

# Critical Muslim Studies (Part III)

Friday, March 16, 2021

00:09 Maura Cunningham

All right, I think we are going to get started here. Thank you so much for joining us for this afternoon's AAS Digital Dialogue. My name is Maura Cunningham. I'm the Digital Media Manager at the Association for Asian Studies. And it's my great pleasure to welcome you all to this, which is our third conversation in an AAS Digital Dialogue mini series on Critical Muslim Studies. This series has been organized by Stan Thangaraj who is going to be serving as the moderator for today's session, and you'll meet him in a moment. In the meantime, I would like to thank the Henry Luce foundation for supporting this AAS Digital Dialogue series. And again, thanks to all of you in the audience for joining us today. We welcome your questions and comments during the discussion, which you can put in the Q&A box while our panelists are speaking. And as always, you can go to the AAS website at [asianstudies.org](http://asianstudies.org) to find out more about this AAS Digital Dialogue ongoing series, you can watch videos of past events, and see what's coming up in the future. So thank you so much for joining and I will turn things over to Stan now to get started.

01:18 Stan Thangaraj

Thank you Maura. Thank you everyone for joining us today. I want to make a couple of acknowledgments before we start one these months have been tough and tiring. Atlanta has taken a toll on us, the mass shootings grip us, anti Asian racism and anti Black racism and gun violence intersect and impact our lives deeply. Asian Studies, Asian American Studies and Arab American studies are needed more than ever. And we need more than ever to talk about the overlapping of anti Asian racism, anti Black racism, indigenous dispossession, border violence and Islamophobia. Many of us are afraid to go out of our homes. Many of us are afraid to leave our office. I see you, I hear you, and I stand with you. Let us create spaces to affirm our feelings and acknowledge the anti Asian racism in so many places in the West and anti Blackness that governs in life in the West and in Asia. I am grateful for all of you who have joined us for this important conversation with rising and brilliant scholars across a wide swath of fields. And for my Muslim friends and Muslim American friends Ramadan Mubarak. I hope this space offers a space to engage intellectually, create community that crosses over disciplinary boundaries, and take pleasure in such amazing work as we live in uncertain times. It is a time, a time to engage in knowledge production. And to celebrate. This has been a product of conversations with Association for Asian Studies, the Association for Asian American Studies, and the Arab American Studies Association. This would not be possible without the incredible leadership vision and brilliance of Jennifer Ho, Christine Yano and Amira Jarmakani. I stand on the shoulders of these giants. And thank you Asian studies for giving us the space via Digital Dialogues to have this conversation. Hilary Finchum-Sung, Maura Cunningham, and Molly DeDona have been wonderful in managing all the schedules and the logistics. They have crafted the space that we inhabit right now and I thank you. So with the ways in which Muslim has become such a floating and loaded signifier, meaning many things and capturing a wide

swath of people this session and others that follow, engage in critical Muslim studies by looking at how Muslim as a category, a geography, and ontology, and epistemology, circulates across race, gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, and nation, while showing the many ways that Muslim and Muslim looking communities manage relationships to race, caste, nation, class, gender, and sexuality with the ways that various ethno nationalist projects have foregrounded the Muslim as the key site of repudiation or formation, the papers here address how Critical Muslim Studies become such an important site for knowledge production and social justice practices. Thus, we hope to put Asian Studies, Asian American Studies, and Arab American Studies in conversation through this space while cultivating an intellectual, pragmatic, and necessary toolkit that incorporates the theoretical influences of area studies, ethnic studies, and Gender and Sexuality Studies, while pushing against canonization. Thus, Critical Muslim Studies is about the future. And that's a space of respect, space of dialogue, and the space of knowledge production. It is a space to support these scholars as we think through the many intersections. Please continue to invest your energy and brilliance in this space. We need to cultivate now more than ever supportive communities for all of us. Each presenter will offer their thoughts on their amazing project for eight to ten minutes each, and then we will move on to questions and answers with a virtual audience. Thank you for being here, and I'm going to introduce our amazing panelists for today.

05:49

Nadeen Kharputly received her PhD in literature from the University of California, San Diego. She is currently a visiting assistant professor in English at Washington and Lee University, where she teaches 20th and 21st century American literature. She has previously taught in Ethnic Studies at UCSD. Her work appears in the *Encyclopedia of Women in Islamic cultures*, *Media myth and millennials critical perspectives on race and culture* and *Society and Animals*. Her current book project is titled *The Burden of Humanization Race Representation and Responsibility in Muslim American Culture*. Our next panelist is Maheen Haider. She is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at Boston College, and is currently studying issues of immigration, race and ethnicity. Her dissertation, *Race, Religion, and Class at the Intersection of High Skilled Immigration*, takes a comprehensive qualitative approach in understanding the contemporary context of US immigration from non white, high skilled, and Muslim perspectives. This work investigates their strategies of acculturation and integration in the political context of post 9/11 War on Terror era and in the light of recent travel bans, aka Muslim ban. Beyond her dissertation, her research also examines racialized representations of Muslim identities across popular culture, contributing to the knowledge of race, ethnicity and Media Studies. She is also the non resident immigration initiative Harvard Fellow for the 2021 academic year and has been appointed as the faculty in residence at the Thea Bowman AHANA (people of African, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American descent) and intercultural center for the 2021 academic year at Boston College. And our final presenter today is Haleema Welji, who is a lecturing fellow in the Duke Thompson writing program, where she teaches cultural and linguistic anthropology and writing. She received the 2020 Award for Excellence in Teaching writing from Trinity College of Arts and Sciences at Duke. Her most recent project explores questions of belonging, race and reform through the lens of social justice activism amongst young Muslim Americans. She is part of the Social Science Research Council's religion, and public sphere Summer Institute for early

career scholars focusing on religion and social justice movements. She has a PhD in linguistic anthropology from UCSD. I am so honored to share this space with you. The virtual claps, thank you for being here. And I now turn it over to you.

09:01 Nadeen Kharputly

Hey everyone is my audio okay? Awesome. So I really want to express my gratitude to Stan, Molly, and Maura and everyone else involved in organizing the space. I'm so grateful to be part of it, because as you'll soon see, as Stan mentioned, in my bio, I work across a number of different fields. So it's really invigorating and very affirming for me to have these conversations with all of you in such an interdisciplinary setting. So as Stan mentioned, I received my PhD from a literature department that has strong interdisciplinary foundations including theory, cultural studies and ethnic studies. I also taught in ethnic studies before I took my current position and a more traditional English department. So my research has been shaped by all these different disciplines. But my central concern lies in the intersection of race and responsibility in contemporary Muslim American literature and culture. And I define that category in a way that's very much aligned with Mohja Kahf who prioritizes what she calls literary Muslimness, in order to include authors across the religious spectrum, including secular Muslims are authors who may no longer identify as Muslims but who deal with religious identity in their work. Muslim American literature is really capacious category because it includes authors across a vast range of racial and ethnic backgrounds. And I will say more about the value of this capaciousness later when I sum everything up and connect to the larger conversations here today.

