REFLECTIONS ON DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS IN THE NEWS

HUMANITY LOST: THE PERSONAL IMPACT OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST
MUSLIMS IN THE POPULAR NEWS MEDIA

BY

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Abstract:

Using autoethnography, critical reflections and reflective and reflexive analyses, this thesis explores the personal and social effects of discrimination against Muslims in the popular news media in the aftermath of three major international terrorist attacks: the 9/11 attacks, the Charlie Hebdo attacks, and the Paris attacks in 2015. Moving through themes of loss, discrimination and exclusion, internalized oppression, resistance and hope, this thesis makes use of theories of oppression and social constructionism to gain a better understanding of how discrimination against Muslims in the news media has impacted and influenced my perceptions of self as a Muslim, and my Muslim identity. I believe that this thesis will provide a necessarily personal perspective on an issue that is highly complex, hidden and nuanced, in hopes of fostering a deeper and more empathetic understanding of the personal impacts of discrimination and oppression.

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Table of Contents

"I'm putting the people on notice that are coming here from Syria as part of this mass migration, that if I win…they're going back." – Donald Trump, U.S. Presidential Candidate

Introduction

On the evening of Tuesday, December 8, 2015, I sat at a table alone in the student centre at McMaster University, with a plate of untouched French fries in front of me, wondering what was wrong with me. I was a 34-year old full-time graduate student, enrolled in the Master's of Social Work program, and I was just a few weeks shy of completing my first term of the program. It was a busy time for me; I had fallen behind on my readings for my classes, final papers were imminent, and I still had to select my topics and do research for them before writing the papers. I also still had to nail down my thesis topic and start doing research for that. There was so much for me to do, and yet there I sat in the student centre, staring off into space, unable to concentrate on anything I should have been thinking about. Instead, my mind was swirling with all of the things I had seen, read and heard about in the news from the past two months.

Syrian refugee crisis. The drowned body of the Syrian boy, washed up on a beach. ISIS. Donald Trump running for the U.S. presidency. Justin Trudeau becoming prime minister of Canada. And of course, the terrorist attacks of November 13, 2015 in Paris, France. Earlier that day, I had seen on one of my social media newsfeeds that the number of hate crimes against Muslims as part of the backlash from those attacks had risen to 46 – more than one a day at that

point. I thought about the many things Donald Trump had said to indicate

his dislike for Muslims, and how these things had made me feel as a Muslim

(Chavez & Stracqualursi, 2015; Colvin, 2015). I found myself thinking back to all

of the things I had seen, read and heard in the news lately, and how they had made

me feel as a Muslim.

I looked around the student centre and thought, *Man, this place hasn't*

changed at all in the past 15 years. I allowed myself to sink into my memories

from 15 years prior, when I was first at McMaster University as an undergraduate

student. Almost immediately, my mind was flooded with memories of another,

long past and nearly forgotten Tuesday that I had spent at this school: Tuesday,

September 11, 2001, the date of the infamous 9/11 terrorist attacks. I suddenly

realized that I felt almost exactly the same way now as I did back then – dazed,

unfocused, thoughts spinning with words and images from the news media, nearly

numb with shock at the racist backlash against Muslims in the aftermath of the

attacks. *What has changed for Muslims since then?* I wondered. *What has stayed*

the same?

I thought about all of the other terrorist attacks that had taken place

between September 11, 2001 and November 13, 2015. I remembered reading

about every one of them in the news, and feeling more and more as though

Muslims were increasingly being depicted in negative ways in the news media. I

realized that over time, my fears about how the general public perceived Muslims,

and what that could mean for the future of Muslims in Canada, had intensified

significantly. I remembered talking about these fears a few times to people, and always getting the same reactions: incredulous expressions, eyes averted, polite, strained smiles. *They think I'm crazy,* I thought. *They think I'm overreacting.* As I reconsidered some of the things I had witnessed over the years in the news media about Muslims, and how they had made me feel sick with hurt, I understood that I could no longer ignore my feelings about the news media's portrayal of Muslims. *So let's find out if I'm crazy,* I thought grimly. *Let's use these feelings as a platform to make the leap towards my thesis – find out exactly how the negative portrayal of Muslims within the news media has impacted me as a Muslim, and my Muslim identity, on a personal, emotional level.*

Let's do this.

Chapter 1: What is Already Known About Muslims and Discrimination –

Literature Review

My reflections on what I had read about Muslims in the news media made me think about discrimination against Muslims in general. I knew that when I saw discrimination against Muslims in the news media, I was not surprised, because I had experienced discrimination as a Muslim many times before, in personal life experiences. I recalled one incident where as a child, I had worn a hijab on my way to the mosque, and another child had pointed at my headscarf and shouted, "Hey! My mom wants her curtains back" as I walked past. *No, no,* I thought, shaking my head, *discrimination against Muslims is not a new thing, and it certainly did not start with the news media.* I had experienced discrimination as a Muslim throughout my daily life experiences **first**, and then after that, I had also experienced it in the news media.

After acknowledging that discrimination against Muslims had been occurring long before I started reading the news, I thought again of the number of times I had read something in the news about Muslims in the aftermath of a major terrorist attack, and how often I had felt offended, defensive, or hurt by what I had read. It seemed to me that this happened to me a lot, and I began to wonder if the frequency of these reactionary feelings were simply a result of me being too sensitive, or if they actually pointed to a bigger truth, a larger reality that I wasn't

aware of yet. *So what's the first thing you do when you're trying to figure out if you're overreacting to an event?* I thought. *You look at how other people have reacted to the same event. You try to find out if anyone else thought or felt the same things that you did, and then you consider why that event has had such a strong impact on you.* I considered what I had already read about discrimination against Muslims, and then I thought about what others had said about discrimination against Muslims in the news media.

What Others Have Said About Discrimination Against Muslims

My thoughts about discrimination against Muslims in general took me back to what Edward Said (1978) had discussed in his book, *Orientalism*. I remembered that Said (1978) noted many important things about how people (all people, including politicians, writers, artists, academics, philosophers, etc.) in the West perceived and understood the people, cultures and religions of the East. Said (1978) frequently used "the West" or "the Occident" to refer to Europe, and "the East" or "the Orient" to refer to the geographically near East (what we now call the Middle East) and far East (which we would understand as being China and Japan). Most importantly though, I remembered that he had discussed the significance of the distinction between the East and the West – namely that the perceived differences between the two marked the starting point of a discourse in which those in the East were "a subject race, dominated by a race that knows them and what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves" (Said, 1978, p. 35). Said (1978) continually related this theory to how the

Occident, or the West, understood and talked about Islam as it represented the Orient.

As I recalled Said's (1978) writings, I realized that the most important theme that shone through for me from *Orientalism* was how Islam was frequently pitted against the West, and against Christianity, which led to the West's fear of Islam. Said (1978) noted that historically, Islam was seen as a real threat to Christian civilizations in Europe because of its successful conquests in many parts of the world, like North Africa and India, but most specifically because of the Ottoman empire. It made sense to me that the strength and might of a Muslim army whose purpose was to invade and conquer, would be fearsome to those who lived in predominantly Christian nations. That wasn't all though; Said (1978) argued that it wasn't just political might that made Islam and Muslims fearsome, it was also Islam's similarities to, and recognition of, many aspects of Christianity and Judaism. These similarities sparked an understanding in the West of Islam that was "analogical", meaning that Islam was only understood, or spoken about in opposition or comparison to Christianity (Said, 1978, p. 60). According to Said (1978), "Islam remained forever the Orientalist's idea…of *original* cultural effrontery, aggravated naturally by the fear that Islamic civilization originally…continued to stand somehow opposed to the Christian west" (p. 260, italics in original). As I reflected on these ideas, I realized that what Said (1978) was talking about was essentially the "us vs. them" mentality that I had noticed so

often myself, not only in my personal experiences of discrimination as a Muslim, but in my readings of the news media's depiction of Muslims.

The "us vs. them" mentality made me remember what I had read in Helly's (2004) article entitled "Are Muslims Discriminated Against in Canada since September 2001?". She had noted that prior to September 2001, there were several bases for stereotyping against Muslims in Canada (2004). One of the foundations for stereotyping was the "negative images spread in the West about Islam," (Helly, 2004, p.31), which Said (1978) said could be traced all the way back to the death of the prophet Muhammad in 632 A.D. Helly (2004) also noted that Muslim immigrants to Canada have a vastly different history than other immigrants coming from Europe, which further contributes to them being stereotyped as being "insular, poor, indifferent to Canadian society and more concerned with life in their country of origin" (p. 2). I thought about the stereotyping Helly (2004) had talked about and remembered that she had also listed the representation of Muslims in the news media as being one of the factors that contributed to the discrimination against Muslims in society.

What Has Already Been Said About Discrimination Against Muslims in the News Media

My recollections of Helly's (2004) article, and the ideas in Said's (1978) *Orientalism* brought me back to the depiction of Muslims in the news media. I decided to go over again the articles that I had already read that pertained to

discrimination against Muslims in the news media. The first thing I realized was that this topic seemed to have been discussed in other parts of the world, and not just in Canada. One of the first scholarly articles I re-read was called "Media, Racism and Islamophobia: The Representation of Islam and Muslims in the Media" by Amir Saeed (2007). Saeed (2007) discussed the way the British news media portrayed Muslims, and the British media's role in creating ideas about who belongs to British society and who does not. He spoke at length about the ways in which Muslims were portrayed as "other" in the British news media, and how they were seen as the "'alien within' British culture" (Saeed, 2007, p. 444).

As I thought about the Muslims as "alien", I recalled that Saeed (2007) had also noted the British news media had frequently portrayed Muslims as violent, misogynistic, or strangely different. Saeed (2007) mentioned that British Muslims had been accused by the news media of being unwilling to integrate into British society, and of being supportive of terrorists like Osama Bin Laden, or suicide bombers, which further reinforced the idea that they did not belong in Britain, and they could not have a "British" national identity. I thought of my many previous visits to England and my own experiences of Muslims I knew there. I realized that I had also often thought of them as being unwilling to participate in British society. I thought for a moment about this and how it pointed to the similarities between British and Canadian news media. According to Saeed (2007), the British news media portrayed Muslims as problematic, and this coincided with my experiences of how the Canadian news media talked about

Muslims. It made me realize that I had internalized this negative representation of Muslims, and then applied it to my perception of British Muslims.

Saeed's (2007) discussion about the portrayal of British Muslims in the British news media made me think of another article I had read about Muslims in the media that was more specific to the Canadian news media. Erin Steuter and Deborah Wills (2009) had written an article entitled "Discourses of Dehumanization: Enemy Construction and Canadian Media Complicity in the Framing of the War on Terror", in which they highlighted the role the news media has played in constructing an "othered" identity for Muslims in Canada. I recalled that Steuter and Wills (2009) had discussed in detail how the particular use of language in the Canadian print media had "dehumanized and de-individualized" Muslims while constructing them as an enemy (Steuter & Wills, 2009, p. 7).

I compared the Saeed (2007) article to the Steuter and Wills (2009) article in my mind, and considered how they had both discussed at length the ways in which the Canadian and British news media portrayed Muslims as excluded from mainstream society. While Saeed (2007) talked about the British news media portraying Muslims as violent or misogynistic, Steuter and Wills (2009) stated that the image of the enemy created by the Canadian news media was animalistic, similar to a rodent or insect. Like Saeed (2007), Steuter and Wills (2009) concluded that by consistently framing Muslims as "the enemy" or "the other", the Canadian news media contributed to the construction of a symbolic Muslim identity that feeds into the fears of the unassuming public. I thought about how

this fed into my own fears about the public's perception of Muslims, and reflected on how that fear had led me to finalizing a topic for my thesis.

As I contemplated the themes of dehumanization and exclusion of Muslims in the news media that had emerged from my readings thus far, I wondered if there was anything I had read that was written by a Muslim that had spoken out against this in the Canadian news. I immediately thought of Haroon Siddiqui's (2016) article entitled "Canada's News Media Are Contributing to the Mistrust of Muslims". Siddiqui (2016) argued that the Canadian news media has perpetuated Islamophobia by "conflating Muslim terrorists with all Muslims" (para 2). Siddiqui (2016), a Canadian Muslim journalist who was Editor Emeritus at The Toronto Star, noted that the "the media are violating their own declared principles of fair and ethical journalism" (para 2). Siddiqui (2016) called out the National Post in particular for doing this consistently and for constantly "looking for terrorists under every Canadian minaret" (Siddiqui, 2016, para 4). He noted that the news media often requires Muslims to condemn terrorist attacks, which they often do, but their views are never reported, which leads the public to believe that Muslims are supporting terrorism "by their silence" (Siddiqui, 2016, para 10). As I remembered reading his article, I remembered thinking about how much it had resonated with me, and how frequently I had agreed with Siddiqui's (2016) ideas.

I then thought about Siddiqui's (2016) suggestions for the Canadian news media, which included eradicating the double standard that exists when reporting

on Muslims; creating ethical guidelines for reporting on Muslims; and providing a

range of views in opinion pieces, rather than just one perspective that supports the

negative bias against Muslims. I thought about how Siddiqui's (2016) suggestions

had made me feel worried, and realized that they caused me to feel this way

because they all pointed to several troubling facts: that there is little fair and

ethical reporting on Muslims; that the Canadian news media does carry a bias

against Muslims; and that there is a double standard when it comes to reporting on

Muslims.

What Seems to be Missing in the Literature

As I reflected upon all the articles and scholarly works I had read

pertaining to discrimination against Muslims, and the discrimination against

Muslims within the news media, I realized that nothing I had read in the literature

that was written by Muslims had spoken in detail about the personal, emotional

impact religious discrimination had on them as Muslims. Although I had come

across works by Muslim authors who were talking about discrimination against

Muslims, and about discrimination against Muslims within the news, there did not

seem to be any discussion in their works about their own Muslim identities

(Jiwani, 2005; Saeed, 2007). *That's odd,* I thought. *Religious discrimination is*

*such a personal phenomenon, and it can be so hurtful, yet there don't seem to be many **personal** accounts of this from Muslims who wrote about it.[1]*

I looked over the articles I had read, and the books I had read again, just to make sure that I had not missed any personal stories from Muslim writers and researchers themselves. I hadn't. I came across articles and books that had been written by Muslims that discussed religious discrimination against Muslims, and religious discrimination against Muslims in the news, but it seemed that almost none of them discussed the personal, emotional impact that this discrimination had on them as Muslims (Jiwani, 2005; Saeed, 2007; Siddiqui, 2016). In fact, more often than not, the Muslim scholars did not discuss their own Muslim identities in relation to their findings at all. I thought about my own identity as a Muslim, and how I myself had experienced the discriminatory attitudes in the news media on a personal and emotional level. I considered how deeply these experiences had influenced my understanding of my place in the world, and how they impacted my understanding of social justice, oppression and social work. *People need to know about this,* I realized. *If the personal stories of religious discrimination against Muslims are hardly ever talked about in the literature by Muslim writers, how will the public know how important it is, how profoundly it*

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[1] Throughout this work, I will be referring to discrimination against Muslims as "religious discrimination" or "religious oppression". Due to the tensions within Muslim communities about the differences between racial identity and religious identity, I will not be using the terms "racism" or "racial discrimination" to discuss discrimination against Muslims. Muslim communities are comprised of many people, from many different racial and cultural backgrounds, and this work seeks to recognize that diversity.

impacts Muslims on a daily basis? And if there isn't enough information about that, how can social workers begin to challenge the overarching discriminatory ideology against Muslims through their practice?

With that thought, I went about planning for my thesis so that I could try to address this gap in the literature. I realize that my identity as a Canadian Muslim and as a social worker has positioned me in a unique way for this task, and I hope that by providing a personal and emotional account of how this discrimination has impacted me as a Canadian Muslim, I can make an important contribution to the existing literature on discrimination against Muslims in the news media.

Chapter 2: "If humankind produce social reality…then transforming that reality is an historical task, a task for humanity." – Paulo Freire, Educator and Writer

Theoretical Framework

How Should I Choose a Theoretical Framework?

After reviewing the literature on discrimination against Muslims in the news media, I sat back and thought about the different ways that I could approach it. I realized that it would be essential for me to figure out my theoretical framework for this project, as well as my methodological approach, so that I could proceed with ease and efficiency. But how to figure out which theoretical perspective and which methodological approach would be the best? I thought about all of the perspectives and methodologies I had learned in class and felt puzzled. I decided to have a conversation with my Inner Self so that I could figure out the best theoretical framework and methodology for my topic. "Hi, Inner Self," I said. "I was wondering if you could help me in figuring out my theoretical framework and methodology for this project." *"Sure thing,"* she replied. "How should we go about deciding?" I asked. She thought for a moment. *"It makes sense to talk first about the theoretical framework, and then decide if the methodology you'd like to use works with it,"* she reasoned. "Alright, so let's do that," I said.

"So we know that there are three main, generalized approaches to research," she said. *"There's positivist, interpretivist and critical (Neuman,*

1997). I believe that the critical social science approach would be the best

basic framework within which to conduct your research." "How come?" I asked.

"While it is generally true that most theoretical perspectives seek to advance

learning and knowledge, critical social science research is often concerned with

changing things in society or the world," said Inner Self (Neuman, 1997; Ortiz &

Jani, 2010). *"Critical theorists will typically be interested in how research or*

knowledge creation will impact the status quo (Neuman, 1997). Critical theory

often goes well with research for structural social work practice and education,

because both of these schools of thought subscribe to the idea that our realities

are shaped by socially constructed meanings (Neuman, 1997; Mullaly, 2007)."

"So then, a researcher with a critical theoretical perspective would have a strong

belief in human potential, and the ability of human beings to change the social

order," I said thoughtfully (Neuman, 1997). "That would go along with my belief

that social injustices, such as racism or discrimination, can be addressed through

the advocacy or activist efforts of critical social work researchers, educators and

practitioners (Baines, 2007; Custer, 2014; Daley, 2010; Denzin, 2003; Freire,

1970; Mullaly, 2007)." *"Yes, it would,"* she said.

"If I understand it correctly," I said, "Within a critical social science

framework that is concerned with social justice outcomes, the researcher attempts

to both understand and address discrimination and oppression (Neuman, 1997). I

am particularly interested in experiences of religious discrimination against

Muslims and how that religious discrimination is exacerbated by the news

media's portrayal of Muslim people. I often find myself thinking about how this portrayal emerges in the aftermath of a major terrorist attack."

"I have a side question: Is it just religious discrimination, or is it racial discrimination too?" asked Inner Self. "The terms racism and discrimination tend to be used sometimes to mean the same thing, but I want to be clear here," I said. "Racism pertains to prejudice against people based on their race, and Muslims as a group are not comprised of one single race – Muslims have many different racial and ethnic backgrounds (Racism, n.d.)." *"So discrimination against Muslims is based on their religion, not on their race,"* replied Inner Self. "Yes," I said, "Therefore, to say that the discrimination against Muslims is racism would be highly problematic. For that reason, I will be using 'religious discrimination' to describe discrimination against Muslims throughout this work." *"I think that's fair,"* said Inner Self.

"Now getting back to theoretical perspective," I said. "It's important to remember that within the critical research perspective, knowledge means power, and those who operate from this perspective have a moral obligation to make appropriate use of that knowledge and the power it brings (Neuman, 1997)." *"Well, that's the whole point of doing this project,"* stated Inner Self. "That's right," I replied. "Hopefully, the knowledge I gain from this research will create the opportunity for me to start a social change process that can begin to address discrimination against Muslims (Beresford & Evans, 1999; Custer, 2014)." *"Perfect,"* said Inner Self.

