state of exception,’ in a zone of indeterminacy in which the laws governing basic human rights do not apply. This expulsion of certain kinds of people from full humanity, based solely on identity (i.e. as young Muslim men without status, ‘whether flying over nuclear plants or delivering pizzas’), is naturalized by a dehumanizing discourse that justifies detentions and deportations of people whose only ‘crime’ is movement.

This dominant message privileges the view that the men – and perhaps anyone supportive of them, and anyone who looks, thinks, believes or behaves like them – are actually or potentially dangerous, simply by virtue of looking, sounding, and living the way they do. These representations justify a terrifying removal of rights, on the basis that certain types of humans – Muslim, Arab, or South Asian men – are inherently in need of

management, control, policing, and containment. The line between this dehumanizing discourse and the total removal of rights for those the state situates – or scapegoats – as dangerous is uncomfortably thin. It creates a powerful resonating communication: that while these particular men may have turned out not to be terrorists, others “like them” may be, and it is good that Canadian officials are closing “the unguarded gate” (“Clean Up” A4), exhibiting “vigilance” (“Accused” A6), damming up the “tide” of “shady” (“Sham A13”) immigrants, the “flow of approved refugees from terror-incubating countries” (“Sieve” A17) to “our shores” (Jonas A14), who are able to “project [...] terrorists’ [...] power against *homeland* America, Canada, or Europe” (Jonas A14; emphasis added). The words of one “counter-terrorism official who did not want to be named” neatly sum up the binary: “This is a glass half-full/glass half-empty story: It’s good they were caught, but why did they get in?” (“Canadian Arrests” A4)

Although the dominant discourse in both *The National Post* and *The Globe and Mail* was ossified in the Enemy Within frame, the powerful mobilizing that arose in response to this case meant that this framing was less total, had less power than it would otherwise have had. The Threadbare coalition provided ideological space within which other ways of seeing – other frames – could be forged and circulated publicly. This mobilization made it possible to bridge important lines of solidarity, and to demand that Canada apologize – significantly, not only to the detainees but to the entire Muslim and South Asian Canadian communities at large, in a significant alliance between citizens and non-citizens reaching across many different communities and demographics. While this case was not the first or only such raid, as the first so-called antiterrorism bust to make such prominent headlines in Canadian media since September 11, 2001, Project Thread and the community response to it marks a pivotal moment in the history of struggle for equality for racialized non-citizens. The media’s failure

to address the structural injustice question was mitigated publicly by powerful grassroots mobilizing that took place in Toronto, a mobilization effort that has since continued to build networks and to expand the power of a national migrant justice movement.



## Chapter Three: Trial by Newspaper: the Case of the Toronto 18

In the summer of 2006, three years after the Project Thread events, new headlines announced that another terrorist cell had been thwarted in Canada. While this case, which came to be known as the Toronto 18, resonates in many ways with historical antecedents and with the Project Thread story in its depiction of an accused terror cell, this case is also distinct in that it marks the first time Muslim Canadian citizens and permanent residents were charged under the provisions of *The Antiterrorism Act*. The arrests took place June 2, 2006, and the first conviction occurred September 25, 2008, a time span that provides just over a two year period for analysis.<sup>33</sup> This chapter looks, not at the legal case itself, nor at the community organizing around it, but at the newspaper narratives about this story, and at the way the story was framed in national newspaper discourse. I analyze all of the items dealing with the trials in Canada's two national English-language newspapers, *The Globe and Mail* and *The National Post*, in this period between the first arrests on June 2, 2006 and the first conviction on September 25, 2008.<sup>34</sup> My question is twofold: first, how does the terror cell

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<sup>33</sup> By the close of the rest of the trials in June 2010, seven of the 18 had their charges dropped or stayed, seven pled guilty, and four went to trial and were judged guilty by juries (Teotonio 1).

<sup>34</sup> To select the body of texts for analysis, which included 115 items in *The National Post* and 84 in *The Globe and Mail*, I conducted searches in Lexis Nexis and Canadian Newsstand as well as online, and then supplemented these results with a hard copy archive in order to gather the most comprehensive set. The search terms that I used included all references to or combinations of the terms (and subterms) *Toronto 18*, *Toronto Terror*, *Toronto Bomb Plot*, *Toronto 17*, *Toronto Jihad*, and related search terms identified through preliminary reading of source material over the time period under analysis. I manually reviewed the results to cut erroneous items (such as Toronto scoring 18 points in a sports match, or articles with search term *Jihad* or *bomb* in Toronto that did not mention this trial). Finally, in order to provide the most complete picture possible of these news narratives, I examined the different versions of these stories in the major editions published by the two newspapers: the Toronto Edition, National Edition, Final Edition, etc. I gathered the results of these comprehensive searches into both a digital and hard copy archive, which were then available for systematic analysis.

story get narrativized in this two year period before the courts have made any determinations? Second, of the available frames that media producers could have employed, which became dominant, and what might unpacking that dominant frame reveal about the struggle for hegemony in national Canadian discourse?

### **Citizenship Rights and The Enemy Within Frame**

This case pulls at two strands of resistance to oppression within Canada that play in tension with one another. On one hand, as I explored in the methodology chapter, citizenship has been figured (for instance in the Japanese Canadian redress movement, or more recently in the Toronto 18 case) as a category of opposition to state violence against racialized bodies in Canada. Yet, the difference between coverage of Project Thread and the Toronto 18 – both in the state’s approach to the cases, and in the frames mobilized to support the men – brings into relief the difference between the ways legal citizenship structures constrain what is possible. The counterdiscursive frame employed in defence of the Toronto 18 demonstrates that the notion of citizenship rights can be mobilized for antiracist purposes: were the men’s important rights as citizens respected, or were they violated? At the same time, citizenship is only available as a resistant category for those who possess it, for those who can claim the legal rights (presumption of innocence, a fair trial) attached to an increasingly inaccessible status designation. The distinction in rights-claims made in each of these two first cases foregrounds the ways in which, even as racialized citizens’ rights are occluded by new laws, we must remain cognizant of the systemic denial to non-citizens of even those basic rights claims that citizenship makes possible.

These representations matter far beyond the specific details of the court case. Regardless of the final outcome of the trials, these news discourses have consequences for everyone in Canada who matches the appearance of an Enemy Within the nation-state in these texts. Furthermore, in its role within a ‘carceral continuum,’ this court case regulates and manages the entire social order, as I explore further in the conclusion. An article in *The Globe and Mail* characterizes the ideological role played by these representations: “Toronto is a multitude of mini-states where the word ‘minority’ will one day have no meaning. As the suburbs of Paris blaze and Londonistan spreads fear across the globe, will Toronto start seeing a budding terrorist in every immigrant?” (Barber M1). In this discourse, race stands in for suspiciousness in ways continuous with WWII ‘fifth column’ fears, in which enemies are accused of hiding in ‘ethnic’ communities. This discourse renders the racialized/ethnicized body into a sign of suspiciousness and places responsibility on a flattened notion of ethnic community. Because of these larger implications for Canadian society, and because of a desire to respect concerns about self-reflexivity in academic research that I deal with more explicitly in the conclusion, this chapter focuses on the news *representations* rather than on the trials or on the community organizing around them. I understand this choice – to focus on the newspaper representations rather than on the community mobilization or the trials themselves – as a way to be responsive to critiques of the fraught relationship between academic production and community organizing around social justice issues. One of the critiques that I raise in the conclusion to this dissertation, and that is relevant here, is the request for academics to refrain from ‘parachuting’ into movements, describing grassroots movements (perhaps parasitically) for an academic audience, or offering advice about campaigns or movements in which they are not already and primarily active as organizers. Out of respect for this concern, and because I was not involved in community organizing

for the Toronto 18, my goal in these first two chapters is not to analyze or depict the community mobilization, but rather to focus my lens on the ways different available frames played out in the news coverage itself.

In order to establish that other frames were available to media producers, I cite public statements produced by community organizers, and I trace the way these frames morph and mutate in their interaction with government and police frames (which are systematically granted significant leverage in shaping media producer frames), and larger cultural frames that constrain the sayable in dominant media discourses. The short term goal of this approach, as mentioned previously, is to contribute an analysis of previous dominant frames, in order to create a resource that might be useful in future campaigns strategizing to push at and supplant dominant frames when new mediated situations arise. Establishing dominant frames is, of course, not just a question of skill or speed – social power structures such as race and class, working in tandem with the implicit criteria that shape notions of newsworthiness, shape which frames are more likely to become dominant; however, a new frame offered quickly, before the media have settled on their dominant frame, can sometimes influence media texts and become part of the public discourse, altering the preferred frames of state actors. The goal, of course, in the long term, is to shift the larger cultural frames in order to make today's alternate frame (whether social justice writ large, or 'status for all') into tomorrow's common sense.

Reading these media articles as story constructed textually and therefore open to literary analysis, it is possible to critique narratives of the dangerous racialized Other within Canada, a narrative that, as many have noted, is not new, but that has taken on specific forms in the contemporary moment. This chapter compares the earlier coverage of the Project Thread story, in which the accused were recognized as innocent of terrorist

intentions by all government and enforcement sources yet still represented as a terror cell in dominant news narratives, to the Toronto 18 case. Regardless of the outcome of the trials, valuable insights can be gleaned by critiquing the narrative structure in the newspaper stories *before* guilt or innocence is publicly explored by the courts.<sup>35</sup> Similar narrative structures are revealed in the juxtaposition between Project Thread and the Toronto 18, which suggests that, regardless of the outcome of the cases, the Enemy Within story follows its own path. The binary established by this frame – are they or are they not terrorists – situates *multiculturalism* as the source of the discursive ‘problem,’ and promotes increased securitization in order to keep the country (in the abstract) safe, as a *National Post* headline bluntly summarizes: “Terror Fight Needs More Cash: CSIS” (Bolan A4).

In this chapter, I seek to denaturalize the ways in which the narrative of ‘home-grown’ terrorism employed in this story situates certain racialized citizens, paradoxically, as ‘immigrants born here,’ who pose a threat to a reified national self due to a permanent insider-outsider position in national space. Cecil Foster captures the paradox in an opinion piece on the issue: “Now, the debate is about whether all Muslims are genuine citizens, even if they are born in this country” (Foster A17). As I explored in the introduction, this contemporary form of exclusion or expulsion (Razack, *Casting*) is continuous with earlier infamous forms of exclusion and dispossession within Canada, such as the Japanese Canadian uprooting from the BC coast. With these injustices against citizens, and this hardening of the meaning of citizenship, in mind – without reducing its importance – this analysis also brings into relief what naturalized assumptions about racialized *citizens* reveal about the rights (or lack thereof) of *non-citizens* within national space. Coverage of the 2006

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<sup>35</sup> For a parallel study that reached similar conclusions using a nomothetic quantitative frames analysis, please see Miller and Sack’s “The Toronto – 18 Terror Case: Trial by Media? How Newspaper Opinion Frames Canada’s Biggest Terrorism Case.”

Toronto 18 arrests brings this contrast between the normative Canadian ‘us’ and the implicit ‘them’ into yet clearer focus because of the status of the accused as Canadian citizens and/or permanent residents.

The basic events of the Toronto 18 story are as follows: on 2 and 3 June 2006, twelve adults and five minors were arrested in the Greater Toronto area by a task force that included Toronto, Peel, and Durham Police, and an RCMP Integrated National Security Enforcement Team, comprised of “representatives of the RCMP, federal partners and agencies such as Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), Citizenship & Immigration Canada (CIC), Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and provincial and municipal police services” (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, “INSET”). Another was arrested later, bringing the total to eighteen. As citizens and residents, the eighteen men and boys were arrested and charged with a range of new charges introduced under *The Antiterrorism Act* (‘20-Year-Old’).

In the early days of the arrests, both the national newspapers ran headlines about the thwarting of a terror cell in Canada, produced within and constrained by existing popular frames about terrorists, discourses shaped in part by the earlier story. As with Project Thread, *The National Post* pushed this discourse further than *The Globe and Mail*, openly stating that the men *were* in fact terrorists (in the total absence of any court statements to that effect). On Saturday June 3, 2006, *The National Post* ran a front-page story with the headline: “Nevermind Foreign Terrorists, Why is Canada Growing its Own Extremists?” (“Nevermind” A1). The image accompanying the story shows a large closeup “danger” sign with the Parliament buildings just visible behind it. Since there is no cutline/caption to the image, and the arrests were not made in the vicinity of Parliament – they were all in Toronto – and since the byline on the image indicates it is a Reuters file photo, this image

communicates an alarmist affective message rather than any specific story-related news content. The story parallels the sensationalist image, and does not bother with the conventional injecting of *alleged* into its list of accusations to maintain even the pretence of the presumption of innocence. While *The National Post* took the most liberties with the early fuzzy details about the case, the discourse in both papers was embedded in a language of the ‘homegrown’ terrorist threat, a classic moral panic about an Enemy Within the nation-state; despite the mobilization of alternative discourses by community organizers, as I will explore, both papers quickly settled into a racialized ‘guilty/innocent’ binary that flattened the possible ways to understand the trials.

In this frame, the only danger that matters is the danger posed to a vaguely-defined abstraction called *Canada*. How the term *Canada* is used in the coverage is never explained, since within this frame, its meaning is assumed – demonstrating the ways in which the very definition of important terms and concepts is part of the struggle for hegemony that plays out in framing. Does *Canada* signify certain buildings? Why some buildings and not others? Are buses, trains, and subways *Canada* – spaces worth protecting, spaces of ‘self’ – but not the bedrooms or homes of Muslims, as suggested by 4 am raids at gunpoint? Does *Canada* signify a citizenship identity? An ethnic identity? The term is never defined, but what is clear in the framing is that the danger posed to Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians targeted by racialized representations is not considered part of this risk to *Canada* that must be averted – this *Canada* does not include the Muslim men targeted by the discourse, or, by extension, anyone in Canada who resembles them enough to warrant suspicion within the dominant narrative.

The Enemy Within frame thus presents a binary in which the available ways to think about the story are bifurcated into ‘guilt’ or ‘innocence’ – focussing blame on the men rather

than on the government or a racist culture that situates Muslim men as dangerous threats and Muslim women as victims needing rescue. Frames ascribe causes, place blame, and propose remedies, all *implicitly*; by situating the binary as a choice between ‘guilty’ or ‘innocent,’ the implicit ‘cause’ of the problem remains stuck on the potential danger to Canada posed by a flattened concept called *Muslims*, and the proposed remedies are tidy neoliberal ones that benefit the consolidation of power among economic elites: increased funding for surveillance and policing of the population, and hardened immigration laws. The narrative elements of the story (dangerous terror cell, brave and capable police, re-establishment of safety for Canada, more money for security) are situated within this limited binary that points the finger at this flattened discursive idea of *Muslims*.

While news coverage in *The Globe and Mail* did include statements indicating that violent acts such as those the Toronto 18 were accused of are contrary to the ways the vast majority of Muslims understand the faith, the dominant frame greatly reduces the ‘salience’ of these statements, in Entman’s term, because they are embedded within the larger frame. The very need to *say* that most Muslims are not terrorists reveals the implicit framing of the narrative. As Lakoff notes, when you tell an audience, ‘don’t think of an elephant!’ all you get is a bunch of people thinking about elephants. “When we negate a frame, we evoke the frame” (3). In a now-famous example of this phenomenon, Lakoff notes, Richard Nixon learned this lesson about framing: “While under pressure to resign during the Watergate scandal, Nixon addressed the [US] nation on TV. He stood before the [US public] and said, ‘I am not a crook.’ And everybody thought about him as a crook” (Lakoff 3). Similarly, news



stories constrained to *deny* the frame's implicit connection between *Muslims* and *terrorism* reinforce the frame.<sup>36</sup>

In the Toronto 18 case, a key argument that challenged the dominant frame and sought to alter it, mobilized by community networks around the Toronto 18, focussed on the presumption of innocence guaranteed by the Canadian charter, and on the larger racism and Islamophobia present in the representations and the media case. A coalition of “labour student, faith, community, and social justice organizations” (OPIRG), the “Presumption of Innocence Project” arose around the case. Unlike in the Project Thread case, this coalition argued in their website and public statements *not* that the men are innocent, but that: “We support [the Toronto 18 accuseds’] right to be tried fairly by the courts, and not by the press or by public opinion. We support their right to be *presumed* innocent” (OPIRG, emphasis added). In media statements by the coalition, furthermore, the men’s Canadian *citizenship* was invoked to argue for their right to be presumed innocent – which indicates that citizenship is still a powerful discourse with which to make rights claims, for those who possess it. James Clark, a member of the Presumption of Innocence Project, speaking on Redeye on Vancouver Coop Radio, said, “these basic civil liberties should be accorded to all of these men, who are all Canadian citizens” (Clark). He adds:

Our concern is making sure that despite the nature of the allegations or despite what the public perception is of these men and boys, that their civil liberties, that *their rights as Canadian citizens* – their right to be presumed innocent, their right to a fair trial, their right to be tried by a court of law and not by public opinion or the media – we want to make sure all those [rights] are protected. (Clark, emphasis added)

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<sup>36</sup> What’s more, the need to state that most Muslims are not terrorists or extremists reveals the assumptions of the underlying narrative that does situate Muslims, and those deemed ‘Muslim-looking,’ as potential suspects. To offer a parallel, this process operates in much the same way as the classic situation in which a racialized person hears from a white person that they “do not see colour/do not mind your race”; the very need to say so reveals the already racially-inflected nature of the interaction.

Clark very specifically states that the Presumption of Innocence Project “does not take any formal position on whether or not these men are guilty or innocent. Our case is simply that they should be presumed innocent and they should have a right to a fair trial” (Clark). However, due to the ‘guilty/innocent’ binary framing of the story, that focuses attention on the ‘danger’ to ‘Canada’ rather than the danger to Muslims, these arguments when they appeared in both national newspapers were reframed. In all of the coverage, over this two year period, with the exception of one news story, these arguments when they appeared in the news were situated not as calls for the *presumption* of innocence, but as claims *for* the men’s innocence – for the ‘not guilty’ side of the ‘guilty/innocent’ binary. These voices were thus situated as ignorant apologists for terror, in a flattened binary representation – a kind of trial by newspaper.

The attempt to frame the issue over whether or not the men were granted the *presumption* of innocence – which would have attributed blame to state practices and potentially to an Islamophobic media – was represented as outside the hegemonic worldview in the news texts, even when the coalition did access the news. For instance a story that introduces the coalition describes it as “a group that *calls itself* the Presumption of Innocence Project” (Freeze A4), granting reduced legitimacy to this framing. (In contrast, we never hear of ‘an organization that *calls itself* CSIS’). Margaret Wentz depicted the issue of the demonizing of Muslims, raised by the Presumption of Innocence Project and other community members who supported the men, as a “conspiracy theor[y]” (Wentz A19). The importance of the presumption of innocence, and the concern about the targeting of Muslims, did appear very clearly in one article in *The Globe and Mail* after a demonstration successfully accessed the media, however, it was situated as a “message” of “a few protestors,” led by “controversial” figures, rather than being granted the kind of legitimacy

that official sources receive in the coverage (Bradshaw A10). The article frames the protestors as arguing that “even terrorism suspects deserve the full protections of the Charter” – in which the word ‘even’ situates this argument as outside ordinary thinking. The word ‘even’ also situates this statement within a larger cultural frame about the inherent superiority of a certain type of Canadian citizen, an implicitly whitened one committed to a rational justice-seeking project (‘the Charter’) with implied others (‘terrorism suspects’) situated as less rational (Thobani) and therefore, paradoxically, as less deserving of fair treatment before the law. A central argument presented by community members around this case was that the coverage itself had significant negative impacts on the ways Muslims, and people portrayed as ‘looking Muslim,’ are understood in Canadian national discourse. As Said argues in *Orientalism*, these ideas reveal more about the one doing the looking than they say anything about the actual cultures or identities of those being seen. This point is vital to an understanding of the coverage and looks far beyond the legal case itself to the impact of this story on racism against Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians in Canada as a whole.

Racialization, as I mention earlier, is thus an important feature of this frame. In the Toronto 18 coverage, as in the Project Thread coverage, signifiers of race, including phenotypical bodily markers such as skin colour, and non-phenotypical signifiers that take on racialized meanings, operate within the binary system. So neighbours, friends, and classmates for instance of the accused student from McMaster University, state that he “didn’t look like the rest of us anymore” as though conformity in clothing is evidence of guilt or innocence. The Mole, Mubin Shaikh, is lauded for not wanting to “look like the people [he’s] totally against” (Blatchford, “A Judgment” A7) by Christie Blatchford, as though his choice to have a shorter beard (A7) is somehow related to whether he is trustworthy: She writes: “I don’t blame Mr. Shaikh for not wanting to look like them any

more” (A7). In *The National Post*, articles cite a CSIS report that states that “growing a beard [and] adopting Muslim dress” are two of the “signs” that a young person is on the path to “terrorism” (Bell A4). Another article in *The National Post* lists as evidence the tendency to “grow a beard, wear traditional Muslim dress and give up drinking” (Bell, “T.O. Terror Recruits” A1).

