Competing Visions, Common Forms:
The Construction of Mosque Architecture in Canada and the US

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ABSTRACT

From minarets to geometric patterned tiles, the reach and influence of Islamic architectural forms extends far beyond the geographic limits of the Muslim world. Indeed, as early as the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century the architecture and visual cultures of Islam has travelled to North American shores and has affected its built environment.

This dissertation examines the making of both the Moorish Revival and mosque architecture in Canada and the US. I argue that these two types of buildings, which have been created by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, show the variability and polarizing nature of contemporary Islamic architecture. For Muslim communities, the primary expression of Islamic architectural ideals is manifested in the building of mosques. In this study, I examine how these contemporary mosques straddle notions of traditional visual and architectural forms with the realities of urban, non-Islamic environments. Through the examinations of mosques that have either been renovated from existing structures and ones that have been purpose-built, I investigate the ways in which these buildings have been responsive to and shaped by the existing architectural norms, political and social circumstances in Canada and the US from the early twentieth century onward.

In studying these two contrasting examples of mosques, I argue that a commonality between these structures exists: they both mark a break from the traditional practice of Islamic architecture and reveal a uniquely diasporic Muslim tension with the question of authenticity and difference. These contemporary mosques not only show what is at stake in the use of Islamic architectural tropes but also provide a glimpse

of the varied application and amalgamation of built forms by Muslim communities living in Canada and the US.

Within Western Muslim communities, debates on the nature of inclusion and agency of women in mosques have also increased in the last decade. The performance of women-led prayers and sermons, most notably led by Amina Wadud, has challenged the segregation of men and women commonly practiced in mosques. The reversal of normative gender roles in the performance of Islamic ritual has slowly made the way for change in the spatial configuration of mosques.

Outside the Muslim community, groups such as the Shriners and Masons to wealthy individuals such as aviator-cum-entrepreneur Glenn H. Curtiss and Hudson-school painter Frederic Edwin Church have also made use of the architectural forms associated with Muslim cultures. I look at how built-forms such as the minaret, bi-coloured brickwork and use of hand-painted tiles have been incorporated in their homes and masonic lodges. Commonly referred to as the "Moorish Revival," these buildings evoked both the grandeur of traditional Islamic architecture and affirm an unequivocal sense of wealth of its owners. Although Moorish Revival buildings utilize a visual language similar to those of mosques, they envisioned an Islam wholly through the lens of Orientalism and removed from the racialized realities of North American Muslim populations.

During the eighteenth-and nineteenth-century, a number of pattern books, literary works, photographs and paintings made their way to the US and inspired artists, writers and architects to explore and appropriate the visual cultures of Islam. However, it was the medium of film that

made the most significant impression on the North American imagination. Drawing on the work by Edward Said, I examine the lingering legacy of the Moorish Revival and that, when compared to Islamic mosques, and their diverse congregants show the distinct fundamental difference between the two.

Lastly, this dissertation concludes with a look at the ways in which contemporary artists engage with the larger conceptual parameters of mosque architecture. Artists such as Michael Rakowitz, Azra Akšamija, Farheen Haq, and the AES Group draw from the mosques spatial mutability. In the case of the AES Group's *Islamic Project*, their digital collages illustrate the racialized fear and tension that exists with the construction of mosques in traditionally non-Muslim countries.

Résumé

Des minarets aux tuiles à motifs géométriques, la portée et l'influence des formes architecturales islamiques se déploient bien au-delà des limites géographiques du monde musulman. En effet, depuis le dix-neuvième siècle, l'architecture de l'Islam s'est répandue en Amérique du Nord et a affecté son environnement bâti.

Cette thèse examine le développement de la renaissance mauresque et de l'architecture des mosquées au Canada et aux États-Unis. Je soutiens que ces édifices, qui ont été créés par des musulmans aussi bien que par des non musulmans, démontrent la variabilité et la nature polarisante de l'architecture islamique contemporaine. Pour les communautés musulmanes, l'expression principale des idéaux de l'architecture islamique se manifeste dans la construction de mosquées. Dans cette étude, j'examine comment ces mosquées contemporaines font coïncider des notions de formes visuelles et architecturales traditionnelles avec les réalités des environnements urbains, non islamiques. En analysant les mosquées qui ont été rénovées à partir de structures existantes et celles qui ont été construites spécialement, j'étudie comment ces édifices ont répondu aux normes architecturales existantes et ont été façonnés par elles, ainsi que par les circonstances politiques et sociales au Canada et aux États-Unis, depuis le début du vingtième siècle.

En étudiant ces deux exemples contrastés de mosquées, je soutiens qu'il existe des points communs entre ces deux structures : elles marquent toutes deux une rupture par rapport à la pratique de l'architecture islamique traditionnelle et révèlent une tension diasporique musulmane unique liée à la question de l'authenticité et de la différence. Ces mosquées

contemporaines témoignent non seulement des enjeux concernant l'utilisation des tropes de l'architecture islamique, mais offrent également un aperçu des diverses applications et fusions des formes architecturales par les communautés musulmanes vivant au Canada et aux États-Unis.

De plus, les discussions sur la nature de l'inclusion et de l'engagement des femmes dans les mosquées se sont faites plus nombreuses au sein des communautés musulmanes, depuis une dizaine d'années. L'exécution de prières et de sermons dirigés par des femmes, notamment par Amina Wadud, a mis en cause la séparation des hommes et des femmes généralement pratiquée dans les mosquées. Peu à peu, le renversement des rôles normatifs liés au genre dans l'exécution du rituel islamique a occasionné des changements dans la configuration spatiale des mosquées.

En dehors de la communauté musulmane, des groupes tels que les Shriners et les francs-maçons, ainsi que des individus fortunés, tels que l'aviateur et entrepreneur Glenn H. Curtiss, et Frederic Edwin Church, peintre de l'école de l'Hudson, ont également utilisé les formes architecturales associées aux cultures musulmanes. J'analyse comment les formes architecturales telles que le minaret, le briquetage bicolore et l'emploi de tuiles peintes à la main ont été incorporées dans leurs résidences et leurs loges maçonniques. Généralement décrits comme appartenant à la « renaissance mauresque », ces édifices évoquent à la fois la grandeur de l'architecture islamique traditionnelle et affirment sans équivoque la richesse de leurs propriétaires. Bien que les constructions néo-mauresques aient recours à un langage visuel similaire à celui des mosquées, elles offrent une perception de l'Islam à travers le seul prisme

de l'orientalisme, perception détachée des réalités ¬racialisées des populations musulmanes d'Amérique du Nord.

Au cours des dix-huitième et dix-neuvième siècles, plusieurs recueils de motifs décoratifs, oeuvres littéraires, photographies et peintures ont été introduits aux États-Unis et ont incité les artistes, les écrivains et les architectes à explorer et à s'approprier les cultures visuelles de l'Islam. Toutefois, c'est le cinéma qui a laissé l'impression la plus forte dans l'imaginaire nord-américain. À partir de l'oeuvre d'Edward Said, j'examine l'héritage persistant de la renaissance mauresque et comment émerge, par comparaison, la différence fondamentale avec les mosquées islamiques et à leurs différents groupes de fidèles.

En conclusion, cette thèse analyse les pratiques des artistes contemporains qui travaillent les paramètres conceptuels plus vastes de l'architecture des mosquées. Des artistes tels que Michael Rakowitz, Azra Akšamija, Farheen Haq, et le AES Group s'inspirent de la mutabilité spatiale des mosquées. Prenant l'exemple du Islamic Project par le AES Group, j'explore la peur et la tension racialisée liées à la construction de mosquées dans des pays traditionellement non musulmans.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CAIR   Council of Islamic American Relations

CCMW   Canadian Council of Muslim Women

ICCM   Islamic Cultural Centre of Manhattan

ISNA   Islamic Society of North America

MTSA   Moorish Science Temple of America

NOI   Nation of Islam

Introduction

<u>**Islam in the West: An Incompatible Faith?**</u>

During the fall of 1995, a Toronto resident spoke out angrily against the renovation of a local building into a mosque arguing, "there is no comparison to that kind of building in Canada... If they put up this minaret and dome, it will act like a calling card for the whole community."[1] In more recent times, such an overt response to the establishment of a mosque has become more and more common. Since the early twentieth-century, the mosque has been one of the most visible markers of Islam in the West; one that has more currently, also tested the limits of multiculturalism and belonging. The mosque, a distinct and historic structure, is especially central to Muslim religious and cultural life in North America, and occupies a critical place in the practice and propagation of Islam. As an important institution for Muslims, the mosque has long served as a place for worship, solace, and religious instruction. Increasingly, North American mosques have also become places where members of the Muslim community are able to obtain and engage in non-religious services such as daycare, job networking, and in some communities, English language courses. Outside of traditionally Muslim-majority countries, however, the mosque has also evoked the angry sentiments of those who are unaccustomed to its aesthetic, historical, and religious significance.

The mosque is a potent site, image, and symbol of Islam across

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1. Engin Isin and Myer Siemiatycki, "Making Space for Mosques: Claiming Urban Citizenship," *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society,* ed. Sherene H. Razack (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002), 205.

the globe. It has roots in the early history of Islam, dating back to the first community of Muslims in seventh century Medina and continues to literally and symbolically signify the presence of Islam. However, despite its outward ability to communicate the presence of Islam, the form and function of a mosque varies. For despite its prominence in early Islamic history, the mosque's structural form does not follow any singular design dogma. For example, reconstructed in 1907 on the grounds of a ruined fourteenth century mosque, the Great Mosque in Djenné, Mali (Fig.1.1), bears little resemblance to the Shah Hamdan Mosque in Srinagar, Kashmir, a building which also shares its origins in the fourteenth century and a similar history of reconstruction (Fig.1.2). These two examples reveal the extent to which the architecture of mosques is reliant on existing regional, cultural, and temporal influences. Moreover, these buildings also highlight the limited architectural requirements of an Islamic sacred space: the prayer space must be unobstructed and free of imagery and idols, and the building must allow congregants to face towards Islam's holiest sites (the Ka'aba) during worship. In mosques, this direction (*qiblah*) is often marked by the *mihrab*, an arched niche located on the wall at the front of the main prayer hall. On any given day, five times a day at any mosque across Canada or the US, like those across the globe, one can expect to see the main hall (or sometimes, the street, (Fig.1.3) fill up with congregants ready for prayer in synchronicity.

As illustrated by the 1995 resistance to the establishment of a East York mosque in Toronto, the mosque is both a place for worship and, in the West, a structure whose presence is a significant cause for concern. Whether it is the location, form, or symbolism, these buildings have evoked both tensions and anger from the residents where they are

FIGURE 1.1
Commissioned by Koy Kunboro, The Great Mosque of Djenné, Mali.
Original building, c.14th century. Reconstruction in 1909. Photographer
unknown.

FIGURE 1.2
Commissioned by Sikandar Butshikan, Shah Hamdan Mosque, Srinagar,
Kashmir. Original building, 1395. Reconstructed in 1493 and 1731. Pho-
tographer unknown.

FIGURE 1.3
Outside prayer.
Photographer un-
known.

proposed to be located. Recent oppositions to the establishment of a mosque have been most clearly articulated in the case of the construction of a mosque in Tennessee in 2010, where local residents challenged not only the construction of the mosque, but incited a debate on the legitimacy of Islam as a valid religion protected under the First Amendment of the US Constitution.[2] More broadly, and perhaps more voraciously, a motion was put forth in 2009 by the right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP) to ban the building of minarets outright. Although a total of four minarets exist across Switzerland, the advertisements that touted the campaign to end the construction of minarets fostered not only animosity towards such structures, but also equated the representation of these architectural forms with those of launching missiles (Fig.1.4). With more than 57% of the vote, the advertising campaign proved successful by making the case that such forms were synonymous with the increasing Islamisation of the nation.[3] According to Martin Baltisser, the SVP's general secretary, the ban served a necessary political message and was in his words, "a vote against minarets as symbols of Islamic power."[4] Indeed, these cases highlight the precarious nexus between identity, representation, built-form, and belonging in which mosques and their congregants find themselves in.

The objective of my doctoral research is to examine how primarily

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2. "Justice Department Wades Into Tennessee Mosque Controversy on Side of Islam," http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/10/18/justice-department-wades-tennessee-mosque-controversy-islam/ (date of last access: 3 July 2011). In a similar but far more polarizing manner has been that of Park51. Initially called Cordoba House, the multi-faith community centre in New York City has also drawn considerable public ire due to its proximity to Ground Zero, the site where the World Trade Centre Towers were destroyed on September 11, 2001. This building will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

3. "Swiss Voters back ban on minarets," http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8385069.stm (date of last access: 7 May 2013).

4. Ibid.

FIGURE 1.4
Swiss Peoples Party Poster, 2009. Photographer uknown.

FIGURE 1.5
Edwin Lord Weeks (American, 1849-1903), Interior of a
Mosque at Cordova, c.1880. Oil on Canvas, 182.9 x 223.5 x 8.3
cm. Collection of The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, MD.

contemporary mosques straddle notions of traditional visual and architectural forms within the realities of urban, non-Islamic and often antagonistic environments. This dissertation asks the question: What is it precisely that makes architecture "Islamic" in the Muslim diaspora? While Islam is without central religious figurehead and a Muslim can perform prayer anywhere, provided that a space is clean and unobstructed, there continues to be a unified consensus of a mosque's architectural ideal. While many Muslim communities can trace their own cultural ancestries to the symbolic elements found in traditional Islamic architecture such as domes and minarets, these elements have often been itemized, categorized, and objectified by the nineteenth-century European colonial approaches to Islamic architectural and cultural historiography in the Near East and South Asia. Domes and minarets are important symbols for identifying and distinguishing mosques – which also served as neccessary accoustical and temperature-controlling functions– but they are not intrinsic or necessary for the practice or propagation of Islam as a religion.[5] Besides their symbolic use by diasporic Muslims, the potency of these architectural markers has also been recognized outside of their traditional religious and social contexts. The architectural style known as the Moorish Revival, which also traces its evolution to the same colonial history, employs the same forms as mosque architecture, albeit for differing ends. These buildings, commonly found across the US, appropriated and utilized the architectures in Islamic lands to denote frivolity, decadence, and leisurely pursuits.

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5. Oleg Grabar, "Reflections of Islamic Art," *Muqarnas I: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture,* ed. by Oleg Grabar (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 2-4; and Andrew Petersen, "Minaret," *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1996), 187-88.

This study will examine the interpretation, use, and changing nature of Islamic architecture in Canada and the US from the late-nineteenth-century to the present. Buildings ranging from repurposed and purpose-built mosques to Orientalist movie theatres and Shriners' halls, are some examples that show the linked influence of the canon of Islamic architectural history, by providing a unique glimpse of the applications of styles and connections of built-forms originating from Muslim cultures.[6] This research will not only attempt to contextualize and theorize the development and use of Islamic architecture in North America, but also aims to show the fraught nature of the field itself in light of the heterogeneous social, racial and cultural makeup of North American Muslim communities. Muslim communities all draw on the conventions and elements of Islamic architecture in their architectural programs, yet the conventions they draw upon are also connected to the universalized and colonial imaginings of Islamic architecture. Put another way, while many Muslim communities are connected to the symbolic elements of Islamic architecture such as domes and minarets, these elements have often been distilled, categorized, and repeated throughout the making of Islamic architectural and cultural historiography that has been part-and-parcel of nineteenth century European colonialism in the Near East and South Asia. A complex web of colonial relations, one that produced an array of travelogues, works of fiction, pattern books and works of art

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6. Due to the size and diversity of Muslim groups in Canada and the US– with the exception of the Baitunnur Mosque and Noor Cultural Centre– this dissertation focuses on mosques congregated by Sunni Muslims. It is also worth mentioning here that other types of spaces such as campus spiritual rooms, prison chapels, rented halls, and the rotating use of basements in family homes are also used for Islamic prayer rituals. However, due to the irregular use of these spaces in terms of the number of congregants and rotating locations, they have not been included in this study of mosques.

(Fig.1.5), have provided ample detailed instruction for American architects and connoisseurs alike to draw upon in their designs.

Included in this study of both mosques and Moorish Revival buildings is an examination of the ways in which the growing agency of Muslim women in North America has challenged the implied and promulgated conventions of sex segregation in mosques. These women, not content with the disconnect between their everyday lives outside and within their respective Muslim communities, have begun to articulate alternative modes of religious practice beginning from the late 1990s onward. By holding women-led ritual prayers, they have begun to effectively change the spatial discourse of mosque architecture in the West. The performance of women-led rituals have also brought the need for interpretations of religious texts that consider the more contemporary roles Muslim women play to the forefront. However, as this study shows, these transformations are in keeping with the very active leadership roles Muslim women played in the early establishment of mosques in Canada and the US.[7]

Despite the substantial social and political transformation of countries with Muslim majorities during the early twentieth-century onward, Orientalist approaches to the study of Islamic architecture have almost exclusively focused on an array of secular and religious historical building types across the Middle East, Spain and the South Asian Subcontinent. As a result, the trajectory of Islamic architectural history has been vast in terms of styles, time spans, and uses, yet restricted to the mostly monumental and dynastic built environments

7. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Jane I. Smith and Kathleen M. Moore, *Muslim Women in America: The Challenge of Islamic Identity Today* (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), 63.

that dominate Muslim societies.[8] While such traditional architectural histories are necessary for understanding the dynamics of historical Islamic built-forms and environments, an emphasis on the production of Islamic architecture—namely mosque architecture—and by extension, its influence on a number of buildings in North America, provides a complex understanding of how varied forms of Islamic architecture are produced outside countries with Muslim-majority populations.

The Limits of an Architectural History of Islam

In his 2004 essay, "Islamic Architecture as a Field of Historical Enquiry", Nasser Rabbat points out that until recently, Islamic architecture has been "among the least theoretically developed areas of enquiry in the field of architecture" with many of the "pioneering historians in the field [who] were European architects, artists and draftspeople" in search of adventure and possibilities for financial gain, participated in the early European military interventions in the Middle East.[9] The histories written by these individuals, informed by the very colonial attitudes and trajectories that brought them to the Near East, were woven into the fabric of European knowledge of Islam. Though the divisions between colonial administrator and subject had not always been black and white, with only a few dissenting voices contesting the limits of Orientalist knowledge,

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8. Nasser Rabbat, "Islamic Architecture as a Field of Historical Enquiry," *Architectural Design* 74, no. 6 (2004), 18.

9. Ibid.

these accounts rarely stepped outside of these colonial framings.[10] The watershed moment for the re-reading of these relations came with the publication of Edward Said's now iconic book, *Orientalism* (1978). No single text has impacted the discipline of Islamic architectural history as much as Said's. Virtually all-subsequent writings on Islamic architecture since Said's publication are deeply indebted to *Orientalism*, as it made the way for "questioning the validity of using geographic, historical, religious and cultural boundaries as disciplinary frameworks" and as Rabbat has argued:

> notions of uniformity, introversion, and cultural and religious determinism that long dominated the study of Islamic architecture began to lose their grip as more and more scholars turned to the multiculturalist method in their enquiry.[11]

Since then, a number of contemporary social and architectural historians have approached the subject of Islamic architecture in the West. Among them are books such as Christian Welzbacher's *Euro Islam Architecture: New Mosques in the West* (2008), Akel Ismail Kahera's *Deconstructing the American Mosque* (2002), Omar Khalidi's essay "Approaches to Mosque Design in North America" (1998), and Barbara Metcalf Daly's *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe* (1996). Each text illustrates the issues related to the construction of Islamic

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10. In *Orientalism's Interlocutors* (Duke University Press, 2002), Jill Beaulieu and Mary Roberts bring together a series of insightful essays that illustrated the multifaceted colonial relations in the Middle East, but also a number of instances where subjects 'spoke back' against the dominant visual culture of colonial and orientalist knowledge. While these examples are important in understanding the nuances of colonial rule, the totality of colonialism and imperialism in the Middle East was far greater, and was often able to exercise power over the colonial subject.

11. Nasser Rabbat, "Islamic Architecture as a Field of Historical Enquiry," 19-20.

architectural forms in the West, and provide a number of case studies that elucidate the synthesis of Islamic and Western architectural histories. Despite the important contributions of these books, comprehensive links between heterogeneous Muslim religious spaces and communities to issues of race and representation as well as gender roles have largely remained understudied. In terms of Islamic perspectives on architecture, the philosophical contributions of Muslims such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1987), Laleh Bahktiar and Nadar Ardalan (1973) continue to be the critical texts, however the field of Islamic architectural history, as it continues to grow its breath and focus on individual national architectural histories, contemporary Islamic architectural history continues to wrest itself from its roots in nineteenth-century colonialism. Traditional approaches to Islamic architectural history studied explicitly religious structures such as mosques, but also secular buildings such as *caravanserais* (road side inns), palaces, and funerary tombs. Such analyses have also focused on the aesthetic and stylistic values of Islamic architectural forms, while not fully describing or documenting the broader relationships Muslims have had with these structures. This study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of Islamic architecture beyond formal stylistic descriptions and grand narratives; one that shows how it has been appropriated, translated, and applied in North America, but also is grounded in an understanding of the diversity of contemporary Muslim histories and their assimilation in the West.

In addition to highlighting the development of Islamic architectures in Canada and the US, this study will expand on the knowledge of race and representation as it is made evident in the built environment and architectural histories. Drawing on the work of Edward Said, Gulzar

Haider, and Amina Wadud, I plan to show how mosque architectures and those used for "fantasy" not only often draw on a similar vocabulary of stylized Islamic architecture, but how their power is dismantled by the practice of Islamic rituals by women outside of their confines. The tensions between these two modes of Islamic architecture show how the essentialism of these forms are problematic in their application, but also necessary in communicating the identity of Muslim subjects. In doing so, it is the intent of this study to show how the use and ideas of Islamic architecture are not limited to Muslim communities, but have also been used more broadly in cities mostly across the US as part of an ongoing fascination with such built-forms. As a result, they also address the impact and influence of Islamic built-forms on secular, everyday architecture outside of Muslim-majority countries.

As previously noted, this study pays particular attention to the gendered nature of Islamic architectural practice, specifically as it relates to mosques. For this analysis, I plan to look closely at the performance and reversal of gendered roles of women in mosques, and their relationship to architectural mosque settings. The literature on the practice of women-led prayer has grown exponentially since the 2005 women-led prayer by Amina Wadud at the Synod House (Episcopalian) in New York City. Since then, the study of such challenges to the normative Islamic ritual practices in the West has steadily increased, as have the calls for feminist engagement with Islamic exegesis. Among the most contextual accounts studied for this dissertation are Juliane Hammer (2012), Ahmed Elewa and Laury Silvers (2010-11), Amina Wadud (2007), Asma Barlas (2002), Mohja Kahf (1999), and Leila Ahmed (1993, 2000, 2001). Although often unacknowledged, Muslim women in the West play an important role in

the maintenance and propagation of Islam. My research will expand on how Muslim women continue to develop strategies to engage mosques and Muslim spaces.

Lastly, a number of the buildings included in this study have neither been fully documented nor researched. Other than Jerrilyn Dodds' book *Mosques of New York* (2002) and Barbara Daly Metcalf's *Making Muslim Space* (1996), research on buildings that have been renovated and used as mosques remains limited. The amount of images and information on such mosques are not easily accessible or available, and moreover they have not been examined in comparison to more traditionally designed mosques across North America. This has also been the case with the study of the various mosques belonging to non-Sunni Muslim sects.[12] My research will attempt to document and provide a range of architectural examples from Canada and the US to fill the gap in the study of contemporary mosques and Islamic architecture. In considering renovated buildings, traditional mosques along with buildings representative of the Moorish Revival, I intend to show the pervasiveness of Islamic architecture in North America, and how these buildings have been an integral part of the way in which Islam and Muslims have been represented in the West. This analysis will challenge the conception and perception that Islamic architecture is unconnected to Western architectural history—specifically from North American architectural history—and that its subaltern status is due to the continued marginalization and exclusion of Muslim populations from the public sphere in the West.

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12. Though not covered in this dissertation, non-Sunni Muslim groups such as the Shia and Ismaili constitute a significant component of the Muslim diaspora in Canada and the US.

Defining the Muslim Diaspora

Given the heterogeneity of Muslims in Canada and the US, could this diverse religious community be aptly described as a diaspora in the traditional sense? Until the 1960s, the term diaspora exclusively defined to Jewish, Greek, African and Armenian populations as classic examples.[13] Certainly segments of the Muslim community qualify as being part of a greater, forced migration outside their known borders, while other groups less so. In the introduction of their book *Diaspora by Design* (2009), Haideh Moghissi, Saeed Rahnema and Mark J. Goodman contend that:

> The identifier "Muslim diaspora" is not as self-explanatory as it may appear, particularly when it is used in reference to the vast number of ethnically, culturally, linguistically, national, and religiously diverse migrant populations of Muslim cultural background in the West… "Diaspora" is widely used today to refer to populations of refugees, migrants, guest workers, expatriates, and the exiled and self-exiled without much concern for the existence of common features or contextual applicability. In these accounts, it is assumed that globalization has created "de-territorialized," fluid, and "transnational" identities, and that the concept allows an understanding of ethnicity, culture and identity free from problems of essentialism.[14]

Far from presenting a loose definition of diaspora, the authors argue that the concept of diaspora "cannot be treated as one of definition only, but must also be critically reconnected to the forces that have uprooted populations historically and pushed masses of peoples

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13. Christoph Schumann, "A Muslim 'Diaspora' in the United States?" *Muslim World* 97, no.1 (January 2007), 12.

14. Haideh Moghissi, Saeed Rahnema, and Mark J. Goodman, *Diaspora by Design: Muslims in Canada and Beyond* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 3-4.

beyond known and familiar borders" and that "these forces include colonialism, neo-colonialism, the formation of nation-states, and the rise of hegemonic nationalist ideologies, regionalization, imperialism, and globalization."[15] Much like the traditional definitions of diaspora, the notion of a Muslim diaspora is keenly marked by a sense of not belonging, but also "sociocultural marginality, racialization, and denial of access to political and economic power."[16] The Muslim diaspora must go beyond the categorization of ethnicity, but incorporate the relations of power that alter a group's feeling of home. In this regard, the arrival and settlement of Muslim peoples in the West is one that continues to be characterized by an imbalance of power, and a disenfranchisement with the models of democracy in Canada and the US.

Along similar lines, Christoph Shumann contends, "diaspora politics revolve around political issues *elsewhere* but, by necessity, it also raises questions of equality and difference or, more precisely, civil rights and cultural recognition *at home*."[17] The establishment of Canadian and American Muslim communities and their mosques emphasize this precise predicament between old homelands and new. As such, diasporic mosques reveal several touchstone points regarding national culture and transnational formulations of Muslim identity, and, as a result, complicate the formulations of nationhood and its connections to the global world. In considering early Muslim history along with the establishment of sectarian communities in the US and Canada, the marginality and intense diversity of Muslim communities not only becomes apparent, but also the

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15. Ibid.

16. Ibid, 6.

17. Christoph Schumann, "A Muslim 'Diaspora' in the United States?," 14.

importance of disrupting the myth of a unique and 'pure' identity that is perpetuated in these nations.

The Parameters of the Study

The first chapter of this dissertation introduces and examines the varied and complex history of Muslim arrival and settlement in Canada and the US, as well as providing an overview of the historiographical approaches to the study of Islamic architecture. The chapter begins with the Al-Rashid Mosque, the first purpose-built mosque in Canada, which is now, after a 1992 move, located at Fort Edmonton Park in Alberta. The early little known history of the Al-Rashid affirms the possibility of such buildings to develop an aesthetic contingent on the community's place in time. This mosque, which resembles an amalgamation of an Eastern Orthodox Church and a single-room schoolhouse, had for many years acted as a community centre for Arabs in Edmonton.

In this chapter I also discuss the arrival of another Muslim population, one whose arrival significantly predates that of the Arab Ottomans. The first Muslims to North America came forcibly, and through much more difficult routes, namely Muslims from Africa's western coast that came during the period of Transatlantic slavery. Though the stories of Muslims life during this period were extremely repressed, knowledge of Islamic practices still remain. However, it would not be until the establishment of the Moorish Science Temple (MTSA) that an Islamic identity was realized. The congregants of the MTSA along with immigrants from the Middle East and South Asia during the late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century, that a concept of sacred space, and by extension, mosque architecture would be developed. The sacred

spaces of these communities were profoundly distinguishable from their counterparts in Muslim majority centres. This chapter will explore the relationship these early communities had with ideas of sacred space and mosque architecture, while also considering the colonial and Orientalist grounding of Islamic architectural history. As a field that emerged during a period of intense European colonialism, the trajectory of Islamic architectural history has been vast in terms of styles, time spans and uses, yet restricted to mostly monumental and dynastic built environments within larger Muslim societies.[18]

To conclude the chapter, I briefly introduce the development of the architectural style known as the Moorish Revival. The style, which presents Islamic architectural forms as a visual language of whimsy and decadence, was an important interpretation of Islamic forms in the US. I emphasis that while the Moorish Revivial employed Islamic architectural tropes, their purpose significantly divergent from the mosques used by Muslims .

In Chapter Two, I examine the foundations of Moorish Revival architecture in the United States starting from the early nineteenth- to mid-twentieth-century. Described by David Naylor as "architectures of fantasy", these prominent homes, movie houses, casinos, and theatres display a deep preoccupation with the styles and forms of Islamic architecture. Informed by the circulation and production of Orientalist literature and works of art, these buildings draw on the conventions of mosque architecture; yet develop their own stylized and essentialized notion of the "East." For masonic organizations such at the Shriners,

18. Robert Hillenbrand, "Studying Islamic Architecture: Challenges and Perspectives," *Architectural History* 46 (2003), 3.

this appropriation of Islamic forms would come to define not only their architectural program of mosque-building (their Shrine Temples were originally called mosques), but also their use of a Moorish identity, and would permeate throughout their organization, from their Shriners clothing to the everyday parlance of Arabic names and phrases. As Holly Edwards notes, "American Orientalism was essentially a therapeutic mechanism as well as a creative process whereby people might construct models of behaviour and society and their move into spaces of power that they had constructed."[19] These "architectures of fantasy" have also been used to convey a sense of excess and opulence that is linked to the formation of Islamic architectural history, but it is also one that is disjointed from the socio-economic realities of Muslim life in North America. Such buildings continue to exist side-by-side mosques, yet they describe a wholly different reality, one where mosque architecture is effectively used as a means to convey a sense of leisure, and where mosques used by Muslims become racialized religious spaces.

A touchstone for the analysis of the Moorish Revival lies with Edward Said's conceptualization of Orientalism. I use Said's ideas to examine how these buildings confirm modes of seeing the architectures of the "East" by those in the "West." However, during the development of the Moorish Revival, competing narratives from the Ottoman pavilions in world expositions in cities such as Chicago and Paris presented built-

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19. Holly Edwards, "Orientalism in America, 1870-1930," *Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures: Orientalism in America, 1870-1930,* ed. Holly Edwards (Princeton: Princeton University Press / Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2000), 17. Edwards explains that the Orient was a "useful construct" for American settlers to "revisit the past and to envision the future" and was "a distant screen upon which the Protestant narrative could be reenacted, American values could be projected, and nostalgia could be expressed." (16-17).

forms that contested the authority of Orientalist knowledge. This chapter seeks to contextualize the varying uses of Islamic architecture in the US.[20]

The Third Chapter of this study looks at two kinds of architectural practices employed by Canadian and American Muslim communities. Firstly, buildings repurposed in order to become mosques, and secondly, those built with the intention of being mosques. Varied in terms of their aesthetic choices and communal make up, the mosques in this chapter include those from the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, the Nation of Islam, and Sunni communities. Mosques examined in this chapter include Baitunnur Mosque (Calgary, AB), Assuna Annabawiyya Mosque (Montréal, QC), Malcolm Shabazz Mosque (NYC, New York), Jami Mosque (Toronto, ON), The Islamic Cultural Center of New York (NYC), and the Dar al-Islam (Abiquiu, NM). Each example highlights the diverse histories and difficult negotiations that each mosque must face during their establishment. Moreover, these examples show the growing stakes involved in the construction of an Islamic architectural history in Canada and the US.

In this chapter I ask several questions, namely, are these mosques understood and used in a similar manner? Or are there differentiating aesthetic and architectural ideals? How has the making of these mosques drawn from of an Islamic architectural history? Are they simply an essentialized version of mosque architecture or do they successfully claim a sense of architectural authenticity? Furthermore, what challenges to Islamic architecture do renovated mosques impose? These mosques provide a glimpse into the heterogeneous uses and applications of mosque

20. Though examples of Moorish Revival exist in Canada, the breadth of Moorish Revival buildings in the US are far more varied and historic than their Canadian counterparts.

architecture in North America. In addition to their function as a religious institution, I highlight how these mosques have integrated broader, more community-focused activities. The motivation to emphasize these functions is to show the non-religious purposes of mosques that goes beyond the rigid and formal practice of ritual, and to understand the role of faith in today's contemporary society. These mosques not only range in terms of style, but also show the ways in which space has been interpreted to accommodate the Muslim community and its geographic situation in the urban environment.

The study of mosque and Moorish Revival buildings also reveals the patriarchal underpinnings in both the approaches considered and applied in their construction. Chapter Four specifically examines such conventions used in mosques, and the ways in which the segregation of women has been increasingly questioned and challenged by Muslim women. These women, by re-evaluating religious texts and precedents, have made the case for women-led ritual practices. While the practice of sex segregation is institutionally entrenched in a number of faiths, the spaces within mosques has for many Muslim women not mirrored the changes in their social, educational, and economic positions in the diaspora. As Yvonne Haddad (et.al) point out, while many immigrant Muslim women come from cultures that do not emphasize (or even expect) women to attend the mosque, women in Canada and the US face considerably less restrictions.[21] In fact, Muslim women in the West play far more important roles in the administration and maintenance of the mosque, yet continue to be marginalized in terms of decision-making and

21. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Jane I. Smith and Kathleen M. Moore, *Muslim Women in America: The Challenge of Islamic Identity Today* (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), 62.

leadership.

In recent years, Muslim women have progressively challenged traditional power relations —namely through a series of women-led events such as Friday Prayers (*Jumm'ah*) led by Amina Wadud in 2005[22] and the 2004 Friday Sermon (*khut'bah*) delivered by York University (Toronto) student Maryam Mirza. Such radical and far-reaching events reverse the roles historically held exclusively by men, and have reenergized the debate on the validity of women's participation in the Muslim community. In many cases, these events are considered to be the first recorded instances of Muslim women challenging Islamic conventions in North America (and perhaps even in recent Muslim history). This chapter will explore how sex and gender is used to define mosque architecture and the roles Muslim women play within the mosque.

Conclusion

While some of the more common formal architectural features are integrated into built-forms, the meanings of mosque architecture in Canada and the US are much more diverse. For some, they are spiritual places of worship and intrinsic to affirming their religious identities. For others, these buildings represent a wildly inaccurate Arabian fantasy and signify the experience of leisureliness. While, for others it is a site where debates on the nature of women's leadership in the Muslim community can be meted out. These issues are an underrepresented part of Canadian and American architectural histories, but also reflect the sometimes disjointed character of Muslim identity. As Reza Arslan argues, since the

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22. Wadud has as a result of her participation in the event been publically accused of being a "non-Muslim."

demise of the Ottoman Empire, a time where Islamic religious and cultural religious authority was symbolically more defined,

> pan-Islamism was discarded as a viable ideology for Muslim unification. And though Pan-Arabism was thus left as a principal voice of opposition to colonialism it could no longer hope to extend beyond national boundaries. Muslims were being forced to identify themselves as citizens of nations, not members of a community.[23]

Given the breadth and variability of American and Canadian mosques, there are no accurate numbers on how many mosques are in existence. In 2006, some estimates were between 1,500 to 2,000 American mosques alone.[24] In Canada, these numbers have still not been tallied. However, what is clear is that mosques are changing the urban and religious landscape in both countries. By 2011, the world's most northern mosque had been established in Inuvik, Northwest Territories by the Muslim community of Inuvik and the Zubaidah Tallab Foundation (Fig.1.6). Each time a mosque is built in North America, it not only negotiates and challenges its connections to Islam, but more importantly, as seen in the numerous acts of vandalism on the South Nepean Muslim Community (SNMC) Centre in Barrhaven, Ottawa (Fig.1.7), presents a litmus test to North American societal values and acceptance in their making.

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23. Reza Aslan, *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam* (New York: Random House, 2011), 239-240.

24. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, et al. *Muslim Women in America*, 63.

FIGURE 1.6
The Midnight Sun Mosque, Inuvik, Northwest Territories,
Canada. 2011. Photo: Phillipe Morin, 2011.

FIGURE 1.7
Vandalized billboard, Ottawa, Ontario. 2010-12. Image courtesy of
the Canadian Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN).

Chapter 1
Building Islam in North America

> *When they arrive in the new country,*
> *Voyagers carry it on their shoulders,*
> *The dusting of the sky they left behind.*
> Mohja Kahf, "Voyagers Dust"(2003). [1]
>
> *And whenever the time comes for prayer,*
> *pray there, for that is a mosque.*
> Sahih Muslim (ca. 821-75).[2]

<u>Introduction</u>

In a 1940s tourist guide booklet on Edmonton, the city is described as being the ideal gateway to the north and is praised for its central location in Canada.[3] Throughout the booklet the tourist (and possibly, the potential investor) is presented with Edmonton's many virtues as a picturesque city with a growing global and natural resource-based economy. Curiously, the booklet also briefly mentions the existence of two communities that have helped place Edmonton "at the crossroads of the World": the first, the existence of a Chinatown, and the second, the presence of Canada's first "Moslem temple," the Al-Rashid mosque (Fig.2.1). While it may seem surprising that either of these communities

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1. Mohja Kahf, "Voyager Dust," *Emails from Scheherazad* (Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 1.

2. Muslim ibn al-Hajj aj al-Qushayri (ca. 821-75) *Sahih Muslim; being traditions of the sayings and doings of the prophet Muhammad as narrated by his companions and compiled under the title al-Jami'-Sahih, by Imam Muslim. Rendered into English by 'Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, with explanatory notes and brief biographical sketches of major narrators* (Lahore, Pakistan: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1971-5), 264.

3. T.H. Dale, *Edmonton, gateway to the north: tourists' souvenir guidebook* (Edmonton, Alta.: 1947) 10, 56-57.

FIGURE 2.1
Mike Drewoth (builder), Al-Rashid Mosque, Edmonton, Alberta,
Canada. 1938. City of Edmonton Archives (A98-55).

FIGURE 2.2
Al-Rashid congregants in prayer, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada,
c.1940s. City of Edmonton Archive, (EA-600-3690a).

are credited for providing Edmonton with a sense of global authority, such mention glosses over Canada's exclusionary immigration policies during the 1940s, while at the same time offers a true glimpse into Canada's largely underrepresented, diverse cultural and religious landscape.[4] However, unlike the Chinese community of this period, Edmonton's predominately Arab Muslims had never been in a legal sense considered a distinct racial or visible ethnic "other" from their Euro-Canadian counterparts. For upon their arrival to Canada, many in the community had assimilated, and as a result, could often either legally or socially pass for White.[5] By adopting English names and even marrying non-Muslims, a number of these newly arrived immigrants assimilated quickly into their new identities, yet maintained their religious practice at the mosque. With its two hexagonal minarets and makeshift metal dome, the Al-Rashid Mosque was, for many in the community, the only visible marker of their religious identity in Edmonton.