"So if the overarching framework within this project is that of critical social science," I said, "what are the specific theoretical perspectives that will inform my interpretation of the findings?" *"There is more than one aspect to this project that needs to be considered,"* said Inner Self thoughtfully. *"You will be discussing discrimination against Muslims within the news media and your personal experiences of that phenomenon. Theory will help you understand the impact of this on you as a Muslim, but there is also the theory that will inform your understanding of how the news media contributes to the perpetuation of discrimination."*

"You're right," I said. "In order to better understand the discrimination against Muslims within the news media and how it has personally impacted me, I will be using Freire's (1970) theory of oppression. I have read Freire's (1970) ideas about oppression as he has frequently been referenced in critical social work texts (Carniol, 1990; Howse & Stalwick, 1990; Mullaly, 2007). His work has had a strong impact on my own understandings of oppression and resistance, so I think it makes sense for me to use his theory to understand my own experiences of religious discrimination as a Muslim." *"I agree,"* stated Inner Self. *"But to gain a better understanding of the role the news media played in the construction of your personal identity, you would need to draw upon the works of media studies scholars who use a social constructionist approach to understand how the news media can influence an individual's perception of their own reality (Hall, 1997; Henry & Tator, 2002; Said, 1978; 1981; Surette, 1992; Van Dijk, 1991)."* "That's

right," I replied, "because even though I won't be doing a media analysis, or a discourse analysis, I am still interested in how the news media has impacted me and my loved ones. I also often wonder if other Muslims have experienced discrimination in the news media in the same way that I have, and if that can tell us something about how the news media can perpetuate discrimination against Muslims." *"Great,"* said Inner Self. *"So let's start with Freire (1970)."*

Let's Talk About Freire's Theory of Oppression

"Paulo Freire (1970) wrote at length about the nature of oppression in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*," I stated. "He talked about oppression being inextricably linked to the loss of freedom and the loss of humanity, or dehumanization, of the people who are oppressed (Freire, 1970). Freire (1970) believed that the quest for humanization is a struggle for all of humankind, and this quest is often 'thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and the violence of the oppressors' (p. 44)." *"Thus, within Freire's (1970) theory, there is the idea that the personal is political,"* said Inner Self. *"Personal injustices and the exploitation of certain individuals point to power imbalances between the oppressed and their oppressors (Freire, 1970)."* "That notion is also present in Freire's (1970) idea that oppression is perpetuated by an overarching 'unjust social order'," I stated (p.44). "The social order he spoke of can be understood as the broader system of oppression that exists within societies, in which certain groups of people are less empowered than others (Freire, 1970; Mullaly, 2007). Their lack of power is often due to their affiliations with certain social identity

factors, like class, race, or gender to name a few (Freire, 1970; Mullaly, 2007)."

"When understood in that way, racism or religious discrimination can be seen as a form of oppression," said Inner Self. "Yes," I replied, "because it dehumanizes and excludes certain people based on their ethnicity or religion."

"Freire (1970) believed that dehumanization is not only the way in which oppressed people become seen as 'things', it is also the way in which people lose the rights to be seen as individuals and treated with respect," I stated. "According to Freire (1970), dehumanization is characterized by a loss of human dignity. I experienced this loss most powerfully whenever I would read the newspaper following a major terrorist attack, because I often felt as though Muslims were being talked about in the news in a way that was discriminatory and disrespectful, and this deeply offended me as a Muslim." Inner Self said, *"Your recollections of the responses you had to particular newspaper articles that made you feel this way, and the conversations they spawned with your family, also raised a lot of questions for you. Your memories made you wonder about how the news media can create or reproduce discrimination against Muslims and what kind of impact this creation or reproduction can have on people like you or your family members."* "That's true," I said. "I will use Freire's (1970) theory of oppression to try and answer some of those questions in this project."

What About Social Constructionism?

"Earlier, you mentioned that I would need to draw on the works of media scholars that took a social constructionist approach to understanding the news media and its influence on individuals," I said. "What is social constructionism anyway?" *"Good question,"* said Inner Self. *"Vivien Burr (2015) has noted that social constructionism is particularly difficult to define, because it 'draws its influences from a number of disciplines…making it multidisciplinary in nature' (p. 2). She does note that there are several key assumptions that are essential to social constructionism as a theory though (Burr, 2015)."* "What are some of those assumptions?" I asked.

"The assumptions, or beliefs, within social constructionism that would be most relevant to your research have to do with the connections between knowledge, social processes, social action, and language," said Inner Self (Burr, 2015). *"Burr (2015) maintains that interactions between people on a daily basis are what construct our versions of knowledge. These constructions are connected to social action, which are 'bound up with power relations because they have implications for what is permissible for different people to do' (p. 5)."* "Okay," I said, "but how is the social construction of knowledge connected to language?" *"Well,"* she answered, *"Burr (2015) believes that our use of language is a kind of action, and that when 'people talk to each other, the world gets constructed' (p.8)."* "So our interactions with each other through the use of language is how we come to know things about the world," I said thoughtfully (Burr, 2015). *"Yes,"* said Inner Self.

"If we consider that discourse is strongly connected to language, and specifically to written or verbal language, it is understandable why scholars of media discourse take a social constructionist approach to understanding the media," I said (Hall, 1997; Henry & Tator, 2002; Said, 1978; 1981; Surette, 1992; Van Dijk, 1991). "I'm not going to be doing a discourse or a media analysis, but I can still use social constructionism to help me understand how the news media's portrayal of Muslims can impact what people know about Muslims, and what I know about myself as a Muslim."

How are Muslims Socially Constructed?

"Considering social constructionism and how knowledge is created, what do you know about yourself as a Canadian Muslim?" asked Inner Self. "Through my language-based interactions with other people, I have learned time and again, that being a Muslim in this society makes me different," I stated. "I participate in certain religious practices that others don't understand, or aren't familiar with, I sometimes wear certain articles of clothing that others don't, and I speak a language that many other Canadians don't understand."

"You also celebrate holidays that non-Muslims don't recognize, and the food you eat is sometimes different too," said Inner Self. "Yes," I replied. *"So, in a way, your understanding of yourself as a Muslim is already socially constructed as 'other',"* said Inner Self. "Right," I said, "my differences from other Canadians, especially when I am making those differences obvious, make it

difficult for me to fit in with a non-Muslim majority." *"And it becomes even more difficult when being different is not understood to be a good thing,"* continued Inner Self. "That's definitely true," I said.

What Does Social Constructionism Have to Do with Discrimination Against Muslims in the News Media?

"So what about the news media?" asked Inner Self, *"Why is it important to consider the role it plays in discrimination against Muslims?"* "Well, it's important to me because I have always read the news and been influenced by it," I replied. "I like to feel like I know what's going on in the world, and I have a keen interest in politics, so I have a strong interest in what the news media has to say about current affairs. Given that I am a Muslim, I also have a keen interest in what the news media has to say about Muslims in general." *"Why do you think it matters what the news media has to say?"* asked Inner Self. I laughed. "I see what you're getting me to acknowledge," I said, "and that is that my understanding of the news media as a reliable source of information is also a socially constructed bit of knowledge." *"You got me,"* Inner Self chuckled.

"I'm not the only one that believes that though," I said. "We know that the news media is an important source of information for most people, and it's a highly influential one at that," I said (Hall, 1997; Henry &Tator, 2002; Surette, 1992; Van Dijk, 1991). *"Right,"* said Inner Self, *"but how is social constructionism linked to discrimination against Muslims in the news media?"*

asked Inner Self. I thought about what Noam Chomsky (1997) had said about the news media in his book, *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda.* "Chomsky (1997) argued that the news media is controlled by a few people that also have the power to manipulate the news as they see fit," I replied.

"*That's right, I remember that now,*" said Inner Self. "*Chomsky (1997) talked about how what is presented and what is excluded from the news is a selective process, and it is through this process that the truth is often kept away from the public. He argued that in this way, the news media can "manufacture consent" from the public (Chomsky, 1997, p. 41).*" "Similar to what Siddiqui's (2016) said, Chomsky (1997) argued that the media purposely excludes the voices of some so as to strengthen the ideas that it wants to present, and has thus done away with objective, or investigative reporting," I said.

"*Rather than reporting facts, the news media is all about manipulating the truth in order to give readers a certain opinion or belief about a certain event, or a certain group of people,*" said Inner Self (Chomsky, 1997). "Yes," I replied, "In this way, the news media can be seen as involved in socially constructing a reality, or a certain version of reality, to the public, which may not be accurate (Chomsky, 1997)." "*That's true,*" replied Inner Self. "*Part of the reason why you got upset whenever you read about Muslims in the news was that you knew the news media were displaying a false reality about Muslims.*" "Exactly," I answered.

"You know," I said, "Chomsky's (1997) ideas remind me of Henry & Tator's (2002) argument that ideologies are discursive," I said thoughtfully, "which means that they are associated with "written or oral text", and that points to the idea that representations within the news media are discursive representations (Henry & Tator, 2002, p. 25). Knowledge is constructed through language, so if the news media uses language, then it can socially construct what we know about certain groups in society (Burr, 2015; Henry & Tator, 2002)." *"I see what you're getting at,"* said Inner Self. *"Then the news media have discursive power, so they can 'not only to represent social groups but also…construct social groups – to establish who is "we" and who is "other" in the "imagined community" of the nation-state'" (Henry & Tator, 2002, p. 27)."*

"This is exactly the kind of representation that Saeed (2007) and Steuter and Wills (2009) were talking about when they argued that the news media had effectively created and maintained ideas about Muslims not belonging in British and Canadian societies," I said. *"Henry and Tator (2002) consistently maintained that the Canadian news media has regularly participated in the perpetuation of certain predominating discourses, one of which is a discriminatory discourse against minority groups,"* replied Inner Self. "Yes," I said. "Considering their idea that most of the public get information about minorities from the news media, this is deeply troubling, as it points to the news media constructing a false reality about minority groups (Henry & Tator, 2002)." *"And you can attest to that, because Muslims are a religious minority in Canada,"* said Inner Self.

24

"That's right," I replied. "My experiences of discrimination in the news media against Muslims support Chomsky's (1997) and Henry & Tator's (2002) assertions of how the news media can socially construct an image of Muslims that is discriminatory, untrue, or unrealistic."

How Freire's Theory of Oppression and Social Constructionism Work Together

"So we've discussed how important the news media is, how it contributes to the construction of our realities, and we've also talked about how that construction can be discriminatory towards Muslims," I said (Chomsky, 1997; Henry & Tator, 2002; Said, 1978; Van Dijk, 1991). *"And we've also discussed Freire's (1970) theory of oppression and how it can be used to understand the way Muslims are portrayed in the news media,"* said Inner Self. *"How are the two theories connected?"*

"If we consider Freire's (1970) concept of structural, or systemic oppression," I answered, "and we also consider the ways in which the news media constructs and reproduces certain ideologies, it becomes clear that the news media can contribute to systemic oppression by constructing or reproducing a discriminatory ideology (Henry & Tator, 2002; Said, 1978; Van Dijk, 1991)." *"That reminds me of what Van Dijk (1991) said about the creation of the news – he said that the power relations within societies indirectly influence what gets selected as a 'newsworthy' topic,"* said Inner Self. *"So if a news topic does not*

maintain the status quo of power relations, it would not be considered

newsworthy."

"That's right," I said. "That means that there is little room for voices or stories that challenge the discriminatory ideology within the news media." *"If oppression is characterized by the loss of humanity, or dehumanization, and it cannot be countered by resistance, then the news media could be very well poised to use their influence to contribute to the dehumanization and oppression of a certain group of people, like Muslims,"* said Inner Self (Chomsky, 1997; Freire, 1970; Said, 1981; Van Dijk, 1991). "That's how the news media can contribute to what Freire (1970) describes as the 'unjust social order'" I answered, "and that is what I hope to explore in this research project (p.44)."

Chapter 3: "I work, and working I transform the world."

– Paulo Freire, Educator and Writer

Methodology

Methodological Approach: Autoethnography

"Now that we've talked about the theoretical perspectives that will inform the interpretations of my findings," I said, "let's talk about the methodological approach I should use. Which approach do you think will be the best for me to use?" *"Well, let's see,"* said Inner Self pensively. *"What you are trying to do is gain a better understanding of a people, or a culture, so what you would need to do is essentially an ethnography (Altheide, 1996). But it would not do to just use any kind of ethnography – you are going to be relating **your** personal memories of certain newspaper articles. So I think you should do an autoethnography (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011)."*

"According to Dwayne Custer (2014), autoethnography 'is a style of autobiographical writing and qualitative research that explores an individual's unique life experiences in relationship to social and cultural institutions'," I said (p.1). "Doing an autoethnography would allow me to use my own voice, and my own experiences as a Canadian Muslim to discuss the impact that discrimination against Muslims has had on me and my religious identity. How does this methodological approach fit with my theoretical framework though?"

"Well," said Inner Self, *"you are using a critical approach to research, which tends to be concerned with social change, and how the creation of knowledge can challenge a pre-existing reality (Neuman, 1997). Autoethnography can be used as a transformative practice, so you can use it to create awareness and challenge the discriminatory ideology that is used in the news media against Muslims (Custer, 2014)."* "And what about the theories of oppression and social constructionism?" I asked. *"You will be using your autoethnography, or the relation of your personal experiences, to gain a better understanding of how the news media contributed to your feelings of discrimination, and how it constructed your understanding of yourself as a Muslim,"* explained Inner Self patiently (Rossiter, 2007). "Okay, that makes sense," I smiled. "I think it could really work!"

I paused. "Hasn't autoethnography been criticized for not being scholarly or objective enough though?" I asked. *"Yes, it has,"* answered Inner Self, *"but many scholars have now acknowledged that it is not possible for research to be entirely objective and impersonal, nor is it possible to remove oneself from one's research (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011; Hubbard, Backett-Milburn & Kemmer, 2001). In fact, autoethnography 'is one of the approaches that acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don't exist'* (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011, History of Autoethnography, para. 3)." "So the lack of objectivity and neutrality would not be a bad thing," I surmised. "In fact, it

would make sense to not be objective, because I would be relating personal experiences about discrimination." *"Exactly,"* she said.

<u>Reflective and Reflexive Analysis in Autoethnography</u>

"How would I go about doing an analysis with an autoethnography though?" I asked. "Don't you need to be objective in order to do an analysis?" *"That would depend on the kind of analysis you are doing,"* she responded. *"If you were using a different methodological perspective, like say a positivist one, your objectivity would matter (Neuman, 1997). But you are using a critical perspective, which you could apply to an analysis that would fit with an autoethnography."* "Like a critically reflective analysis," I said thoughtfully (Daley, 2010). "Daley (2010) talked about how critical reflection is 'reflecting on action' – I could use critical reflection to analyse and relate my memories of the newspaper articles (p. 70)."

"That wouldn't be enough of an analysis though," mused Inner Self. *"That would only tell us what you remember. What you would also need to do is an analysis that will allow your readers to glean more information from your memories – what do they tell us about how discrimination impacted you? Why are the memories significant?"* "Ah," I said, "you're now talking about what Daley (2010) describes as a reflexive analysis. That is 'reflecting in action', or analyzing my claims to knowledge via the relation of my memories (Daley, 2010, p. 70)." *"That sounds right,"* agreed Inner Self.

"The combination of an autoethnographic account of my experiences, with reflective and reflexive analysis would really work well," I said thoughtfully, "but how can an autoethnography contribute to challenging oppression? Remember, I am using a critical social science approach, so what I do with my research has to contribute to challenging a pre-existing social reality (Neuman, 1997)."

Autoethnography and Resistance

"Remember what Freire (1970) said about silence perpetuating oppression?" answered Inner Self. *"Autoethnography is a way to use your voice to bring about transformation (Custer, 2014; Denzin, 2003). According to Norman Denzin (2003), 'texts offer moral tales that help men and women endure and prevail in the frightening years of this new century. It is our obligation to make our voices heard…[when] we do so, we speak and perform as critical [auto] ethnographers' (p. 259)."* "Custer (2014) talked about that too," I stated. "He said that autoethnography is a 'transformative research method that…fosters empathy, [and] eliminates boundaries' (p. 1.). Maybe my autoethnography will foster empathy for Muslims, and eliminate the boundaries that are created for us by discrimination and oppression!" *"There's only one way to find out,"* said Inner Self with a smile. *"So let's get started!"*

How I Did It: Details About the Research Process

On the night of Friday, August 5th, 2016, my husband and I were sitting in our living room after having put our son to bed. Both of us were working on something – he was completing some work from his job that he had brought

home, and I was sifting through newspaper articles for my thesis. He finished his work before I finished mine, and picked up a few of the newspaper articles I was looking at. "What are these?" he asked. "I know they're for your thesis, but what are you using them for?" "They're basically raw data," I replied. "I'm looking through them to see which ones trigger my memories about the three terrorist attacks I'm focusing on for my project." "Oh, cool," he said, squinting at one of them. "They're kind of blurry – how did you access these newspaper articles?"

How I Gathered Information for Research

"Well, I tried to find a way to get the entire newspapers online, and I was able to get a few articles that way, but it was pretty challenging, so I ended up using the library archives at McMaster University instead," I said. "I used a microfiche machine to look at the archives of The Toronto Star, The National Post and The Globe and Mail." "How come only those three?" he asked. "Because those three are daily newspapers, and they have a sizeable readership across the country," I answered. "The National Post and The Globe and Mail both have held status as national newspapers, while The Toronto Star is a newspaper that is considered local to my places of residence in Ontario. The national distribution of the first two papers will ensure that the articles I use for my study will have been read by people all over Canada, while the inclusion of The Toronto Star articles will be reflective of the local news from the cities in which I lived." "Plus, those three would each give a slightly different perspective," he reasoned. "That's correct," I said. "The National Post is considered to be a far-right or conservative

newspaper, while The Toronto Star tends to take a leftist, or liberal approach to the news. The Globe and Mail tends to fall somewhere in between those two."

"So if it was only those three newspapers, how come you have so many articles to look through?" he asked, looking around us at the heaps and piles of papers. "It was only three newspapers," I said, "but I needed to look through all three newspapers for all three major terrorist events – the September 11 attacks, the Charlie Hebdo attacks, and the Paris 2015 attacks." "Ohhh," he said, "so technically it was like you had three full newspapers to look through, from front to back, for three different periods in time." "Yup, exactly," I said. "So what kinds of memories are you hoping they will trigger?" he asked. I paused. Then I said, "I'm looking through them to see which ones I remember reading that had an emotional impact on me because of the way they talked about Muslims, and which ones sparked important conversations with you, or with my other family members, about discrimination against Muslims."

"9 full newspapers - that will be a lot of articles to go through," he said. "How will you go about deciding which articles to read fully, and which ones to skip over?" "Well, first I would have to establish a data protocol," I explained (Altheide, 1996; Appendix C). "I would write down the elements of the articles that are important to me, like what date the article was published, whether or not it triggered a memory for me, what the overall message was about Muslims. I would also look for certain emotional themes, like fear, shock, loss, discrimination and trauma." "That's still going to be a lot to go through," he said worriedly.

"Newspapers went on about those attacks for weeks on end. How will you narrow

it down?" "Oh, I'm only looking at the first and second days of reporting on the

attacks," I said. "So for let's say, The National Post's articles on the September 11

attacks, I would only look through the newspapers from September 12, 2001 and

September 13, 2001." "Right, because they wouldn't have started reporting on it

until the day after the event," he said knowledgeably. "That seems more

manageable. Once you've narrowed it down a bit, how will you decide which

articles to focus on?"

"I will decide which articles to focus on based on how strong an emotional

impact the article had on me," I explained. "Given that these three terrorist attacks

were shocking and traumatic events, I will have emotional reactions to a lot of the

articles, so again I'll need to narrow it down. I will only select articles that had a

strong emotional impact on me, and only if that emotional impact had to do with

the portrayal of Muslims in the aftermath of the attacks." I paused for a moment.

"Knowing how strongly I feel about discrimination, though," I continued,

"I will probably end up choosing articles that highlight a negative portrayal of

Muslims, because those will probably end up being the ones that I felt most

strongly about." "Well, your topic is centred around how the discrimination

against Muslims in the news media has impacted you, so it would make sense to

do that even in a conscious way," he said. "I suppose you're right," I replied, "but

I don't want to go about it that way because, well, what if there aren't any articles

that speak negatively about Muslims?" He laughed. "I suppose that's possible," he conceded.

From Reading and Choosing to Remembering: Organizing My Memories

"You said you're going to write about your memories?" he asked. "How will you organize your memories so you know which ones are going to be relevant to your project?"

"Once I've selected the news articles that had the strongest and most relevant emotional impact on me, I'm going to write down my current emotional reactions to them and my recollections of the reactions I had when I read the stories for the first time," I said. "I will also write down my recollections or memories of interactions I had with my family members about the articles that I have chosen. Once these recollections are written down, I will look at them for their relevance to certain themes, like my own Muslim identity, my or my family's personal safety in the aftermath of a terrorist attack, or discrimination against Muslims in general."

"How will you organize those themes?" he asked. "I'm going to keep it fairly simple," I replied. "I will highlight parts of the memories that relate to each of those three themes, and then once I decide which theme – my Muslim identity, personal safety, or discrimination against Muslims – really shines through in each memory, I will place them in folders that are labeled with each theme." "That

makes sense," he said, nodding. "Now what about the analysis part? How will you analyze your memories?"

"So I'm doing an autoethnography," I told him. "Autoethnography is a research method that allows the researcher include or account for themselves in their research (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). An important part of doing an autoethnography is writing about past experiences, so I can use critical self-reflection as an analytical tool (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). I can also use reflexivity to analyze my memories," I answered (Daley, 2010). "The memories that are triggered by the articles will be written as though I'm telling a story, and those will be followed by reflexive and analytical conversations with myself about those memories. I'm hoping that through the analysis, I will discover what the memories tell me about discrimination against Muslims in the news media, and what they tell me about my own Canadian Muslim identity."