In an instance again reminiscent of the Project Thread case, Abdul Qayyum Jamal, the man in his forties initially accused of being a ringleader, but who was eventually freed and his charges stayed (Freeze “Charges Stayed” A7), appeared on the front page of *The Globe and Mail* with a full-page courtroom sketch of his face, under the headline “The Friendly Zealot.” This sensationalist article – about an innocent man whose charges were later dropped – went into great detail about his behavior, steeping all of his actions in suspicion: teens at the mosque remember “all the times he joined them for soccer games and cricket matches, and all the lessons he gave at a nearby mosque” (McArthur, Akkad, and Friesen A1), the fact that he “led prayers,” that he “volunteer[ed] to clean the carpets” (A1) – all of which are situated as suspicious behavior by language such as that he was “encouraged” (A1) to volunteer, against the better judgment of members of the mosque, who now are quoted speculating that “God Forbid, Qayyum Jamal was conspiring something” (A1) and lauding parents for being suspicious. The article goes into great detail about the death of his first wife “from an unknown illness” (A1), the word ‘unknown’ casting further doubt upon Mr. Jamal; his immigration status; his second wife – who the article specifies ominously is “Caucasian, [a] Canadian convert to Islam” (A1) – and her choice to wear the burqa; as well as her speech to the Toronto District School Board advocating schools inform religious parents in advance when sex education is going to be taught in class (A1). His subsequent release and the dropping of his charges and of his name

from the mediated list of suspicious characters bring into relief the ways in which media narratives unspool threads of their own making that have little to do with the details of the case, and further emphasize the ways in which these details become part of a racialized Enemy Within frame. Since the frame flattens the story into a question of guilt or innocence that is impossible for the news media to resolve, details of people's lives become racialized and folded in to that impossible binary.

Articles repeatedly raise the ethnicity and birthplaces of the accused, cataloguing their citizenship status and other details of their lives. The article "A Roster of Unusual Suspects" presents information about the men such as that one "moved to Canada from Pakistan when he was 8" (McArthur, Mick, Robert, and El Akkad A1) and another "spent his early years in Saudi Arabia" (A1). They juxtapose religion with images of violence: the fact that the arrested men "attend a mosque," "pra[y] several times a week," and "would often go out to schools and encourage youths to convert to Islam" (A1) are listed as important information about their relative suspiciousness. An image appears of one of the young men in his high school yearbook, with an article that quotes his yearbook message of "La ilaha illallah" (A1), as though the presence of religious belief is itself a sign of terrorist ties. This pushing of racialized Muslim Canadians out towards the edges of the nation-state, positioning these state citizens outside the metaphorical or discursive borders of the nation, foregrounds internal borders. Fault lines emerge that reveal discursive struggles within the narrative of the seemingly pluralist Canadian nation-state. In the contemporary moment, an older understanding of race makes *Multiculturalism* signify as an incursion of raced bodies within a white polity; this in stark contrast to the discourse about Multiculturalism as a celebration of the 'song and dance' of the world's cultures, and as a defining feature of Canadian society that was dominant from the late 1970s until the early years of the new

millennium. What David Theo Goldberg describes as overt racist discourses, returned to prominence yet simultaneously transformed, unable to be named as such, within the neoliberal moment,<sup>37</sup> mobilize a justification of violence towards those caught in the fault, marked as at fault by racialized discourses about Muslims. The site of this struggle is the very meaning of terms (such as *Multiculturalism*, *immigration*, *the public*, or *diversity*) within the national; the struggle for definitional power is a major part of the battle that takes place over establishing dominant frames.

Rather than recounting court details such as what the charges are or what each lawyer argues, the articles go into lengthy detail about the fact that the accused men had beards, attended mosques, and read the Koran. In court drawings and photographs of the men, such racialized signs as beards and long hair (Mick) contribute to this framing. Images of women supporters and family of the accused wearing clothing marked as ‘Muslim’ are displayed repeatedly, signifying as evidence of suspiciousness (Blatchford A1; Friesen A1; McArthur et al. A4). Women in ‘Muslim clothing’ become a signifier of deception and otherness, as in front-page headline “Hateful Chatter behind the Veil” (Akkad and McArthur A4). In *The Globe and Mail*, Christie Blatchford provides an explicit demonstration of the way racialization and women’s bodies signify the visual clarity of guilt, in the Foucauldian sense. As an opinion columnist, Blatchford can state openly what elsewhere is couched, coded, and indirect; her words thus merit quoting at length:

Even before I knew for sure that they’re all Muslims, I suspected as much from what I saw on the tube, perhaps because I am a trained observer, or

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<sup>37</sup> In *The Threat of Race*, Goldberg writes: “There is here the condition without the category and mode without the (same) meaning. The modes, forms, sociologies, even their rationales more often than not mimic classic racisms. But they lack the sharpness of their identifying account or defining contours, torn as they are from the classic conditions of their articulation. These anthracic racisms without the ostensive reference of racism exacerbate humiliation and degradation, debilitation and desecration, desacralization and distortion. [...] So as racisms have become more difficult to track and trace, more blurred, new targets and their rationalization have appeared” (361).

you know, because I have eyes. The accused men are mostly [...] bearded in the Taliban fashion. They have first names like Mohamed, middle names like Mohamed and last names like Mohamed. Some of their female relatives at the Brampton courthouse who were there in their support wore black head-to-toe burkas (now there's a sight to gladden the Canadian female heart: homegrown burka-wearers darting about just as they do in Afghanistan), which is not a getup I have ever seen on anyone but a Muslim woman. (Blatchford, "Ignoring" A6)

This signification occurs in a context in which human bodies marked by signs of race are already overdetermined signifiers indicating evil and otherness within national space, such that Blatchford seems to think she can tell by looking that the accused are suspicious: thus, the line, 'perhaps because I am a trained observer, or, you know, because I have eyes.' The invocation of Blatchford's 'eyes' – of eyesight, particularly the eyesight of a whitened female columnist – in this passage indicates the naturalized process of racialization at work both in the exnomination of Blatchford's whiteness, and in the demonization of these Muslim women. Blatchford writes of their appearance as though revealing a dangerous secret or 'common' shared suspicion, as though their very appearance is both an obvious indication of suspiciousness, and as though it is unspeakable, as though Blatchford is brave to reveal that the women in the images are Muslim. This combination: fabricating a secret, and simultaneously fabricating the revelation of the secret, enables the 'obviousness' of the women's status as Muslim to stand in for the 'obviousness' of their guilt or terrorist status, thus flattening the concept of *terror* and *Muslim* as though the two are one and the same, without ever saying so overtly. It furthermore situates the dominant culture as the underdog, 'daring' to speak the truth, situating the voice that speaks from a position of dominance as though it were an oppressed minority.

This collapsed representation, this set of assumptions, is the Enemy Within frame at work. Blatchford 'suspected' them of being Muslims? Would she ever 'suspect' someone of

being Christian? Blatchford's language of suspicion, her association of 'beard[s]' with 'Taliban,' of the name 'Mohamed' with suspicion, and her invocation of 'homegrown burka-wearers' in a context in which the term *homegrown* is already explicitly linked to terrorism, make implicit claims that underpin the news coverage and situate this imagery within the long tradition of western Orientalism: to be (or more precisely to appear) Muslim in Canada is to be suspect. As Yasmin Jiwani argues, the "threat of the veil":

invokes the paranoia of cultural dilution on the part of the sovereign state (premised as it is on fictional blood lines and a presumed homogeneity). The threat of the veil is then the threat of an engulfing Islam, a threat that resonates with the historical archive of the crusades and that has to be contained somehow if not neutralized. ("Doubling" 79)

Muslim women's bodies constitute a "floating signifier" in this way, "corralled to fit particular hegemonic designs" (79). Building on John McBratney's conceptualization, Jiwani observes the ways these representations operate as a "doubling discourse" in which both 'positive' and 'negative' images are contained within a larger representational construct, "circumscribed within relations of power" (61). The available tropes that are 'knowable' within this discourse situate Muslim women as either 'good' (because rescue-able) victims of Muslim men or as "wicked [and] duplicitous" (65). The situating of Muslim women as victims of Muslim men fosters a relational grammar of representation, in which Muslim men are figured as inherently more prone to violence than whitened men, as though it is *the east*, and not patriarchy, that is the problem. These codes, as Razack argues, justify the suspension of rights for Muslim men "through appeal to racist narratives about intrinsically savage, pre-modern Muslims" (*Casting* 19). Ironically, this suspension of basic human rights reveals the inherent brutality of countries such as Canada, willing to treat some as less human than others to the extent of denying them basic human rights based purely on identity, ostensibly (and paradoxically) in the name of protecting 'our' tolerant ways.



As in the Project Thread coverage, the narrative in this media text foregrounds the voices of RCMP, CSIS, and the police, which reinforces this frame. The quotations and perspectives in the coverage just after the police raids are all from government or police: we hear from “police,” from “RCMP commissioner Mike McDonell,” and from “Police Chief Bill Blair” (Appleby A1), but not from the arrested men, and only occasionally from their lawyers. As in Project Thread, information from family, lawyers, and supporters is once again narrativized to argue that the people around the detainees were “shocked” (McArthur), implying that family and friends were naively innocent, never suspecting that their sons, brothers, and friends were (the narrative implies) in fact dangerous terrorists – as adjacent stories proclaim. The perspectives of supporters of the detainees are not presented as viable, on a par with official opinions, but rather are framed as the misguided or misinformed family who simply can’t believe that their loved ones could do such a thing, despite all evidence to the contrary, which is presented as obvious.

Word choices and word order reveal the frame at work. For instance, in *The Globe and Mail* story “Storm Parliament Hill[,] Seize the Politicians[,] Behead the Prime Minister” (Friesen A1), the official opinion is given verisimilitude by the placement of qualifiers accompanying the quotations: when the official perspective is given, allegations appear first, followed by their source, using neutral language to introduce the source. An example reads: “[T]he startling revelations include purported plans to bomb power plants in Southern Ontario and take control of the CBC building,” followed by a list of allegations, and only then the source: “[T]he allegations . . . are contained in a synopsis of charges filed against Steven Chand” (A1). The source’s position at the end of several paragraphs of accusations and the passive voice that introduces it lend the allegations verisimilitude. In contrast, when a lawyer for the men is quoted, the source appears before the quotation: “[The lawyer] said

[...] he is concerned his client will not be treated fairly” (A1). This rhetorical structure foregrounds this quoted statement as an opinion, indeed, as a complainer’s opinion; the lawyer’s next quotation then begins, “[H]e complained” about the process, rather than with the neutral word ‘said’ used for government sources. This contrast exemplifies the narrative that underpins much of the content: the government and police are constructed as the truthful upholders of state security and sanctioned knowledge; the lawyer is ‘complaining’; and the friends, families, and supporters of the suspects are either naive or – as in the case of the women involved – untrustworthy.

This official narrative gives the public relations frame emanating from elite sources precedence over the injustice frame, with its focus on the presumption of innocence, mobilized by community networks. The rhetoric in the news stories is congratulatory to the police, using language such as “swooped down” and “scooped up” (Appleby A1), as though the police are Batman and Robin, calling the arrests “spectacular” and “sensational” (A1). The repetition of this language lends veracity to official versions of the events even as it creates fear. Returning to a Foucauldian analysis, the power of these narratives lies not only in their ability to appear truthful, but actually in their power to produce truth. The newspaper reports obfuscate what evidence was part of the police seizure and what was put on display by police for the media scrum. The texts, if read closely, indicate that walkie-talkies, hunting knives, and bags of fertilizer were seized, yet at press conferences journalists took pictures of a cellphone with wiring and other electronic gadgets presented in the coverage with no explanation. This disjuncture suggests that the cellphone bomb pictured in the first major media event was a constructed police publicity display.

## Disavowal of Multiculturalism

The difference between the two papers was mainly a matter of degree: *The National Post* took less care to insert the customary terms indicating presumption of innocence such as *alleged* or *accused* before stating the charges (“Nevermind” A1), and pushed a discourse of the dangers of multiculturalism further than the *The Globe and Mail*. This disavowal of multiculturalism, which, as Smaro Kamboureli, David Chariandy, and others have noted, has been present since Official Multiculturalism’s inception as state policy, has accelerated significantly around terrorism cases and the trope of the homegrown Other, and was present in both papers. The Enemy Within frame allows for, indeed makes possible, this disavowal of something the news reports now call *multiculturalism* – a very different kind of multiculturalism even than the Multiculturalism-from-above envisioned by left-nationalists such as Trudeau, or the multiculturalism-from-below described by antiracists such as Himani Bannerji. The frame positions a flattened vision of *multiculturalism* – a code word for racialized people, bodies, cultures, communities – as the source of the potential trouble. In addition to situating the story as a question over the guilt or innocence of the men, the racialization inherent in the frame also enables the coding of *multiculturalism* as an encroachment of racialized ‘homegrown’ Others onto a beleaguered white Canadian self. *The National Post* coverage carries this argument to its extreme, repeatedly describing “Canada’s multicultural policies as a root cause of terrorism” (Patrick et al. A6). This struggle over the very meaning of *multiculturalism* marks a key shift in national public discourse, in what is sayable in the public sphere. This coded *multiculturalism* becomes one half of a brutally xenophobic binary whose discursive opposite is the survival of Canada as a white, liberal country: a resurgence of an older blunt racism that had, until recently, lost all public credibility.

As the case progressed over the two year period (particularly after seven of the accused's charges were dropped and details of the sting aspects of the case emerged) other newspapers – notably *The Toronto Star* – ran articles questioning the legitimacy of the trials. In *The Globe and Mail*, these arguments are situated primarily as *critiques* of *The Toronto Star* rather than as analyses in their own right. *The Globe and Mail* referred to these arguments as coming from “critics [who] suggest that the case must be falling apart” (Freeze “Wannabes” A9), rather than making space for the presumption of innocence. Within the binary of the Enemy Within frame, these voices (from the *Star*) mutated, reappearing as defending the men's *innocence*, by creating a trial in the media in which writers were constrained to speak for the guilt or innocence of the accused. Calls for treating the accused as members of society, not some externalizeable entity, were also situated as defenders of terror in a flattened, demonized representation.

The dominance of the Enemy Within frame constrained how the eventual convictions in the case resonated. When the first conviction was laid, it became retroactive vindication for the voices arguing ‘guilty.’ Calls for *presumption* of innocence, which were never distinguished from *claims of* innocence within the Enemy Within frame, were thus further, and retroactively, marginalized. A Sept. 26 article in *The Globe and Mail* epitomizes the effects of this Enemy Within frame and its guilty/innocent binary, when Christie Blatchford reduces all critiques of the case to ‘naive’ arguments that the men were innocent and/or incompetent (Blatchford, “A Judgment” A7). Blatchford completely ignores the issues around the presumption of innocence and the concerns over Charter rights, focussing instead on guilt and innocence and using the guilty verdict to erase these larger concerns: “The unpalatable, unwanted, much-resisted verdict is in and it will shock only those who could never bring themselves to face the truth” (A7). *The Globe and Mail* and *The National Post*

were remarkably similar in this regard; *The National Post* ran an article stating that the conviction would convince Canadians of the need for the Antiterrorism law and tougher security laws (Leong A1), never once mentioning the presumption of innocence concerns or demonization of Muslims that were raised by the community coalition and others. In both newspapers, then, calls to regard the case in a more focussed way as specific criminal charges against specific “men and boys” (Clark) rather than some sort of generalized ‘Muslim’ problem, and calls for the presumption of innocence, were thus all contorted into arguments for innocence, which left little room to question the extremely wide net cast by the law, or the rights and justice issues at stake. These arguments, since they were distorted within the Enemy Within frame, then appeared ‘disproven’ through the convictions.

One distinction was noticeable between *The Globe and Mail* and *The National Post*: *The Globe and Mail* included interviews, for instance with University of Toronto law professor Kent Roach, that raised concerns that the law was applied too broadly because, for instance, the first convicted youth didn’t actually know of any details of any specific terror plot, and wasn’t involved in planning any actual terrorist actions. Roach’s argument, however, was situated within headlines claiming the “success” of the case. (Freeze, “Terrorism Laws” A1). The article, which announces the convictions, states that the Crown has for the first time “successfully prosecuted a crime designated as an act of terrorism, thanks to the wide net cast by new laws” (A1). Framing the conviction as a ‘success’ within this binary, in a moment of profoundly circular logic, appears to justify the broad powers of *The Antiterrorism Act*. It also funnels all other ‘sides’ presented by critics into arguments *for* innocence. The tautological nature of this argument – that the ‘successful’ convictions justify the extremely broad laws that allowed for them – goes unremarked in the coverage.

### **Citizen and Non-Citizen: the Naturalization of Racist Discourse**

The case of the Toronto 18 demonstrates the ways racialization operates within contemporary national discussions of terrorism cases under the neoliberal Canadian state. The spectacle of the legal proceedings, and the visible signifiers of race (including non-phenotypical markers such as names, clothing, facial hair, or religion), dramatically fold in to the guilty/innocent binary of the Enemy Within frame, which naturalizes the categories of identity produced by the contemporary immigration system and reinforces neoliberal meanings of important Canadian concepts such as *migration* and *Multiculturalism*. Through this racialized binary, Canadians with brown skin and the wrong kind of name, clothing, or religion become the targets of racialized discourse that, as Sherene Razack argues in *Casting Out*, expulses Muslims (and those deemed ‘Muslim-looking’) from western society, and justifies zones of indeterminacy in which human rights have no meaning.

The Project Thread detainees were in the main deported due to their lack of citizenship status, which meant that their story faded from the news world fairly quickly since it fit already-naturalized paradigms about non-citizens. In contrast, the Toronto 18 case produced a racialized moral panic over the citizenship status of the accused. With this distinction in mind, and taking both case studies together, the arbitrary gap between the basic rights of citizens and non-citizens under contemporary neoliberal state structures becomes apparent. As much as all citizens must be treated equally before the law, and as much as the Toronto 18 should have been presumed innocent in the news coverage, it is becoming increasingly apparent, in light of expanding categories of precarity in legal citizenship as it is produced by the neoliberal state, that an ethical stance in today’s political moment is to argue that these rights should be granted regardless of the legal citizenship status of the accused. The difference in the nature, intensity and duration of the coverage

between Project Thread and the Toronto 18 cases foregrounds the arbitrary line dividing citizens and non-citizens under the contemporary immigration regime; it also foregrounds the ways ‘illegality’ is produced (De Genova) under neoliberalism and the expanding categories of precarity (Goldring et al. 6) that shape citizen and non-citizen identity in Canada today.

In closing, I wish to observe that while these newspaper narratives are, of course, important to the men and boys directly caught up in the Toronto 18 story, the significance of these representations goes much further than that. As Kassamali observes in “Solidarity in Islamophobic Times,” “[i]t is impossible to know the realities behind the Toronto 18” (14).

She writes:

In my conversations with family members, they described arduous years of court appearances marked by intense Islamophobia, with prosecutors citing the Qur’an and traditional Islamic texts to demonstrate individuals’ supposed ideological extremism. After years of being denied bail and losing motions, guilty pleas provided the quickest means to ending the saga and accessing the education, family contact and additional privileges that would come from transfer out of solitary confinement after a guilty sentence (likely to be the eventual result anyway). (13)

Thinking with Kassamali, I wish to stress that my focus is not primarily on the ways the stories impacted the men themselves, or on the “facts” of the case beyond representation. Rather, it is on the ways these representations enter the larger public sphere, mobilizing and fuelling neoliberal narratives about Muslims and about those situated as “looking Muslim” in violent national discourses. The internal workings of the case itself are not fully knowable to media researchers whose primary access to the story is through the public texts it generated; the media narratives are, however, socially significant far beyond the case itself. Kassamali observes:

It is just as difficult to grapple with the role of deeply entrenched police informants and the likelihood of entrapment, or the personal histories and motivations of each of the individuals involved. [...In the end] we must ask: What allows the state to publicly propagate accusations of intended violence [...] while exonerating its own violence? The elaborate investigations and eventual sentencing of the Toronto 18 showed the reach of government intelligence and policing into the daily lives of its Muslim citizens – already a familiar reality for many, including Indigenous communities, the poor, the homeless, and those living without status. [...] These operations will continue to extend tentacles into families, workplaces and private lives, seeking to break down communities already subject to intense public scrutiny. (14-15)

With these ideas in mind, I wish to note that the Toronto 18 case is merely a focal point of a much, much larger narrative that impacts everyone living in Canada who is targeted by these representations. The unspoken tension in these news texts over the assumed meaning of concepts such as *Canada* and *Multiculturalism* brings into relief a key discursive terrain upon which social struggle is waged. As I mention earlier, the goal of analyzing the ways frames play out in each of these specific media discourses is to offer additional tools to organizers, who seek to create and circulate effective frames very quickly in order for those frames to gain traction when a news story hits the press. Although what frames are likely to take root in each new situation is constrained by prior conditions, each mediated story is part of a larger struggle to shift the entire playing field.

Finally, the racialization of the Enemy Within frame parallels Razack's observation that "the abandonment of populations, an abandonment configured as an emergency [or a state of exception, to invoke Agamben's term], is accomplished as a racial project" (*Dark Threats* 6). As Razack writes, "the denial of a common bond of humanity between people of European descent and those who are not" (5) is a defining feature of this narrative, which as Sunera Thobani observes, ironically exalts a certain type of citizen deemed more rational and compassionate, and thus more deserving, than the imagined Other. At the same time, these



court cases can be understood as part of a ‘carceral continuum’ that impacts us all. This news narrative about the ‘right’ kind of Canadian (compassionate, rational, empathetic) works to justify state actions and media discourses – discourses that operate in a feedback loop with one another – which would otherwise be seen for the irrational fear, and deep lack of human empathy<sup>38</sup>, that they demonstrate.