I also work with media in addition to literature. So the body of texts that I'm working with, is interdisciplinary, because the question that I'm invested in is relevant across different sites of representation. And that question is: How are Muslim American writers and artists navigating between their artistic visions on the one hand and their relationship to the communities that they belong to on the other hand? How much freedom do these artists really have in the social political, cultural landscape that they're working in? And what sort of responsibilities if any, are placed on these writers given that they are working and what Viet Thanh Nguyen describes as an economy of narrative scarcity, where there are fewer stories by and about underrepresented communities, so the weight of representation and the burden of responsibility as a storyteller is amplified as a result. This is especially true for Muslim Americans, given the nature of the climate that we're in, especially in the United States in the post 9/11 climate where, on the one hand, we have legislated and racialized Islamophobia. And on the other hand, we have attempts to try to humanize scare quotes "Islam and Muslims" for non Muslim audience, audiences to try to prove that Muslims are "just like us" or and aren't murderous terrorists, or whatever. And of course, these two forces are linked, right? The impulse to try to humanize Muslims and Islam exists because of the institutionalization and enactment of Islamophobia. So given that Muslim American writers and artists are located in this complicated and conflicting landscape, how does that affect their work? And what kinds of responsibilities are placed on them? And how are they grappling with those expectations in their work? I see several kinds of responses to this burden of responsibility and this expectation and the texts that I work with. And I'm going to talk about two of those of those kinds of responses. The first type mounts a direct challenge to the practice

of “humanizing” Muslims this attempt to rehabilitate perceptions of Islam in order to prove that Muslims aren’t violent, misogynist terrorists. Their refusal to engage in this practice tends to appear in texts that feature secular Muslim male protagonists, who are struggling and often unable to reconcile their identities as Muslim and as American because they live in a society where those values are seen as mutually exclusive, making it difficult, if not impossible to be both Muslim and American. And there are different levels of this formula. On one level, we have texts like *Master of None* and *The Big Sick*, which are two recent examples of film and television by about Muslim Americans. Both of these texts feature a secular male Muslim protagonist who is portrayed as being in conflict with his religious upbringing. And in many ways, these protagonists reject their religious identities because they have a hard time reconciling being Muslim with being American. And this can be interpreted as aligning with the assumption that Islamophobia rests on that “Muslim values and American values are incompatible”. And I’m using scare quotes to question the assumption that these values are discrete in any way. That’s one level. The next level of this kind of formula that I’m talking about is includes a bunch of texts that really push this characterization to the edge by featuring secular male with some protagonists who respond to their situation, their identity complex with acts of violence, very often misogynist violence with it, a sprinkle of terrorists sympathizing folded in. These protagonists are quite extreme and their characterization and present a very bold refusal to engage in a project of humanizing or rehabilitating the image of Muslims in Islam. A few examples of this are Ayad Akhtar’s “Disgraced”, Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Ali Eteraz’s *Native Believer*.

15:02

On the one hand, this refusal to humanize Muslims through these types of characterization is useful because it highlights the problem with these projects of humanization by showing that these projects are built on a limited construction of humanity, that Muslims need to be “just like us” in order to be human or humane, or in some shape or form palatable to the audience. So by reappropriating, the notion of the bad Muslim these authors directly challenged the presumption of these rehabilitating offered efforts by refusing to cooperate. But on the other hand, is formula because it’s emerged across a number of different texts by different authors, at some point starts to become a cliché or a trope even. And it’s a trope that occupies a really unsettling space in the kind of climate we’re in where Islamophobia is legislated and enacted, often on the basis of these perceptions of Muslims as misogynist terrorists, or misogynist extremists. This trope also occupies an unsettling space in the publishing world, because what does it mean that some of the most celebrated literary representations of Muslims rely on this trope, and additionally, are these kinds of representations being valued at the expense of other kinds of narratives, because there are other types of responses that I’m witnessing and contemporary writing, very often featuring women and queer and trans Muslim perspectives, by writers who are grappling with the intersection of race and responsibility in really fascinating ways that don’t rely on the tropes that I just described. One of the tactics that I’m seeing across a number of different texts and genres is a fracturing of narrative voice so that we don’t just have one narrative perspective, we have multiple perspectives and voices, very frequently split across time and space. And what this achieves is that it unsettles the centrality of 9/11 as the core narrative and identity conflict and it also unsettles the primacy of the male Muslim or ex Muslim protagonist. This doesn’t

mean that those narratives are unimportant or that 9/11 is no longer relevant or important. It just that we're seeing room for other histories being brought into account in these kinds of narratives, histories, like the history of partition, or the Bangladesh war of liberation, Trump's presidency, ushering in a new era of Islamophobia, Syria, Palestine, etc. And with these histories, we're often seeing how writers are grappling with their own role, and their own complicity and shout out to Shaista Patel here for her work on complicity in Imperial violence and settler colonial history.

17:45

And in order to talk about the significance of these different and these competing responses to the burden of representation, I want to go back to the capaciousness of the Muslim American category because it illustrates not just what constitutes Muslim American literature and media but also what Muslim American as a category does. So I mentioned that Muslim American literature is a broad and inclusive category encompassing Arab, Asian, African American and Caucasian racial and ethnic identities, as well as a vast range of religious and secular perspectives. Within the same category, we have to, or at least to at least two, I talked about two in this talk, kinds of responses to the politics of representation in an Islamophobic landscape. And you can certainly envision these two categories is being an opposition to one another, which to me, signals that one of the things that Muslim American as a category as a category can do is challenge our perception and practice of critique. Because, on the one hand, we have representations that suggest that literature and art in general should not be held hostage to external expectations and judgment. Authors have a right to exercise their artistic vision in the way that they see fit. And while these values are necessary to uphold, we also have to consider that this privilege isn't universally accessible or guaranteed there are social and cultural and political forces that limit this privilege, who can access it, particularly when even more marginalized and historically underrepresented authors try to challenge and complicate existing and widespread narratives. It's also necessary to complicate to consider how Islamophobic started to think about how the Islamophobic landscape has a unique- I'm like, babbling right now. But what I'm trying to say is that it's necessary to consider how our current Islamophobic landscape has a unique effect on all of this. The politics of representation that I've been talking about is not unique to Muslim American representation. Any author who has written from the margins, has been grappling with these questions for as long as we've had ethnic literature for lack of a better term. But I'm curious as to how Islamophobia complicates the making of art in this climate? And does it do so an unprecedented and unique ways? I personally, grappling with these questions for a long time, especially as I'm working on my book right now. And I'm really delighted to have the privilege of grappling with these questions because, for me, the notion of what Muslim means to different writers and cultural producers and audiences, offers a really fruitful point of investigation in the process of understanding how narratives by Muslim American writers and cultural producers are being consumed and understood and judged amidst the different social, political, and cultural landscapes that they are inhabiting. And I will stop there. I hope that's within time.