How I Got Participants, and Ensured the Research Would Be Ethical

"Well, that's kinda cool," he smiled. "I like the sound of it, it's different. You said you're going to use conversations you had with me and the rest of your family, though," he continued. "I know we talked about it and I'm totally okay with it. How will you make sure that the rest of your family will be okay with that?" "I went over to my parents' place for tea a few weeks back," I told him, "and explained my research study to them and my sister. I showed the Letter of Information and Consent to all of them, and explained how their information

would be used (Appendix B). I told them that I would not be using any names and that I would do my utmost to ensure their confidentiality wherever I could." "So like the same thing you told me," he said. "Did they all sign the form like I did?" "Yeah, they did," I said.

"I told them that I'm going to have them read the information about them that I'm going to put into the thesis, same as I told you," I continued. "But they said that they wouldn't need to read it. Just like you, they said they would be okay with whatever I wrote, even if they didn't get to read it." "That makes sense," he replied. "Still, though, I'm going to provide all of you with copies of my thesis so that you can know what I wrote," I said. "Just to be on the safe side. I already got my Research Ethics Board approval though (Appendix A)."

"So what will happen to our information during and after the project's completion?" he asked. "The information largely exists in the form of my memories, but I will be writing my memories down, so the information will be kept on the hard drive of my computer, which will be password-protected," I stated. "No one but me will have access to it. After the project is complete, I will keep the information on my computer's hard drive indefinitely because it might be useful for future projects, but if I do want to use it for future projects, I will go through the consent procedure with you and my other family members again."

"Sounds like you've got it all figured out!" he said. "Good luck, and I hope you learn a lot on your research journey." "Thanks!" I beamed at him. "I hope so too."

Chapter Four: "All the Muslims. Send them back home."

– Luz Medina, nursing home worker (The Globe and Mail, Associated Press, & Reuters News Agency, 2001, p. N4)

On the morning of Tuesday, September 11th, 2001, I was jogging through McMaster University's campus. I was a 20-year old undergraduate student in my second year of study, and I was working towards a degree in Multimedia and English. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings, I had my Introduction to Graphic Design course, which I was thoroughly enjoying so far, but no matter: I was late.

As I speed-walked my way through throngs of students who were all trying to do the same thing as me, I wistfully looked at food options. Breakfast would have to wait, there was no time for that. This would make the second time in a row I would be late, and given the smaller class sizes for multimedia courses, there was no hiding; everyone would see me come in. I huffed and puffed my way to class, and opened the door, ready to present my excuses to the professor.

"Sorry I'm…", my apology died on my lips as I noticed the hush in the room. Everyone was watching something. I looked at the large television screens that were at the front of the classroom, usually displaying the graphic design pieces that we would be discussing that day. The screens were showing videos of two buildings, with the words "BREAKING NEWS" flashing along the bottom of the screen. I slowly made my way to an empty seat, registering my fellow classmates' poses and expressions as I went: arms tightly crossed, hands clapped

over their mouths, hands gripping their faces, mouths open, mouths in a thin, tight line, but their eyes were all the same – wide open in alarm, staring. I watched the buildings on the TV screens, and for a split second wondered, *Why are we watching these buildings?*

Then an airplane slammed into one of them. My hand flew to my mouth. *Oh my God,* I thought frantically, *Are there people in there?* It felt like only moments later when I jumped in my seat as another airplane crashed into the second building. I sat there for what seemed like an endless stretch of time, dazed and uncomprehending. It took a while for me to fully grasp what I had just witnessed, to understand what it meant. Then the television screens were switched off and I was asked if I wanted to talk about anything. I did not answer as I left the classroom. All I could think was, *I need answers, I need information. I need to read the newspapers.*

Over the next few days, that was all I did – read newspapers. I read all the newspapers I could get my hands on. The ones I continually read back-to-front were The Toronto Star, The Globe and Mail and The National Post. There were so many articles that had an emotional impact on me, but there were two in particular that made me feel as though my perceptions of myself and my place in the world were about to change drastically. These articles caused me to embark on a reflective and reflexive trip down memory lane, that would end with analysis (Daley, 2010; Finlay, 2002).

The first article that had a major impact on me was "This is the Way the World Changed" by Ian Brown (2001). This article was first printed in The Globe and Mail on September 12th, 2001, and it was written in the style of a diary entry. In this piece, Brown (2001) takes the reader through his experiences and reflections on the September 11 attacks. Brown's (2001) ideas about Muslims in relation to the attacks are presented in the following excerpt:

> Worse still, I will never see another devout, turban-wearing Muslim without wondering -- unfairly, I admit, against my better instincts, I realize, but doing so nevertheless -- was he part of it? Or, at least, did he feel remorse? And I will never know the answer…[and] so, just as there is less of New York, there is less of me now: less of me willing to believe in the human project of commonality. I regret this, but cannot help it, not with all the discipline and forbearance I can muster. (p. N2)

I first read this article on Wednesday, September 12th, 2001, the day after the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. I had been searching for an article like this one in all of the newspapers I had read that were providing coverage of the September 11 attacks. In every newspaper, I found news coverage, accurate reporting, and it was just like reading the news about anything else, except a lot more horrifying. *But what are the **people** saying?* I thought. *What are they feeling? Are they feeling what I'm feeling?* I had had a hard time finding an article that really focused on the human elements of the attacks, or gave more of a personal story. I wanted to read something that would reflect the horror, shock and fear that I myself was feeling, something that would validate the pain I felt. I was looking for a personal story, in hopes that I would find someone who felt the same way as I did. I was also looking for someone, or something that said that it

wasn't fair to blame ordinary Muslims for this. The word "diary" in the byline of this article caught my attention and I began to read the article.

I had found what I was looking for. Author Ian Brown's reminiscences of the day before the attacks resonated with me as I remembered, along with him, the Manhattan that I had visited many times throughout my childhood and that I had last visited two years before. Reading the author's recollections was simultaneously peaceful and devastating. They forced me to recall my happy childhood and adolescent memories of New York, but these were now marred by images of destruction and death. Reading his words, I grew to realize that the Manhattan I had known was no more, and likely would never be the same again. Tears came to my eyes as I thought again of my family and friends in New York and felt grateful that I had already heard from all of them, confirming that they were safe. I read the article, relieved at the alleviation of my isolation, happy with the human connection between myself and the author of this article, who seemed to express exactly what I was feeling. *I'm not the only one*, I thought. *I'm not the only one feeling like my sense of reality is shattered. This guy, this author knows how I feel because he's feeling it too! I'm not alone!*

Then I got to the part where his brother talked about the attackers. His brother was quoted as saying, "I hope the Americans bomb the hell out of whoever did this. They're fucking animals (Brown, 2001, p. N2)."

But…who's "they"? I thought, a tightening dread creeping through my chest. *Who's he calling "they"? Animals…we've been called animals before. That's usually how racists describe people of colour. He's not talking about us….is he? Please, God, no. Let this person, this ONE person, not assume that the attackers were Muslims, Arabs, or from the Middle East.*

No such luck. The author's brother was further quoted as saying, "This is why the Americans can't just bomb the shit out of the Arabs. Because they need the oil (Brown, 2001, p. N2)."

THAT'S WHY???? my thoughts exploded. *THAT'S WHY YOU CAN'T JUST BOMB THE SHIT OUT OF ARABS?? Because of the oil?? Not because killing people is wrong?? Not because you shouldn't drop bombs on entire nations who happen to share the assumed ethnicity of the attackers?? When you DON'T EVEN KNOW that the attackers were in fact Arabs????* Okay, deep breath, Saadiaa, I told myself. *Calm down. It's just one random guy's angry reaction to these terrible events. Inhale…exhale. Inhale…exhale. Inhaaale……exhaaale.*

There, that's better now. I continued reading.

But I bet he's not alone, a small voice spoke suddenly from the back of my mind. *I bet he's just one of many who feel exactly the same way.*

I bet they're gonna hate us even more now.

I bet me…my mother…my sister…my father…my friends…are gonna pay for this. Who's going to avenge US?

Never mind, never mind, I told myself, trying to reassure myself against the rising hysteria I was starting to feel. *Calm down. You don't know that that will happen. You must have hope. You must stay positive. You must believe that there will not be backlash, that some silly, reactive, wrongheaded words on a page will not infiltrate the minds of thousands, inciting them to hate Arabs and Muslims in general. It's just this author's brother right? His brother, who was upset and shocked and angry. It's not the author himself.* **He** *doesn't hate Arabs, he's still on my side, he's not making any assumptions.* I read on, holding out hope for this writer with whom I felt so connected, because he described so perfectly the fear and confusion I was feeling.

As I continued reading, I felt the assault of some of his written words, like little bullets, nicking my skin as they whizzed past me: "'Kill the Middle East!'"; "Yasser Arafat…former terrorist and airplane hijacker himself" (Brown, 2001, N2). *It's all right, I'm fine, just surface wounds, really,* I thought. *Maybe it's a bit harsh to call Yasser Arafat a terrorist, he is a democratically elected leader, but alright, I can let it go, it's not that bad.*

But it got worse. I got to the last few paragraphs, and read about how he would "never see another devout, turban-wearing Muslim without wondering…was he a part of it? Or, at least, did he feel remorse?" (Brown, 2001,

N2). Laughter, incredulous, bitter and sarcastic, escaped my lips. *How ignorant you are. You don't even know that most Muslims here don't wear turbans, they wear caps. God help the poor Sikhs that cross your path, unaware of your suspicious, accusatory thoughts about them.* Then came the defensiveness: *Of course we weren't a part of it! Of course not, this is not who we are, we don't believe in killing people! I never did anything wrong, nor did any of the Muslims you will see on the street!*

Finally, as these words really sunk in and took hold of me, I experienced a most sickeningly familiar feeling. It was that sense of rejection, accompanied with a feeling of profound hurt. The exact same feeling I felt every time I was treated like an outcast at school, called racial slurs or made fun of because of my skin colour or the language I spoke. The exact same feeling I got when people pointed and laughed at my mother in the street because of her traditional Pakistani clothing. The message from that feeling I got was always crystal clear: *You're not one of us. You don't belong here. You never will.*

As the author continued his musings on feeling helpless in his discrimination, I felt my heart break. I was never connected to him and I never could be. It was all just an illusion in my head. Because even though I thought he and I shared something important, that we were alike in our humanity, he didn't believe that about me. He couldn't possibly, because if he saw me in the street, he would only be able to see my difference, the ways in which I do not belong to this society. It was this perception of my difference that would make him think that I

was "a part of it", somehow involved and implicated in this horrifying massacre that actually had nothing to do with me or even my faith Worse still was that he admitted that this was inhumane of him, and yet he was unwilling to challenge his own assumptions and reactions. Hopeless, helpless against this kind of hate, I felt the loneliness and an aching despair wash over me again as I turned the page, still searching for someone or something to validate my pain while expounding my innocence.

These feelings lingered and intensified somewhat in the days following September 12th, 2001. By Friday, September 14th, 2001 I had begun hearing more about attacks on ordinary Muslims and was rather relieved to come across news reports that condemned these attacks. The article entitled "Canadian Muslims 'Feel Under Siege'" by Small and DeMara (2001) was one such article. The following excerpt from the article highlights the impact of the backlash on everyday Muslims:

> The Canadian Islamic Congress is advising Muslims to stay home from work and school in light of a backlash against terrorist attacks in the United States...Islamic congress is particularly worried about the safety of children, and of women wearing *hijabs* (religious headscarves) or anyone else in an Islamic mode of dress…The Islamic congress urged Canada's estimated 600,000 Muslims to stay away from crowded areas 'where a mob mentality may develop.' (Small & DeMara, 2001, p. A2, italics in original).

Although I was glad that these attacks were being reported, the news reports about them also heightened my fear and anxiety about my own personal safety and the safety of my loved ones. *My God,* I thought as I read the article.

How bad must it be if they're telling Muslims to stay home from school and work?
I had been feeling worried about my mother to begin with because she wore the
hijab, but I felt my panic increase as I read over the words "mob mentality". *A
mob?* I thought, feeling my heart begin to race. *Like an **angry** mob? Like a **lynch**
mob?*

I had never felt so unsafe before in my life. I felt a pressing need to go
home for the weekend and spend time with my family. I went home as soon as I
could that week, anxious to be around people that I loved so that we could make
each other feel safe. I had just gotten home, and was putting my things in my
room, when I heard the sounds of my parents' voices coming from the family
room. I went downstairs to find my mother and my father engaged in an intense
conversation, with my sister silently looking on.

"You don't understand," my father was saying to my mother. "You don't
understand; it is **very** unsafe for us right now. You should not wear your hijab
when you go out. Please do not wear it when you leave the house tomorrow." "I
will continue to wear my hijab," she replied calmly. "I do understand that it is
unsafe, but I don't care. I will wear it regardless." My father ran his hands over
his hair and let out a frustrated sigh. He was pacing now, as my mother sat on the
sofa, next to my sister. I sat down opposite to them and looked at him.

"People are getting hurt!" he exclaimed. "People are getting attacked, and
women especially because they wear hijab! If you wear it, you could be assaulted

too. Please, listen to me. **Don't** wear it." My sister cast me a dark look. "You know," she said to me, "I heard about this girl at my school who wears hijab. Some guy came and lifted up her hijab and set her hair on fire." "Are you serious?" I asked, incredulous. "What kind of person would do that?" "Yeah," she replied, "Apparently, he said he did it because he figured she didn't need her hair anyway." I spluttered in indignation. "You see?" said my father, turning to my mother again. "You see what is happening to women wearing hijab? Do you want that to be you? Even all the imams are saying that it is okay to take off the hijab temporarily. Just don't wear it!"

My mother shook her head, *no*. "I will wear it," she said firmly. "I know that the imams have said it's okay to take it off, but I don't want to. My religion says that I should wear it, and so I will wear it. It does not matter to me if it is very unsafe or very difficult for me to wear. In fact, it is in times like these that we should be strong in our faith. If I get hurt because I wear the hijab, that is fine by me. But I will not take it off."

My father looked at my sister and I, sadly, helplessly, as if to say, *I can't get through to her, what do I do?* "Think of your daughters," he pleaded. "If you get hurt, what will happen to them?" "I **do** think of them," she said sharply, her voice rising. "I think about them all the time. If I stop wearing the hijab now, what kind of lesson am I giving them? In this country, we have the freedom to practice our religion, and it is my right to wear the hijab. If I die defending that right, there is no better lesson I could give to my daughters, because they need to understand

that they have to fight for their rights! And stay true to their commitments,

especially if it is a commitment made to God." My father sat down on the couch,

and put his head in his hands.

My sister and I exchanged troubled looks. *Who's right?* I thought. *Who's wrong?*

"They're both right…" I whispered, trailing off. "And they're both wrong," she

finished sadly.

"Okay, um, Mom?" I said, my voice coming out shriller than I had

intended. "Maybe you shouldn't wear it. I was reading this article where the

Islamic congress told people to stay home from school and work because it's so

dangerous (Small & DeMara, 2001). It was talking about how people are getting

attacked and the Islamic centres are getting threats and stuff (Small & DeMara,

2001). It's all over the papers (Gadd, 2001; Read, 2001; Small, 2001; Small &

DeMara, 2001). I'm scared for you. I really, **really**, don't want you to get hurt."

My mother looked me in the eye and said, "Never be afraid to get hurt when you

know you are doing the right thing. When you do the right thing, Allah is with

you. Don't be afraid; you must be brave."

"I wish we didn't have to be brave," I said, miserably. "I wish we could just be

ourselves."

My father turned to face me. "It's time to stop wishing," he said. "And start

doing."

Present Day

I sat back in my chair as I finished reading both these articles for the second time. I closed my eyes, and felt the rush of familiar feelings and thoughts as my memories of reading them the first time flooded my consciousness. These memories left me feeling rather shaken. For the second time, I experienced the shock, sadness, outrage, and most significantly the fear and despair that I had felt upon reading them the first time. Reflective analysis and reflexive analysis both require self-awareness, and I was feeling very self-aware after reliving my memories (Daley, 2010; Finlay, 2002; Pillow, 2003). I thought back to Hertz's (1997) idea about reflexivity, that it meant having "an ongoing conversation about the experience while simultaneously living in the moment" (Hertz, 1997, p. viii). I decided to explore the process of selecting my memories, and the feelings that came with them by having a conversation with my Inner Self about them.

"Why are these memories important, Inner Self?" I asked. "What do they tell me? Why did I choose them for my project?" *"Well,"* she replied. *"You've always loved stories, right? Stories are like your lifeblood. You live them and relate them all the time. I think you chose these memories because they tell a powerful story."* "You're totally right!" I replied excitedly. "Maybe not the whole story, but these memories definitely tell me part of a story." *"Yeah...it's kind of a sad story,"* she mused. *"It's a tale of loss, exclusion, and discrimination."*

"You're right, it is. So…how?" I asked her. "How did the memories tell the story? You know it can't be a story unless these themes are all brought together by something. They've got to be connected." *"Hmm,"* she said. *"That's true."* She was silent for a while. *"The emotions!"* she said suddenly, *"The emotions are what bring these elements together."* "You're right," I said. "It's the fear, hurt, anger, and sadness that highlight loss, exclusion and discrimination."

"Yes," she said critically. *"But…so what? You've got to go deeper. The emotions bring it all together, but who cares? Why is this story important? What's the point of it?"*

I pondered her question for a while. "The story is important," I told her, "because the feelings and the themes reflected in it point to my Muslim identity being a major factor in my sense of exclusion from mainstream society. The story, or this part of it anyway, tells me that Muslims don't belong in this society. This feeling of exclusion has impacted the way I live my life, and the way I conduct my social work practice." *"There you go,"* she said. *"Now we can talk about how these feelings and themes did that for you. Let's break it down together."*

I thought back to my memories of reading both articles. I noticed that my memories highlighted several different kinds of loss, but there were three that really shone through for me: the loss of human life, and the loss of personal freedom and security, and the loss of personhood. "So there's the loss of human life, and the loss of personal freedom and security," I told her. "I was

experiencing the loss of human life much the same way everyone else was, you know? Like the shock of all those people being dead, and the worry and fear for my own loved ones that lived in New York, and how relieved I was when I learned that they were okay." I paused.

"Continue," she encouraged. "I didn't get to experience the loss of human life for long though," I said. "It almost immediately gave way to the other loss, the one of personal freedom and safety. It was just two days later when the newspapers began printing stuff about how Muslims shouldn't leave their houses because they were getting attacked (Small & DeMara, 2001). People already started to take out their anger on ordinary Muslims (Small & DeMara, 2001)." *"As though they were responsible for the attacks,"* she said. "Exactly," I said. "So then ordinary Muslims like me and my family members had to think twice about leaving the house, and think twice about what we wore outside our houses, whether it was a hijab or a t-shirt. We would have to change our modes of dress so that we weren't so obviously Muslim. So we could stay safe." *"So your freedom and safety was restricted, more than it was for non-Muslims,"* she said. "Yes, I think that's right," I agreed. *"That's a bit like oppression, isn't it?"* she asked.

I thought about this for a moment. "I suppose it is," I answered. "The dictionary definition of oppression talks about using power in an unjust way, but if you read Paulo Freire, oppression is inextricably linked to the loss of freedom (Freire, 1970; Oppression, n.d.). In fact, not only does he say that it's linked to the

loss of freedom, he also links oppression to the loss of humanity (Freire, 1970). That's what I mean by the loss of personhood."

"Hmm," she said. *"So even though we Muslims were on the receiving end of the attacks like everyone else, we weren't recognized that way, because the overarching oppressive system that we live in did not allow people to see us as individual human beings (Freire, 1970; McLaughlin, 2005). Instead, we were assumed to be the perpetrators of the attacks, just because of our religious identity."* "Right," I said. "We, as Muslims, lost our personhood, the ability, or the right maybe, to be seen as individuals, as human beings." *"Our feelings of hurt, sadness and anger over the attacks were erased simply because we are Muslim,"* she said. *"And so, this discriminatory attitude added to our personal losses while completely invalidating them at the same time."*

"What exactly **was** the discriminatory attitude?" I asked. Inner Self was silent for a while. Then she said, *"That whole…idea, you know? That idea that Muslims are completely different from other groups in mainstream society, and not in a good way. That's the idea that makes you an outcast."* "The idea," I said. "that Muslims can't belong to the same group of innocent people that was on the receiving end of these attacks, because they belong to the perpetrator group – a group they're thrown into just because they're Muslim. I mean, I'm not a criminal. And neither is anyone else in my family." *"Yes,"* she replied. *"But you and I already knew that."*

I paused. "Am I being too sensitive?" I asked her. "Am I over-exaggerating my

feelings about being excluded? Is this one of those situations where I'm seeing discrimination where it doesn't exist?"

She laughed. *"Don't you think that sounds like you're discounting your lived experiences? Hasn't your education in social work taught you **not** to do that so far?"* (Fook, 2012; Ortiz & Jani, 2010) "I suppose it has," I replied. "But what do **you** think?" *"I think that where there is smoke, there is usually a fire. And your experiences, as reflected in this part of the story, seem to constitute smoke."* I mulled this over for a while, considering the contested notions of objectivity within research (Daley, 2010; Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011; Finlay, 2002; Pace, 2012; Pillow, 2003).