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<sup>38</sup> Here I do not mean to suggest that *empathy*, in the limited liberal use of the term employed, is the best proposed remedy. Rather, I note the contradiction inherent in dominant assumptions about the meaning of ‘empathy,’ when this concept is used in nationalist discourses (instead of, for instance, terms such as solidarity, mutuality, or justice, concepts that *incorporate* empathy but that also take into account existing power relations). Genuine human empathy, when it comes with a concurrent willingness to take full account of social relations and work to change them structurally, is of course immensely valuable; empathy may motivate and form part of these other available concepts. However, *empathy* and *compassion* as these are used in nationalist media discourses act as fig leaves that attempt to mask power dynamics and deny rights to refugees and immigrants deemed *less empathetic* or more atavistic. In this meaning of *empathy*, which lacks any sense of structural power relations, the concept accrues benefit to those in relative positions of power, rather than creating genuine power for those on the receiving end of a dominant culture’s *empathy*. Used in this way, *empathy* also seeks to create a disconnect between historical or structural *causes* of human suffering, and instances of offering voluntary empathy, as though those ‘giving’ and those ‘receiving’ each exist in a vacuum with no prior power dynamics that structure the relationship.

1. How do security systems see?  
Everything that moves is a danger.
  
2. Naturalized:  
“The newspapers unfortunately just report on the reality...”  
criminality, genetic inferiority, history apart
  
3. Naturalized:  
white settlers sink into the snow upon landing  
one foot on this soil and they are one of us  
naturalized, made natural                      made one of us.
  
4. We are not allowed to name our –  
the dark secret I tie up in ribbons  
twist round a chickenbone  
a wishbone of secrecy                      a tiny tourniquet  
if you deny it blood, it will drop off and die
  
5. not true. The traces are gangrenous,  
speak of the serrature, lines of dark lines of white  
lines of power in the silent unnamed  
one foot in the snow  
one in the sand  
the mark of Cain on your dark face  
the mark of Cain on my light face
  
6. the silence makes my mark invisible  
makes entrenched power  
walls of stone, like encampments, encroachments,  
enactments on the CBC with  
minor players wiping aprons in the kitchen, dying in the background  
dark like the earth, evincing blood, eviscerated  
in Faulkner fictions of Light in August,

August arrests, roundups in pre-dawn raids by the Lake,  
bodies standing out in silhouette on the snow near Toronto  
a white string to mark an invisible centre  
at the scene of a body dragged into silence

## **Chapter Four: Detained Without Charge: Race, Nation, and Security Certificates**

In the summer of 2005, two Security Certificate detainees who were at the time held at Metro West Detention Centre in Toronto began hunger strikes to protest the conditions of their detentions. Hassan Almrei began a hunger strike on June 24, 2005, which lasted 73 days, and Mohammad Mahjoub began an overlapping hunger strike soon after, which lasted 79 days and ended September 24, 2005. These were not the first or last hunger strikes undertaken by Security Certificate detainees in Canada; however, the minimal but sustained coverage that these hunger strikes received in the national press and their contained duration of exactly three months provides an opportunity to analyze one instance of contemporary national print news discourse about people detained without charge, situated by state discourse as enemies of the state living within Canada. This chapter examines coverage in *The National Post* and *The Globe and Mail* of Security Certificates during this three-month hunger strike, from June 24 to September 24, 2005.

Picking up on themes raised in Chapters Two and Three about the differences and similarities between coverage of citizens and non-citizens positioned as threatening Others within the nation-state, I use this case study as an access point to critique underlying assumptions about whose safety and security matter in the national Canadian imaginary. This chapter examines the ways the representation of Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians circulates to hold a sort of trial by newspaper in lieu of actual trials for the accused. As I discussed previously, racialization operates as a feature of the Enemy Within frame that flattens the

available sides of an issue. This framing sets the terms of the debate over a question of guilt or innocence, and thus folds all available public perspectives into a narrow debate over the potential danger to a naturalized abstraction called *Canada*, rather than making room for discussion of the injustice and danger to those targeted not only by the Security Certificates, but by the racialized discourse itself – in other words, everyone in Canada who matches the discursive imagery in these representations.

I chose these two particular hunger strikes because these are the first sustained available set of texts in the Security Certificates case. Before this story made a few headlines, the national press was, by and large, ignoring the presence of people detained indefinitely in Canada without charge or trial. This set of hunger strikes brought some regular national news coverage to the underreported story of detentions without charge in Canada, and therefore created the first opportunity to submit to critical examination newspaper representations of bodies incarcerated by the Canadian state as enemies in the ‘War on Terror.’ Organizing around Security Certificate detentions had been ongoing for years; this set of hunger strikes brought increased media attention to one moment in a long campaign that continued to build momentum, and grew into a long and sustained struggle that fostered a more high-profile public debate. Public attention to this issue eventually led to the transfer of all of the men from jail into house arrest, the quashing of two of the Certificates, and, as of this writing, profound public and legal challenges to the entire process – although that struggle is far from over, as I will discuss in the conclusion to this chapter.

### **Security Certificates**

In addition to the ongoing normalization of detentions without charge as part of the regular immigration bureaucracy, a protocol of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act

(*IRPA*), called a Security Certificate, allows indefinite detention of any non-citizen upon the signatures of two officials: the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and the Solicitor General of Canada. The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) makes secret recommendations to the ministers, who can then detain non-citizens indefinitely, pending deportation. Permanent Residents, such as Adil Charkaoui, have access to more frequent detention review, but for all security certificate detainees there is no appeal of the judge's decision. A Federal Court judge must agree that the certificate is "reasonable" but is not permitted to make a judgment about the relative truth of the accusations. Under Security Certificates, Almrei, Mahjoub and three others – Mahmoud Jaballah, Mohamed Harkat, and Adil Charkaoui – have been detained at different times, indefinitely, for years, without charge and without access to the evidence against them, and neither they nor their lawyers have been allowed to be present for closed door hearings at which CSIS presented arguments to adjudicators. Since 1991, 26 people have been detained on Security Certificates, as of this writing (Canadian).

After years of indefinite detention without trial that included years in solitary confinement, all five men were placed under house arrest on Security Certificates. House arrests includes extreme surveillance measures in place such as the requirement to wear GPS tracking bracelets, curfews, a ban on the use of cell phones and internet, restrictions on movement and times allowed out, and a requirement to be accompanied by a government-appointed supervisor when leaving the house (Rosella). The Security Certificate process that allows indefinite detention without charge is not new to the post-9-11 era, but was strengthened and expanded under the post 9-11 measures passed in *The Antiterrorism Act* and the *IRPA*. Audrey Macklin notes that older immigration legislation in *The Immigration Act* already "permit[ted] automatic, indefinite, warrantless, preventative detention of a non-

citizen if the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and Solicitor General sign a certificate declaring the person concerned to be a security risk” (Macklin 394). The post-2001 *IRPA* fulfils Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s stated goal of “say[ing] ‘no’ more quickly” (CIC), “casts a wide[r] net over non-citizens rendered inadmissible on security grounds, expands the detention power over designated security risks, and reduces access to independent review of Ministerial security decisions” (Macklin 84).

This approach to national security resembles *The War Measures Act* employed during the World Wars and in the 1970 October Crisis, in its circumvention of trials for those under suspicion; the executive discretion of a handful of authorities is sufficient under the law to detain and deport the accused non-citizens, who do not have even basic rights to a trial, the right to defend themselves, or the right to know the case against them. As Ian Radforth notes in *Enemies Within*, “In some cases [during World War II], the authorities bluntly stated that ‘representations had been made’ that the individual was [suspicious]; the state had to prove not that the representations were correct, only that they had been made” (202). Similarly today, “[t]he legislation provides that the information at issue must be deemed relevant by the judge; however, its terms do not require an evaluation of the credibility or veracity of the original source” (Inter-American). Thus, judges in Security Certificate cases are discouraged from analyzing the relative veracity of the accusation brought against the person under suspicion. A successful Supreme Court challenge launched independently by three Security Certificate detainees found in 2007 (Makin) that the Security Certificate process is unconstitutional; in response, the Federal government introduced a special advocate process whereby Security Certificate detainees are defended by a lawyer with security clearance, who is not allowed to discuss the details of the accusations with their client (Copeland). Even under the revised Security Certificate special advocate process, since

the accused do not have access to all of the evidence or to the accusations, it remains the case that “the person concerned is unable to challenge the source or to rebut the content of that information” (Inter-American). Upon this flimsy base, irrevocable decisions can be made. “Once a certificate is upheld by a judge, it constitutes conclusive evidence” (Inter-American).

Federal Court Justice James Hugessen, having presided over security certificate cases, has written publicly about this experience. In a rare move that in and of itself is indicative of the intensely Kafkaesque nature of the Security Certificate process. Judge Hugessen writes:

All the national security functions which are laid on the Federal Court have this in common: they involve at one stage or another and sometimes throughout the piece a judge of the Court sitting alone in what are called hearings, but they are held in the absence of one of the parties. [...] This is not a happy posture for a judge, and you are in fact looking at an unhappy camper when I tell you about this function. Often, when I speak in public, I make the customary disavowal that I am not speaking for the Court and I am not speaking for my colleagues but I am speaking only for myself. I make no such disavowal this afternoon. I can tell you because we talked about it, we hate it. We do not like this process of having to sit alone, hearing only one party and looking at the materials produced by only one party. (384)

However, as Hugessen indicates, the judge’s hands are tied by the legislation itself.

It is important here to observe the tensions – the similarities and differences – in the ways that racialized citizens and non-citizens figure within these systems. Audrey Macklin notes that the dividing lines between state actions towards citizen and non-citizen are inter-related and multifaceted. On one hand, laws technically designed to apply to one group can be applied to the other. While the *IRPA* applies only to non-citizens, while *The Antiterrorism Act* applies to everyone in Canada including citizens, Macklin writes, “[w]herever possible, I anticipate that the state will take advantage of the broad investigative powers conferred under *The Antiterrorism Act* to gather evidence to have the person declared a security risk

under *The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*” (Macklin 396-97). On the other hand, the two pieces of legislation (The *IRPA* and *The Antiterrorism Act*) work together to “reinscribe the border dividing citizens and non-citizens that [*The Antiterrorism Act*] effaces in theory” (Macklin 397).

In order to establish the set of texts to analyze, I extracted all of the items which named the detainees in the three month period under analysis using two digital search engines, followed by a search of the hard copy versions of the texts using the search engine results as a guide. Because the study deals with the operation of Canadian national ideology, I chose to exclude one item that focussed primarily on issues in the US (inmates at Guantanamo Bay). I then created a hard copy archive of the extracted content that included all of the items that mention Security Certificates during this three month period: seven news items, one editorial, six columns, and one letter to the editor in *The Globe and Mail*, and seven news items, one editorial, one column, and four letters in *The National Post*.<sup>39</sup> At first brush this low coverage (28 items) might indicate that a story is not important enough to merit a critique. However, in this case the low media coverage of the story is itself significant, and indeed forms part of the analysis inherent in this study: what framing of these events allows them to be relegated to inside pages and minimal coverage in the national newspapers? The semiotic analysis, revealing the racialized nature of the frame, further indicates that the absence of more significant coverage is itself part of the framing of these events.

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<sup>39</sup> The two papers differed in ways one might expect. Measured in paragraphs, *The National Post* had a much higher incidence of Enemy Within news content (63 paragraphs out of 101) compared to *The Globe and Mail*, which had 36 Enemy Within focussed paragraphs out of 106. *The Globe and Mail* contained 26 paragraphs concerned with “Human Rights,” double that of *The National Post* at 13. In addition, *The National Post* contained 11 paragraphs focussed on the actions of celebrities, nearly equal to the amount of content it contained on human rights. Finally, *The Globe and Mail* contained 24 paragraphs focused on the human interest angle of concern for the detainees, a much higher number than in *The National Post*, which contained 9 paragraphs on “Concern for Men” issues.



### **Frame: Flattening of Options**

The shifting of argument in this coverage away from *presumption* of innocence before a trial, away from the judicial and human rights issues presented by supporters, demonstrates an Enemy Within frame at work. This frame replaces those varied concerns with a flattened binary in which the only available ‘position’ for supporters of the men is to ‘prove’ that the detainees *are innocent*. This frame mobilizes a Canadian nationalist discourse that actively masks the inherent injustice of the Security Certificates process: the myth that we live in a good and just society, good by definition, in which anyone accused of wrongdoing is assumed “innocent until proven guilty” (“*Infiltrate*” A14, “*Sieve*” A17). The myth reproduced by this quotation, that our system holds all people ‘innocent until proven guilty’ – which is simply not the case for non-citizens – acts as a mask that allows these profound injustices to slide by public attention, naturalized: since our system is so fair, runs the paradoxical, fallacious, yet powerful reasoning, these men *must* have done something to *deserve* detentions without charge and denial of the evidence against them.

### **“Sides” and Contestations**

Supporters of the detainees, such as Toronto Action For Social Change, the Justice for Adil Charkaoui Coalition, and the Justice for Mohamed Harkat Coalition, argue that the Security Certificates constitute a human rights violation since the accused are not able to defend themselves or know their accusers (Toronto). Since the Security Certificate detainees have been labelled terrorists by the Canadian state, and are thus at risk of torture if returned to their home countries, their supporters also argue that deporting them to countries known to use torture, such as Syria or Egypt, is a breach of international law, since deportations to torture are prohibited by the *UN Convention Against Torture*, to which Canada is a signatory

(UN Convention 1). Amnesty International has called the process “fundamentally flawed and unfair” (Neve and Frenette). Civil liberties groups argue that the Security Certificates process is problematic because it does not respect due process; the BC Civil Liberties Association calls the Security Certificate process “anathema to fundamental due process protections and [...] an embarrassment to the roots of our democratic principles” (BCCLA 1). Migrant rights groups supporting the detainees and calling for equality of all people in Canada regardless of citizenship status take this argument a step further, for instance by arguing that Canada is *structurally* racist, and that the right to a fair trial and the ability to defend oneself against arbitrary detention should have no relationship to citizenship status. Supporters of the Security Certificate detainees also focus on the impact of the men’s indefinite incarceration on their wives and children, quoting the families of the detainees in statements of support for the men and opposition to the process. Finally, supporters of the men, such as Toronto Action for Social Change, argue that the secrecy of antiterror laws actually protects CSIS and the RCMP from public accountability and responsibility for their actions, more than it protects an abstract national security.

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), whose agents make recommendations to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and the Solicitor General regarding who should be detained under these immigration measures, state that the Security Certificate Five are “suspected of association with Al Qaeda” (CSIS homepage) and other terrorist groups, and that Security Certificates are justified against those, they state, who “pose the greatest threat to Canada and Canadians” (CSIS homepage). CSIS argues that the secrecy is necessary to protect “information that, if disclosed, would be injurious to national security or the safety of any person” (CSIS homepage). This became the dominant frame of newspaper content, so that even the supporters of the detainees were quoted debating their

relative guilt or innocence as an enemy of the state, rather than discussing human rights and democratic function, which were the emphases of supporters of the Security Certificate detainees.

The Enemy Within frame works in a similar way in this case as it does in the Project Thread and Toronto 18 stories. In this case, as in those, guilt or innocence are impossible for the newspapers to ascertain, given the shroud of secrecy that surrounds Security Certificate proceedings. Given that even the accused are not allowed to see the evidence against them, how can newspapers make claims about relative innocence or guilt? As in the Project Thread and Toronto 18 stories, since the newspapers lack access to any means to answer the questions presented by these binaries, race markers come in to play as implicit signs of guilt and innocence. This process occurs, not in any simplistic one-to-one way, but in complex and nuanced systems of signification with race as a silent focal point, pulling national Canadian discourse in multiple directions, sliding over and across axes such as the meaning of *multiculturalism*, of *nation*, of *citizenship*, of *self* and *other*. All of these tensions become folded into the frame, in which competition to identify and define national debates is subsumed. Arguments about the presumption of innocence, presented by supporters of the men, become flattened and twisted by this binary and signify instead as claims for innocence – which appear naïve or idiotic, completely outside the ‘real,’ once they are run through the steamrolling effect of this frame.

A more technical way to say the same thing is that the Enemy Within frame gives increased salience to public discussions over the guilt or innocence of detainees, and to lists of allegations, while it decreases the salience of arguments about racism, due process, structural injustice, human rights, or international law that compete for attention in the public debate on Security Certificate use. For instance, Christie Blatchford writes a column

entitled, “Becoming Familiar With Your Foe” in which she notes that Hassan Almrei “has taught himself to speak, understand and read English at such an impressive level [...] How are you on an even footing with your foe if he’s fluent in your language and you can’t pronounce his name?” (A4). A news article in *The National Post* states, “When asked if Canada was an enemy, [Almrei] said, ‘never was, never will be’” (D’Andrea A10). He is asked if he “see[s] Canada as the enemy” (Blatchford A8); his supporters are quoted saying that he “does not have a hate-on for the U.S. or Canada” (Kari A6) and that “he loved Canada as soon as he arrived” (A6). This highlighting of the detainees’ attitudes towards *Canada* – the foregrounding of discussion over whether they ‘hate’ Canadians or the Canadian nation-state, indicates that arguments about Enemies Within set the framework within which comments by supporters are selected and presented. It also indicates that *Canada* – rather than individual buildings or people – is understood within this frame as a potential target, thus situating the Security Certificate detainees as potential enemies of the (abstracted) state itself, living within the boundaries – in the absence of any full court process within which to situate this evidence and determine guilt or innocence for any specific plans or acts of violence.

In news content in both papers, this decreased salience of presumption of innocence arguments reveals the circular logic of detentions without trial, such as when two men are accused only of association with each other, even though neither is suspected of terrorist acts. Numerous articles mentioned that Almrei is accused of “procuring a false passport for Nabil al-Marabh, an illegal immigrant who was later held in the United States on suspicion of terrorism, then deported to Syria, where he remains in detention” (Wente A15). This accusation – that Almrei “help[ed] another suspected terrorist to cross the border allegedly to visit his sick mother” (D’Andrea A8), or that he “Obtained passport for 9/11 plotter”

(D’Andrea A10) is repeated many times in the period under analysis but rarely linked to another vital piece of information: that by 2002, Al-Marabh “was not suspected of terrorist activity” (Kari and Bell A1). Almrei is thus presumed guilty by association, with someone who is himself no longer considered suspect. In one instance of this circular logic, an article that focuses on allusions to guilt in the title and the article’s first half then gives these details in the final paragraphs:

The potential risk that Mr. Almrei poses [...] focussed primarily on the links between Mr. Almrei and Al Marabh, an employee at a Toronto copy shop, who was initially considered a suspect in the planning of the September 11 attacks [...] A U.S. federal attorney stated in 2002 when al Marabh was convicted of an illegal border crossing that he was not suspected of terrorist activities. He was deported to Syria last year and is reportedly in custody. [CSIS agent] P.G. testified that if Mr. Almrei is released he may try to contact Marabh. (A1, emphasis added)

Almrei thus is suspected for association with another accused terrorist who is no longer accused; in an argument that several journalists and supporters of the men call Kafkaesque, the two are perhaps guilty only by association with each other. The salience of this grave human rights abuse and circumvention of justice is reduced in the article, as its positioning at the end of the article and embedded in a CSIS agents’ concern about security risk, shows. As Sherene Razack argues, ‘having a profile’ – the very fact of *being* a young, brown, Muslim man – is considered adequate grounds for detention (*Casting* 25).

*The Globe and Mail* ran only one editorial on Security Certificates in the period under analysis. This editorial contained several themes including a discussion of the legal issues inherent in deportations to torture. The editorial’s primary focus matched the dominant Enemy Within frame. The editorial, entitled “The Tool of Deportation Without Threat of Torture” (A12), focussed on what to do about “the problem of Hassan Almrei, now of Toronto, and other suspected foreign terrorists” (A12). It listed all the accusations against

Almrei, noted without context about Security Certificate processes that “a court said the government acted reasonably, on the evidence, in declaring him a danger to the security of Canada” (A12), and stated that “setting loose Mr. Almrei, who has been in jail for four years while fighting to stay in the country, might expose Canadians or people elsewhere in the world to harm” (A12), reproducing CSIS language. As mentioned earlier, the harm brought daily to racialized people targeted by this media discourse is not available in this media frame. Finally, the editorial concluded facetiously, “It’s time for Canada to sit down with Syria and other countries and explain that true cooperation in the fight against terror means taking back the terrorist suspects without torturing them” (A12).