The story of the Al-Rashid mosque and its congregants, while

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4. During the opening ceremony of the Al Rashid Mosque, then mayor John Fry, perhaps making a comment on the practice of Jim Crow segregation laws in the United States, said that the mosque's opening was "'a unique privilege for him and for those attending'" and that "'the worshippers should be proud they were Canadian citizens "'as "'this couldn't happen in some lands which you are well aware of.' " ("Formally Open First Mosque in Dominion." *Edmonton Journal*, Monday, 12 December 1938, Section Two, 9). However, both Canada and the United States have long held discriminatory immigration policies favoring European settlement through the displacement and dispossession of Aboriginal peoples. By the 1960s, the liberalization of immigration policies opened the door for non-Western Europeans. This topic will be discussed further in the following chapters of this dissertation.

5. Sarah M.A. Gualtieri's book *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the early Syrian American Diaspora* (2009) provides insight into how early Syrian settlers used legal and economic means to define their racial identity as being 'White' in the US during the late 1800s- early 1900s. Unlike early South Asian or East Asian immigrants, these Ottoman Arab settlers, the majority of whom were Christian (and often of Eastern, Christian sects), were able to use both historical and commonly believed notions of race to support their claims of whiteness and ultimately, their citizenship.

an important part of Edmonton's early settler history, is an unfamiliar
one. Since the late 1880s, the Muslim community that formed the Al-
Rashid mosque came to Alberta seeking both economic prosperity and
political refuge.[6] This community, which consisted of Ottoman Arabs
from countries now known as Lebanon and Syria, was composed of
traders, merchants, and farmers who made up a small yet important part
of Alberta's social and economic fabric (Fig.2.2). By 1938, the community
had the means to employ Ukrainian master-builder Mike Drewoth to
build the Al-Rashid Mosque.[7] The mosque's unique, church-like design,
which showcases an amalgamation of the community's needs and the
builder's skill and knowledge, would come to represent the hybrid nature
of subsequent mosques in North America. The Muslim community in
Edmonton, like other early Muslim settlers in places in Canada and the
U.S. such as Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Halifax, Nova Scotia or Dearborn,
Michigan, present a deeper history of Muslim settlement and arrival,
one that is far less politically and socially polarized from any notion of a
cohesive European or Christian settler past that is often imagined.

The mosque, an important historic structure central to Muslim
religious and secular life, serves as a place where one can learn about
Islam, gain supplication and receive community support. As a result of
their centrality to the practice of Islam, the histories of mosques in Canada
and the US provide insights into the fluidity of the Islamic faith that is

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6. Due to the both the heighten prospect of WWI and the changing religious and
ethnic legislation towards non-Muslims and non-Turks during the late-Ottoman
period, the bulk of Ottoman Arabs who migrated to North America were of
Christian and Jewish faiths. However a significant number of Muslim Arabs
were also affected by the changing laws and social attitudes towards Arabs in the
predominately Turkish ruled Ottoman Empire.

7. Andrea W. Lorenz, "Canada's Pioneer Mosque," *Saudi Aramco World* (July/
August 1998), 28-31.

"lived by its people today, people who are no longer isolated from the pluralistic chaos and consequences of modernity and the after-effects of colonialism."[8] To be more precise, the mosques like the ones established by these early immigrant communities show the improvisational and changing nature of Islamic built forms, and by extension, Muslim life. This is to say that these early communities, like the ones to come afterwards, would simply make do with the available facilities for the performance of rituals. Whether they are purpose-built or renovated from existing structures, these mosques continue to be the focal point for many practicing Muslims in Canada and the US. Beyond the varied cultural visual forms presented in these mosques, they also provide a look into the ways in which Muslim identity is spatially constructed in North America, while challenging the presumption of a secular and raceless urban landscape in countries with growing Muslims populations.

Like the heterogeneous makeup of Muslim communities, the causes of Muslim migration to North America have also been diverse. While the first arrivals were Africans who came to the US forcibly, against their will and under duress during the period of Transatlantic Slavery, Muslim immigration (particularly Arab and Albanian) to North America can be traced back to the late 1880s. The easing of Canadian and US immigration laws for non-European immigrants from the 1960s onward, namely reforms to the American Asia Exclusion Act in 1965[9] and the Canadian Immigration Act in 1976[10], has meant that both the size and

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8. Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* (OneWorld Publications: Oxford, UK, 2007), 2.

9. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, *Becoming American? The Forging of Arab and Muslim Identity in Pluralist America* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2001), 4.

10. Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-2006,* Rev. ed., 2007 (Toronto, ON: Dundurn Press, 1997), 209-210.

diversity of Muslim communities in cities such as Detroit, Toledo, Toronto and Montréal have grown significantly.[11] According to Statistics Canada, in Canada alone, from 1991 to 2001 the number of people identifying themselves as Muslim grew by 128.9 percent, making the Muslim community one of the most significant religious groups in the country.[12]

However, this growing presence in major North American metropolises has been met with heightened levels of public antagonism toward Muslims, Islamic religious practices, and the establishment of mosques. Hostility toward the Muslim community has grown in tandem with global concerns about terrorism that are often linked to polarizing events, from the Gulf Wars to 9/11, the invasion of Iraq, and the subsequent war in Afghanistan.[13] Rather than being viewed as an integral part of a multicultural society (as articulated in the Edmonton guidebook), Muslims have increasingly been singled out as being at odds with Western society, Western "values", and particularly resistant to integration and

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11. Omar Khalidi, "Approaches to Mosque Design in North America," *Muslims on the Americanization Path?*, eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 317.

12. Haideh Moghissi, Saeed Rahnema and Mark J. Goodman, *Diaspora by Design: Muslim Immigrants in Canada and Beyond* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 7. According to the 2001 Census, the number of Muslims in Canada was 579,640, which represents 2 percent of the total population. See http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/home/index.cfm (accessed 2 Jan. 2011).

13. Much has been written on contemporary Muslim life in North America. For more recent information, see Sherene H. Razack, *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Natasha Bakht, *Belonging and Banishment: Being Muslim in Canada* (Toronto: TSAR Publications, 2008); Geneive Abdo, *Mecca and Main Street: Muslim Life in America After 9/11* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Peter Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004) and Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), Amina Beverly McCloud, *African American Islam* (New York: Routledge, 1995) Baha AbuLaban, *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1980.) .

assimilation.[14] The construction of mosques has often been at the heart of these debates and such sentiments are most clearly expressed in some of the thinly veiled Islamaphobic and racist arguments made against their establishment. Among the most common concerns are complaints over the appropriateness of the building's location, decreased property values, traffic congestion, and the possibility of diminished access to parking for local residents.[15] When raised at town halls or council meetings, these arguments continue to disavow claims for space by Muslim communities.

The Contested Field of Islamic Architectural History

For many Muslims across the globe, the template for all mosques is the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. As the second holiest site for Muslims, this early mosque which was initially a simple courtyard with a palm leaf roof for shade,[16] was primarily used as a meeting place for followers and for communal prayer. Established in the historic pre-Islamic city of Yathrib in 622 CE (later renamed Medina), this early structure would also come to be a part of what Reza Aslan calls the "enduring mythology" in Islam's early history– one that would define the religion and politics for the next fourteen hundred years.[17] For it was here in this agricultural oasis that "the Muslim community was born, and where Muhammad's Arab

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14. Haideh Moghissi, Saeed Rahnema and Mark J. Goodman, *Diaspora by Design,* 16.

15. Isin Engin and Myer Siemiatycki, "Making Space for Mosques: Claiming Urban Citizenship," *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society,* ed. Sherene H. Razack (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002), 188, 201.

16. Robert Irwin, *Islamic Art in Context* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 11 The holiest site for Muslims is the Kaaba in the city of Mecca. Five times a day Muslims across the globe physically and spiritually direct their prayers towards the Kaaba.

17. Reza Aslan, *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2011), 52.

social reform movement transformed into a universal religious ideology."[18] Moreover, it was this time and place that has continued to inspired various groups and revivalist movements from the Middle Ages to contemporary times as an Islamic archetype.[19] This period has left lasting impressions, as contemporary mosques have largely stayed true to the function and purpose of this first mosque. As spaces that are used for more than just the performance of Islamic ritual, contemporary Canadian and American mosques, either purpose-built or repurposed from an existing structure, have become community centres in the Muslim diaspora, and continue to serve Muslims as places for educational, cultural, and social activities.

The aim of this chapter is to present some of the issues that surround the development, appropriation and impact of both purpose-built and renovated mosque architecture in Canada and the United States from the early 1900s to the present. Purpose-built mosques like the Islamic Center of Washington (Fig. 2.3) employ a combination of crafts and visual forms of traditional Islamic architecture from Egypt, Iran, Turkey and Spain.[20] Built by architects at the behest of Muslim communities, these buildings are still easily recognizable as standard mosques. Moreover, in replicating and incorporating the languages of traditional Islamic architecture, they represent an idealized form of mosque architecture. Conversely, renovated mosques are often purchased storefronts, houses, warehouses, and even old car dealerships (Fig.2.4) that are made into mosques through a series of renovations to both the exterior and interior of the original structure. Depending upon the scale of the renovations, these mosques are often

18. Ibid, 52-53.

19. Ibid.

20. Akel Ismail Kahera, *Deconstructing the American Mosque: Space, Gender and Aesthetics*, 69.

FIGURE 2.3
Mario Rossi (architect), Islamic Center of Washington, District
of Columbia, USA. 1944. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2009.

FIGURE 2.4
Imadul Islam Centre, North York, Ontario, Canada. Date of establishment, c.
1990s. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2008.

not easily identifiable as places of worship, and as a result are most often experienced as "interiors."[21] Located in the heart of a predominately Arab neighbourhood in the north end of Minneapolis, the Islamic Cultural Community Center – Masjid Al Huda (Fig. 2.5) is a prime example of a renovated mosque. Originally an office building, this mosque blends in amongst the apartment buildings, rows of fruit shops and Middle Eastern restaurants, and is subtle in its proclamation of a Muslim identity. The buildings that fall into this category of repurposed mosques do not always overtly exhibit any Islamic architectural forms, but nonetheless use parts of the idioms and ideas of traditional Islamic architecture. Whether with the Arabic calligraphy on their exteriors, or the gendered divisions in the interiors, these mosques incorporate a commonality of traditional Islamic forms. Moreover, because of their affordability and often times, proximity to neighbourhoods with existing Muslim populations, these types of buildings have come to represent the bulk of mosques in North America.[22]

In conjunction with this study of mosques it is fruitful to also consider Orientalist architectures, alternatively known as the "Moorish Revival."[23] Buildings such as the Olana Castle (Fig.2.6) and the Zorayda Castle Museum (Fig.2.7) were primarily built by wealthy, Euro-North American men who extensively travelled throughout Muslim regions in the Middle East, India as well as the Far East in the late nineteenth and

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21. Jerrilynn D. Dodds, *New York Masjid / Mosques Of New York* (New York: powerHouse Books; 1 edition, May 2002), 25.

22. Omar Khalidi, "Approaches to Mosque Design in North America," *Muslims on the Americanization Path?*, eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Hadadd and John L. Esposito (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 317-334.

23. For the sake of both consistency and accuracy, I have used the term Moorish Revival to describe these buildings. Other alternative names exist such as "Moorish Fantasy", "Moorish-Influenced", "Turkish Revival Folly", and "Moorish Folly" among many others.

FIGURE 2.5
Islamic Cultural Community Center – Masjid Al Huda, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. Date of establishment unknown. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2012.

FIGURE 2.6
Richard Morris Hunt (architect) and Fredrick Church (developer), Olana House Fortress, Hudson, New York, USA. 1870-1891. Photo: Corbis.

FIGURE 2.7
Franklin W. Smith (architect), Zorayda Castle
Museum, St. Augustine, Florida, USA. 1883. Photo:
Phil Pasquini.

early twentieth century. In the case of the Olana Castle, its owner Frederic Edwin Church, a prominent member of the American Hudson River School, was a part of a larger process of "aesthetic and oral philosophizing [as much] as it was painting, collecting, synthesizing, and designing."[24] These buildings draw upon and incorporate a similar stylized vocabulary of traditional Islamic architecture. Ranging from movie theatres to family homes to Shriners' halls, the buildings associated with the Moorish Revival are best described not necessarily as a movement, but as a construct of an Islamic identity that is detached from the practice of religion, and that is instead a "product of fads and fancies, explorations of exotic possibilities of the architecture of other cultures."[25]

While vastly different in terms of their lived realities and development, arguably both mosques and Moorish Revival buildings offer a complicated version of Islam, one that shows how styles and built forms influenced by and originating from a variety of Muslim cultures have taken root and flourished in North America.[26] In addition to reaffirming formal stylistic descriptions and grand narratives, when looked at in conjunction with mosques, Moorish Revival buildings reveal the interrelated colonial origins of their architectural histories, and the fraught

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24. Holly Edwards, "A Million and One Nights: Orientalism in America, 1870-1930," *Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures: Orientalism in America, 1870-1930*, ed. Holly Edwards (Princeton: Princeton University Press / Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2000), 30.

25. John M. MacKenzie, "Orientalism in Architecture., *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 71.

26. Holly Edward points out that the political circumstances and aesthetic ideals for American Orientalists differed from their French counterparts, as "imperialistic activities were largely confined to the North American continent, where depredations on native peoples were rationalized as exploration and Manifest Destiny. Elites and aesthetes sought 'refinement' abroad or equated it with imported artifacts and cultural traditions of greater antiquity than their own." (12)

nature that surrounds the basis of their "Islamic" character. Put in another way, a study of these built forms in North America depicts an Islam that is neither culturally or religiously homogeneous, nor at odds with the rapid changes of modernity, but as a site for showing how Islam has been "condensed into a symbolic construction with enormous psychological power."[27]

The study of mosques and Moorish Revival buildings in North America raise several questions regarding the parameters of Islamic architectural and Canadian and US history. For example, what constitutes a mosque, especially outside of countries with long and historic traditions of Islam? Do either of these types buildings fit within the chronology of Islamic architectural history? What are the motivations behind the uses of Islamic architectural tropes in Canada and the US? How do mosques spatially construct gender? And most importantly, do these types of buildings racialize Muslim identity, and what is at stake in such identity constructs? I would argue that without an analysis of how spaces formulate and convey notions of Islam in built-form in Canada and the US, the practices and identities that are utilized by Muslim communities become further stigmatized, while their built-forms are seen as being either pastiche expressions or as being incompatible with the North American architectural landscape. Or at worst, mosques in particular are seen as sites of hostility and the unknown (and for example, a potential place for the recruitment and training of extremists).

There is little doubt of the ways in which architecture renders the

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27. Haideh Moghissi, Saeed Rahnema and Mark J. Goodman, *Diaspora by Design: Muslim Immigrants in Canada and Beyond* (Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 2009), 13.

movement and identities of people visible.[28] Built-forms reflect the cultural values and aesthetic ideals of a given people. However, through strategies of distancing (and sometimes even outright denial), the exclusion of both historic and contemporary Islamic architecture from the histories of Canada and the US presents the idea that these Islamic buildings are unaffected from the complexities of the urban landscape. Moreover, in buildings such as those described as part of the Moorish Revival, the imagined Orient represented in their forms are presented as a verifiable truth.[29] However the study and linkage of buildings as heterogeneous as purpose-built and renovated mosques along with examples of the Moorish Revival challenges the historicized perceptions of not only Islam, but also the narratives and parameters of a universalized Islamic architectural history.

A cursory review of Islamic architectural history reveals the need for a history that encapsulates both Canadian and American mosque and Moorish Revival architectures, and that is grounded in an analysis of the circulation and application of Islamic visual forms. This means a further expansion on the ways in which the raced character of the structures are presented and displayed. Additionally, studying mosques and Moorish Revival buildings is one way to unravel and rethink the historicized and dynamic spatialized anxieties between the "West" and "Islam." In their construction and establishment, mosques in particular offer insights into how citizenship and belonging are envisioned and unsettled through built-forms, and how racism based on negative Orientalist attitudes

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28. Sherene H. Razack, *Race, Space and the Law*, 11.

29. Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," *Race-ing Art History: Critical Readings in Race and Art History,* ed. Kimberly N. Pinder (New York: Routledge, 2002), 72-78.

continue to confront these buildings. For buildings and cities do not simply "evolve naturally" but are conditioned by cultural, economic and symbolic exchanges.[30] The image of the city is not only informed by its buildings, but by the ideas that its buildings share, the degree of "physical coherence" to "convey a sense of place."[31] And though cities are constantly evolving in terms of their economic and social infrastructures, set values on the look and function of the city exist. Mosques and Moorish Revival buildings are one of the starting points to denaturalize how cities are valued and imagined. They expose how cities and citizens produce meaning in relationship to their buildings—and ultimately who is permitted to participate in its construction.

Legacies of Islamic Architectural History: Colonial Perspectives and Modern Realities

In the current post-9/11 world, the discourse on Islam and the West has become a public and popular debate amongst academics and television pundits alike. Among the issues that have since directly impacted and shaped Muslims in Canada and the US have been the perilous and continuous global threat of terrorism, conflated with polemical debates on the integration and assimilability of Muslim peoples, namely the wearing of the niqab and burqa by women.[32] What is omitted from these discussions is a contextual reflection on the lived realities of

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30. Sherene H. Razack, *Race, Space and the Law*, 7

31. Arnold Berleant, "The aesthetic in place," *Constructing Place: Mind and Matter,* ed. Sarah Menin (New York: Routledge, 2003), 43.

32. In Canada this has been highlighted by the reasonable accommodation debates, specifically the Taylor-Bouchard Commission (2010) and in the introduction of Bill 94 (2010) which bans Muslim women from covering their faces in Quebec. More recently, this debate has included the ban of turban wearing soccer players by the Quebec Soccer Federation (later overturned in June 2013).

Muslim life. This point cannot be emphasized enough. In his follow up to *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said argues in *Covering Islam* (1997) that Islam "has been looked at first of all as if it's a monolithic thing, and then with a very special hostility and fear... Islam represents not only a formidable competitor but also a late coming challenge to Christianity."[33] This approach to the study of mosque and Moorish Revival architecture builds and expands upon Said's framing of Orientalism and seeks to show how these contemporary buildings "challenge ideas of the nation-space, refusing to sit easily either within some model of transplanted traditionalism or within linear histories of absorption and development."[34] I am interested in how Muslims and non-Muslims engage and circulate notions of traditional Islamic architectural forms and how as a result, they are framed within the North American urban environment. Additionally, this study works against the "clash of civilization" ideology popularized by Samuel Huntington, by demystifying Muslim peoples by showing the adaptiveness and malleability of Islamic religious practice, mosque architecture and by extension, the pervasiveness of Islamic styles and forms.[35] Neither renovated and purpose-built mosques are associated with the frivolity or opulence that is performed by Moorish Revival buildings, but instead these mosques expose a deeper set of values that Sherene

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33. Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: how the media and the experts determine how we see the rest of the world* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 4-5.

34. Mark Crinson, "The Mosque and the Metropolis," *Orientalism's Interlocutors: Painting, Architecture, Photography*, eds. Jill Beaulieu and Mary Roberts (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 79.

35. Samuel Huntington's influential and widely disseminated 1993 article (and later book) *The Clash of Civilizations* posits that the world is divided along the lines of culture, specifically 'Western' and 'non-Western'. He argues that these very distinct and separate worldviews, namely the West and "Islam" will brutally clash. After 9/11, his essay found a renewed popularity and was hailed as 'prophetic.'

H. Razack identifies as "race-thinking, the denial of a common bond of humanity between people of European descent and those who are not."[36]

Though both mosque and Moorish Revival architectures share an interrelated visual history, tensions between these two forms of architecture linger. In their employment of the visual language of Islam, these buildings share a intertwined colonial history that at once shows a rejection of Muslim cultures and the appropriation and investment of Islamic visual forms to claim a sense of authenticity, place and identity. The use of essentialized Islamic built forms can be simultaneaously problematic as an architectural form, and yet also successful in communicating a global Muslim identity.

To illustrate the difference of both architectural forms one can look at the means of their construction and their function. A space becomes a mosque not only when the floors and walls are clean and unobstructed, but when the congregation performs ritual prayer in unison while facing east towards the Kaaba in Mecca. Structures included as part of the Moorish Revival on the other hand, do not require the performance or symbolism of ritual to enact the spiritual meaning of space, they simply appropriate the visual tropes in order to assume their Islamicness. While many Muslim communities are connected to the symbolic elements of Islamic architecture such as domes and minarets, these elements have often also been understood as being quintessentially "Islamic" in Orientalist Islamic architectural and cultural history that has been an

36. Sherene H. Razack, *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 6.

integral part of European colonial knowledge.[37] The symbolic values

of these kinds of architectural forms are recognized in both mosques

and Moorish Revival buildings. Though domes and minarets perform

a symbolic role in a mosque's Islamic identity, the symbolism of these

historic architectural features were only second to their practical

performatory functions in carrying sound regulating heat in arid

climates. More importantly, neither of these architectural forms are found

universally across regions with Muslim majorities.

Likewise, mosques in Canada and the US do not conform to any

one particular style, but use a number of visual strategies to articulate

their Islamic identity from signage, location and to the temporality of

the place.[38] As architectural curiosities, Moorish Revival buildings do

not invoke such sentiments, but are nevertheless not politically neutral.

Instead, these types of buildings show the "range of experience[s] of the

aristocracy" that was "ultimately transferred to leisure pursuits for the

masses."[39]

Despite their differing purposes, their uniform usage of domes,

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37. In *Displaying the Orient* (1992) Zeynep Celik traces the representation and replication of Islamic architecture in world expositions across Europe and the US. Likewise, Timothy Mitchell in *Colonising Egypt* (1991) also maps out the strategies colonial powers used to depict Islam in France and the impressions of Muslim spectators. Both texts show how Islam becomes the foil to the progress and scientific claims made by Europeans. These claims ultimately served to justify colonialism.

38. Michel S. Laguerre (2003) describes "temporality of place" as the ways in which time is divided by Muslims in New York City, specifically how these Muslims articulate their identity via time and against the hegemonic temporality within New York City. In other words, Laguerre examines how, while on one hand diasporized Muslim communities observe social practices regulated by civil society, while on the other, they follow an internal daily rhythm in order to accomodate their faith. This means that places such as mosques experience a different routine of time that has been modified and adapted in order to also make room for religious practice.

39. John M. Mackenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, 72.

minarets, and even Arabic calligraphy, these buildings can often be difficult to distinguish from each other. In fact, the distinction between these two modes of architectures can be so blurred that it can be difficult for even the trained eye. Upon his arrival to the US as a young student architect in the 1960s, Gulzar Haider recounted the architectural ironies in the appropriation of Islamic forms used by Moorish Revival buildings:

> As we turned onto a minor street on the University of Pittsburgh campus, he pointed to a vertical neon sign that said in no uncertain terms "Syria Mosque." Parking the car, we approached the building. I was fascinated, albeit with some premonition. I was riveted by the cursive Arabic calligraphy on the building: *la ghalib il-Allah*, "There is no victor but Allah," the well-known refrain of Granada's Alhambra. Horseshoe arches, horizontal bans of different colored bricks, decorative terra-cotta – all were devices to invoke a Moorish memory. Excitedly, I took a youthful step forward towards the lobby, when my host turned around and said "This is not the kind of mosque in which you bend up and down facing Mecca."[40]

Haider's story demonstrates the confusing slippages and overlaps between "authentic" Islamic visual tropes with those of a secular and Orientalist purpose and appropriation buildings present in North America. More importantly, his observations also show an important aspect of the colonial production of Islamic architectural knowledge, namely what Homi Bhabha refers to as mimicry. Mimicry, Bhabha writes is "the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal" and is "the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes

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40. Gulzar Haider, "Muslim Space and the Practice of Architecture," *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe,* ed. Barbara Daly Metcalf (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 31.

power."[41]

This overarching and dialectic system of power and knowledge is at the heart of the study of both mosque and Moorish Revival architecture. When studied together, they reveal the struggling claims between Muslim self-representation and Western representation of Muslims. Purpose-built and renovated mosques both use Islamic architectural tropes as a strategy to claim authenticity, whereas buildings of the Moorish Revival mimic preconceived ideas of Islamic architecture to convey an image of Islam that is both singular and yet also conveys a sense of authenticity that is grounded in the social history of colonialism and travel. Again, this problematic relationship between these two separate built-forms underscores how knowledge on Islamic architectural history continues to inform contemporary built-forms, but that these buildings also reproduced racial hierarchies in their construction and usage.

Because of the close relationship between the production of knowledge and colonialism, the history of Islamic art and architecture has also been informed by Orientalist knowledge and the attitudes of colonial administrators in Muslim lands. As a product of late nineteenth-century colonialism, the study of Islamic architecture was initially taken up by men employed in the military service of colonial powers such as Britain and France.[42] The surveys of buildings and decorative arts were conducted by men like K.A.C Creswell who, during the 1920s worked under the assumption that the buildings constructed in Muslim lands were

41. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 86.

42. Johnathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, *Islamic Arts*, 4 and Robert Hillenbrand, "Studying Islamic Architecture: Challenges and Perspectives," *Architectural History* 46 (2003), 5-6.

intrinsically spiritual and timeless.[43] Despite Creswell's lack of knowledge

of the languages of the Middle East or standard higher education, his

extensive survey of Egypt formed the basis of not only the field of Islamic

architecture but also contributed to the formation of the notable Islamic

art and architecture library at the American University in Cairo, which,

during his tenure there he would often fondly referred to as his "harem."[44]

Creswell's contribution to the field of Islamic architectural history writes

Jonathan Bloom, "with his meticulous method and magisterial voice

ensured that his statements would be widely accepted."[45]

More historic approaches to the study of Islamic architecture

have almost exclusively focused on an array of secular and religious

historical building types across the Middle East, Spain, and the South

Asian Subcontinent from the time of the Prophet Muhammad to the fall

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43. Edward W. Said discusses this way of seeing the Middle East and Islam in his influential book, *Orientalism* (1978). Said describes Orientalism as the expression, distribution and awareness into among many things, the aesthetic, scholarly, and historical frameworks on the culture of Islam and the Middle East produced and disseminated by the Occident. Orientalism is a system of knowledge that has the power to shape the identity of Muslim peoples; it is the way in which the 'West' sees the "Orient."

44. Roger Hamilton, "Keppel Archibald Cameron Creswell, 1879-1974," *Muqarnas VIII: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Oleg Grabar (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), 45.

45. Jonathan Bloom, "Creswell and the origins of the Minaret," *Muqarnas VIII: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Oleg Grabar (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), 55.

of the Ottoman Empire.[46] With the further entrenchment of colonialism in the Muslim world, the study of Islam would also be conducted by those with interests and occupations in a variety of fields such as travel writing, painting, archeology, philology, and literature. Consequently, the trajectory of Islamic architectural history has been both vast in terms of styles, cultures, languages, time spans and uses, yet restricted to mostly monumental and dynastic built environments within dominant Muslim societies. In terms of architecture, this has meant that a number of secular and religious buildings such as caravanserais, palaces, funerary tombs, and mosques are all framed as "Islamic" without an understanding of how or what relationship the faith of Islam has with these built forms. In each of these examples, the relationship to the practice and propagation of the faith has been varied, if not tenuous. As Islamic art historians Johnathan Bloom and Sheila Blair write:

> There is no evidence that any artist or patron in the fourteen centuries since the revelation of Islam ever thought of his or her art as "Islamic," and the notion of a distinctly "Islamic" tradition of art and architecture, eventually encompassing the lands between the Atlantic and the Indian oceans, is a product of late nineteenth- and twentieth century Western scholarship, as is the

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46. Though not covered in this dissertation, the study and framing of "Islamic Art" is equally difficult (for what makes a tenth century, Iranian gilt silver dish with a lion-headed bird Islamic or even "Art"? or equally problematically, is Iranian American artist, film-maker Shirin Neshat's work Islamic? Neither question elicits a clear response). As Nasser Rabbat notes in his review of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's recent re-opening of the "Islamic Galleries", the official name for the space is now "The Galleries for the Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia." The new title was chosen to "convey the variousness of Islamic art and its geographically distinct expressions, as well as to deemphasize the religious identity associated with the old name, since Islamic art, like any other art, has many nonreligious manifestations." ("What's in a Name?", *Artforum* 50, no. 5, 78)

terminology used to identify it.[47]

In his reflection on the study of Islamic art and architecture, Oleg Grabar also echoes Blair's analysis of the somewhat shaky parameters of the field:

> Thirty years ago, the study of Islamic art was easy enough to define. Most people came to it along one of three simple paths: One was archeology: the study of Umayyad palaces in the Levant and cities like Nishapur… Another was collecting rugs, ceramics, and miniatures acquired a market value… Finally, there was the old and much-maligned Orientalism, which instilled, through dry and inhospitable grammars and furtively read travel accounts, romantic notions of faraway lands and exotic cultures.[48]

Moreover, the previous thousand years of Islamic art was framed in terms of nineteenth-century knowledge of the Orient. To make matters more complicated, Islam, unlike Christianity, did not have a central institution like the Christian Church, for the patronage of the arts. No Islamic version of a bishop, cleric or pope aided in the construction or creation of a philosophical framework of Islamic art and architecture.[49] Instead, the arts and architecture produced in Muslim regions were the result of commissions by kings, princes, and other high ranking courtly officials in regional dynastic powers and as such, these commissions were

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47. Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, "Unwieldy Field," 153. Many other Islamic art and architecture historians have examined the origins and limitations of the study of the field. They have included, most notably Oleg Grabar (1983), Robert Hillenbrand (2003), Dogan Kuban (1996), Hassan-uddin Khan (2012), Nasser Rabbat (2012), Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom (2003). The approaches used to understand traditional Islamic art and architectural history has increasingly fragmentary with the emphasis of contemporary national identities rather than any singular religious ones.

48. Oleg Grabar, "Reflection of Islamic art," *Muqarnas I: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Oleg Grabar (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2.

49. Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, *Islamic Arts* (New York: Phaidon, 1997), 7.

not seen as a product of religious reflection on Islam but as in line with maintaining the monarchic production of culture. For example, while a Muslim ruler would commission the building of a palace or fort, the methods used in the construction would often follow the architectural norms and practices unique to their region. With the exception of mosques, the objects and buildings considered in the canon of Islamic art and architectural history, though representative of the cultures that embraced Islam, do not describe the ritualistic practice and transmission of Islam. As such, the precarious relationship with the practice of Islam, combined ambiguous definitions of Islam has made the field of Islamic art and architectural history, an uneasy and problematic mode of analysis for contemporary Islamic architectural forms. However, recognition of the shortcomings in the approaches to Islamic architectural history has yet to resolve the broader ways in which to understand Islamic architecture built after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

More recently, a number of social and architectural historians have approached the subject of Islamic architecture and the Moorish Revival in the West. Texts by sociologists, historians and architects such as Christian Welzbacher (2008), Omar Khalidi (2002, 2004), Akel Ismail Kahera (2002), Barbara Metcalf Daly (1996) and Zeynep Çelik (1992) illustrate the issues related to the construction of Islamic architectural forms in the West and provide a number of case studies that elucidate the synthesis of Islamic and Western architectural histories. In particular, Barbara Metcalf Daly's edited volume on the construction of Muslim space, illustrates the variety of ways Muslims make space. For Daly, "Muslim space" is not the exclusive domain of mosque architecture but also inclusive of homes, shops, and even neighborhoods. It is also a space that neither requires any

juridically claimed territory nor formally consecrated or architecturally specific space. These often informal spaces used by Muslims reveal the "discursive practice of Islam," and the cultural processes and characteristics practices of Islam.[50] The recitation and performance of prayer, the gathering of Muslims, and the presence of Arabic calligraphy are a few examples of elements that, when present, help constitute a Muslim space. Daly also points out that the visual cannot be the primary mode for understanding Muslim spaces because there is no single style that has emerged from Islamic history that is uniquely or pervasively 'Islamic', but the discourse of Muslim space allows for an analysis that shows the "web of loyalties and networks" of Muslim life, which is not to be confused with other visual "shorthand(s) for self-indulgence luxury and even decadence."[51]

However, if visual built-forms such as minarets, which are very much seen as part of Muslim vernaculars in North America, are not considered to be a legitimate means of examining Muslim religious structures, then how can one account for their construction and the symbolism conveyed by these structures both inside and outside Muslim communities? I contend that while there are no singular images or built-forms of Islam that can be found universally across the Muslim world, there are built-forms that have been coded as "Islamic" in the West. Glazed tiles, geometric patterning, hypostyle arches and columns all evoke a sense of Islamicness in Canada and the US. This is why they are also successfully employed in Moorish Revival architecture. While Daly's

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50. Barbara Metcalf Daly, ed, "Introduction," *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 4.

51. Ibid, 2.

framing of Muslim space is critical for understanding the process in which built-forms become used and understood by Muslims, it does not describe the competing usages of Islamic visual forms. The definition of "Muslim space" can easily be applied to describe the relationship and production of Islamic forms between purpose-built and renovated mosques, but it does not explain the relationships or influences of these buildings on the production of the Moorish Revival.

With "virtually no literature on the history of American mosques,"[52] the ability to formulate a history of mosques is a formidable challenge. Though the major ethnographic and colonial sentiments presented in the past accounts of Islamic architectural history no longer have an authoritative place in the understandings of contemporary built-forms in North America, the discipline continues to make progress and shake the confines of its nineteenth-century origins. The real challenge is to provide an analysis that links how and where Islam is visually and architecturally communicated and by whom. Much of this research relies on both traditional architectural histories and the ethnographic methods of documentation to survey representations of the diverse forms of mosque and Moorish Revival architectures. Merged with a framework steeped in critical race and urban theory, is when the exchange and travelling character of Islamic architectural and visual forms become apparent. It also provides the opportunity to connect to deeper accounts of Muslim arrival to North America, ones that begins with the arrival of African Muslims enslaved and brought to the Americas.

Forgotten Histories: African Muslims in the Americas (1700s-1930s)

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52. Akel Ismail Kahera, *Deconstructing the American Mosque: Space, Gender, and Aesthetics*, 3.

While limited in numbers, a few slave narratives that speak about Islam and the Muslim experience do exist:

> Muh gran come frum Africa too. Huh name wuz Ryna. I membuh wen I wuz a chile seein muh gran Ryna pray. Ebry mawnin at sunup she kneel on duh flo in uh ruhm an bow obuh an tech uh head tuh duh flo tree time. Den she say a prayuh. I dohn membuh jis wut she say, but one wud she say use tuh make us chillun laugh. I membuh it wuz 'ashamnegad'. Wen she finished prayin she say 'Ameen ameen, ameen.[53]

> My name is Omar ibn Seid. My birthplace was Fut T'fir, between the two rivers. I sought knowledge under the instruction of a Sheikh called Mohammed Seid, my own brother, and Sheikh Soleiman Kembeh, and Sheikh Gabriel Abdal. I continued my studies twenty-five years, then returned to my home where I remained six years. Then there came to our place a large army, who killed many men, and took me, and brought me to the great sea, and sold me into the hands of the Christians, who bound me and sent me on board a great ship and we sailed upon the great sea a month and a half, when we came to a place called Charleston in the Christian language. There they sold me to a small, weak, and wicked man, called Johnson, a complete infidel, who had no fear of God at all… Before I came to the Christian country, my religion was the religion of Mohammed, the Apostle of God—may God have mercy upon him and give him peace. I walked to the mosque before day-break, washed my face and head and hands and feet. I prayed at noon, prayed in the afternoon, prayed at sunset, prayed in the evening. [54]

Recollections of Muslim ritual (*salat*) presented in narratives such as the ones by Omar ibn Said and Rosa Grant, illustrate how against all odds, fragments of Muslim life survived during slavery. The arrival of

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53. Sylviane D. Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 61-62.

54. "Autobiography of Omar ibn Said, Slave in North Carolina, 1831," *The American Historical Review* 30, no. 4 (July 1925), 787-795.

slaves, starting from the mid-fifteenth century, marked the introduction of Islam as the second largest monotheistic faith in the Americas.[55] With the absence of mosques or any other formal Islamic institutions to maintain Muslim religious practice, these narratives and other similar accounts describe the nature and circumstances of Muslim ritual practices that were often maintained solely through memory and oral histories, histories that demonstrate that even under duress , material deprivation, and physical limitations, Islamic practices were remembered.[56] But how do these narratives contribute to the development of architecture in Canada and the US?

These histories are starting points for grasping the dimensions of Muslim arrival, but also ground the future establishment of African American Muslim movements, specifically in the US. To use Katherine McKittrick's analysis of the cartographies of Black women's geographies, I argue that the location and identification of these communities allow us to "make visible the social lives which are often displaced, rendered ungeographic."[57] Furthermore, these Muslims, with their lives defined by the confines of slavery, provide a critical means for linking space and place to the study of multiplicity and syncretism of Islam in North America, one that shows that Islam was not superficially transplanted.[58] Simply put, recovering and emphasizing the legacies of Muslim arrival in the Americas from the time of the Transatlantic slavery disrupts the more contemporary and sometimes trivial understanding of Muslim life.

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55. Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, 275.

56. Sylviane D. Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas*, 106.

57. Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women And The Cartographies Of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 2006), X.

58. Sylviane D. Diouf, 70.

Whereas instances of Arab and South Asian Muslim immigration to both Canada and the United States prior to World War II had been fairly infrequent, the arrival of enslaved Muslim to the Americas has a much longer history of engagement. Due to the brutality of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, much of their identities and religious practices and markers such as their names, familial and societal kinships as well as clothing would be violently and sysmatically removed and replaced to fully institute the bonds of slavery, even before their arrival on the shores of the Americas. The bulk of men and women who came from predominately Muslim tribes such as the Mandinka, Wolof, Yoruba, Dahomean and Ibo represented the majority of the people who came from Western and Central Africa.[59] Individuals from these tribes like Yarrow Mahmout,[60] (Fig.2.8) Lamine Kebe, Abd ar-Rahman Sori and Bilali were "trained so well in the tenets of their faith that nearly all adhered to the religion of their parents despite years of blandishments by Christian missionaries in the New World."[61] Though a few traces of Muslim life during the period of slavery can be found, the practice of Islam has largely been written out of the narrative of the history of the Americas. Moreover, the narratives by Muslims of this period did not have the same currency and were often

59. Islam had spread to North Africa during the late 600s and to sub-Saharan Africa by the 800s. See Sylviane D. Diouf's *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas* (1998), Edward E. Curtis IV's *Muslims in America: A Short History* (2009) and Antony Black's *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present* (2001).

60. In 1819, the then elderly artist Charles Willson Peale, took up painting portraits of diginatries in the Washington D.C. area. Fasinated by Yarrow Mamout, a former slave who reportedly claimed to be 140 years old, Willson Peale approached him for to pose for a portrait as part of this series. See: http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/319114.html (date of last access: 7 August 2013).