"Besides," she continued. *"You're not the only one who has felt like there is a predominating racist, exclusionary discourse about Muslims. Ortiz and Jani (2010) have said that, and so has Edward Said (1978; 1981)."* "That is true," I replied. "And I know that Van Dijk (1991; 2000) has said that specifically about the discourse of the news media." *"So did Steuter and Wills (2009),"* she said. "So then…I'm **not** crazy to have reacted the way I did to those articles." *"No, you're not,"* she replied.

"I don't know," I said wearily. "Maybe I am and maybe I'm not. I just hope I can learn something from these memories."

"I hope so too," she said.

Chapter 5: "No one can deny the truth any longer. It is Islam that inspires the murders every time again."

– Geert Wilders, head of the Freedom Party in the Netherlands (Talaga, 2015, p. A11)

On Thursday, January 8th, 2015, I woke up early and headed downstairs to the kitchen. I began making breakfast for my husband. Usually, he and I woke up at the same time and prepared our own meals together, but that day was different. I made sure to get up before him, and before our baby woke up, so that I could make him his favourite breakfast – chocolate chip waffles with whipped cream. I smiled to myself as I put the kettle on. *He's going to love this*, I thought. It was his birthday.

And he did love it. "Waffles!" he exclaimed as he made his way downstairs. He ate every bite before he headed out for work that day. The rest of my day was spent making birthday plans for the evening, and taking care of our son, who was 6 months old. I was on maternity leave from my job as a child protection worker, and was due to return to work later that year. I eagerly anticipated my husband's return home, so that we could commence the celebrations.

But when he came home from work, his expression was grim. "Have you heard?" he asked. "Heard what? No, I haven't heard anything," I replied. "What are you talking about?" "Apparently, it's all over the news," he said. "Someone

killed a group of journalists in Paris." He flopped down on our sofa and ran his hands over his face.

"Oh, God," I said, hesitating to even utter my next word. "Muslims?" "Of course," he said wearily. "Said and Cherif Kouachi. Of course it was Muslims who did it, it always is now, isn't it?" "How many?" I asked, afraid of the answer. "How many dead?" "I don't know the details," he said. "I didn't read the news yet, but everyone at work was talking about it. I've been trying to stay away from newsfeeds and newspapers today. I was hoping to stay happy on my birthday." He sighed. "So much for that." I shook my head sadly. He turned on the television and we both turned towards it so we could watch the news.

In the days following the attacks on the offices of Charlie Hebdo, the French satirical news magazine, I once again found myself constantly reading and watching the news. There were so many programs and articles that covered the attacks, and many of them had an emotional impact on me. The more I read and watched, however, the more uneasy I got about the way Muslims in general were being talked about. There were two articles in particular that fueled my discomfort, and it was this discomfort that forced me to embark on a reflective and reflexive journey again (Daley, 2010; Finlay, 2002; Pillow, 2003).

The first piece of news that particularly worried me was Margaret Wente's (2015) article, entitled "France's Problems Are in Plain Sight". *The Globe and Mail* published the article, and I read it on the day after it first appeared - January

9th, 2015. I initially read it because the title gave me hope that it would discuss

some of the social inequalities in France. Instead, it talked about France's

problems with terrorism and immigration. The following is an excerpt from that

article:

> The terrorists who struck in the heart of Paris on Wednesday were not
> mentally imbalanced or socially marginalized. They were highly organized
> assassins who believe the West should live under a caliphate governed by
> strict Islamist law, and that blasphemers should die. This attack…may
> well pitch the country into profound crisis, because it crystallizes what
> everybody knows. France has a serious Muslim problem, a serious
> immigration problem and a serious terrorism problem, and the political
> class has no idea what to do about it. France is an easy target for Islamist
> terrorists because a large number of French Muslims are sympathetic to
> their causes. (Wente, 2015, p. A15).

Really, I thought skeptically. *A "large number" of Muslims are

sympathetic…based on what? Did they do a poll?* I skimmed through to see if any

surveys taken by Muslims were mentioned in the article. They weren't. I had

grown increasingly critical of the news media since the September 11 attacks in

2001. *I hate that word, 'Islamist'*, I thought. *It's so similar to 'Islamic' that every

time I read it, my brain thinks it read 'Islamic' and it's a while before I realize it

actually said 'Islamist', not 'Islamic'.* I paused and wondered how many other

people had encountered this same issue, causing them to confuse the two terms.

Probably a lot, I worried, *and that's a problem because the words have different

meanings. The word "Islamist" means "an advocate or supporter of Islamic

militancy or fundamentalism" while "Islamic" means anything "relating to

Islam" as a religion (Islamic, n.d.; Islamist, n.d.).* I read over the words "Muslim

problem" again. *Nice to know though,* I thought bitterly, *that **we're** the problem with France.* I felt tired as I contemplated the attitudes, ideas and language presented by Wente (2015). The tiredness overcame me as I put the newspaper aside and tried to put it out of my mind for the rest of the day so I could take care of my son.

Later that night, I was sitting in my living room with my husband. I had just put our son to bed, and we were having a cup of tea together. Since the previous day, we had not been able to talk about anything other than the attacks, and what they would mean for us as Muslims living in Canada.

"This is going to make things so much worse," I said to him, anxiety creeping into my voice. "I've read so many articles where I felt like they were talking about Muslims as though we're all the same person." "You should hear what people are saying on the radio," he said darkly. "I listen to the news radio programs in my car on the way to and from work, and when people call in…the things they say." He shook his head. "It's like the words 'Muslim' and 'terrorist' have the same meaning." We both silently sipped our tea, contemplating the possible implications of this. *Little warm comforts like sipping tea*, I thought. *Feels like the calm before the storm.*

"You know that a Muslim died in the attacks too, right?" he said suddenly. "What? Where?" I said, surprised. I couldn't recall having read about that in the papers. "Yeah," he said, "Ahmed Merabet. He was the police officer on the beat

when the attacks happened." "I don't remember reading about him," I said, perplexed. "He's in there," he replied, "All the papers have mentioned him, but you have to **really** be paying attention to what you're reading."

I thought back to what I had read earlier that day. "But then, how can they say things like, 'France has a serious Muslim problem'? I mean, if there are Muslim police officers, and one of them died in the attacks, then obviously not all French Muslims are part of the problem (Wente, 2015, A15)."

My husband was silent for some time. "I don't think his death matters to the press," he said slowly. He swirled the tea in his mug before finishing it in one big gulp. "Muslims like you and me, and him…they can't make like our deaths matter, because that would make people sympathize with us. And people can't sympathize with us, because if they do, then we can't be 'the problem'."

I thought a lot about Police Officer Merabet after our conversation. I found it odd and unsettling that I had somehow missed articles about him despite having carefully followed the news about the attacks. I searched through the papers again, this time for articles that talked about him specifically, and I did manage to find some. As my husband had said, however, they were usually not prominent, front page articles. Of note was an editorial piece mentioning him that was published in The National Post on January 9th, 2015, entitled "We Are Not Immune". The following is an excerpt from that editorial piece:

It is ironic indeed that Officer Merabet would have his life ended by men not all that different from himself…[we] have little doubt that there are thousands of Officer Merabets for every Kouachi brother. But there are others like the Kouachis out there…[one] step proposed by the Conservative government strikes us as entirely sensible: When a Canadian suspected on reasonable grounds of being radicalized leaves the country, revoke his passport. That is one fast way to prevent them from bringing home any nasty business learned abroad to try out on our streets. (National Post Editorial Board, 2015, p. A8)

As I read this article, I felt a now-familiar clenching sensation in my chest. The more I read, the tighter the sensation got. By the end of the editorial, I was having a hard time breathing. I looked at my hands. They were shaking as I wiped them clean of sweat and willed myself to breathe. *C'mon now*, I told myself. *You know what this is, you know what to do. It's just a panic attack. Remember what the doctor said, breathe and count, breathe and count.* I breathed, and I counted. The clenching eventually subsided, but when it did, I found I was rather angry. I re-read the words in front of me.

Not all that different? I thought angrily. *Officer Merabet was NOT THAT ALL THAT DIFFERENT from the Kouachi brothers?? Good Lord, how on **earth** were they **similar**? They shared a common birthplace and religion, but **that's it.*** In the other articles I had read, the Kouachi brothers were described as orphans who had grown up in the foster care system in France, and the younger Kouachi brother had a criminal record (Hamilton, 2015). Somehow they became radicalized and ended up killing 12 people (Hamilton, 2015). Officer Merabet had also grown up in France but not in the foster care system, and far from becoming a murderer, he had dedicated his life to the safety of the communities he worked

in (Watt & Gardner, 2015). The vast differences between him and the Kouachi brothers were glaringly obvious to me, and yet he was still being described as similar to them. *Probably just because they were both Muslim,* I realized miserably.

My eyes ran over the words, "We have little doubt that there are thousands of Officer Merabets for every Kouachi brother. But..." *But who cares, right?* I finished the sentence in my mind. *But what does that matter when there are still "Kouachi brothers" out there – let's focus on that.* And focus on that they did. The piece went on to talk about how this kind of attack could certainly take place in Canada, and that this was a possibility that we should all take to heart. I felt a sickening in the pit of my stomach as I read on to discover how we, as Canadians, should take this threat to our safety seriously.

The words "suspected on reasonable grounds of being radicalized" and "revoke his passport" jumped out at me again (National Post Editorial Board, 2015, A8). *So not even "suspected of terrorist activity"?* I thought fearfully. *Not "convicted of terrorism", but suspected of "being radicalized". What does that even **mean**?* I shut my eyes tightly. *My God, could **I** be suspected of that? Who would define what is radical? Probably not Muslims. And what, exactly, would constitute "reasonable grounds"?* I cast a glance at my bookshelf, full of texts about radical reform in social work, radical reform in Islam, terrorism and genocide, not to mention book after book about the Qur'an and Islam. I

swallowed my rising nausea. *I **could** be suspected of that,* I worried. *It all just depends on exactly how crazy things get around here.*

Wait a minute though, my voice of reason finally piped up. *You're being alarmist. You're getting ahead of yourself. That won't happen. And as far as revoking your passport, well they can't just do that to a Canadian citizen. It's not that simple.* I nodded, confirming this belief, feeling slightly relieved. I went back to re-reading the article.

*But it could **become** that simple,* I suddenly realized, with horror. When you talk about something as dangerous as the - only vaguely warranted - revoking of citizen's passports, **and it's fully supported by the government**, it becomes much simpler to target specific groups of people. *So much for visiting Pakistan to see family,* I thought. *Wouldn't want me bringing back "any nasty business" I learned abroad. Because if I'm honest with myself, I know now that the "them" mentioned in that sentence means Muslims like me and my family.* I shook my head, attempting to shake off the feelings from this article, refusing to be daunted by my fear. *Something's got to change,* I thought, frustrated. *This can't happen. I need to start **doing** again, just like Dad said. It's time to get to work.*

Present Day

I tucked the two articles neatly back into their folders and pushed the folders away from me. I leaned back, put my hands behind my head and let out a

slow breath. *It's a little different this time,* I realized. I recognized some of the

same emotions that I had upon reliving my memories from the September 11

attacks, but some feelings were different. I rubbed my eyes and thought briefly

about just dismissing my emotions. They were distressing and cumbersome, and I

didn't like feeling them. Then I remembered what Hubbard, Backett-Milburn and

Kemmer (2001) had said about the inclusion of researcher's emotions in research,

and how "our understandings of the social world will remain impoverished" if

emotions are excluded (p. 119). *All right, all right,* I thought tiredly. *Time to wake*

up Inner Self again and have a conversation.

"Hey, Inner Self," I said. "How were my feelings different this time

around and why?" *"Let's see,"* she responded. *"What do we have here…anger,*

hurt, fear, sadness…yeah, it's the shock that's missing. All the other emotions are

there, but the shock is gone." "Why though?" I asked. "Why am I no longer

shocked?" *"Because you're used to it,"* she said simply. *"It's not surprising*

anymore when you constantly read the same things about yourself in the news,

again and again." I thought about this for a moment. "Did shock get replaced by

anything?" I asked her. *"Not sure,"* she said, *"resignation, maybe?"* "No, I feel

way too restless to be resigned," I told her. "I feel like I'm itching to do

something." *"Determination,"* she said. *"That's what replaced shock."* "Yes, that

makes sense," I replied. "I feel resolute."

"So," I said grimly. "My tale of loss, exclusion and discrimination continues, huh?" *"Indeed it does,"* she said thoughtfully. *"But this part of the story highlights those themes in different ways."* "How so?" I asked her. *"Well, this time the loss of human life was muted – you didn't feel that so acutely this time because you don't know anyone in France,"* she reasoned. *"Instead this time, I'm seeing more of the loss of personhood as it relates to human dignity, and the loss of civil rights."* "That is totally spot on," I told her. "There **is** a loss of personhood, which is, once again, connected to Freire's theory of oppression, because it coincides with his idea that oppression is linked with the loss of humanity and freedom (Freire, 1970)." *"Yes, exactly,"* she said. "But what about the loss of civil rights?" I continued. "I can see how that's oppressive, but not sure if it's dehumanizing *per se*." *"It isn't in itself, not quite,"* she agreed. *"I think the loss of civil rights, while indirectly connected to oppression as it pertains to the loss of freedom, is more strongly connected to that age-old, much-loved mantra from feminism – 'the personal is political' (Hanisch, 2000)."* "Ooh, I **love** that saying!" I exclaimed. *"Yes, so do I,"* she said fondly. *"But let's begin at the start. Let's talk about the loss of human dignity."*

I thought back to the Wente (2015) article and how she spoke about Muslims. "You know," I said. "It's really hard to feel dignified when someone tells you that you're a problem. With that label, you can feel pretty worthless. Because, what do you do with a problem? You try to get rid of it. It's nasty, it's unwanted." *"So this is how social constructionism comes into the news media's*

portrayal of Muslims," said Inner Self (Burr, 2015). *"In this article, the news media was using the language, or the discourse of the news media to socially construct an identity for Muslims that is problematic by assigning them with a negative label (Burr, 2015; Said, 1981)."* "It's also *more* of what Freire (1970) was talking about when he spoke of dehumanization," I said thoughtfully. *"You're not a person, you're a thing, and an unwanted thing at that,"* said Inner Self. "Yes, exactly," I said. "I can see this exact same idea again, actually, when I look at Steuter and Wills (2009)," I continued. "They talked about the use of pestilential language, describing Muslims in terms of 'animal imagery' (p.7). Calling us a problem, much like calling us animals, makes us sub-human." *"Sub-human,"* she said scornfully, *"The very epitome of less-than, unequal, lower, base, unworthy…"* "Unworthy of respect…and thus undignified," I finished.

"The issue of human dignity re-appears," I continued after some time, "When my husband and I talk about the deaths of ordinary Muslims like Officer Merabet, and how they don't matter." *"You know, I still can't believe it,"* said Inner Self. *"How easily you missed his death when you first read the newspapers!"* "Yeah. That kind of makes me think of what Van Dijk (1991) and Chomsky (1997) said about the creation of the news," I stated. "They both noted that what does or does not get presented in the news is a reflection of power imbalances in society. So the relative lack of reporting on Officer Merabet's death not only points to it not being newsworthy, or it being unworthy of attention, it also points to the 'lesser' status of Muslims in society. We don't deserve the

respect that comes with attention and concern, even in death." *"You're right,"* she said. *"It also reminds me of what Chomsky (2003) said about the lack of reporting on the deaths of the Vietnamese in the 1960's – for the news media, their deaths just didn't count."* "Chomsky (1997; 2003) **does** tend to get it right," I murmured.

"So what about the loss of civil rights?" she asked. "Well," I replied, "civil rights typically encompass the rights to certain freedoms, like freedom of thought, and freedom of religion (Donnelly, 2003; Wharf Higgins, 1999). According to Jack Donnelly (2003), human 'rights simultaneously constitute individuals as equal and autonomous citizens and states as polities fit to govern such rights-bearing citizens' (p. 45). You're not exactly autonomous when your very movement, your travel, is restricted by the fear of losing your passport." *"And you're not exactly equal when it's only a specific group that is targeted for that – like Muslims,"* she said. "Right," I agreed. "Because, let's be real here…who **else** but Muslims, Arabs, or people from the Middle East in general, would be suspected of radicalization?"

"And then to say," I continued, "that your passport could be revoked because of that. Having a passport is a right that comes with Canadian citizenship (Government of Canada, 2012; Government of Canada, 2015). I mean, even if you're a citizen **convicted of a crime**, your passport is not necessarily revoked (Government of Canada, 2016)." *"So to revoke the passport of a citizen who is only **suspected** of something, would be a grave abuse of civil rights,"* she

reasoned. "I believe so," I said. "Doing so would certainly exclude certain people from the rights that come with citizenship. That's a whole other level of exclusion, isn't it?" *"It is,"* agreed Inner Self. *"Plus, with the way it's presented – it's so vague. How would you even go about proving that you, as a Muslim, were singled out for this?"* "It would be practically impossible," I responded. *"Exclusion on both social and political levels…so complex and powerful, yet so quiet and insidious that you couldn't even call it what it is,"* she said worriedly. I was silent as I let this sink in. *"How does this all relate to the notion of the 'personal is political' though?"* she asked eventually (Hanisch, 2000).

"So this is where we can see how the personal and political are interconnected," I answered (Hanisch, 2000; Mullaly, 2007). "In that phrase, the word 'political' is mainly used to describe broader power imbalances in societies (Hanisch, 2000; Mullaly, 2007). We see an example of that power imbalance in the lack of attention given to Officer Merabet's death, which called into question the basic worthiness, or basic human dignity, of Muslims in the eyes of the news media. But in the loss of civil rights, like the rights that come with citizenship, we can see how that theory can also be applied to actual government policies and how they impact individuals (Hanisch, 2000; Mullaly, 2007)." *"Explain more,"* said Inner Self.

"Well," I answered, "events like the Charlie Hebdo attacks tend to shift the political climate somewhat (Kenny-Scherber, 2003). Carol Kenny-Scherber

(2003) talks about the 'stream of problems' and the 'political stream' that have an impact on government policies (p. 93). An event like a major terrorist attack enters into these streams, and creates space for a government to issue a new policy, or change an existing one (Kenny-Scherber, 2003)." *"So an event like this gets taken up by the public, and by news media, and others,"* said Inner Self, *"and that leads to the government saying something along the lines of, 'citizens' passports can be revoked if they're suspected of radicalization' (Kenny-Scherber, 2003)."* "Yes, that's right," I said. "So a shift in political climate can lead to a policy change, and in the case of the Charlie Hebdo attacks, it was a policy change that would contribute to the systematic discrimination against Muslims – thus impacting our daily lives." *"And further excluding us from society,"* Inner Self concluded. "Essentially, yes," I said.

"It didn't really stop there though, did it?" Inner Self reminisced. *"In the months following the Charlie Hebdo attacks, the Harper conservative government started introducing other new policies that were just as discriminatory."* "Yeah," I responded darkly. "Like the two-tiered citizenship bill (Black, 2015). Under that law, you could lose your citizenship if you had dual nationality and if you committed a crime in Canada or abroad, or if you weren't born in Canada and moved somewhere else (Black, 2015). I mean, under that law, my parents would lose their Canadian citizenship because they briefly lived in another country." *"It was criticized for being anti-immigration,"* said Inner Self (Black, 2015). "Yeah," I said, "**and** for being in violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and

Freedoms (Black, 2015)." *"And yet it was still set to go through,"* said Inner Self (National Post Editorial Board, 2015). "It sure was," I replied, shaking my head.

"Discrimination can be so scary," she said eventually. "Yes," I agreed, "Especially when it starts getting support from governments and their policies." *"It's one thing to be excluded,"* she continued, *"singled out, taunted and insulted by our fellow citizens because of our religious identity. **That** leads to serious personal losses and hurt feelings,"* she said. *"But like you said, it's a whole other level when your government starts coming out with policies that strengthen and support the discrimination and exclusion of a specific group of people. It's like, where does it go from there? Where **can** it go from there?"* I shuddered. "I don't think I really want to know the answer to that question," I told her. *"Hull (2003) talked about 'problem populations' and 'final solutions',"* she continued. *"And Steuter and Wills (2009) talked about dehumanizing language as setting the stage for something as awful as genocide."* "Yeah," I said, a deep sense of unease settling itself in the pit of my stomach. "I know they did."

"So let's use your research to speak out against that kind of discrimination. Maybe you can't stop 'final solutions' from happening by yourself, but at least you can make a start," Inner Self told me (Hull, 2003). "Yes," I agreed. "Let's do that."

Chapter 6: "I'm so bloody sick of these savages shooting and bombing…I'm Islamed out. I'm tired of Islam, 24/7…day after day after day."