*The National Post’s* opinion content also demonstrates this framing, stressing trial by public opinion and debating guilt or innocence rather than stressing the presumption of innocence. Much of this content focussed on the actions of celebrity supporters Alexandre Trudeau, Avi Lewis, and Naomi Klein. Even though *The National Post* quotes Trudeau’s concern about the detainees’ “lengthy detention in solitary confinement” (Kari and Bell A1), and another article quotes him saying he supports the detainees “for my country. It is in the interest of Canada to not be detaining people who haven’t been charged” (A6), the opinion content in *The National Post* opinion content ignores Trudeau’s repeated statements about “human rights” and instead speaks of “a few CBC types and the son of a former prime minister still living in the shadow of his father, claiming that they will post bond for a suspected terrorist. Their collective *proof of the suspect’s innocence* can best be summarized as a wishful but unsubstantiated confidence that Hassan Almrei will obey the laws of Canada” (Moir A21, emphasis added). The one Editorial in *The National Post* on the Security Certificates, “Have You Hugged a Terrorist Today?” (A12) includes a long list of allegations, and then says, “none of this information appears to have fazed Mr. Trudeau and his

companions [...] treating as a martyr a man who has every appearance of being a legitimate threat to security. Perhaps they know something that the judge does not” (A12). This focus on Almrei’s guilt or innocence, presuming that his supporters must ‘know something’ about his history or have ‘proof of the suspect’s innocence,’ ignores the focus on due process and human rights put forward by those who oppose the Security Certificates. Furthermore, this quotation preserves the syntactical idiosyncrasies of spoken words, rather than correcting Trudeau’s grammar for the printed medium; this choice undermines the content of Trudeau’s message.

The shifting of argument away from *presumption* of innocence before a trial, away from the judicial and human rights issues presented by supporters, and towards the need for supporters to *prove* innocence – impossibly, to ‘know something’ about the case when neither the accused, nor the media, nor the public have access to that information – demonstrates the Enemy Within frame at work. In this case these messages are further embedded in a discourse suggesting that the supporters are simply naïve. A column by George Jonas in *The National Post* engages in this strategy. It first goes into a long, patronizing memory of Lewis as a young boy “dressed up like a little lord Fauntleroy” (Jonas A18) being brought in to CBC by his mother, and then states:

It’s possible that Ms. Klein or Messrs. Lewis and Trudeau know something about Mr. Almrei that offsets allegations [...] It’s also possible that they don’t know something the rest of us do know, namely that it’s dangerous to play with fire. (A18)

The fact that none of the ‘allegations’ have been tested in fair trials, and that the supporters of the detainees express their support primarily in nationalist terms, calling for due process and the presumption of innocence, takes a back seat in this column that foregrounds public debates over Almrei’s guilt or innocence in absence of any evidence either way. The celebrity

supporters are expected to ‘know’ whether the allegations are true in order to offer bail. The tone of this column is deeply condescending, literally invoking Lewis as a child in order to discredit arguments for the presumptions of innocence. The reminder of the age difference between the writer and Lewis, which has nothing to do with the issue at question, indicates a weak attempt to silence democratic debate through an ad hominem attack. This attack comes with a subtle threat: “What exactly are their political circles? When Alexandre Trudeau, Avi Lewis, and Naomi Klein turn up in court [...] to support Mr. Almrei’s quest for freedom [...] it raises, questions, and eyebrows” (A18).

### **Racialization in the Enemy Within Frame**

In the total vacuum of any means by which to determine guilt or innocence, newspaper discourses mobilize signs of race, which come to signify within the constructed binary. The Enemy Within frame thus employs semiotic markers of race, including language, religion, country of origin, clothing and facial hair – communicating a racialized subject position implicitly while rarely naming race outright. These representations take on particular resonance in the context of security measures designed to strip certain kinds of human beings of basic rights, rendering them outside the category of those deserving status as full human beings. In *Casting Out: The Evictions of Muslims From Western Law and Politics*, Sherene Razack quotes an CSIS agent who spoke confidentially at a hearing to determine the validity of the Security Certificate used to hold Hassan Almrei. The agent states that Almrei “*has a profile* which makes him of use to Al Qaeda [...] We are not hanging our case on this notion that he was among the cream-of-the-crop recruits in the early 1980s. I never said that” (“Applicant’s, cited in *Casting* 25, emphasis added). Razack argues:

Almrei’s profile is that of an Arab man who went to Afghanistan as a teenager to fight the Soviets in the late 1980s and early 1990s. When



combined with the fact that he seems to know other Arab men, some of whom have similar histories, the profile is enough for CSIS, and ultimately the court, to believe that he is someone who will engage in terrorism.” (26)

As Razack notes, the Security Certificates provision in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* renders people inadmissible on security grounds not only for committing, or planning to commit, acts of violence, but for “being a member of an organization that there are reasonable grounds to believe engages, has engaged, or *will engage* in [acts of espionage, subversion, or terrorism]” (*IRPA*, cited in Razack 26, emphasis added). The idea that people can be detained indefinitely in prisons without charges or trials because the spy agency ‘believe[s] they ‘will engage’ in terrorism in the future, due to a ‘profile’ that makes them of “possible use to Al Qaeda” (26), indicates that people’s very *identities* are now being used as evidence against them. Razack writes:

In the post-9/11 environment, few are surprised that individuals with life histories such as Almrei’s should come to the attention of security services. What is noteworthy, however, is that at his hearing, Hassan Almrei’s life history *suffices* to make the case that he is a terrorist or will become one. [...] In the post-9/11 period the profile now performs an additional function. It targets and condemns through launching Hassan Almrei into a state of exception, a place in law where he has limited due-process rights. (*Casting* 29)

This enacts a process of pre-emptive punishment based on racialized identity, a process that is naturalized via visual representations that enact a racialization of bodies deemed outsiders, not worthy of basic rights accorded to citizens. The absence of images in this set of coverage is itself indicative: only three of the stories on Almrei contain his picture, the same photo each time: an outdated formal portrait that does not illustrate his appearance in solitary confinement or his physical deterioration after numerous hunger strikes. A fourth image – a dark, blurry court drawing – of Almrei appears next to Blatchford’s column “Innocent or Zealot, a Formidable Man.” In this and other representations of Almrei the words “alleged

Muslim extremist” (A8) appear under the picture; this juxtaposition of text and image inscribe meanings onto the features of the detainee, reinforcing the racialized position of Enemies Within the nation, a racialized position that exnominates the ones doing the looking, and situates those ‘being seen’ as outside spaces of law or human rights. This image and language resonates with the front page courtroom drawing of Abdul Qayyum Jamal, the 40 year old accused man whom the media presumed to be ringleader and depicted with a blotchy, angry-looking courtroom sketch under the title “The Friendly Zealot,” in the Toronto 18 case (McArthur, Akkad, and Friesen, A1), whose charges were later dropped (Freeze “Charges Stayed” A7). These juxtapositions of bodies and text within the frame of the Enemy Within shape the message of the manifest content of newspaper texts, and they do not necessarily require active or intentional manipulation on the part of news producers.

The positioning of bodies and the implicit racialized significations also communicate meaning about good and evil, us and them. For instance, Christie Blatchford’s column, “Becoming Familiar With Your Foe” (A4) is juxtaposed with a half-page photograph in which three British police with whitened features stand above a man with the racialized markers of curly hair and an aquiline nose, who sits on the ground with his back against a building on the street. The positioning of the bodies – white police standing, racialized man lying on the ground – in this image indicates a power differential that is already encoded with racialized meanings. The man is pointing upwards at the police and has lowered eyebrows, and his mouth is open as though in a yell; out of context it is impossible to know whether his expression is due to the sun that hits his face, to a moment frozen in speech, or to anger. A fourth, female police officer, also with whitened features, stands in profile in an extreme close up at the very front of the image, looking backwards towards the scene, and in the distance two other whitened onlookers and a distant police officer stare. The caption says

simply, “A man is questioned by police near the Warren Street station in London yesterday after an explosion is reported on an Underground train” (A4); this caption does not name the racialization of the bodies in the image, yet the meanings communicate racialized identities. This imagery mobilizes ideas about eastern Others who, it is assumed, “come from a culture in which religion, and not rationality, produces individuals with an *inherent* capacity for violence” (29). This Orientalist discourse situates Arabs and Muslims as somehow inherently violent compared to Whiteness human beings, and this concept renders them inherently less deserving of basic rights in this discourse.

That these images, as Razack argues, of the ‘terrorist monster’ and the exnominated self may seem natural to viewers speaks to the ubiquity of these media messages – the safe white police protecting ‘us’ from the dangerous other. Shadows and camera angle can also shape the message: the story “Supreme Court Reviews Terror Law” (A4) contains a quarter-page image of detainee Adil Charkaoui that is profoundly ambivalent. In the image, which accompanies the human rights themed article, Charkaoui’s eyes are deeply shadowed under a baseball cap. Although Charkaoui is smiling, he is positioned at an awkward diagonal slant jutting out of a car door, and his lowered eyes negate his otherwise happy expression. This racialization in the frame of the Enemy Within, which situates the detainees within existing Orientalist discourses that, through racialization, justify extraordinary measures such as the Security Certificates process, can be further observed in a comparison of a caricature and a photo of one of the detainees. A caricature of Mohamed Harkat appears on page A2 under the header “Next Stop, Supreme Court.” Although derived from a photo that appears with the inside story, the front-page caricature racializes Harkat’s features. His head is elongated; his eyebrows are twisted downwards over his eyes in a cartoonish ‘evil’ expression; and his nose is hooked. His curly hair is accentuated in a black fuzz atop a pointed head. Instead of

the “Vancouver, Canada” T-Shirt that Harkat wears in the photograph, which would situate him as a friendly normative Canadian, the caricature wears vague grey robes draped loosely around hunched shoulders, reminiscent of media (mis)representations of “terrorist clothing.” These images do not exist in isolation, but take on their meaning in relation to visual codes in popular fictional narratives, shaped by older Orientalist discourses. The caricature, juxtaposed with the words “suspicion of terrorist ties” and “effort to stave off deportation,” inscribe racialized identity onto his body.

In contrast, when readers turn to an inside page to see the actual story about a Supreme Court challenge (which would prove successful), the original picture represents Harkat with a less racialized visual code. Harkat’s photo appears with the story “Terrorism Suspect Sets Eyes on Supreme Court” (A9). In the photograph, Harkat is pictured looking relaxed in a domestic setting on the front porch of a house in the summer. In the background, on a banner decorated with pictures of balloons and presents, the words “Party’s Here” are visible. This image situates Harkat as within a more normalized Canadian identity, which is lost in the process of caricaturization. The production of the caricature (regardless of the intent of the artist), in playing up features recognizable within existing frames about suspicious terrorists, reveals the underlying racialized codes that inform the news narrative.

“Colour” and race, then, are embedded in the very ways human bodies are understood and classified in popular representations such as these newspaper texts, and as Razack reminds us based on Agamben’s premise, the grammars of race normalize the idea that certain human beings should exist in a space where, paradoxically, the law determines that the law does not apply. Razack writes:

When race thinking, the belief in the division of humanity into those prone to violence and those who are not according to descent, is accompanied by the idea that there must be two different, hierarchical legal regimes for each, and when we begin to grow accustomed to places without law and to people to whom the rule of law does not apply, we enter into the terrifying world of the colonies and the concentration camp. (28)

Race thinking, as Razack observes, does a certain kind of work in the environment of the state of exception. (28) These racialized discourses thus are embedded within the Enemy Within frame; the racialization of the Enemy Within frame puts debates over racial profiling, especially with regard to immigration and border issues, into a new light. Immigration officials do not choose whether or not to 'see' race when making decisions about who poses a security threat, for racialized meanings about Enemies Within already overdetermine the way bodies can be perceived and understood, structure ideas about who deserves rights and who does not, even as the specifics of who constitutes an enemy shift at various moments. As the content analysis demonstrates, this frame, which highlights debates over guilt and innocence, is at work in national discussions of the social position of Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians in Canada, at once establishing non-citizens as less human than citizen, while also crossing the line that citizenship rights establish in theory. The framing draws attention to fears of the Enemy Within, and away from human rights violations, racism, and questions of international law raised by opponents of the Certificates, including Federal Court judges, civil liberties groups, and international human rights organizations. Where such arguments do appear, they are already inscribed with older Orientalist meanings.

Detainees went on numerous other hunger strikes over the course of their detentions, before and after they were moved to a new detention facility in Kingston. Hassan Almrei came very close to death before the government granted him visitors in his cell. In February 2007 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Security Certificates process as it

existed was unconstitutional, and gave the government a year to make changes, which turned out to be largely decorative. The government created a special advocate role for a security-cleared lawyer who attends the secret bail hearings and defends the detainee, but who still is not allowed to tell the detainee all of the accusations. In October 2009, Montrealer Adil Charkaoui, the only permanent resident among the five, had his Security Certificate rescinded, and he is no longer being held. The certificate against Hassan Almrei was quashed by a federal judge in December 2009, leaving Almrei a free man after years in solitary confinement, with no explanation or apology. In September 2009, a Federal Court judge loosened the restrictions on Harkat's house arrest, although his case is far from resolved, as I explore below. These recent victories for the security certificate detainees and their families and supporters – the quashing of several of the Security Certificates after years of unjust detainment, and the Supreme Court's ruling that the Certificates are unconstitutional – suggest that the Security Certificate process is losing its legitimacy. Simultaneously, this delegitimizing of the process brings into relief the role of the mass media in producing the Enemy Within, foregrounding the ways in which media narratives normalize detentions without charge, via the racialization and expulsion of human beings and of entire categories of identity from within a nationalist frame.

Several of the Security Certificate detainees are still caught in a tangle of Kafkaesque proportions with implications not only for the men themselves but for the working of the democratic system, as lawyer Tom Sandborn of the BC Civil Liberties Association has noted many times over the years. As I write this, in December 2010, Mohamed Harkat, one of the men featured in this chapter, is threatened with deportation because the certificate against him was upheld this week. This even after Harkat won the Supreme Court challenge that successfully established the Security Certificates process as contrary to the Canadian charter

of Rights and Freedoms. Harkat, like the other men tangled in the Security Certificates process, still has not seen the full evidence against him: the evidence that apparently justifies his years of incarceration, the evidence that purportedly justifies the ongoing threat of deportation, a deportation that would exile him from family and friends.

To the question of whether western nation-states have “a right” to combat potential, possible threats, by reducing entire populations to “possible terrorists,” comes another question. Who is protected by that nation form and its right to “self-defence,” and who, among the *members* of the nation-state, is already under violent threat from the inherent exclusions of nationalism that Balibar discusses in “The Nation Form” (9)? The nation-state that is the social, political, and economic formation naturalized across the globe today – which is, relatively speaking, a recent development, but which is now generally seen as the normal state of affairs – only seems normal, natural, and proper to those who benefit from it.

This Enemy Within frame present in the media texts creates a naturalized narrative in which the Security Certificate detainees are positioned as so dangerous to the nation-state, in absence of any system for determining guilt or innocence, that any means necessary to hold them is justified, including pre-emptive punishment, and removing the burden of proof. One *National Post* reader expresses these assumptions in a letter: “it’s beyond farce that we feed and protect refugees like Hassan Almrei [...] it simply is not our problem as to what consequences they can face if deported. I am tired of seeing us bend over backwards to ultimately kiss our collective derrieres goodbye” (Lachovsky A17). This focus on ‘our collective derrieres’ which was a common thread in the narrative, reifies the naturalized ‘collective’ of the nation-state, and focuses on fears of the Enemy Within to the detriment of all other issues or concerns.

Histories that have become well known, such as the Japanese Canadian expulsion and internment, become newly evocative in light of current events in Canada. These events include such seemingly disparate stories as Project Thread, the Toronto 18, the Security Certificates, the Maher Arar inquiry, or Toronto G8/G20 policing in June 2010 that led to calls for a public inquiry from Amnesty International and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. These seemingly disparate expansions of state policing power, over citizens and non-citizens, are all linked in the expansion of a ‘carceral’ state. When does national self-defence in fact become offensive, in both meanings of the word? In its ever-evolving relationship to global capital, the nation-state is, in practice and in theory, exclusive, hierarchical, and at worst murderous to those with no state, or with the ‘wrong’ state affiliation. At a panel discussion organized by members of migrant and racialized communities in Vancouver, panelist and community organizer Sumayya Kassamali countered the argument that naturalizes the ‘right’ of states to invoke collective self-defence: “The idea that western nation states have the right to defend themselves is only apparent to those who feel protected by that nation-state structure. Who does that same nation-state harm as a normal order of business? The very basis of the modern nation-state is inherently exclusionary” (Kassamali 2006). As Himani Bannerji argues in *The Dark Side of the Nation*:

When we scrutinize this Canada, what is it that we see? The answer to this question depends on which side of the nation we inhabit. For those who see it as a homogenous cultural/political entity, resting on a legitimately possessed territory, with an exclusive right to legislation over diverse groups of peoples, Canada is unproblematic. For others, who are on the receiving end of the power of Canada and its multiculturalism, who have been dispossessed in one sense or another, the answer is quite different. (104)

Kassamali extends this point to include the slippage that occurs between personal security and national security. To those within the fold, who are able to conceptualize the state as benevolent protector, the current system appears necessary in that ‘we’ will be unsafe



without it. This position “makes it possible to argue that nation-states need to defend against perceived threats. However, a transference occurs, in which individuals feel their *personal* security is related to upholding the *nation-state*” (Kassamali). Self-defence of the individual, understood as legitimate violence when defending oneself against an immediate personal attack, becomes coterminous with collective defence of an abstraction called *Canada*, and legitimates *pre-emptive* action to position entire racialized and status groups as potential suspects and outsiders. This tendency raises serious questions about whether collective, national self-defence can rightly be called self-defence at all, particularly when it concretely endangers *all* excluded individuals – including those who live and make homes within the geophysical borders, as citizens, permanent residents, or non-status people – in the name of an idea of abstract collective protection more useful for its propaganda function than for the physical safety of actual human beings.

## War Measures

(for Hassan Almrei and David James Hudson)

war measures:

the enemy within  
war measures acts on bodies  
war measures bodies  
extracts sums  
extracts some  
contains others

war measures acts on bodies  
war measures bodies  
measures rights and freedoms  
measures right  
extracts life  
measures extreme measures necessary measures

national parks minus monuments  
Canadian Japanese War Measures Acts  
war measures exacts extracts  
war measures bodies blood race states status

small room, plastic seats  
scruffy guests cookies paper staples watery coffee scrappy cut  
and paste search research we search  
makeshift screen quick composition words of power      self doubt      taste of tiredness  
shy voices at microphone

explode streaming live from mouth to mouth!  
words packed with code

reach ears denied history  
Canadian Ukrainian Japanese War Measures  
power to know spirals up from earth through feet to core and out and out  
me to you you to me “we rise rise rise” spiralling code encode encore  
our small response crystallizes resistance  
watched documentary into me document history repeated  
encore [encode] encore [encode] code!  
spiralcode packed with info you can know packed  
to pack we can fight back  
spirals                    encoded                    beam body (resistance)  
our small                fractal                        resistance (resistance)  
fractures enemy image                    (image enemy)  
small presses                                small pressures                but there are so many of us  
satellites spinning our own gravity we  
send sounds back

back to back  
face to face  
make our own audience

my hands hand out to you send words encoded packed to you the reviving  
pack  
(back to back we can fight back)

Canadian Ukrainian Italian Japanese War Measures  
no "fertile ground" before me  
land of the free, indeed-  
but fertile ground beneath me  
north america [land of plenty] north america [land of poverty] north america land  
of impoverished plantings  
plantation history power beginnings upon beginnings upon old traditions  
tree plantings "stone and silence" and  
national parks minus (*National Post* minus)  
national parks minus monuments

War Measures  
war measures bodies, exacts sums  
extracts some  
contains others  
this is no fertile ground  
beneath me  
"soles of sneakers stick to floor like Spiderman?"  
cold man (glowing man) in concrete cage  
solitary for six years with no charges

the refugee can resist the guards  
the refuge  
north america land of safety-  
Canadian Ukrainian Italian Japanese "Arab"

War Measures

words spiral from pen to palm through teeth and lung  
code criminal code encode a criminal  
"enemy aliens" 1914  
"illegal immigrants" turn of century  
millennial fears millennial terror again again a gain who gains?  
"never again" says Mulroney  
"never again elect Bush" – again, again, a gain *who gains:*  
"national parks / railroads / corporations / golf courses / cities towns" built by illegal  
dying hands  
Canadians' fertile ground

war measures

acts on bodies  
war measures bodies  
exacts sums  
extracts some  
contains others

measures extreme measures necessary measures  
North America land of doublespeak and security

A Word Watches,  
The World Watches  
well,

we watch back.

our own satellites our own gravity our light weightlessness our own words to write

history

## Chapter Five: “Hands Clasped As If In Prayer”: The Sanctuary Story of Laibar Singh

This chapter examines coverage of the high-profile case of Laibar Singh, a paralyzed dalit Punjabi Sikh man who spent just over one year in sanctuary in Gurdwaras (Sikh temples) in British Columbia’s lower mainland in 2007 and 2008. I engage in a close reading to compare the news content that appeared in the newspapers to the public statements released by Laibar Singh’s supporters, in the local print media (*The Province* and *The Vancouver Sun*), and the national Canadian print media (*The Globe and Mail* and *The National Post*). I include the two local newspapers because this story received more local than national coverage; the local papers, in addition, circulated discussion firmly situated within concepts of the national. I examine one year of coverage between December 10, 2007, and December 10, 2008, beginning on the day 1500 people surrounded Laibar Singh’s taxi at the Vancouver International Airport to prevent his departure, and ending at his deportation just short of one year later, encompassing the subsequent media reports that trailed off in the following week. While the story did not begin with the prevention of his deportation on December 10 – a postponed deportation and strong public mobilizations had made headlines the previous summer – the dramatic images of 1500 people surrounding Singh’s taxi at Vancouver International airport began a year-long and very public debate that centred on the ‘strength’ of the border agency, and a morally inflected debate over whether and why Canada ought to deport Singh despite the very visible public support he had garnered before and then at the airport protest.