61. Allan D. Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America: Transatlantic Stories and Spiritual Struggles* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 11.

FIGURE 2.8
Charles Willson Peale, American (1741 – 1827), *Portrait of Yarrow Mamout* (Muhammad Yaro), 1819. Oil on canvas, 61 x 50.8 cm. Collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Purchased with the gifts (by exchange) of R. Wistar Harvey, Mrs. T. Charlton Henry, R. Nelson Buckley, the estate of Rictavia Schiff, and with funds from the proceeds of the sale of deaccessioned works of art, 2011

overlooked as significant contributions of oral histories about slavery. As historian Sylviane A. Diouf points out:

> In the United States, descendants of Muslims who could have kept their memory alive were engaged in mainstream religions that had little tolerance for other faiths. Their forefathers' religion was of no relevance or particular significance to them. In addition, there are indications, if the Sea Islands are taken as an example, that these descendants related their family's religion to sun and moon worship, because the Muslims prayed at sunrise and sundown. A determination to distance oneself from "primitive" African practices, a lack of understanding and knowledge, a desire to conform, and fear of retribution from the white and Christian establishment all may explain why the Muslims' descendants remained silent about the religion of their parents and grandparents.[62]

The recuperation of these Muslim identities would slowly resurface by the early twentieth-century. Born as Timothy Drew in 1886, Noble Drew Ali "invoked what he understood to be the Islamic principles as a means of uniting Americans of African heritage."[63] The origins of his knowledge on Islam are unclear and could have possibly been formed during his employment in P.T. Barnum's circus as a "mystic of the East" or through exposure to Ahmadiyya Muslim missionaries. However, what is known is that by 1925, Noble Drew Ali established the Moorish Science Temple. The members of the temple built upon Islamic cosmology that also amalgamated ideologies on race and the origins of African Americans. At the forefront of his message was that "their race was not

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62. Sylvanne D. Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas*, 198-199. Naming Islam as "sun and moon worship" may have also been a strategy to either hide or make the faith more understandable to their Christian owners.

63, Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, "A Century of Islam in America," 2.

black, coloured, or negro—words that Drew detested—but Asiatic" and even Moorish with origins in Morocco.[64] Shortly after the death of Noble Drew Ali in 1929, Wallace D. Fard, an enigmatic travelling silk peddler with unknown origins and multiple aliases, also began to preach the same religious beliefs as Noble Drew Ali in Detroit. In between peddling, Fard would soon enlist Georgia migrant Elijah Poole to spread his brand of Islam across the northern US Eventually Elijah Poole would come to be known as Elijah Muhammad and take over the reins of the Nation of Islam.[65]

What becomes clear in the histories of these early engagements with Islam by groups of African Americans is that the practice of religion is not simply about a spiritual communion with a higher being, but an important means to reclaim erased identities and gain self-empowerment. The Moorish Science Temple and the mosques established by the Nation of Islam such as the Malcolm El Shabazz Mosque in Harlem (Fig. 2.9, originally known as Mosque no. 7) were central places of community organization, where members gained collective political power that extended beyond the walls of the mosque. Mainly found in northern US states, these buildings are primarily renovated structures that also incorporate the styles of traditional Islamic architecture to affirm their affiliation and connection to Islam. Once more, their usage of Islamic visual and built-forms tropes presents another dimension to the study of Islamic architectural history in North America, calling into question the frameworks presented by official narratives. The mosques in these communities are shaped by more than Orientalist discourses on Islam, but

64. Edward E. Curtis, *Muslims in America: A Short History*, 35.
65. Ibid, 37.

FIGURE 2.9
Sabbath Black (architect), Malcolm El Shabazz
Mosque, Harlem, New York, USA. 1965. Photo:
Nadia Kurd, 2009.

are also tied to legacies of slavery and segregation which "emerged as the dominant and formalized modality of racism."[66] Moreover, the narratives, experiences and practices of Islam continue to face marginalization not only within their greater publics, but also within immigrant communities.[67] Despite the fact that African Americans constitute the largest single ethnic group of Muslims in the US,[68] their identities are also informed by negotiations with both non-Muslims and immigrant Muslims.

Conclusion

To illustrate the radical changes in attitudes towards mosques in North America in the last few decades, I want to return again to the story of Edmonton's Al-Rashid mosque. By the mid-1980s, Edmonton's multi-ethnic and multi-generational Muslim community had grown exponentially to 16,000, and as a result, had constructed two new mosques to accommodate the Muslim congregation. Unused for several years, the old Al-Rashid mosque had fallen into disrepair and had been slated for demolition by the city. A group of women led by Evelyn and Karen Hamdon, the great-granddaughters of Hilwie Hamdon, one of the first community leader's of the Edmonton Muslim community, rallied together to save the mosque and its historic legacy.[69] Through active community

66. David Theo Goldberg, "Racial Americanization," *Racialization: Studies in Theory and Practice,* eds. Karim Murji and John Solomos (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 90.

67. Amina Wadud, "American Muslim Identity: Race and Ethnicity in Progressive Islam," *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism*, ed. Omid Safi (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003), 271.

68. It is estimated that nearly 50% of Muslims in the US are of African American descent. Aminah Beverly McCloud, *Transnational Muslims in American Society*, (Tallahassee: University Press of Florida, 2006), 25.

69. Andrea W Lorenz, "Canada's Pioneer Mosque," *Saudi Aramco World* (July / August 1998), 28-31.

fundraising, the women were able to secure enough money to preserve

the mosque. However, to the dismay of the Muslim community, the most

challenging task was persuading the city to have the mosque relocated to

Fort Edmonton Park. What ensued in the following months was a heated,

public opposition to the mosque's relocation. Among the numerous

arguments made from outside the Muslim community opposing the

relocation of the mosque was the claim that the mosque did not fit the

Park's mandate, and that the Park should not have to accept a "historical

intruder."[70] During a public meeting held by the city of Edmonton, one

outspoken resident shouted at the elderly Saleem Ganam to "go back" to

the country he came from, to which he replied back "Sir, are you aware

that I was born in Canada?"[71]

Towards the fall of 1992, after much debate and fundraising, the

mosque had been moved to Fort Edmonton Park, where the building

continues to stand today. However as a living museum, Fort Edmonton

Park narrates Alberta's history up until 1930 with period actors circulating

both inside and outside historical built-forms throughout the park.

Because the mosque was constructed in 1938, the period actors do not

narrate the mosque's history, but instead step out of character, breaking

the historical framing and narration of the tour to discuss the mosque

in the first person. No longer part of Edmonton's rich collective and

celebratory past, the Al-Rashid mosque is now seen as a unanimated

recent addition, and sits at the end of the 1930s street isolated from the

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70. Ibid, 28-31.

71. Richard Asmet Awid, *Through the Eyes of the Son: A Factual History About Canadian Arabs* (Edmonton, AB: Accent Printing, Ltd., 2000), 71.

other buildings and histories at Fort Edmonton Park.[72]

This recent history of the Al-Rashid mosque reflects the current condition of Muslim life in the West. In the last three decades, Muslim identity has been shaped by and contingent on geopolitical events and has been immeasurably scrutinized for its adaptability in modern, democratic societies. Long before 9/11, Islam and Muslims have been understood firstly as either slaves or colonial subjects, and then later as hostile intruders. Global events such as the Iran hostage crisis (1980) and the Gulf Wars (1990s-2000s) to the more recent legislative bans on minarets in Switzerland (2009) and the reasonable accommodation debates in Quebec (2010) have also revealed and fuelled the anti-Muslim sentiments in both North America and abroad. These polarizing debates build upon historical orientalist and racist hierarchical divisions and have detrimental results on all segments of the Muslim community. And yet, the evidence against these presumed schisms can be found in the ways Muslims simultaneously manifest heterogeneous identities in their mosques yet maintain commonly identifiable practices and visual forms throughout. In other words, while all mosques used by Muslims accommodate the ritual practices, they do so in varying forms and styles.

In settler societies such as Canada, the idea of a normative urban landscape and built-forms is heavily informed by distilled notions of not only cultural but also religious belonging. These notions are deeply rooted in early histories of European settlement and continue to be

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72. In the fall of 2009, I visited Fort Edmonton Park and was provided a tour of the site where I learned that the Park does not regularly animate or host activities at the mosque. Although Edmonton's Muslim community had arrived and settled before the 1930s, because their identity only became materially and spatially identifiable with the construction of the mosque after 1930, their mosque does not qualify as part of the Park's historical narrative.

dependent on the dispossession of those who do not culturally fit within this conception.[73] The marginalization of mosques can be linked to a longer colonial project that alleges an incompatibility between Islam and democracy and has been active in shaping attitudes towards Muslim groups in Canada.[74] Such oppositional frameworks have created barriers for Muslims throughout Canada, not only in the terms of claiming urban space but also of accessing full citizenship rights.[75]

In this chapter I have attempted to illustrate the entangled histories of early Muslim life in Canada and the US as well as the challenges that Islamic built-forms present, especially when they are most clearly expressed. By linking seemingly disparate histories and built-forms— both Muslim and Moorish Revival, I contend that the circulation of the ideas and images about Islam, which have been produced and distributed through more traditional forms of Orientalist discourse, are not confined or owned by any one particular community or population. They do nevertheless have a variety of uses and meanings that shape the practice of architecture and the ability to visually contribute to an understanding of Muslims today.

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73. Nicolas Blomley, *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 110.

74. Isin and Siemiatycki, "Making Space for Mosques," 192.

75. Recent public examples of Muslim Canadians who have been denied citizenship rights can be cited here, namely, Mahar Arar, Suaad Hagi Mohammed, Mohammad Charouki, Mohammed Harkat, Abousfian Abdelrazik, and Omar Khadr. In terms of well-known global events, the proposal to construct a multi-faith community centre, Park51 near Ground Zero in Manhattan, NY, as well as the banning of minarets in Switzerland have generated hostile public debate over the "appropriateness" and admissibility of mosques and spaces created by Muslims.

Chapter 2
Of Bedazzlement and Fireworks: The Reproduction of Islam in Non-Muslim Built-Forms

Entering the Court of the Lions a few evenings since, I was almost startled at beholding a turbaned Moor quietly seated near the fountain. For a moment one of the fictions of the place seem realized: an enchanted Moor had broken the spell of centuries, and become visible…
Washington Irving, *The Alhambra* (1832).[1]

What can I say about it all? What can I write you? As yet I am scarcely over the initial bedazzlement. It is like being hurled while still asleep into the midst of a Beethoven symphony, with the brasses at their most ear-splitting, the basses rumbling, and the flutes sighing away; each detail reaches out to grip you; it pinches you; and the more you concentrate on it the less you grasp the whole…by God, it is such a bewildering chaos of colours that your poor imagination is dazzled as though by continuous fireworks as you go about staring at minarets thick with white storks, at tired slaves stretched out in the sun on house terraces, at the patterns of sycamore branches against walls, with camel bells ringing in your ears…
Gustave Flaubert (Cairo, 15 January 1850).[2]

Introduction

After his 1844 visit to the Royal Pavilion in Brighton (Fig.3.1), the American impresario and showman P.T. Barnum had been so struck by John Nash's "Oriental design" that he decided to adopt the building's architectural style for his new home in Bridgeport, Connecticut.[3] Designed by architect Leopold Eidlitz, Barnum's estate Iranistan (Fig.3.2) drew much of its inspiration not only from Nash's Royal Pavilion, but also from

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1. Washington Irving, *The Alhambra* (Chicago and New York: Rand, McNally and Company, 1832), 110.

2. Gustave Flaubert, *Flaubert in Egypt* (New York: Penguin Books USA Inc., 1996), 79.

3. Phineas Taylor Barnum, *The Life of P.T. Barnum* (Buffalo: The Courier Company Printers, 1888), 97.

Fig.3.1
John Nash (architect), The Royal Pavilion, Brighton, United
Kingdom. 1815-18. Photo: Corbis.

Fig.3.2
Leopold Eidlitz (architect), Iranistan, Bridgeport, Connecticut,
USA. 1848. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division,
Washington, DC., LC-DIG-pga-04090.

Islamic architecture from Damascus.[4] Prior to the building's demise by fire in 1857, the home was, according to Barnum, "the only building in its peculiar style in America."[5] Indeed, with its horseshoe latticework, onion domes, and multiple-minaretted columns, Iranistan represented one of the earliest examples of the Moorish Revival architectural style in the United States.

If the mosques built by Muslim communities across Canada and the US have appeared varied in terms of their layout and appearance, then the buildings associated with the Moorish Revival like Iranistan are, in contrast, much more easily identifiable. With their elaborate and often highly intricate designs, the Moorish Revival is a European architectural style known for its appropriation of tropes and forms found in traditional Islamic architecture. More concisely, the Moorish Revival (at varying times also known as "Moresque") is an architectural style that can be described as having a preoccupation with the *idea* of the material culture of the Muslim world rather than being a sustained observational or studied architectural school of thought.[6] These buildings did more than just utilize the most identifiable or archetypical features commonly found in Islamic architecture, they perceptively established an Orientalist ways of seeing. In other words, through their construction, purpose and function, Moorish Revival buildings confirmed eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ideas

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4. Omar Khalidi, "Fantasy, Faith, And Fraternity: American Architecture of Moorish Inspiration." np. Unpublished essay.

5. Phineas Taylor Barnum, *The Life of P.T. Barnum,* 166.

6. John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 71. Additional terms used to describe art and architecture inspired by Islamic visual cultures has included "arabesque", "Mohammadan" and "Saracenic." At varying periods, these terms have also been employed to describe Islamic architecture. However for this study, I use the term Moorish Revival to distinguish its departure from Islamic architecture and to indicate the transmission and use of Islamic styles in North America.

associated with Muslim cultures such as self-indulgence, immutability, and leisurely pursuits in built-form. Moorish Revival buildings were less about promoting Islamic architectural forms and more keen on providing an Orientalist vision of an urban landscape associated with Muslim-majority nations in the Middle East and South Asia.

In this chapter, I will examine the production of Moorish Revival architecture in the United States and argue that these buildings first and foremost, represent a fantastical yet distinctly Americanized articulation of Islamic built forms.[7] In this chapter, I look at three prominent and most evident examples of the Moorish Revival in the US: Atlanta's Fox Theatre (Fig. 3.3), Milwaukee's Tripoli Shrine Temple (Fig. 3.4) and the City of Opa Locka's City Hall (Fig. 3.5). While each of these building has served differing purposes, which respectively include a theatre, fraternal lodge and a seat of municipal government, they all utilized identifiable forms and features connected to Islamic architecture to emphasize and convey a sense of a consumable otherworldliness, far from the humdrum of everyday American life. The Moorish identities of these buildings have not only been expressed through the usage of Islamic architectural styles, but in many cases, also through theatrical performances such as festivals and parades. For example, in terms of performing an Orientalist identity, each chapter of the Shriners' fraternity promoted and displayed their

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7. There are many reasons for the proliferation of Moorish Revival buildings in the US: The establishment of the Shriner's Fraternity, increased economic opportunities and cultural influences from the Middle East, and as Oleg Grabar argues, the Protestant spiritual education that saw the American landscape be "covered with biblical references in the names given to rivers, mountains, cities, and villages, as the Promised Land of America often its toponyms from those of God's promise to Israel…" that also "led to the organization of group pilgrimages, pious individual travels, often ill-fated settlements in Palestine itself in which the spirit of adventure and pious inspiration were often mixed." (*Noble Dreams*, 3-4).

Fig.3.3
Mayre, Alger &Vinour (architects), Fox Theatre, Atlanta, Georgia,
USA. 1929. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2010.

Fig.3.4
Clas, Shepard and Clas (architects), Tripoli Shrine Temple,
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. 1928. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2012.

FIGURE 3.5
Bernhardt Muller (architect) and Glenn H. Curtiss (developer), Opa Locka City Hall, Miami, Florida, USA. 1929. Photo: Phil Pasquini.

Moorishness through elaborate car parades and organizational customs, whereas the annual Arabian Fantasy Festival in Opa Locka, Florida which has taken place on the grounds of the City Hall since the incorporation of the city in 1927, has seen "women clad in harem clothing with scarves draped over their heads and men in pantaloons and turbans."[8] However nowhere was Orientalism more powerfully communicated than through cinema. Neither of these festivals or parades provided the wide impact of filmic representations of Orientalist knowledge of Islamic and Arabian identities on the American-built environment or psyche. Actors such as Douglas Fairbanks and silent films like *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924) provided audiences with animated and compelling narratives from the *1001 Arabian Nights*. Combined, such performances and films promoted the distinctive features of Orientalism in the US: an interpretation of the Middle East as an easily consumable, commercial entity, influenced by European written accounts, and one far removed from the contextualized and variable realities of Islam across the Middle East and South Asia.

Imagining the Architectural Image of Islam in the West

In articulating an archetypal, Orientalist imaginary of Islamic architecture, specifically mosque architecture, I contend that Moorish Revival buildings also avow a passable, yet racially complex image of Islam. Moreover, this imaginary was heavily linked to both travel literature and the increasing consumption of leisurely activities, such as the availability of films and the attendance of world expositions, from the

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8 . Lidia Dinkova, "City opens door to world of 'Arabian Nights'." Miami Herald (Tuesday 25 June 2013), http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/06/25/3469638/city-opens-door-to-world-ofarabian.html#storylink=cpy (date of last access: 12 September, 2013).

eighteenth-century onward. Initial endeavours to utilize Moorish Revival built forms were found in the construction of private homes. Depending on the wealth of the patron, the architect either relied on pattern books or, was able to travel to North Africa, India, and the Middle East to "observe and record buildings firsthand in order to create more genuine-looking structures."[9] Grounded with the knowledge on Muslim cultures and the Islamic faith, the architects of these buildings were able to assert a spectacle-like image of the Orient, which was also purposely commercially commoditised, and thus more transmissible and accepted. In contrast to North American mosques, Moorish Revival buildings have not been constructed or used by Muslim communities. Moreover, by being affirmed as places of entertainment by non-Muslim architects and audiences, these buildings continue to be afforded space, both theoretically and socially in the vernacular of North American architectural history. I assert that by virtue of their purpose, usage, and even elaborated designs—to the point of exaggeration—they operate in wholly contrasting social and political space as mosques owned and used by Muslim communities. As architect Gulzar Haidar writes in his observation of American Shriners Temples, Moorish Revival buildings reflect the "inherent ironies of the Muslim condition in the West as expressed through architecture."[10]

For early Euro-North American settlers, their first introduction to the lands of Islam has been via the Bible where, "descriptions, along with illustrations of the Holy Land published in some editions of the Bible,

9. Phil Pasquini, *Domes, Arches and Minarets: A History of Islamic-Inspired Buildings in America* (Novato, CA: Flypaper Press, 2012), 9.

10. Gulzar Haider, "Muslim Space and the Practice of Architecture: Personal Odyssey," *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe*, ed. Barbara Daly Metcalf (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 33.

set the look and feel of the ancient landscape and the cities and towns in much of the public's minds."[11] However, prior to the wide circulation of the Bible, the Islamic world and Christian Europe have had a long, entangled history of trade, war and diplomacy—one which arguably began at the very rise of Islam—yet it was not until Napoleon's 1798 invasion of Egypt that the "the paraphernalia of scholarly colonialism" truly gave way to the production of twenty-three massive volumes on the Middle East, fourteen of which were dedicated to detailing Muslim life in Egypt.[12] This taxonomic account provided the most comprehensive and widely available study of Egyptian and Muslim customs by French colonizers of the period.[13] With the assistance of over 100 scholars, artists, and scientists, these Napoleonic accounts covered a wide range of issues, from customs and familial life to descriptions of the city of Cairo and the Egyptian countryside.[14]

The subsequent arrival of travelers, colonial administrators, artists, and writers from across Europe and the United States to places like Egypt and the Middle East often dedicated their professional and personal lives to the study of the "Orient." Men such as Edward Lane, Jean-Léon Gérôme, Gustave Flaubert, John Fredrick Lewis, and Frederic Edwin Church began not only to study the culture of the Middle East, but to also systematically generate knowledge on a variety of Muslim cultures, specifically in contrast to commonly held disparate racial and religious categories. In doing so, they linked and unified disparate cultures in "an

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11. Phil Pasquini, Domes, *Arches and Minarets*, 19.

12. Mark Crinson, *Empire Building: Orientalism and Victorian Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1996), 23

13. Ibid.

14. Arthur Goldsmchmidt Jr., *A Concise History of the Middle East*, Seventh Edition (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2002), 162.

ethnically dominated condition locked forever in a stage of history long bypassed by the West."[15] For many of these men, the Orient was more than a geographic region but an object of study. More importantly, it was a complex and self-indulgent world filled with intrigue, and sexual and social deviance. While a number of these images and impressions were informed by direct empirical observances and recorded in travelogues, others like John Ruskin and Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, wrote about the Middle East and its architectural history without ever leaving European shores.[16]

The studies conducted by these European men on the Middle East and Muslim life would inform a number of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. In terms of the field of architecture, Orientalism would come to be articulated most distinctly through the Moorish Revival. In North America, specifically the United States, the Moorish Revival has manifested in a number of different forms: movie theatres (Fig.3.6), Shriner's Temples (which were initially called "mosques") (Fig.3.7), municipal offices (Fig. 3.8), homes (Fig.3.9), and even hotels (Fig. 3.10). In each example, familiar Islamic architectural archetypes such as onion domes, arched windows, hypostyle columns, and a penchant for elaborate geometric forms and decadent interiors are found repeated throughout. Moreover, this style has also been sporadically utilized in synagogue (Fig.3.11) and even church (Fig.3.12) architecture. With the exception of the latter two examples, however, many of these buildings evoked, in Islamic architectural historian Omar Khalidi's words, "a picturesque, romantic

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15. Mark Crinson, *Empire Building*, 4.

16. Deborah Howard, "Ruskin and the East" *Architectural Heritage* 10 (Edinburgh University Press: November 1999), 30.

FIGURE 3.6
Carl Heinrich Boller and Robert Otto Boller, Boller Brothers (architects), Missouri Theatre, St. Joseph, Missouri, USA. 1927. Photo: Phil Pasquini.

FIGURE 3.7
Fred Olds and F. Willard Puckey (architect), Irem Temple, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, USA. 1906-1907.Photo: Phil Pasquini.

FIGURE 3.8
Bernhardt Muller (architect) and Glenn H. Curtiss (developer), Opa Locka Logan Executive Center, Miami, Florida, USA. 1929. Photo: Phil Pasquini.

FIGURE 3.9
Carl F. Stuck (architect), Bardwell-Ferrant House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. 1883, 1890, 1984. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2012.

FIGURE 3.10
John A. Wood (architect), Tampa Florida Hotel, University of Tampa, plant Hall Building. 1888-1891. Photo: Phil Pasquini.

FIGURE 3.11
Architect unknown. Temple Beth-El, Corsicana, Texas, USA. 1898. Photo: Larry D. Moore, 2010.

quality of oriental decoration."[17] In *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (1995), John M. McKenzie argues that during the nineteenth century, while an increased expression of Orientalism appeared in the façade and interiors of many buildings in Europe, it never constituted or was considered as an artistic movement. He notes that while a few historians have remarked on high architectural forms (i.e. John Nash's Brighton Pavilion), a range of buildings that have employed aspects of orientalism have not been conceptualized beyond issues of pastiche and decorative arts. Buildings such as theatres, towers, ballrooms, cinemas, and railway stations have largely been ignored in the study of the influence of Orientalism upon everyday architecture.

Moreover, MacKenzie examines this range of buildings and formulates a framework for understanding such buildings under the term "demotic architecture." Demotic architecture, MacKenzie argues, is the architecture of popular culture, and that "the character of the adaptation, in presenting a culturally filtered analysis of the original, carries its own message."[18] With their decadently designed façades and heavily ornate interiors, these buildings intentionally mimicked Islamic architectural forms and were often used as venues for popular entertainment that were widely accessed by large audiences. As a result, the Moorish Revival exemplified the growing attitudes towards leisure in the nineteenth

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17. Omar Khalidi, "Fantasy, Faith, and Fraternity: American Architecture of Moorish Inspiration," 2002, 1. The term "Moorish Revival" does not accurately apply to church and synagogue architecture. While these two types of buildings do employ the stylistic features found in Islamic architecture from the Levant, their usage of the style is more of a reflection of the denomination of the congregation and their links to older Abrahamic traditions rather than an appropriation of Islamic styles, i.e. Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Sephardic Judaism.

18. John M. McKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, 73.

FIGURE 3.12
Aristide Beaugrand-Champagne (architect). Église St-Michel, Montréal , Quebec, Canada 1915. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2008.

FIGURE 3.13
Jean-Léon Gérôme, The Snake Charmer, c. 1870, Oil on canvas, 83.8 x 122.1cm Acquired by Sterling and Francine Clark, 1942. Collection of the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, USA, object number: 1995.5.1

century. These buildings contributed to and created increased awareness that the Orient was closely connected to entertainment that was eventually made accessible to the masses.[19] In recreating and elaborating upon the architectural elements and styles from Muslim cultures, these building attempted to transport the occupants to the sensual worlds described in popular travelogues such as Washington Irving's *The Alhambra* (1832) and interior architectural scenes illustrated in paintings such as Jean-Léon Gérôme's *The Snake Charmer* (Fig. 3.13, c.1880).[20] However, these literary and visual creations were not the only modes through which knowledge on the Moorish Revival was communicated. Representations of Muslims and Islamic built forms were also supplemented by and conveyed through staged global exhibitions such as the World Expositions in cities like Chicago, London, and Paris.[21]

Despite of the pervasiveness of Orientalist knowledge being produced during the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, representations of Islam or Muslim cultures were not exclusively produced by White, non-Muslim men from the Western world. Dovetailed with this examination

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19. Ibid, 72.

20. In her influential essay "The Imaginary Orient" (1983), Linda Nochlin specifically describes Gerome's *Snake Charmer* as "a visual document of the nineteenth-century colonist ideology, an iconic distillation of the Westerner's notion of the Oriental couched in the language of a would-be naturalism"(34) where "the white man, the Westerner, is of course always implicitly present."(37). Like Gerome's Orientalist paintings, the buildings of the Moorish Revival are distillations with a keen ability to depict accuracy of architectural spaces, and in doing so, present a naturalized version of Islamic built forms.

21. These early World Expositions, organized and presented in major metropolises across Western Europe and North America, showcased the technological and cultural might of the host colonial power. Moreover they organized and displayed the cultures under colonial rule and they "served the politics of colonialism. Both subject peoples and products from foreign possessions made colonialism concrete to those at home and reaffirmed the colonizing society's 'racial superiority,' manifest in its technical, scientific, and moral development" (Zeyneb Celik, *Displaying the Orient*, 19).

of Moorish Revival buildings, I will also briefly examine the ways in which Muslim artists and individuals, predominantly Ottoman in origin (also comprised of mostly men), of this period of European colonization of the Middle East, were able to reflect and resist the grand narratives circulated through Orientalist discourse. For example, during the 1889 World Exposition in Chicago, an Ottoman pavilion showcased the technological feats and accomplishments from across the Middle East. In Paris of the same year, a delegation of Egyptian men touring the Paris Exposition, to their dismay, became an integral part of the exhibition's spectacle themselves. Their reflective critiques on their placement and role in the exposition offered insights on both the "external reality" of Muslim cultures and, how the detailed accuracy in the replication of their built forms, presented a definable sense of certainty of the lived spaces in the Middle East.[22] These accounts show how Arab Muslims had also assessed and participated in the visual production of Islam during this period in order to challenge the totality of the Orientalist appropriation of Islamic architectural and visual knowledge. In these instances, we see an active attempt to compete with the Western narratives. In some cases, as with the representatives of the Ottoman Empire, these men employed similar visual strategies, like presenting at World Expositions for example, to counter and compete with European imperialist conquest not only in the Middle East, but also across the globe. As a result, they attempted to anchor and promote aspects of Muslim-Ottoman culture to show that the Muslim world was capable of modernization and technological progress

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22. Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 7-8.

rather than being passively referred to as the "Sick man of Europe."[23]

Nevertheless, the studied and expansive approach of Orientalism as visually communicated through the Moorish Revival can indeed be understood as a product of colonial knowledge, but a key question in this analysis is to examine the dialectic nature of this framework.[24] For example, is the Moorish Revival simply a distorted reflection of Islamic architecture? Or does it offer any additional insights beyond the polemics between the East and West? What was the nature of the understanding of the producers and architects of the Moorish Revival in terms of the field of Islamic architecture or even Islam? And, how do Moorish Revival buildings evolve and what are their various uses? While this chapter is concerned with how forms of Islamic architecture, namely the Muslim place for religious worship—the mosque, have been established and used in the US by non-Muslims, I am also interested in the ways performance and literature have contributed to the establishment of the Moorish Revival.

In studying the Moorish Revival, what becomes immediately clear is that these buildings were not isolated expressions of an appropriated version of an essentialized Islamic visual culture, but deeply connected to an emergent circulating network of Orientalist knowledge that was able to easily crossover to the US. Whereas the bulk of the interactions between Europeans and Ottomans, Arabs, and South Asians occurred overseas

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23. Zeynep Celik, *Displaying the Orient*, 36.

24. In terms of Islamic architecture, ornamentation and design from the Middle East and South Asia were primary sources of inspiration that were incorporated in Moorish Revival buildings. In addition to Irving's work, Owen Jones' influential trade book *The Grammar of Ornament* (1910) assisted in conveying the various origins of styles from across the Middle East. A further discussion of Jones' book will be included later in this chapter.

through close, shared colonial circumstances, the number of instances of interactions between European settlers with the religion of Islam and the Muslim community in North America was fairly limited.[25] Orientalism travelled longer routes to North America. Direct observational accounts between colonial powers such as Britain and France and their subjects in the Middle East and South Asia, resulted in the significant trade and exchange of goods had not yet been similarly established in the Americas.[26] And yet, the growing presence of the Moorish Revival beginning from the 1850s indicates that architects and connoisseurs were familiar with architectural language from the Muslim world as the result of having publications that explored Islamic architecture.[27]

The Makings of the Moorish Revival: Orientalism in North America

The establishment and appeal of the Moorish Revival can be attributed to more than simply the strict appropriation of architectural forms and ornamental designs. From the subtle influx of geometrically patterned earthenware to the American colonies, to the impactful staged pavilions of the 1893 great Chicago exposition, the introduction of Islamic architectural knowledge heavily relied on its connection to Britain. However, after Independence this means of acquiring information about Islam had changed considerably. In his study of the influx of the Moorish Revival in America, John Sweetman states:

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25. Holly Edwards, "A Million and One Nights: Orientalism in America, 1870-1930" *Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures: Orientalism in America, 1870-1930*, ed. Holly Edwards (Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey, 2000), 21.

26. Omar Khalidi, "Fantasy, Faith, and Fraternity: American Architecture of Moorish Inspiration," 2.

27. John Sweetman, *The Oriental Obsession: Islamic Inspiration in British and American Art and Architecture, 1500-1920* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 241.

> The degree of difference is also accountable in terms of what America and Europe were seeking and where each was seeking. In the later eighteenth century Europeans, tiring of Roman classicism, were finding new points of reference in the alien mysteries of Turkish-occupied Greece and beyond. Geographical proximity to Islamic lands and the cultural and commercial encounters made possible by this meant that those mysteries were brought to them alive and analysable. Americans however, creating a nation in a land which had alien mysteries of its own, were looking for models to link it to Europe.[28]

This ultimately meant that direct modes of engagement to the US were few and far between. Whereas wealthy individuals such as P.T. Barnum could commission eclectic mansions like Iranistan after traveling to Britain to visit the Royal Pavilion, and the highly stylized paintings by notable American artists John Singer Sargent and Frederic Edwin Church who also travelled and observed the Middle East, far more demotic forms were available to the American public. Pattern books, novels, and trade journals for architects were also significant components in the early spread of the Moorish Revival in North America. Amongst these examples however, one contribution to the spread of knowledge on the Muslim world would outweigh the rest in terms of both content and availability.

In 1832, Washington Irving, an American author most known for his books *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1820) and *Rip Van Winkle* (1820), published *The Alhambra*. The book, which "chronicled the 'true and fabulous'" would become one of the most widely read books of the

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28. Ibid.

century.[29] Essentially a travelogue interspersed with historical accounts, Irving's descriptive book awoke American's desire to see and learn about Islamic Spain.[30] Readers could enjoy Irving's candid tone and detailed description of the people and places he encountered during his four-month stay in Spain. Moreover, in describing the architectural details of the Alhambra, the palace-fort located in the city of Granada, the book introduced a way of thinking about Muslim visual culture that subsequently influenced the production of Moorish-styled architecture in the US.

What set Irving's book apart from other travelogues of the period, was his focus on presenting Spain's history both prior to and after the Spanish conquest. In his portrayal of Islamic Spain, Irving's *Alhambra* offered a "form of classicizing Orientalism" as conceptualized by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978), but not in terms of a colonial Islamic East as framed by the Christian West.[31] As Brian T. Allen argues, Irving depicted the Orient polemically, but cast it within Spain's own historical and cultural framework, for *The Alhambra* depicted Spain as embodying two types of ruin:

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29. Ibid. 120, 217. The early-nineteenth century onward saw a growth of publications on Islam and Islamic lands in the US. Irving's publication, though without illustrations was "small size, comparative cheapness and human content." (218) John Sweetman also points out that "at such a time of growing wealth, and activity by American writers on the role and purpose of art, Islamic artistic ideas could be laid in front of the public in the numerous profusely illustrated books and articles on house interiors which were being published almost yearly." (232)

30. Gerald Steven Bernstein, *In the Pursuit of the Exotic: Islamic Forms in Nineteenth-Century American Architecture,* Unpublished dissertation (University of Pennsylvania, 1969), 31-32.

31. Brian T. Allen, "'The garments of instruction from the wardrobe of pleasure'": American Orientalist Painting in the 1870s and 1880s," *Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures: Orientalism in America, 1870-1930,* ed. Holly Edwards (Princeton: Princeton University Press / Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2000), 61.

> The first ruin of Islamic Spain—the once glorious
> Alhambra—but this ruin serves for him a subtly
> aggressive function as a measure of Spain's lost, ancient
> past, perhaps a better past. The second, juxtaposed level of
> ruin is that of imperialist, colonizing Spain.[32]

By describing the contrasting histories of Spain, Irving's book went beyond presenting an account of his travels, and sought to promote Islamic Spain's past as one both deeply decadent yet confined to the past. This contrast as defined by Irving ensured that while the ornamental and decorative architecture of Islamic Spain could be textually celebrated, on the other hand, historicizing its achievements could ensure that it was safely contained and removed from the growing independent US imperialism and trade interests abroad.

A number of years after the appearance of Irving's travelogue, influential British architect and designer Owen Jones published *The Grammar of Ornament* (1856). Composed of a hundred vibrant coloured folio plates, Jones provides a detailed survey of ornamental styles, not just from the Middle East and South Asia, but also with older period European styles such as the Roman and Celtic to even the decorative tattoo and patterning styles from "Savage Tribes" of the South Pacific.[33] Jones described his book as the selection of "a few of the most prominent types in certain styles closely connected with each other" in order to "aid in arresting that unfortunate tendency of our time to be content with copying."[34] However his book was concerned with more than providing

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32. Ibid.

33. Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament* (London: Day and Son, 1865), 1.

34. Ibid.

a detailed source book for architects, but with the intent of refreshing the study of ornamentation (and not necessarily architecture) and in providing architects with the designs that were grounded in a generalized history. Much in the same vein as *The Alhambra*, *The Grammar of Ornament* offered its readership an authoritative and extensive vocabulary on patterning and style which was as popular with professionals as it was with the lay public.[35] Furthermore, it also,

> provided principles for Victorian design that were consistent with the industrial and imperial worldview of a radical group of politicians, designers and clients associated with the design reform movement of the mid-nineteenth century. At the same time, contemporary British culture witnessed an emerging cosmopolitanism in the arts and in the politics in which certain artists, educators and patrons cultivated an attitude of openness, curiosity and emulation of other cultures that extended into the design practice and philosophy of the period.[36]

The adoption of Jones's sourcebook on design grew out of a growing concern and knowledge on Islamic arts and design (and not so much with architecture). Yet his surveyed study paved the way for the consumption of goods inspired by Islamic art. Unlike his contemporary John Ruskin, whose work "reinfused issues of race and cultural superiority" into his work on Islamic influences, the challenge of Jones's work was "to find lessons for the development of design."[37]

35. Mark Crinson, *Empire Building: Orientalism & Victorian Architecture*, 39.

36. Stacey Sloboda, "*The Grammar of Ornament*: Cosmopolitanism and Reform in British Design," *Journal of Design History* 21, no. 3 (2008), 223.

37. Mark Crinson, *Empire Building*, 33.

Redefining Orientalism: *Orientalism* and the Production of the Orient

No doubt, the circulation of Orientalist texts greatly aided the transmission of knowledge on Islamic architecture in North America. Any study in the field of Orientalism would be incomplete without the discussion of Edward W. Said's groundbreaking 1978 work *Orientalism*. Said's book "paved the way for post-colonial studies by forcing academics in the West to rethink the relationship between the Occident and the Orient."[38] Since its publication, the conception and term Orientalism has become synonymous with the nineteenth century imperialist study of the Middle East and Islam. In his book, Said examined how the constructions of cultural and political systems of knowledge on the "Orient" have circulated in the West. More precisely, Said defines Orientalism as the expression and distribution of geopolitical awareness into the aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical texts on the predominantly Muslim Orient that was produced and maintained by the Occident (also known as Europe). His analysis focused on eighteenth and nineteenth century European imperialism and scholarship, primarily through the literary works of Ernest Renan, Antoine Isaac Baron Silvestre de Sacy, and Edward Lane, writers whose work shaped and promoted the idea that the Orient, was so steeped in tradition and history that it was fundamentally disconnected with modernity.

The worlds described in the works of these authors presented an Orient both with detailed accuracy, but framed with Victorian values. Historian Mark Crinson writes, "for Victorians, Islam was often interchangeable with the group of ideas about art, religion, society, history

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38. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2006), 10.

and geography that made up the imaginary of the 'Orient.'"[39] While the bulk of Said's analysis concentrated on non-visual forms, Said's study on the systematic imagining of the Muslim world and the Middle East, was a powerful, if not watershed moment for postcolonial studies, specifically in terms of understanding the role and implications of colonial authority exercised over colonial subjects, and continues to serve as a touchstone analytic framework on the study of Islam and Arabs.