- Mark Steyn, journalist (The National Post, 2015, p. A10)

On Friday, November 13th, 2015, I came home from school after having picked up my son from the babysitter's. I had quit my job as a child protection worker a few months before and was enrolled as a full-time student in the Master's of Social Work program at McMaster University. My son and I spent the evening as usual. We did some learning activities, practiced walking, and played games with each other, him shrieking with laughter as we chased and tickled each other. We went through dinner (during which he demonstrated his food policy: eat less, and throw more), after-dinner cleanup (during which he cleaned less and threw more), and finally it was bath time and bedtime. My husband quietly came home from work as I was starting to put our son to sleep.

It was just past 9:30 PM when I came into the room where my husband was watching television. I yawned and started preparing for my nightly ablutions before going to sleep. "Um, Saadiaa?" he said tentatively. "I know you hate watching the news now, but…you're going to want to see this." I sighed. I was exhausted. I had been on my feet for the past 16 hours and I **really** just wanted to go to sleep. "What is it?" I asked wearily, warily. "Just watch," he said.

I watched with increasing horror as the news program covered the deadly Paris attacks as they were unfolding. I clutched my face as I watched in fear as

news of more and more attacks came forth. It seemed endless. The soccer stadium. The restaurant. The other restaurant. The third restaurant. The concert hall. And all those people…dead, dead and even more dead. Killed while they were engaging in activities that I myself loved: going out to eat, enjoying music at a concert. It was like September 11, all over again. And of course, all at the hands of Muslims. *So-called Muslims, more like,* I thought derisively. At some point my fear gave way to anger, and I began pacing the room. "These people, these ISIS people," I said furiously, struggling to find words. "They're so… so stupid and…and evil!! Can't they see what they're doing?" I gestured wildly at the television screen. "Look at this! What is this going to do? Get them revenge? At what cost? What did these poor people ever do to deserve this?" "Daesh," said my husband softly. "What?" "Call them Daesh," he said. "ISIS stands for 'Islamic State of Iraq and Syria'. There's nothing Islamic about what they're doing. Daesh is what they are called in Arabic-speaking countries, and it's a name that they don't like."

I sat down, my anger deflating and giving way to fear and sadness again. "What does this mean for us?" I said, rubbing my eyes. "These bastards, they do these things, and then people like you and me have to deal with the consequences. They don't even care about Muslims," I said desperately, "about how many Muslims they kill, or how much more difficult their actions make things for Muslims in general." We both fell silent as we contemplated what the future would hold for us.

"So where would we go?" my husband asked eventually. I looked at him, half hoping that he was kidding. His expression was grave. "I mean, you know it's going to get bad for us," he continued. "It already isn't exactly great, it's obviously just going to get worse now. Where can we go when it gets really bad?" "Well…there's always Pakistan," I said uncertainly. "I mean, we have citizenship for both countries, they wouldn't deny us entry." "True," he countered. "But if it gets so bad in **Canada**, of all places, that we feel the need to leave, I'm guessing that the state of the world will be rather different than it is now. What if the Daesh have spread to Pakistan by then?" "Then maybe Dubai?" I asked nervously. "Hmm," he said thoughtfully. "Dubai may not be a bad option."

"How are you so calm?" I burst out. "I'm totally freaking out here." "I'm not exactly calm *per se*," he said grimly. "I've just lived through a war before. So I know what to expect, and what to do when things get really bad, because I have experience with it." We both fell silent again, lost in our own thoughts about the unspoken, undeclared war against Muslims.

"Thank God for Justin Trudeau," I said finally. "Can you imagine what Stephen Harper would have done with this?" "I don't even want to think about it," he said wearily. "Him with his two-tiered citizenship and revoking passports."

Following the attacks, I spent my days caught in a vicious cycle. The news reports fueled my worry for the future, and my worry for the future kept me obsessively reading the news. What I found was simultaneously alarming and

soothing. There were many reports on the attacks against Muslims, which was good, but these came alongside articles that assigned Muslims with negative labels. Of the many articles that had an impact on me during this time, there were two that stayed with me. They were almost like polar opposites in their overall message, and they also had opposing effects on me: one added to my fear and consternation, while one soothed me and gave me hope. What follows is my reflective and reflexive journey through the memories and conversations about those two articles (Daley, 2010; Finlay, 2002).

The first article that added to my worry was "The Barbarians Are Already Inside the Gate" by Mark Steyn. It was published on November 16th, 2015 in The National Post. The article can be described as Mark Steyn's reaction to the Paris attacks, and in it, he is highly critical of Muslims, immigration and the responses to the attacks from various politicians. The following is an excerpt from the article:

> I'm so sick of these bloody savages shooting and bombing and killing and blowing up everything I like…there's nowhere to get away from it; the barbarians who yell "Allahu Akbar!" are there waiting for you…then Europe decided to invite millions of Muslims to settle in their countries. Most of those people don't want to participate actively in bringing about the deaths of diners and concertgoers and soccer fans, but at a certain level most of them either wish or are indifferent to the death of the societies in which they live. (Steyn, 2015, p. A10)

I first read this article online on the night of November 16th, 2015, the day it was printed. Given my hectic schedule, between classes, school work and child care, I had to limit my news-reading time to nights, right before I went to sleep.

Mark Steyn's article confirmed some of my worst fears at the time: that Muslims were thought of as "barbarians" and "savages", and that all Muslims would be painted with the same brush, thus creating space for average Muslims like myself and those poor Muslim refugees that were trying to flee the Daesh to be targeted and punished for the crimes of a few murderous people. As I finished reading, I realized that my teeth were clenched and my nails were white from gripping the edges of my phone. *My God, think of what you're saying,* I told the author in my mind. *Think of what your words will mean to us, and what they will mean **for** us.*

I couldn't get his words out of my mind. *He's sick of "these bloody savages" killing and bombing,* I worried, *but he didn't make clear who exactly the bloody savages **are** (Steyn, 2015, p. A10). Is he talking about the specific people that carried out the attacks? Or is he talking about all Muslims?* I puzzled over this for a while, exploring my own feelings of anger towards the perpetrators of these attacks. *It doesn't really matter what his intention was though,* I realized, *because people are going to read it the way they're going to read it. And if there's no specificity, no clarity about who he **means** to call savages, then it creates room for readers to assume he's talking about all Muslims.*

I couldn't sleep. As I tossed and turned, the words "the barbarians who yell 'Allahu Akbar!' are there waiting for you" came back to mind (Steyn, 2015, p. A10). *But Muslims generally say "Allahu Akbar" **all the time**,* I thought anxiously. *It's only delusional murderers like the Daesh who say it before they kill people - because they're wrong and evil.* I thought of the number of times

"Allahu Akbar" (meaning "God is great") is said in each azaan, the call to prayer, five times a day. *Not to mention the many times,* I thought, *we say "Allahu Akbar" during the actual prayer. But now in this article,* I realized sadly, *and with the acts of these terrorists, this phrase that we say, this beautiful remembrance of God's glory, is getting associated with murder and barbarism.*

So if people who yell "Allahu Akbar" are barbarians, then, well, all Muslims are barbarians. Stands to reason, right? I thought bitterly. *Ugh, there's no use trying to sleep.* I sat up, and took out my phone to bring up the article. I went over Steyn's (2015) words again, "…most of them either wish or are indifferent to the death of the societies in which they live…" (p. A10). I made a disbelieving noise. *"Most of them"*, I thought, *again, where's the poll? How can you say for sure that "most" of them don't care?*

I wondered about how the language and ideas in this article would impact the general public's perception of the 25,000 Syrian refugees Justin Trudeau had promised to bring to Canada (Curry, 2015). My heart twisted as I recalled the image I had seen in the news lately of the drowned body of a Syrian refugee child that had washed up on a beach (MacKinnon, 2015). He had looked no bigger than my son. My sadness turned to revulsion and anger, however, as I recalled how the French magazine Charlie Hebdo had used that image to imply that the child would have grown up to be a perpetrator of sexual assault because of the attacks in Cologne, Germany (Allegretti, 2016). My restless wonderings, and my mixture of emotions compelled me to put down the article and go check on my child.

As I looked at his innocent, sleeping face, I wondered, *What would he think if he read Mark Steyn's article? What would it make him think about Muslims? What would it tell him about who he is, about his Muslim identity?* I thought about my husband's idea that we should move to a Muslim-majority country. *Maybe we should,* I mused. *Maybe, if we want our son to feel proud of his identity, we need to leave.* I shook my head at the sadness of this reality and headed back to bed, hoping to find solace in slumber.

After I initially read this article, it felt as though every day there was a report of some fresh hate crime against Muslims, overwhelmingly Muslim women, in Canada, in the U.S., and in England. It seemed like Muslims were getting attacked all over the place. I began to feel desperate, like someone had to do something about the violence and the discrimination against Muslims, like there had to be someone who spoke out against the discrimination.

I started looking for things that Muslims had written about the terrorist attacks, and I came across an article in The Globe and Mail entitled "Not in Our Name: It's Time for Muslims to Reclaim Islam". It was printed on November 16, 2015, but I didn't read it until several weeks later in December. The article is written by Dany and Lisa Assaf, Muslim lawyers from Toronto, and in it, they discuss the need for Muslims to speak out against terrorists like the Daesh. The following is an excerpt from that article:

> There is a criminal gang masquerading as some kind of extreme Muslim movement, terrorizing and killing innocent people…Enough is enough. As

heartbroken Canadians and as Muslims, we are here to reiterate and shout to these criminals: Not in our name. This savagery is no more Muslim than the Ku Klux Klan represents Christianity. The Islam we know emphasizes that the taking of one innocent life is as if one killed all of humanity and that God created us as different nations and tribes for us to enjoy life's diversity – not to hate one another. It also clearly dictates that there is no compulsion in religion. What we see from the so-called Islamic State is not Islam under any interpretation. (Assaf & Assaf, 2015, p. A12)

YES! I thought, jubilantly. *Finally! Finally an article that says exactly what I'm thinking and feeling! Finally, proof that there is someone out there who feels the same way as me, proof that I'm not alone and I'm not crazy!* I happily read the whole article, again and again, feeling so relieved I could've cried. *Thank you, Dany and Lisa Assaf! I don't know you, but thank you for writing this article!*

Their understanding of Islam was the Islam that my husband and I had been raised with, and that we were trying to raise our son with. The Islam that taught peace, tolerance, love and acceptance. The Islam that condemned killing, rape and ill-treatment of women and children. And most of all, the Islam that taught us that all human beings were created equal but different so that we may learn from each other and respect each other.

As I went over the article again, my eyes caught the words, "Unfortunately, all religions are susceptible to slander and abuse…[we] feel sick at what these so-called Muslims are doing under a banner of Islam" – *Yes, yes, exactly!* I thought excitedly (Assaf & Assaf, 2015, p. A12). *That's exactly right – all religions can be abused by their followers – it's the people carrying out these heinous acts that are solely to blame, not the religion!*

Finally, the authors complimented Canada in its ability to "engage with the world", and I couldn't have agreed more (Assaf & Assaf, 2015, p. A12). This article gave me the hope, and the confidence that I needed to proceed. Even though it was just one article that spoke the truth about Islam while floating in a sea of articles that perpetuated misconceptions about it, it was enough for me. The two Canadian Muslims' voices may not have made front-page news, but they clarified their positions, and stated their purpose in a way that would be read and understood by many. *This is why,* I thought, *this is why we, as Muslims, have got to turn to action. Even if two of us, like these lawyers, engage in resistance, and that act of resistance has the potential to give one person hope, that is a step in the right direction.*

I thought about resistance, and the different forms it could take. Dany and Lisa Assaf (2015) had chosen to write an article for the newspaper to have their voices heard. I remembered my mother adamantly refusing to take off her hijab to defend her right to practice religion, despite being encouraged to do so for her safety. I recalled my father encouraging me to "start doing", and my husband persuading me to watch the news even though I didn't want to. I pondered the ways in which I could engage in resistance, and thought of my idea to use the terrorist attacks and their connection to Muslims as a topic for my thesis. Because of this article, I began to see how I could use writing as a form of resistance, and as a way to have my voice heard. *Maybe I won't have the readership of The Globe and Mail,* I thought, *but at least it would be a start.*

Present Day

I set aside my articles and looked around me. I was surrounded by heaps and heaps of papers, newspaper articles, books and other scholarly articles. I felt dishevelled, unkempt and disorganized, but oddly contented and calm. *How different*, I thought to myself, *than before. I started off feeling the same as earlier, but now I feel calmer, even more determined somehow.* I realized that this time around, my emotions were different than when I had finished reading and remembering the articles from the previous two chapters. This worried me a little, and I thought once again of those who had criticized the use of reflexivity in research (Daley, 2010; Ellis, Adams &Bochner, 2011; Finlay, 2002; Pace, 2012; Pillow, 2003). *How do I reconcile the problems of representation when my feelings are all over the place?* I wondered. Then I remembered what Finlay (2002) had said about reflection being used to provide a new perspective, not an absolute truth. *And experiences will naturally change emotions and perspectives. All right then, off we go,* I thought, smiling to myself.

"How are you, Inner Self?" I asked. *"Oh, much better than before, thanks,"* she answered. *"I see you're feeling calmer, that's good!"* "Any insights on why?" I asked her. *"Of course,"* she replied. *"So there are the usual emotions – the hurt, anger sadness, and fear."* "Right," I said, "Continue." *"This time around, shock made a bit of a comeback but was again replaced by determination,"* she went on, *"and then I saw a new emotion rise up – hope. It's*

the hope that is ultimately making you feel calm, and it is also feeding the determination." "That's correct," I said as comprehension dawned on me. "It's a bit like an awakening, isn't it?" I said to her. *"Indeed, it is,"* she replied. I pondered this for a moment.

"So in this part, the story takes on a slightly new turn," I told her. "It's still a tale of loss, exclusion and discrimination, but here it is slowly becoming a journey towards hope and resistance" *"That's correct,"* she said. "I like that," I said, smiling. "I like happy endings." *"Well, let's not get too ahead of ourselves,"* she responded sensibly, *"there is still a lot of stuff to deconstruct, and lots to do."*

"All right, so let's get to work," I said. "How is this part of the story characterized by loss?" *"There is one main kind of loss in this part of the story, so far as I can tell,"* she replied. *"There is the loss of personhood, but this time the loss of personhood seems to be connected to a loss of pride in one's identity."* "Hmm," I said, "kind of like a loss of self-esteem you mean?" *"In a sense,"* she said, *"but more general than that because it's a loss that can apply to a group of people rather than just one person, because it's a loss that is shared by those with a particular religious identity."* "Yes," I agreed. "But why did that loss of pride in my identity occur?" *"Because your identity was being conflated with the identity of the terrorists,"* she replied simply. "Which was oppressive because it denied me my individuality," I said. "So once again, we are seeing Freire's (1970) theory of oppression as it relates to the loss of humanity," I said. *"Yes,"* she replied. *"But*

even more importantly, because the story is taking a turn for the positive, we are

also seeing how his theory of oppression relates to his ideas about hope, love and

resistance (Freire, 1970). So let's get started. Let's talk about loss."

"Okay," I replied. I thought for a moment. "Just like it's hard to feel

dignified, or worthy of respect, when you are described as a problem, it is also

very hard to feel proud of yourself, of your identity, when you are regularly

described as a 'barbarian' or a 'savage.'" *"Or a criminal,"* she said darkly.

"Right," I agreed. "And this loss of pride can be a pretty dangerous thing. "It

paves the way for all kinds of personal issues – issues that can perpetuate

oppression." *"What kinds of issues?"* she asked. "So there's the usual sadness that

comes with being on the receiving end of insults – you could get depressed," I

answered, "But there's also what Paulo Freire (1970) describes as 'self-

depreciation' (p. 63). He talks about how the oppressed eventually internalize the

oppressor's opinion of them (Freire, 1970). He said, 'So often do they hear…that

they are sick, lazy, and unproductive – that in the end they become convinced of

their own unfitness' (Freire, 1970, p. 63)." *"When we constantly read about*

ourselves as 'barbarians' or 'savages', or 'criminals'," she said thoughtfully, *"it*

paves the way for us to start believing that about ourselves." "Hence my worry

about my son," I said. "I don't want him to believe that about himself." *"Or,"* she

said, *"he could refuse to believe that about himself, but in so doing, completely*

reject his Muslim identity." "Yeah," I said quietly. "That could happen, too."

Inner Self gave a huge sigh. *"It's **so** important that your son not associate his Muslim identity with terrorism,"* she said fervently. "Yeah," I said, matching her tone, "and he also can't associate being Muslim with being a murderer, or a savage, or a barbarian." *"Yes, that's true,"* she said worriedly. *"We can see here how the news media is socially constructing a Muslim identity that is dehumanized and criminalized, and we know that the news media's power and influence when it comes to socially constructing reality is strong (Burr, 2015; Surette, 1992; Van Dijk, 1991)."* "And it's all because of these terrorists…Inner Self?" I asked, as my feelings of anger towards the terrorists resurfaced, "There's something on my mind that I can't quite figure out. Whenever I get angry with the terrorists, I think that they're barbarians too." *"Riiight,"* she said, *"and…?"* "Well, in my anger, I said things about them," I continued in a rush. "I referred to them as 'stupid' and 'evil', as 'so-called Muslims' and 'those ISIS people'. Why did I do that?" Inner Self was quiet as she contemplated my question. "I mean," I said, "I understand why I was angry at them, because I think that what they're doing is wrong, but why do I refer to them in those terms?"

"This goes back to what I said earlier," she replied, *"about your identity becoming conflated with the identity of the terrorists. You don't want that to happen – so you said those things to separate yourself from the people that were committing those crimes."* Realization dawned on me as I thought about my **need** to be separate from them. "Oh, my God, you're right!!" I shouted. "I can't believe I never saw that before! I needed to make it crystal clear that the Muslims that

perpetrated the attacks were not the same as me and all of the other Muslims I know. That discriminatory idea, that all Muslims are the same, and its strong presence in the news media was forcing me to create a distinction between myself and the terrorists, a distinction that should have been intuitively understood by everyone, but wasn't, because Muslims have lost their humanity, their personhood."

"So now, there is a new theme emerging," said Inner Self thoughtfully. *"In addition to loss, discrimination and exclusion, there is also the theme of internalized oppression."* "You're right," I said. "The themes of hope and resistance were kind of there already, but I understood them differently – I thought that they were just connected to my wanting to do something about how Muslims were talked about in the news media. But now that I can see the theme of internalized oppression, and how my son's perception of self along with my own self-perception is at risk because of it, I see how that is actually what is really fueling the hope and resistance."

"That's right," said Inner Self. *"When you spoke of the terrorists in negative terms, you were responding to the impending self-depreciation that comes with discrimination (Freire, 1970). Essentially, the discriminatory attitudes towards Muslims in the news articles were, sort of, pushing you to internalize the message that Muslims are criminals, are unworthy, sub-human, undignified, and you were refusing to buy into that by saying that the terrorists were different than*

you." "Just like Dany and Lisa Assaf (2015)," I mused. "The loss of pride in my Muslim identity was connected to the loss of individuality, the dehumanization of Muslims. Can you break this down more clearly so I can see how it relates to discrimination?"

"Well, let's think for a moment about what discrimination actually is," she replied. *"It's not discrimination if these labels and targeting behaviours are applied liberally to everyone in the country, regardless of their various identity markers (Discrimination, n.d.)."* "Discrimination is actually defined as the 'act or instance of…making a distinction' (Discrimination, n.d.)," I said. "It's only discrimination if a certain group or category of people is being singled out for something," *"Yes,"* she replied. *"The language in the first article is a prime example of discrimination, because those labels – 'savage', 'barbarian' – were exclusively applied to Muslim terrorists, or Muslim immigrants."* "That's true," I said. "No one else, no other groups are referred to with those words. And the same could be said for some of the other articles that were included in this study (Brown, 2001; National Post Editorial Board, 2015; Wente, 2015)." *"Yeah,"* she replied, *"so basically, the loss of your personhood, and the consequent loss of pride in your identity, is connected to discrimination because you belong to the single group of people – Muslims – that is being targeted for that loss."* "And that loss," I continued sadly, "is putting me at risk of internalizing the negative labels that are assigned to me (Freire, 1970)." *"Yes, exactly,"* said Inner Self.

"Hope," I said thoughtfully after some time, "is what we have to have, so that ideas like that about Muslims, that we are 'barbarians' or 'savages' never really take hold here in Canada. Where did we see hope in the memories of the articles?" Inner Self was silent for a while as she recalled the memories. *"Hope shows up throughout this work,"* she reflected, *"It's there in all the memories, where it fuels resistance. But it shows up most prominently here when you discussed the last article."* "You're right," I said. "That article reminded me of why I should be proud of my Muslim identity, and why I should have hope." *"Paulo Freire (1970) said that '[hopelessness] is a form of silence, of denying the world and fleeing from it'",* said Inner Self (p. 91). *"It seems that you can't have resistance or liberation, without hope (Freire, 1970)."* "Nor can you have resistance or hope with silence," I replied. *"So Dany and Lisa Assaf (2015) broke the silence,"* said Inner Self, *"just like you are trying to do with this research."* "Yes," I replied, "I'm going to use it to try and start making way for change."