I met Laibar several times, because as a member of the No One Is Illegal-Vancouver collective at the time these events took place, I became involved in his extended support network. The first time I met him, he was lying down on a narrow wheeled bed in the temple hall, and we grasped hands as a mutual friend introduced us. His hand that held mine was folded tightly in upon itself, his fingers stiff and bent straight out from the knuckle so they pressed nearly flat against his palm. He smiled gently and thanked the small group of supporters who had come to meet him. We took a group picture together and spent some time visiting, laughing and chatting. The next time I saw him was the day of the airport action. The Gurdwara that had hosted Laibar after he was released on bail the previous summer had agreed to deliver him to the airport, and they fulfilled that promise, but Laibar never made it out of his cab. 1500 to 2000 people – many of them old women with walkers, working class Sikhs – spontaneously came to surround the taxi where Singh sat with Parveen Gill, the daughter of temple President Swarn Singh Gill, by his side. She held his hands, talked with him, and kept him company the entire time.

The airport action surprised everyone involved, because no one group or person had any idea of the sheer numbers this deportation would attract. The morning of the day Laibar and the temple had agreed to come to the airport for his deportation, a group of about ten or twelve of his supporters met to drive out together in a few cars. We discussed what we would do if we were the only ones there – would we make a circle around the taxi if there were only ten of us? Hold hands and refuse to let him out? Over the phone we learned that one of the temples had also arranged a couple of buses for members of the community who wanted to come see Laibar off. Meanwhile, many Sikh taxi drivers in Vancouver were following the story on Punjabi call-in radio shows on stations such as Radio India. One radio host on a call-in show spent the morning asking everyone who cared about Laibar Singh's

case to come to the airport –and the taxis responded! Throughout Vancouver, people going to the airport to support Laibar got a free cab ride. Elders listening at home – including hundreds of elder women – heard the call, called in to talk about Laibar, and came to the airport. In addition to large public mobilizations earlier in the year that built public awareness and support for Laibar, it was most likely this combination of the open public sphere of the radio call-in shows, and the independent actions of many taxi drivers working in unison, that made that day at the airport such a surprisingly large outpouring of public support for Laibar. While the newspapers and TV coverage showed only the men at the centre of the protest, for those of us who were there, things looked very different: this was mostly a crowd of elderly women, many with walkers, and of children running about around our legs. Samosas and hot drinks were generously handed out to the crowd and there was a strong sense in the air of doing something, taking action together, that was exciting and positive.

As the numbers swelled and swelled, the airport called in the RCMP and local security. RCMP stood in a line inside the airport with arms held down, waiting for orders to dispel the crowd – orders that never came. Just two months earlier, Polish immigrant Robert Dziekański died after being tasered by multiple RCMP officers at the Vancouver airport; airport officials weren't in the mood for any more embarrassing public scandals. As a backup plan, in case Laibar did actually make it to his flight, I stood leafleting passengers in the lineup to Laibar's Cathay Pacific flight. If passengers on the flight refused to sit down and buckle in, the pilot would be unable to take off. Even if Laibar had made it out of the taxi that day, that flight wouldn't have gone anywhere, because at least six passengers who heard that a paralyzed man was being deported on their flight committed to standing up if Laibar

was put on the plane. They agreed they would refuse to sit until he was allowed to disembark.

When a furious airport official noticed me leafleting the lineup, and instructed me to move away from the lineup and leaflet outside, he pointed to the line of RCMP, and I pointed to the dozens of cameras from national and local media. He backed down. As the news reports show, the plane took off without Laibar aboard, and soon afterwards his taxi left, to take Laibar to another temple that had agreed to take him in while he and his supporters decided what to do next. He was taken in by another temple, a wealthier and more conservative one; when the CBSA informed Laibar's lawyer that they would be coming to take Laibar away at 4 in the morning, the temple declared formal sanctuary, and a phone tree went out to be ready to be at the temple for 3 am. A crowd of several hundred supporters came to stand in front of the locked gates of the temple while Laibar's lawyer, Zool Suleman, negotiated with the CBSA; while this was a smaller protest, it was just as dedicated. We stood in the cold for hours in the middle of the winter to physically prevent the border guards from entering a place of sanctuary, and through negotiations, Laibar was granted another postponement. While I was largely in a second or third-tier ring of support, learning about the internal conversations through friends who translated (I don't speak Punjabi or Hindi), I followed developments closely as the months went on, and it was clear that everyone involved in the closest circles supporting Laibar was under immense pressure from the government and from the media; fault lines of class and values meant that some time later, Singh was back at the temple that took care of him first and longest. When I visited Laibar later, I was moved by this caring community around him at the Kalgidhar Darbar Sahib Society Gurdwara, where he stayed the longest and had the strongest community support.



Set up comfortably in a house at the back of the temple grounds, in a spacious room and a special adjustable bed, Laibar's condition was improving. When I visited, the daughter of the president of the Gurdwara was with him, as usual, making sure he was comfortable, laughing and chatting with him in his room that overlooked a garden through large windows. A baby slept quietly in a bassinette on the sofa. A group of us sat with him and chatted, laughed, ate orange slices offered by community members in the adjacent kitchen and sweets that well-wishers had brought Laibar, and spoke about his situation and about media reports. A gentle man, with laugh lines around his eyes and a kind smile, Laibar always struck me with his patience, his gentleness, and his kindness. Via an interpreter I chatted with Laibar about what it is like to live your daily life stuck in bed, unable to move your legs or hands. Add to this physical trap a political one: confined mostly to one room, unable to leave the grounds of the Gurdwara for fear of being snatched by armed men and deported to an uncertain future alone in a strange city. I learned that the first time Laibar was taken into custody, he was given bare wooden boards to lie on with nothing to cover him or prop him up. It seemed the CBSA was not in the least concerned about his basic physical safety.

As we chatted during one of these later visits, Laibar practiced picking up small objects with his paralyzed hands – a bottle cap, a small scrap of paper. By this time, he was able to use his thumbs, and open and close his palms, but his fingers remained frozen in a stiff folded position. I watched as he succeeded at picking up a small bit of paper between two frozen fingers, and then was unable to open his fingers to put the tiny paper back down. With concentration, he could curl his pinkie finger and palm around a bottle cap to pick it up. This increased mobility, due to the regular acupuncture and other care that he received for free from community members, was incredibly inspiring when I remembered that first time I met him prone on a wheeled narrow bed, his hands folded immobile against his

palms. We sat casually on sofas and chairs around his room, munching on fresh fruit, while friends translated for me. Occasionally Laibar's face broke into a smile, and I noticed that with the love and support of the people around him, and a wicked sense of humour, he laughs often. In a letter of support I wrote to the Minister of Immigration for Laibar's Humanitarian and Compassionate Review, I said that it is quite honestly terrifying to think that the Canadian government could force this gentle, patient man out from a safe space where he is loved and protected, cared for in a comfortable room supplied at no cost to the Canadian state, supported by volunteers who tend to him day and night out of pure commitment and affection, and to send him to be anonymous in a hospital in Delhi or another major Indian city where he has no family nor friends. This situation was particularly intolerable considering it would incur an enormous bill that a low-caste dalit cannot afford. Laibar was afraid that isolated in a city in India – away from this very supportive community that had rallied around him here in Vancouver – he would be a financial burden to his children, who were already struggling themselves in a rural area and would not be able to come to the city to be with him.

Laibar was clear, in these conversations, about the ethical dimensions of his situation: why should he leave a place he had chosen to be, and a community he had chosen as his own and that had chosen him? Where is the justice in that? Considering the bigger picture, and the right for all human beings to live a life of dignity, it becomes obvious that this deportation was unethical – against his wishes, and against the wishes of everyone in Vancouver who cared about him as family. Laibar's capacity to galvanize community around him, his own critiques of the exclusive nation-state system, his analysis of the media representations described here, and his profound relationships with his supporters all point towards a valuable role played by an important member of the community.

## Disability, Class, Citizenship, and Representation

Before I come to the media analysis below, it seems important to ask some fundamental ethical questions about what it means to write a dissertation about these media representations, when the dissertation is itself another representation of Laibar Singh. The act of representation raises important questions, first about the relationship between disability and representation, and second, about the role of authoritative ‘distanced observer’ voice that is still the norm in conventional content analysis methodologies. I will explore each of these in turn.

The centrality of images of Singh’s body are pivotal. All of the media stories, all of the writing and statements by Singh’s supporters and by Singh himself, as well as this dissertation, focus on and struggle over representations of Singh’s physical body. Representations of disability intersect here with race, citizenship, and class in important ways. Disability itself has a special place within Immigration law in Canada. Indeed, before any other exclusionary practices were written into law, such as the race exclusions of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century or the current points system that excludes people based on class, income, education level, and language, disability was already central to immigration exclusions. As the first *Immigration Acts* I described in the Introduction demonstrate, before Canada’s immigration law had a border or the concept of *citizen*, people deemed “Infirm” were the subject of various special exclusionary provisions. In 1859 any “Lunatic, Idiotic, Deaf and Dumb, Blind or Infirm person” not accompanied by family could be the subject of a 300 dollar fine payable by the master of any ship that transported them to Canada (1859 art. 10.2), thus discouraging ships from accepting people with disabilities on board. By the 1910 *Immigration Act*, “prohibited persons” includes entire categories of “persons mentally defective,” “diseased persons,” and “persons physically defective” (1910, art. 3.a, 3.b, 3.c).

Physical disability could be seen as the first, and longest running, legal exclusion legitimated in Canadian immigration law. This exclusion has been normalized for so long that media representations take for granted the position that people with disabilities are to be excluded, particularly when disability intersects with race and class in the grammar of worthiness.

On the other hand, playing with and subverting conventional representations of people with disabilities, as Rosemarie Garland-Thomson writes, can “refuse the traditional visual rhetorics that present disability as sentimental, inspirational, curable, shameful, or disposable” (524). Instead, representations of disability can “endow their subjects with authority and grace [and] represent disability as a tenable and valued way of being in the world” (523). Representation, Garland-Thomson argues, can “reimagine disability” (523) and thus challenge the assumptions of a world designed to accommodate the nondisabled and exclude the wider range of human physical variation. As Simi Linton argues, “disabled people continue to test the rules of participation[, ]just as rules such as ‘Only men can vote’ or ‘People of African descent can’t own property’ or ‘Women can’t be police officers or firefighters’ or ‘Two people of the same sex can’t marry’ have been challenged” (519). In this case, by choosing to put himself in a very public position of taking sanctuary, Laibar Singh forcefully tested multiple axes of ‘participation’ by virtue of his physical body’s role in public discourse. His disability became central to the arguments that he should be granted residency, literally on “Humanitarian and Compassionate” grounds, as the name of the legal application suggests. His body also was an unspoken but central impetus in racist arguments calling for deportation. In this case, the only available public argument accepted as ‘within the real’ of media discourse was the compassionate one; Laibar’s own argument that he, as a human being, should be allowed to stay in the community of his choosing and live a life of dignity regardless of what papers he holds, was not an available position in the framed media

debate, but it was a prominent message in independent media that reached across the country and galvanized support. Articles in the newspapers either ignored this position when it was presented by Laibar or his supporters, or discredited it in (blatantly inaccurate, as I will explore) statements such as, “*despite claims* by some groups that ‘no one is illegal,’ presenting false papers is an offence in Canada that carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison (“Offering” A10), in which the phrase “despite claims” situates the migrant justice perspective as marginal and not worthy of serious consideration, and the inaccurate information about refugee law creates a false dichotomy. Although it was dangerous to do so in the context of the dominant discourse employed by both media and government, Singh himself stated in private conversations with supporters that he was seeking more than compassion; a public statement released at the time of Singh’s deportation explains: “Even under circumstances of extreme physical duress and what seemed like a legal impossibility, Mr. Singh dared to demand that his dignity and that his right to exist as a human being be recognized” (“Returns”). As I discussed in the Project Thread case, the ‘right to exist as a human being’ is a direct challenge to current states of exception generated by contemporary security regimes, and to the current immigration system’s naturalized framework in which only non-disabled, wealthy, educated people are considered worthy of existence as full, legally recognized human beings.

### **Decolonizing Content Analysis Methodology: “Objectivity” as Objectifying Discourse**

Just as the distanced observer voice in representations of people with disabilities is an objectifying discourse that situates readers as nondisabled and assumes disabled people are primarily passive objects of compassion, the possibility of any authoritative, objective observer voice needs to be called into question. As I discussed in the methodology chapter,

the neutral voice employed in the genre of standard content analysis is inherently problematic. It is problematic on the one hand because it is a fiction (albeit a powerful, authoritative one); objectivity, as Gramsci teaches us, is impossible for human beings, who always speak from a set of social positions that influence what they see and don't see. It is problematic, moreover, because the 'neutral' or objective academic voice produces another objectifying discourse that situates its content as an object of study, in much the way the media texts objectify Laibar Singh as the object of a national gaze that can observe, pass judgment, depict accurately, and speak for.

At the same time, textual analysis combined with the process of close reading *can* reveal patterns of silencing in media coverage, can expose frames, assumptions, and missing information in media texts. Without making assumptions about objectivity or the availability of a distanced observer perspective, what I offer below is a critical analysis based in a frame that is observable, I argue, in these newspaper texts. Without offering closure, I feel compelled to ask a few questions. What does the personal narrative with which this chapter opens contribute to the content analysis below? Does it offer a commentary on the more neutral academic voice that is implicit in the content analysis? Does it critique, does it undermine, the distanced and objectifying voice of a standard content analysis, or does the personal narrative just resituate this chapter as authoritative representation that can 'capture' Laibar Singh's overly-mediated, already-objectified body, once again? These ethical questions are foundational to this research, and also can never be fully answered or completed, since knowledge about and perceptions of identities such as race, class, ability, and citizenship status are changing and will continue to change. As Ajay Heble has stated, the need for ethical self-reflexivity, while necessary as an ongoing part of our work, also cannot be allowed to freeze us or prevent taking action. It is important to continue writing and thinking and taking

action, with self-reflexivity, and also with the recognition that there is no perfect understanding.

### **Content Analysis**

Taking this case study as a window into the construction of the national imaginary, I will explore the mode of racist nationalism that invokes *Canada* paradoxically as at once the naturalized keeper of morals and norms of humanitarian justice, and (in a related discourse that rests on these ideas about morality) as an exclusionary state founded on naturalized racist assumptions. As I will argue, a conceptual frame limits and shapes the media coverage that appeared in the newspapers, in which this complex story is simplified into the false dichotomy of “rule of law” (“Sikh Temple” B1) vs. “compassion” (“Let Singh’s” B1). In addition, I will explore the ways racialized imagery acts as a framing device shaping the narrative.

In addition to exploring the ways these frames manifest in the newspaper content, I will critique the coverage to explore the relationship between discourses of *terrorism* and those of *undesirables*, or those deemed morally or physically unworthy of Canadian identity in popular narratives. How are the discursive, racialized borders of the nation reified by the situating of this paralyzed asylum seeker within the discourse of a *queue-jumper* or *illegal*, a threat to naturalized Canadian norms of justice, as reported in media narratives? How permeable were media narratives to the mobilization of alternative discourses put forward by Laibar Singh’s diverse supporters, discourses which fell outside the established frame? Finally, I wish to explore the continuities and discontinuities between narratives of terror explored in earlier chapters, and narratives about Sikhs in Canada. The specific location of

Sikhs, and more generally of South Asians, in Canada is particularly relevant to the Laibar Singh case.

From the Komagata Maru, through the historic organizing for farm worker's rights, including the founding of the Canadian Farm Worker's Union<sup>40</sup>, through to media representations of the Air India strike and ongoing 'moral panics' about South Asian gangs, Sikhs and South Asians have a particular history of representation within the news discourse of Vancouver, of BC, and of Canada, and a particular location within the hierarchies that structure the Canadian state. Doreen Indra observes, in a comprehensive study of six decades of media analysis, that media portrayals of South Asians in Vancouver have historically used Sikhs and South Asians as "a scapegoat for social ills that were not of their making" (Indra 550), invoking themes such as the "dangers faced" by immigration, blaming immigration for such diverse factors as "the soaring price of housing, unemployment, and the high cost of government" (550). Such representations also invoke "racial tensions," coded language employed by newspaper discourse when South Asian people described in the study name racist violence against them, and insist on their right both to be protected by the police and to protect themselves from such violence (Indra 554). News discourse in the period under analysis invokes the belief that South Asians are "dramatically different" (556) from the dominant society to the extent that their very presence will inevitably lead to 'racial

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<sup>40</sup> Walia elaborates: "BC did not join the SAWP until 2004. This late adoption was largely due to the arrival in BC in the 1970s and 1980s of South Asian immigrants from working-class/farming backgrounds in Punjab; most of these immigrants had little knowledge of English and were primarily elders and women. Often enduring fourteen-hour workdays, making \$1 per hour and living in converted chicken coops, South Asian farm workers carried forward a momentous struggle, including the historic founding of the Canadian Farm Workers Union. A gruelling fifteen-month strike at the Jensen Mushroom farms resulted in the first labour contract for farm workers in BC. And the Money's Mushroom strike initiated by five Punjabi women effectively shut down the sale and distribution of mushrooms across BC. Despite limited English skills and support networks, the workers were able to exert, through community action, significant pressure on the agricultural industry." (Bush and The Canadian Farmworkers Union, *Zindabad*, Cited in Walia, "Transient")



tension' without questioning who causes that 'tension,' thus placing the blame for racism on the heads of those receiving it. In a revealing instance, the newspapers in Vancouver misreported a Federal Government Green Paper on immigration policy and practice, claiming the government was concerned about future "racial tension" when in reality, "nowhere in the report was such a suggestion even implicitly made" (551).

The fact that Sikh communities, particularly in Vancouver, historically and currently include a significant working class population also shapes and reflects how Sikhs are positioned within the hierarchies that structure Canadian society and Canadian media representations. While Sikhs have been part of Canadian society for over a hundred years, first settling in British Columbia in 1903 ("South Asians"), racism against Sikhs and other South Asians was immediate, intense, and overt, as was anti-Asian racism in general. Legal exclusions discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, such as the Continuous Journey regulation specifically targeting South Asian immigration, or the disenfranchisement of South Asians in BC in 1907, as well as cultural representations that situated Sikhs and other South Asians as outsiders to normative Canadian identity, structured the formation of the contemporary Canadian nation in this period when most of the land now called Canada was being settled by mass migrations. These social hierarchies that were instated as the national imaginary was forged continue to influence conceptions of Canadian society; in a study of the Vancouver press from 1905-1976, Doreen Indra uncovered the moral stratification system regulating the representations of different groups within Canadian society. The study revealed a "moral hierarchy" in which Scottish and English people are situated near the top; Americans, Germans, Russians, and French Canadians occupy the middle range; and Chinese, South Asians, Italians, and Aboriginal groups scored lowest (Indra 108). This

hierarchy, which emerged as the contemporary Canadian nation was structured, continues to shape representation today.

Underrepresentation and stigmatic misrepresentation thus structure existing media frames about racialized minorities in Canada. As Jiwani observes:

Under-representation is a significant issue because it communicates the relative absence of a particular group in the symbolic order represented by the dominant media. [...] Being under-represented, however, translates into minimal, marginal, and stereotypical representations. This reaffirms the minoritized status of racialized communities. It basically negates their history and contribution to the development of the nation-state and erases their ongoing participation in the social order. Through under-representation, the media continue to border these communities, casting them as Others outside the social body. (*Denial* 42)

This tension: underrepresented, and/or represented in sensationalized narratives that racialize violence and problematize minority identities as Others to the nation, informs the history of mediated representations of Sikhs and South Asians in Canada. Indra's study observes that negative newspaper representations both informed popular ideas about Sikhs, and also informed Sikh community perceptions about the ways Sikhs and South Asians are viewed by the dominant culture, by situating Sikhs low in perceptions of the social hierarchy (560). This study explores the impact of newspaper misrepresentations on perceptions of the possibility for social participation and inclusion: the study found that "Sikhs felt shut out of the newspapers, in the sense that they felt unable to gain any input into them, either as individuals or as groups" (563). Furthermore, "so different were Sikh life and the press image of it that it was difficult for people to explain their portrayal in any other way but that the creators of the newspapers were against Sikhs" (557).<sup>41</sup> This history both of the position

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<sup>41</sup> For further discussion of the relationship between news representations of South Asians, and the social positioning of South Asians within Canadian society, see also Indra's "South Asian Stereotypes in the Vancouver Press" and Jiwani's "To Be and Not to Be: South Asians as Victims of Oppressors in *The Vancouver Sun*."

of Sikhs within Canadian social hierarchy, and the fraught history of news coverage concerning Sikhs and South Asians, in which stigmatization and misrepresentation is understood as both a historic and ongoing issue, impact the Laibar Singh story, informing a discomfort with media attention, particularly stigmatic attention that could lead to additional backlash. British Columbia in particular has a long history of violent and overt anti-Asian racism, as Norm Buchignani and Doreen Indra explore in *Continuous Journey: A Social History of South Asians in Canada*. Within this historical context of racism, stigmatization and marginalization, Laibar Singh's choice to take a public stand, and the very public nature of his campaign and of the community support that surrounded him, take on increased resonance, since facing such public attention and naming structural racism requires a significant amount of courage. Semiotic (mis)representations of Sikhs and the discourse of undesirability intersect with class, with race, and with national narratives to situate Sikhs and South Asians within the "vertical mosaic with privileged groups at the top and the underprivileged or non-preferred groups at the bottom" (*Denial* 50) that structures the Canadian nation.