At the heart of Said's analysis is the argument that "knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength, [has] in a sense *create[d]* the Orient, the Oriental and his world… the Oriental is *contained and represented* by [its] dominating frameworks"[40] Said goes on to argue that,

> In a sense Orientalism was a library or archive of information commonly and, in some aspects, unanimously held. What bound the archive together was a family of ideas and a unifying set of values proven in various ways to be effective. These ideas explained the behaviour of Orientals; they supplied Orientals with a mentality, a genealogy, an atmosphere; most important, they allowed Europeans to deal with and even to see Orientals as a phenomenon possessing regular characteristics. But like any set of durable ideas, Orientalist notions influenced the people who were called Orientals as well as those called Occidental, European, or Western; in short, Orientalism is better grasped as a set of constraints upon and limitations of thought than it is simply as a positive doctrine.[41]

For Said, the basis of Orientalism was tied to the Foucauldian understanding of the relationship between the subject and power. In other words, the ways in which the individual is objectified and turned into a subject, show how they are "placed in relations of production and

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39. Mark Crinson, *Empire Building*, 3.

40. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, Pantheon Books, 1978), 40.

41. Ibid, 42-43.

of signification, [where] he is equally in power relations."[42] In short, the production of knowledge is connected to power. The links between the two are inextricable as colonial authority produces knowledge and affirms this knowledge of the Orient that is "activated into theater where history comes alive, a tableau vivant upon which dreams and fantasies can be realized."[43] Through knowledge of the Oriental world, the Occident is able to define, but more importantly disseminate attitudes and understandings of the Middle East and Muslims. Such claims of knowledge translated to the unequivocal ownership of Muslim cultures and identities, thus polarizing and distancing the Orient from the Occidental as an ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious "Other." Through the systematic knowledge garnered by colonial administrators and scholars, Orientalism became the instrument for articulating power, which eventually,

> applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize and others have to recognize in him.[44]

The circulation of Orientalist knowledge of the Muslim world entrenched itself in all facets of colonial life, ranging from policies to social attitudes. However, these attitudes and understandings did not cede with the rise of mid-twentieth century independence from colonial powers, but have continued to inflect into the contemporary knowledge of Muslim life and also the political implications of this knowledge. The

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42. Michel Foucault, "Subject and Power," *The Essential Foucault Reader*, eds. Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (New York and London: The New Press, 2003), 127.

43. Abdirahman Hussein, *Edward Said: Criticism and Society* (New York and London: Verso Books, 2004), 239.

44. Michel Foucault, "Subject and Power," 130.

strength of Orientalism, as Said argued, has been the power not only to shape perceptions of the colonial relationships in the Middle East, but in its ability to also continuously disseminate and connect various negative and sustained notions of Islam and Muslims.

Challenges to *Orientalism*: Bernard Lewis and Aijaz Ahmad Respond

Indeed, Said's thesis has had a profound impact on post-modern and postcolonial thought and has given way to a number of studies and debates on the political identity of Arab and Muslim cultures. His study helped articulate the production of modern knowledge and reached into a number of disciplines across the humanities, including women's studies, anthropology and art history. However, despite the profound impact of *Orientalism*, criticism has been levelled towards Said's framing of the political application and implication of Orientalist knowledge, and also in the form of personal attacks against Said ranging from questioning the authenticity of his Palestinian identity to his involvement in Middle Eastern politics.[45] The most vocal critiques (and at times, even hostile detractions) have come from Bernard Lewis and Aijaz Ahmad. For these two academics, Said's study undermined and simplified the value and contribution by Orientalist scholars. According to Lewis, Said's analysis distorted the legacy of Orientalist scholarship and the term. He argues,

> What then is Orientalism? What did the word mean before
> it was poisoned by the kind of intellectual pollution that
> in our time has made so many previously useful words
> unfit for use in rational discourse? In the past, Orientalism

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45 . See: Fred Halliday, "'Orientalism' and Its Critics," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 20, no.2 (1993), 145-163, and James Clifford, "On Orientalism," *The Predicament of Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 255- 276.

was used mainly in two senses. One is a school of painting—that of a group of artists, mostly from Western Europe, who visited the Middle East and North Africa and depicted what they saw or imagined, sometimes in a rather romantic and extravagant manner. The second and more common meaning, unconnected with the first, has been a branch of scholarship. The word, and the academic discipline which it denotes, date from the great expansion of scholarship in Western Europe from the time of the Renaissance onward.[46]

Lewis's criticism of *Orientalism* focuses on Said's emphasis on the political and social ramifications of Orientalist study on Muslim subjects. For Lewis, the knowledge produced by scholars prior to and during the period of British and French colonialism was primarily concerned with the "recovery, study, publication and interpretation of texts."[47] Lewis contends that Orientalist scholars—British, French and at times even Turkish—were involved with investigating the culture and language of the Middle East with the intent of producing theses much in the same fashion as the Latinists who studied the classics.[48] Rather, Orientalists engaged in the production of knowledge produced for the sake of contributing to knowledge. Absent in Lewis's conception of Orientalism however, is an understanding of the objectives of these studies and their role in maintaining hegemonic relations in the colonies. To this issue, Lewis's critique remains peculiarly silent, and indeed, supports Western cultural dominance. While it may seem evident that the conception of the term "Orient" itself has the power to totalize a vast geographic and

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46. Bernard Lewis, "The Question of Orientalism," *The New York Review of Books*, June 24, 1982. http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1982/jun/24/the-question-of-orientalism/ (date of last access: 17 February 2011).

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

varied cultural landscape, Lewis dismissed the possibility that nineteenth-century knowledge had continuing implications for and influences on the ways in which Islam or Muslims are seen.

From quite another position of criticism, literary theorist Aijaz Ahmed in his article *Orientalism and After* (1992) argued that Said, in his attempt to survey the history of Orientalism, falls into periods of ambivalence: that in surveying canonical texts from Aeschylus to Edward Lane to outline the denigration of the Muslim world, he inevitably falls short in presenting any specificity or locality, and as such, comes across as an arbitrary assemblage of European humanistic traditions. Without this locality, the relationship between the colonizer and colonized is never fully defined or established, and thus Said falls into recreating the same type of all-encompassing trajectory that he critiques Orientalist scholars for constructing. Moreover, Ahmad argues that in doing so, Said's conceptualization of Orientalism fails to examine "the history of Western textualities about the non-West quite in isolation from how these textualities might have been received, accepted, modified, challenges overthrown or reproduced by the intelligentsias of the colonised countries."[49]

In his article *Orientalism Reconsidered* (1985), Said squarely addresses some of the concerns raised after the publication of his book: namely the usage of the term Orientalism and its political currency. What Said was able to achieve in *Orientalism* was the,

...epistemological critique at the most fundamental

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49. Aijaz Ahmad, "Orientalism and After: Ambivalence and Cosmopolitan Location in the Work of Edward Said," *Economic and Political Weekly* 27, no.30 (Jul. 25, 1992), 101.

level of the connection between the development of a historicism which has expanded and developed enough to include antithetical such as ideologies of Western imperialism and critiques on the one hand, and on the other, the actual practice of imperialism by which the accumulation of territories and population, the control of economies, and the incorporation and homogenization of histories are maintained.[50]

To this end, the Moorish Revival, as part of the infrastructure of Orientalism has permitted American architects and author's to utilize the language of Islamic architecture as they saw fit. Through the demarcation of the historical parameters established by authors such as Washington Irving, the Moorish Revival in the US was able to accurately depict traditional architectural forms as conceptualized and defined by the European colonialist project in the Middle East. In other words, by virtue of their establishment in the US, in the absence of the close and constant contact with the Islamic world unlike their architectural counterparts in Europe, these buildings have been fully designed and constructed with a detailed knowledge of the practice of Islamic architectural forms, which only attests to the evocativeness of works like *The Alhambra* to create an imaginary representation of the Middle East across the Atlantic. Drawing on the image of the mosque, buildings such as Atlanta's Fox Theatre, the Tripoli Shrine Temple and Opa Locka's City Hall demonstrate the mutability of Orientalism in architecture. In addition to the employment of Islamic architectural forms, these buildings support and enact a Muslim identity, one that is at once knowable, and so wholly Othered, but more importantly, one that was increasingly framed by an expanding American

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50. Edward W. Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered" *Cultural Critique*, no. 1 (Autumn 1985), 101.

FIGURE 3.14
Clas, Shepard and Clas (architects), Tripoli Shrine Temple (central dome detail), Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. 1928. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2012.

FIGURE 3.15
Clas, Shepard and Clas (architects), Tripoli Shrine (entryway camel, detail), Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2012.

FIGURE 3.16
Clas, Shepard and Clas (architects), Tripoli Shrine, second floor foyer, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2012.

consumerist public fascinated with the exotic.

The Moorish Revival: Exercises in Orientalist Architectural Knowledge

Milwaukee's Tripoli Shrine (1928): FEZZES! FUN! DIN!

Built during the early twentieth-century, Milwaukee's Tripoli Temple is a striking example of the Moorish Revival style. In its design, the two-story Tripoli Temple represents the magnitude of the Shriner's financial ability and knowledge of Islamic architecture to articulate its Moorish identity through built form (Fig. 3.4).[51] Located in Milwaukee's west end, the temple traces its early history to the Medinah Temple in Chicago. Challenged by the distance of the Chicago Shrine, members living in Milwaukee sought to build a local shrine of there own. By actively petitioning the Imperial Shrine Council they were eventually granted the right to establish a charter by 1885.[52] However financing the project would significantly delay the construction of a local temple for many years afterwards. Efforts to build the temple would begin in 1925, and by 1928, the architectural firm of Clas, Shepard and Clas completed their commissioned design for the Shriner's temple, a design that would be an architectural replica of India's iconic Taj Mahal.[53]

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51. In *How the Arabian Nights Inspired the American Dream* (2009), historian Susan Nance shows that in addition to their elaborate costuming and rituals, members financially contributed to the organization as it was "simultaneously a preeminent venue for male consumerism and signified one's success as a producer of wealth because collectively, fraternalists were an enormous market of generous spenders… Fraternal participation alone required payment of ritual fees, yearly dues, charity donations, the purchasing of costuming and paraphernalia and tickets for fraternal travel, banquets and picnics." (81-2).

52. Tripoli Shrine, http://www.tripolishrine.com/history.html (date of last access: 16 February 2013).

53 . Ibid.

The Islamic architectural details integrated into the exterior design included the bi-colour brickwork (the design technique commonly used in Islamic architecture from Andalusia referred to as *ablaq* in Arabic) and extensive use of painted tiles on the building's central and two smaller domes, as well as the entryway facade (Fig. 3.14). Aside from the two architectural forms featured most evidently in the building: the two pirouetting minarets and onion dome, the building also features two sculptures of camels flanking the base of the entryway balustrades (Fig. 3.15). On the purpose of the two camels, a Shriner's administrator aptly put it, "they're one of the symbols used by the Shrine. The ritual of the Shrine is based on the Arabic way of life, and the camels are a part of it."[54]

As one of the first thirty Shriner's Temples built in the United States,[55] the financial capital and concerted effort paid to the details can also be seen in the building's interior. Gilded and hand-painted geometric patterning is found throughout both floors of the building (Fig. 3.16). Within the main dome hangs a chandelier surrounded with additional floral arabesque gilding, intertwined with Arabic calligraphy (Fig. 3.17). Like the grand mosques found in Cairo, Aleppo, and Lahore, such calligraphic texts, either carved or painted, provide not only religious information, but perhaps more importantly, suggest an oasis with foliage to promote "notions of growth, abundance and fertility" that was a much "desired antidote to the harsh desert climate of the Middle East."[56] The use of calligraphic texts on buildings such as the Tripoli Shrine, though they

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54. Jackie Loohauis, "Eccentric, and all ours; 10 oddball and totally Milwaukee tales" Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (November 10, 2006), E10.

55. "The First Thirty Temples," *The Washington Post* (June 11, 1935), SE18.

56. Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 22, 24.

have also been used for such decorative ends, are not in most cases legible texts, but rather an assemblage of letters, cursive marks and shapes.

Notwithstanding the overall appearance of the building, a key part of its identity is bound to performance of "Moorishness." The Shriners, a Masonic fraternal organization that traces its origins to nineteenth century New York, are known not only for their philanthropic services and charitable work, but also for their broad appropriation of Muslim material culture. Part of the Shriner's architectural program was to convey the "Moorish Fantasy" theme in their Masonic temples in order to corroborate not only the fraternity's overall Arabian identity, but also, perhaps more importantly, its geographic origins in Arabia. As Phillip Gordon Mackintosh and Clyde R. Forsberg point out, this simulated "geography added greatly to the construction and affirmation of a set of highly ritualized and performative values that serviced the private and public needs of bourgeois men, many of whom were disenchanted with their role in industrial modernity."[57] From the donning of the fez cap, to the usage of names and places from the Muslim world, as well as some common Islamic terminology (for example, "Es Selamu Aleikum" is a standard Masonic greeting). As William D. Moore states of the Shriners:

> By assuming an Arab identity and signaling this
> appropriation by wearing a fez or some more elaborate
> costume, Shriners stepped out of an identity with which
> they had grown uncomfortable and inhabited a role
> that symbolically opposed it. The mosques, then, were
> cognitive aids through which the Shriners escaped
> America and its Victorian moral structures. Although

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57. Philip Gordon Mackintosh and Clyde R. Forsberg, "Performing the Lodge: Masonry, Masculinity, and Nineteenth-Century North American Moral Geography," *Journal of Historical Geography* 35, no.3 (July 2009), 453.

FIGURE 3.17
Clas, Shepard and Clas (architects), Tripoli Shrine, chandelier (detail), Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2012.

these apparently non-Western buildings were physically present in American cities such as Brooklyn and Binghamton, they frequently were portrayed in a desert context.[58]

The Shriners creation of a Moorish identity was invariably tied to the elaborate performance of a pan-Muslim Oriental imaginary which significantly assisted in sustaining this identity for the Shriners Temple. For example, when the first stone for the building was laid in 1927, among the uniformed members of the temple the ceremony also included members of the Oriental band, Arab patrol, and Ringmasters followed by a parade through Milwaukee.[59] Though the Shriners no longer construct Temples in the fashion of the early Moorish Revival, the carnivalesque appropriation of Islam continues to be presented via annual parades and Shriner Temple initiation ceremonies.

In recent years, with the dwindling membership to the fraternal organization (as the result of insufficient recruitment of new members and the aging demographic of its current membership) and the economic decline of the surrounding neighborhood, these calligraphic texts and architectural forms found in the Tripoli Shrine continue to convey a unified sense of being an authentic mosque. Apart from the regular and annual activities held by the regional potenate at the Shrine, it has also become a destination for weddings, special events, and anniversaries. The expansive interior, with its distinctive and embellished look has allowed

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58. William D. Moore, *Masonic Temples: Freemasonry, Ritual Architecture, and Masculine Archetypes* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2006), 166.

59 "Masons to Lay Mosque Stone." *The Milwaukee Journal*, (Friday July 22, 1927), 17. The Arab Patrol, Oriental Band and Ringmasters are sub-units of the Shriners. Inclusion into these groups involves additional costuming, membership dues and rituals as well as active involvement in the Shriners annual parades.

the Shriners to subsidize their growing operating costs through such facility rentals. As the nature of the organization's membership changes, the likelihood of the Tripoli Shrine becoming a destination event centre in the future seems increasingly possible.

Atlanta's Fox Theatre (1929): A Building to "out Baghdad Baghdad."

Between the 1925 and 1935, as many as 27 theatres across the United States were designed and constructed in the style of the Moorish Revival, which ultimately contributed to the popular usage of the style.[60] With their origins in vaudeville theatre and the traveling show, these movie theatres were instrumental in the propagation of the early Hollywood film industry during the 1920s.[61] These buildings were constructed "not just to express romantic extremes of architectural design, but also to serve a purpose purely economic in nature: drawing patrons to the box office."[62] Many of these opulent buildings were an architectural mix between a palace and a cinema, as their extravagant designs were meant to heighten movie-goers' experience by providing an overwhelming sensory feast, where "more than just the primary source of entertainment… the movies provided a release for the increasing pressures of a world growing more hectic by the day."[63]

Such was the impetus for the refurbishment of Atlanta's Fox Theatre. Nicknamed the "Mecca on Peachtree," the spatially imposing building was initially intended to be the Yaarab Mosque for Atlanta's

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60. Omar Khalidi, "Faith, Fantasy and Fraternity", 10.

61. Charlotte Herzog, "The Movie Palace and the Theatrical Sources of Its Architectural Style," *Cinema Journal* 20, no. 2, (Spring, 1981), 22.

62. David Naylor, *American Picture Palaces: The Architecture of Fantasy* (New York: Prentice Hall Editions, 1981), 32.

63. Ibid, 14.

Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, more commonly

known as the Shriners. Designed and built by the Atlanta architectural

firm Mayre, Alger & Vinour, the architectural vision behind the building's

appearance can be credited to Ollivier Vinour. His travels to Africa, the

two volumes of David Roberts lithographs *Egypt and Nubia* and *The Holy

Land* (1838), and his access to postcards from Spain and the Middle East,

all heavily shaped his knowledge of Islamic architecture.[64] Born in France

and educated at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Vinour relied on these texts not

only for their architectural information, but also ornamentation, window

and door designs and furnishing.[65] This studied knowledge of Islamic

motifs can be seen throughout the cinema, from the tiled water fountain

(Fig.3.18) to the painted arabesque designs to the niched architectural

features such as *muqarnas* (Fig.3.19).[66]

However, the rising costs of the building forced the Shriners to

abandon the project during its construction, until movie mogul (and

founder of Fox entertainment) William Fox assumed the lease of the

project. By 1939, the Shriners had relinquished ownership of the 250,000

square foot building and it was eventually converted into a cinema.[67]

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64. Christine Born, *The Decorative Arts of the Fabulous Fox Theatre* (Atlanta: Atlanta Metropolitan Publishing, 2004), 2. The exact dates of Vinour's travels to the Middle East have been difficult to discern. Based on a letter to the Fox Theatre from Vinour's daughter Lydia Vinour Miller, as a young man in France, Vinour was required to serve in the French military and saw active duty in 1911. It is quite possible Vinour was mobilized for duty in North Africa during this time (Lydia Vinour Miller to Rick Flinn Fox Theatre Manager, personal letter, 14 November, 1991).

65. Robert Michael Craig, *Atlanta architecture: Art Deco to modern classic: 1929-1959* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 1995), 71.

66. A muqarna(s) refers to the architectural feature of multiple projecting niches. See: Andrew Petersen, *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture*, 1996.

67. David Naylor, *American Picture Palaces: The Architecture of Fantasy*, 80.

Despite the change of ownership, many of the original designs were retained under Fox. With its minarets, dome, and horseshoe arched windows the theatre most visibly resembles a cross between a Hispano-Iberian and a North African mosque. This is most clearly articulated not just in its use of the minaret, but also in its strips of alternating coloured bricks (Fig 3.20). Along the circumference of the building's largest dome is carved stone, which intermingles the design of something closely resembling Arabic text along its base (Fig. 3.21). In the building's interior, a main stage auditorium—no less ornate or decorative than the exterior—is the most distinctive feature of the Fox Theatre (Fig. 3.22). Seating 4,678 patrons across two levels (which were segregated during the period of Jim Crow laws in the South[68]), the auditorium was designed to mimic the look and feel of an Arabian tent. Whereas the ceiling above the auditorium seats have been painted a luminous ultramarine blue with twinkling stars, a structure resembling the draping fabric of a tent's entryway extends over the second tier (Fig 3.23). The walls around the auditorium hold a brick and latticework façade, filled with domed turrets that overextend to the main stage much like a palace. The intent of this layout was to present the visitor with the sense of being inside an ornamented Arabian tent, observing the stories being played out on stage.[69]

The opulence of the Fox theatre and its spatial effects as a cinema-palace are perhaps best expressed in the way Gustave Flaubert described Egypt at the beginning of the second chapter where the bustling Egyptian

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68 . Kathy Roberts, *The Fabulous Fox Theatre: The History of an Atlanta Icon* (Atlanta: Atlanta Metropolitan Publishing, 2002), 21.

69 . Or as the General Manger of the Fox relayed to me in 2010, the auditorium is meant to transport audiences to the Arabian Desert where they can listen to Bedouin tales and life in Arabia.

FIGURE 3.18
Mayre, Alger &Vinour
(architects), Fox Theatre,
water fountain (detail),
Atlanta, Georgia, USA.
Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2011.

FIGURE 3.19
Mayre, Alger
&Vinour (archi-
tects), Fox The-
atre, muqarnas
(detail), Atlanta,
Georgia, USA.
Photo: Nadia
Kurd, 2011.

cityscape with its "chaos of colours" and aural excess, embodied the influence and input driving the designs of the Moorish Revival. The descriptions in European travelogues illustrate the visual narratives that served as an introduction to a way of thinking about the possible forms and functions of Islamic architecture to audiences in the US. Such writing also provided the tone and sense of both whimsical spectacle and decadence that has come to be the defining characteristic of cinema-palaces like the Fox Theatre.

During this period, the Moorish Revival became the key mode in articulating the desire to explore and be transported to the worlds outside of the American general public. So great was the anticipation of the new cinema's Christmas day opening, the local press proclaimed that the cinema was,

> an oriental poem translated in occidental language through a medium of stone, marble and golden materials and making its gradual appearance as temples do in our dreams when the "magic carpet" carries our fanciful imagination through ethereal dreamlands. It has been thus. Today it stands completed and read to offer you the apex of entertainment through the various mediums at its command. Rising as through an oasis and flanked with stepping terraces and winding stairways, this monument of colourful masses and motives, leads the eyes of the observer towards a towering minaret where one can almost visualize at sunset the strange silhouette of the muezzin and hearken his calling of the faithful to evening prayer. [70]

Despite the initial popularity of the Fox Theatre, by 1974 the operators of the building faced financial difficulty that threatened its closure. Through active fundraising drives and a designation as a National

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70 "Architecture of New Fox Oriental Rhapsody in Stone." *The Atlanta Constitution* (December 22, 1929), A7.

FIGURE 3.20
Mayre, Alger &Vinour (architects), Fox Theatre, ablaq (detail), Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2011.

FIGURE 3.21
Mayre, Alger &Vinour (architects), Fox Theatre, main dome (detail), Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2011.

FIGURE 3.22
Mayre, Alger &Vinour (architects), Fox Theatre, auditorium intere
ior (detail), Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2011.

FIGURE 3.23
Mayre, Alger &Vinour (architects), Fox Theatre, auditorium second
tier (detail), Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2011.

Landmark Museum Building in 1991, the Theatre continues to thrive as a key entertainment destination in Atlanta.[71] From dance cabarets to even performances of classical South Asian musical ensembles, it has successfully built upon its history as an entertainment complex and has maintained a constant association between the Moorish Revival and the presentation of entertainment—a place where both sight and sound are overwhelmed all within the confines of a mosque structure. Today the building serves as an entertainment complex where traveling bands, singers and still occasionally yet, the odd *Arabian Nights* silent film are shown.

Opa Locka's City Hall (1929): "The Baghdad of Dade"

The brainchild of aviator and real estate developer Glenn H. Curtiss, Opa Locka City Hall (Figure 3.5) had been initially part of a larger complex of buildings inspired by the various translated stories in *The Thousand and One Arabian Nights* and the Hollywood silent film *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924). The Opa Locka City Hall grew out of the real estate development boom in Florida during the 1920s and included two suburban communities Hialeah and Miami Springs.[72] Located just north of the city of Miami, both the anticipation and cost – which was an estimated to be fifty thousand dollars– of Curtiss's extensive development of these communities had been great. As one writer of the *Miami Herald* mused, "it will no doubt be difficult for the average person to grasp the idea that

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71. Atlanta's Fox theatre, http://www.foxtheatre.org/ (date of last access: 1 March 2011).

72. Seth H. Bramson, *The Curtiss-Bright Cities: Hialeah, Miami Springs and Opa Locka* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2008), 115.

a town with electric lights, water, paved streets and all other modern improvements is springing up there."[73]

Now a firm part of Dade County Miami, the suburb of Opa Locka is centred on the former Seminole village of Opatishawockalocka.[74] Located at the centre of the suburb, with its multiple minarets and bicoloured stuccoed exterior, fountain courtyard and a large octagonal tower overlooking Opa-locka Boulevard, the Opa Locka City Hall most resembles the architectural styling of the Great Mosque of Cordoba; but more importantly, it resembles what Curtiss and most Americans at the time assumed what buildings in the Arabian Desert looked like.[75] After poring over many drawings, stories and proposals, Curtiss directed his architects to create the building that would eventually become Opa Locka's City Hall.[76] The cluster of structures that would form Curtiss's Arabian Nights-style vision represents the largest concentration of buildings inspired by Islamic architecture in the US.[77]

The architectural inspiration behind Opa Locka has been attributed to a number of factors. The first, was credited to architect Bernhardt Muller who was inspired by the landscape depicted in the tales of *Araby*, and the other influence is attributed to Curtiss's mother, Lua Andrews Curtiss who upon reviewing images of the town site cried, "Oh, Glenn,

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73. "Glenn Curtiss Creates Town," Miami Herald 11, no. 68 (2 January 1921), 1. The development of these communities also included the construction of a commercial building for offices and a grocery store.

74 . Larry Luxner, "Opa-Locka Rising," *Saudi Aramco World* (September/October, 1989), 3-4.

75. Ibid.

76. Seth H. Bramson, *The Curtiss-Bright Cities,* 115.

77. Phil Pasquini, *Domes, Arches and Minarets*, 152.

it's like a dream from the Arabian Nights!"[78] Seth H. Bramson contends

that the likely source of Opa Locka's architectural vision was Curtiss

himself. As a real estate tycoon who made his initial fortunes during

the building of the American aviation industry, Curtiss is said to have

established Opa Locka after reading the *One Thousand and One Arabian

Nights*.[79] Given the expansive and integrative use of the style throughout

Miami Springs, Hialeah, and Opa Locka, there may be little doubt that the

reading of the *Arabian Nights* had fuelled the development and planning

of the subdivisions. To heighten the association with the *Arabian Nights*,

Curtiss named the palm tree-lined streets of Opa Locka after the characters

and places found in the stories: names like Ali Baba Avenue, Oriental

Boulevard, Caliph Street, and Sinbad Avenue all aligned and intersected

the City Hall.

In addition to the fantastical street names, Curtiss's Arabian vision

for Opa Locka confirmed its "Moorishness" by hosting the yearly Arabian

Nights Fantasy Festival. Every May, since the founding of Opa Locka,

belly dancers, musicians, fashion designers, and vendors "ply the streets

selling everything from olive-wood camels to traditional Arab foods,"

culminating in an Arabian Nights Fantasy Parade (Fig.3.24).[80] In the

aftermath of 9/11, due to the lack of interest and the rising production

costs, the festival was ended in 2002.[81]

As it stands today, the four stucco domes of the City Hall building

have been painted a candy pink while the exterior walls a sandy brown.

The adjacent streets are also lined with palm trees, while the main

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78. Seth H. Bramson, 115.

79. Phil Pasquini, 152.

80. Larry Luxner, "Opa-Locka Rising," 3-4.

81. Phil Pasquini, 152.

courtyard of the building contains an Iberian-style fountain and garden. Despite Opa Locka's whimsical beginnings, the 1929 stock market crash, followed by Curtiss's death a year later, the city began to see a decline.[82] By the 1980s, it had become almost unliveable. So great was the influx of drugs and violent crime that metal barricades had been erected near all but one entrance into the community.[83] The city's former glory as a place of fantasy has all but faded, and to date, only twenty of the original 105 buildings are listed on the National Registry of Historic Places (many of them being destroyed during a 1926 hurricane).[84] While many of the original Moorish Revival structures have fallen into disrepair, the primary building, the City Hall remains as the key reminder of the vibrant Orientalist past.

Against the Orientalist Tide: Muslims at the Exposition

The European visual imagination of the Muslim world was not produced in isolation. Though Saidian Orientalism exposed the nature of European study of the Middle East, it offered little by way of understanding how Muslim or Arab authors perceived their cultural value or contribution to Europe. Writing about Orientalism on the side of the "Other", Zeynep Celik argues that this approach "studied from this unconventional corner, Orientalism reveals a hitherto concealed

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82. Ibid. Pasquini also points out quite ironically that up to 1990, local Muslims would also use the City Hall property for congregational prayer (152).

83. Robert Samuels, "Miami's crime-plagued neighborhoods resolute in security effort," *The Miami Herald*, (16 October 2010). http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/10/06/1861264/crime-barriers-at-a-crossroads.html (date of last access: 19 February 2011).

84. City of Opa-Locka, http://www.opalockafl.gov/index.aspx?NID=229 (date of last access: 1 April 2013).

dynamism, one that is about dialogue between cultures and about contesting the dominate norms."[85] Moreover, this "Other" side reveals the possibility of thinking through the disciplinary challenges that have been presented in fields such as Islamic Art and Architecture, namely how the field itself has been constructed as a product of colonial observation on Muslim cultures.

In his study on British colonisation of Egypt, Timothy Mitchell writes that during the summer of 1889, on their way to the Eighth International Congress of Orientalists, a delegation of Egyptian officials travelled to France to witness the World Exposition in the French capital. Upon their arrival at the exposition, specifically on the Rue du Caire, amid the carefully rendered Egyptian cityscape, the delegation was astonished since,

> Part of the shock of the Egyptians came from just how real the street claimed to be: not simply that the paint was made dirty, that the donkeys were from Cairo, and the Egyptian pastries on sale were said to taste like the real thing, but that one paid for them with what we call "real money." The commercialism of the donkey rides, the bazaar stalls, and the dancing girls seemed no different from the commercialism of the world outside.[86]

For the Egyptians, the final shock came when, upon entering the door of the mosque, they found that like the street, it was a façade. Inside the structure, the delegation discovered it had been set up as a coffee shop "'where Egyptian girls performed dances with young males,

85. Zeynep Celik, "Speaking Back to Orientalist Discourse," *Orientalism's Interlocutors: Painting, Architecture, Photography*, eds. Jill Beaulieu and Mary Roberts (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002), 21.

86. Timothy Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order," *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 463.

FIGURE 3.24
Opa Locka Fantasy Parade, May 27, 1955.
Photographer unknown.

and dervishes whirled.'"[87] The spectacle created through events like the Exposition were meant to stage the world as a picture, ordering the world before an audience as "an object on display, to be viewed, experienced and investigated."[88]

The degree to which the French were able to mimic Egyptian customs and cultural life at the Expositions reflected how much knowledge had been gathered through studied observation, but also the visual "representation" of this ordered knowledge. The key function of Orientalism was to reproduce seamlessly, without discord or evidence of the disjuncture in the reality portrayed. Moreover, these representations, Mitchell states, were modeled on an external world, which was most clearly articulated to the surprise of the Egyptians as on the Cairo Street recalled that "even the paint was made dirty."[89] Such observations made by the Egyptian delegation as they walked through and experienced the architectural facades created in the Expositions like the one in Paris, illuminate how their experience of the exposition highlighted the fundamental difference between built forms created and maintained by Muslims and non-Muslims. Whereas the mosques used by Muslim communities assert agency of self-representation and knowledge, the built forms constructed by non-Muslims present an image of Islamic architecture that was both picturesque and fantastical, but one that was

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87. Timothy Mitchell, "Egypt at the Exhibition," 5.

88. Ibid, 6. Many of the visitors to the world Expositions in Europe and the US were often official representatives from Muslim states or independent travelers. In her book *Displaying the Orient* (1992), Zeynep Celik writes that these individuals, once at the Exposition would themselves become the focus of attention and a part of the display as specimens (17). Moreover, the Cairo Street in Paris was the most popular attraction at the exposition, so much so that it was recreated for the Chicago Exposition in 1893.

89. Ibid, 7.

largely devoid of Muslim participants (or actual knowledge of Islam) as active agents. Moreover, these architectural and cultural facades created an objectified representation of Islamic lands.

The impact of these Expositions was soon recognized by the officials of the Ottoman Empire, who in 1893 mounted an ambitious pavilion in Chicago (Fig.3.25).[90] Among the displays featured as part of the pavilion were "business street of Constantinople," Turkish fire engine, and "'all kinds of wood for carpenters and cabinetmakers produced in the Empire.'"[91] As Zeynep Agyen states that "with the decline of Ottoman power in Europe and the Middle East, the Empire began to search for the reasons behind its decline. Western innovations in military science seemed to give the answer."[92] Participating in the World Expositions, was the key avenue through which the Ottoman Empire could gain a sense of their legitimacy and connection to Europe, though in doing so,

> Muslim nations had to reconsider and redefine their
> cultural identities in order to present a summarizing
> image; as they did, they re-evaluated their past and
> present architecture and made projections for the future.
> Along the way they had to come to terms with the

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90. It is worth mentioning the pivotal importance of the 1893 World Exposition in Chicago. The expo celebrated the 400-year anniversary of Columbus's arrival to the Americas and as Mona Domosh (2002) points out, the Chicago fair was "a turning point in American history, a point when the United States moved from an era of nation-building to one of empire-building." Furthermore, Domosh has argued that "the relatively new technologies of mechanized harvesters, reapers and binders were patented by American companies, and by the end of the nineteenth-century these companies were aggressively marketing their products overseas, and were using their international status to sell their products at home." (182-3).

91. Zeynep Celik, "Speaking Back to Orientalist Discourse at the World's Columbian Exposition," *Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures: Orientalism in America, 1870-1930*, ed. Holly Edwards (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press in association with the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2000), 77-8.

92. Zeynep Aygen, "'A Ship Sailing East with Its Voyagers Travelling West": Architectural Saints, City Fathers and Design Patrons in the Late Ottoman Empire," *Journal of Design History* 20, no.2 (2007), 93.

widespread influence of the "advanced" world. The direct involvement of Europeans in architecture and urbanism (as colonial decision makers and as invited technocrats) complicated the issues further.[93]

With the rapid losses of Ottoman territories and the failure to instigate real changes during the mid-nineteenth century through educational and military reforms,[94] the presentation at the Chicago Exposition was an attempt to grasp control of the image of the Ottoman Empire, which by the early twentieth century had finally dissolved. And yet, their participation in creating a visual, constructed narrative— though moderate in both size and scope—stood against the totality of European domination on the image of Islam during this period. It provided a concerted resistance to the universalized narratives and European attitudes to Muslims of the period—an act that would become a progressively difficult endeavour in the face of the political climate of the US in the decades to come.

Conclusions

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93. Zeynep Celik, *Displaying the Orient*, 153.

94. By the mid 19th century, educational reforms pushed by rulers Selim III and Mahmut II transformed the social fabric of the Ottoman Empire. Characterized by the restructuring to the social and economic ordering of the Ottoman Empire, the Tanizmat reforms of the late Ottoman period sought to change not only the ways in which the Ottoman subject interacted with the state, but how the Ottomans saw themselves in relationship to Europe. Literally translated as "reorganization", the Tanzimat instituted a series of policies that centralized Ottoman state powers, and broke down the religious and cultural autonomy of the *millets* (Jewish, Christian, Muslim communities governed by separate religious laws) to create a common Ottoman citizenship which in theory would replace the religious ordering of society in which Muslims were dominant. Moreover, these policies changed the ordering of the Ottoman Empire that had been the social, political and economic norm for the past three hundred years. William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 3rd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2004), 83.

25 years after writing *Orientalism*, Said reflected on the climate of
US-Mideast political relations and the ongoing necessity of emphasizing
the lasting implications of colonial relations. He wrote:

> Orientalism is very much a book tied to the tumultuous
> dynamics of contemporary history. Its first page opens
> with a 1975 description of the Lebanese Civil War that
> ended in 1990, but the violence and the ugly shedding of
> human blood continues up to this minute… the "Orient,"
> that semi-mythical construct which since Napoleon's
> invasion of Egypt in the late eighteenth century has
> been made and re-made countless times. In the process
> the uncountable sediments of history, that include
> innumerable histories and a dizzying variety of peoples,
> languages, experiences, and cultures, all these are swept
> aside or ignored, relegated to the sand heap along with the
> treasures ground into meaningless fragments that were
> taken out of Baghdad.

In his study, Said goes on to also argue that:

> My argument is that history is made by men and women,
> just as it can also be unmade and re-written, so that "our"
> East, "our" Orient becomes "ours" to possess and direct.
> And I have a very high regard for the powers and gifts of
> the peoples of that region to struggle on for their vision
> of what they are and want to be. There's been so massive
> and calculatedly aggressive an attack on the contemporary
> societies of the Arab and Muslim for their backwardness,
> lack of democracy, and abrogation of women's rights
> that we simply forget that such notions as modernity,
> enlightenment, and democracy are by no means simple,
> and agreed-upon concepts that one either does or does not
> find like Easter eggs in the living-room. The breathtaking
> insouciance of jejune publicists who speak in the name of
> foreign policy and who have no knowledge at all of the
> language real people actually speak, has fabricated an arid
> landscape ready for American power to construct there an
> ersatz model of free market "democracy."[95]

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95. Edward W. Said, "Orientalism 25 Years Later: Worldly Humanism v. the
Empire-builders," *CounterPunch* (August 4, 2003). http://www.counterpunch.
org/2003/08/05/orientalism/ (date of last access 17 February 2013).

FIGURE 3.25
Ottoman Pavilion at the Chicago World Exposition, 1893. Paul
V. Galvin Library, Digital History Collection, Illinois Institute of
Technology.

The affective resonance of Orientalist knowledge and its sustained ability to support the exercise of unilateral power over former colonized states has penetrated into the understanding of Islamic architectural forms. The Orientalism of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century provided a complete picture, if not a powerful source of information for twentieth-century America. Complex and often reproduced, the Moorish Revival can trace its roots to the formation of the colonial discipline of Islamic architectural history. It also reflected a response to the influx of distinct ideas and images of Islam and Muslim visual cultures to the US that were easily adapted into architectural forms.

While the exchanges between the Islamic Middle East and Christian Europe had a long history of cultural interaction and trade, such knowledge on Islam travelled longer, more textually based routes to reach North American shores. However, once Orientalism arrived, the ways in which American authors, artists, organizations, and even wealthy industrialists would evaluate and present Islamic lands through a quite different lens from their European counterparts. For organizations such as the Shriners, the Moorish Revival style of their fraternal temples was part of a larger appropriation of a pan-Islamic identity. Individuals such as Curtiss Glenn envisioned a Middle East that resembled the *Arabian Nights*, one that could be easily replicated as an urban oasis in Southern Florida. Others like James Fox would see the Moorish Revival as a means to underscore the spectacle of the movie house, and associate it with a sense of the whimsical and fantastic—a built form that assisted with the compelling visual storytelling on the silver screen.

As a colonial nation emerging from British rule, American Orientalism developed built forms that were inspired by textual

documents and performative events rather than through direct, insitu observations. The influence and circulation of pattern books, Omar Khalidi points out:

> offered suggestions for their adaptation to contemporary use, and professional trade journals published primarily for practicing architects. The trade journals offered professional and scientific analysis; for instance, of Islamic brick-laying techniques, accompanied by carefully numbered diagrams explaining exactly how to duplicate an Alhambra stalactite vault.[96]

Dovetailed with the circulation of pattern books, works of fiction such as Washington Irving's *The Alhambra*, and *1001 Thousand Nights* promoted the style widely, while also promoting the affective qualities of the Orient. In the US, architects who produced Moorish Revival built forms were not necessarily keen on developing architecture as a style that dissolved the distinctions between the West and the East, but were attempting to create a combined visual and architectural escapism unconnected to the nuanced practice of architecture in the Muslim world.