"That sounds like a good plan," she replied.

Chapter 7: "Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift."

– Paulo Freire, Educator and Writer

Discussion

As I read through my autoethnography, and the reflexive and reflective analysis it contains, I wondered what the point of it all was (Daley, 2010). I thought about all of the emotions I had been through, and all of the themes that came out of my memories of these three events. I wanted to make sure that I hadn't been through the shock, fear, hurt, sadness and anger for no reason, and that there had been a purpose to me telling my stories apart from just engaging in self-reflection. I realized that my reflections were nowhere near over, and I could not put aside my reflexive process yet either. I decided to wake up Inner Self, and have a more in-depth conversation with her about the things I had found in my recollections of the three major terrorist attacks.

"Inner Self, are you still there?" I asked. *"I'm always here,"* she said. *"What's up?"* "Oh, everything," I responded. She laughed and said, *"As usual, I guess."* "Yup," I said, "so, what did we learn here? What was the meaning of all this and why did I have to tell these stories? I know that I started off wanting to talk about discrimination and oppression against Muslims in the news media, but what did that tell me?" *"Perhaps the most important question you should be asking me,"* she replied thoughtfully, *"is, what did these stories tell you about yourself?"* "Yeah," I nodded vigorously. "That, too." Inner Self was silent for

quite some time as she contemplated the many questions swirling through my mind. *"It would seem to me,"* she said eventually, *"that we should reflect on the themes that emerged from your autoethnography, and link them to the theories that influenced your understandings of those themes."* "Hmm," I said, rubbing my chin. "That seems to make sense." *"So let's hop to it,"* she said. *"What themes emerged and what theories informed your interpretations of those themes?"*

"Okay – so I know that the themes that emerged were those of loss, discrimination and exclusion, but also, there were themes of internalized oppression, resistance and hope. What theories tied all of them together? *"Come on,"* Inner Self cajoled, *"you're a social worker, you know what theories they were. Why do 'personal troubles' like loss and discrimination matter?"* "Oh!" I cried, "Because they point to the theory that oppression is structural! (Freire, 1970)" *"Spot on!"* cheered Inner Self. *"And what was the other theory that influenced your understandings of the news media from time to time?"* I reflected on my findings and my theoretical framework. "Oh, yeah," I remembered, "the other theory was social constructionism (Burr, 2015)." *"That's right. Now how did the themes appear in your memories?"*

"Well," I said, "the themes of loss, discrimination/exclusion, internalized oppression, and resistance/hope were present throughout the memories and conversations that I presented in the autoethnography." *"So let's go through them, one at a time,"* said Inner Self. "Sure thing," I replied.
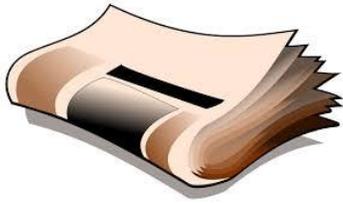
Loss: "The Canadian Islamic Congress is advising Muslims to stay home from work and school in light of a backlash against terrorist attacks in the United States." (Small & DeMara, 2001, p. A2)

"So the first theme that we discussed that emerged from the memories was that of loss," I said. "All of the losses we talked about – the loss of personal safety, the loss of personhood and individuality, the loss of personal dignity and the loss of pride in one's identity – were all personal losses that could be applied to broader issues of systemic oppression," I said. (Mullaly, 2007). *"We see the notion of 'the personal is political' within Freire's (1970) theory of oppression,"* said Inner Self. "That's right," I replied, "Freire (1970) said that oppression is characterized by 'dehumanization', or the loss of one's humanity. He explains that 'dehumanization…is *not* a given destiny, but the result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed (Freire, 1970, p.44). The ways in which one becomes 'dehumanized' would primarily be considered 'personal' losses." *"That reminds me of the loss of personal safety, and the loss of freedom and personhood, especially as they came up in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks,"* Inner Self said. "Right," I replied, "My memories, and the newspaper articles that triggered them, point to ordinary Muslims in Canada being targeted for hate crimes in the aftermath of the attacks, despite the fact that none of the attacks took place in Canada." *"And the backlash against Muslims restricted your daily life – what you wore, where you*

went – and simultaneously stripped you of your individuality. You could not be

seen as an individual in your own right, and so you were thought to be the same

as the terrorists; thus Muslims like you came under attack," said Inner Self. *"That*

makes sense. So that's how we saw the theme of loss emerge. What about

discrimination and exclusion?"
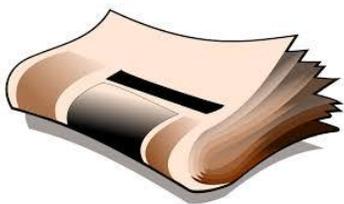
Discrimination/Exclusion: "When a Canadian suspected on reasonable grounds of being radicalized leaves the country, revoke his passport." (National Post Editorial Board, 2015, A8)

"The themes of discrimination and exclusion were present throughout the

memories and they almost always appeared together," I said thoughtfully. "We

saw them time and again, connected to each other." *"You're right,"* said Inner

Self. *"They were there throughout, but I think it figured most prominently in the*

aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks." "I agree," I stated. "That was where the

personal losses for us, like the loss of personal freedom, took place on a new

level, because we saw them being reflected in government policies. The loss of

freedom for Muslims in the aftermath of those attacks was exemplified by

government policies that would have resulted in the loss of civil rights such as

revoking passports and changing the conditions of citizenship." *"And what made*

it so discriminatory was that the policy changes would exclude only certain

groups of people, like Muslims," said Inner Self. "That's right," I said.

"We also saw discrimination and exclusion once again in the aftermath of those particular attacks when we noticed the difference in news reporting about Officer Merabet," I continued. "It was so easy to miss reports on his death, and even when he was discussed, he was described as being similar to the attackers because of his Muslim identity." *"In your reflections on both the Charlie Hebdo attacks and the Paris, 2015 attacks, you saw discrimination and exclusion again in the way Muslims were talked about – as 'problems', 'barbarians', and 'savages',"* said Inner Self (Steyn, 2015; Wente, 2015). *"Which brings us back to Freire's (1970) idea about structural oppression, and what Van Dijk (1991) said about racism in the news media,"* she said. "Yes," I replied. "According to Van Dijk (1991), as well as Henry and Tator (2002), the news media both perpetuates and is influenced by structural oppression. The difference in reporting on the police officer's death, as well as the negative language used to describe only Muslims, points to there being an overarching system, a pre-existing structure or ideology, in the news that is disempowering and oppressive to Muslims (Freire, 1970; Said, 1981; Van Dijk, 1991)."

"This is where social constructionism comes in as well," said Inner Self (Burr, 2015). *"Officer Merabet being described as similar to the terrorists was one way in which the Muslim identity began being constructed as 'terrorist'."* "You're so right," I nodded. "And the language used after the Charlie Hebdo attacks and the Paris, 2015 attacks to describe Muslims also contributed to Muslims being socially constructed within the news media as an unwanted,

subhuman group of people." *"Given what you know about the power and influence of the news media, and how it contributes to knowledge as a social construction, this was alarming,"* said Inner Self (Hall, 1997; Henry & Tator, 2002; Van Dijk, 1991). "So when I realized this, I became worried that my son would internalize what was being said about Muslims in the news media, or believe what he read about Muslims and reject his Muslim identity," I said. *"Yes,"* she replied.
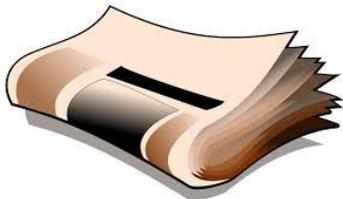
Internalized Oppression: "So often do they hear that…they are sick, lazy, and unproductive – that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness." – Paulo Freire (1970, p. 63)

"It took me a long time to see it within myself," I continued, "but internalized oppression finally shone through as a theme in the aftermath of the Paris 2015 attacks." *"I think it was present throughout the memories of **all** the attacks,"* replied Inner Self, *"It was there, but you just didn't see it."* "How was it there throughout?" I asked. *"There was always this need for you to separate yourself from the perpetrators of the attacks,"* answered Inner Self. *"I saw it after the 9/11 attacks when you got offended that the journalist did not differentiate between ordinary Muslims and the terrorists."* "Right," I said. "And it was there again in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks, when I got offended that Officer Merabet was described as similar to the terrorists."

"Yes," continued Inner Self. *"The way Muslims were treated by the news media, and the way that they were spoken about in the articles you chose for this project were constant reminders of how insignificant and unworthy you are. Your religious identity was being socially constructed within the news media in a way that you knew was untrue and unfair and you knew that you were at risk of internalizing that false identity, so you wanted to do something to counter that risk (Henry & Tator, 2002; Van Dijk, 1991)."* "It was the risk of self-depreciation that forced us to separate ourselves from the Muslims that were being described as 'terrorists' or 'barbarians'," I said (Freire, 1970). "At the risk of losing ourselves, our very identities, we felt the need to create a distinction between ourselves and 'those ISIS people'." I thought about this for a while.

"But," I said eventually, "technically, those people are also Muslims, and I thought of them as barbarians, too. In a way, I was no different than the people who wrote those articles." *"This is what Freire (1970) means when he talks about the oppressed internalizing their oppression,"* said Inner Self. *"He said that they become oppressors themselves, because they have no other model of humanity and they are seeking to regain their own humanity (Freire, 1970)."* "And so I used the same words to describe the terrorists that the journalists did in their articles," I stated. *"Exactly,"* replied Inner Self. *"So the internalized oppression was there all along. But you only saw it when you got worried that your son would internalize the negative labels that were being assigned to Muslims in the news media, due to how the news media was socially constructing a Muslim*

identity that was discriminatory (Henry & Tator, 2002; Van Dijk,1991)." "That forced me to confront my need to be separate from the terrorists," I said thoughtfully.

"Apart from needing to differentiate yourself from the terrorists, did you see any other signs of internalized oppression in your findings?" asked Inner Self. I took a few moments to reflect upon my findings and the analysis of my memories. "No, I really don't think so," I said eventually. "The need to create a distinction between Muslims like myself and my family members was really the strongest form of internalized oppression I experienced. I felt angry at having my religious identity be conflated with those of the terrorists, but I didn't feel ashamed of who I am, nor did I ever try to hide my Muslim identity." *"Why do you think that was?"* asked Inner Self. "Hmm," I pondered her question for a moment. "I think it goes back to what my mother said about being brave. She and my father always taught me and my sister to be proud of who we were, and never hide any of our various social identities. They both always taught us that racism and religious discrimination especially are morally wrong and unfair, and if we are on the receiving end of it, we should resist or challenge it." *"That makes sense,"* said Inner Self.
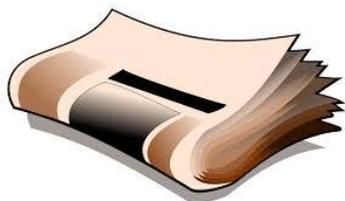
How the News Media can Contribute to Oppression

"We've already talked about how important and influential the news media is," I stated, "but how can we make the relationship between the news media and oppression really clear?" *We would have to talk about how the news media constructs or reproduces knowledge, especially about specific groups of people,"* replied Inner Self. *"You know that the news media uses language to present ideas about certain groups of people, and we know that language is a key component of knowledge construction (Burr, 2015; Henry & Tator, 2002)."* "I also know that social interactions are what lead to knowledge, and people interact with the news media all the time, by reading it," I said (Burr, 2015; Henry & Tator, 2002).

"If I consider," I continued, "what I know about the news media's role in perpetuating and reproducing pre-existing ideologies through the creation of the news, and what is considered to be newsworthy, I begin to see how the news media can contribute to the perpetuation of a racist or discriminatory ideology about a specific group of people, like Muslims (Henry & Tator, 2002; Said, 1981; Van Dijk, 1991)." *"When the news media does this, they continually construct and re-construct knowledge about that specific group of people,"* said Inner Self (Burr, 2015; Henry & Tator, 2002). "Which not only maintains the discriminatory beliefs that others hold about the group of people, but also," I said, "as I saw in my findings, and in the discussion above, places members of that group at risk of internalizing the discriminatory ideology about themselves."

"Your memories show us that the news media perpetuated a socially constructed, dehumanized Muslim identity – that of the Muslim as a terrorist, as a problem, as a barbarian," said Inner Self. *"When you constantly read about yourself being described that way, you began to internalize that false identity."* "The news media took the power imbalances that already existed within society, the pre-existing negative social construction of Muslims, that was already there, and then exacerbated it by using such terminology to maintain the overarching oppression of Muslims in society," I explained. "And that is how the news media contributed to my loss of humanity, my oppression as a Muslim."
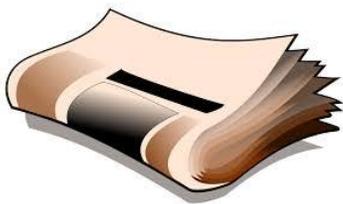
Resistance/Hope: "As heartbroken Canadians and as Muslims, we are here to reiterate and shout to these criminals: Not in our name." – Dany and Lisa Assaf (2015, p. A12)

"So where did you go from there?" asked Inner Self. "Freire (1970) noted that internalized oppression occurs at the beginning of a struggle because the oppressed have not yet realized how different they are from the oppressors, and instead are trying to identify with the oppressors," I said. *"And thus,"* continued Inner Self, *"they continue to cause damage to their own identity and humanity because they perpetuate the oppression, instead of challenging it."* "Yes," I agreed. "Once I realized that I had internalized the discriminatory attitude against Muslims in the news media," I answered, "I began to look for ways to reclaim my identity, my humanity." *"You began to look for ways to resist and challenge*

oppression," said Inner Self. "Right," I said, "but I couldn't do that without hope, and I found that hope in the aftermath of the Paris 2015 attacks, when I read that article by Dany and Lisa Assaf (2015). *"You know,"* said Inner Self thoughtfully, *"that article gave you so much hope, it nearly cancelled out the losses you had experienced so far."* "You're right," I said. "The way the authors talked about Islam, and how much I could relate to that, reminded me of why I should be proud of my Muslim identity, and why I should have hope." *"It also reminded you that you are not alone,"* said Inner Self. *"It is important for the oppressed to feel unified with each other in order to achieve liberation (Freire, 1970)."*

"'Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift,'" I said after a while (Freire, 1970, p. 45). "Time and again, Freire (1970) talked about the importance of resistance, and how it must come from the oppressed themselves." *"So did Carol Hanisch (2000),"* said Inner Self. *"She talked not only about the importance of women working for their own liberation, she also talked about the importance of rejecting self-blame (Hanisch, 2000)."* "Which goes with Freire's (1970) concept of resistance too – when we blame ourselves, we continue to internalize the oppression that frames our existence," I said.

I thought for a while about this, and then said, "Edward Said (1981) has also mentioned it, specifically in regard to Muslims. Similar to how Freire (1970) talks about the oppressed, Said (1981) said that Muslims need to understand the reasons for their dependence so that they can 'encourage…the capacity to produce and articulate a conscious and forceful self-image' (p.62)." *"It goes right back to*

your mother refusing to take off her hijab, and your father telling you to 'start doing'," said Inner Self. "You can't have liberation without recognition or understanding, and you also can't have liberation without taking action to acquire it," I replied (Freire, 1970; Hanisch, 2000; Said, 1981).

"According to Said (1981), in order to eradicate the 'myths and stereotypes of Orientalism, the world…has to be given an opportunity, by the media and by Muslims themselves, to see Muslims…producing and, more important, diffusing a different form of history, a new kind of sociology, a new cultural awareness'," I continued (p.63). "We have to take opportunities for ourselves to rewrite history, challenge oppression and thus begin to reclaim our identity, and reconstruct our humanity (Freire, 1970; Said, 1981)."

"It's a bit like being in an unhealthy romantic relationship, isn't it," mused Inner Self. *"You keep looking for love and acceptance and respect from someone outside of yourself, but you don't realize that you can't get that unless you love yourself first."* "That's so true," I said, marveling at this realization. "And you can't love yourself unless you recognize what's preventing you from doing that, what's bringing you down." *"Perhaps this is what Freire (1970) was talking about when he said that resistance is an act of love, and oppression is an act of lovelessness,"* said Inner Self. *"Acknowledging one's own oppression is the first step in rebuilding self-love, which fosters hope (Freire, 1970)."* "But it wouldn't be good to just have hope and do nothing," I said. "As Freire (1970) said, 'As long as I fight, I am moved by hope; and if I fight with hope, then I can

wait' (p. 92). So we must find ways now to fight with hope." *"I think social work can help us find a way,"* said Inner Self. "I think so too," I replied with a smile.

Chapter 8: "It's time to stop wishing, and start doing."

– My Father

Implications for Social Work/Conclusion

How to Stop Wishing and Start Doing: Applying the Findings to Social Work

Education, Policy and Practice

After going over what I had learned from the findings in my autoethnography, I found myself considering the limitations of my research project, and how far it would go in terms of addressing discrimination against Muslims. I realized that the discriminatory rhetoric against Muslims in Canada was part of a much broader, more structural and global phenomenon, and that my critical reflections and reflexive analyses would only go so far in terms of addressing discrimination and oppression. I began thinking about how to take further action, and this led me to wonder what my research had to do with social work. "Hey, Inner Self," I said. "I need to talk to you about what I learned from this project and what that means for social work." *"Of course, that's important,"* replied Inner Self. *"How do you think your findings are connected to social work?"* I spent some time thinking about the theories I had used in my project, and how they had informed my understanding of the findings. "If we consider Freire's (1970) theory of oppression," I began thoughtfully, "it is fairly clear that oppression is a phenomenon that occurs on all levels of society – micro, mezzo and macro. Oppression on a 'macro'-level surfaces when he talks about there

being an 'unjust social order' (Freire, 1970, p.44)." *"Right,"* agreed Inner Self, *"and oppression on 'micro' and 'mezzo' level is in the interactions between the oppressor and the oppressed (Freire, 1970)."*

"It's no wonder that social work theorists and researchers often reference Freire," I mused (Howse & Stalwick, 1990; Mullaly, 2007). *"Critical perspectives in social work do often discuss oppression on micro, mezzo, and macro levels as well,"* agreed Inner Self (Carniol, 1990; Fook, 2012; Mullaly, 2007). "And these perspectives also discuss social work practice as it can be used to counter oppression on those levels," I stated (Carniol, 1990; Fook, 2012; Mullaly, 2007). *"Not to mention that social constructionism is also a theory that is used in critical social work education, to develop an understanding of how knowledge is socially constructed,"* said Inner Self (Burr, 2015). I contemplated the connections between these theories and the findings from my autoethnography, and how the knowledge gained from these connections could be applied to social work education, policy and practice.

What is the Role for Social Work Education, Policy and Practice?

"Wow," I said after some time, shaking my head. "It seems like my findings are pointing to a really complicated and nuanced role for social work education, policy and practice." *"How so?"* asked Inner Self. "Well, it seems fairly clear to me that discrimination towards a specific group of people is a form of oppression that critical social workers on every level – education, policy and

practice – would seek to challenge or address," I replied (Fook, 2012; Mullaly, 2007). "But when I start to think about how they would go about doing that, it seems to be an overwhelming task." *"So let's break it down,"* suggested Inner Self. *"Start with education within the field of critical social work."*

"See, it's not as though critical perspectives in social work education don't already talk about discrimination as an oppressive force," I said thoughtfully (Mullaly, 2007; Ortiz & Jani, 2010). "It's just that it's not a very in-depth conversation (Ortiz & Jani, 2010). Every time racial or religious discrimination has been discussed in any social work class I have attended, the conversation has either been very superficial, or it has resulted in high emotions amongst students and micro aggressions against students who belong to the ethnic or religious minority (Ortiz & Jani, 2010)." *"That means that discrimination is very difficult to talk about, which must mean that it is also very difficult for educators to incorporate into a learning environment,"* reasoned Inner Self (Ortiz & Jani, 2010).

"True…but it's not impossible," I countered. "I mean, think about how much I have learned about the impact religious discrimination has had on my Muslim identity as a result of this project. That learning came about as a direct result of me engaging in critical reflection and reflexive analyses of my experiences of discrimination against Muslims in the news." *"What I think you're saying is, critical self-reflection, and reflexive analyses of those reflections could be used more as a teaching tool within social work classrooms,"* said Inner Self.

"Yes," I replied, "and if they are used in conjunction with the social constructionist theory of knowledge creation, they could foster a more in-depth understanding of how religious or racial discrimination, as they appear in popular discourses like the news media, impacts people on a personal level (Burr, 2015)."

So What About Social Policy?