### **Framing: Compassion vs Rule of Law**

As I mention above, a dominant frame in the coverage created a false binary between Canadian "compassion" ("Let Singh's" B1) and a moralized call to uphold the law, with a concurrent call for a strong border enforcement action to maintain the "integrity" (McMartin B1) of the Canadian immigration system. Within this framing, there were only two available options, each a flipside of the same moral coding: Singh should be allowed to stay because Canadians are presumed to be inherently compassionate and should therefore demonstrate compassion for a paralyzed man, or he should be deported because he is

situated as illegal and a “queue-jump[er]” (McMartin B1) and thus represents a threat to the ‘integrity of the system,’ which stands in metonymically for the safety and integrity of Canada and Canadians, as I explore below. These two halves of a seeming binary are embedded within a larger framework that contains them both: the arguments calling for deportation use a logic based in the assumption that ‘Sikhs’ are ‘less compassionate’ than discursive Canadians and that their presence will render Canadian society less compassionate (enlightened, liberal, etc.). This highly paradoxical logic reveals the larger discourses of dominance, and of denial, that structure both ‘sides’ of the frame. Indeed, this implicit call to protect the “integrity” of Canada is continuous with historic representations of Sikhs and South Asians as ‘undesireables’ whose very difference from a whitened and exnominated dominant society is understood, paradoxically, to *cause* racism against them.

### **Widening the Frame: Refugee Law and Irregular Documentation**

Some background context is useful here to widen the frame beyond this binary. In contrast to media discourse about illegality, Singh’s supporters, and several prominent lawyers not directly connected to the case, explained in media releases and public statements that under Canadian and international law, refugee claimants are legally allowed, via an exemption, to travel with irregular documents in order to reach safety, so long as they declare their true identity when they make their refugee claim, as Singh did. Media outlets that covered the case had access to this information; even though on the whole they appeared not to understand it, this aspect of refugee law vital to any basic understanding of the case was publicly available. For instance, immigration lawyer Catherine Sas, who was not connected to the case, appeared as an expert guest on CBC Radio’s show *BC Almanac* on Jan 9, 2008 and, contrary to statements by phone-in guests on the show, specifically clarified that

it is not illegal in Canada for asylum seekers to travel with false or incomplete documents, since Canadian and international law provide an exemption that protects the right of asylum seekers fleeing their home countries and allows them to travel on irregular documentation (*BC Almanac*). Sas clarified that Laibar Singh is “using legal avenues to see if he will be allowed to stay” (*BC Almanac*). A caller to the show demonstrates the framing that distorted this information, expressing outrage with the words: “they are saying he has to be deported because he came into this country with an illegal forged passport. That is against the law” (*BC Almanac*). Sas clarifies:

It is legal to come to Canada on a false passport. In fact it’s quite common that refugees come to Canada on false passports, and it doesn’t change the legality of their claim or the legality of their case. [...] They are still permitted to be in Canada until their case is adjudicated upon. And so Mr. Singh is still permitted to remain in Canada on the same criteria that he always was at the very beginning. (*BC Almanac*)

As Sas observes, this right exists for all those who believe they are in danger and seek asylum, regardless of the eventual outcome of the claim. The right to travel on irregular documentation is not an exception or unusual within refugee law, but a central understanding of the dangers refugees face that is enshrined in law. As lawyer Peggy Lee explains, the principle at stake is the right, guaranteed under Canada’s obligations to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to “leave one’s country and seek asylum” (Lee) using irregular documentation if required. Similarly, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, upon a 2007 visit to Canada, drew attention to the disturbing trend of criminalizing irregular migration and how it can lead to unnecessary detention and human rights violations: “the association of irregular migration with criminality promotes the stigmatization of migrants and encourages a climate of xenophobia and hostility against them” (Pillay, qtd in Lee). She stresses that inflammatory terms such as

*illegal immigrants* should be replaced by internationally accepted terminology such as *undocumented* migrants, which more accurately describes the situation of not having, or having lost, the proper documents allowing them to travel, to reside in a given territory, or to work there (qtd in Lee).

The reason for these laws becomes obvious when you consider hero-mythologized stories about brave ancestors of contemporary Canadians who travelled here as refugees. Popular storytelling in Canada, for instance, heroizes Jews who escaped Nazism, telling the stories of many people (just like my paternal grandparents) who fled with their children in tow, using whatever means were needed in order to escape. How many Jews who escaped the Nazis travelled under their own names? How many films, books, and stories portray travelling on fake documents as *brave*, under the circumstances? Clearly, when you believe your safety to be in danger at the hands of your own government, you cannot simply apply for travel documents to leave the country, as that might draw attention to yourself and your intention to leave. Other prominent lawyers also spoke publicly on this issue at the time of this media coverage; for instance, lawyer Michael A. Leitold, a member of the Law Union of Ontario Steering Committee, stated in a media release: “contrary to media reports, Laibar arrived legally in Canada, and declared his false documents, which is a normal part of the refugee process enshrined in Canadian and international law” (“Stop”). Janet Cleveland, Canada Research Chair in International Migration Law at the Université de Montréal noted that: “the fact that Mr. Singh used false documents to enter Canada and to claim refugee status cannot be held against him, as is stated expressly in the Geneva Convention and other instruments of international and Canadian law” (“Stop”). As Singh’s supporters explained, this right is recognized by the UN as well as by Canada’s own laws. Nonetheless, the dominant frame of the newspaper coverage naturalized the belief that Singh had *obviously*

arrived ‘illegally.’ Not a *single* news story or editorial in any of the four newspapers under examination clarified, or included this basic information about refugee law that is vital to understanding the case. This public misinformation profoundly impacted the outcome of the case, because this mistaken belief formed the basis for public calls to deport Singh when his Humanitarian and Compassionate Review was being decided.

The choice to take public sanctuary, rather than go underground, also needs to be considered in broader context. Singh’s supporters noted that taking sanctuary is a public act, undertaken very much in the eye of the media and the government; Singh and his supporters made it very clear where Singh was, and the Gurdwaras that protected him declared official sanctuary in public statements. Sanctuary, as Singh’s supporters observed, is a form of imprisonment, and is undertaken very much in the public eye. In contrast, newspaper representations that situated Singh as “holed up” (“Deportee” A10) or “hiding” (Carrigg A18) misrepresent this situation; logically, no one would ‘hide’ by announcing their location to the Canadian government and inviting the national media along for the ride.

Keeping the legal context in mind, it becomes evident that the newspaper content exhibited a frame in the coverage of this story. Out of the 61 items (news, commentary, and letters to the editor) that name Laibar Singh in *The Vancouver Sun* between December 10, 2007 and December 10, 2008, terms denoting dishonest entry such as “false passport,” “fake passport,” or “phoney document” appear in 14 items, and 8 additional items call the way Singh entered the country “illegal”; in other words, nearly a third of the items that appeared in *The Vancouver Sun* frame Laibar Singh’s arrival explicitly – and inaccurately – within the discourse of illegality. In contrast, only two of the items in *The Vancouver Sun* provide the larger context described above; these were both Letters to the Editor, which are not granted the same authority as news stories and editorials. Furthermore, these letters offering

information that widens the frame are lumped with other letters under misleading headlines that frame the issue, even though the headline contradicts the content of the letters themselves. For instance, a letter to the editor that quotes Amnesty International to explain that it *is* within Canadian law to travel on irregular documents when making a refugee claim is grouped with other letters under the title “Compassion is Weighed Against the Rule of Law After Planned Deportation Descended into Chaos” (December 12, 2007). This headline frames the available opinions into a virulent binary: either Singh should stay because Canadians are compassionate, or Singh should be deported because Canadians should uphold the rule of law (and Singh is presumed to have entered illegally). This framing masks the fact that the public’s capacity to comprehend the ‘rule of law’ is precisely what is at stake in recognizing refugee rights to travel on irregular documentation. Any other arguments are unthinkable once this frame has been established; the letter that argues that no law has been breached becomes incomprehensible, outside the available discourse. The fact that Singh *voluntarily declared his identity* when he made his refugee claim, in accordance with Canadian law, goes unnoticed in this framing, as do the careful explanations of international law by lawyers specializing in the topic that were available to media producers at the time.

*The Province* had even higher rates of misrepresentation: of the 35 items (including news, commentary, and letters) that mention Laibar Singh by name in *The Province* in this year-long period, 21 items say his way of entering the country was “illegal” or not conducted “legally.” 7 use the terms “false passport,” “fake passport,” or “forged passport”; in other words, nearly two thirds of the stories in *The Province* represent Singh’s arrival explicitly within a discourse of illegality. In *The Province*, as in *The Vancouver Sun*, not a single news story mentions international law or the right of refugee claimants to travel with whatever papers they require in order to seek safety. Here again, the only items that clarify that it is perfectly



within the law to travel with irregular documentation as a refugee claimant are Letters to the Editor written by Singh supporters. Not a single news story in *The Province* contextualizes Singh's claim by reporting that he voluntarily declared his identity to the Canadian government upon making his refugee claim. This absence, despite the availability of this information, indicates a frame at work that renders this information outside the 'real' of the discourse.

In *The Globe and Mail*, 18 items name Laibar Singh during this one year period, of which a third, or 6 items, use the term "illegal"; the terms "false passport," "forged passport," or "fake passport" appear in 15 out of 18 items, none of which offer the context of refugee law that would help readers understand the significance of those terms. Indeed, in *The Globe and Mail* as in the local papers, the context of refugee law appears *not once* in the year of news coverage. Stories that quote supporters of Singh, who argued that he came to Canada in a standard way for refugee claimants, frame these quotes within a discourse of illegality that decontextualizes and discredits the statements, such as in this story that appeared shortly after the airport action: "[a supporter] said at a news conference that [Singh] came to Canada legally, despite arriving with a forged passport" (Ferrerias S4). The context of international law is entirely lost in this frame, in which the 'obvious' understanding – indicated by the term 'despite' that negates the words before it – is that 'arriving with a forged passport' is *obviously* 'illegal.' This frame renders the arguments presented by supporters unintelligible; these statements are outside the 'real' of the dominant discourse of illegality, which produces the obviousness of its own truth claims.

*The National Post* archive contains a smaller number of stories, but the same pattern emerges here. Of the eight articles about Laibar Singh in *The National Post*, three say his arrival "[broke] the law," was "illegal" or not "legal"; three more say simply that he arrived

with a “false” or “forged passport,” without the necessary contextualizing information about refugee law; indeed, none of the items in *The National Post* situate the story within the context of refugee law. The same frame shapes the coverage in *The National Post*: two ‘sides’ are forged, which each constitute a call to moral action. One side of this frame situates Canada as a “caring nation” (“Deport” A16) while the other constitutes a morality-inflected call to “show a little backbone” by enforcing Singh’s deportation. (Birch A14). As I clarified above, this frame limits the possible ways the situation can be understood and situates important information – such as the context in which Singh arrived in Canada, and the exemption provided to refugee claimants – as outside the frame, therefore unintelligible. It also offers two seeming ‘sides’ that are, in fact, both structured within a larger discourse of domination.

### **Close Reading: Racialized Representation and Canadian Nationalism**

As I mentioned above, comments by Singh supporters that attempt to contextualize Singh’s irregular documentation within refugee law are consistently discredited and decontextualized, for instance by calling into question the legitimacy of the speaker, as in this line in *The Province*: “Harsha Walia, who *calls herself* a spokeswoman for the South Asian community” (Lazaruk A32, emphasis added). The necessity to have one voice act as ‘spokesperson’ for a social construct called the ‘South Asian community’ is a media fabrication, not one generated by Singh’s supporters. In that same article this passage appears:

[Walia] also said Singh has a legal right to stay in Canada because he wasn't under a removal order at the time he became paralyzed, as he was still legally applying to become a refugee. But documents from Singh’s detention review hearing on Aug. 13, 2007, indicate a conditional departure order was issued in 2003 when he made a refugee claim in Montreal. (Lazaruk A32)

This statement, that Singh ‘has a legal right to stay in Canada because he wasn’t under a removal order at the time he became paralyzed,’ simply makes no sense without the context of refugee law. The statement is obfuscated, rendered unintelligible, and situated before a ‘but,’ suggesting contradiction by the subsequent information: a false opposition. The actual point raised by supporters was that the term ‘illegal’ – the impetus for national outrage over Singh’s continued stay in Canada – is wholly inappropriate with regard to Singh’s case, because, as explained earlier, it is within the law for refugee claimants to travel with irregular (i.e. fake) documents; hence, Singh did not arrive “illegally” as media reports repeatedly claimed. An editorial in *The Vancouver Sun* exemplifies the lack of understanding of this important exemption provided by refugee law: “Singh came to Canada using a fake passport and, despite claims by some groups that ‘no one is illegal,’ presenting false papers is an offence in Canada that carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison” (“Offering” A10). Since the mistaken belief that Singh “broke the law” (Schwartz A21) in entering Canada forms the foundation of assertions that he should be deported, this missing context is absolutely vital.

The virulent, and racialized, Canadian nationalism expressed in these articles centres on a discursive ‘Canadian’ outrage over the ‘inability’ of the CBSA to deport Singh. The claim to morality is central to the internal logic of these arguments. The need for strong security agencies to enforce a presumed breach of law is depicted in an editorial in *The National Post*, for instance, as a question of morals, arguing that “the whole affair is a complete moral disaster” (“Deport” A16).<sup>42</sup> The loudest voices that argue for deportation as a ‘moral’ necessity come from the union of CBSA border guards. The national president of

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<sup>42</sup> In contrast, the stories written for the Canada NewsWire reveal a pattern of more sympathetic coverage, with headlines such as: “Increasing National Support for Laibar Singh” (“Increasing”) or “Cross-Country Rallies in Support of Laibar Singh” (“Cross Country”).

the Customs and Excise union, whose membership includes CBSA's border guards, circulated an anonymously-composed assessment that states:

It is the majority of the officers' opinion that not removing Mr. Singh makes us look quite impotent and we need to show the public that we do uphold the immigration laws and that we should not bow down to public protests, as this makes us appear without a backbone. (Bailey, "The Head")

The moral dimensions of the call for 'backbone' operate within a discursive context in which a moral right is ascribed to border enforcement. The underlying assumptions that grant this assertion moral status are never examined. Why is it *ethical* for Canada to deem certain people worthy of citizenship and others unworthy? What *kinds* of people does this 'fair' and 'ethical' system allow entry? The blunt class dimensions of this system are an unspoken, and unspeakable, undercurrent in this discourse. A dalit working-class Sikh without savings or degrees cannot 'get in the queue' in India and wait for his visa to arrive, the way lawyer Richard Kurland proposes when he says, "you got to go through the front door. You can't go through the back door. He can't queue-jump. It's manifestly unfair to the tens of thousands of Indians waiting for visas in New Delhi" (McMartin B1). The 'tens of thousands' who may eventually be accepted to Canada are educated, wealthy, and/or physically normative, i.e. able-bodied. The sheer absurdity of this claim that there is a 'fair system' and a 'queue' for those who are willing to patiently wait their turn does not prevent this belief from circulating as truth within the dominant discourse of the news, underwriting an assertion that the 'rule of law' is fair, just, and evident in this case.

This 'rule of law' vs 'compassion' frame sets the foundation for an exclusive-nationalist, and moralistic, Canadian voice, expressing a virulent Canadian nationalism in which the CBSA stands in for discursive Canadians as an imagined collectivity. Jiwani writes, "as representative public texts, the news media influence policy makers by presumably

presenting the people's view" (37); the implicit conflating of the CBSA position with a generalized public opinion both contributed to that public opinion, as indicated by Letters to the Editor, and also presumably influenced the decisions made by the Immigration Minister, who at any time could have chosen to accept Labair Singhs' Humanitarian and Compassionate application.

Based on the mistaken belief, as mentioned earlier, that Singh 'entered the country illegally,' Letters to the Editor invoke a collective 'we' that fosters a discursive crisis: "As a taxpayer and lifelong citizen of Canada, I'm the one who's outraged [...] Immigration Minister Diane Finley [should] set a strong precedent that breaking *our laws* won't be tolerated in any situation" (Birch A14, emphasis added). Readers refer to the immigration apparatus as "our refugee system" (Collacott A19, Hathaway A22), and invoke the border guards as defending the "integrity" (McMartin B1) of a collective national identity imagined self-righteously, and morally, as exclusive, without ever questioning the grounds of that assertion. The historicization of the emergence of citizenship as a concept suggests that this right, while naturalized, may stand on an unexamined foundation that has no basis in morals at all. This discourse shapes even the ways racialized and immigrant speakers articulate their understanding of the immigration system. Letters from readers, which consistently repeat the false information that Singh entered the country 'illegally,' express outrage based solely on this misrepresentation: "for those claiming he has the support of the Sikh community," argues a letter writer in *The Province*, "I say speak for yourselves. I'm one Sikh who applies the same rule to everyone trying to come to our beautiful country. Do it legally" (Bassi A21). The fact that this opinion appears in Letters written by people who are themselves racialized and/or immigrants highlights the importance of the missing context in the story and the ways frames operate to shape reality. If readers were informed that Canadian and

international refugee law protects the right of asylum seekers to travel with irregular documentation, the assumed link between how Singh entered Canada, and the question of his deportation, could never have gained the public weight it did. The great majority of those letter-writers who wanted Laibar Singh deported indicated their reason was the belief that he ‘entered the country illegally.’ The news coverage in all four papers encouraged this belief through framing, lack of context, and sheer misrepresentation of refugee law. This media coverage, in effect, produced the social reality of the case; it led to Laibar Singh’s deportation and left a mark in the public consciousness that will undoubtedly affect the public capacity to understand future refugee cases.

Paradoxically, fear of growing ‘waves’ of immigrants ‘changing the face of the nation’ – what essentially amounts to xenophobic racism – is justified through a discourse that posits “major differences between the morality of [...] ‘Canadians’ and [...] ‘others,’” (Todd D8). As Sunera Thobani argues in *Exalted Subjects*, the dominant Canadian language of liberal multiculturalism exalts nationals as “compassionate,” “caring,” and committed to gender equality and other forms of rational social organization, implicitly situating its Others as less tolerant of difference, less caring, less egalitarian (Thobani 107) than discursive ‘real’ Canadians, and therefore, paradoxically, less deserving of the basic human rights attached to citizenship. News coverage during the period analyzed raise the spectre of a “polarizing trend among immigrants [...] forging a complex new moral face to the country, especially to BC” (D8). Attempts by Singh supporters to offer diverse voices to media (since the coalition to support Laibar Singh reached across many different lines of race, religion, class, gender, etc.) fell on deaf ears. In a media bent on situating Singh’s struggle as a ‘Sikh’ issue, speakers were obliged to act as ‘spokespeople’ for ‘community’ in this impossible way. An article in *The Vancouver Sun* shortly after the airport protest begins: “‘I hate homosexuality,’ says

Balwant Singh Gill, a prominent leader in B.C.'s large Sikh community” (D8). Although Canadian conservative Christians – including then-minister of Public Safety Stockwell Day himself – express homophobia without being understood to speak for all Canadians, in this case, “Canadian values” are held up as more “moderate” than a flattened representation of “Sikh,” or “South Asian” values about sexuality, which are in turn positioned as representative of “immigrant” morality. The article asks the alarmist question: “are immigrants the main reason British Columbians are losing their reputation as morally easy-going and freedom-loving?” (D8). The article presents discursive *Canadians* as more ‘moderate’ than immigrant Others (D8); *immigrants* are represented, in an alarmist tone, as *both more* socially liberal *and* more socially conservative than *Canadians*. This discourse folds critiques of homophobia into naturalized assumptions: moderate Canadians obviously do not want ‘immigrants’ here, given the atavistic views that “imported moral conservatism” (D8) bring to Canada. This set of assumptions assume a monolithic and heteronormative Sikh identity, as though “queer” and “Sikh” are incommensurable categories, which is clearly as impossible in this context as it would be in any other social group. Gill is invoked as “the spokesman for 39 Sikh temples in B.C.” (Todd D8), a misrepresentation that creates a flattened idea of community for popular consumption, as though any one person or religious leader can speak for all the Sikhs of British Columbia – as though all the Sikhs in the Province even constitute a community or a collective body that can speak as such. The deep paradox in this set of assumptions, that pits the ‘moderate’ and ‘tolerant’ Canadian against the ‘intolerant’ – *and* morally ‘laissez-faire’ – immigrant, reveals an exclusive, xenophobic framework. This paradox calls into question the presumed moral claim to exclude on the basis of superior “Canadian” morals.