Buildings such as the Opa Locka City Hall, Atlanta's Fox Theatre, and the Shriner's Tripoli Temple present an interpretation of Islamic architecture as distilled through the production of Orientalist knowledge. These buildings appeal to and reflected the theatrical interpretation of Islamic architectural practice and the communities who would otherwise utilize the forms they employ. What is more, these buildings continue to function as places of spectacle, and in a historicized discontinuity: each building maintains their associations to an Oriental identity despite the

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96. Omar Khalidi, "Fantasy, Faith, And Fraternity: American Architecture of Moorish Inspiration." np. Unpublished essay.

influx of Muslim populations to North America who would seemingly challenge the connotations these buildings present. Beyond showcasing the disciplinary power of Orientalism, Moorish Revival buildings show how the use of Islamic forms, however passively essentialized or infrequently recognized, are a part of the dynamic of Islamic architectural history in the US.

Chapter 3
Manifestations of the Sacred: Mosques in Canada and the US

Less than a century ago, America's Islam was something we wouldn't even recognize… back when it was just the Old Orientalism of Mahmet delivered through Gibbon and Caryle and Sahih BUCKHARDT, the ancient al-Coran mysteries, red fez-caps with tassels, sharp scimitars whose blades curved like crescents.

Michael Muhammed Knight (2006).[1]

God's temple is the earth, and its roof the sky.

Alexander Russell Muhammad Webb (1893).[2]

Some Muslims want to build a mosque a couple of blocks from Ground Zero in New York City, but some 9/11 families believe it's insensitive, and 64% of Americans say it is wrong. President Obama is framing the issue as a 'freedom of religion' deal, but that's not what it's about. This is about sensitivity towards thousands of Americans who lost loved ones in the 9/11 attacks. The action is certainly inappropriate, and even some Muslims understand that. Once again President Obama is going against the will of the American people, but for what purpose? This is another in a long line of dubious decisions by the President. So here is my advice to the White House. Why don't you help these guys build a mosque? And then try the mastermind of 9/11 Khalid Sheikh Mohammed in it? That way, you can combine two insane things together. And that's the Memo.

Bill O'Reilly (2010).[3]

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1. Michael Muhammad Knight, *Blue-eyed devil: A Road Odyssey Through Islamic America* (New York City Autonomedia, 2006), 85.

2. Muhammad Alexander Russell Webb, *Islam in America & Other Writings* (Chicago, IL: Magribine Press, 2006), 127.

3. The O'Reilly Factor. "Talking Points Memo: A Big Misstep by the White House." The O'Reilly Factor. Aired 16 August 2010. www.billoreilly.com/show?action=viewTVShow&showID=2670#1 (date of last access: 7 August 2013).

Introduction

Born in 1886 as Timothy Drew in North Carolina, by 1913 the former P.T. Barnum Circus performer had changed his name to Noble Drew Ali and founded the Canaanite Temple in Newark, New Jersey.[4] While little is known surrounding his learning and knowledge of Islam, what is clear is that Noble Drew Ali's personality and attire, albeit flamboyant and essentialized, established one of the most significant early expressions of Islam in North America (Fig.4.1). By 1926, he would go on to found another religious congregation, one far more successful than the Canaanite Temple in terms of its reach and longevity. Based in Chicago, the newly formed Moorish Science Temple was to be Ali's most important endeavour; the organization presented a faith-based identity that combined ideas based on Islamic practice with that of a greater nostalgia for Africa and Garveyism.[5] With their red fez caps, billowing pantaloons and striped tunics, the followers of the Moorish Science Temple utilized the essentialized visual identifiers associated with the cultures of the Middle East and embraced the communal nature of Islamic religious practice (Fig.4.2). Their attire and attitudes were consciously

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4. Aminah Beverly McCloud, *African American Islam* (New York: Routeledge, 1995), 10.

5. Ernest Allen Jr. "Identity and Destiny: The Formative views of the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam," *Muslims on the Americanization Path?*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 168. Marcus Garvey's "Back to Africa" Movement (as articulated and promoted by the Universal Negro Improvement Association, an organization he also founded) during the 1920s was the first, international movement that promoted self-help, unification of African peoples and pride. Its influence was profound and shaped a number of groups such as the Nation of Islam, Black Panthers and Rastafarians. See Richard B. Turner, "The Ahmadiyya Mission to Blacks in the United States in the 1920s."*Journal of Religious Thought* 44, no.2 (Winter/Spring 1988), 50-66.

FIGURE 4.1
Noble Drew Ali. Date and photographer unknown. Source: MTSA website, 2013.

FIGURE 4.2
Moorish Science Temple of America, Chicago, Illinois, USA. 1928. Photographer unknown, Wikimedia Commons.

chosen to harken back to a time long before slavery in the Americas but, more importantly, to a time they believed to be of cultural and religious surety. Utilizing these Islamic signifiers was a direct means for the congregants in the reclamation of their erased and suppressed racial and cultural identities. Moreover, the institution instrumental to the growth of their religious and cultural community was their mosque. In providing a central space for the congregation, the mosque anchored and provided space and place for the practice of their newfound identity in Chicago. The building used by the Moorish Science Temple congregants reflected their sectarian values and beliefs and was visually and performatively unique in comparison to other mosques around the globe.[6] As a result, the mosque could be described as being a "masonically tinged fraternal organization transformed into an Islamic house of worship."[7] By the 1930s, some of the membership of the Moorish Science Temple had split to form the Nation of Islam, another socio-cultural and racialized religious organization that by the 1970s had solicited and gained widespread conversion to their movement.[8] African-American Islamic scholar Amina Wadud argues that these early communities "were alternative religious and spiritual articulations to address the problems of identity and race in America."[9]

Though Noble Drew Ali and his followers were not the first

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6. The Moorish Science Temple Mosque in Chicago was formerly a church. However, rather than keeping the main service hall unobstructed, the congregants continue to use church pews and do not observe the obligatory eastward direction towards the Ka'aba in Mecca during their religious services.

7. Ernest Allen Jr., "Identity and Destiny: The Formative views of the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam," 181.

8. Ibid, 164.

9. Amina Wadud, "American Muslim Identity: Race and Ethnicity in Progressive Islam," *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender and Pluralism,* ed. Omid Safi (Oxford: Oneworld Press, 2003), 276.

individuals in North America to express a distinctly Muslim identity, their usage of various Islamic visual and cultural markers illustrated not only the permeability of what was considered "Islamic," but also the legibility of the political and historical meanings of those signs. Indeed, the propagation of Islam within the African American community during this period demonstrates the potency of faith as an arbiter of identity and as a necessary means to create links to an imagined cultural past.

This chapter concentrates on the multifaceted nature and power of Muslim identity in Canada and the US, but also looks at the ways in which Islam is visually constituted in built forms outside countries with Muslim majorities. The buildings in this chapter are either purpose-built or renovated mosques that have been either commissioned or renovated by members of the Muslim community for the explicit purpose of hosting religious and community services. The key distinctions between these two forms are in the methods used in their creation. Purpose-built mosques are constructed with the intent of looking like an idealized image of a mosque, whereas renovated mosques are purchased buildings that have been remodelled, to varying degrees, in order to become a mosque. In other words, what are the visual components and methods Muslim communities use in the construction of contemporary mosque architecture, and how do these buildings represent modern-day Muslim identities, especially given the establishment of the Moorish Revival and the traditional frameworks of Islamic architectural history? How have these buildings been shaped by attitudes towards race, religion and property in Canadian and American urban landscapes and what impact has that had on Muslim communities? In this chapter, I discuss a concise range of purpose-built and renovated urban mosque examples to show that these buildings represent and

embody the evolving visualization of contemporary Islam that push the limits of traditional Islamic art history, and, in particular, reinvigorate Edward W. Said's conception of Orientalism.

For Said, the relationship between the Occidental and Oriental world has been, since the birth of Islam, historically tenuous and based on the exertion of Imperialistic power. More than a field of study of languages and literature, Orientalism is the expression and distribution of geopolitical awareness into a range of aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological and historical texts on the Orient—the Near East—specifically on Islam, which has been produced and maintained by the Occident—the West. Said contends that Western writers and historians have presented Islam and the cultures of the Middle East as one unified and static entity. "Orientalism" writes Said,

> was a scientific movement whose analogue in the world of empirical politics was the Orient's colonial accumulation and acquisition by Europe. The Orient was therefore not Europe's interlocutor, but its silent Other.[10]

Although Islam has been largely understood through and by the power of Orientalist discourse and as a result has minimalized the lived realities of Muslim life, these buildings have been produced and understood by the communities that they serve and in their construction are able to confront the taxonomy of Eurocentric knowledge of Islam.

While his interpretation can describe the discursive nature of colonial literary and visual knowledge, does Said's analysis extend into understanding the realm of built form? How far can Said's understanding of Orientalism be applied to the social history of mosques? Moreover, does

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10. Edward W. Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered." *Cultural Critique*, no. 1. (Autumn, 1985), 93.

Said's study, as Gauri Viswanathan suggests, "believe that individuals are doomed to inhabit the representations that usurp their own lived reality? Is there no way out of the prison of Orientalist representations?"[11] Here, I argue that Islamic architectural history, and by extension mosque architecture, is inextricably grounded and shaped by colonial knowledge, and as such continues to straddle notions of traditional visual and architectural forms with the realities of urban, non-Islamic environments. These mosques reveal how Muslim communities struggle with issues of cultural authenticity and with the legitimization of mosques as religious institutions in Canada and the US. These buildings not only reveal this continued legacy of Orientalism but also what Sherene H. Razack defines as "race-thinking." This concept, defined as "a structure of thought that divides up the world between the deserving and undeserving according to descent", becomes known through the articulation of values, and

> enables us to understand how a relatively innocent category (like color) could become virulent, how politically defined characteristics (like nationality) could so easily become inheritable traits.[12]

In this case, the construction of mosques illuminates the precise ways in which race-thinking is a regulating force in the urban environment. Whether they are purpose-built or renovated from existing structures, mosques are categorically seen as inherently outside the rational, knowable space of the modern built city. These buildings shape both the practice and propagation of Islam, but in many cases, also

11. Gauri Viswanathan, ed., *Power, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), xiv.

12. Sherene H. Razack, *Casting out: the eviction of Muslims from western law and politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 8.

highlight tensions in accessing property and space in European settler societies. In essence, urban cities in Canada and the US are physically, symbolically, and politically postcolonial spaces.[13] This chapter not only seeks to understand the complex colonial and spatial circumstances that mosques face in Canada and the US, but also to confront the historical perceptions around their construction.

Though the spatial requirements for mosques are few, the archetypical architectural forms chosen and applied in these two types of buildings raise interesting dilemmas: on the one hand, purpose-built mosques display and affirm the idiomatic potency of Islamic architecture and are easily identifiable as religious structures; while on the other hand, renovated mosques, often structurally and aesthetically untraditional, are often rendered invisible despite fulfilling their utility as sacred structures in providing an equally employable space for the use of Islamic ritual and gatherings. In each case, these buildings realize and speak to the ongoing need to affirm place and a visual identity. And yet tensions around authority and authenticity between these two types of mosques are heightened, and at times overshadowed by the detailed splendour articulated in both canonical Islamic architectural history and Moorish Revival architecture. The difference between these two types of mosques, however, primarily lies not only in the purpose of these buildings, but also with the people who utilize them. For depending on the context, congregation and location, these two types of mosques present the varied and often divergent expressions of modern Islam in the West. Besides being vital institutions to the propagation of the faith, mosques in urban

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13. Nicolas K. Blomley, *Unsettling the city: urban land and the politics of property* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 108.

areas are intrinsically hybrid in their construction and existence, and continue to strive to maintain access to public space and often, claims of belonging.

In their making and histories, purpose-built and renovated mosques reveal the constant anxiety and often, openly hostile opposition from politicians, neighbours and media personalities alike. Due to the changing perceptions of global Islam, unsurprisingly these sentiments have become commonplace and have been informative in the regulation of mosques across Canadian and American cities.[14] Such regulations are at the heart of the foundations of the national identities of these countries. As European settler nations, the immigration policies of the two countries have historically centred on selection, one based almost exclusively on ethnicity and, by extension, biological conceptions of race. Such exclusionary immigration practices have influenced the historic legal doctrine of *terra nullius,* a concept that has its origins "in the dispossession and near extermination of the Indigenous, by the conquering Europeans. As it evolves, a white settler society continues to be structured by a racial hierarchy."[15] National histories, Razack argues, are deeply spatialized stories as they "enable citizens to think of themselves as part of a

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14. A number of examples can be cited here, however, the most infamous example has been the construction of Park51. Though the building is not a mosque, but a multi-faith community centre, the Muslim organizers came under fire for constructing the centre close to Ground Zero on Lower Manhattan. Considering it to be an affront to the victims of 9/11, detractors of the centre, many of whom have been media personalities, protested and claimed the building was a "victory mosque" and that the location of its construction would signify a decisive triumph for terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaida. After a prolonged legal and media battle, the building opened its doors on September 21, 2011.

15. Sherene H. Razack, "Introduction," *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*, ed. Sherene H. Razack (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002), 1.

community defining who belongs and who does not belong to the nation" where "Aboriginal peoples are consigned forever to an earlier space and time, [and] people of colour are scripted as late arrivals.[16] The echoes of these colonial legacies continue to reverberate most clearly in urban landscapes and built-forms.

The histories of these nationalistic narratives have also been instrumental to informing the perceived formation and cultural makeup of contemporary urban and rural landscapes in Canada and the US. The landscape imaginaries of the two countries are necessarily bound to the concept of race-thinking as a result of their settler-nation status but they are also share an affinity to the knowledge-power of Orientalism. As a result, architectural built forms that have their origins in Western Europe have found an easy and naturalized acceptance as conventional structures. In this regard, such structures are scripted as evidentiary and normalized buildings which legitimize the colonial occupation of urban space. Structures that fall outside of this colonial conditioning of urban spaces are perceptible reminders of difference. As such, this creates a false sense of the histories and the impact of Muslim communities especially since, as institutions with significant cultural, religious and civic roles, mosques are seen outside the historical or naturalized visualization of these landscapes. As one Markham city councillor stated during a public debate on the proposed construction of a mosque, the main concern was " traffic congestion" but also that the mosque "resemble[d] the Taj Mahal in India."[17]

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16. Ibid, 2.

17. Tom Godfrey, "Markham mosque plan sparks local concerns." *Toronto Sun*. October 17, 2011. http://www.torontosun.com/2011/10/17/markham-mosque-plan-sparks-local-concerns (date of last access: 19 May 2013).

Though mosques have existed as both repurposed community centres and formal purpose-built religious buildings in Canada and the US since the early twentieth-century, it is primarily through the exteriors of these buildings that visual distinctions from other religious built forms are evoked. Visual markers such as the onion domes, minarets, and Arabic texts operate either as direct replicas or are associated with an identifiable "Middle-Eastern" style. This, as a result, makes the relationship between the global and the local a recurrent tension for Muslim communities.[18] The legislation of Muslim identity, namely buildings such as the mosque, shows quite simply, as Mustafa Bayoumi has argued, that historically religion has determined race and that post 9/11, Islam has been seen as an exclusive "racial category."[19] In either stylistic form, the mosque has become a decisive touchstone for understanding the social and political conditions of Muslim life and the ways in which religion has played an increasing role in determining one's racialized religious identity.

<u>Ways of Seeing: The Philosophies of Islamic Architecture</u>

As outlined in chapter two, the discursive foundation of Islamic art and architecture has its origins in the studies of nineteenth-century European Orientalists. These works, non-fiction and fiction alike, consolidated a Eurocentric way of envisioning the Middle East that has since been both widely circulated and has come to wholly inform the trajectory of knowledge of Islam and the Middle East. However, since the publication of Said's *Orientalism,* the field of postcolonial studies has

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18. Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Travelling Islam: mosques without minarets." *Space, Culture and Power: New identities in globalizing cities,* eds. Ayse Oncu and Petra Weyland (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd, 1997), 177.

19. Mustafa Bayoumi, "Racing Religion," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2006), 284.

forced "academics in the West to re-think the relationship between the Occident and Orient."[20] This has undoubtedly opened the way for a re-evaluation of the political intentions of both historic and contemporary Islamic studies. In terms of Islamic art and architecture, this has meant a rethinking of the formal analysis Orientalist scholars have applied wholesale to the arts from Muslim lands. In their studied analysis of the field of Islamic art history, scholars Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair note that

> it is a truism of postmodernism that everything the historian studies has as much, if not more, to do with the present than the past, yet the intrusion of contemporary religious and political issues into the study of Islamic art seems more difficult to ignore than in other fields of art history.[21]

For example, as Bloom and Blair note, while Orientalist studies on the Dome of the Rock have focused on the building's late Byzantine and early Islamic architectural synthesis, a re-examination of the building may also reveal its symbolic meaning as an emblem of Palestinian resistance in the Israeli-occupied city of Jerusalem. Each of these studies reveals vastly differing socio-political meanings of the same site.[22]

Within traditional Islamic art and architecture, it is the range of distinct approaches that has provided the most interesting insights into the dynamism and complexity of its history. First, canonical surveys of the lands of Islam, have largely focused on providing an introductory account

20. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, eds. *The post-colonial studies reader*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 10.

21. Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, "The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field," *Art Bulletin* 85.1 (March 2003), 176.

22. Ibid, 176.

of Islamic art and architecture as a response to understanding museum collections.[23] Second, traditional approaches have been taken up mostly by archaeologist who have been less concerned with collections or surveys. Many of these instances have concentrated on specific landmarks and monuments. Lastly, the approaches that have resonated with researchers have focused on the geography of dynastic empires across the Muslim world.[24] However, even within these areas of Islamic art and architecture, temporal tensions, authorship, and the nature of their religious purpose remain unsettled.

In each of these frameworks the most enduring questions into the study of Islamic art and architecture resta with the inclusion of an analysis based in Islamic theology and practice. Can an understanding of the visual and material culture of Islam be framed within the contexts of the practice of faith? Is there a possibility of a Muslim way of seeing that can be applied to the histories of Islamic art and architecture? In their book, *The Sense of Unity* (1973), Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bahkhtiar approach the study of Islamic architecture (used interchangeably with the term "Persian") under the lens of Sufi philosophy (Islamic mysticism). Both Ardalan and Bahkhtiar argue that early Islamic architecture in Persia (present day Iran) is the manifestation of "The Divine" on earth, and that the sole purpose of Islamic architecture is to reaffirm the sacred cosmology of Islamic practice and tradition. In other words, a mosque that through its architecture both exalts the oneness (*tawhid*) of Allah

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23. David Carrier, "Innovation and eccentricity in Islamic art history," *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions*, ed. Elizabeth C. Mansfield (New York: Routledge, 2007), 174.

24. Blair and Bloom, "The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field," 157-166.

and allows the worshipper to "feel" His presence (*ta'wil*) on Earth, has successfully provided the follower of Islam with the necessary means to orientate themself towards Mecca and ultimately model themself after the "Universal Man" Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam.[25] In their analysis, Ardalan and Bakhtiar do not make distinctions between the sacred or the profane in architecture as they argue that "The Divine" makes his presence felt in every earthly object and can be easily identifiable through the examination and interpretation of geometric patterning, colour schemes, and mathematical symbolism. Their analysis examines buildings such as the mosque and the medressah (Qur'anic school), including architectural details such as muqarnas and minarets alongside the geographic nature of the city and the bazaar, and attempts to ground them in classical religious thought.

Along the same lines, architectural historian Akel Ismail Kahera links together Muslim philosophy (from such historical figures as 13th century philosopher Ibn Arabi) and Qur'anic interpretation with the contemporary constructions of mosque architecture to describe some of the aesthetic and social meaning of Muslim spaces. Kahera also deconstructs some of the aesthetic and cultural influences that have shaped mosque architecture and traces some of these developments to mosque design in Muslim-dominated countries across the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Combined with his analysis of aesthetic, religious and cultural values of North American mosques, Kahera's approach to grounding contemporary mosques is primarily by utilizing his own

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25. Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bahkhtiar, *Sense of Unity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 9.

critical vocabulary, borrowing from Islamic legal and cultural lexicons.[26]

These examples, largely produced by contemporary Muslim religious scholars, introduce insight into the religious and spiritual conceptions within Islam and endeavour to provide a phenomenological understanding of the symbolic form and construction of religious buildings in the traditional Muslim world.[27] Beyond their symbolic references, however, these perspectives not only limit the possibilities for expanding a contextualized reading of built-forms in Canada and the US, but also introduce generalizations on the purpose and function of buildings such as the mosque for Muslims. They inadvertently confirm a link between an Orientalist sense of religious timelessness and universalism that undoes "interpretation from reference to artists' intention."[28] These approaches, despite their attempts to reinvigorate Islamic theology, fall short in articulating the often-contradictory realities of contemporary Muslim life. In short, no one way of seeing the production of Islamic art and architecture, in particular, a way solely rooted or focused on a theological interpretative model, can narrate the history of these works in an effective way.

The Global Connections: Canadian and American Muslim Diasporas

No single narrative can adequately describe the nature of Muslim

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26. Moustafa Bayoumi, "Review of *Deconstructing the American Mosque*," H-Gender-MidEast@h-net.org (June 2004). In his review, Bayoumi asks if Kahera's reinterpretation of terms such as *sunnah* (traditions of the prophet) into what he calls "spatial sunnah," can, given their rootedness in Islamic theology and jurisprudence be "so easily transposed onto an architectural terrain?" The answer Bayoumi argues is no, these terms are "too idiosyncratic, for idioms and languages develop organically from a community, not individually."

27. Ibid.

28. David Carrier, "Innovation and eccentricity in Islamic art history," 176.

migration to the Americas. The arrival of Muslims has been contingent on a diverse set of political, social and economic conditions and circumstances, which have also varied depending on the racial, ethnic or cultural backgrounds of each individual community member. Needless to say, while the diversity of the Muslim community abounds, it is one of the most misunderstood aspects of Muslim identity.

The earliest large-scale arrival of Muslims to North America began with the advent of the Transatlantic slave trade. By the sixteenth century, Islam had been well established in Western and Central Africa. The Muslims from these regions were "active participants in the global community of believers, establishing commercial, cultural, and diplomatic ties that reached into North Africa and beyond."[29] Writer Genevieve Abdo argues that human trafficking from this region was not simply an accident of geography but was also connected to the mass Christianization of the Iberian Peninsula that also greatly profited from the existing regional schisms in West Africa.[30] While the total numbers of enslaved Africans brought to North America are difficult to ascertain, it is estimated that the number of Muslims brought to North America at best runs in the tens of thousands and constitutes approximately 20 to 30 percent of all the slaves brought to the colonies.[31] However, the brutality of the Middle Passage combined with forced Christianization and the subsequent continuous enslavement of generations of Africans eliminated a significant amount of

29. Geneive Abdo, "The Roots of Islam in America," *Mecca and Main Street: Muslim Life in America after 9/11* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 65.

30. Ibid.

31. Iftikhar Haider Malik, *Islam and Modernity: Muslims in Europe and the United States* (London; Sterling, Va.: Pluto Press, 2004), 166.

FIGURE 4.3
Mike Drewoth (builder). Al-Rashid Mosque, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.
1938. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2009.

knowledge amongst slave populations of the practices and identification with Islam. In terms of religious practice, very little information is known since within one to two generations many identifiers through markers such as names, garments, familial relationships and practices were effectively erased.[32]

The second phase of Muslim arrival to the Americas, though still rooted in political and social turmoil and significantly smaller, proportionally, saw the influx of Muslim from Ottoman lands. From the late nineteenth-century, Arabs from countries now known as Lebanon, Syria and Yemen, settled in industrial cities such as Detroit, Montreal, New York, and Boston.[33] These immigrants, faced with the divisive policies of Turkish rule of the period, saw Canada and the US as places for freedom and economic opportunity.[34] Moreover, upon their arrival, these early, often male, immigrants worked as peddlers and shopkeepers and actively formed close-knit communal ties, choosing to locate to cities with existing populations originating from a familiar area, city or village.[35] These two factors allowed Arab immigrant communities a great deal of stability, including a sense of shared linguistic and cultural values, which led to the formalization of religious practices. In many cases this meant that worship services, once held in the domain of private family homes, moved into larger purpose-built buildings. Mosques such as Edmonton's Al-Rashid (Fig.4.3) and Cedar Rapids' The Mother Mosque of America (Fig.5.4) are prime examples of such established early immigrant-based,

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32. Ibid.

33. Ibid, 175.

34. Baha Abu-Laban, *An olive branch on the family tree: the Arabs in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980), 79.

35. Ibid, 110.

Arab Muslim communities.

Besides the influx of Arab Muslims, by the 1920s a relatively unknown Islamic revivalist sect from Northern India had also made its way to the US. Considered to be heretical by orthodox Sunni Islam due to their belief in a succession of prophets after Muhammad, the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam is a predominately South Asian immigrant-Muslim group that has also played an instrumental role in the propagation of Islam in North America, particularly within the African-American community. In 1920, Ahmadiyya leader Mufti Mohammed Sadiq traveled to Detroit to proselytize Islam which resulted in a "thousand plus converts over the next five years, [where] many, if not most, would turn out to be of African-American descent." [36] These encounters would pave the way for the growth of uniquely American Muslim groups such as the Moorish Science Temple of America and the Nation of Islam. With their strong emphasis on missionary work, it was primarily through the efforts of Ahmadiyya leaders like Mufti Mohammed Sadiq that individuals such as Noble Drew Ali, the leader the Moorish Science Temple of America (MTSA) and W.D. Fard, the leader of the Nation of Islam (NOI), were introduced to English translations of Islamic religious texts such as the Qur'an.[37] While the distinctions between African-American Islam and the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in terms of beliefs and practice are quite evident, parallels exist between the syncretism of African-American Islam and the Ahmadiyya. Much like MSTA and the NOI, Ahmadiyya cosmology and practices evolved around the belief of a mortal, living

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36. Ernest Allan Jr., "Identity and Destiny: The Formative Views of the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam," 177.

37. Ibid, 180.

prophet and claims of biblical descent.[38]

Indeed, Muslim communities in North America are diverse and represent a number of different sectarian, ethno-linguistic communities and are more often "visible" in terms of skin colour, language, dress code, and observable cultural practices. The question remains, under what frameworks can such a large and culturally diverse religious group be understood? I contend that given the complexity of the settlement of Muslim groups in Canada and the US, the concept of diaspora offers insights on the issues of power within these groups and can describe the socio-political conditions of their arrival. With regard to framing Muslim communities within the conception of diaspora, Haideh Moghissi states that

> the question of "diaspora" cannot be treated as one of definition only, but must also be critically reconnected to the forces that have uprooted populations historically and pushed masses of peoples beyond known and familiar borders. These forces include colonialism, neo-colonialism, the formation of nation-states, and the rise of hegemonic nationalist ideologies, regionalization, imperialism, and globalization.[39]

Moghissi further asserts that the theoretical formulation of a Muslim diaspora must also describe the inequalities that are generated

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38. For example, both groups believe that not only is their group divinely selected, but that also their spiritual leaders have active roles in their communities. For the MSTA this was Nobel Drew Ali, for the NOI this is Louis Farrakhan (current) and for the Ahmadiyya this is Mirza Masroor Ahmad (current).

39. Haideh Moghissi, Saeed Rahnema, and Mark J. Goodman, *Diaspora by Design: Muslim Immigrants in Canada and Beyond* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 4.

through the interactions of people when they are brought together.[40] This is necessary not only for understanding the divisive interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims, but also when considering the interactions within diverse Muslim communities as distinct ideas and understandings of Islam are challenged as a result of encountering Muslims from different ethnic and sectarian backgrounds. Due to the range of situations and circumstances for the arrival of Muslim groups to the Americas, the framework of diaspora offers a method of examining Muslim communities in terms of their journeys, but also a means of understanding the "relations of power that similarise and differentiate between and across changing diasporic constellations."[41] In its framing of the movement of populations, the concept of diaspora provides a means of working through the interconnectedness of historic and contemporary Muslim populations outside the Muslim world.

No doubt, situating the arrival of Muslims at the time of the Transatlantic slave trade radically alters the perception and construction of a primarily immigrant-based Muslim identity in North America. This genealogy of Muslim contact with the so-called "New World" disrupts both notions of the lack of historical interconnectedness between European hegemony and Islam and moreover its effect on Muslim identity. Additionally, this recalibration of Muslim identity also reveals how the legacy of slavery has been generally based on the limited idea of a Christianized antebellum South. Historian Iftikhar Haider Malik points out that

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40. Ibid, 5.

41. Avtah Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 444.

…Most studies on slavery and race relations in the US still concentrate on the numbers involved and the socioeconomic debate, and in the context of moral and religious issues consider only Christianity and the evolution of the black Christian churches. Discussion of Islam as the religion of a huge section of the slave population, of their efforts to continue with this heritage in order to preserve their identity, and of the eventual loss of a whole tradition has remained largely absent […] [42]

While the focus on church activities has been due to the change in values and the erasure of knowledge of Islam, this is evidence of how attitudes regarding Muslim identity are once again removed from the discourse on national identities in Canada and the US (in regards to Canada, these histories are generally absent and understudied). A study on the erasure of Muslim identity during the antebellum period warrants further and deeper attention as it not only emphasizes the interconnectedness of Muslim settlement in the Americas, but reorients this history to allow for an understanding of the intricacies of global cultures and diverse communities.[43]

When considering early history of Muslim arrival along with those of immigrant communities in the United States and Canada, not only does the marginality and intense diversity of Muslim communities become apparent, but also the need for disrupting the national narratives which have perpetuated and informed the cultural identities in Canada and the US is emphasized. As cultural anthropologists Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson state, "spaces have *always* been hierarchically interconnected, instead of naturally disconnected, then cultural and social change becomes

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42. Iftikhar Haider Malik, *Islam and Modernity*, 164-165.
43. Ibid.

FIGURE 4.4
Muhammed Mosque no.7, Harlem, New York, USA. Date of establishment unknown. Photographer unknown.

FIGURE 4.5
Gulzar Haider (architect), Baitul Islam Mosque, Vaughn, Ontario, Canada. 1992. Photo: Tahir Mahmood, 2012.

not a matter of cultural contact and articulation but one of rethinking

difference *through* connection."[44]

These connections of migration and settlement of Muslim groups
also shape the formation and visual identity of mosques. For example,
mosques established by the Nation of Islam (Fig.4.4) have historically
repurposed storefronts centered in northern US cities in predominately
African-American neighborhoods. The NOI mosques did not employ
symbols such as the dome and Arabic text to identify their buildings as
places of worship but rather maintained much of its storefront appearance
in order to have maximum exposure and opportunities to engage with
members of the community. By the 1960s such community engagement
moved beyond spreading the word of Islam; leaders within the NOI
encouraged full economic self-sufficiency and began to open schools,
housing, grocery stores, restaurants and farms.[45] Reflecting on the
recruitment of members during this early period, Malcolm X, the most
well known minister in the movement's history, wrote:

> We went to work 'fishing' on those Harlem corners—
> on the fringes of the Nationalist meetings. The method
> today has many refinements, but then it consisted of
> working the always shifting edges of the audiences
> that others had managed to draw. At a Nationalist
> meeting, everyone who was listening was interested in
> the revolution of the black race. We began to get visible
> results almost immediately after we began thrusting
> handbills in people's hands, 'Come to hear us, too, brother.
> The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us how to
> cure the black man's spiritual, mental, moral, economic,

44. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity and
the Politics of Difference," *Cultural Anthropology* 7, no.1 (Blackwell Publishing,
February 1992), 8.

45. Eric C. Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, Third Edition (Grand Rapids,
MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 16-17.

and political sicknesses— ' I saw the new faces of our Temple Seven meetings. And then we discovered the best "fishing" audience of all, by far the best conditioned audience for Mr. Muhammad's teachings: the Christian churches. Our Sunday services were held at two P.M. All over Harlem during the hour or so before that, Christian church services were dismissing. We by-passed the larger churches with their higher ratio of so-called 'middle-class' Negroes who were so full of pretense and 'status' that they wouldn't be caught in our little storefront. We went 'fishing' fast and furiously when those little evangelical storefront churches each let out their thirty to fifty people on the sidewalk. 'Come to hear us, brother, sister—' 'You haven't heard anything until you have heard the teachings of The Honorable Elijah Muhammad—' These congregations were usually Southern migrant people, usually older, who would go anywhere to hear what they called 'good preaching.'[46]

In a similar fashion, the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam has actively sought to engage non-Muslims; however, as an immigrant-based Muslim community, members of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam occupy a wholly different set of challenges to notions around Muslim identity and the meaning and usage of the mosque. For the Ahmadiyya, mosques such as the Baitul Islam (Fig.4.5) rely primarily on the symbols of Sunni Islam to claim a sense of authenticity on par to the visual claims made by buildings such as the Washington Islamic Centre. While the claims to visual and architectural authenticity are meant to solidify their stakes to religious legitimacy, in the diaspora this can be regarded as a conflation of their distinct identity with that of Sunni Islam. In other words, this claim to the visual markers belonging to a predominately Sunni-Muslim architectural history can provide Ahmadis a sense of

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46. Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 239.

belonging to a larger Islamic tradition. It does not, however, change the attitudes that exist between the two communities. As Mohommed A. Muqtedar Khan writes:

> The Muslim community, for example, draws boundaries to differentiate between who belongs to a Muslim community and who does not. It also defines what makes a Muslim community Muslim, and what does not, by identifying the characteristics of the collective and contrasting them with others and then giving meaning and relevance to these characteristics.[47]

This has in turn created a sense of the "internal-other," argues Khan, and has prevented immigrant-Muslims from looking beyond their own ethnic and sectarian divisions even though they are positioned in the diaspora. For the Ahmadiyya community, who are almost exclusively situated in the diaspora, this 'internal-other' has continued the uneasy sentiments with Sunni-Muslims from countries such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but allowed their community to practice and propagate their sect's values as well as participate in an understanding of Muslim identity in the US. The Ahmadiyya's diasporic Muslim identity is one that is shaped not only by their mass departure from South Asia, but by the differences that are accentuated upon their arrival to the US. Even so, it is this single and yet polarizing internal value, the ability to establish and maintain buildings as mosques, that has provided the Ahmadiyya the agency to proclaim a Muslim identity. The agency to do so in their countries of origin, such as Pakistan, continues to be denied to the Ahmadiyya by both state and religious law, and therefore the dispora offers the ability to claim

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47. Mohommed A. Muqtedar Khan, "Muslims and Identity Politics in America," *Muslims on the Americanization Path?*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 87.

the mosque as a religious building free from such constraints.

Purpose-built and Repurposed Mosques: A Cursory Overview

The evolution of early Muslim communal religious practice is one familiar to those of other monotheistic faiths brought to Canada and the US. Early congregational practices were regularly observed on Fridays, the Muslim day of Sabbath, and hosted at ad-hoc locations. Depending on the nature of the congregation, local members met at either residential houses, rented halls or vacant classrooms on university campuses. However, despite the informality of these spaces, the services and outreach of these emergent communities ranged from communal prayers, to fundraising dinners, and the hosting of lectures.[48] These places emphasized the mutability of Islamic rituals and the adaptability of a spectrum of spaces for secular and religious purposes. Furthermore, these places for worship were often humble in their appearance and amenities, were "unchanged, mute to the building's new function."[49] As they grew and became financially secure, these spaces were abandoned for larger, permanent buildings that have a more demonstrative profile in the cityscape.[50] In 2001, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) identified approximately 1,209 regularly used community mosques across

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48. In 1965, months before his assassination, Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El Shabazz), visited Toronto for a press tour, but also presented a lecture at Toronto's first mosque known as the Dundas Street Mosque (a storefront shop purchased by members of Toronto's Muslim community in 1961 at 3047 Dundas Street). His visit marked one of the earliest examples of both the active outreach and political action of emergent Muslim communities. Reflecting on the visit, Muslim community member Murray Hogben recalled that after Malcolm X's speech, the mosque had been broken into and ransacked. For more personal reflections on the visit, see: mosqueone.com (date of last access: 28 June 2013).

49. Jerrilynn Dodds, *New York Mosques*, 25.

50. Ibid.

the US.[51] Unfortunately, such data on Canadian mosques has yet to be comprehensively gathered.

In this section I focus on two distinct types of mosques. The first type are buildings that have been renovated in order to become mosques. These buildings have included former office spaces, houses and churches that have often been affordably purchased and require minimal amounts of changes to both their interiors and exteriors. Due to the affordability of such buildings, along with the scale and cost of the renovations, these changes to repurposed mosques have been completed by members of the community without the assistance of an architect.[52] However, despite the wide presence of these repurposed mosques across North America, such buildings lack scholarly examination. The reasoning is two-fold; these buildings neither conform to nor express the ways Islamic architecture has been traditionally envisioned, nor does the temporality of most repurposed mosques provide for long-term transferable knowledge, thus contributing to the lasting knowledge of the communities that use these buildings. In their architectural subtleness, these mosques contest the traditional, colonial image of a mosque, and even the singular visual or built-form representation of Muslim life in the West. Instead, these repurposed mosques respond to the immediate needs of the local community. They also demonstrate the degree to which experience is privileged over expression.[53]

The second type of mosques most common in Canada and the

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51. Ihsan Baghby, et. al, eds. *The Mosque in America: A National Portrait: A Report from the Mosque Study Project* (Washington, D.C.: Council on American-Islamic Relations), 2.

52. Omar Khalidi, "Approaches to Mosque Design in North America," 317-34.

53. Jerrilyn Dodds, 32.

FIGURE 4.6
Sabbath Black (architect), Malcolm El-Shabazz Mosque (street view),
Harlem, New York, USA. 1969. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2009.

US are those that have been built with the intention of appearing and functioning as mosques. That is, these contemporary buildings visibly draw from the vernacular architectural forms commonly found across the Muslim world and are, as architect Ahmad Hamid writes "fragmented elements from the reservoirs of collective memory."[54] Constructed with the active input and independent fundraising efforts from individual communities, these purpose-built mosques manifest varied architectural styles and visual forms such as domes, latticework and Arabic calligraphy under the direction of an architect. Recalling the stylistic decision on the design of purpose-built mosques, architect Gulzar Haider writes:

> …there is the recurrent issue of architectural expressions. Nothing is more telling of the communal fragmentation of ideas and images than the kinds of mosques people carry in their minds. It is not easy to untangle the complex network of individual and collective memories of first-generation immigrants. Little wonder that whenever a Muslim bank or an airline publishes a calendar of mosques, their torn pages start to appear in the mosque committee meetings. I have also the unique honour of having received a childlike paste-up calendar made of cutouts collected by a member of the community who owns an auto-body repair shop.[55]

Haider's account of his experience designing mosques shows the dynamic involved in the process of mosque construction within North American Muslim communities. Though repurposed mosques represent the bulk of Muslim sacred spaces, much is at stake in the design of

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54. Ahmad Hamid, *Hassan Fathy and Continuity in Islamic Arts and Architecture: The Birth of a New Modern* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2010), 32.