20:50 Stan Thangaraj

Thank you very, very much. Yeah. And we're gonna move you, of course.

20:53 Maheen Haider

Alright, thank you so much. Um, it is such a pleasure to be here. Nadeen, this was beautiful. And I'm gonna pick off pretty much to what Nadeen has mentioned, in terms of this whole question in the idea of Muslim as a category. What does it mean to be a Muslim? What is a Muslim? What does a Muslim look like? Where are Muslims from? I think, these are some really basic questions that have dehumanized the Muslim experience, and ethno racially othered, the Muslim immigrant experience. And this is where my research comes in. I am a sociologist, and, you know, a PhD soon, very soon, as it's a pleasure to be here talking about all this. But I examine the issues of citizenship, race and belonging from Muslim perspectives. And this question of what is a Muslim? And what does it mean to be a Muslim is crucial to my own research, and this whole understanding of the Muslim immigrant experiences. I investigate the intersectional identities of Muslim immigrant groups, post 1965 Immigration Act, which was crucial to allowing non white immigrants to come to the United States. We're over the political context of 9/11. And we're over, followed by the war on terror era and the recent travel bans. So this underlining of political context is integral to understanding Muslim identities, Muslim experiences, this whole idea of how citizenship works, and historically understanding what immigrant groups, what non white immigrant groups have gone through repeatedly at different points in time. And I emphasize, and I want to emphasize that it is important that when we're looking at the Muslim immigrant experiences, we understand the non white immigrant experiences and the history of immigration in the United States. And it also includes immigrants from Eastern European and Southern European parts of the world. Because the challenges and struggles that immigrant groups experienced post- uh, pre 1965 are integral to what immigrant groups, Asian Americans, Muslim immigrants, South Asian immigrants, Hispanic and Latin American immigrants are experiencing today. And they all fall under the category of citizenship, who has access to citizenship, how they are being perceived in the system? How is racial profiling operating? All these systemic issues are integral to understanding to the lived experiences of Muslim immigrant populations. So my research in particular looks at the context of US immigration from high skilled immigrant perspectives. And using this lens of high skilled immigrant groups is integral because while we talk about Muslim immigrant groups, within the context of war on terror and terrorism, and this whole social construction of terrorists, and identity-terrorist identities that are sort of masked in it is also important to understand where they're coming from and what they are coming from. So there is this idea of class and race that is sort of inbuilt in the notion of privilege that Muslim immigrant groups have also experienced. And I think it's important to sort of highlight that based on the context of US immigration, and I look at it from the high skilled perspectives and link it with global capitalism, primarily because you have these immigrant groups coming in to study as international students and then becoming long term residents. So doctors, engineers, who are everywhere in all hospitals are brown people. And you have Facebook, Google, so and Microsoft! So I think what is lost in the conversation is the presence of Muslim immigrant groups in the global labor market, and what does it mean for the US economy, because there is an essential need of this high skilled subset of immigrant groups who perform these certain tax- tasks. So my work explores this complex puzzle of how

Muslim immigrant identities are reviewed or reviewed under the terrorist framework. Yet at the same time, experience is upwardly mobile class trajectories, underlined by the policies of US immigration. And I show in my my work, I examined the issues of gender, which are crucial to understanding Muslim immigrant identities, I under try to understand the issues of race and religion. And I want to emphasize that while I specifically look at South Asian Muslim immigrant groups, and which are located located at the intersection of the Middle Eastern identity, and the South Asian identity of the model minority group, it is important to understand that when we are looking at Muslim immigrant groups, we are looking at all forms of phenotypes. And that is crucial to how Muslim immigrants experience ethno racial othering and the processes of inclusion and exclusion in the American mainstream. And I think it's important to acknowledge the white passing, that Muslim immigrant groups have also experienced over time, yet at the same time how religious signifiers of hijab, the beard have also become extremely problematic, and making them prominent and victims of hate crimes, because it appears as an extension of Islamic terrorism. So these, I think, what these issues of class, education, skill sets, race, religion, gender, and access to citizenship, it complicates and humanizes the immigrant experience. And while, because we these issues are underlined, but Islamophobic context is essential to look at these processes as systemic and constantly changing and how diverse, it impacts the Muslim immigrant lives. So my other project, which I'm going to connect this with, looks at Muslim immigrant identities, specifically racial representations of Muslims in Hollywood films. And it's a fascinating project that I got into because I was like, wait, how do I explain this? Because we are all about knowledge production here. It's a privilege to be in the scholarship, and creating scholarship that's not been done before, but of course, standing on the theoretical frameworks of the people that have come before us. But I think a Hollywood films give us this classic example of an visual representations of how Muslim immigrants are perceived. So I did, I sort of looked at all the top box office films and there were 11 of them. And just understanding in terms of how is it that we are consuming this idea of what is a Muslim? And what is the role of these films because the hegemonic frameworks of reason racism are integral to how we perpetuate or reinforce racism. And I saw that how gender and Muslim space was polarized and used in extremely negative ways, just to perpetuate this ideology of Islamic extremism that was imposed. So you will find these very complex scripts like *Syriana*. Like it's a complex film where you feel sad for the prince, you see, you feel you feel some kind of emotional bondage to what the Muslims are going through across the world. Yet you also criminalize them because at large, there's something wrong somewhere that is enabling them as a threat. So I think what these projects have shown empirically, is the idea and the importance of political contexts and how political context shape and perform these identities that are invoked and masked on Muslim identities, specifically in terms of race as race, ethnicity, class, gender, skill levels. And I also show in my work, in terms of immigration is how the global markets, specifically the neoliberal economy in the United States, requires high skilled immigrant groups. And there's a category yet at the same time, it is so interesting, depending on who they're working with, this access is exploitation or this enabling of how the immigration processes work, are integral. And there is and there is just this complete idea of performing the burden. Because we are from the the, I see that in my own research work, I see that in my participants. It's this performance, not only performance, but there's a shared responsibility of apologizing of what has happened. And, also distancing themselves from it. So, this important, this trajectory of explaining that there is the