## Difference or Division?

The flattening of these representations erases many kinds of difference, such as the important class differences between the various Gurdwaras that took Singh in at different times, and their varied relationships to provincial and federal politics. Since Sikhs are part of British Columbian society, all of the difference that exists in society – such as political affiliations, class, gender, and other kinds of difference, also should be expected to exist among people who identify as Sikh. Ignored in news representations is the fact that the Sahib Kalgidhar Darbar Society Gurdwara, that took Singh in for the longest time and cared for him when no other temples would, has a primarily working-class membership with strong egalitarian values of care and mutuality. Temple president Swarn Singh Gill explains: “We like to help [...] handicapped people, [...] poor people and anyone who comes in the temple” (Eustace A1); the Guru Nanak Gurdwara that took Singh in for a time after the airport protest has a wealthier membership and closer ties to the Conservative government. This misrepresentation in media texts moved in two directions simultaneously: on one hand, something called “Sikhs” are situated as a homogeneous group, invoked as targets for backlash. At the same time as erasing difference, however, this construction of a cohesive “Sikh” identity refigures *differences* as *divisions*, which are in turn used to delegitimize the voices of the thousands of people who came together to support Singh publicly across all these lines. If there are “divisions” in what is supposed to be a homogenous mass of “Sikhs,” then claims that “the community” supports Singh are rendered less legitimate, despite the thousands of people who publicly demonstrated their support for Singh. This double bind literally represents a trap, in that genuine complexities and differences between various actual Sikh human beings – differences of religious practice, of class, of egalitarian or capitalist values, of gender and sexuality, of physical ability, are ignored, only to reappear



when convenient as a disqualifying “division.” Difference refigured as “division” undermines the authority of the thousands of people who presented their names in petitions and their bodies in demonstrations insisting that Laibar stay.

### **Racialized Imagery**

The imagery used in the stories constituted a mode of racialization that is in and of itself a framing device. As I discussed in the Methodologies chapter, racialization can itself frame content. Without needing to resort to overt arguments about keeping out certain kinds of people, and regardless of intent on the part of writers, imagery in the newspapers racializes this story; imagery intersects with moral panic over a “tide” (Santa Ana) of atavistic brown immigrants, and thus contributes to arguments about whether Singh should stay or go. The news coverage of the airport protest painted a picture of an undifferentiated mass of (angry, male) Sikhs posing a threat to the border agency, which stands in for a Canadian “us” in this discourse, as mentioned earlier. Jiwani writes: “The homogenization of difference is another strategic move by which racialized Others were and often continue to be represented as hordes, having little or no individuality” (*Denial* 35). The first story about the airport action in *The Province*, on December 11, 2007, describes “a sea of technicolour turbans” (Austin A6) at the airport – which contradicts the actual experience – as I said earlier, except for the area directly around the taxi, I saw mostly women at the protest – and later depicts the protestors as “a sea of humanity” that “parted to allow Singh to leave” (A6). The biblical reference, parting the sea, invokes the miraculous, an event out of the ordinary, elemental or religious forces out of the control of the observer. Images in *The Province* of unnamed “men [with] fists clenched and shouting with joy” (A6), or in *The National Post* of a “chanting mob” (Bolan A1) situate the protestors as undifferentiated Others, with no names

or individual identities. The fact that the protest was peaceful and – as the capacity of the crowd to move aside to let Singh’s taxi leave indicates - reasonably orderly for a spontaneous expression of public will, is occluded by this discourse. That the actual *words* being spoken by protestors are well within a discourse of citizenship and participation in political process – such as threatening to withdraw votes from the Tories in the next election, or demanding that the government respect a formal petition of 40,000 signatures – is lost in this imagery of a chanting turbaned mob with brown skin and raised fists.

Instead of representing the airport action as a form of democratic political *participation*, as invoked by the language of the protests such as the oft-repeated chant “Tory government shame shame,” the repeated invoking of the petition, or the fact that the main ‘threats’ uttered by the crowd at the airport were aimed at the ballot box rather than human beings or physical structures, the imagery of a ‘sea’ of protesting ‘turbans’ with ‘fists clenched’ invokes imagery of the threatening easterner operating outside democratic norms. The transmutation of this peaceful, and internally cooperative, expression of democratic will into a ‘mob’ and a ‘sea of turbans’ cannot be read separately from the history of representations of South Asians in British Columbias and Canadian discourse. This imagery, despite the democratic *content* of the protest, invokes popular metaphors about ‘waves’ of atavistic immigrants breaking on the embattled shores of the nation-state (Greenberg; Santa Ana) and threatening Canada’s civilized ways. Pete McMartin’s editorials in *The Vancouver Sun*, in particular, situate Singh within Orientalist discourse that, as Edward Said argues, evoke an imagined Other at once exotic, inferior, and threatening:

[Singh appears] swaddled in blankets and turban and a new feral growth of beard, the hands clasped in front of him as if in prayer, his dark eyes the only thing moving in that impassive face. They take in the chaos and shouting around him, betraying nothing, and only occasionally do they look directly into the cameras filming him, where viewers had a microsecond to decode

what those eyes might be saying and what the brain behind them might be thinking. [...] The near-riot swirling around Singh contrasted with the dark passivity of Singh himself. (“Let Singh’s” B1)

This language of Singh’s ‘dark passivity’, his unreadable ‘dark eyes’ that ‘betray nothing’ in his ‘impassive face,’ and the depiction of this peaceful political protest as “chaos” and a “near-riot” are contemporary invocations of the Orientalist imagery that has infused western representations of racialized people’s bodies since the early colonial era. The language of a ‘feral’ beard indicates wildness, lack of control, danger, lack of civilization. The depiction of Singh’s hands is particularly telling. McMartin portrays Singh’s characteristic folded hands – which Singh was unable to open due to paralysis – as ‘clasped in front of him as if in prayer.’ One wonders if this editorialist has not read the reports of Singh’s paralysis, which clearly state that Singh experienced immobility in all four limbs. McMartin ignores the physical cause of folded hands in favour of a semiotic meaning that links Singh to images of fanatic ‘prayer’ that overdetermine the meanings of these media images. The pre-existing discourses and semiotic signification of images such as praying hands connect this story to older discourses of the Other within, situated here as a threat to the stability of the nation represented by the border agency and RCMP.

This language of ‘passivity’ takes on additional resonance in light of the media’s portrayal of Singh as socially ‘passive,’ due to his physical disability. As I explained earlier, Laibar Singh was anything but passive; he built profound relationships with his supporters and members of the Gurdwara that cared for him. By *publicly* taking sanctuary, risking both the discursive and physical violence of the public backlash, he actively challenged the assumption that working class people with disabilities are ‘unworthy’ of staying in Canada due to race, class background, and physical ability. His choice to take a very public stand, rather than go underground, galvanized support and acted as the flashpoint for public

debate, bringing into relief the inherent paradoxes of public discourse about a tolerant Canadian society that uses these very ideas about Canadian tolerance to justify intolerant actions. Indeed, his choice to take public sanctuary in and of itself is a courageous action, which insists that deeper social change, and genuine justice and equality, are available, even if they challenge the centrality and comfort of those who situate themselves as the normative centre of “Canadian” identity.

*Multiculturalism* in this context, as the sentence above suggests, is represented as a kind of incursion, a threat to discursive Canada’s strength and coherence. As I explored in the methodology chapter, this brand of discourse about Official Multiculturalism’s “failure” pitches “diversity” against the “dominant culture” (Chariandy 819). In an indicative example, McMartin writes: “This is what multiculturalism has morphed into in Canada: In bending so far over backwards to embrace it, we’ve confused spinelessness with flexibility. We do so want to be liked” (“Let Singh’s” B1). In this discourse, *multiculturalism* is equated with the presence of non-white Others, and simultaneously, though paradoxically, situated as a threat to ‘Canadian’ compassion and generosity; ‘our’ (internally differential, discursive) wealth and control of this land base, which structures this idea of ‘generosity,’ is not examined. This positioning suggests that white Canadians are still always at the centre, granting ourselves a natural decision-making authority to ‘allow’ others into national space, a presumed moral authority whose foundations cannot be examined too closely, lest they collapse. While this exclusive conceptualization of Canada has gained currency in recent years, it is not new: in “Sedative Politics,” Smaro Kamboureli notes the “disavowal” of multiculturalism that has been one current of debate ever since Multiculturalism was first established as state policy (84). In this configuration, this reified, imagined national community ‘bend[s] over backwards’ to accommodate others who take advantage of ‘our’ presumed generosity. The

assumed dominance of white Canadian culture is portrayed as under siege from these Others whose crime is only the wish to live here, just as we – those of us with citizenship – do. The material power differences between Laibar Singh and the CBSA – for who holds the guns in this situation? – are lost in this telling of the story. The intensity of this brand of public critique has, as the Laibar Singh coverage indicates, accelerated significantly in the current political climate. Rendered invisible within this naturalized discourse is the rotten foundation of any moral reason for the dominant culture’s claim over this land. Despite the moralistic tone of media calls to ‘show a little spine’ against ‘rule breakers’ – who ‘break the rules’ merely by their wish to live here – the question is never addressed of what *moral* basis grounds our implicit right to manage the movement of people on these lands.

With this erasure in mind, I would like to close by situating this story, as I did in the opening of this chapter, within the long history of ossifying borders and increasingly strict rules for travel documents and human movement. As I explained in the introduction, the idea that any ‘we’ possesses a moral right to decide who can live in Canada is fairly recent, and is historically contingent rather than primordial or inevitable. Although this belief is naturalized within today’s world system, it is not the only available way to think about land or countries and was in fact not inevitable or obvious as Canada was being established in the 1800s and 1900s. Most of the people who now call Canada home, and have citizenship papers, are descended from not-too-distant ancestors who travelled without documentation. Indeed, the concept of “the border” or the notion of “citizen” in a Canadian context first appear in *The Immigration Act* only in 1910, as discussed in the introduction. The early *Immigration Acts* of Canada (1869, 1906) contained no such language. The recentness of this idea of borders – in the contemporary sense of exclusive legal filters for human beings – calls into question naturalized assumptions that those who situated themselves as ‘settlers’

rather than ‘migrants’ ever since the early days of the establishment of the country have any inherent *moral* right to control the movement of everyone else. If this exclusiveness is a naturalized historical effect rather than an inherent moral right, then assumptions about the moral superiority of Canadians, upon which arguments to exclusivity rest, are themselves called into question.

Just short of one year after the massive outpouring of support at Vancouver’s International Airport, following numerous instances of harassment by CBSA guards at the temple, Laibar Singh decided to give up the fight to stay in Canada, and agreed to present himself for deportation. The arrangements were made by his new lawyer, Peter Edelman, since Laibar’s previous lawyer, Zool Suleman, had had a heart attack during the case. On the drive to the airport Laibar was accompanied, as always, by temple president Swarn Singh Gill and his daughter Parveen, who along with other temple members at Sahib Kalgidhar Darbar Gurdwara provided day-to-day care for Laibar and had grown to love him as family. A group of Laibar’s supporters met him at the airport to accompany him in these last hours of his time here. Judy Hanazawa of the National Association of Japanese Canadians came, as did supporters from many different walks of life; a CBC journalist who had just been put on the beat and who I chatted with in a quiet moment later on commented on what a diverse group we made, in remarkable contrast to the news stories that had presented his supporters almost exclusively as Sikh, in reports which attempted to frame the story as a Sikh ‘problem’ rather than a Canadian one.

When Laibar arrived, we formed a mobile circle around his wheelchair as he entered the airport, to keep a small physical and emotional space between Laibar and the hordes of camera-flashbulb-crowding media who pressed in to get the best scoop on his deportation. Inside the airport, near the International Arrivals area, a sliding door designed to be

overlooked by travellers opened to receive Laibar, and on the other side of the door waiting stood a large CBSA guard with gun at the ready. Gentle as always, with his head held high, Laibar wheeled across the threshold, and the door closed so we could no longer see him. He literally left the arms of his friends and crossed into the uncaring hands of the state apparatus.

Once he was gone, on the other side of that disciplining barrier, the media slowly drifted away, and the group of supporters moved as though underwater, slowly back out to the airport entrance. At the exit, one of our phones rang, and – it was Laibar! With a laugh and a strong will, he spoke with us even after the state took him: never giving up, never backing down from his right to dignity and freedom as a human being.





[terrible neutral            [white man]  
thick head thick authority]

[broad back                [up at invisible door]  
architecture of concealment:]

[one-way [ticket]  
glass]

[terror:                [overblown bull head]  
gleams in white lights, a pool cue white ball]

[sunk, in the hole, cleaned up    [owns the game]  
thick-shouldered, gun-holstered]

[sharp blue eyes        [as men with  
blink and smile        no faces  
at the cameras,        pole bodies  
flashbulbs pop]        downriver]

[flashbulbs *pop*        [white face beams]  
authority into the livingrooms of the nation]

[on the tarmac planes whine,    [takeoff]  
bodies restrained]

[bodies digested in back rooms [back seats of airplanes]  
as polite strained attendants serve: coffee, tea]

[moving doors open [walls swallow one soul]  
absorb one man]

[in wheelchair, legs still,    [head up]  
& my spine shoots daggers]

[as hidden door opens to    [sudden guns, guard standing alert to]  
capture you:]

[we can accompany you no further    [this time we stand]  
on the shores of Forgetting]

[as businessmen] [briefcases]  
[bathroom  
cleaning  
workers]  
[tourists] [pass in a blur]

[electric-ear-coil thick-chest gun-guards]

[huddle in blue by gleaming Burger King]  
[pull you down into hidden back rooms]

for the name: Sing resistance

*and a black man  
wins a race*

(november 3 and 4, 2008)

## Conclusion: Looking Outward, Looking Inward

At a press conference in October 2010 staged in front of the Ocean Lady, the ship that brought 76 refugees from Sri Lanka to safety in Canada a year earlier, Jason Kenney, the minister of Citizenship, Immigration, and Multiculturalism, “announced new [proposed] human smuggling laws the federal government hopes will deter such operations” (Canadian Press, “Some Tamil”). The Minister was speaking in the wake of a second ship of approximately 500 Tamils, including refugee claimants rejected by the U.K., who arrived aboard the Sun Sea in August 2010 and applied for refugee protection. In describing the way they entered Canada, Kenney states:

This *unlawful behavior* is nothing more than *jumping the immigration queue*, taking up space and resources in our immigration and refugee system that should be focused on those who are *legitimate* and *lawfully* waiting their turn to come to Canada. (“Some Tamil,” emphasis added)

The next paragraph in the article states, “But Canadian law doesn’t stop a failed refugee claimant in one country from making the same claim in Canada” (“Some Tamil”), and states that the new “bill proposes giving the federal minister of public safety the power to designate groups of migrants as ‘irregular,’ and treat them differently from other refugee claimants” (“Some Tamil”).

The Citizenship and Immigration website clearly describes the usual protocol by which refugee claimants are expected to submit their claims:

### **Refugee claims in Canada—How to apply**

There are two ways to apply for refugee protection in Canada:

You can make a claim when you arrive in Canada, at the port of entry. This could be at an airport, a seaport or a Canada-United States border crossing. At ports of entry, claims are received by officers of the Canada Border Services Agency.

You can also make a claim from within Canada at a Citizenship and Immigration Canada office.

(Citizenship and Immigration Canada)

As this quotation indicates, the Tamils who arrived on the Sun Sea are, in fact, using the usual channels to make their refugee claim. Since the government's own process – the government's own instructions for making a refugee claim using the appropriate channels – lays out clearly that arriving by boat and making a refugee claim at 'a seaport' *is* the usual channel, what does it tell us when the Immigration Minister invokes 'queue-jumping' and 'unlawful[ness]' in his description of the Tamil migrants, who did exactly what the law demands? If "Canadian law" does not prevent or proscribe the refugee claims made by the Tamils aboard the Sun Sea, and if the government is seeking to *introduce* new law – which does not yet exist – to render certain refugee claimants 'irregular,' then why does the immigration minister – whose job it is to know immigration law – invoke 'unlawful behavior'? To expand upon this question, if the way the Tamil refugee claimants arrived in Canada is perfectly within the normal channels, what work is done by the language of 'illegality' and 'queue-jumping' invoked in this article?

### **Looking Outward: Media Frames and the State Apparatus**

The new name of the Immigration portfolio, which folds Multiculturalism in to the job description as the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration, and Multiculturalism, might provide a clue. The collapsing of Multiculturalism into the governance of Citizenship and

Immigration indicates the collapsing rhetoric of race and citizenship within neoliberal ideology, in which immigrants and racialized citizens are viewed as parts of the same problem to be managed, and parts of the same dominant media frame. ‘Queue-jumping’ works as a key metaphor in this context, to focus public anger against migrants, and against racialized people more generally. Invoking the already-circulating idea that refugee claimants who arrive by boat are behaving ‘unlawfully’ is a strategic, if dishonest, discursive move on the part of the government. Presumably, the Immigration Minister would be fully aware that the Sun Sea refugee claimants used the usual, legal channels to make their refugee claim. Based on that assumption, these otherwise baffling statements about ‘unlawful’ ‘queue-jumping’ and about refugee claimants not ‘waiting their turn’ in the immigration system are not actually about law-breaking, but are indicative of some other process at work.

That other process is framing. In the current political climate, the Immigration Minister can successfully invoke the frame of the ‘queue-jumper’ to mask the actual law, and the aspects of the law that are designed to protect refugee claimants. Under cover of the public anger this framing is intended to foment, the Immigration Minister and the Prime Minister of Canada can justify seeking to change the laws themselves, introducing new laws that *would* effectively make it illegal for refugees to arrive in this way, and would punish refugee claimants who pay smugglers to carry them to Canada by boat. Put another way, if it were already ‘unlawful’ to come to Canada by boat and make a refugee claim, the government would not attempt to write new laws to make this mode of seeking refugee status illegal, or to create a category of ‘irregular,’ as the article describes. Instead, by invoking this category that does not actually exist in law, state officials wish to “activate” (*Denial* 37) existing populist racisms, to mobilize the idea of ‘illegals’ in order to link this concept to migration and refugee protection in current public discourse about the national in

news narratives. This whipping up of populist outrage against a scapegoat facilitates structural, legal alterations, provides a cover for introducing new laws that move the country towards a neoliberal state structure. The government seeks to pass new laws against human smuggling that would punish refugees as well as smugglers, and the framing of ‘illegality’ is useful to mobilize public support for rendering these actions illegal.

In other words, the frame would produce the legal reality. The discourses of risk, criminality, immigration, and illegality have become increasingly bound up together as neoliberal doctrine has become the ideological and legal norm. This is how common sense is produced: the Minister’s words reflect and further the reemergence of overt, rather than liberal, racism in public discourse. As such, the battle over frames is a key location of struggle over meaning within the neoliberal state and over the shape of the state; this attempt to shape public discourse – to establish and define concepts such as *irregular* or *legitimate* in the public sphere – is one important node, a point at which state actors (such as the Immigration Minister) seek to push public discourse in directions conducive to the strengthening of neoliberal state systems and their continual expansion.

At the same time as these new paradigms appear designed to keep people out, the shifting nature of Canadian border laws and enforcement have created new identities and new class categories within Canada, not only by keeping people out, but by controlling how people may enter and how life can be lived here by those deemed *temporary*, *migrant*, *non-status*, or of precarious belonging due to exclusive citizenship rights. In light of these changes, and in their interactions with older fault lines internal to the concept of who deserves full social citizenship privileges within Canada, new social movements of racialized migrants armed with their own discourses and theory, supported by allies with citizenship status, have emerged and are speaking for themselves.

The main contribution I have offered in this dissertation is to look at the ways in which racialization interacts with nation and state in English-Canadian newspaper narratives, and I have chosen to focus on representations of Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians because these representations are a major site of struggle within discourse about the national in our contemporary moment. I have sought to combine the discourse being produced within the migrant justice movement, that critiques the material violence of the Canadian citizenship apparatus, with discourses in Canadian literary studies that base claims for cultural inclusion on the mobilization of citizenship rights, and to bring this tension to bear on an analysis of narratives of nation in the newspapers. I have also brought together two disparate research practices, which are the literary practice of reading against the grain through the lens of race theory, and analyzing the ways Frames operate to produce social reality, looking at how counterhegemonic frames can intervene to alter, supplant, and push at dominant cultural and media frames set by elite actors. In combining these approaches, I treat newspapers as story and analyze them using close reading in the way you might analyze another form of textual storytelling about Canada, with a twist: the analysis of the news frame and its role as a site of struggle over hegemony. I have explored the interplay between producer frames, textual frames, and the public frames that constitute social reality, because the gaps between these are sites where intervention becomes possible.

It is vital to develop these analyses, because challenging the news frame is an important way to create cognitive space for articulations of reality that these representations seek to close off.<sup>43</sup> A telling scene might help illustrate: sitting in the Toronto Public

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<sup>43</sup> The fostering of an independent mediasphere is also a crucial means by which such discourses are generated and circulated. The years in which I was writing this dissertation – years which witnessed the emergence of the grassroots democratic Media Coop infrastructure (“About The Media Coop”) and the growth of many forms of independent media with nation-wide audiences that seek to pose a direct challenge to commercial media dominance – are exciting ones for the media world in Canada.

Library's beautiful newspaper reading room, I spent several weeks buried in several years of news narratives of the Toronto 18, working on Chapter Four as a conference paper for Congress. Immersed in these news stories, I was suddenly unable to figure out what there was to say. I had spent years critiquing newspapers and had already written the other chapters, and yet, the frame that shapes the news coverage – in this case the Enemy Within frame that produces the story as a binary of 'guilt or innocence' – was so powerful that when I spent this time by myself buried in the news narratives, I could no longer think outside them. That is how powerful these frames can be; I could no longer see beyond guilt or innocence, and I started to wonder why I was writing about this case at all, what there could possibly be to say about it, especially after the guilty pleas and convictions. It took a conversation with a colleague outside the newspaper reading room to remind me of what I had been exploring for the past few years: the issue in this particular case is not one of guilt or innocence, as the framing would have it. The point is that the frame – this false dichotomy – itself constrains and limits how the case can be thought about, and flattens the larger issues, which in this case *included* protecting the citizenship rights of the accused; it also included the right to the presumption of innocence, and the racialized nature of the coverage. Widening the frame, it becomes clear that these racialized representations do not only affect the people directly involved in the case. They have impacts far beyond it, in shaping and constraining national discourses of belonging, citizenship, and exclusion; as such, they affect everyone targeted by these racialized discourses and everyone who understands themselves as situated within the discourse of a Canadian identity.