55. Gulzar Haider, "'Brother in Islam, Please Draw us a Mosque' Muslims in the West: A Personal Account," *Expressions of Islam in Buildings*, ed. Hayat Salam (Singapore: Concept Media/The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1990), 158.

FIGURE 4.7
5 Percenter's Allah School, Harlem, New York, USA. 1971.
Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2009.

FIGURE 4.8
Jami Mosque, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Original building, 1910-28. Purchased in 1969. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2012.

purpose-built mosques in their increasingly pronounced articulation of their "Islamicness."[56] More importantly, due to their size, purpose-built mosques, unlike their renovated counterparts, are commonly found in suburban locales rather than city centres. The differences between the two are primarily economic, as purpose-built mosques require capital for both the purchase of property and the construction of the mosque, whereas repurposed mosques are properties cheaply acquired at auction as the result of bank foreclosures or estate sales.[57]

Repurposed Mosques

Malcolm El Shabazz Mosque (New York City, New York)

The iconic Malcolm El Shabazz Mosque stands on the corner of 116th Street and Lennox Avenue in Harlem (Fig.2.9). The Mosque, which rose to prominence during the late 1950s with the persistent proselytizing of charismatic leader Malcolm X, has through the decades undergone three major transformations. In 1965, the former Lennox Casino had been transformed into the Nation of Islam's Temple no. 7. However with the departure of Warith Deen Mohammed (the son of the late leader Elijah Mohammed) from the NOI in 1975, the mosque was transformed once again to service a Sunni congregation.[58] Besides offering space for spiritual

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56. Amaney Jamal, "The Political Participation and Engagement of Muslim Americans: Mosque Involvement and Group Consciousness," *American Politics Research* 33, no. 4 (July 2005), 526.

57. The 2001 CAIR survey of mosques across the US found that the majority of mosques (55 percent) were purchased, and that approximately one-quarter (26 percent) were actually built by the Muslim community as a mosque. Baghby, Ihsan, et. al, eds. *The Mosque in America: A National Portrait: A Report from the Mosque Study Project*. Washington, D.C.: Council on American-Islamic Relations, 26.

58. Jerrilyn Dodds, 89.

and educative religious activities, the three-story mosque also operates a number of community outreach events, from renting storefronts for small businesses (Fig.4.6), producing a weekly newspaper, and offering an *Eid-ul Fitr* soup kitchen, to hosting annual events such as the "Jail Ain't No Good" walk-a-thon to participating in the Juneteenth parade and street fair.[59] Moreover, the Malcolm El Shabazz Mosque continues to operate the Sister Clara School, a private school that not only focuses on the spiritual development of its students, but is also rooted in the Nation of Islam's philosophical emphasis on African and African-American cultural awareness and social justice.[60] No doubt, far from operating in isolation from their surroundings, members of the mosque have had a lengthy and regular engagement with the Harlem neighbourhood.

Unlike most repurposed buildings, the Malcolm El Shabazz Mosque is distinctly Islamic in its outward appearance and is most known for its distinct onion dome and multi-coloured brown and yellow exterior. Designed by architect Sabbath Black, the two-story building fully embraces the multi-use nature of its construction. The unobstructed main prayer hall and multiple rooms allow for broad usage, while the arched windows act as a constant reminder of the religious character of the space. The Mosque's interior follows the conventions of repurposed spaces, however, it is the mosque's exterior, specifically its dome that showcases how the meaning of such a structure is contingent on time, community and place. As one noted scholar observes:

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59. Eid-ul Fitr is the annual religious Festival of Fast-Breaking, which is proceeded by the holy month of Ramadan. The Juneteenth parade and street fair is the celebration that commemorates the end of slavery in the US.

60. Mohammed Schools, http://mohammedschools.org/about/mission-and-values/ (date of last access: 13 February 2012).

FIGURE 4.9
Jami Mosque (main prayer hall), Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Original building, 1910-28. Purchased in 1969. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2012.

FIGURE 4.10
Assuna Annabawyiah Mosque, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2009.

the process of creating an American Muslim identity, one
that is not polarized, is similar at Masjid Malcolm Shabazz
and at the mosques built for immigrant communities. It
is only that the use of architecture - meanings given to
architectural forms like the dome- are simply different in
divergent times and places. At Masjid Malcolm Shabazz,
an Orientalist dome was exploited as a subverted image
of marginality, just as early African American Muslims
subverted the conventional image of black inferiority until
divergences became a point of pride. [61]

The dome not only raises the profile of the Mosque, but within

Harlem, it also distinguishes the building from other Afrocentric Muslim

groups such as the Nation of Islam's Mosque no.7 (Fig.4.4) and the Five

Percenters' Allah School (Fig.4.7). Based in the Sunni branch of Islam, the

Malcolm El Shabazz Mosque continues to service a predominately African

American and increasingly African congregation that asserts self-reliance

through an Islamic worldview.

Jami Mosque (Toronto, Ontario)

The Jami Mosque (Fig.4.8), is one of Toronto's earliest Muslim

places for worship. The building, a former Presbyterian Church was

purchased in 1969 by the Muslim Society of Toronto to accommodate the

growing community. The early members of the Society, men like Regep

Assim, came from Albania and the former Yugoslavia during the 1910s

and founded the Albanian Muslim Society.[62] With the influx of immigrants

from the Arab world and South Asia, the group expanded and became

the Muslim Society in 1957. At this time, the community had grown

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61. Jerrilyn Dodds, 90.

62. Murray Hogben, "Islam in Toronto," (Published by the Muslim Society of
Toronto, 1967) http://mosqueone.com/history (date of last access: 13 January 2012),
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Fig 4.11
Assuna Annabawyiah Mosque (main prayer hall),
Montréal, Quebec, Canada. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2010.

Fig 4.12
Assuna Annabawyiah Mosque (women's room window),
Montréal, Quebec, Canada. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2010.

significantly, and meeting in private homes for religious and cultural events did not suffice. The first building used by the Muslim Society had been a repurposed mosque on Dundas Street until the further growth, along with increased infighting over religious practice and language, resulted in the purchase of the church a few blocks away in Toronto's High Park neighborhood. However not all members of the Muslim Society moved to the new mosque; a number of Albanian, Bosnian and Turkish members went on to form a distinctly ethno-religious Mosque that same year.[63]

Though the statuettes have been removed from the alcoves throughout the building, the Jami Mosque still retains the appearance of a church. Inside the mosque, gone are the pews, pipe organ piano, and bell. What remains in the main prayer hall are two distinct architectural devices that function as a way to organize and situate the space longitudinally towards Mecca: the first, the *minbar* (pulpit), which provides a place for the Imam or community leader to speak in front of the congregation, the second, the installation of bi-colour carpeting to organize the rows of people engaged with the performance of prayer. Overlooking the main prayer hall, the location of the grand pipe organ piano on the second floor of the building has been enlarged to become the women's section. Despite the building's original design and specific intent of functioning as a church, minimal renovations were needed in order to transform the space

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63. "Move to the Jami Mosque," http://mosqueone.com/video-end-of-an-era (date of last access: 13 January 2012).

into a mosque (Fig.4.9).[64]

Though many of the original members and their families have left both the neighbourhood and the mosque for suburban locales across the Greater Toronto Area and beyond, the Jami Mosque continues to be one of the few mosques centrally located to serve Toronto's urban Muslims that is not affiliated or connected to a university student population. Without the sustaining support of Muslims living in the neighbourhood the soaring cost to operate the mosque was by 1973 under the management of a newly incorporated MSA Islamic Services of Canada, which ultimately secured a large contribution from the late King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. By 1976, the Jami Mosque was absorbed by the umbrella organization the Islamic Society of North America.[65] Though the management of the mosque has changed hands over the years, for the past 43 years this building has served as a place for Muslim worship.

Assuna Annabawiyya Mosque (Montréal, Quebec)

Nestled in the heart of Montréal's multiethnic Parc-Extension neighborhood, sits the Assuna Annabawiyya Mosque (Fig.4.10). Originally an office building, the four-story Mosque is almost indiscernible amongst the rows of discount fruit shops, hair salons and Lebanese restaurants. Apart from the signage above the doors, the Mosque is subtle in its proclamation of a Muslim identity. Since 1993, the Muslims of this Montréal neighbourhood have found solace, education, and support

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64. It is important to note here that a number of repurposed churches exist across Toronto. A number of new religious communities have purchased old churches to suit their needs and now function as Buddhist and Hindu Temples. However, beyond serving such new religious communities, foreclosed churches have most often been transformed into high-end condominiums.

65. Jami Mosque, Toronto, http://www.jamimosque.com/some_words_about_us.php (date of last access: 13 January 2012).

Fig 4.13
Assuna Annabawyiah Mosque (window), Montréal,
Quebec, Canada. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2010.

Fig 4.14
Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (architects), Islamic Cultural
Centre of Manhattan, New York, USA. 1986-1991. Photo:
Nadia Kurd, 2009.

from this place of worship. Once a predominantly Greek enclave, Parc-Extension has recently become more known for its South Asian stores and residents. Unsurprisingly, many of these businesses have congregated around the mosque and, as a result, the neighbourhood itself has also become visibly "Muslim." With the establishment of the Assuna Annabawiyya, a steady migration of Muslims from across North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia has arrived since the early 1990s, all establishing roots and making Parc-Extension home.

Though understated, the repurposed Assuna Annabawiyya Mosque reflects not only the socioeconomic realities of its congregants, but also the ways in which they have had to adapt and integrate their ritual and communal spaces with an urban environment. While the exterior of the mosque remains unchanged, save for the signage above the main entrance, a number of small-scale modifications were carried out in order to transform the former office building into the Assuna Annabawiyya Mosque. These renovations have included the installation of a *minbar* (pulpit), the elimination of walls to create wide unobstructed rooms (Fig.4.11), the insertion of the *mihrab* (niche) to orient the congregants towards Mecca, the division of spaces with curtains (and separate entrances) to segregate women and men (Fig.4.12), as well as appliqués of patterned arches that adorn the windows (Fig.4.13). Inside the second floor of the Mosque, there are also classrooms, administrative offices, as well as a community library. The renovations made to the Assuna Annabawiyya do not necessarily reflect any strict aesthetic concerns for Islamic visual traditions, but rather, the need for practical spaces within the mosque for the community.

What becomes immediately evident upon looking at the Assuna

Fig 4.15
Islamic Cultural Centre of Manhattan (main prayer hall),
New York City, New York, USA. 1986-1991. Photo: Nadia
Kurd, 2009.

Fig 4.16
Islamic Cultural
Centre of Manhat-
tan (minbar), New
York City, New York.
1986-1991. Photo:
Nadia Kurd, 2009.

Annabawiyya Mosque is the communal nature of its construction. As a repurposed Mosque, the modifications have been carried out and maintained by members of the community. The sparsely decorated Mosque was made without the assistance of an architect to oversee or develop the space. Absent from the renovations are the incorporation of outwardly architectural forms closely associated with Islam such as minarets, domes or stylized tile work façade. Beyond presenting an alternative image of the mosque, the Assuna Annabawiyya Mosque emphasizes the reexamination of the primacy of architecture over the ritual practice of Islam. In other words, such mosques reveal the fluidity of ritual practice by showing that it is not contingent on the replication of specific visual forms or structures. Considered from a religious perspective, the act of prayer and remembrance of God requires the believer's undivided attention—independent of the presence or assistance of formal structures and visual aids. This means that the presence of reliquaries, religious images or idols are strictly prohibited inside both the mosque, and more importantly, in the presence of an individual performing prayer. In this respect, the physical performance of communal prayer becomes the primary means through which the identity of the mosque is formulated and exists apart from the form of the structure or appearance of the mosque. Repurposed mosques emphasize the "separation of architecture's cultural content from its spiritual and community functions" and arguably that such cultural visual forms are unrelated to the spiritual or religious practice.[66]

To understand this non-visual informality of mosques such as the Assuna Annabawiyya Mosque, an apt explanation to describe

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66. Jerrilyn Dodds, *Mosques of New York*, 65.

Fig 4.17
Manu Chugh (architect), Baitunnur, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. 2008.
1986-1991. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2011.

Fig 4.18
Manu Chugh (architect), Baitunnur (main prayer hall), Calgary, Alberta,
Canada. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2011.

how the building is imbued with a sense of sacredness is what social anthropologist Michel S. Laguerre terms as the "temporality of place." Laguerre's conception of time refers to the way in which non-Christian religious communities in North America articulate their identity both via time and against the hegemonic temporality of an urban centre. Diasporized Muslim communities, Laguerre notes, on the one hand observe social practices regulated by civil society, while on the other, follow a temporal enclave "that links them to a worldwide Islam via an Islamic calendar".[67] This means that the mosque and its surrounding neighbourhood experience a different routine of time that has been modified and adapted in order to make room for religious practice. Around the Assuna Annabawiyya Mosque, this practice of time can be directly observed five times a day when the faithful, composed primarily of taxi drivers, neighbourhood shopkeepers and residents, arrive at the Mosque in time for prayer. Through the temporality of place, the structure of the Assuna Annabawiyya becomes visibly activated as a sacred site because of the daily and repeated performance of ritual.

This is not to wholly disregard the visual importance of the mosque in Canada, for a few symbolic and structural elements are regularly taken up by Muslim communities during the transformation of existing structures. Whether it is the Arabic calligraphic text on the mosque's exterior or the gendered divisions within the mosque, these storefront mosques incorporate Islamic architectural forms that communicate the sense of a communal tradition and sacredness of the site, which serve to distinguish it from other urban structures. While these elements are not

67. Michel S. Laguerre, *Urban Multiculturalism and Globalization in New York City: An Analysis of Diasporic Temporalities* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan Press, 2003), 80.

consistently or uniformly replicated across similarly renovated mosques, they are idioms that can be traced back and found in historical mosque architecture.

Purpose-Built Mosques

The Islamic Cultural Center of Manhattan (ICCM)

This notion of experience over expression vastly contrasts with the Islamic Cultural Centre of Manhattan (Fig.4.14). As a purpose-built mosque, the ICCM is a two-story mosque that is centrally located in Manhattan with its main entrance and minaret angled to face a busy intersection for increased visibility. Built in 1991, the mosque had been designed by a US-based architectural firm along with a cross-section of scholars, foreign officials and community members, and represents an example of a "high" style, Ottoman inspired, purpose-built mosque.[68] With its towering minaret, and tiled and stuccoed exterior, the façade of the mosque is also decorated with a stylized Arabic Thuluth script. Inside the ICCM, the main prayer hall and women's section boasts a wide, light-filled open space with geometric patterning throughout (Fig.4.15, 4.16). Adjacent to the main prayer hall, the mosque operates both a private religious school and secular education from kindergarten through to the second grade.[69] The ICCM is by far the most recognizable mosque in New York not only in terms of its design and size, but because of being financed by a number of international governments from the Muslim world and

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68. Omar Khalidi, "Approaches to Mosque Design in North America," *Muslims on the Americanization Path?*, eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito (Atlanta, GA.: Scholars Press, 1998), 325.

69. Islamic Cultural Center of Manhattan, http://www.islamicculturalcenter-ny.org/ (date of last access: 10 January 2012).

for its recognition by the United Nations as a landmark for Islam in New York.[70]

While mosques such as the ICCM show a seamless synthesis of various traditional styles with contemporary materials, its construction reveals a set of wholly different challenges. In a reflection of the mosque's construction, Jerrilynn Dodds recounted the architect's travails with the various diplomats, U.N. and trade commission representatives, community members and a board of scholars on the architectural intent of the building. As Dodds writes, "there developed a schism between those who wanted to import architectural forms, and those who wanted instead to explore what a worship space in Islam means. There was constant negotiation, and in the end compromises were made by all of us."[71] For architects working with the Muslim community, the design and form of the mosque intersects a variety of challenges that may often result in the mediation of a number of voices, ideals and issues of patronage. At the basis of these design and construction negotiations are tensions between the idealized vision of Islamic architecture and the realization of the building's location and capital. In most cases, as in any large scale architectural project, the design plays a secondary role to the realities of the community's available resources.

Baitunnur Mosque (Calgary, Alberta)

Located in a semi-industrial section of the Taradale neighbourhood in Calgary, the Baitunnur Mosque is the largest mosque in Canada (Fig.4.17). Boasting multiple prayer halls, classrooms, a full restaurant-

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70. Jerrilyn Dodds, *Mosques of New York*, 31.
71. Ibid, 32.

Fig 4.19
Hassan Fathy (architect) Dar al Islam Mosque and complex. Abiquiu, New Mexico, USA. 1980. Photo: Omar Khalidi, c. 1980s.

Fig 4.20
Hassan Fathy (architect) Dar al Islam Mosque and complex. Abiquiu, New Mexico, USA. 1980. Photo: Omar Khalidi, c. 1980s.

style kitchen, daycare, gymnasium and housing, the mosque also incorporates all of the conventions of traditional Islamic architecture.[72] Stylistically, the Baitunnur incorporates several identifiable Islamic architectural tropes. Whereas the Ottoman minarets buttress the stainless steel Mughal-style dome, the Mosque's geometric shaped windows throw patterned shadows across its light-filled interior (Fig.4.18). Like other mosques, the interior of the Baitunnur Mosque is spatially sparse save for the presence of the *mihrab*, *minbar* and clean unobstructed rooms. Where the Baitunnur differs from traditional mosques is in the building's technological capacities. Throughout its various administrative offices, educational and ritual spaces, the Baitunnur Mosque is electronically linked via projectors and wide-screen televisions, which ultimately serves to not only connect congregants to the individual leading the prayers and delivering sermons, but also to the a broader, global community via satellite television.

However, what ultimately distinguishes the Baitunnur from other mosques is in the congregation it serves. For the congregants of the Mosque are adherents of Islamic sects that, due to their values and practices, have been marginalized in regions dominated by Sunni Islam. Through the establishment of mosques in the diaspora, these communities have been able to claim a Muslim identity that is otherwise denied to them in countries where Sunni Islam dominates. Funded and constructed by local communities, the presence of these Ahmadi mosques exemplifies the heterogeneity of Muslim communities in North America.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the congregants at the Baitunnur

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72. Though designed by Manu Chugh, for the sake of consistency in their communal identity, the Baitunnur Mosque incorporates all of the stylistic designs of the first Ahmadiyya mosque in Canada, the Baitul Islam.

Mosque are part of a revivalist sect known as the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. This globally situated sect, deemed as heretics and non-Muslims in countries such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, have been subject to persecution and displacement since the early twentieth century. Legally declared non-Muslims in Pakistan in 1974, members of the Ahmadiyya Movement are denied access to public places of worship, banned entry to Mecca and deprived of the ability to label their own buildings as mosques.[73] Only in the diaspora are the members of the Ahmadiyya permitted to both identify themselves as Muslims and construct mosques that have the formal characteristics of Islamic architecture.

Looking back on the construction of the first large-scale Ahmadiyya mosque, Gulzar Haider writes: "I was advised to reject this commission, lest I risk my future and never get another job, or even risk my hereafter by 'partnership in crime of Ahmadiyyat.' "[74] Indeed, Haider's comments on the construction of the Baitul Islam Mosque reveal how various diasporic Muslim communities struggle to legitimize their claim to a Muslim identity and how others continue to reject the sect's claims to visual authenticity. While the entrenched antagonism amongst Sunnis against the Ahmadiyya continues to perpetuate in the diaspora, the diaspora also allows these sub-sects the power to legitimize their buildings as mosques.

In her study of Alevi and Sunni Turkish communities in Berlin, Ruth Mandel notes that in the diaspora,

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73. Barbara Daly Metcalf, "Introduction," *Making Muslim space in North America and Europe*, ed. Barbara Daly Metcalf (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 10.

74. Gulzar Haider, "Muslim Space and the Practice of Architecture: A Personal Odyssey," *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe*, ed. Barbara Daly Metcalf (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 42.

migrant Alevis have in many ways successfully reversed their hierarchical subordination to Sunni Turks...[They] also have opportunies to participate in organizational, preaching and educational modes that would be illegal in Turkey.[75]

This scenario parallels the religious activities and observances of the Ahmadiyya communities in that as a religious minority within Islam, the diaspora offers the freedom from religious persecution that would be otherwise unavailable. Claiming the mosque as both a visual and structural edifice for the practice of these Muslim sects offers both the access and legitimacy to an uncontested Muslim identity.

Dar al-Islam (Abiquiu, New Mexico)

In 1979, a not-for-profit organization called the Dar al-Islam Foundation established itself in New Mexico with the mission to increase links between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in the US. Shortly after its inception, the Foundation began its architectural program to build a teaching mosque, school and housing units along the Rio Chama River. The project, was "born out of a utopian notion of a liberal Islamic community of learning and teaching, consisting of around 150 families in the otherwise predominantly Christian southwest of the US." While plans to bring families to Dar al-Islam never materialized, the development still addressed the *genius loci* of the arid landscape.[76] The commissioned architect, the famed Egyptian modernist Hassan Fathy, integrated the

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75. Ruth Mandel, "A Place of Their Own: Contesting Spaces and Defining Places in Berlin's Migrant Community," *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe,* ed. Barbara Daly Metcalf (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 155.

76. Rudolf Stegers, "Dar al-Islam Mosque," *Sacred Buildings* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2008), 210.

Nubian mud brick building techniques of South Egypt with those from the American Indian adobe style.[77] The result of this synthesis saw the Dar al-Islam Mosque and adjoining education centre (Fig.4.19) as the first purpose-built Islamic centre that utilized Indigenous architectural building practices. Centuries before, the Chama Valley had been the ancestral home to a number of Indigenous groups, namely the Navajo, Ute, Tew, Apache amongst others. With the arrival and settlement of the Spanish, the area soon became home to the *Los Hermanos de la Luz*, a Christian Penitente Brotherhood.[78]

With its white-washed walls and multiple domed ceiling, the Dar al-Islam Mosque is a single level structure. The design of the building is composed of a series of domed joining rooms that form a grid, rather than a singular large prayer hall. Adjacent to the mosque is the Islamic school which integrates a series of courtyards. In integrating Egyptian and Indigenous building practices, the overall impression of the Dar al-Islam Mosque complex is designed with the purpose of promoting a contemplative and focused religious practice in a space that also considers its environment. Fathy sought to have an optimally designed building that addressed the climatic conditions and local materials, but most

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77. Nuridin Durkee, "Dar al-Islam," *MIMAR 24: Architecture in Development* (Singapore: Concept Media Ltd., 1987), 12.

78. Akel Ismail Kahera, *Deconstructing the American Mosque: Space, Gender and Aesthetics*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002, p. 82. The Christian Penitente Brotherhood is an independent (and somewhat secretive) Catholic sect which traces its roots back 800 years to Spain and Italy. The sect is known for amongst many other things, the belief that "sin can only be expiated by suffering, and that forgiveness can most surely be obtained by self-inflicted torture." See: L. Bradford Prince, "Spanish Mission Churches of New Mexico," http://southwest. library.arizona.edu/spmc/body.1_div.34.html (date of last access: 7 April 2013). and the group's website, www.elsantuariodechimayo.us/Santuario/Penitentes.html (date of last access: 30 August 2013).

importantly, sought to revive ancient craft skills (Fig.4.20). During the construction of the complex, Nubian master builders from Egypt were employed to assist and impart their knowledge and skills.[79] Though thirty years have passed since the Dar al-Islam Mosque was built, it continues to be a prime example of integrative and innovative mosque design today.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Undoubtedly, the nature of mosques in North America runs "counter to the widespread Western view of an Islam located in minarets, calligraphy, and carpets."[80] This chapter has attempted to illustrate the divergent historical origins, spatial and religious specifics of mosque design and the expanded use in the North American Muslim diaspora. Whereas repurposed mosques showcase the emergent, economic and developing expressions of the architectural vocabulary from the Muslim world, purpose-built mosques show the growing comfort, and specific cultural and political currency of these buildings.

Another point of divergence is in the sectarian and cultural make up of the mosque congregation. The choice to employ Islamic architectural style speaks not to any moral or ethical practice of the faith, but as in the case with the congregations which practice at Baitunnur and the Malcolm Shabazz Mosques, the cultural and sometimes political investments in signifying the distinct and overt vernaculars of traditional Islamic architecture. Even within the larger Muslim population, each mosque uniquely articulates the growing practices of architectural design, the social meaning of these choices and the diverse communities that employ

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79. Nuridin Durkee, "Dar al-Islam,"12.

80. Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, "Transcending Space," 48.

them.

However, outside the Muslim community, unsurprisingly, it is the purpose-built mosque that elicits the most controversy in its construction. These mosques require a substantial commitment on the part of the commissioning community in terms of capital and resources to make, but more importantly communicate an unambiguous identity. This in turn, more so post 9/11, has come to signify an encroachment on the ideals and principles of Western democracy. In both the US and Canada, this has meant open hostility, mostly in the form of vandalism and destruction of property.[81] In retaining an unchanged exterior, repurposed mosques continue to operate without the exposure, but not in the absence of the policies and attitudes that foster the concept of "race-thinking." This concept infers the unsuitability of Muslim groups and mosques in the West, and continues to marginalize buildings, even those with significant cross-cultural histories. It also points to the Christian belief systems that underpin the supposed secularism of Western societies. Forgotten are the diplomatic and integrative roles played by the congregations of the Dar al-Islam Foundation and the Jami Mosque. Race-thinking disavows the broader relationships these buildings have in the cities and neighborhoods that they serve.

As the religious profiles and dynamics of Canada and the US change, mosques will increasingly, though with much difficulty and debate, become a noticeable part of the urban landscape. The

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81. In Canada, these acts of vandalism have largely occurred in urban centres. In 2011, hate crimes had been reported to mosques in Hamilton, Vancouver, Montreal, Ottawa, Gatineau and Waterloo. See the reported acts of vandalism on the CAIR-CAN websites: http://www.caircan.ca/ (date of last access: 10 January 2012).

heterogeneous nature of mosques as well as the challenges presented in their construction will further emphasize that the term "Islamic" also needs to be carefully examined. While the discipline of Islamic art and architecture will continue to study the historic objects and buildings of the Muslim world, the study of contemporary, diasporic Muslim creative expression has the potential to unravel the formulations of Islam that have shaped it thus far. The study of North American mosques, one that includes both repurposed and purpose-built, and the diversity of Muslim groups, can expand upon the social history of art and can incorporate insights that go beyond ahistorical descriptive studies. Whether renovated or purpose-built, Ahmadiyya or Sunni, Canadian mosques employ symbolic visual forms to varying degrees and incorporate the community's needs in their construction. "Even the most casual engagement with these buildings and the communities they serve," writes art historian Jerrilyn Dodds, "defies any single reductive image."[82]

82. Jerrilyn Dodds, *New York Mosques*, 25.

Chapter 4
Performing Power: Making Space for Women in Mosques

Women have an Islamic right to enter a mosque.
An Islamic Bill of Rights for Women in Mosques (2005).[1]

*As a descendent of African slave women, I have carried the
awareness that my ancestors were not given any choice to
determine how much of their bodies would be exposed at
the auction block or in their living conditions. So, I chose
intentionally to cover my body as a means of reflecting my
historical identity, personal dignity, and sexual integrity.*
Amina Wadud(2007).[2]

Introduction

On November 13, 2004, twenty-year-old student Maryam Mirza
became the first female known to have publically delivered a *khutba*
(sermon) to a crowd of two hundred gathered for Eid prayers in Toronto's
west end.[3] The event, though highly publicized as a transformative
moment for Muslim women's agency, was not as Leila Ahmed argues,
"a new quest in relation to women in Islam," but "the activism of today
among American Muslim women [that] represents the most recent and
now, for the first time, [something] distinctly Western."[4] Indeed, such
contemporary religious actions—meant to question and establish gender

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1. "An Islamic Bill of Rights for Women in Mosques," *Living Islam Out Loud:
American Muslim Women Speak*, ed. Saleemah Abdul-Ghafur (Boston: Beacon
Press, 2005), 153.

2. Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford:
Oneworld, 2007), 221.

3. Nicholas Keung, "Keeping the female faith," *Toronto Star* [Toronto, Ont] 14 Nov
2004: A03.

4. Leila Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to
America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 305-6.

parity—have grown in terms of their reach and impact on Muslim women in the West. Many of these actions have, moreover, directly arisen as the result of the longstanding patriarchal nature of gender segregation and leadership in mosques. As discussed in previous chapters, mosques in the West have faced numerous aesthetic, historic, and urban tensions. However, it is the increased and active participation of women in defining the religious character of Muslim life that has perhaps elicited the most public response from both within and outside Muslim communities. Because of the divergent cultural, educative, and economic shifts in the Muslim diaspora, the agency of Muslim women has transformed and has indeed, afforded significant roles in the development and operation of mosques right from their inception. By the same token, despite the generally positive changes to the social, economic, and cultural conditions granted to Muslim women in the West, they, like many Muslim women across the globe, continue to—albeit to varying degrees—"directly experience the consequences of oppressive misreadings of religious texts."[5]

Events such as Maryam Mirza's khutba raise significant questions about the role Muslim women play in religious and civic life in the West. For example, how has the image of the Muslim woman become a symbol of oppression? What are the historical and contemporary circumstances of women's authority in mosques in Canada and the US? And has the inclusion of women in positions of authority in the Muslim community altered the physical and aesthetic makeup of mosques? This chapter examines the segregated nature of both purpose-built and repurposed

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5. Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 3.

mosques and the degree to which Muslim women take part in their establishment. I argue that while Muslim women play an increased role in the daily operations of mosques in North America today, the design and construction of mosques have largely enforced the segregation of men and women. As a result of systematic patriarchal and oppressive readings of religious texts, mosques have also become patriarchal institutions. However, performative oppositions to this status quo, as seen in the reversal of gendered roles in religious activities such as Maryam Mirza's khutba, have begun to trouble the dichotomous and sometime polemical power divisions between the sexes. Historically and normatively performed by men, these acts, such as leading prayers and delivering khutbas, have been taken up by women as a means to underscore both the need for Muslims to reform the religious authority in mosques and redefine Islamic spiritual practices.

This chapter seeks to expand the understanding of the relationship between gender roles, religious attitudes, and built forms. I will look at the impact of these religious spatial interventions, such as women-led prayers and sermons, on Muslim identity in Canada and the US. These interventions, mostly enacted beyond the walls of the mosque and under the gaze of the news media, have become symbolic of what Juliane Hammer describes as an "American Muslim women's exegesis: an emphasis on the spiritual equality, as expressed in shared religious obligations and in the Qur'an's emphasis on individual responsibility for salvation."[6] In other words, in challenging patriarchy, these women have interpreted and performed religious rituals to embody alternative,

6. Juliane Hammer, *American Muslim Women, Religious Authority and Activism: More than a Prayer* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), 64.

decidedly Islamic, practices as a way to gain equality, without compromising their religious identities and values as Muslims, while doing so mainly outside of the officially sacred space of the mosque.[7] I assert that the patriarchial construction of space that is confirmed within and largely confined to mosques is questioned and rethought in women-led performance of Islamic rituals, which have also expanded the agency of Muslim women in cultural and religious life. Although slowly, these religious reenactments have also opened the way not only for an engagement with gender justice in Islam, but also a renewed vision of female-positive mosques in the West.[8]

Muslim Women as Narrative Subjects in Western Literature: An Overview

The subjecthood of Muslim women as known today in the West is simultaneously diverse, historic, and colonial in origin. Contingent on the period of temporal and geographic engagement with Islam, Muslim cultures have been featured in European literary works since the Middle Ages.[9] In her historical outline of the visual and narrative representations of Muslim women, writer Mohja Kahf explains that these early European texts, though limited in terms of breadth on Arab and/or Muslim cultures they had covered, by the tenth-century had increasingly

7. Banu Gökariksel, "A Feminist Geography of Veiling: Gender, Class and religion in the Making of Modern Subjects and Public Spaces in Istanbul," *Women, Religion and Space: Global Perspectives on Gender and Faith*, eds. Karen M. Morin and Jeanne Kay Guelke (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 63.

8. The concept of gender justice employed here draws on the work of Amina Wadud in *Inside the Gender Jihad* (2006). Wadud argues for a radical, feminist hermeneutical engagement with both Quranic classical Islamic texts. Moreover, Wadud in her calls for feminist readings also acknowledges the very same texts used by neo-conservatives to uphold patriarchy and male-dominance over the very nature of "what Islam means." (16)

9. Mohja Kahf, *Western Representation of the Muslim Woman: From Termagant to Odalisque* (Austin, TX, USA: University of Texas Press, 1999), 11.

replaced older "negative images of pagan civilizations that preceded the Islamic, including Roman and Old Testament pagans."[10] During this period, a series of Islamic conquests had already brought Islam to Europe's door, and even with the subsequent decline of Muslims in Spain "there was never a break in the European sense of besiegement."[11] For example, literary texts from the Crusades (10th-13th centuries) negatively characterized noble Muslim women in "conversion scenarios." In stories from this period such as the *Historica Ecclesiastica* (1130-35), a Turkish noblewoman falls in love with an imprisoned French Crusader and "secures his release through the betrayal and disavowal of her father and converts to Christianity, thereby renouncing her Islamic "Otherness.'"[12] In the narrative, she "permits the Christians to seize the citadel and claim its substantial fortunes as a symbolic redistribution of wealth."[13] Within these narratives the Muslim woman comes to signify "the Other within [a] powerful Other."[14] Kahf argues that though narrative traces of Muslim women existed in Western literature before "the West" became considered a consolidated entity, it was during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that the concept of female oppression became linked with Islam. She goes on to state:

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10. Ibid, 14.

11. Ibid, 16.

12. Jasmine Zine, "Muslim Women and the Politics of Representation," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (vol 19, issue 4, 2002), 5. This narrative is not unique to Muslim women. In North America, it shares similarities with the popular story of Pocahontas, where she falls in love with John Smith upon first sight, even though there is no historical evidence that they were romantically involved . See: Gary Edgerton and Kathy Merlock Jackson, "Redesigning Pocahontas: Disney, the "White Man's Indian," and the Marketing of Dreams," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* (vol. 24, issue 2, 1996), 90.

13. Ibid.

14. Mohja Kahf, *Western Representation of the Muslim Woman: From Termagant to Odalisque,* 14.

When the Orient was Orientalized (to paraphrase Edward Said), when a vast and complex body of knowledge about the Islamic Other developed simultaneously with Western subjugation of that world, the image of the Muslim woman most familiar in the West today emerged. Relative to the growth of the discourse on Islam in general, the Muslim woman character grows all at once (as if she had eaten one of Alice in Wonderland's distending cakes) into one of the overarching concerns of that discourse. Paradoxically, her figure simultaneously shrinks in subjectivity and exuberance. In the eighteenth century, the Muslim woman character turns into an abject harem slave, the quintessential victim of absolute despotism, debased to a dumb, animal existence. Then in the nineteenth century, this harem slave is rescued by the Romantic hero and recreated as the ideal of numinous femininity. The recurrent drama of incipient colonization, that of a heroic male conquest of a feminized Oriental land, is played out in literature upon the inert body of the Muslim woman.[15]

The fundamental shift between earlier European attitudes of Muslim women and those from the eighteenth-century onwards lay in the nature of Western hegemony in the Middle East: whereas the engagement with Arab forces during the Crusades had been protracted battles without the sole intent to convert Muslims, the expansion of European dominance over the Middle East and much of Asia was a type of direct, prolonged economic governance that sought to reform Muslim cultures.[16] Contingent on colonial time and place, this "Othering" of Muslim women was disconnected not only from the lived realities of those

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15. Ibid, 8.

16. Ibid, 14-16. Kahf also points out the limitations of Said's analysis of Orientalism on the early period of European-Islamic encounters since the result of Muslim conquests in Europe had clearly made Islam the governing civilization. In this regard, the paradigm of imbalance of power contained in Said's analysis of Orientalism is specific to eighteenth and twentieth century colonialism and cannot be easily applied in such historical circumstances.

it narrated, but became an essentialized, if not iconic representation of the Muslim woman. This was both strategic in its evocation of political sentiments in the West and a necessary and sustaining part of the larger Orientalist discourse on the lands of Islam. The historical reverberations and articulations of the subjugated Muslim woman has gained currency whenever the impending "threat" of Islam's arrival to the West has been felt, be it through foreign intervention or immigration. In both scenarios, the representation of the Muslim woman has been connected to a larger discourse of European "colonizing power" where political certainty presented an objectified view through visual and literary media such as travelogues, paintings and photography. These depictions were successfully based on their ability to fuse an external reality with a constructed, often detached objective reality.[17]

In more recent times, the political circumstances and places of Western engagement with Muslim women have changed again. The negative associations in regards to Muslim women have grown considerably insidious and have drawn intrigue and even outright hostility in regards to issues of immigration, assimilation, and citizenship due to Islam's denotative meaning of Otherness. Muslim women who wear the veil, either in the form of the hijab (head scarf) or niqab (face covering veil), have been the particular focus of these debates. While veiling and gender segregation traditions exist amongst many faiths, the focus on Muslim women and the veil has been unrivaled in terms of its global reach and decisive impact on legislative governance in North

17. Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 7, 23.

America and Western Europe.[18] As a result of its charged, global status, the veil has become an evocative symbolic indicator of women's oppression, and has progressively become a focal point for discussions on "the roots of geo-political places, events, and war."[19] This in turn has also made the issue of the veil a *cause célèbre* on matters related to women's liberation for feminists, politicians and journalists to qualify a range of ideas and actions, many of which bare little relationship to the historicity and religious use of the veil. From the veil's ban in France to the rationale for the US-led intervention of Afghanistan, the emancipation of Muslim women from oppressive Muslim men has been both the motivation and primary intended outcome of these global incursions. As Sherene H. Razack has carefully noted, "Islam is everything the West is not. Furthermore as fatally pre-modern, tribal, non-democratic, and religious, the barbarism of Islam is principally evident in the treatment of women in Muslim communities."[20] There is no question then that the Muslim woman has not only become a prominent signifier of Islam's "intrinsic" backwardness but has also emphasized the politicized weight placed on the veil as evidence that Islam is "innately and immutably oppressive to women, that the veil and segregation epitomized that oppression."[21]

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18. In 2011, France passed a law prohibiting women from wearing the niqab. Though only 2000 women of France's 5 million Muslims are believed to wear the niqab, women wearing the niqab are subject to laws that either carries a fine or lessons on French civic values.

19. Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others," *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (September 2002), 784.

20. Sherene H. Razack, *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 84.

21. Leila Ahmed, "The Discourse of the Veil," *Veil: Veiling, Representation and Contemporary Art,* ed. Gilane Tawadros, et al. (London: Institute of International Visual Arts / Modern Art Oxford, 2003), 43.