sense of ignorance, we are here as immigrants we're peaceful, we want to integrate, we want to work, we have more affiliation to the American identity to a rather than our original home identity, but sort of like performing and making sure that the airport surveillance officer knows that the security officers know that. So it's important, I think, that notion of identity, and this responsibility of what a Muslim immigrant has to do is integral to understanding the Muslim immigrant experience. And something that keeps on repeating itself over and over again. And it's interesting, because, again, this is linked with, with the non white experience in the United States. And I want to quote W.E.B. Du Bois here, by this notion of consciousness, double consciousness of how the African American was unable to link his or her identity to Americanness, yet sees, yet saw themselves from the outside as being a slave all the time. So this notion of like, how their twoness was integral to being an American, yet also not being being an American, and I extend this concept, and show that like, in terms of them, these Muslim students, international students, immigrants who are coming, the responsibility of constantly seeing themselves of how they're being reviewed from the outside of how to deconstruct this terrorist framework, how to share that burden, how to navigate this, because this is crucial to the first generation experience. And the second generation on the other hand, whose mourn here performs or embodies Muslim identity as a sense of self, because the only land that they have seen is the American land. So it's sort of so interesting, of this, this, this, this, this conflict, that the first and the second generation experiences within themselves, and its connection to the land and belonging, and how they're perceived versus how they're being seen, I think untangles the Muslim immigrant experience. So I'm going to stop now. Before I'm gone but thank you so much.

33:16 Haleema Welji

Alright, and I will go ahead and begin. So I just wanted to thank Stan, Molly, and Maura for creating the space not only for us to discuss and collaborate together, but for mentorship and support. So what I'd like to do is kind of center my talk today around this key guiding question, which is what role does activism play and challenging stereotypes and assumptions about the category of Muslim? And much like my colleagues, especially the Nadeen kind of mentioned this a lot, is thinking about the label of Muslim and new and complex ways in ways that allows for flexibility, and especially in my case, self definition. So really allowing people to, to use that category in ways that makes sense to them. And for the population that I'm going to be talking about today, which is young activists. They use the category of Muslim and Islam in many, many different ways. So some of them use it to talk about cultural practices and the way that they grew up. They talk about their socialization, so their young childhood and sort of the framework in which they were raised. They also talk about it in terms of their ethics and values. This is why I believe what I do is because I was raised in this framework, and then more importantly, about relationships. So their relationships with spirituality or ritual practice, which may or may not be compatible, or the same thing to them, and then their relationships with other people and the world more broadly, I'm going to focus on that last one, especially today. So this is a bit of context for the project that I'm talking about. And this is a new project that I started working on a couple years ago, that looks at the experiences and ideas of belonging amongst college age, Muslim Americans that are active in social justice work. And I have spoken with them, I have sort of watched what they do. So participant observation and interviewing, specifically around



the work that they do, that they've been starting to do and why they do that work. So their motivations behind it. And these are people who may not consider themselves social justice, like activists, but they do consider themselves as active in social justice work. So that label may not fit them. But they definitely describe their work within these active frameworks. And some of the causes that they work on are anti Black racism, environmental issues, educational reform, prison abolition, and gender based violence. And they may see that, you know, many of these ideas are interconnected to them, but they may have one or two that they're specifically passionate about specifically working towards. So is a framework for the ways in which Islam and being Muslim are working for them, they generally start by talking about the ways in which Islam was their key introduction to issues of social justice. So it becomes almost like what they consider the roots of their social justice. Islam was their initial insight into that. And so they give me various examples. For example, one of them will tell me a story about Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him in the ways in which he was key to her realizations. And so she talked about Prophet Muhammad as someone who used his resources to quote, "try and lift the bottom line," instead of increased outcome for everyone. He was trying to help the people who didn't really have anything. So really trying seeing the ways in which Prophet Muhammad was working within the social justice, justice framework that we see today, of correcting the imbalances that you see in society. And all of them kind of talk about particular ethical ideas, the ones that come up most common humility, generosity, giving everyone compassion and mercy. So that initial framework really comes from Islam. And then they build on that even more. It's not just about Islam as the belief it's about Islam as the drive for action. So Islam is an active way of living. So it's not just a passive submission, but it's a well, it's about what you do with it. And building on that one, one step further, Islam becomes very relational, it becomes about a way of connecting with other people. So one of my participants took this quote by Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, it kind of adapted it to say, when I do social justice work, I feel like I'm praying with my feet. But it was it is the action of what she is what she is doing, that makes her a Muslim, and a social justice activist or someone active in that work. And just as one final example of this, the practice of Zakat, which is instrumental to Islam, this almsgiving, or charity work, one of my participants describe this not just as a way of valuing equity, but actually enacting the fact that, that no person is better than anyone else, and that we have a duty to be compassionate, right? So this is the ways in which Islam becomes this active verb to them, of doing what they believe is right.

38:05

So even though Islam and being Muslim is instrumental to the foundations of their principles of social justice, for many of them, for most of them, they are also integrating ideas of their context and what's going on around them. And Maheen talked about this as well, we can't sort of see Islam as disconnected from the environment in which it's occurring. So for them, social justice principles that they're learning in school in their, you know, college work that they're seeing around amongst their friends, is being integrated into their ideas about Islam. And so they are developing an idea of connection with a broader humanity as their unit of being, much bigger than just being part of the Muslim community. They are proud of this idea of liberation across all of humanity. And this, of course, is compatible with Islamic values. This aligns with the ways that the religion is founded on the key principles of the religion. However, as my colleagues have already talked about, the context of Islam is also sort of influencing how this gets

practiced. So Islamophobia, anti Blackness within the within the community and within the Muslim community, but also more broadly, xenophobia. All of these are leading to some instances of feeling like the security comes from insularity and that insularity could be religious. It could also be ethnic, it could also be sectarian. So there are many ways in which even though Islam is encouraging these values of a liberated entire humanity, in practice, it is often limited to smaller bubbles that are exclusionary. And so even though it's difficult, these activists are trying to work to align their beliefs, their values and their practices with that broader idea of humanity, and sort of how do I create this, and they get that that's hard, right? So one of my participants who works on prison abolition, will talk to me about that he knows that this humanity includes the clients that don't treat them well, and the police that he's actively working against. And yet, as he still says, it's about being able to see humanity and all of them. So really working against that instinct of pushing back against, you know, sort of excluding the people that disagree with you, but still finding a way to see no, but they also have dignity as humans. And just one other example. Another one of my activists talked about having to include the people that disagreed with her. And she said, the prophet peace be upon him, was constantly kind to everyone, even people that were awful to him. And I think that is something I am definitely trying to embrace as much as possible. That is what Islam means to me. I'm being and being the kind of person, and um, sorry, and it is being kind to every single possible person and doesn't matter if they agree with their decisions or not.