Foucault's concept of the carceral is instructive here<sup>44</sup>. He writes:

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<sup>44</sup> Thank you to Yasmin Jiwani for proposing this connection.



By means of a carceral continuum, the authority that sentences infiltrates all those other authorities that supervise, transform, correct, improve [...] By operating at every level of the social body and by mingling ceaselessly the art of rectifying and the right to punish, the universality of the carceral lowers the level from which it becomes natural and acceptable to be punished. (*Discipline* 303)

Arguing that a primary function of the “carceral city” is the power of “normalization” (308), Foucault foregrounds the ways in which the prison, “in the central position it occupies” (308), is “not alone, but linked to a whole series of ‘carceral’ mechanisms” (308) which are diffuse throughout society. The carceral in fact structures society, with the prison at its centre and a continuum of modes of normalization extending outwards, producing “a whole multiplicity of illegalities” (308). Thus, legality and illegality are a major technology by which the carceral city, in Foucault’s conception, is produced and reproduced.

### **The Carceral and the Cultural: a Continuum of Social Control**

As the Introduction’s discussion of the continuum of forms of precarity in citizenship status suggests, the discursive production of subject positions (such as *citizen*, *migrant*, *irregular*, or the binary between *legal* and *illegal* human beings) – in popular narratives, in media discourses, and in law – shapes and disciplines society as a whole by producing normative codes of behaviour and signification. The ‘carceral,’ Foucault writes:

With its many diffuse or compact forms, its institutions of supervision or constraint, of discreet surveillance and insistent coercion [meant that] a certain significant generality moved between the least irregularity and the greatest crime; it was no longer the offence, the attack on the common interest, it was the departure from the norm, the anomaly. (*Discipline* 301)

Thus, binary categories of legality and illegality, combined with “the chimerical granting of the right to punish” (303) that is made real through this process of institutionalization, produces and manages the entire social order. This understanding highlights the continuities

between the case study chapters: the immigration bureaucracy that could discipline Laibar Singh for the place of his birth, and for being a paralyzed working class Sikh, operates in a continuum with the quasi-judicial and policing system that raided the homes of the Project Thread detainees and detained and deported them, or that continues to control and discipline the Security Certificate detainees; these operate in a continuum with the court system that tried the Toronto 18, Canadian citizens held up in media narratives as a spectre of deviance. It is not a coincidence that the language of imprisonment was frequently invoked by Laibar Singh and his supporters, even though Laibar Singh was never charged with any crime, since Laibar Singh was in practical terms imprisoned within the Gurdwara by the threat of the CBSA's violence against him. This instance and the ongoing house arrest and threat of deportation faced by the Security Certificate detainees can thus be understood as parts of a larger mechanism that links all of these modes of social control and normalization, extending throughout Canadian society to standardize belief and behaviour. These modes of normalization, the threat of punishment for deviance that is always in operation, thus shape and constrain other national discussions that appear to take place at the level of the cultural, and outside the realm of the carceral: the wearing of the headscarf; the practicing of religion; the discussion about what constitutes 'good literature'; the expression of living, changing, human cultures beyond the narrow parameters of official multiculturalism's song and dance, including the continual transformations within any given 'culture,' such as feminist and queer justice work. The system of ongoing, everyday immigration detentions, and the expanding numbers and categories of non-citizen workers upon whom the Canadian economy increasingly rests, are thus part of a carceral continuum. The media and legal treatment of the Project Thread detainees, the Toronto 18, the Security Certificate detainees, and Laibar Singh are expressions of the same continuum, one which

seeks to expand modes of social control and discipline throughout Canadian society.

### **Looking Inward: Academic Space and Critical Antiracism**

Returning to one of the questions with which this dissertation opened, within this paradigm and under these social conditions, what are the ways academic work can be accountable to communities and to community organizers, particularly those organizers who themselves are the targets of the immigration bureaucracy, or whose lives have been governed and constrained by the daily violence of immigration laws? The critique of the violence of legal citizenship structures emerging within the contemporary migrant justice movement productively reveals the limit of all progressive movements that still rely on a discourse of citizenship rights as a form of claim-making within the national. Just as this reliance on the idea of the citizen is a blind spot in some forms of progressive organizing, so too Canadian literature as a field, in grappling with *cultural* exclusions and with neoliberalism, has mobilized citizenship as the ground for inclusivity. This practice now needs to take into consideration the ways in which the neoliberal state has absorbed and redeployed the discourse of citizenship to generate new naturalized exclusions, under the guise of increasing inclusion.

The insistence on citizenship as a category of resistance in Canadian literary studies was necessary in a particular theoretical moment and it remains vital, particularly as blunt racisms have returned in public discourse. Instead of setting up these ideas in competition with one another, I wish to note that there is a new front to antiracist struggle under the disciplinary structures of an expanding Canadian neoliberalism. Shifts in the state apparatus, naturalized and in turn naturalizing new modes of social control, have created a gap between the material realities of the state and contemporary discussions of the national in several important areas: in debates over justice within a Canadian literary and cultural context;

within progressive movements that mobilize the discourse of citizenship rights; and within the news media's naturalized narratives.

In this context, powerful critiques of academic work, theoretically nuanced critical media analysis, and new theorizations of citizenship or of race are currently being generated in vibrant spaces of reflection fostered within community organizing spheres. This kind of productive theorizing overlaps with academia but, as in the past, it produces knowledge “largely through creative, critical and community-based work by writers, artists, and cultural theorists of colour, who [are] for the most part identified with social movements outside the university's jurisdiction” (Miki, *Broken Entries* 162). Walia describes the coalitions that have been building across different racialized and Indigenous organizing spaces, coalitions whose roots and force are situated – and theorized – primarily outside academic settings, though these movements are also described in academic environments:

While alert to trivialising the differences within and between these communities, strong alliances have been built amongst grassroots Indigenous and migrant justice groups. In BC, immigrants and refugees have participated in several delegations to Indigenous blockades, while Indigenous communities have extended their solidarity through rally slogans such as, ‘No one is illegal, Canada is illegal’ and the offering of protection and refuge for migrants facing deportation. This on-the-ground organising has gone a long way to developing trust and breaking down divisions between Indigenous and racialised migrant communities that are mediated by White settler colonialism. (“Transient” 82)

In this conclusion, I'd like to take some time to tease out the tensions between this kind of academic research that makes implicit claims to help those whose representations are analyzed, and the critiques offered by several community-based theorists and organizers working on those same issues: namely that academic antiracist work purporting to help does not *de facto* help antiracist migrant justice movements and may even detract from them in tangible ways (Walia; Singh).

## The Production of Ideas: Constraints, Possibilities, and Claims to Help

To be clear, academic or literary work for its own sake, or as oppositional critique, is not at issue here; what I wish to observe is simply that claims, implicit or explicit, to *helping* those I am writing about, logically ought to engage openly with feedback from the so-called ‘helpees’ about whether this research does, in fact, help. This is not a comparison between *action* and *reflection*, or *theory* and *practice*, with simplified understandings of where each of these activities take place. While academia is still largely dominated by white European bodies and cultural concerns, academics can be racialized or come from migrant backgrounds. Academics can also participate in grassroots community organizing (though usually in ways constrained by the sheer time exigencies of pursuing an academic career). In a related discussion, Trinh T. Minh-Ha observes this doubling vision of ethnographic ‘subjects’ who are also filmmakers and academics: “the moment the insider steps out from the inside, she is no longer a mere insider (and vice versa). She necessarily looks in from the outside while also looking out from the inside” (Minh-Ha 74).

I do not mean to suggest that the boundaries between academic research and grassroots research are completely impermeable to one another; clearly, they are not, and academic spaces are heterogeneous. While some academics are also community organizers working from within racialized and migrant communities, many community organizers theorize their work without requiring academic sanction or infrastructure. Far from being constrained only to act without reflection, organizers read and engage with theoretical critique, and produce texts and publications, community reflection sessions, roundtables, public talks, teach-ins and theoretical discussions over what it means to do the work they do and what it means to build the kinds of community mobilizations they build. In other words, theory is not only the purview of academic space, and action is not only the purview of

community organizing. Instead of simplistic assumptions about what kind of work is produced where, I wish instead to engage with an understanding that different rules of behaviour and rules of appropriate speech constrain (for good and for ill) different kinds of spaces, even as people, activities, and ideas move between them.

Academic spaces, governed as they are by norms and encrusted codes or routines of propriety that are often naturalized to those accustomed to them, thus give “Otherness [...] its laws and interdictions” (Minh-Ha 69). Law professor Patricia Williams illustrates, in her description of the editing process of an article on racism critiquing ‘how the rhetoric of increasing privatization, in response to racial issues, functions as the rationalizing agent of public unaccountability and, ultimately, irresponsibility’:

From the first page to the last, my fury had been carefully cut out. [...] The active personal had been inverted in favour of the passive impersonal. My words were different; they spoke to me upsidedown. I was afraid to read too much of it at a time – meanings rose up at me oddly, stolen and strange. [...] All references to Benetton’s [where the incident that inspired the critique took place] had been deleted because, according to the editor and the faculty advisor, it was defamatory [and] unverifiable. [...] I could not but wonder, in this refusal even to let me file an affidavit, what it would take to make my experience verifiable. The testimony of an independent white bystander? (a requirement in fact imposed in U.S. Supreme Court holdings through the first part of the century.) [...] Two days after the piece was sent to press, I received copies of the final page proofs. All reference to my race had been eliminated because it was against ‘editorial policy’ to permit descriptions of physiognomy. [...] Frustrated, I accused [the editor] of censorship; calmly he assured me it was not. “This is just a matter of style,” he said with firmness and finality. (Williams 47-8)

How, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith asks, can research about “oppressed communities” undertaken within academic settings – particularly Canadian literary settings – be carried out in a way that is “respectful, ethical, sympathetic, and useful” (2) in the eyes of the people whose representations we analyze, and whose problems we claim to understand?

## **Critiques of Academic Research About Migrant Justice Organizing**

In the six years I have been involved to varying degrees in organizing communities in Vancouver, all while in a PhD program, I have been lucky enough to attend and participate in many conversations – formal and informal – and to hear several important critiques of academic research on migrant rights generated within organizing spaces. These critiques include: the relative power differential between differently positioned voices writing about the same issues; the distribution of resources and the location of decision-making control over financial and other resources for antiracist work; the relative material benefits and legitimation that accrue to the researcher, relative to those ‘being researched,’ and hence the inexorable pull of academia for those who begin their antiracist work in community-based spaces; the intense time constraints on academic work, in which a single article may take years before it arrives in public, thus preventing timely analyses, while draining time and energy from other writing that can appear in public in time to take effect; the fact that the most public migrant justice organizers in Canada receive such a high number of requests to do academic interviews that saying yes to even most of them would take all of their time; that publishing an academic book may entail a publisher’s requirement to go on tour to promote the book, which takes organizers away from the communities in which they work and is thus simply not realistic; the ways spaces such as conferences or publishing settings structure discourse and social interaction, and the constraints on thought produced by professionalization and career requirements, which shape how much academics – particularly in an age of decreasing access to tenure and permanent positions – can rock the boat or write unpopular opinions or present concepts outside the sanctioned frameworks of their field. In small fields concerned with current events, the peer review process may keep writing standards high, but it also constrains academic writers to responding primarily to

other peer-reviewed academics, by engaging in the required 'lit review' of existing peer-reviewed material, which leaves little room or time for engaging with grassroots writing by organizers who are best situated to theorize migrant justice issues. Without being involved in the organizing, or while being peripherally involved or involved as observers, academics run the risk of describing organizing activities for an academic audience without the sanction of those they work with, and it is not always clear who is intended to benefit from the description, or what purpose is served by the research. One line of critique observes the perhaps parasitical relationship between academics who describe social justice movements, gaining incomes, publication credits, and respectability, without giving back to the movements they write about in labour defined by organizers rather than by the academics: giving back through the less professionally rewarding daily grind of leafleting, doing childcare, cooking for events, setting up chairs, collecting signatures, doing jail support, strategizing, and all of the other ongoing work that sustains community organizing but may not bring professional acclaim to the academic struggling to make decisions about how to best use limited time and energy.

Good intentions are a good start in building respectful relationships with those we write about, but they are not enough and can sometimes be a deterrent to real responsibility and accountability. Williams writes:

As well-intentioned as they were, I was left with the impression that no one existed for them who could not be governed by their intentions. While acknowledging the lack of apparent malice in this behaviour, I can't help thinking that it is a liability as much as a luxury to live without interaction. To live so completely impervious to one's own impact on others is a fragile privilege, which over time relies not simply on the willingness but on the inability of others [...] to make their displeasure heard. (72)



In order to avoid a patronizing attitude, which has historically marched hand in hand with colonialism in Canada, that I know what is best for those I write about regardless of their opinions on the matter, I wish to engage with emerging critiques, such as that different spaces (NGOs, charities, service provision agencies, and grassroots organizations) each operate under different rules about what is sayable or thinkable and hence require significant ongoing self-reflexivity. Out of respect for these critiques I wish to observe that CanLit debates within the Canadian literary academic field – the setting in which this particular research is taking place and hence the focus of my own self-reflexivity while writing – is no exception. In raising these concerns, and seeking to remain accountable to them, I hope this dissertation can take seriously Tuhiwai Smith’s question.

One way of doing so is to circulate and broadcast the analyses that are currently being generated within grassroots migrant justice organizations in Canada, such as No One Is Illegal or Solidarity Across Borders. Just as we now know that during the uprooting of the Japanese Canadian community, we should have insisted that rights adhere to human beings regardless of race, today, in listening to the powerful theorizing that these movements are generating, it becomes clear that we must argue rights adhere to human beings regardless of citizenship status. In today’s political climate of increasing precarities, zones of exception, and contemporary security discourses, categories produced by the discourse of *legitimate* and *illegitimate* citizenship status have the same dangerous implications as older race categories.

Alternative discourses are mobilized by those who are members of this community and have ties to this land in practice, but whose freedoms and existence are circumscribed by state laws that shape and are shaped by discourses of racialized Otherness. As Anna Pratt writes in *Securing Borders*, “[D]etention and deportation and the borders that they sustain are also key technologies in the continuous processes that ‘make up’ citizens and govern

populations” (1). In this context, deep accountability is necessary and, I think, possible: by supporting organizing in concrete, tangible ways, academics can cultivate personal relationships with organizers working out of migrant communities and with the ‘epistemic privilege,’ in Kristeva’s terms, of understanding firsthand how these systems function. We can seek to understand and foster what genuine accountability looks like, and respect what the people we write about have to say. This is one way to ensure that our research is accountable to, and in touch with, complex concerns.

Following Ajay Heble, it is apparent that “in an era of widespread inequality, privation, and injustice, when subjugated knowledges struggle for legitimacy only to be met with various forms of institutional disparagement and intolerance, pedagogy can carry an impressive ethical [and] public force” (8). Mass media, literary production, and academic research can each play a powerful pedagogical role when it comes to doing representational work; therefore all three must be accountable directly to the people they represent. Research grounded in the theorizing and the lived experiences of people directly affected by security policies, that grapples with the physical violence of the state and that works to foreground the legitimating, normalizing power of mass media narratives in the face of security discourses, can open up options for meaningful coalition building. Here, Roy Miki’s invocation of change comes to mind: “where we are going from here becomes an ethical question” (*Broken Entries* 109).

Specifically, my research at each stage attempts to engage with the writing and critiques offered by specific migrant justice organizers in Canada who theorize publicly and organize tirelessly on these issues. Recognizing the ever-increasing constraints in time and energy required to succeed in an academic career, and without creating false expectations, I will continue to participate in, support, and promote spaces organized by migrant justice

groups and community movements led by racialized organizers and those with direct personal experience with the exclusive nature of contemporary immigration laws, to listen and learn and help, rather than obliging people to function in spaces that I, in my role as an academic, shape and control. The analysis in this dissertation and in all my academic work, furthermore, will need to stand up to and be accountable to the analyses and critique presented by specific organizers with whom I developed working relationships, and friendships, over several years of organizing in Vancouver. One of the requests is for recognition that choosing an academic career path actually takes one's time and energy *away* from organizing, a factor that I have found rings true in my own work. I stepped back from organizing for over two years, for instance, in order to finish this dissertation.

It is particularly important given my white skin privilege to keep in mind the problematic preponderance of white antiracist academics, willing to do antiracist critique, but unwilling to give up their own access to academic privileges and the financial stability that this kind of work (sometimes) brings. This is a central question given my position as a white academic. Within academic settings, I seek to remain cognizant of the personal benefit that accrues to white researchers conducting antiracist research, and to be willing to “step back” and be self-aware about the dynamics of these relationships, even if this means I may give up publications, teaching positions, or other personal benefits. These questions must also always be considered within complex interlocking systems of privilege that structure who makes it through the academic system. Miki writes:

One danger may be the phenomenon that Ashok Mathur calls the ‘rhetoric of approval,’ in which there is “an appearance of radical change without any actual commitment to such change on a systemic level” (2). Discussions of racism, sexism, and cultural chauvinism are politely tolerated in a climate that leaves unspoken the outsider status of those constructed as ‘minorities’ (read here people of colour) and covers over the paucity of non-white faculty undertaking anti-racist scholarship and pedagogy. The well-intentioned but

uncritical work of white academics ‘amazed’ Bannerji, and continues to amaze, because of its failure to acknowledge ‘that the exclusion of non-white people was not accidental, [and] that the social organization of Canada actually expressed itself in the social organization/relations of the academic world and general production of knowledge as well. (“Re:Turning” 234, cited in Miki 168).

In relation to the work of community organizing outside academia, and while keeping these limitations in mind, I will seek to create research that can be used in some way by grassroots community-based organizers to further their work, without relying on self-congratulatory assumptions or beliefs that I can or should tell people what to do or how to run their campaigns, simply because I am working on a PhD. While research will always benefit the researcher more than it does the researched, and while there is of course no one cohesive community perspective that is the ‘correct’ one, which means researchers always make choices about who to listen to – I seek both to recognize, and own, the limits of academic work about migrant justice, so as to avoid grandiose assumptions about the value of this work, and to shape my research in response to feedback from specific migrant justice organizers who are willing to offer it.

In other words, this dissertation comes into contact with political considerations that face in two directions: internally, to the dynamics of antiracism within academia itself, and externally, to the fraught relationship between academic research and community organizing. These axes – each of which is multipronged – must be held together in order to produce a piece of writing approaching or seeking to engage in the ethical. In light of the neoliberal state’s redeployment of narratives of citizenship to generate new and growing exclusions within Canada, what would it mean for our national literature and literary critique to take seriously the resistance to legal citizenship exclusions? In asking what it might look like for us to engage seriously with the analysis generated from the migrant justice movement, I also

want to foreground the dangers in extracting a subjugated critique from the material context that produces it. Roy Miki's words come to mind here when in "After Redress" he speaks of "the distance between academic knowledge and social injustices" (83) and says that "knowledge production remains troublesome because of its lack of accountability in most institutions" (82). With these ideas in mind, I want to ask, rather than how we can 'make space' for these voices, what it would look like for our field to foster direct 'accountability' to the movements that are producing these new discourses that productively trouble the naturalized category of the citizen.

Considering where and how our texts are used both inside and outside academic space, *and* paying attention to what other non-academic work we do to 'give back' in the ways community organizers tell us are actually helpful – giving money, time, labour, to the movements we write about whether they use our research or not – are all equally important. Yasmin Jiwani writes of the potentials and pitfalls this negotiation entails, concluding that despite the risks, academic research can be engaged ethically:

The legitimizing power of academic writing, access, and institutional resources can be harnessed in the interests of social change even though such attempts are amenable to cooptation by those in power. Nonetheless, as potential sites of intervention, such structures of legitimation as the academy are a useful and resourceful site for those committed to social change, especially in terms of challenging or contesting national mythologies. (*Denial* xvi)

The 'institutional resources' available within academic spaces in particular can be shared and offered, without strings, to community organizers 'identified,' (to return to Miki's observation), 'with social movements outside the university's jurisdiction' (*Broken Entries* 162). In addition, "invoking," as Jiwani proposes, "the voices of those who endure these realities daily" (*Denial xvii*) is necessary to respect the knowledge produced by those who

have direct understanding both of the violence of the state, and of the myriad forms of daily resistance to it that are currently being theorized and undertaken. Furthermore, the production of social critique is strongest if it is grounded in and grows alongside other modes of challenging power. Analyzing texts, as we do in Literary studies, is valuable, but in and of itself, textual critique or envisioning new social possibilities through textual intervention is not enough to generate social change; a danger of our field is to think, because text is so powerful, that producing emancipatory texts is enough to create social change. To return to Hall, this is “a tension that all textual practices must assume: [to respect] the necessary displacement of culture, and yet [be] always irritated by its failure to reconcile itself [...] with other questions that cannot and can never be fully covered by critical textuality in its elaborations” (284).

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