What are some of the contemporary visual sources of the historically oppressed, veiled Muslim woman? In his influential book *The Colonial Harem* (1986), Malek Alloula studies the use of photography, namely the portable nature of the postcard as a tool to cheaply and effectively transmit images of both veiled and unveiled Algerian women during the early twentieth century. While the image of Arab and Muslim women had permeated the European imagination through earlier Orientalist travelogues, fictional narratives and paintings, Alloula writes that:

> It matters little if Orientalistic painting begins to run out of wind or falls into mediocrity. Photography steps in to take up the slack and reactivates the phantasm at its lowest level. The postcard does it one better; it becomes the poor man's phantasm: for a few pennies, display racks full of dreams. The postcard is everywhere, covering all the colonial space, immediately available to the tourist, the solider, the colonist.[22]

These postcards were produced in the thousands starting from the late nineteenth century and drew from the canon of Orientalist painting to depict a number of pre-existing archetypical representations of Muslim women: "the harem, the odalisque, the white mistress and her black slave."[23] This taxonomic documentation of Muslim women emphasized and portrayed a known visual language; image after image systematically reaffirmed what had already been conceptually visualized by Orientalist scholars, artists, and writers. Whereas before, paintings that were once exclusively held in the collections of wealthy patrons were now visually

22. Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, Trans. Myrna & Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 4.

23. Jananne Al-Ani, "Acting Out," *Veil: Veiling, Representation and Contemporary Art*, 94.

FIGURE 5.1
Postcard. "Fillettes arabes" or "Arab girls," B&W, 9 x 14 cm, collotype.
Lehnert & Landrock, Algeria, 1915. Collection of the Smithsonian Institute,
Washington, DC., EEPA AE-20-63.

FIGURE 5.2
Postcard. "Ouled Naïl," B&W, 9 x 14 cm, collotype. Collection
Idéale P.S., Algeria, 1905. Collection of the Smithsonian Institute,
Washington, DC., EEPA AE 1995-0020-45.

replicated through photography to convey proof to some of the notions associated with Orientalism. They were largely produced in colonial photography studios for the European tourist market for the upper and middle classes.[24] The photographic postcards corroborated such ideas by depicting "native models" who "reenacted exotic rituals in costumes provided by the picture taking impressario."[25]

Furthermore, these women were shown either semi-naked or wearing ornate gauzy veils, and were staged in a variety of poses such as smoking, dancing, and reclining in interior spaces. These postcards provide a glimpse of women– from the highly staged image of the bare-chested, reclining odalisque to fully cloaked women whose billowing veil makes invisible the individual's corporeality save for her eyes, to more candid images that appear *in situ*. For example, whereas the young girls in Fig. 5.1, are presented to the viewer's gaze, the image of women in Fig. 5.2 are presented in a far more ethnographic and documentary manner as more attention has been made to classifying women with shared cultural affliation (Ouled Naïl/Berber) and their garments. In each case, the images contained conflicting sentiments towards the depicted figure all at once: one of desire, denial of desire, and, finally, the practice of the photographer's art.[26]

Alloula correctly suggests in his study that the photograph does the painting one better. By capturing detailed accuracy and offering the sense of objective realism, photography confirms the poor man's phantasm of Islam. Additionally, the photograph makes the trivial, everyday objects

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24. Ibid, 97.
25. Barbara Harlow, "Introduction," *The Colonial Harem*, xiv.
26. Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, 7.

immediately known, imbuing the details of life with meaning and "making stories real."[27] Much like in Orientalist painting, everything from the backdrop, to costume to the interior space of these photographs are carefully constructed and replicated for authenticity. In writing about the nature of this detailed accuracy in the paintings of Jean-Léon Gérôme, Linda Nochlin perceptively points out:

> There is a clear allusion here, clothed in the language of objective reportage, not merely to the mystery of the East, but to the barbaric insouciance of Moslem peoples, who quite literally charm snakes…what I am getting at, of course, is the obvious truth that in this painting Gérôme is not reflecting a readymade reality but, like all artists, is producing meanings. If I seem to dwell on the issue of authenticating details, it is because not only Gérôme's contemporaries, but some present-day revisionist revivers of Gérôme, and of Orientalist paintings in general, insist so strongly on the objectivity and credibility of Gérôme's view of the Near East, using this sort of detail as evidence for their claims.[28]

The replication of temporal visual details in works by artists such as Gérôme, would continue to be the template for representations of Muslim women. However, the very portable and cheap nature of the photograph ensured that these images became widely seen and circulated, but more insidiously, conveyed a sense of objective Truth. Drawing on the history of Western representations of Muslim women, they not only confirmed the imagined social and cultural landscape of the Middle East, but also gave

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27. John Szarkowski, "Introduction to the Photographer's Eye," *The Photography Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 100. Reina Lewis also adds that by the late nineteenth-century photography had already become part and parcel of the fieldwork process in the emergent disciplines of anthropology and ethnography, thus playing a crucial role in the "classification, conceptualisation and visualisation of 'other' peoples." (*Rethinking Orientalism : Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem*, London, GBR: I.B. Tauris, 2004, 209).

28. Linda Nochlin, *The Imaginary Orient*, 73.

the viewer a sense of the intimate spaces in which these women occupied. Photography builds on the familiarity of the landscape of Orientalist paintings, but as in the case of the veiled women, the viewer also has the authority to easily gaze upon the image and "recall in [an]individualized fashion, the closure of private space."[29]

No doubt, the histories of Western Orientalist writers and artists have significantly contributed to the visual understanding of Islam and Muslim peoples and have continued to serve as a frame of reference through which the gaze has been enacted upon Muslim women. And while the image of the Muslim woman in the West has been shaped with reductionist political and religious meanings, this perception is far from accurate. As an ethnically heterogeneous faith-based gendered group, Muslim women in Canada and the US do not conform to a single representational vision. They are either Sunni or Shia, veiled or not, and vary in terms of observing religious customs. Muslim women do not by any means necessarily share a common cultural, ethnic or religious identity, but rather, the ties that connect them in the diaspora have often been forged in the rooms of mosques and interwoven with transnational networks.[30] This means that as Muslims, these women are connected to the global currents of Islam, but as citizens of the US and Canada, are shaped by local societal customs and attitudes. But even with Islam's Universalist values as a monotheistic faith, one that clearly defines the global community of Muslims as part of the *Umma* (unified Muslim community) and calls for an egalitarian worldview, Muslim communities, and more specifically Muslim women, are not only commonly divided along

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29. Malek Alloula, *Colonial Harem*, 13.
30. Juliane Hammer, *American Muslim Women*, 6.

economic and educational lines, but also according to their prospective

ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. This means that even within larger

Muslim communities, mosques and social events are organized according

to smaller ethno-cultural groups. For not only do the pluralistic confluence

of socio-cultural values, migration, and spaces shape the lives of Muslim

women, they are also contingent upon the global flux of ideas and

attitudes towards political events. These relationships have, since the

events of 9/11, grown exponentially in terms of being publically debated,

performed, and mediated through the media to such a degree that:

> Against the hyper-visibility of the Muslim woman's body
> (customs officers, shop clerks, and restaurant workers
> now all presume to know how Muslim women are
> oppressed by their terrible men), it is virtually impossible
> to name and confront the violence that Muslim women
> (like all groups of women) experience at the hands of their
> men and families without providing ideological fuel to
> the 'war on terror.' The extant to which Western feminists
> have begun to share conceptual and political terrain with
> the far right is troubling.[31]

Razack's observations on the contemporary Muslim woman's

body—as a knowable, gazed-upon site, one where violence meets cultural

attitudes towards the veil—echoes Alloula's observations on the dualistic

nature of the "closure of private space." Those who gaze upon her body

not only have competing authorial claims, but also contradictory reasons

for the literal "unveiling" of women. In these claims, the body of the

Muslim woman becomes an ideological and legislative battleground

where public debates determine whether or not Muslim women can

make independent choices about their bodies or define religious textual

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31. Sherene H. Razack, *Casting Out*, 107.

interpretations for themselves.[32] Such meditations, as reflected by Razack,

are often seen as a decision between traditional values and Westernization,

and have dire repercussions on the lives of Muslim women. In contrast,

the redefinition of contemplative Islamic rituals as seen in women-led

prayers emphasizes and asserts the primacy of Muslim women's bodies

in public spaces. These acts also contest the normative exegetical practices

traditionally exercised by Muslims to effect reform—politically and

spiritually—so that it becomes integral in all aspects of gender justice,

in both theoretical religious meanings of Islamic thought and the socio-

cultural practice of Muslim life in the West.[33]

Between Culture and Religion: Muslim Women and the Practice of Segregation

Early Islamic history shows that Muslim women have not always

been regarded as unequal participants in religious life. Rather, the societal

attitudes and roles of women during the time of the Prophet Muhammad

in the seventh century (CE) ebbed and flowed between the existing

Arabian tribal viewpoints and the new religious values. For example,

whereas the Prophet Muhammad's first wife Khadija, known as the

first convert to the new faith, remained his sole wife until her death and

was independently wealthy (not to mention older in age than him), the

Prophet's subsequent eleven wives were veiled and lived in segregated

apartments. However, even amongst these eleven wives, there existed

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32. Here I am referring to both the calls for the ban of headscarves in countries such as France and Canada, and those enacted in Muslim majority countries, such as Pakistan, where laws such as the Hudood Ordinances that are specifically geared to "protect" women from extramarital actions in fact make claims of rape and sexual abuse punishable offenses for victimized women as opposed to perpetrating men.

33. Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, 53.

differing levels of engagement and status within the broader community of new Muslims. For instance, the Prophet's most beloved wife Aisha, known for her participation in key expansionist Muslim battles, would become valued for her comprehensive knowledge of the Prophet's life and habits after his death. Her testimonies, recorded in the *Hadiths* (the revered recorded sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad), constitute not only the largest source of information on the Prophet, but would come to represent close to fifteen percent of the contributing knowledge that founded Shariah Laws.[34] As a result, the inclusion of women's voices such as Aisha's in religious texts would make Islam theologically unique, for it is the only major living faith to include women's voices in scriptures.[35]

If the inclusion of women's narratives in Islamic religious texts have been foundational to the understanding and interpretation of the Qur'an, why do patriarchal attitudes still persist? More importantly, if the social and religious etiquette for the treatment of women has been taken from the Prophet and the Hadiths, why has there been an uneven balance of power between the genders in Muslim societies? For Muslim feminist theorists such as Riffat Hassan, this imbalance has resulted from the intertwining of anti-women religious law with that of civil law, and also the lack of theological knowledge of primary Islamic texts.[36] For Hassan, a key example is the inclusion and power of such laws as the Hudood Ordinances in Pakistan. These laws, which disavow a women's right to

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34. Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam*, 45-6. Shariah can be broadly defined as a set of religious moral and civil laws informed by interpretations of both the Qur'an and Sunnah along with "human efforts to codify Islamic norms in practical terms and legislate for cases not specifically dealt with in the Quran and Sunnah." ("Shariah," The Oxford Dictionary of Islam, ed. John L. Esposito, 2012).

35. Ibid.

36. Riffat Hassan, *Feminism in Islam*, 253.

testify or act as a legitimate witnesses in trials, have promoted the further

alienation of women from their civil rights. Such laws combine patriarchal

appraisals of religious texts and connect them with broader, more common

applications of the law. In this regard, women are both defined and judged

by religious moral codes. At the root of these prohibitive laws, Hassan

argues, is the fundamental misreading of the primary narratives regarding

the genesis of humankind according to the Islamic tradition. Hassan

writes:

> The roots of the belief that men are superior to women
> lie, in my judgment in three theological assumptions: (a)
> that God's primary creation is man, not woman, since
> woman is believed to have been created from man's rib
> and therefore, derivative and secondary ontologically: (b)
> that woman, not man was the primary agent of what is
> customarily described as 'man's fall' or explusion from
> Eden, and hence 'all daughters of Eve' are to be regarded
> with hatred, suspicion, and contempt; and (c) that woman
> was created not only from man but also for man, which
> makes her existence merely instrumental and not of
> fundamental importance.[37]

This basic assumption of man's fall has become so foundational

to Islamic knowledge that even the primary story in Islam, that of the

creation of Eve, has been confused and replaced with those of Jewish and

Christian narratives, where the literal reading of the Qur'an shows how

"the context of human creation speaks always in completely egalitarian

terms."[38] Whereas the Qur'an speaks of both genders in equitable terms,

as Kambiz GhaneaBassiri points out, "any claims to normative Islamic

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37. Ibid, 254

38. Ibid. Hassan also highlights the various terms used in the Quran to denote gender-neutral beings such as *al-insan*, *an-nas* and *bashar*, but that even the name Adam "functions generally as a collective noun referring to the human (species) rather than to a male human being." (255)

injunctions regarding the role of the sexes have resulted not from a lucid set of instructions in the Qur'an, but from a process through which religious scholars have studied the Qur'an and *Sunnah* (the ways of the Prophet) in an attempt to understand and to apply God's will in human lives."[39] A concise example of such interpretative knowledge had been recorded long after the Prophet Muhammad's death, where the Hadiths offer an account by his companions, such as Abu Huraira, affirming that Eve was created from Adam's rib, and like a rib, all women are crooked.[40]

During the late nineteenth-century, through the collective efforts of colonial artists and photographers through visual modes such as paintings and photography, and through more formal, economically bound modes of display such as the World Expositions, had comprehensively conveyed the idea of the passivity of Muslim women and their bodies in the West, entrenching the trope in the imaginations of everyday Europeans. In contrast, Muslim counterparts of this period were left with the indelible exegetical and colonial knowledge that a woman's place in society was second to that of a man's. However, these two parallel viewpoints on Muslim women would change as the result of circumstances brought on by Muslim immigration to Canada and the US. Starting from the 1880s, Ottoman Arabs who had brought Islam to North America began establishing mosques in places such as Ross, North Dakota, Cedar

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39. Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, *Competing Visions of Islam in the United States: A Study of Los Angeles* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 107.

40. Ibid.

FIGURE 5.3
Ross Mosque, Ross, North Dakota, USA. 1929. Demolished in
1970. Rebuilt in 2004. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2013.

FIGURE 5.4
The Mother Mosque of America, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA. 1934.
Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2012.

Rapids, Iowa, and Edmonton, Alberta.[41] These early immigrants were mainly composed of unmarried males who had initially settled in urban centres, and were incredibly mobile and often took up professions such as peddling, factory work or as labourers. As Baha Abu-Laban points out, during this period women are almost completely absent as cultural restrictions limited their independent movement, and those who arrived did so to be reunited with their husbands.[42] For these Arab men, the abundant economic opportunities in urban areas contributed to long-term settlement in search of work.[43] However, the mobility and economic return provided by peddling ensured that these early immigrants were able to easily generate income and begin to settle across the US Midwest and Canadian Prairies.

Far from any coastal urban center, the mosques in cities such as Ross, North Dakota (Fig. 5.3), Cedar Rapids, Iowa (Fig. 5.4) and Edmonton, Alberta (Fig. 4.3) contested the essentialized roles attributed to Muslim women in two significant ways: firstly, the foundational role women played in establishing these mosques; and secondly, the way that space and segregation based on sex differentiation had been constructed and utilized in these early buildings. These two factors resulted in mosques that were supported by the social activities of women, and that,

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41. Early Muslim communities in major port cities and urban centres often repurposed existing buildings as mosques or rotated communal prayers amongst family homes. In the case of the repurposed buildings, once the community outgrows the facility or invests in building a mosque, the traces of the original mosque no longer remain with these facilities as they are purchased and renovated again. In such cases, the community's early history remains in the memories of older congregants. A prime example of a disused repurposed mosque and its history (as told by its members) is Toronto's Dundas Street Mosque: www.mosqueone.com, date of last access: 10 September 2012).

42. Baha Abu-Laban, *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1980), 60.

43. Ibid, 68.

with the absence of partitioned walls (in all three mosques), fostered the inclusion of women in the community. Furthermore, each of these similarly constructed single-room early mosques reflect how –like most other mosques situated in outposts far from the lands with historical Islamic legacies– architectural styles have been amalgamated from new homelands and old. These "pioneer" mosques also demonstrated architectural ingenuity with cost-effective measures to create spaces that both anchor the faith and created formative ritual conventions of Muslim life. In other words, all three mosques resembled existing, naturalized architectural forms found across North America, nevertheless they contain subtle, minor indicators such as the crescent moon atop a makeshift dome, and a drawn niche to direct the congregation's prayer towards Mecca. These details would become the few defining characteristics found in the prayer halls of these first, single room mosques.

Amid the Great Depression of the 1930s, construction began on Canada's first mosque: the Al-Rashid. Despite the economic hardships across the Prairies, a group of women led by Hilwie Hamdon began fundraising for the new mosque to be built on a sizable portion of land donated by the City of Edmonton (an unheard of proposition today).[44] Multiple fundraising potluck dinners and tea parties were combined with private donations, all made possible by the determination of these women, which eventually paid off when they successfully raised the $5,000 needed to build the mosque.[45] With the fundraising success behind them and availability of land on which to build, the community employed

44. Andrea W. Lorenz, "The Women Behind the Al-Rashid," *Legacy: Alberta's Heritage Magazine* (November 1998-January 1999), 17.

45. Daood Hamdani, *The Al-Rashid: Canada's First Mosque, 1938* (Kingston: Canadian Council of Muslim Women, 2010), 9.

FIGURE 5.5
Main prayer hall, Al-Rashid Mosque, Edmonton, Alberta,
Canada. 1938. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2009.

Ukrainian master-builder Mike Drewoth to construct the Al-Rashid Mosque.[46] Aside from its unique exterior and similarity to an Eastern Orthodox Church, the Mosque's sparse interior reveals both the necessary spatial requirements for the performance of Islamic ritual and also the economic means of the community. That is to say, though its builder Mike Drewoth was unfamiliar with mosques, it was financially prohibitive for the community to employ the services of a Muslim architect from abroad. On the recommendation of a respected community member, Darwish Teha, the community employed Drewoth because of his reputation for fair business ethics.[47]

Two distinct architectural features of the Al-Rashid speak to its communal inclusiveness—something that in the years to come would be a source of contestation for Muslim women in Canada and the US. The first would be its open upper hall (Fig. 5.5) where, during its early years, the Al-Rashid was a non-segregated space with no physical obstruction separating the sexes during sermons and prayers. Secondly, the Mosque features a single entryway to the prayer hall for members and visitors alike. In her essay on the early history of the Al-Rashid, writer Andrea W. Lorenz recounts the Muslim community's need to not only have a space for religious activities, but also for the Mosque to become a place for Arabs in the region (of Jewish and Christian religious backgrounds) to socialize, a place where,

> Weddings, funerals and [E]'id ceremonies were performed
> in the main hall. The basement was the scene of teas and
> covered-dish suppers. Mothers and fathers would keep

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46. Andrea W. Lorenz, "Canada's Pioneer Mosque," *Saudi Aramco World* (July/August 1998), 28-31.

47. Daood Hamdani, *The Al-Rashid*, 9-10.

an eye out for possible marriage partners for their own
children, and the young people who had known only
the Prairies of Canada would catch a glimpse of how life
had tasted and sounded in their parents' Middle Eastern
villages.[48]

The Al-Rashid Mosque became a beacon for Arabs of various religious beliefs in the Prairies. It was a place where early immigrants came to socialize and celebrate cultural customs. In this regard, the Mosque functioned as a cultural centre where racial, cultural and ethno-linguistic ties prevailed over religious ones and where the size of the community and need for communal activities ensured stability. Additionally, it was in this space where the community merged to define the new social codes of interaction between Muslims of the opposite sex in Canada. For women such as Hilwie Hamdon, who came from Lebanon's Beqa'a Valley to Canada as a sixteen-year-old bride, this meant that the space of the mosque would provide women like her with an active role in the social and community life of Muslims in Edmonton.[49]

With a similar immigrant history, the Mother Mosque of America in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, follows a parallel architectural footprint of the Al-Rashid Mosque. As a purpose-built mosque, the single prayer hall building sits along a suburban street aligned with houses. From its outward appearance, the Mosque largely conforms to the residential

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48. Andrea W. Lorenz, "Canada's Pioneer Mosque," 28-31. Observant Muslims celebrate two major religioius holidays. The first, Eid Al-Adha also known as the "Feast of the Sacrifice" commerates God's test to Abraham to sacrifice his first son, Ishmael. The other, Eid ul-Fitr known as the "Feast of the Breaking of the Fast", is celebrated at the end of Ramadan (the holy month of fasting).

49. An important note here is the prominence and activity of the Edmonton branch of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW). As discussed in chapter one, members of the CCMW, some of whom had been the descendants of the community's original settlers participated in moving the Al-Rashid to its new home at Fort Edmonton Park in 1992.

FIGURE 5.6
Main prayer hall, Mother Mosque of America, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA.
1934. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2012.

FIGURE 5.7
Mihrab and minbar (detail). Mother Mosque of America,
Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA. 1934. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2012.
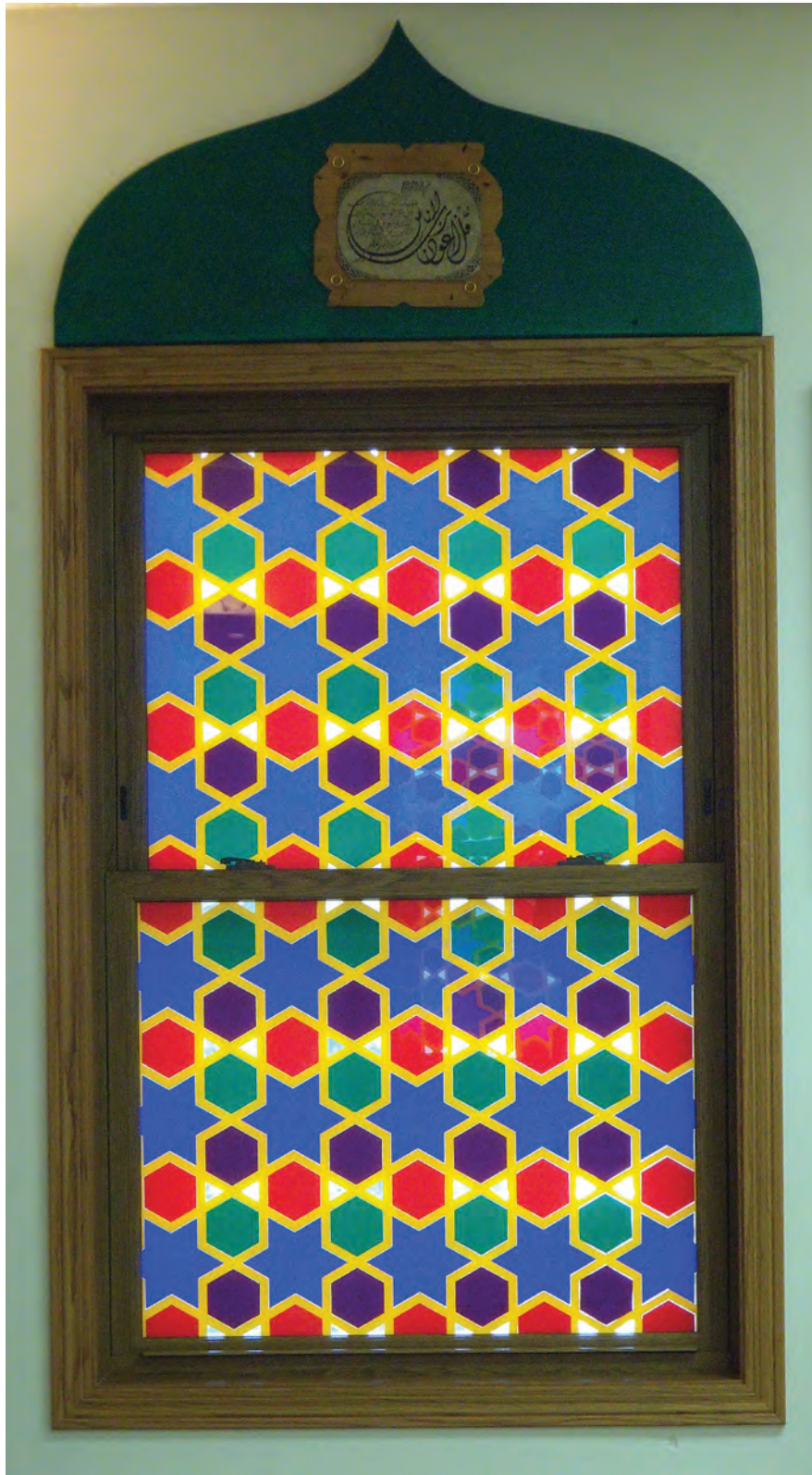
FIGURE 5.8
Window (detail). Mother Mosque of America, Cedar
Rapids, Iowa, USA. 1934. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2012.

neighbourhood's architecture with the exception of its signage and now plastic-covered dome. As in the case with the Al-Rashid, the community in Cedar Rapids was composed of peddlers, shopkeepers, and farmers that settled during the period of Arab immigration from the Ottoman Empire. Throughout its history, the Mother Mosque changed hands several times, the building functioning as a shelter for Cambodian refugees and a rented space for a local church. By 1990, the Islamic Council of Iowa purchased and refurbished the building as it stands today.[50] And like the Al-Rashid, the Mother Mosque features a single room prayer hall and collective entryway (Fig. 5.6), a mihrab (an alcove directing congregation to Mecca) and minbar (pulpit) (Fig.5.7) and arched windows (Fig.5.8). However despite its unfamiliar story in American history, the mosque has also been included as a registered historic site with the US National Park Service and operates as a museum as well.

Such early immigrant mosques, alongside those built by burgeoning African-American Muslim communities, have traversed multiple terrains. Their histories have not only complicated the polemical knowledge of the arrival of Islam and the nature of Muslim cultures in North America, but also show the fluid and negotiated nature of women's spaces in mosques. Single room mosques with communal entrances, though subtle spatial indicators, would eventually become a touchstone for Muslim women in their battle for equal access to sacred space in the years to come. With the growth of Muslim populations, the nature of congregations in mosques have changed from being small and close-knit to larger, more diverse in terms of cultural backgrounds and religious

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50. The Mother Mosque of America, http://www.mothermosque.org/page.php?2 (date of last access: 5 November 2012).

practices. In her book, *Mecca and Main Street* (2006), Genevieve Abdo

posits that the architectural division of space and prevalent religious

attitudes in contemporary mosques are the result of the ethnic makeup of

the congregants:

> In many American mosques dominated by Muslims
> from India and Pakistan, it is rare for women to pray in a
> mosque. In some Turkish mosques, a barrier made of thick
> straw separates the men from the women. It allows the
> women to see out but prevents the men from seeing inside
> the women's section. By contrast, in most of the Arab
> world, for example in Egypt, women simply pray behind
> the men.[51]

Abdo also points out that these divisions have intensified in North

America because:

> The fight for women's rights is perhaps more fierce in
> America than in the Muslim world because when Muslim
> American women participate in activities at the mosque
> they expect to be treated in the same way they are at
> their jobs and schools. But, when they enter the mosque
> community, these rights are redefined by the Muslim men
> who generally control mosque life…There is little they can
> do to defend themselves because they lack the religious
> education that would make them authorities on Islamic
> law.[52]

The distinct divisions between everyday social life and religious

life in Canada and the US have contributed and given way to both the

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51. Genevieve Abdo, *Mecca and the Main Street*, 140. The practice of sex segregation in Canadian and American mosques not only varies from mosque to mosque, it is also dependant on and shaped by the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the congregation and their attitudes towards women. Whether it is a physical wall or curtain that separate the sexes or simply a group of women praying behind men, women's bodies are considered desirable, and therefore potentially distracting for men during times of prayer.

52. Ibid,141.

FIGURE 5.9
Mixed-gender prayer led by Amina Wadud at
Synod House, New York City, NY. March 18, 2005.
Photo: Corbis.

performance of women-led prayers and the gradual establishment of gender inclusivity in mosques. Moreover, the changes in women's roles in mosques have been dovetailed with significant debates within major Islamic organizations such as the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and the Council of Islamic American Relations (CAIR) about the nature of women's inclusion in mosques. With added pressure from news media and American right-wing politicians and organizations, many mosques have added to the debate, albeit as the result of pressure from negative news coverage, on the status of Muslim women.

<u>Beyond the Mosque: The Public Performance of Gender Justice</u>

From the establishment of single prayer room mosques during the early twentieth century to the contemporary public performance of women-led prayers, much has changed in terms of Muslim women's agency. Perhaps the first and most well-known event that raised the profile of gender equality debates within Muslim communities was the 2005 mixed congregation Friday prayer led by scholar and activist Amina Wadud in New York City (Fig. 5.9). However, as many scholars and historians have noted, the 2005 women-led prayer was not the first instance of a challenge to religious patriarchy. Indeed, one of the earliest attempts came in 1994, where Wadud delivered a khutba at the Claremont Main Road Mosque in Cape Town, South Africa, to much

controversy.[53] The roots of reclaiming gender equality in North American mosques began in 2003. On the day before Ramadan in Morgantown, West Virginia, author Asra Q. Nomani walked through the main door of her local mosque. As the entrance had been reserved specifically for men, by walking through the door Nomani broke with tradition and then refused to leave the building.[54]

What began as a subversive spatial act by Nomani, soon triggered a wider debate on the limited nature of women's roles in mosques and the Muslim community. Subsequent events such as the women-led prayer in NYC and Miram Mirza's 2004 khutba in Toronto drew criticism from conservative Muslim groups for being un-Islamic and not keeping with traditional religious practices within Islamic societies. The performance of Islamic rituals by women not only unseated the established patriarchy, but

53. Juliane Hammer, *American Muslim Women, Religious Authority and Activism,* 37. In *Inside the Gender Jihad* (2006), Wadud recalls that while she had been initially invited to South Africa for a conference, the khutba she would deliver at the Claremont Main Road Mosque had not been part of her itinerary as she had only been informed of her lecture before the congregation moments before her arrival to the mosque for Friday prayers. The fallout to the event had been intense and Wadud was intimidated by the extreme (and even violent) reaction to her khutba not just in South Africa, but also across the globe. Members of Wadud's mosque decided that she be dismissed from her position as professor of Islamic Studies: "No one from that mosque ever contacted me to discuss the matter, yet they collectively decided that they would attack the source of my livelihood as a single parent to four children. Of course they had no power over a secular university in U.S. academia, but the audacity that they even considered themselves able to hold such authority hints at the entrenched nature of patriarchy in Muslim community life and the viciousness with which they will try to sustain it." (169)

54. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, et al. *Muslim Women in America*, 61. Both Nomani's protest and the events that followed at her mosque was documented in the 2009 film, *The Mosque in Morgantown* (Dir. Brittany Huckabee). In the documentary, both male and female members of the mosque chastised Nomani for being unIslamic and disobedient for not moving, before finally giving up and allowing Nomani to stay. The event generated much publicity locally and nationally. Nomani subsequently posted the "Muslim Women's Bill of Rights" on the door of the Morgantown mosque and participated in the 2005 prayer led by Amina Wadud in New York City.

stirred a reexamination of traditional Islamic hermeneutics, specifically as it relates to contemporary Islam. In her position paper published by the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW), Islamic scholar Nevin Reda points to historical and scriptural texts that refute the assumptions of unquestioned male authority on Islamic doctrines and the contingency of women's agency. Armed with textual knowledge, Reda argues that based on both Hadiths and Qur'anic verses, space for women-led prayer can exist within Muslim communities without compromising traditional values. Arguments for women's subservience based on biology such as attractiveness, ability, or mental capacity have no grounding in Qur'anic texts, and such discrepancies in Hadiths "warrants a re-evaluation and a comparison of our inherited laws with the Qur'an, retaining laws that are consistent with the Qur'an and rejecting laws opposing it."[55]

Leading up to the 2005 mixed-gender prayer event led by Wadud, one of the primary challenges was access to physical space to hold the event. After approaching numerous mosques and even an art gallery, the prayer had been held in the basement of New York City's Synod House of the Cathedral of St John the Divine.[56] Standing side-by-side in evenly divided rows of men and women, Wadud began reciting the *ahdan*, or the call to prayer. In her subsequent description of the prayer, Wadud relates the overwhelming spectacle of the event:

When the organizers began to publicize the intention to

55. Nevin Reda, "How 'Islamic' is 'Sharīa' law in relation to women?: Three cases in which the Qurān was overruled by Sunna, Ijmāʿ or Qiyās." Published by the Canadian Council of Muslim Women: nd, http://www.ccmw.com/resources/res_publications.html, (date of last access: 10 November 2012).

56. Author unknown, "Woman leads US Muslims to prayer," BBC News: http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/americas/4361931.stm (date of last access: 10 November 2012).

have "the first" female-led Friday congregational prayer service with me as its leader, the climate also began to heat up. This increased the tension for me between potentially competing intentions. I deliberately chose to turn away any media attention focused my way. I agreed to participate in a press conference before the prayer as requested by the organizers…When I left the press conference to observe the quiet time I needed before the actual prayer, the organizers fielded questions from the media and tried to get the prayer space set up. I had reminded them of a few details about the ritual format even as a break from the male exclusive format would occur simultaneously…I turned for the first time to face the *qiblah*, direction for prayer, toward the Ka'abah in Makkah, and I made my silent prayer of intention and raised my head with my hands at the sides of my face to recite "Allahu Akbar," God is greatest. I was shocked to find cameras and journalists directly in front of me! This was not where I wanted to direct my prayer.[57]

Upon concluding the public prayer, one defined more by the media attention paid to the spectacle than by the intent of the prayer, Wadud reflected that despite the distraction by cameras and journalists, the prayer was an "act of devotion to That which is beyond our eyes' vision."[58] Given the colonial history of photo-documentation and the Eurocentric male gaze on the Muslim women's body, the scene at the NYC women-led prayer was uncanny. However, in Wadud's view, while the media's gaze had temporarily diverted her focus, it ultimately did not detract her public exegetical exercise as a Muslim woman. The public nature of the ritual prayer performance, which was widely documented and circulated through the media, triggered discussions within Muslim communities (also among viewers of the event) about the changing roles of Muslim

57. Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam*, 248-252. The now defunct organization, Progressive Muslims Union (PMU) had been the organizers of the prayer event.

58. Ibid, 253.

FIGURE 5.10
Moriyama & Teshima Architects, Noor Cultural Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Originally built in 1963. Purchased in 2005. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2013.

FIGURE 5.11
Exterior lantern (detail). Moriyama & Teshima Architects, Noor Cultural Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Originally built, 1963. Purchased in 2005. Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2013.

FIGURE 5.12
Exterior latticework (detail highlighted). Moriyama & Teshima
Architects, Noor Cultural Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. 1963.
Photo: Nadia Kurd, 2012.

women in religious life, and the stakes involved in the exclusion and disavowal of women in positions of authority. The women-led prayer resulted in the reexamination of religious interpretation as a powerful tool for dismantling the infrastructure of gender inequality in Muslim communities, where more often than not, women are confined to either smaller prayer spaces or dissuaded from entering mosques altogether.[59] Moreover, Wadud's leadership of the mixed-prayer had quickly become the starting point for subsequent discussions on the nature of gender segregation in mosques and the establishment of alternative spaces and mosques in North America. Through their differing mandates and division of space, these emerging places have also begun to articulate a pluralistic Islamic identity.

Rethinking Islamic Space: Gender Neutrality in Mosques

Toronto: The Noor Cultural Centre

Despite the immediate and far-reaching impact of the women-led prayer, not all efforts for egalitarian Muslim spaces have succeeded like the events in NYC or Morgantown. Prior to the women-led prayer, the establishment of a space for critical debate on gender inclusiveness had already begun in Toronto's east end. In July 2001, Philanthropist Hassanali Lakhani and his family purchased the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre on Wynford Drive to convert it to the Noor Cultural Centre (Fig. 5.10). Built in 1963, the Cultural Centre was designed by Japanese-Canadian

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59. Again, the nature of a woman's access and agency is contingent on the cultural and ethnic make-up and size of the congregation and the attitudes towards women's roles outside the home. In terms of receiving religious instruction outside the mosque, young women participate in a variety of outlets such as sunday schools, *halaqas* (learning circles), Qur'an *khawanis* (receitation gatherings) and internet listservs which are not always reliant on the exclusive knowledge male family members.

architect Raymond Moriyama.[60] The commission, which is one of the

earliest examples of Moriyama's work, had been designed based on a

"mapping out [of] the addresses of all the Japanese Canadians in Toronto

and forecasting patterns of future movement."[61] More importantly,

because it was geographically close to the early Japanese community,

many of whom had been interred during World War II and lost most

of their possessions under the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property Act,

the building came to signify what Painters Eleven co-founder Kazuo

Nakamura called a sense of normalcy, where members could simply have

"a place where we could invite people."[62]

By the time the former Cultural Centre had been purchased by the

Lakhanis in 2001, the building had long been in disuse and the members

had moved to a larger location. Not wanting to have the Modernist

building haphazardly renovated with clichéd Islamic markers, Moriyama

had been hired to redesign elements of the building to accommodate the

new congregation. Exterior elements such as the geometric concrete façade

were in need of restoration rather than renovation. However, among

the most significant changes to the building was the insertion of Arabic

text inside the two flanking lantern-style columns above the entryway

(Fig.5.11), the inclusion of latticework in the windows (Fig. 5.12) and the

elimination of walls inside the building to accommodate large gatherings

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60. Noor Cultural Centre, http://www.noorculturalcentre.ca/?page_id=24 (date of last access: 10 November 2012).

61. Moriyama & Teshima Architects, http://www.mtarch.com/mtahistory.html (date of last access: 10 November 2012). Moriyama's most notable architectural contributions in Canada have included: the Ontario Science Centre (1964), the Bata Shoe Museum (1995) and the Canadian War Museum (2005). Unfortunately Moriyama & Teshmima are unclear on the methods they used to map out these patterns over a ten year period.

62. Deidre Hanna, "Cultural Evolution," *Canadian Architect* 47, no. 9 (September 2002), 22.

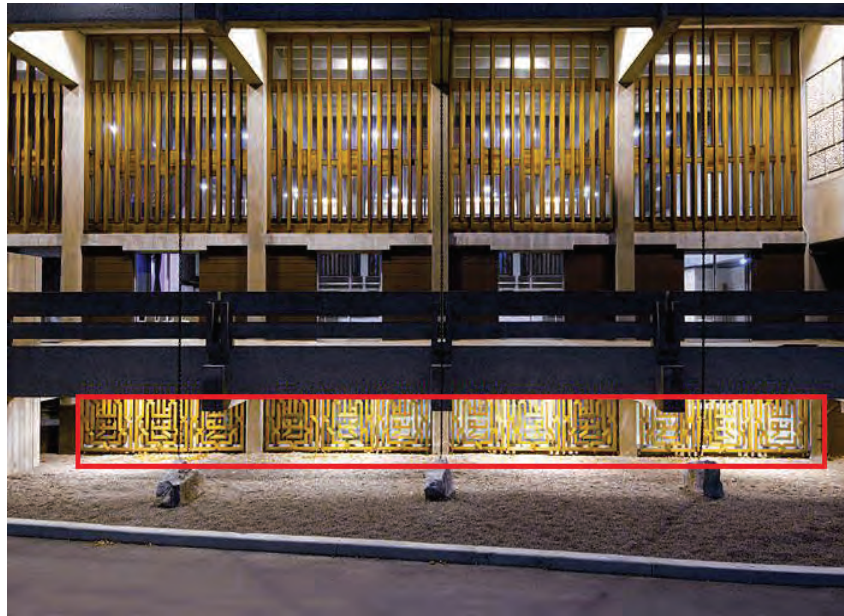**FIGURE 5.13**
Interior prayer hall.
Moriyama & Teshima
Architects, Noor Cul-
tural Centre, Toronto,
Ontario, Canada. 1963.
Photo: Nadia Kurd,
2013.