40:57

So one of the consequences that I found in my work about this philosophy is that it often leads to leads to challenges of integrating within the Muslim community in particular. And that again, that's not because there's a conflict between Islam and these broader principles of humanity. But just because they are seeing examples in the Muslim community in which that is not being practiced. So that could be members of the community, like uncles and auntie's, it could mean college, their college Muslim Students Association, their peers, their Muslim peers, or leaders. But when those people are not acting in line with the principles, but they see as central to Islam, that's leading to conflicts of integration and feelings of belonging. Some of those examples might be seeing the colorblind discourses within their community, in which people say, I accept everyone, but using that to deny the exempt the existing examples of stigma against some groups, whether that's anti Black racist, anti Blackness, or patriarchal practices. And another example, and I think this one is also really common amongst their Muslim peers, is seeing the privileging of certain traumas that are self interested. So for example, I will stand up for ethnic and religious hatred, but not necessarily when it comes to other groups that are not them. So they may stand up for Islamophobia, or anti Asian sentiments, but not necessarily anti Black racism. So seeing that incompatibility kind of leads them to some particular feelings of tension and sort of being pushed out. So I want to conclude my segment by just thinking about the way in which my research is really helping to add complexity to this category of Muslim and Muslim American. And so one of the key things that I'm really trying to get at is the ways in which being Muslim or the category of Islam can't be seen in isolation. It's heavily influenced and sort of defined by its context. So the political situation, the existence of Islamophobia, and these integrating practices of social justice. And then even more, more deeply than that is that the definitions of being Muslim and Islam fluctuate by situation and by individual. So sometimes

they're defining it as their childhood experiences, sometimes they're defining it as their ethics. But in all cases, they really need that flexibility to define Islam in the ways that works for them. And the final key thing that I that I, that I'm trying to get at with my work is also in the same way that the broader community feels like they have power in defining who is Muslim and who gets to be, who gets to be Muslim who doesn't get to be Muslim. Being Muslim is also is also kind of entailed by how the Muslim community sees you, and how, to what extent they feel like you are part of this community. So with my participants, and my activists, I'm really looking at the ways in which feelings of isolation, sorry, feelings of integration and acceptance are not uniformly distributed across the community. And so I have participants who feel like they are being excluded because of key identities or the things that they do, right. So the activism that they're doing or the criticism that they level at people who may not align with their beliefs. They often feel pushed out. And then some of them are also just withdrawing from the community because I feel like there's that misalignment. So not even just that, that you know, who gets to be Muslim is being defined, but by the broader community, but the Muslim community itself is also sort of creating these boundaries. And that kind of is challenging for bringing about these values of social justice more broadly. Thank you.

44:37 Stan Thangaraj

Thank you very, very much. Oh, my goodness, what incredible joy and honor to share this space. So why don't we give a minute or two for, you know, the members of the audience to type in their questions. And then we will begin. So we'll just give a couple of minutes for them to type in their questions. And so one of the questions I want to raise to all three of you in many ways in which I think they are connected, right, is I'm thinking a lot about the amazing book by Dr. Sunaina Maira, *The 9/11 Generation and Missing*, right. So there's something there where how does Muslim as a category operate? To open spaces, right? Like, how is how are folks maybe identifying as Muslim first, rather than as ethnic Pakistanis, or Indians, or Bangladeshis? And what does that identification as Muslim first, over other categories do, right? What type of work does that do? In really engaging with the local context and certain histories? So that's just for you three, two, if you could just answer that.

45:57 Maheen Haider

I'm happy to go first, if you want.

46:00 Stan Thangaraj

Please-

46:01 Maheen Haider

Um, I think in my research, it's interesting rather than the religious category, it's more of this hyphenated ethnic American category that immigrants tend to identify themselves with. So they will always say, "Yes, I am an American. And I am Muslim, but I am an American." And so I think having that is integral primarily because they are new immigrants. And the way that they have experienced these ideas of what it means to be Muslim, and I think wanna just make sure that they are included in the American mainstream and distanced themselves from the stereotypes. So I think it's an interesting balance. And who is it? I think that they're talking to because the

audience immediately impacts the way that they're responding to this question. So I think that in itself shows how complex that is.

47:03 Haleema Welji

Um, one of the things I'd like to add is just the ways in which that the identity of Muslim first is a key component, especially with the participants that I work with, in which they are feeling like part of their responsibility is changed within the community. And I feel like that identity as a Muslim is essential to saying I want to see, I believe in this religion, I believe it's part of my identity, I see the values in it, but I also see room for change. And if they don't identify as Muslim, first, I feel like they would feel pushed out of that space and not able to comment. And because they are centering their Muslim identity, they are able to take what they value from it. And that childhood, that culture, that tradition, but also say I am as equally invested in reforming the religion from within the community from within the community, as I am about changing the perceptions of the community more broadly. And I think that that's where I see the Muslim first identity as being key and central.

48:05 Nadeen Kharputly

It's also been an important guiding philosophy for my own work when I'm privileging the category of Muslim American literature, as opposed to Arab American literature, Asian and African American literature. It's a category that allows me to make all of these intersections and find all these parallels between different bodies of literature, and allows me to see how different experiences of Islamophobia of living in a Islamophobic landscape within the United States is being experienced by different groups across all of these racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds. So for me, it's been one of the major philosophies that are allowing me to articulate the value of Muslim American literature as its own category that is also comprising all of these different ethnic literature's, again, for lack of a better word.

48:58 Stan Thangaraj

Thank you, thank you, and we have some really amazing questions. So why don't we start off with them? Um, so Samina Ali, wrote, thank you all for such great presentations. My question is for Nadeen, what are your thoughts on the role of spirituality within depictions of literary Muslimness? How do you connect to personal practices of spirituality versus dogmatic practices of religion relate to our complicate the trope of the secular Muslim American man versus literary depictions of Muslim American women and LGBTQIA Muslims?