"So that's how your findings point to education in social work," she said. *"How can the findings from your autoethnography relate to social work policy?"* "Well, I think it can relate to social policy on macro and mezzo levels," I answered. "The findings showed us that the news media provides us with information on changes in government policy," I continued. "We saw that in my reflections on the discriminatory government policies around the rights of citizenship. Carol Kenny-Scherber (2003) discussed the need for more social workers to become active in the government policy arena, so we can influence policy and more importantly, challenge discriminatory social policies – thus challenging and resisting against one form of systemic oppression (Freire, 1970; Mullaly, 2007)."

"Along with that, she said that government policy can also be influenced by a news media event," said Inner Self (Kenny-Scherber, 2003). "So, social workers can be more active in government policy to effect change on a macro level," I replied, "but it seems to me that they could also use the news media to voice their concerns about discriminatory social policies, which could then create awareness and work towards changing government policy on a mezzo level

(Kenny-Scherber, 2003)." *"Critical social workers study the social construction of knowledge, and they learn that knowledge is constructed via discourses like the one in the news media,"* said Inner Self (Burr, 2015). *"It would make sense for them use the news media to influence what the public knows about discriminatory policies, which could ultimately gather support for broader policy change."*

A Few Words on Social Work Practice:

"That seems to make sense," I said. "Now that we've talked about the implications for social work education and policy, what about the implications for social work practice?" *"The examples of discrimination towards Muslims in the news media from your autoethnography were in fact examples of systemic oppression,"* Inner Self said (Freire, 1970; Mullaly, 2007). "My reactions and reflections on those examples showed how discrimination as an oppressive force can impact one's daily existence," I said. *"Right,"* agreed Inner Self. *"I don't think it's a stretch to say that there may be other people out there who have been similarly impacted by the discriminatory attitudes towards them in the news media."* "And as social workers, we would most certainly come across those people in our practice settings," I reasoned. "Part of the reason why I chose this topic for my autoethnography was to encourage a deeper, more personal understanding of discrimination as an oppressive force, and to foster empathy for those who are discriminated against (Custer, 2014)." *"So a major implication for social work practice would be for social workers to employ a deeper, more empathetic understanding of discrimination and its effects on service users in*

their day-to-day practice," said Inner Self. "That's right," I replied. "Plus, social constructionism tells us that knowledge is created through language and social interactions, which means that our interactions with service users form a part of that knowledge construction (Burr, 2015). So we need to ensure that we use our interactions with them to oppose and challenge discrimination, not perpetuate it."

Social Work as a Vehicle for Transformation:

"Freire (1970) said that it is not possible to overcome oppression without resistance and change," said Inner Self. "Well, social workers are nothing if not agents of change," I said (Baines, 2007; McMaster University School of Social Work, 2016; Ortiz & Jani, 2010; Howse & Stalwick, 1990). "But change needs to take place at all levels simultaneously," I said. "Policy changes need to be made at the same time as practice changes, and policies and practices need to go hand-in-hand with social work theory and education (Kenny-Scherber, 2003; Stepney, 2006). There can't be this separation that exists between caseworkers and policy workers, between clinicians and activists (Mullaly, 2007). We, as social workers, need to start actually doing what we say we're going to do while we're in school." *"Seems like we've got our work cut out for us,"* replied Inner Self.

"So what are we waiting for?" I said, rolling up my sleeves. "Let's get started, already." *"My thoughts, exactly,"* said Inner Self with a smile.

Conclusion

On August 20, 2016, I sat at my kitchen table and thought about my autoethnography. I found myself once again questioning whether or not my work would be considered academically valid, and what kind of impact it would have, if any, on those who read it. I thought about what I had learned from it, and how important that learning was for me. I pondered what Daley (2010) had said about the difference between critical reflection and reflexivity, and how reflexivity is 'reflecting in action' (p. 69), where one constantly considers claims to knowledge. I contemplated what Pillow (2003) had said about reflexivity as truth, and how my need for truth influenced the approach I took to this project. I thought of my feelings about knowledge construction and how I believed the telling of my truth was connected to my self-knowledge (Burr, 2015; Daley, 2010; Pillow, 2003). "What do you think about all this, Inner Self?" I asked.

"I think that you have learned a lot about the importance of self-reflection and reflexivity in research," she replied. *"But it has to be said, there are limitations to these approaches."* "You're right," I agreed. "The use of reflective and reflexive analysis within this autoethnography can only go so far, because discrimination against Muslims is part of a much larger, structural and international issue. Those issues were outside of the scope of this work though – I was only trying to take a small first step at addressing the larger issue." *"True,"* agreed Inner Self. *"And can you imagine having learned as much as you did if you **didn't** engage in reflection and reflexivity? (Daley, 2010; Finlay, 2002)"* "Most definitely not," I replied. "How unfortunate it would have been for me to

have left my emotions out of it in pursuit of an 'objective' stance (Hubbard,

Backett-Milburn & Kemmer, 2001)!" *"That would have been a grave mistake,"*

observed Inner Self. "I used to worry about objectivity and how the findings from

my autoethnography would not be considered to be true in the factual, scientific

way," I said thoughtfully (Finlay, 2002). "But what I've realized is that actually,

that does not matter, because my autoethnography is **my** truth, it is **my** voice and

my knowledge." *"In sharing your truth, and your self-knowledge, you have*

invited others to understand your perspective," replied Inner Self. *"Which can*

foster awareness in them, and create the opportunity for them to join you in your

resistance against oppression." "And that is how," I reflected, "I begin to fight

with hope (Freire, 1970)."

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Appendices

Appendix A

McMaster
University

McMaster University Research Ethics Board (MREB)
FACULTY/GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE/STAFF
APPLICATION TO INVOLVE HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN
RESEARCH
[Behavioural / Non-Medical]

Date: May 11, 2016	Application Status: New: [X] Change Request: [ ]	Protocol #:

Helpful Hints Mouse over bold blue hypertext links for help with completing this form.

- Use the most recent version of this form.
- Refer to the McMaster University < Research Ethics Guidelines and Researcher's Handbook >, prior to completing and submitting this application.
- For <help> with completing this form or the ethics review process, contact the Ethics Secretariat at ext. 23142, or 26117 or ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca
- To change a previously cleared protocol, please submit the "< Change Request >" form.

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION PLUS SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (scanned PDF signature) BY E-MAIL
You can also send the signed signature page to: **Ethics Secretariat, Research Office for Administration, Development and Support (ROADS), Room 305 Gilmour Hall, ext. 23142,** ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca.

SECTION A – GENERAL INFORMATION
1. Study Titles: (Insert in space below)

Title: Snapshots Through Time: News Media and The Emergence of the Muslim Terrorist
1a. **Grant Title:** (Required for funded research. Click this < link > to determine your grant title).

2. Investigator Information: This form is not to be completed by < Faculty of Health Science researchers >.

*Faculty and staff information should be inserted above the black bar in this table.
Student researcher and faculty supervisor information should be inserted below the black bar in the table below.

	Full Name	**Department** (& or name of university if different from McMaster)	**Telephone Number(s) &** Extension(s)	**McMaster E-mail Addresses**
Principal Investigator*				
Co-Investigator(s) (Insert additional rows as required.)				
Research Assistants or Project Coordinators*				
Student Investigator(s)*	Saadiaa Khan	School of Social Work		khans9@mcmaster.ca
Faculty Supervisor(s)*	Saara Greene	School of Social Work	(905)525-9140 ext. 23782	greenes@mcmaster.ca

3. Study Timelines: (Contact the Ethics Secretariat at X 23142 or ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca for urgent requests.)

MREB Form.docx Version Updated September 8, 2015 by MREB
- 1 -

(a) What is the date you plan to begin recruiting participants or obtain their permission to review their private documents (Provide a specific date)?
May 10, 2016.

(b) What is the estimated last date for data collection with human participants? July 31, 2016.

4. Location of Research: List the location(s) where research will be conducted. Move your mouse over this   < Helpful Hint > for more information on foreign country or school board reviews and contact the Ethics Office at X 23142 or 26117 for information on possible additional requirements:

(a) McMaster University [X]
(b) Community   [X] Specify Site(s) My home – 96 Memory Lane, Brampton, ON
(c) Hospital   [   ] Specify Site(s)
(d) Outside of Canada   [   ] Specify Site(s)
(e) School Boards   [   ] Specify Site(s)
(f) Other   [   ] Specify Site(s)

5. Other Research Ethics Board Clearance
(a) Are researchers from outside McMaster also conducting this research? If yes, please provide their information in Section 2 above.   [   ] Yes [X]
No

(b) Has any other institutional Research Ethics Board already cleared this project?   [   ] Yes [X]
No

(c) If Yes to (5b), complete this application and provide a copy of the ethics clearance certificate /approval letter.

(d) Please provide the following information:

| Title of the project cleared elsewhere: |
| Name of the other institution: |
| Name of the other board: |
| Date of the other ethics review board's decision: |
| Contact name & phone number for the other board: |

(e) Will any other Research Ethics Board(s) or equivalent be asked for clearance?   [   ] Yes [X]
No
If yes, please provide the name and location of board(s).

| |

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS AND HELPFUL TIPS (Please read first):
*Please be as **clear** and **concise** as possible and **avoid technical jargon**. Keep in mind that your protocol could be read by reviewers who may not be specialists in your field. Feel free to use headings, bolding and bullets to organize your information. Content boxes on this application expand.*

6. Research Involving Canadian Aboriginal Peoples i.e., First Nations, Inuit and Métis (Check all that apply)
(a) Will the research be conducted on Canadian Aboriginal lands?   [   ] Yes [X] No

(b) Will recruitment criteria include Canadian Aboriginal identity as either a factor for the entire study or for a subgroup in the study?   [   ] Yes [X] No

(c) Will the research seek input from participants regarding a Canadian Aboriginal community's cultural heritage, artifacts, traditional knowledge or unique characteristics?   [ ] Yes   [X] No

(d) Will research in which Canadian Aboriginal identity or membership in an Aboriginal community be used as a variable for the purpose of analysis of the research data?   [ ] Yes   [X] No

(e) Will interpretation of research results refer to Canadian Aboriginal communities, peoples, language, history or culture?   [ ] Yes   [X] No

If "Yes" was selected for any questions 6.a-6.e above, please note that the TCPS (Chapter 9) requires that researchers shall offer the option of engagement with Canadian Aboriginal communities involved in the research. http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/chapter9-chapitre9/. For advice regarding TCPS guidelines for conducting research with Canadian Aboriginal peoples, please contact Karen Szala-Meneok at X 26117 or szalak@mcmaster.ca

(f) Please describe the nature and extent of your engagement with the Aboriginal community(s) being researched. The nature of community engagement should be appropriate to the unique characteristics of the community(s) and the research. The extent of community engagement should be determined jointly by the researchers and the relevant communities. Include any information/advice received from or about the Aboriginal community under study. *The TCPS notes; "although researchers shall offer the option of engagement, a community may choose to engage nominally or not at all, despite being willing to allow the research to proceed". If conducted research with several Aboriginal communities or sub-groups, please use headings to organize your information.*
ATTACHMENTS: Provide copies of all documents that indicate how community engagement has been or will be established (e.g., letters of support), where appropriate.

N/A

(g) Has or will a research agreement be created between the researcher and the Aboriginal community?   [ ] Yes   [X] No

 If Yes, please provide details about the agreement below (e.g., written or verbal agreement etc.).
ATTACHMENTS: Submit a copy of any written research agreements, if applicable. See the MREB website for a sample customizable research agreement https://reo.mcmaster.ca/educational-resources or visit the CIHR website http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/29134.html

N/A

(h) Are you are seeking a waiver of the community engagement requirement? (A waiver may be granted if the REB is satisfied that, Aboriginal participants will not be identified with a community or that the welfare of relevant communities will not be affected by the research.)   [ ] Yes   [X] No

 If yes, please provide the rationale for this waiver request in the space below.

7. Level of the Project (Check all that apply)
[ ] Faculty Research   [ ] Post-Doctoral   [ ] Ph.D.   [ ] Staff/Administration
[ ] Master's (Major Research Paper - MRP)   [X] Master's (Thesis)
[ ] Undergraduate (Honour's Thesis)   [ ] Undergraduate (Independent Research)
[ ] Other (specify)

8. Funding of the Project
(a) Is this project currently being funded?   [ ] Yes   [X] No
(b) If No, is funding being sought?   [ ] Yes   [X] No
(c) Period of Funding: From: [   ] To: [   ]
                              (mm/dd/yyyy)   (mm/dd/yyyy)

(d) Funding agency (funded or applied to) & agency number (i.e., number assigned by agency), if applicable.
Click this < link > to determine your "*agency number*". (This is not your PIN number).
[ ] CIHR & agency #   [ ] NSERC & agency #
[ ] SSHRC & agency #   [ ] ARB
[ ] Health Canada & agency #   [ ] CFI & agency #
[ ] Canada Graduate Scholarship & Agency #   [ ] Post Graduate Scholarship & Agency #
[ ] USRA   [ ] Other agency & # (*Specify*)

(e): Are you requesting ethics clearance for a research project that was not originally designed to collect data from human participants or their records (i.e., your research project originally did not involve collecting data from humans or their records) but you now intend to do so?
          [X] Yes   [ ] No

9. Conflicts of Interest
     (a) Do any researchers conducting this study, have multiple roles with potential participants (e.g., acting as both researcher and as a therapist, health care provider, family member, caregiver, teacher, advisor, consultant, supervisor, student/student peer, or employer/employee or other dual role) that may create real, potential, or perceived conflicts, undue influences, power imbalances or coercion, that could affect relationships with others and affect decision-making processes such as consent to participate?
                    [X] Yes   [ ] No

     (i)   If yes, please describe the multiple roles between the researcher(s) and any participants.

The study participants would be members of my family. They include my mother, father, sister and husband.

     (ii)   Describe how any conflicts of interest identified above will be avoided, minimized or managed.

I will attempt to not use any information that identifies my family members by name. They will be given the opportunity to read the journal entries I prepare before the entries are included in the project. I will approach them for their explicit consent to use their information while being clear that their decision to give or not give their consent is entirely voluntary.

     (b) Will the researcher(s), members of the research team, and/or their partners or immediate family members:
          (i) receive any personal benefits (for example a financial benefit such as remuneration, intellectual property rights, rights of employment, consultancies, board membership, share ownership, stock options etc.) as a result of or being connected to this study?
               [ ] Yes   [X] No

          (ii) If yes, please describe the benefits below. (Do not include conference and travel expense coverage, possible academic promotion, or other benefits which are integral to the conduct of research generally).

N/A

(c) Describe any restrictions regarding access to or disclosure of information (during or at the end of the   study) that the sponsor has placed on the investigator(s), if applicable.

N/A

SECTION B – SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

10. Rationale
For the proposed research, please describe the *background* and the *purpose* concisely and in lay terms, as well as any overarching research questions or hypotheses to be examined.
Please do not cut and paste full sections from your research proposal.

Over the past fifteen years, there have been a number of terrorist attacks that have been connected to changes in the daily lives of Muslims. The 9/11 attacks in 2001, the Charlie Hebdo attacks in 2015 and the Paris attacks in 2015 have all had an impact on the average Muslim. As a direct result of these attacks, Muslims have been the victims of hate crimes, often at the hands of their neighbours, colleagues, and community members. It seems that every time there is a major terrorist attack, there is a resurgence of hate crimes against ordinary Muslims, as though they are just as responsible for the attacks as those who carried them out. Being a Muslim myself, I have particularly been impacted by the portrayal of Muslims in the news media. The news media is a powerful force in our society, and is often connected to discourses about identity, nationalism and citizenship.
The purpose of this research project is to explore whether or not the print news media surrounding these three terrorist attacks have contributed to the social construction of an identity for Muslims that is "dangerous", and what impact, if any, this could have on every day Muslims. This research puzzle will be examined by conducting a media discourse analysis and an autoethnography. My hypothesis is that there is a negative discourse about Muslims in the news media which could be influencing the general public's perception of them. This is a research project that will explore the way a particular social discourse can be created, and the impact it can have on social justice for the implicated individuals.
The two major research questions for this project are:
1)"Have popular news media discourses about 9/11, the Charlie Hebdo attacks, and the Paris attacks contributed to the construction of a 'dangerous' Muslim body?"
2)"How has the portrayal of these attacks in the news media impacted my religious identity?"

11. Participants
Please use the space below to describe the:
(a) approximate number of participants required for this study
(b) salient participant characteristics (e.g., age, gender, location, affiliation, etc.)
If researching several sub-populations, use headings to organize details for items (a) and (b).

    a) 5 (including myself)
    b) All 5 of the potential participants are Muslims with Canadian citizenship

12. Recruitment
Please describe in the space below:
(a) how each type of participant will be recruited,
(b) who will recruit each type of participant,
(c) relationships (if any) between the investigator(s) and participant(s) (e.g. instructor-student; manager-employee, family member, student peers, fellow club members, no relationship etc.),
(d) permission you have or plan to obtain, for your mode of recruitment for each type of participant, if applicable.
If researching several sub-populations, use headings to organize details for items (a) – (d). Click "Tips and Samples" to find the "How to Unpack the Recruitment Details" worksheet and other samples.

a) Both male and female participants will be personally spoken to about the project;
b) I will recruit the potential participants;
c) My relationships with the participants are familial – they are all members of my family;
d) I will create and use consent forms to ensure the ethical and voluntary participation of the potential participants.

13. Methods

Describe _sequentially, and in detail_ all data collection procedures in which the research participants will be involved (e.g., paper and pencil tasks, interviews, focus groups, lab experiments, participant observation, surveys, physical assessments etc. —_this is not an exhaustive list_). Include information about _who_ will conduct the research, _how long_ it will take, _where_ data collection will take place, and the ways in which data will be collected (e.g., computer responses, handwritten notes, audio/video/photo recordings etc.).

If your research will be conducted with several sub-populations or progress in successive phases; use sub-headings to organize your description of methodological techniques.

ATTACHMENTS: Provide copies of all questionnaires, interview questions, test or data collection instruments etc. Label supporting documents as appendices (e.g., Appendix A or 1) and submit them as separate documents - not pasted into this application.

Click "Tips and Samples" to find the "How to Unpack the Methods" worksheet and other samples.

The only data collection procedure that the participants will be included in will be in the writing of the personal journal entries that I will be using as part of my autoethnography. These journal entries will be based on my memories of conversations that I have had with my family members about the three terrorist attacks and their aftermath that are the focus of this research project. The journal entries will be typed by me, and will most likely be completed at McMaster University. The collection of this data will likely take 2-3 weeks. None of the participants will be formally interviewed for this portion of the project.

14. Secondary Use of Identifiable Data _(e.g. the use of personally identifiable data of participants contained in records that have been collected for a purpose other than your current research project)_:

(a) Do you plan on using identifiable data of participants in your research for which the original purpose that data was collected is different than the purpose of your current research project?   [X] Yes   [ ] No

If yes, please answer the next set of questions:

(b) Do you plan to link this identifiable data to other data sets?   [ ] Yes   [X] No
    If yes, please describe in the space below:

(c) What type of identifiable data from this data set are you planning to access and use?
    [ ] Student records (please specify in the space below)
    [ ] Health records/clinic/office files (please specify in the space below)
    [X] Other personal records (please specify in the space below)

Personal conversations with family members.

(d) What personally identifiable data (e.g., name, student number, telephone number, date of birth etc.) from this data set do you plan on using in your research? Please explain why you need to collect this identifiable data and justify why each item is required to conduct your research.

> The personally identifiable data I might use are the relationships I have with the potential participants. For example, I could use the terms "my mother", "my sister" or "my husband". These terms could be a necessary part of my data collection as I plan to present some of the conversations I have had with these people in my life. I will need to do this in order to demonstrate how the terrorist attacks, and how the media's depiction of Muslims, has impacted my daily life, as part of my autoethnography. No other personally identifiable data will be used.

(e) Describe the details of any agreement you have, or will have, in place with the owner of this data to allow you to use this data for your research. _ATTACHMENTS: Submit a copy of any data access agreements._

> I plan to use a detailed consent form that outlines the participants giving their permission for me to use the information from our personal conversations in my research project.

(f) When participants first contributed their data to this data set, were there any known preferences expressed by participants at that time about how their information would be used in the future? [ ] Yes [X] No
If yes, please explain in the space below.

>

(g) What is the likelihood of adverse effects happening to the participants to whom this secondary use of data relates? Please explain.

> The likelihood of adverse effects happening to the participants is very low. My research will likely not be published and will not be accessed by the public. Furthermore, the information given by the participants will largely discuss their own feelings about the situations at hand, and they are not occupying any positions that would adversely be affected by this (for example, their jobs would not be impacted by this). It is unlikely that their participation in this project would have any effect on their lives at all, as the only people to read my thesis would be faculty at the school of social work at McMaster University, or future social work students.

(h) Will participants whose information is stored in this data set (which you plan to use for secondary purposes) consent to your use of this data?   [X] Yes [ ] No
Please explain in the space below.