FIGURE 5.14
Park51, Manhattan, New York. Established 2010. Photo: Corbis.

for ritual prayer (Fig.5.13).[63]

Since its inception, the Noor Cultural Centre has sought to be a non-denominational place where both Muslims and non-Muslims can gather. Beyond hosting prayers, the centre also hosts lectures, films, and cultural events, and presents a joint program on Islamic Studies with York University. What has made the mosque distinct from other repurposed mosques has been its commitment to engaging Moriyama's original design, while also redefining Islamic practices for contemporary life. Much like the Al-Rashid and Mother Mosque, Noor Cultural Centre has a single door entrance and a common area for dinners and special events. Located in the basement, the shared prayer room is where "men sit on the left and women on the right, so all can see the imam as he preaches; women do not have to symbolically subjugate themselves by sitting behind the men. Women can sing the call to prayer or give a pre-prayer sermon, but the line not yet crossed is to have a woman as imam."[64] Not since the days of the Prophet have such changes to the role of women in the practice of Islam resulted in the increased visibility of women in mosques and changed the attitudes towards women's agency in religious settings– and ultimately, for the congregants of the Noor Cultural Centre this has become a part of the normative, everyday practice of Islam.

Even with the absence of women acting as imams at the centre, the safekeeping of the building's original façade, common entryway and area for prayer have fostered woman-positive attitudes within the centre. Furthermore, the establishment of a side-by-side orientation of men and

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63. Ibid.

64. Matt Mossman, "Mosque Makeovers: Reimagining a Sacred Space," *The Walrus,* April 2011. http://walrusmagazine.com/articles/2011.04-religion-mosque-makeovers/1/ (date of last access: 11 November 2012).

women in the same prayer hall, emphasizes the shared responsibility and engagement within not only the Islamic spaces, but also in everyday social spaces. It is within these reimagined physical spaces that women occupy in mosques such as the Noor Cultural Centre that they are acknowledged as active participants and not as passive subjects unaffected by the changing societal circumstances of the Muslim diaspora. Moreover, the role of women at the cultural centre can also assist in changing some of the cultural attitudes towards Muslim women outside the mosque which can bring fundamental shifts to the promulgation of Islam and equality for Muslim women. The Noor Cultural Centre is an institutional site for such changes for Muslims in the Greater Toronto Area.[65]

New York City: Park51

Originally named the Cordoba House, Park51 (Fig. 5.14) has become one of the most controversial sacred sites of Islam in North America. Though not established exclusively as a mosque, but principally as a community centre with a particular focus on Muslim life that is open for all faiths in New York, the location of the building has garnered significant negative publicity due to its proximity to Ground Zero in Manhattan and what was seen as a provocation to the memory of the events of 9/11. So large was the global response—both for and against the establishment of the centre—that it nearly eclipsed the centre's opening in 2011. Initially under the leadership support of Imam Faisal Rauf and the

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65. Toronto's Unity Mosque, or alternatively Masjid el-Tawhid Juma Circle should also be mentioned here. This newly established community of Muslims provides a space that is "gender-equal, queer-friendly, and religiously non-discriminatory." Though the location of the gathering space frequently rotates and is kept private amongst its members, the group meets on the Islamic day of Sabbath (Friday) for ritual prayer. See: http://salaamcanada.org/el-tawhid-juma-circle-mosques/ (date of last access: 13 November 2012).

New York-based organization the Cordoba Institute, the organizers soon

came under fire from a range of groups and individuals, from the relatives

of 9/11 victims to NYC firefighters and politicians, once the intent for

repurposing an old coat factory became known. Since the location of the

community centre is so close to Ground Zero, a site so transformed by the

destruction of the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001, it has become

> … A place inscribed by local, national, and global
> meanings, a neighborhood, a commercial district, and
> a site of memory and mourning. The narratives that
> have been layered on Ground Zero reveal the complex
> convergence of political agendas and grief in this space,
> as if, somehow, the production of new spatial meanings
> will provide a means to contain the past, maintenance
> the grief, and make sense of the violent events that took
> place there…These meanings and narratives matter at a
> national level when they are deployed in the service of
> national agendas, within a broader global context in which
> images of the United States are exported with political
> consequences. Ground Zero is a site where practices of
> memory and mourning have been in active tension with
> representational practices and debates over aesthetics, a
> place, one could say, defined and redefined by a tyranny
> of meaning.[66]

Located two blocks away from Ground Zero, Park51 could not

escape the media frenzy surrounding the development of a Muslim

community centre labeled as an "insult to the victims of 9/11." The

same rights and freedoms granted to every US citizen under the First

Amendment of the Constitution were readily tested, and though the

project to create a Muslim-focused community centre ultimately withstood

calls for its closure, it was not without significant organizational changes

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66. Marita Sturken, "The aesthetics of absence: Rebuilding Ground Zero,"
American Ethnologist 31, no. 3 (Janurary 2008), 312.

to the individuals on the board.[67] However by the time the centre's doors opened to the public, the inital antagonism towards the building had significantly died down and had almost passed without notice.[68]

From the outside, the building still retains its original coat factory façade, and while the building continues to undergo architectural changes, the centre holds community-focused programs such as art classes and exhibits as well as lectures and film screenings. To date, any planned renovations to the sixteen-story building will not draw from explicitly traditional Islamic designs. As Park51 architect Michel Abboud states, "there will be no minaret, or room for ablutions, or other essential features of a mosque. Its religious elements would be "a matter of interior design."[69] Though these architectural or design features do not infuse the building with an idea of Islam's essential or "intrinsic" markers most associated with mosques, it is perhaps the most significant aspect of Park51's current development and functionality as a non-denominational, Muslim-focused centre that has the potential to shift how larger communities interact with faith-based organizations. Rather than promoting a single vision or history of Islam in North America, the centre has created a space for interactions with multiple communities. As in the case of the Noor Cultural Centre, the

67. *U.S. Constitution*. Amend.I. The First Amendment states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." Although the constitution clearly protects both religious freedoms and the assembly of individuals, the increasing Islamophobia as the result of the US "War on Terror" has obscured these rights for Muslim Americans.

68. Kevin Drum, "Park51 Mosque Opens, No One Cares," *Mother Jones*, September 20, 2011. http://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2011/09/park51-mosque-opens-no-one-cares (date of last access: 20 September 2012).

69. Rowan Moore, "Why Park51 is much more than the 'mosque at Ground Zero,'" *The Observer*, Sunday 7 November 2010. http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/07/ground-zero-park51-new-york (date of last access: 20 September 2012).

Park51 building was developed with the intent of promoting pluralistic faith-based activities and renovated in order to accommodate its use as such.

However, with the ongoing development of Park51, it is difficult to ascertain the direction and role that mix-gendered prayer will have in the daily operations of the centre. As it currently stands, the same developers own the prayer hall, but it is not affiliated with Park51, and gender segregation has not played an important role in the operation of the Park51 facility.[70] With the projected development of a recreation centre, auditorium, culinary school, and swimming pool at Park51,[71] the nature of gender integration is yet to be determined as it may pose a challenge to observant Muslims using the centre. In this regard, Park51 will offer a telling case-study for the development and negotiation of Muslims spaces, and potentially serve as a template for faith-focused centres in the future.

Conclusion

Shortly after 9/11, a number of large Islamic organizations, notably the Council on American Islamic Relations-Canada (CAIR), the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), and the Muslim Students Association (MSA) came together to support a publication by Islamic Social Services Associations and Women In Islam, Inc. called, *Women Friendly Mosques and Community Centers: Working Together to Reclaim Our Heritage* (2005). Although the booklet shies away from endorsing women-led prayers, as

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70. While the adjacent prayer hall is segregated, the main facility permits men and women to intermingle.

71. Author unknown, "Park51 Islamic Center Opens Its Doors Near Ground Zero," *Huffington Post* http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/22/park51-islamic-center-ope_n_975585.html#s369012&title=Future_Home_Of (date of last access: 14 April 2013).

a resource guide for community leaders and members it instead offers a number of guidelines and points for the inclusion of women in mosques. The recognition by these organizations of women's estrangement from the Muslim community, but more specifically the mosque, marks a significant ideological and attitudinal change towards mosque leadership and authority. The booklet notes:

> The masjid is a place for spiritual growth and development for all Muslims, and should be equally accessible for both genders…The alienation of women from the masjid must be addressed at the local level. Each masjid must gradually but in a determined fashion modify its architecture, governance, and programs to be inclusive of women and children. The leadership at each masjid must be proactive in initiating and supporting these changes.[72]

There is no doubt that mosques in North America have undergone significant changes since their early inception. With the establishment of purpose-built mosques in the Canadian Prairies and the American Midwest, Muslim women have played foundational roles in defining the egalitarian attitudes that have shaped their immediate communities. Women such as Hilwie Hamdon exercised their agency through the establishment of mosques and had an effective place in the institutional organization of the Al-Rashid. In more recent times, Muslim communities that enforce complete gender segregation or prevent women from access to the mosque have faced increasing opposition to their traditional cultural dogmas. As Muslim feminist scholars such as Asma Barlas, Riffat Hassan, and Amina Wadud have pointed out, the fundamental challenge

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72. *Women Friendly Mosques and Community Centers: Working Together to Reclaim Our Heritage* (Islamic Social Services Associations and Women In Islam, Inc., 2005), 8.

to Muslim women is refuting the all-defining role of patriarchy in the reading of Islamic texts by exercising women-positive practices. That means acknowledging that while the Qur'an is not wholly a feminist text, patriarchy must not be naturalized as an inherent characteristic of Islam. Rereading and revising practices, as shown in women-led prayers and in women-positive mosques are steps towards establishing gender justice. Moreover, in challenging the exclusion of women in mosques, Muslim women are also contesting the potency and legacy of European colonial imagery. No longer languid or posed, the spatial performance of ritual emphasizes the transgressive corporeality of Muslim women who defy the normative religious and cultural codes. These performances also begin to undo the perception that Muslim women who choose to observe the veil are either victims of male oppression or Islamic traditions, but rather shows them as contributors of religious knowledge.

Indeed, even such rereading of sacred texts has not come without backlash or confrontation from within Muslim communities. For Muslim women in the West, the effects of this backlash, which is often seen as a Westernization of Islamic values, can have dire consequences.[73] The challenge will remain with observant Muslim women to emphasize the legal and juristic understanding and implications of patriarchy in mosques and community spaces. Unseating this power imbalance will also require allies from mosque leaders and organizers, without whom, effectual change will remain elusive.

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73. Though not discussed in this chapter, the instances of femicide or the inappropriately termed "honour killings" have become all too familiar stories in North American media outlets. However, the impact and brutality of these actions cannot be underestimated. For more information, see: CCMW Position on Customary Killing (honour killing), http://www.ccmw.com/resources/res_position_papers.html

The establishment of gender-neutral mosques and Islamic spaces marks the next phase of Muslim women's roles in communal settings. The Noor Cultural Centre and Park51 have set the precedence for alternative faith-based centres in North America and remain some of the few places for Muslims of all stripes to engage, debate, and shape how their religious identities are understood and articulated. Beyond the integration of men and women in spaces, the activities and events these organizations employ such as art exhibits, lectures, and multi-faith initiatives broaden the role of mosques in the greater community. The value of these organizations cannot be stressed enough. As stated in the vision of the Noor Cultural Centre, it is a place for "the sharing of knowledge and wisdom in a spirit of humility and respect."[74] Within an increasingly Islamophobic civil discourse in Canada and the US, such universal religious attitudes do not seem antiquated, but necessary.

As Muslim women engage in public debates on their positions in mosques, this will undoubtedly place a pressurized expectation on Muslim communities to reexamine exclusionary practices that have been couched in religious misunderstanding. Many mosques continue to offer limited spaces for women (and children) inside the mosque, who are at times completely removed from the community Imam. For Muslim women in Canada and the US, the time has come to challenge, protest, and negotiate how they live Islam each day and to contest the space allotted within their mosques. For them, "achieving connected, accessible, and nonsegregated prayer spaces would, in their understanding, recognize

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74. Noor Cultural Centre, http://www.noorculturalcentre.ca/?page_id=5 (date of last access: 10 November 2012).

their equal rights with men."[75] As Juliane Hammer has clearly stated, "space becomes a metaphor for rights, which need to be actualized through women's leadership."[76]

75. Juliane Hammer, *American Muslim Women*, 132.
76. Ibid.

Conclusion

Maintaining Traditions: Islamic Architecture in the 21ˢᵗ Century

Located in the Mojave Desert, between Las Vegas, Nevada, and San Bernardino, California, is Fort Irwin. Established in 1844 by CPT John C. Fremont as an army camp to serve the Old Spanish Trail, it would later become an important supply centre for pioneers during California's settlement and gold rush.[1] In Fort Irwin's more recent history, it has become a simulated Iraqi-Afghan village where American soldiers can be trained and prepared before deployment (Fig.6.1).[2] The simulated village, which is composed of replica marketplaces, streets, and mosques with minarets (not to mention actors who speak Pashto and Arabic and perform as "locals," (Fig.6.2, 6.3), provides US soldiers with live action scenarios that would "introduce the troops to the types of encounters they will face."[3] Fort Irwin, much like the Moorish Revival buildings or even the Orientalist facades of the world expositions, mimics the minutiae of built-forms that are found in countries with Muslim majorities. However, unlike the Orientalist structures from the past, Fort Irwin reveals a far more overt political if not militaristic exercise of American imperial foreign power. Here, the display and function of these buildings, along with the actors within them, have had real life implications on Afghani and Arab

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1. Fort Irwin History: http://www.irwin.army.mil/Visitors/Info/Pages/FortIrwinHistory.aspx (date of last access: 10 May 2013).

2. Ibid.

3. Phil Pasquini, *Domes, Arches and Minarets,* 240. Pasquini also notes that among the real life situations, perhaps the most dramatic staged events are where "civilian amputees are employed to act as troops seriously injured by IEDs in some scenarios. Special effects are widely used to simulate roadside bombs and gunfire, as well as casualties, complete with artificial blood." (240).

FIGURE 6.1
Fort Irwin National Training Centre, California, USA. Photo: Phil Pasquini.

FIGURE 6.2
Base enactment, Fort Irwin National Training Centre, California, USA. Photographer unknown: Fort Irwin website, 2013.

FIGURE 6.2
Base enactment, Fort Irwin National Training Centre, California, USA. Photographer unknown: Fort Irwin website, 2013.

populations.

The Fort Irwin compound is a surreal albeit powerful example of the appropriation of Islamic built forms for political ends. The compound of Fort Irwin offers less of a descriptive study of architectural forms than it does a simulation of wartime battles. No doubt, gone are the days of the grand, decorative visions (and financial investments) of Islamic architectural forms as seen in the Fox Theatre in Atlanta or the Tripoli Shrine Temple in Milwaukee. Many of the early Moorish Revival buildings, such as the Irem Temple in Wilkes Barre (Fig.3.7), have fallen into disrepair and risk complete destruction.[4] Other buildings, such as the former Medinah Temple in Chicago (Fig.6.4), have been transformed into commercial spaces like the Bloomingdales department store. The histories of these buildings contain important lineages and connections to the formation of Islamic architectural history that is often overlooked (or completely absent) in the accepted national histories in Canada and the US. More than just fads or moments of folly, these buildings stand out in their environments, and are often more representative of idealized Islamic architectures than of the mosques used by Muslim communities. The gulf of experience between the buildings occupied by Muslims and those of the Moorish Revival needs to be bridged in order to show how the development of mosque architecture is not merely the result of the current influx of immigrants, but the circulation of ideas about the "Orient" and Islam.

Mosques in Canada and the US are changing. As Muslim communities grow and develop their own architectural programs for mosques, they will build upon the traditions of mosque architecture,

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4. Ibid, 104.

but within the paradigm of the North American environment. Some of these changes have already taken place and are the result of engaging Muslims (or non-Muslims) that have trained as architects.[5] Buildings such as the Islamic Society of North America Mosque and Headquarters in Indiana (Fig.6.5), do not exhibit some of the more outward emblems of Islamic architecture. However they do meditate on Islamic philosophical ideas. Of his inspiration for the mosque, architect Gulzar Haider wrote: "in my design, I resisted Western exploitation of the visual symbols of Islamic 'tradition' rather than the tradition itself."[6] This design, much more subdued in its exterior and interior design, followed Haider's own reflection on the Divine and his practice as an architect:

> I was also very intrigued by the Divine attributes
> expressed in two of the names of God, "The Hidden" and
> "The Manifest." I wanted to find in them a special wisdom
> for the designer, who must create but not confront, offer
> but not attack, and yet withal express the profound in
> a language understandable and pleasing to the listener.
> To distinguish the exterior from interior, I chose to veil
> this mosque, evoking the need for meaningful and
> purposeful dissimulation. I thought of my building as an
> oyster whose brilliance and essence were internal, while
> the expressed form sought human ecological harmony,
> modesty, even anonymity.[7]

5. The Aga Khan Development Network, which includes the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Archnet.org, and the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture (joint program at MIT/Harvard) has played a critical role in the preservation of Islamic architecture across the globe and has almost single-handedly supported the study, training and advancement of architects and historians. Through the philanthropic support from the Aga Khan (the spiritual leader of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims) and his foundation, these endeavors have been fostered. For more, see: http://www.akdn.org/

6. Gulzar Haider, "Muslim Space and the Practice of Architecture," *Making Muslim Space in North American and Europe*. Barbara Daly Metcalf, ed. Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 39.

7. Ibid.

FIGURE 6.4
Huehl& Schmid architects. Medinah Temple Shrine,
Bloomingdales, Chicago, USA. 1912, 2000-2003. Photographer
uknown.

FIGURE 6.5
Gulzar Haider (architect). Islamic Society of North America, Indiana,
Indianapolis, USA. 1981. Photo: Aga Khan Trust for Culture, 1991.

As the headquarters of North America's most influential Islamic organization, the design approach for the Indianapolis building relies less on the usage of easily identifiable forms, and more on engagement with spiritual ideas, and with energizing Islamic philosophy and its connection to built-forms actually used by Muslims. Moreover, this engagement also relies less on the perpetuation of symbolism, but more upon the ideas that challenge the uniformity accentuated in Orientalist Islamic architectural history.

In Canada, one recently built mosque follows a similar trajectory. Designed by Sharif Senbel of Senbel Studio, the 7,000 square foot Prince George Islamic Centre in Northern British Columbia (Fig.6.6) attempts to unify the building with its geographic surroundings, where "the dynamic roof forms are created by the intersection of geometries of the orthogonal city grid and the axis to Mecca."[8] The design of the mosque speaks to the local geography of Prince George as much it does to the spatial requirements of Islamic ritual practice with a nod to Islamic history: the building integrates regionally sourced timber and large open windows, including wide spaces for communal prayer, with geometric patterning etched in the glass above the main entrance. While the mosque is steadfastly segregated (Fig.6.7), the dividers between men and women are almost constructed entirely of glass, thus allowing for a full view of the main prayer hall below. Moreover, the use of glass throughout not only allows women to view the main prayer hall from above, it also permits natural light to filter into the building, while also integrating one of the

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8. Studio Senbel, http://www.studiosenbel.com/projects/prince-george-islamic-centre (date of last access: 12 May 2013).

FIGURE 6.6
Sharif Senbel (architect). Prince George Islamic Centre,
Prince George, British Columbia, Canada. 2011. Photo:
Sharif Senbel.

FIGURE 6.7
Women's section, Prince George Islamic Centre,
Prince George, British Columbia, Canada. 2011.
Photo: Sharif Senbel.

spiritual names of God: *al Nur* (the light).[9] The concept of light, which has allegorical resonances among many faiths, also has a centralizing role in Islam—from verses in the Qur'an and religious treatises, to whole philosophies on illumination.[10] Here, the role of light has another, more practical, purpose: to incorporate environmentally sustainable strategies such as harvesting daylight to reduce the everyday consumption of energy (Fig.6.8).[11]

The examples of the ISNA Headquarters and Prince George Islamic Centre represent some the most current developments in the making of mosque architecture in Canada and the US. However, the impact of mosque architecture is not only being considered within Muslim communities, but also in contemporary art. These artists engage with the spatial physicality of mosques through performance, photography, and textile works—some more problematically than others, though each uniquely addresses the current challenges of mosques in the West.

The Expanded Mosque: Contemporary Expressions of Architecture in Art

Beyond architectural configurations, a few contemporary artists have thematically explored the representation of mosques and Islamic rituals in their art. Recognizing the symbolic and spiritual value of Islamic prayer ritual, the works by these artists have transcended the formal, gendered spaces of the mosque. Artist like Canadian Farheen Haq, whose public prayer performances, documented in the photo-series *Retreat* (Fig.6.9),

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9. *Al-Nur* is one of the 99 names of Allah. In the Islamic tradition, each name identifies an attribute of God's omnipresence and power.

10. Annemarie Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 12-13.

11. The British Columbia Muslim Association, http://pg.thebcma.com (accessed: May 12, 2013).

FIGURE 6.8
Main prayer hall, Prince George Islamic Centre, Prince George, British Columbia, Canada. 2011. Photo: Sharif Senbel, 2011.

FIGURE 6.9
Farheen Haq. *Retreat*, 2004. Digital photo series. Image courtesy of the Artist.

examine "how space and the urban landscape changes when a spiritual or reflective action takes place."[12] Her performance of Islamic rituals, specifically by going through the motions of prostration (*Salat*), shows both an affinity with Wadud's 2005 woman-led prayer, but also draws contrasts with the fast-paced nature of commercial and public space. In other words, Haq's public meditations, cross the boundaries of public and private contemplation and subvert the institutional and spatial authority of mosques, and also the highly consumerist, transactional space of the shopping mall.

In each photograph in the series, Haq juxtaposes her contemplative actions against the informality of an urban backdrop. Interestingly, her presence in many cases blends into the foreground, as some of the identifiers of Muslim identity are not overtly present. For example, in two of the photographs a toque covers her hair (rather than a hijab). And what looks like a seated prayer for the Muslim viewer can also appear that Haq is in deep slumber. The ambiguities of Haq's actions are both subtle and subversive: they acknowledge Muslim rituals, but are not limited to observing strict religious prayer. Rather, these photographs elucidate the fluidity of contemplation—in its various forms and contexts.

Along similar lines, architectural historian and artist Azra Akšamija developed the *Nomadic Mosque* project (2005). In the project, a single article of clothing is unwrapped and transformed into a prayer rug, ready for ritual at any location (Fig.6.10). As Akšamija explains:

> The project reinterprets the concept of the World as
> a Mosque, as defined by the Prophet Mohammed, as
> wearable architecture. The Nomadic Mosque can thus be

12. Farheen Haq, http://www.farheenhaq.com/work/retreat/ (accessed: May 11, 2013).

seen as a minimal-volume mosque, whose design is based on individual needs and experiences of the worshipper. It is a device to transform any secular space into a prayer space. Not only does the wearable mosque accommodate the liturgical necessities, but also acts as a prosthetic device of the worshipper communicating his/her prayers: problems, needs and desires.[13]

For Akšamija, the starting point for The Nomadic Mosque project began as a response to the 1992-95 Balkan War. During this time, both ethnic and religious lines were being drawn violently. Moreover, it was a time where

Places of worship [were] being particularly targeted within the process of 'ethnic cleansing'—the territorial and cultural 'decontamination' executed by nationalist extremists involving the eviction and mass murder of civilians, as well as the systematic extermination of their cultural and historical traces—destroying the evidence of the previous period of peaceful multiethnic co-habitation. While all ethnicities suffered destruction or damage of their cultural heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the quantity of over 1000 purposefully destroyed mosques far outweighs the number of destroyed Catholic and Orthodox churches.[14]

The portable mosque, no longer contingent on the formal space of the mosque is now able to "decode and recode and de-decode it-self with the changing landscape, politics, and life in general. The signified of the line of flight leads not to de-politicize Muslim populations but to invigorate self-determination."[15] As debates on the permissibility of woman-led prayers

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13. Azra Akšamija, http://www.azraaksamija.net/nomadic-mosque/?show=gallery (date of last access: 11 May 2013).

14. Azra Akšamija, "Wearable Mosques." http://www.provisionalfutures.net/?p=301 (Published: April 19th, 2008, date of last access: 11 May 2013).

15. Nebahat Avcioglu, "Identity-as-Form: The Mosque in the West," *Cultural Analysis* 6 (2007): 91–109.

continue to be argued by Islamic jurists, the works by Haq and Akšamija envision the possibility of women's agency in ritual practices that are not determined by the physical structure of the mosque.

The spectrum of artists performing the expanded mosque also includes Iraqi-American artist Michael Rakowitz. His ongoing performance of *Minaret* (Fig.6.11), utilizes an alarm clock in the shape of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina that is attached to a megaphone. The clock's sound is that of the *adhan*, the Islamic call to prayer, and with the megaphone the sound is amplified. Standing in front of various buildings and rooftops, Rakowitz plays the alarm clock, thus mimicking the sonorous call to prayer most often heard five times per day in nations with large Muslim communities.[16] Much like in the work of Farheen Haq, Rakowitz juxtaposes his miniature mosque against the backdrop of European and American cities. In describing his practice, Rakowitz positions his art between architecture and design, aiming to create interventions that "critically explore societal and institutional deficiencies. In this endeavor I seek to foster a critical dialogue about some of the basic, yet unfulfilled, needs in our everyday environment."[17] Rakowitz's intervention symbolically presents the structure of the minaret to urban landscapes with growing Muslim communities that have mosques with no minarets.

Perhaps on the opposite side of the spectrum of interventionist work are the digital collages by the Moscow-based AES Group. In the

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16. Michael Rakowitz, http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/minaret/ (date of last access: 12 May 2013).

17. Michael Rakowitz, "OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES: A collage of texts about contemporary art practices, and modernist architecture by Javier Cambre, Anna Novakov and Michael Rakowitz." *Rethinking Marxism* 15:3, (July 2003), 327.

FIGURE 6.10
Azra Akšamija, *The Nomadic Mosque*, 2005. Image courtesy of
the Artist.

FIGURE 6.11
Michael Rakowitz, *Minaret*, 2001 – Ongoing. Performance; Mosque
alarm clock, megaphone. Image courtesty of the Artist.

controversial images that make up the *Islamic Project* (1996-2003), the AES Group collages images of mosques, Muslims, and sundry of animals and objects into European and American urban settings. The results are often jarring and portray the anxieties of the Islamisation through digitally altering iconic architectures and structures such as the Statue of Liberty (Fig.6.12) and the skyline of New York City (Fig.6.13). Many of these images, reproduced on coffee cups, postcards, and T-shirts (and later carpets and tents) as part of a storefront installation and performance, were intended to use absurdist techniques to serve as "a kind of social psychoanalysis—visualization of fears of Western society about Islam."[18] Though the project began long before 9/11, when the fear of Islam and Muslims—though present—had not yet reached a fevered pitch across the US or Western Europe, these images do little more than fuel the most apocalyptic visions of Islam, while providing no insights into the historic origins of such fears.

Given the ban on minarets in Switzerland and the prohibition of mosque construction, the images created by the AES Group confirm the perception of a totalizing power that could unseat Western democracy. Indeed, the works present a provocative, dystopian visual imagining of Islam, and the impact of Muslim populations on Western urban landscapes. However, by using Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory as a starting point to inform the series,[19] the group has done little in terms of unpacking the issues of the presence of Muslim

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18. AES Group, "Islamic Project: 1996-2003," http://www.aesf-group.org/ (accessed: May 12, 2013).

19. Dorothy Barenscott, "Grand Theory/Grand Tour: Negotiating Samuel Huntington in the Grey Zone of Europe," http://pmc.iath.virginia.edu/text-only/issue.502/12.3barenscott.txt (accessed: May 12, 2013). For more on Huntington, see Chapter One, note 36 of this dissertation.

FIGURE 6.12
AES Group. *New Liberty*, 1996, from the series "Islamic Project", digital collage, digital print on paper. Image courtesy of the Artists.

FIGURE 6.13
AES Group. *New York City*, 1996, from the series "Islamic Project", digital collage, digital print on paper. Image courtesy of the Artists.

migration in Europe and the US or the East/West divide. As digital

images, the works were quickly circulated and appropriated for politicized

ends. In her essay, "Grand Theory/Grand Tour: Negotiating Samuel

Huntington in the Grey Zone of Europe," art historian Dorothy Barenscott

notes that,

> For AES, it seems that the place for criticality may indeed
> be receding, as its work circulates in ways and in contexts
> that it cannot control. Removed from the spaces of its
> mock travel agency, AES's images travel precariously and
> within the same uneven process of indexing and dragging
> that it seeks to question. And indeed, with the events of
> September 11th, the issues taken up through AES's Islamic
> Project have found a particular currency, positing its work
> as somewhat prophetic if not completely disturbing.[20]

This has certainly held true for the works of the *Islamic Project*. The

work garnered media attention, and the images from the group's website

circulated widely, and were quickly integrated and expanded upon in

various anti-Muslim propaganda. The images held particular weight in

the discourse of "Eurabia," a notion that alleges that with the influx of

Muslim populations into Western Europe, the kind of scenarios illustrated

in these types of images have real-life possibilities. The concept of Eurabia

sees Islam as a colonizing force, one that could " 'Islamiciz[e]' European

civilisation, in thrall to the Arab world."[21] Since 9/11, this concept has

increasingly found its way into mainstream political discourse.[22] While

the intention of the project sought to probe the apprehension of Muslim

presence, the images became evidentiary source material for those who

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20. Ibid.

21. Matt Carr, "You are now entering Eurabia," *Race & Class* 48 no.1 (July 2006), 2.

22. Ibid, 5.

proposed the exclusion of Muslims from Europe and North America.

<u>Concluding Thoughts</u>

This dissertation has stressed the contextual and connected histories of Muslim life and mosque architecture in Canada and the US and the diverse application of the Islamic architectural forms and ideas in non-religious buildings such as the Moorish Revival. The canonical, art historical understanding of Islamic architecture, the foundations of which are located in nineteenth-century Western colonialism and rooted in Orientalism, has had a profound influence on mosque architecture in North America. The most direct influence of Orientalist study can be seen in the Moorish Revival. Architects, who had been commissioned to make use of the style, drew inspiration from pattern books, travelogues and literature and were introduced to the style via longer, transnational routes. In terms of Muslim communities, the ways in which mosques have been built and used—either repurposed or purpose-built —are contextual and have engaged with varying degrees of aesthetic and symbolic choices to manifest their religious identity. Archetypical mosques like the Malcolm El Shabazz and the Baitunnur, are used by marginalized Muslim groups to emphasize their connection in the wider Islamic community. Within some of these groups, namely the Moorish Science Temple of America, the contentious use of Islamic architectural forms is the critical means through which to reclaim a lost cultural and religious identity.

Mosques are an integral component in the practice of faith and the establishment of Muslim communities, and can be traced back to the early community of Muslims in Arabia (geographical now known as Saudi Arabia). However, the dissolution of a centralized Islamic religious authority with the fall of the Ottoman Empire, including the rapid

colonialization of Muslim-majority nations, has presented a situation that can only be described as fragmentary. Even in the examination of mosque architecture –a quintessentially Islamic building used for communal service– the links between built-form and the tenets and practice of faith need to be made in their histories.

In Chapter One, I introduced the early history of Muslim arrival and settlement to North America and examined how these early communities sought to express their Muslim identity in their new homelands. The first mosques in communities such as Edmonton, Alberta and Cedar Rapids, Iowa, tell the story of Muslim immigration to Canada and the US during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The histories of these communities along with those who arrived forcibly from Western Africa complicate the accepted perception of Muslim arrival to the Americas. In this chapter, I also elucidated the colonial origins of Islamic architectural history and its development as an extension of Orientalist scholarship. In this regard, the development of mosques also complicates the canon of Islamic architectural history—for if it officially ends with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, these contemporary mosques test the colonial assumption of Islam's continuing evolution outside traditionally Muslim lands.

In this chapter I also argued that the concept of "race thinking" has wider implications on built-forms. Race thinking, Sherene H. Razack suggests, can appear from the outset innocuous, however can be revealed in such phrases as "Canadian values" or "American values."[23] It differentiates between those who are "the deserving and the undeserving

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23. Sherene H. Razack, *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 8.

according to descent."[24] The articulation of this difference was most clearly expressed with the relocation of the historic Al-Rashid Mosque to the Fort Edmonton Park in 1992. When they learned of the proposed move, park officials challenged the buildings inclusion as well as its historical significance.[25] After much public debate, the eventual move to the park highlighted some of the ongoing challenges mosques and Muslim communities face in their acceptance and belonging to the larger national narratives.

To emphasize the complexity and application of Islamic forms, Chapter Two examined the making of Moorish Revival architecture in the United States. Drawing from Edward Said's analysis of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century preoccupation with the study of the Middle East and South Asia, the chapter shows how Orientalist study came to be represented in architecture in the US. A style used in a range of architectural forms such as cinemas, estates, and churches, the Moorish Revival was often limited to those with the economic means to recreate the elaborated ornamental and decorative qualities associated with Islamic architecture. Furthermore, these buildings were built entirely by non-Muslims who, after being introduced to the images, travelogues, or, in some cases, Hollywood films, were interested in replicating the

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24. Ibid.

25. An undated, hand written note in the file on the Al Rashid Mosque at Fort Edmonton Park elucidates some of these concerns: "interpretively difficult— void of Islamic ornament–boring bare walls and floor, few unique architectural features other than a corner niche facing Mecca and external turrets. How does one interpret a bare building? no furniture > not traditional. Fort Edmonton Historical Foundation did more than required to help find a solution in my opinion. Summation: Repeatedly Mr. Awid and friends have been told that the bldg. does not fit our criteria but they appear to ignore the polite direction > trying to get us doing the Bureaucratic Neutron Dance!" (Fort Edmonton Historic Park file, accessed: 2009).

authenticity of built-forms found in Muslim nations. The most elaborate usage of the style was by the Shriners Fraternity in the Tripoli Shrine located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Their usage of the architectural style also extended into their organization's identity as well.

My argument in this chapter is not to evaluate whether or not the appropriation of Islamic forms have been either positive or negative, but rather that in the application of such forms, these buildings highlight the broader circulation of the styles and features associated with Islamic architecture. Not confined to Muslims or nations with Muslim populations, the influence of European Orientalism ultimately found its way into the United States through more demotic forms, no more so widely accepted than Hollywood films. Lastly, as buildings used primarily by non-Muslims, the realities of the Moorish Revival are quite different from those of mosques. Not subject to picketing or protest, the grandeur and legacy of Islamic architectural history is the lasting impression of these buildings today.

In Chapter Three, I introduced two modes of mosque architecture practiced in Canada and the US: the renovated, repurposed mosque and the purpose-built mosque. Repurposed mosques are those that have taken existing structures—offices, storefronts and houses—and have had modifications made to accommodate congregational ritual prayer. Purpose-built mosques are buildings that have been commissioned by Muslim communities to be mosques. These buildings often incorporate identifiable forms, layouts, and motifs from traditional Islamic architecture. Depending upon the cultural makeup of the commissioning community, the appearances of these buildings vary.

The mosques and communities examined in the chapter included

the Moorish Science Temple, the Ahmadiyyaa Movement in Islam, the "Black" Muslims, and the immigrant-base mosques such as the Assuna Annabawiyya and the Dar-ul Islam Mosques. Each of these buildings provides a glimpse into the heterogeneity of Muslim life, and the value of authenticity assigned to these forms. For groups like the Ahmadis and congregants at the Malcolm El Shabazz Mosque, whose voices are sidelined from mainstream Sunni Islam, the mosque provides the space for their practice of Islam. These buildings present a nuanced approach to the study of contemporary Islamic architecture—one that straddles notions of authenticity of visual forms, legitimacy of religious practice and their urban contexts. Ultimately, in their making, the diversity of these built-forms presents a real, continuing challenge to the totality of Orientalist discourse.

Chapter four introduced the growing challenges Muslim women present to the maintenance of gender segregation within mosques. Unlike the single room mosques established during the early twentieth-century, contemporary mosques employ various strategies to separate the sexes. In this chapter I have argued that the actions of Muslim women in Canada and the US, women such as Maryam Mirza, Asra Nomani and Amina Wadud, have not only opened the discussion of women's agency within the Muslim community, but challenged the spatial power of mosques. In their performance of traditionally male roles, they presented what can be described as,

> the embodied performance of gender justice in the eyes
> of the organizers and participants. They symbolically
> challenged exclusively male privileges of leading Muslims
> in ritual prayers, and they blurred lines of gender

segregation in ritual prayers at the same time.[26]

Informed by the re-reading of religious texts, these Muslim have begun to determine their religious practice and the very meaning of religious experience for Muslim women. Additionally, in the recognition of women's limited access to positions of authority within the Muslim community, the performance of gender justice has also fostered the development of mosques such as the Noor Cultural Centre and Park51. Within these mosques, the issue of gender segregation has been far from exclusionary. Here, women either pray side-by-side their male congregants, but also given the Muslim opportunity to present and participate in the daily activities of their communities. Though the permissibility of women-led prayers remains a divisive issue within the Muslim community at large, slow change is on the way.

In each chapter of this dissertation, I have attempted to show that there is no singular expression of Islam in architecture in Canada and the US. While the utilization of idealized forms can be found amongst both mosque and Moorish Revival buildings, there are competing visions of Islam being communicated in these buildings. Even amongst mosques, the heterogeneity of Muslim communities has contributed to the varying approaches and constructions of their built-forms. The links between colonial and Orientalist perceptions of Islamic architecture continue to infiltrate the discourse of Islamic architectural history. However, as architects such as Gulzar Haider and Sharif Senbel have shown, an engagement with the spiritual Islamic concepts and their application

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26 Juliane Hammer. "Performing gender justice: the 2005 woman-led prayer in New York," In *Contemporary Islam*, volume 4 (2010), 93.

in mosque architecture is one way through which a localized Islamic architecture can grow and mature. I would also argue that women-led prayers play a vital, ongoing role in critiquing the ways in which patriarchy is spatially enacted and enforced in Muslim communities.

This research stems from a personal, abiding interest in the practice of Islam in North America and how mosques in Canada and the US communicate their religious identity in the Muslim diaspora. The representation of Islam in built-form has had a lengthy history and period of acculturation, one that has often gone under-recognized. What makes a mosque a "mosque" is the congregation that makes use of the structure. Their histories, ideas, practices, and cultures all contribute to the elasticity of their Islamic practice and the architectural programs they undertake. In each mosque, the application and understanding of Islamic architectural forms is undoubtedly contextual; they are dependent upon the historic and contemporary contexts in which the community operates. The exploration and elaboration of these ideas is one way the tenets of the Islamic faith can be reconciled with the contemporary use of mosque architecture, and, ultimately, shed necessary light on everyday Muslim life.

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