49:39 Nadeen Kharputly

I love that question. Thank you so much. I'm thinking of it in relation to a few different texts. One is texts by people and perspectives who have long been marginalized, not just in greater society, but within Muslim communities itself. I'm thinking of queer and trans Muslims, right? I'm thinking of how people like Fatimah Asghar or Dane- Xantia Hadar who were queer and trans authors are complicating this landscape of Muslim American literature by like, identifying as Muslim and talking about spirituality in a way that is incredibly inclusive. That doesn't just expand the field of Muslim American literature. But it totally subverts the expectations that people have with Muslim Americans literature being like faith based or being founded in the

domain of certain kinds of writers. I think their work that they're doing is unbelievable. I'm also thinking of this question in relation to I don't know if any of you have seen the Hulu TV show *Ramy*, but its depiction of spirituality is absolutely fascinating, because in some of the texts that I described, we have these representations of secularity, where you're moving away from your religious identity, in order to become more American, whatever that means. But in *Ramy*, we see the opposite, he's actually becoming more Muslim, because his idea of what it means to be Muslim is tied in with what it means to be a good human being. So it's a really fascinating depiction of spirituality. And it's *Ramy* is going to occupy a big part of my book project. But it's, it's sort of hard to think about where he fits in with all these other things, because it just does such a unique job of articulating a lot of the present forces in Muslim American representation. So it's yeah, unbelievable show. And I really appreciate this question, because it's allowed me to think about these connections between representations of religion and identity and spirituality, and these newer and more exciting ways.

51:45 Stan Thangaraj

Great, thank you. So the next question is by Sunaina Maira, for Maheen, wonderful presentation. And this is such an important topic. Could you give some specific examples of the conflict between upward mobility and anti Muslim racism you found in your research? And what were the particular occupations of your research subjects? And she's curious to see how it plays out in particular sectors and this, you know, also in conversation with both of her books, but also Junaid Rana's 2016 social text article too.

52:21 Maheen Haider

Thank you so much. That is such a great question. And you're right. So I tried to have everybody in different professions. And because I knew everybody, primarily South Asian immigrants are skewed towards STEM professions, but at the same time, because I was looking at this large sample from 1965 to 2013, that enabled this liberal arts movement from the sending countries. So I was very lucky enough to include participants from different professions in my sample. And in terms of how this complex puzzle of upwardly mobile trajectories and race and racialization I think it also speaks to this understanding of what is race? And what does it mean to be racialized? And how is it that immigrants come to realize that they are an actually a racial identity, rather than being an immigrant group? And I think that in itself, this process of learning, I think, is the crux of why they feel entangled is this in this issue of, oh, but why are we being reviewed? Or why are we being looked upon in a certain way? And I think this idea of American media is important because how immigrants consume the United States before coming to the US and having these preconceived notions and then arriving to the US and then experiencing this issue of race and ethnicity and religion and finding that conflict, I think, puts them into this whole notion and struggle and challenge of oh, interesting, I am brown here or I am Muslim here and this is what it means. I think, the this idea of this colorblindness is debunked, and reliving the understanding of race and ethno racial identity how they perceive themselves, but also how they're perceived from the outside is something that is part of this tension. Thank you.

54:28 Stan Thangaraj

Thank you. Thank you. And my thing would that also I think getting, you know, coupling with these texts that I've mentioned, to think about which Muslim American communities then also get the greater effect of state surveillance, right and feel it much more deeply within the Muslim community that's also at the intersections of class, right? So the next question, yeah, yeah.

54:53 Maheen Haider

And their names like if you were Muhammad, right? If you are, if you have like these very specific names, you're going to be part of this. I think that is part of the story.

55:01 Stan Thangaraj

So for the next two, I'll read the next two questions simultaneously. The first one is by Sylvia Tiwon I'm terribly sorry if I mispronounced your name. To what extent are these Muslim American communities open to pre engaging with what happens outside the US? And I want to also link that up with Sunaina Maira's question for Haleema. And she starts with so excited about your research, did these activists organize and Muslim campaigns groups or in coalitions with other groups? And as we think about those two questions, I also want to add this question, right. So a lot of focus on Muslim America has been through state categories and the effects of anti Muslim racism. And Haleema's work actually is giving us the everyday practices of Muslimness, right? So could you also talk about like, what are these everyday conceptions and practices of Muslim ness that are not always about these relationship to state a state ascriptions?

56:08 Haleema Welji

So I could take a stab at starting with this question. So absolutely, I'll start with the middle one. Absolutely. These activists were campaigning across the board. You know, one thing that, you know, in going back to the question, the earlier question around Muslim first, I think what these, what these youth are able to do is to see their intersections and just sort of see the ways in which they're intersectionalities, and see the ways in which various identities are kind of being flagged at various time points. And so when when they think about organizing with Muslim campaigns, I think they are sort of, they're sort of like enacting certain identities at certain points in time. So they do, they do align with Muslim campaigns, but they also do so much more than that they do work outside the community. And I think that that's also like one of their key frustrations with the Muslim community has been, to what extent they are being supported by the Muslim community. And so they'll tell me things like, well, you know, when we did organizing for Justice for Palestine, we had a lot of Muslims supporting us. But when we aligned and collaborated with the Black Student Union, we had a lot fewer, and it was only some groups that were represented. And so I think they are definitely working within the Muslim framework and with Muslim Coalition's at the same time, as they are so much more than that, and aligning, and they keep telling me, like, I'm really drawn to people, not for their religion, not for their race, not for their ethnicity, not for their age, I'm drawn to them because they share my worldview. And so that I think is front and center when they collaborate with people is do you align with my worldview, which has nothing to do with religion, although it could have emerged from religion. And that is, I think, essentially, also why they, why they are so much broader than just what's happening the United States, my perspective is sort of seeing this global, this global world,

because even though that might be harder for them, because it's like maybe less visible to them, they are thinking so much broader than just themselves and just their one single group.

58:10 Nadeen Kharputly

I can try to connect to what Haleema is saying by noting that I'm seeing similar or maybe not similar, but I'm seeing expressions of the sort of collective understanding of community in history. And something that I mentioned the second type of response to the burden of expectation in texts very often in poetry, where you see this sort of polyphonic exploration of what does it mean to be a Muslim, not just in the United States context, but in a transnational collective context. And this willingness to grapple with what does it mean to be Muslim on the global stage as an American who has you know, has played some role in anti Blackness or settler colonialism or Imperial violence? Some of my favorite examples of poets who do this are Tarfia Faizullah and her collection *Seam and Registers of Illuminated Villages* do this really beautifully. Where 9/11 I mean, it's a central part of like this sort of violence depicted there. But she's also looking at the Bangladesh war of liberation. She's looking at the sort of campaign that destroyed all of these Kurdish villages in northern Iraq. And, and the ways in which I think in the first poem in that collection, she talks about, like not being able to fall asleep, and she tries to catch sheep. But instead of counting sheep, she's like, doing a sort of mental count of all of the villages and the people who have been destroyed in these campaigns. So thinking about, is this an articulation of guilt? Is this an articulation of responsibility? That's so counter to the other kinds of responses that I described previously. So yeah, there's a real willingness, especially in these perspectives that I mentioned, particularly by women and queer and trans Muslim writers who were very open to grappling with histories of violence that are happening, not just in the US, but abroad as well.