> They will be provided with a voluntary consent form by which they can give their permission. In situations where they cannot provide written consent, their verbal consent will be either recorded digitally or via a consent log. If they do not sign the consent form, or provide their verbal consent, then their information will not be used.

15. Research Database

Does your research involve the creation and/or modification of a research database (databank) containing human participant information? A research database is a collection of data maintained for use in _future_ research. The human participant information stored in the research database can be identifiable or anonymous.

[ ] Yes [X] No

If "Yes" was answered to the above question, you will need to fill out and submit MREB's "Supplementary Form for Creating or Modifying a Research Database Containing Human Participant Information" along with this application.

NOTE: If you intend to collect or store personally-identifying health information, now or at a later stage in your research, your protocol must be cleared by Hamilton Integrated Research Ethics Board (HiREB) rather than MREB. For further advice contact MREB at x 23142 or X 26117 or HIREB x 905 521-2100 X 44574.

16. Experience

What is your experience with this kind of research? Include information on the experience of all individual(s) who will have contact with the research participants or their data. *For example, you could mention your familiarity with the proposed methods, the study population(s) and/or the research topic.*

I have some experience with this kind of research. I have conducted media analyses before as part of my undergraduate coursework, and I have also conducted scholarly research for coursework in my Master's degree so far. I am familiar with the study population because I am a member of the study population myself. I am a Muslim, and I consider myself to be a part of the Muslim community. My familiarity with the research topic comes from my personal experiences as a Muslim who is interested in social justice and social equality. No one besides me will have direct contact with the research participants.

17. Compensation

	Yes	No
(a) Will participants receive compensation for participation?	[ ]	[×]
Financial	[ ]	[×]
Other (specify)	[ ]	[×]

(b) If yes was answered for any of the above choices, please provide details. See < Helpful Hints > for funded research projects.

(c) If participants choose to withdraw, how will you deal with their compensation?

SECTION C – DESCRIPTION OF THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

18. Possible Risks
(a) Indicate if the participants might experience any of the following risks:

 i.) Physical risk (including any bodily contact or administration of any substance)? [ ] Yes [X] No

 ii.) Psychological risks (including feeling demeaned, embarrassed worried or upset)? [X] Yes [ ] No

 iii.) Social risks (including possible loss of status, privacy and / or reputation as well as economic risks)? [X] Yes [ ] No

 iv.) Are any possible risks to participants greater than those the

participants might encounter in their everyday life?   [ ] Yes [X] No

(b) If you checked yes for any of questions i – iv above, please describe the risk(s) in the space below.

> There may be some psychological risks for my family members as they review my prepared journal. They may become emotional as the journal entries will force them to recall memories of particularly unpleasant and distressing times, such as September 11, 2001. They also may become sad, angry or frustrated when they read about how these events impacted me. My family members may also experience a loss of privacy, as these journal entries will reflect conversations we had as a family in the privacy of our home, and will likely deal with matters of personal and emotional safety.

(c) Management of Risks: Describe how each of the risks identified above will be managed or minimized. Please, include an explanation regarding why alternative approaches cannot be used.

> The risks to the participants in my project will be largely emotional, and minimally social. For the risk of emotional impact, services from external agencies, such as counselling services, will be offered to participants. The social risks involved will include a risk to the participants' privacy, as noted above. This risk will be mitigated by fully disclosing the potential impact of this risk to all participants involved, and seeking the full permission of all participants via a hard copy consent form and Letter of Information. Furthermore, participants will be consulted on all journal entries, and the entries that they are uncomfortable with will be removed. They will be given the opportunity to read the journal entries before the entries are included in the project.

(d) Deception: Is there any deception involved in this research?   [ ] Yes [X] No

> i.) If deception is to be used in your methods, <u>describe</u> the details of the deception (including what information will be withheld from participants) and <u>justify</u> the use of deception.

> ii.) Please describe <u>when</u> participants will be given an explanation about <u>why</u> deception was used and <u>how</u> they will be debriefed about the study (for example, a more complete description of the purpose of the research).
> <u>*ATTACHMENTS*</u>: *Please provide a copy of the written debriefing form or script, if applicable.*

19. Possible Benefits
Discuss any potential benefits to the participants and or scientific community/society that justify involvement of participants in this study. (*Please note: benefits should not be confused with compensation or reimbursement for taking part in the study*).

> There is a distinct lack of Muslim voices within the news media, and there is also a distinct lack of Muslims' personal accounts, and personal understandings of the Muslim identity within popular Canadian discourses, particularly those within the news media. Adding information from the participants about how they felt in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, and how they felt about the news media's portrayal of their religious identity and their religious community, will provide powerful information about discrimination against Muslims and how it impacts their daily lives. The major benefit of including their voices will be that society can gain a better understanding of the social injustices that are committed against Muslims. It will hopefully build awareness around this social issue.

SECTION D – THE INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS

20. The Consent Process

(a) Please describe how consent will be documented. Provide a copy of the Letter of Information / Consent Form (if applicable). If a written consent form will not be used to document consent, please explain why and describe the alternative means that will be used. While oral consent may be acceptable in certain circumstances, it may still be appropriate to provide participants with a Letter of Information to participants about the study.

Click "Tips and Samples" for the McMaster REB recommended sample "Letter of Information / Consent Form", to be written at the appropriate reading level. The "Guide to Converting Documents into Plain Language" is also found under "Tips and Samples".

ATTACHMENTS: Provide a copy of the Letter of Information and Consent form(s) or oral or telephone script(s) to be used in the consent process for each of your study populations, where applicable.

> Consent will be documented via a written, hard copy consent form for all participants.

(b): Please describe the process the investigator(s) will use to obtain informed consent, including who will be obtaining informed consent. Describe plans for on-going consent, if applicable.

> I will speak to the participants about the project and explain the consent form to them in detail. I will be obtaining consent from them. There will be no need to obtain ongoing consent.

21. Consent by an authorized person

If participants are minors or for other reasons are not competent to consent, describe the proposed alternate consent process. *ATTACHMENTS: Attach the Letter of Information and Consent form(s) to be provided to the person(s) providing the alternate consent. Click "Tips and Samples" to find samples.*

> N/A

22. Alternatives to prior individual consent

If obtaining written or oral documentation of an individual participant's consent prior to start of the research project is not appropriate for this research, please explain and provide details for a proposed alternative consent process. *ATTACHMENTS: Please provide any Letters of Information and or Consent Forms.*

> N/A

23. Providing participants with study results

How will participants be able to learn about the study results (e.g., mailed/emailed brief summary of results in plain language; posting on website or other appropriate means for this population)?

> There will likely be no results from their participation, however, participants will be given a verbal summary of the outcome of the research project.

24. Participant withdrawal

a) Describe how the participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the project. Describe the procedures which will be followed to allow the participants to exercise this right.

The right to withdraw from the project will be explained to the participants at the beginning of recruitment. Their right to withdraw their consent will also be provided when they are informed of the consent procedure. They will also be reminded of their right to withdraw from the project when they are providing their verbal or written consent.

b) Indicate what will be done with the participant's data and any consequences which withdrawal might have on the participant, including any effect that withdrawal may have on the participant's compensation or continuation of services (if applicable).

The participant's data will be destroyed if they withdraw their consent. No other consequences are anticipated at this time.

c) If the participants will not have the right to withdraw from the research, please explain.

N/A

25. SECTION E – CONFIDENTIALITY & ANONYMITY

Confidentiality concerns the protection, privacy and security of research data. Consult the Data Security Checklist at http://reo.mcmaster.ca/educational-resources for best practices to secure electronic and hard copy versions of data and study documents.

(a) Will the data you collect be kept protected, private and secure from non-research team members?

[X] Yes [ ] No

If No, then explain why not, and describe what steps you be put in place to advise participants that data will not be kept protected, private and secure from non-research team members.

(b) Describe the procedures to be used to ensure that the data you collect in your research will be kept protected, private, and secure from non-research team members. In your description, explain who will have access to the data and what data security measures will be put in place during data transfer and data storage.

The data will be kept on my personal computer in a hidden file, and my computer is password protected. My thesis advisor, Saara Greene, will have access to some of the data as I present it to her, and the information will be given to her in person or over a secure internet connection.

(c) Will the research data be kept indefinitely or will it be deleted after a certain time period? Please explain. In your answer, describe why you plan to keep data indefinitely or not. If deleting data after a certain time period, explain why you chose the time period you did. Describe how participants will be informed whether their data will be deleted or not.

The research data will be kept indefinitely. At this point, I am not sure if any of the data will be relevant to my future research projects, but it is possible that it could be. Participants will be verbally informed that the data they provided will be kept indefinitely. Should their information be relevant to a future research project, they will be informed of this and I will seek their consent again.

Anonymity concerns whether participant identities are made known or not. The anonymity promised to participants can be different during different stages of research (i.e., during recruitment, during data collection, during data storage, and during the dissemination of research findings).

(d) Describe the extent to which participant identities will be made known in <u>each</u> of the following activities: during <u>recruitment</u>, during <u>data collection</u>, during <u>data storage</u>, and during the <u>dissemination</u> of research findings. In your description, explain what steps or procedures you plan to put in place to keep participant identities unknown in each of those activities.

During recruitment:
Participants will only be known to myself and my thesis advisor.

During data collection:
Participants will only be known to myself, themselves and my thesis advisor.

During data storage:
Participants will only be known to myself and themselves.

During Dissemination:
Participants will be known to myself, my thesis adviser and my second reader, as well as future students who may choose to read my thesis.

SECTION F -- MONITORING ONGOING RESEARCH

26. Adverse Events, Change Requests and Annual Renewal/Project Status Report
   a) Adverse events (Unanticipated negative consequences or results affecting participants) must be reported by faculty researcher or supervisor to the REB Secretariat (Ethics Office – Ext. 23142) and the MREB Chair, as soon as possible and in any event, no more than 3 days after they occur.
   See: https://reo.mcmaster.ca/policies/copy_of_guidelines#12-0-adverse-events

   b) Changes to cleared research: To obtain clearance for a change to a protocol that has already received ethics clearance, please complete the "< Change Request >" form available on the MREB website or by clicking this link. Proposed changes may not begin before they receive ethics clearance.

   c) Annual Renewal/Project Status Report <u>Ethics clearance is for only one year.</u>
   The minimum requirement for renewing clearance is the completion of a "Annual Renewal/Project Status Report" in advance of the (1 year) anniversary of the original ethics clearance date."

   <u>*PLEASE NOTE:*</u>
   It is the investigator's responsibility to complete the Annual Project Status Report that is sent each year by email 8 weeks in advance of the anniversary of the original ethics clearance to comply with the Research Integrity Policy. If ethics clearance expires the Research Ethics Board is obliged to notify Research Finance who in accordance with university and funding agency regulations will put a hold on funds.

27. Additional Information: Use this section or additional page(s) to complete any part of this form, or for any other information relevant to this project which you wish to provide to the Research Ethics Board.

28. POSTING OF APPROVED PROTOCOLS ON THE RESEARCH ETHICS WEBSITE
   a) It is the policy of MREB to post a list of cleared protocols on the Research Ethics website. Posted information usually includes: title, names of principal investigators, principal investigator department, type of project (i.e. Faculty; PhD; Masters, Undergraduate etc.)
   b) You may request that the title be deleted from the posted information.
   c) Do you request that the title be eliminated from the posted information? [ ] Yes [X] No
   d) The ethics board will honour your request if you answer Yes to the above question 27 c) but we ask you to provide a reason for making this request for the information of the Board. You may also use the space for any other special requests.
   e) < List of MREB Cleared Protocols > < List of Undergraduate SREC Cleared Protocols >

Supporting Materials Checklist:

Instructions:

Complete this checklist to identify and describe your supporting materials to ensure your application form is complete

- *When supplying supporting materials, ensure that they are properly labeled (e.g., "Appendix C: Interview Guide for Teachers") and referenced in your protocol (e.g., "The interview guide for teachers – see Appendix C – is …").*
- *Do not cut and paste supporting materials directly into the application form; submit each as a separate appendix.*
- *If you have multiple supporting materials of the same type (e.g., multiple letters of information that target different populations), list each supporting material on a separate row in this checklist. Add a new row to the table if necessary.*

Supporting Materials Checklist	I will use this type of material in my study (insert X below)	I have attached a copy of this material in my protocol (insert X below)	This is how I labeled and titled this material in my protocol (e.g., Appendix A – "Email Recruitment Script for Organizational Workers")
Recruitment Materials			
Study Information Brochure			
Video/audio recording that explains study details			
Participant Screening Form			
Recruitment Advertisements			
Recruitment Poster			
Recruitment Script – Verbal/Telephone			
Recruitment Script – Email (direct to participant)			
Recruitment Script – Email (from holder of participant's contact information)			
Recruitment for follow-up interview			
Snowball Recruitment script			
Reminder/thank you/ card/script/email			
Appreciation Letter/certificate – For Participants			
Other			
Informed Consent Materials			
Consent Log (to record oral consent)			
Oral/Telephone Consent Script			
Letter of Information & Consent Form – Participants	X		
Letter of Information & Consent Form – Parent			

Supporting Materials Checklist	I will use this type of material in my study *(insert X below)*	I have attached a copy of this material in my protocol *(insert X below)*	This is how I labeled and titled this material in my protocol *(e.g., Appendix A – "Email Recruitment Script for Organizational Workers")*
Letter of Information & Consent Form – Guardian or Substitute Decision Maker			
Letter of Information & Assent Form – Minors			
Online survey brief information/consent and implied consent buttons			
Letter of Support for Study			
Research Agreement			
Other			
Data Collection Materials			
Information Sharing/Data Access/Transfer Agreement (for secondary use of data)			
Demographic form – Participants			
Instructions for participants			
Interview Guide – (Questions for face to face, telephone, internet/email interview)			
Interview Guide – Questions for Focus Groups			
Questionnaire or Survey questions & instructions (Paper and pencil or online formats)			
Rating Scales/Inventories/Assessment Instruments			
Role-play/simulation scripts			
Stimuli used to elicit responses			
Images (photos, diagrams etc.) depicting instruments, equipment, exercises etc.			
Other			
Debriefing Materials			
Debriefing Form			
Deception Study – Debriefing Letter & post debriefing consent form			
Deception Study – Debriefing script – verbal			
Other			
Confidentiality Materials			
Confidentiality Oath/Agreement			
Confidential Study Code Key Log			
Other			
Materials for previous review by other REBs			
Application form – Other REBs (Original)			
Application form – Other REBs (Revised)			
Communication between REB & researcher (letters, emails, faxes etc.)			
Clearance Certificate (Other REBs)			
Other			
Other Supporting Materials			
Compensation Log			
List of support services for participants			
Participant Appreciation – letter, script, email or certificate etc.			
Researcher Training Certificates			
Scientific Licenses			
Other			

29. Researcher Assurance: < SECTION G – SIGNATURES >

[X] I confirm that I have read the McMaster University Research Integrity Policy http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/faculty/Research/Research%20Integrity%20Policy.pdf , and I agree to comply with this and other university policies, guidelines and the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS) and of my profession or discipline regarding the ethical conduct of research involving humans.

[X] *In addition*, I understand that the following *all constitute violations of the McMaster University's Research Integrity Policy:*

- failure to obtain research ethics clearance;
- carrying out research in a manner that was not cleared by one of the university's REBs;
- failure to submit a Change Request to obtain ethics clearance prior to implementing changes to a cleared study;
- failure to report an Adverse Event (i.e., an unanticipated negative consequence or result affecting participants) by the investigator or faculty supervisor of student research to the MREB secretariat and the MREB chair, as soon as possible and in any event, no more than 3 days after the event occurs;
- failure to submit an Annual Renewal/Project Status Report in advance of the 1 year anniversary of the original ethics clearance date.

_____

Signature of Faculty, Student or Staff Researcher   PLEASE PRINT NAME HERE   Date
        (Add lines for additional researchers.)

Supervisor Assurance for Graduate or Undergraduate Student Research:

[ ] "I am the supervisor for this proposed student research and have read this ethics application and supporting documents and deem the project to be valid and worthwhile, and I will provide the necessary supervision of the student(s) researcher(s) throughout the project including ensuring that the project will be conducted as cleared and to make myself available should problems arise during the course of the research.

_____

Signature of Faculty Supervisor of Student Research   PLEASE PRINT NAME HERE   Date
        (Add lines for additional supervisors.)

The signature page may also be emailed as a scanned PDF or be sent by campus mail to GH-305.

MREB Form.docx Version Updated September 8, 2015 by MREB
- 15 -

DATE: May 19, 2016

McMaster
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Inspiring Innovation and Discovery

APPENDIX B
LETTER OF INFORMATION /CONSENT FORM
FOR FAMILY MEMBERS AND ACQUAINTANCES
USING AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

A Study Examining News Media Discourses About Muslims

Faculty Supervisor:
Dr. Saara Greene
School of Social Work
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
(905) 525-9140 ext. 23782
E-mail: greenes@mcmaster.ca

Student Researcher:
Saadiaa Khan
School of Social Work
Masters Candidate
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

E-mail: khans9@mcmaster.ca

Purpose of the Study:
I am interested in understanding the role the news media has played in socially constructing an identity for Muslims that is "dangerous", and what impact this has on the daily lives of Muslims in Canada. In an effort to include the perceptions and lived experiences, I would like to share stories from my experiences as a Muslim woman in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the Charlie Hebdo attacks and the Paris attacks in November, 2015. You are part of these stories, and so I am asking your permission to include you when I tell these stories as part of my studies.

What Will Happen during the Study?
In my research, I will share stories about the conversations we had in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, the Charlie Hebdo attacks and the Paris attacks of 2015. We spoke about these events and the impact they had on our daily lives as Muslims living in Canada. These stories will be based on my recollections of conversations that I have had with you, and I will share the stories with you to ensure their accuracy. I am asking your permission to use stories that might involve you.

Potential Harms, Risks, or Discomforts:
The risks involved in participating in this study are minimal. I will use your direct statements and stories that may involve you, so it is possible that your words or actions might create feelings of embarrassment or discomfort.
You can refuse permission to include certain stories in my studies. You can also withdraw (stop taking part) at any time before July, 2016. I will offer you the opportunity to read the stories involving you before including them in the project.
I will not be using your name in stories that involve you. Instead I will be referring to you by your relationship moniker, such as "mother", "sister" or "husband".

Are There any Benefits to Doing This Study?

The research will not benefit you directly. I hope to create awareness and develop a deeper understanding of how the news media's portrayal of Muslims impacts the daily lives of Canadian Muslims. I hope that what is learned as a result of this study will help us to better understand how the news media impacts public consciousness and can contribute to the social construction of certain identities. While the research will not benefit you directly, I hope the study findings will offer another perspective pertaining to discrimination against Muslims within the news media. This project will share my personal experiences about the terrorist attacks of September 11, the Charlie Hebdo attacks and the Paris attacks of November, 2015, and will provide a glimpse into the lives of myself and others I know.

What if I Change my Mind About Being in the Study?
Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is your choice to be part of the study or not. If you decide to be part of the study, you can stop (withdraw), for whatever reason, even after signing the consent form or before **July 31, 2016.**
If you decide to withdraw, there will be no consequences to you. In cases of withdrawal, your stories will be deleted and not used in my research.

How do I find out what was learned in this study?
I expect to have this study completed by September, 2016. If you would like a brief summary of the results, or a copy of my thesis, please let me know how you would like it sent to you.

Questions about the Study:
If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact me at:

Saadiaa Khan **Email:** khans9@mcmaster.ca

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

> McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat
> Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
> c/o Research Office for Administration, Development & Support (ROADS)
> E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CONSENT

- ☐   I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Saadiaa Khan of McMaster University.
- ☐   I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.
- ☐   I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time or up until approximately **July 31, 2016.**
- ☐   If I wish to see a summary of the results, I will let Saadiaa Khan know my preferred format.
- ☐   I have been given a copy of this form.
- ☐   I agree to participate in the study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of Participant (Printed) _____

1. [ ] Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the study's results.
Please send results to me at this email address _____
Or to this mailing address: _____
          _____
          _____

   [ ] No, I do not want to receive a summary of the study's results.

Appendix C:

Data Protocol Sheet

i)   Date and year of article publication;

ii)   Source of article;

iii)   Location of article in the newspaper;

iv)   Size of article;

v)   Impact/Memory of article for researcher;

vi)   Language describing terrorist attacks;

vii)   Message or emphasis in the article;

viii)   Themes: Fear, loss, victimhood, innocence, discrimination, shock,

        political action;

ix)   Frames: Justice, public, politics, personal

x)   Angles: Moral, victim, objective;

Words to look for:

Islam; Islamic; Muslim; Muslims; Arab; Arabs; Islamist; Terror; terrorist; terrorism; fundamentalist; extremist; horror; fear; attack; attacks; discrimination; backlash; racism; racist; criminal; punishment; innocent; guilty; safe; threat.