1:00:00 Stan Thangaraj

Yeah, and I think if you three could also try to engage Sylvia's question, you know, so how are they engaging with concepts back in, you know, ancestral context or outside the US? Because there's something where Muslimness is also a transnational frame, right? So how can we bring in? And I think you know, Nadeen, you're absolutely there, right with with your analysis, but I was wondering if the if the panelists could speak explicitly to how critical Muslim studies might also require a methodology that is transnational?

1:00:39 Maheen Haider

I can take that. Yeah. Okay. Perfect. No, I think this transnational frame is integral to I think, each of us here in terms of positionality, including you, we all bring in this, this forum itself brings in this transnational frame, being around understanding Islam and Muslims and Muslim immigrants, again, understanding how diverse it is to be a Muslim, and the ethno and cultural context that Muslim immigrants come from. So I think it's a very important idea of global transnationalism is integral to understanding the global immigrant Muslim experience. Because I think what is also important is to understand the conflicts that the Muslim groups also have internally and in their understandings of how they perpetuate race and racism across each other, and within each other. And I think that is crucial. I think, I think, in terms of pedagogy, and in terms of this whole idea of scholarship, acknowledging these gaps that we have, and these

problems and conflicts that exist within such a diverse category of Muslim, I think is crucial to adding that global lens. And I try to do that in my work, because the hidden overt and covert inequities, that are built in our in like these biases that are sort of like that stem from these global notions of what it means to be Muslim, and what it means to be an immigrant and how we consume certain elements. I think that itself is a global frame to understanding the Muslim experience.

1:02:19 Haleema Welji

And I could just add one more thing. So, central to my work is really thinking deliberately about the role of the institution of the university or education more broadly. And and I think, but across the board, we're all you know, we're thinking about people who have either benefited from or taken advantage of, to some degree, an elite education or higher class education. And and I think, well, at least the participants that I'm working with are in elite spaces where Western education and Western ways of understanding the knowledge production or privilege, I think this is a group of individuals that has been exposed to multiple sources of knowledge and multiple ways of understanding the world and also see them in more relatable and more equitable terms than the western education system does. And so I think, in looking back to this question about how are they engaging outside the United States, I think this is a population that is trying to integrate, reconcile and sort of maybe even tease out to some extent, aspects of an of an international way of more international way of seeing the world and understanding knowledge. So yes, in some cases, that might mean rejecting some sort of forms of knowledge production or ways of seeing the world that their parents might have been raised with, but they're not rejecting all of it. They are integrating it into their ways of being and I think that this is the generation at least what I'm studying that is maybe pushing back on some of their educational institutions and saying, you know, why is this the supreme way of being? Why is this the supreme way of thinking about knowledge production? And how can we learn from other ways of doing things? How can we learn from other patterns and practices that actually just make us stronger and better, and then this sort of more pluralistic mindset? So I think there are ways in which knowledge from the outside are being taught to them through other sources through their own learning through their parents, and integrate it into who they are and how they see the world as well.

1:04:25 Stan Thangaraj

Yeah, thank you. Thank you, and I think that, you know, answers one of one of the questions in the chat as well. So I'm going to move to the question by Dea Dini and again, you know, I apologize if I'm not pronouncing your name correctly. So they said that just a simple question for me, how do you see the syncretism between Islamic teaching and the local culture, such as the Javanese Muslim on Java? You know, in Indonesia, is there any comparable case within your own community within your Muslim community? And I think that really addresses you know, what are the ways in which there are these multiple practices and heterogeneity, and I, you know, and hybridity within, you know, the communities you study? And, um, it's open for any of you to tackle first.

1:05:26 Maheen Haider



I can go first again.

1:05:29 Stan Thangaraj

All right. Great. I don't want to [call on people] cause that's not fun.

1:05:39 Maheen Haider

Uh, I mean, it's- [...] Thank you for your question. It's a really important question. And I think in terms of my respondents, I can say that, as I mentioned earlier, the South Asian Muslim identity is extremely diverse, which means that they have ethnic identities, and in terms of their religious context, whether being Sunni or Shia, or other, or other Muslim groups, is integral to how they want to transfer their ethno racial and Muslim heritage to the second generation. So I think what we see in the United States in terms of integration strategies is this presence of mosques and cultural centers, we, you see, we see like across diverse possibilities of, of like an Iranian Cultural Center, Center, a Bangladeshi mosque, an Indian mosque, a Muslim, a Pakistani mosque, or a Shiite mosque, or you know, so I think that in itself, where people are choosing where they want to belong to is part of the agency of and the freedom of living in the United States. And I think that is privilege that a lot of immigrant groups tend to embody here because a lot of immigrant moves that come to the United States are also coming in as refugees, and are marginalized from their countries of origin. So they're also finding their new sense of belonging, like the Ismailis that have gone through a lot of atrocities. So I think, within the United States, having that diversity, and having the resources to enable themselves, and this idea of class, and you know, belonging is integral. So I hope that helps, I think there's a multicultural there's a multicultural presence of the Muslim identity and of the Muslim experience. And you see that in mosques and depending on, you know, selecting who they choose and what they identify with.

1:07:40 Haleema Welji

Just building on Maheen's comment a little bit more. I mean, I think that there's also a way in which the local American culture is playing a pretty heavy role into who they are. Like I've had intense conversations with some of my participants about their viewing of someone, Islam, or maybe their Islamophobic media productions and how they sort of relate to that. So they might have long conversations about how they know that Homeland is terrible, yet they're really into the show. And so I think that what what not only is what what's provided is the diversity of being able to say to see the ways in which the various ethnicities and expressions diversity is within Islam becomes part of their being but they're also in like integral they're American, this is integral to who they are as well. So they become these sort of like these these deeply diverse beings in which they are participating in like a Holi celebration, one week and then you know, you know, a Ramadan iftar from a totally different kind of food, and they feel equally as comfortable in all of these settings, so I think they are integrated into, or they're invested in developing ideas of local culture. But they're also invested in learning about the diversity of local cultures around them as well. So.

1:08:57 Stan Thangaraj

Yes, so why don't we move to the question by Robert Fung. Thanks to all the presenters. My own work involves helping educators develop culturally and linguistically responsible

pedagogical practices, considering the complex intersectionality present in the various Muslim communities you have studied, I'd be interested in your thoughts on the role of education systems and educators in influencing perceptions of what it means to be a Muslim in America, especially in our direct work with our Muslim students and education system. This is this question is for any or all of the presenters. And I think it's also something really deeply to think about with how our associations work and function, right? What does that mean for how we teach in Asian studies? What does it mean for how we teach in Asian American studies? What does it mean for how we teach in Arab American Studies, and just a quick note, Robert Fung, 2020 *Urban Education*, I have an article on Racing the Muslim that might be helpful, but teaching but panel please.

1:10:08 Haleema Welji

I can start. So you know, one of the things that I see as my role in you know, teaching in a first year writing program and predominantly non Muslim students is what is my responsibility as an educator to teach along the lines of sort of a more culturally responsive education, especially in the in the realms where I can contribute so Muslim, Muslim, Islam and Muslims. And, and it's tricky for me, because my students come in with not only a very lack of knowledge when it comes to Asian American issues, and Muslim American issues more more specifically, but also a lot of misconceptions and a lot of misjudgments. And so one of the things that I've been really thinking about is how do I encourage my students to really develop a nuanced understanding of the issues around Muslim Americans and, and their issues of representation is mostly what I've been focusing on. And so I'm actually working on a piece for the journal *Prompt*, which is a journal of writing assignments to actually share some of the projects that I've done with my students. So hopefully, in the 2022 social justice volume, I have a piece coming out that looks at the ways in which I am helping my not my mostly non Muslim students really think about the complexities of representation, and really echoing Nadeen's, sort of issues with the shows like *Master of None* and *The Big Sick*, even though they're they may be created by Muslim Americans. In what ways are they reinforcing some of the same problematic discourses that we see in the president like President Obama, for example? So how are those those, you know, ideas of the good patriotic Muslim being replicated? And so I've been able to sort of use these assignments as a way of helping students navigate that complexity and navigate those like, Oh, well, I understand that Obama is sort of praising Muslims. But I also see the ways in which that's problematic, because now Muslims are expected to be these patriotic people. And so these sorts of responsibilities that I feel like, you know, some of us could take on, are great ways of introducing students to that diversity, and I don't think it's perfect. I don't think I get it all, all right. But I think that becomes a space in which the college critical thinking atmosphere kind of helps students build those skills.

1:12:26 Nadeen Kharputly

I can follow Haleema really quickly, just to say that I echo what you're seeing, what you're saying Haleema and I like want to affirm the challenges of being in this position where like, I have to think very carefully about what I teach in my classes, because maybe this is the only English class where the only Ethnic Studies class that a student takes do they have, like, what kinds of backgrounds do they have to be able to treat these texts as fiction are not

representations of a particular community? And thankfully, I've been really lucky so far, but it is something that I've had to think about, you know, I've taught *Disgraced*, I've taught *American Dervish*, I've taught *Master of None*, I've taught *The Big Sick*, and thinking about like, how do I frame these texts so that we're treating these issues as carefully as possible with the complexity of the politics that are guiding this cultural landscape? So it's really hard especially especially when, you know, teaching in the humanities, I think of what how my students are encountering Islam, like in what context are they learning about Islam, maybe they're learning about it in political science classes, maybe they're learning it in religious studies, classes or history classes where, at least in history and political science, long history of orientalism and Islamophobia, right. So I do feel it's kind of responsibility as an educator to sort of, you know, give them a humanistic approach to all these issues and considering how they may have been exposed to representations of Islam prior to their coming to my class. So it's just it's a, it's a big burden to deal with, but also a real privilege to share these texts that I love so much with my students. So yeah, tricky and affirming all at once.

1:13:57 Maheen Haider

I'll just quickly add this, this notion of positionality. And how our positionality is integral because we are in spaces. Unlike today, it's really nice to be in the company of peers and similar identities. But we are in spaces where we technically are the only ones. So when you're teaching these courses, it is sort of interesting that the positionality itself of my positionality becomes a question and I, I always talk about, I'm like, alright, I'm an immigrant, I came here as an international student, this is my little story and have a global background. But I think what that does is enabling that space of, of providing access, and it's an added responsibility that we also have to perform as belonging to these identities. But I think it is crucial in sort of enabling that and creating that, that, that space where they can understand like, because I think there's so much mystification about this idea of Muslims and Muslim identities, that having that presence, there definitely helps, but it is an extra burden. So I think that is how in terms of pedagogy and in terms of scholarship, where we come in, and also, I think, having the privilege or allowing the resources that we teach in our syllabi from different scholars of similar identities, and including that, so that enables this whole idea of like, who can we include in different voices. And I think that helps engaging in dialogue. I think healthy dialogue is important, because it's part of the intellectual learning and having different exchanges and point of views is important to the processes of how we learn. So I definitely deploy that.

1:15:46 Stan Thangaraj

And why don't we go to another question? And this is by Katsuyo Motoyoshi. And again, I'm sorry, if I have pronounced your name in an incorrect way, do you find that experiencing othering, through their immigrant experience, and effort to renegotiating with the mainstream American culture flattens out the differences between various Muslim ethnic communities, um, sectarianisms and nationalism? Which I think is a fantastic question. So any of you that would like-

1:16:23 Maheen Haider

It's a very good question, and I love how insightful this is. And this is interesting, because you're right, it's sort of interesting that, um, there is this idea of when this is and this not does, not only go does not only stand for Muslim immigrants, and it also stands for the African American experience since the time of slavery, because they also came in with different diverse identity groups, yet they were racially, racially, racially categorized into the Black category, in contrast to whiteness. And I think that is crucial this homogenizing of non white identities is crucial to the immigrant experience. And I think you are very right that the, in terms of the Muslim immigrant experience that is crucial, in terms of how I am unclear in terms of empirical data of how much it flattens out the differences, but I will say that from within from my participants, that yes, it does, and within their diverse notions, while gender is an important category of like influencing those racialized experiences, but it does create that Muslim identity that is imposed on them.

1:17:37 Haleema Welji

I just like to add that yes, well, I think it has that tendency to flatten. And there's also a way in which, depending on your immigrant experience, depending on your class, your gender, your race, your ethnicity, that those levels of privileges are also interacting in different ways. And so I think there there could be a way in which some people are held to different standards because of their sort of racial privilege or their ethnic privilege, but at the same time may not understand that other Muslims in different categories may not be in the same position. So I think class erasure is probably one of the most important of sort of assuming that all people from your group, your immigrant experience, have the same experience without realizing that your privileges are interacting in some similar ways as well. And that may or may not be understood by sort of an outside perspective, but to some degree flattening to some degree and sort of interacting with these, these intersectional identities as well to give a different experience.

1:18:35 Stan Thangaraj

Great. Thank you, everyone. It has been a great session. Our time is up, but I want to spend a few seconds thanking our amazing panelists. Thank you three for joining us today for sharing your work and to make sure we realize the importance of the future and the future is right now with these three panelists. And so please, please check out their scholarship cite, junior scholars of color, cite women of color is more important than ever. Thank you, everyone, and have a great weekend.

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