Introduction

1 The Aga Khan Museum, which opened in 2014, has been the centre of numerous Islamic exhibitions and music and dance concerts, as well as special talks on Muslim cultures and societies; across from the museum is the Ismaili Center, with the jamatkhana (prayer hall).

2 I note here that our SSHRC applications proposing research on Sufism in Canada were not funded simply as a response to Aaron W. Hughes’ chapter “Research Funding and the Production of Knowledge about Islam: The Case of SSHRC” in Barras et al., eds., Producing Islam(s) in Canada. Hughes importantly highlighted in his chapter the political realities regarding which projects on Islam in Canada receive federal funding.

3 For more discussion of positionality in fieldwork, see the excellent chapters in Section 3, “Positioning Selves,” of Barras, Selby, and Adrian, eds., Producing Islam(s) in Canada.

1 Situating the Study of Sufism in Canada

1 A famous example is the Moroccan Estevanico of the Narváes expedition (1527–36), whom we know about from Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca’s 1542 account (Khan 2020: 36).

2 Khan’s Far from Mecca (2020) offers an excellent account of how the Sufi aesthetic was important for the literary productions of enslaved peoples in the Afro-Caribbean, especially in British Guiana (Guyana), and of how Sufi traditions influenced figures like Muhammad Kaba Saghanughu and Abu Bakr al-Siddiq. Both were West Africans who were enslaved in Jamaica in the early nineteenth century (35).

3 All of these archival materials have been digitalized thanks to the Documenting the American South Project. Many of these archives make reference to Canada and are waiting for scholars to engage with them. These materials are also great
resources for those who teach about Islam in Canada and the United States. They can be accessed at https://docsouth.unc.edu/index.html.

4 For access to this study, visit https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/07/01/5-facts-about-religion-in-canada.

5 Siobhan Chandler’s 2011 dissertation discusses the limitations of 1960s and 1970s New Age Movement and how contemporary manifestations of SBNR and religious nones capture a long history of seekers in Canada.


7 The 3HO was founded in 1969 in the United States by Yogi Bhajan. It focused on the practice of Kundalini yoga. For more about this community, visit its website, https://www.3ho.org. Bhajan has since been faced with civil lawsuits regarding various counts of sexual abuse against women and minors.


10 Since his death, several accusations of sexual abuse have been made against Carlebach. For more on these claims, visit Sarah Blustain’s “Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach’s Shadow Side” in Lilith: Independent, Jewish & Frankly Feminist (9 March 1998), https://lilith.org/articles/rabbi-shlomo-carlebachs-shadow-side.

11 In her study of Amma's transnational movement, Lucia uses the terms “inheritors” and “adopters” from Jan Nattiers's study of Buddhists in America. Here, inheritors are those who grew up with Hinduism and are South Asian, whereas adopters are those who have come to Amma and are white, African American, or Latinx (2014: 149).

12 In “Neo-Sufism,” his contribution to The Cambridge Companion to New Religious Movements (2012), Mark Sedgwick frames Sufism in the west as “Neo-Sufism,” adding that “the term ‘Neo-Sufism’ was first used by scholars to describe an unusually fertile wave of new orders and sub-orders in the eighteenth-century Muslim world. The term is now increasingly used, however, to describe various forms of Sufism found in the West since the nineteenth century. The main difference between these and Sufism as found in the Muslim world is that the limits within which Sufism operates in the West are much looser, and the influence of the local is much greater” (199). Here the local is contrasted with the global. Though I understand the complex origins of Sufism in the west, I prefer to phrase this reality as Sufism in the (global) west, and not as neo-Sufism, for it is precisely this debate over “newness” insinuated by the prefix “neo” that I wish to decentre in my own scholarship on Sufism in the west.

13 Not all Orientalists who first encountered Sufi literary traditions and Sufis were involved in colonial projects. That said, the Christian lens through which these people encountered Islam and Sufism was strongly Protestant, and this sharply
influenced some of the criticism directed at the Sufis. An important example here is Martin Luther (d. 1546), the famed reformer. For more, please see Sharify-Funk et al. (2017).

14 Ayeda Husain speaks about this practice in chapter 4.

15 In his extensive research, Geaves found that Sufism in Britain was “tightly bound up with ethnic identity, as a means of maintaining traditions and customs closely linked with localities in the place of origin” (2009: 98). Some of the prominent tariqas in Britain include Naqshbandiya, Qadiriya, Chishtiya, Alawiyah, and Tijaniya.


19 Further important work on Aguéli is now being done by scholars. This includes the new edited volume Anarchist, Artist, Sufi: The Politics, Painting, and Esotericism of Ivan Aguéli (2021) edited by Mark Sedgwick. Also, Gregory Vandamme has been researching fascinating aspects of Aguéli’s Italian letters, which are archived at the Cini Foundation in San Giorgio in Venice, Italy.


21 The position and approach I take in this book differs, for instance, from how Sophia Rose Arjana thinks about the commodification of Sufism and Rumi in Buying Buddha, Selling Rumi (2020).

2 Early Sufi Communities in Canada

1 For more on Gurdjieff, see the book John G. Bennett Is There “Life” on Earth? An Introduction to Gurdjieff (1973) or Gurdjieff’s writings such as Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson: An Objectively Impartial Criticism of the Life of Man (1950). See Mark Sedgwick’s Western Sufism: From the Abbasids to the New Age (2016).

2 For more information on the Gurdjieff Foundation: Society for Traditional Studies, visit http://gurdjieff-foundation-toronto.org/whoWeAre.html. The foundation maintains the Traditional Studies Press.

3 For more information about the Gurdjieff Society of Atlantic Canada, including a brief history, visit http://www.gurdjieffatlanticcanada.com/aboutus.htm.
For a poster on a public talk, visit http://gurdjieff-foundation-toronto.org/images/PathsToFreedom_Talk.pdf.


For more information about the Sufi Circle Study Group and Dr Baig, visit http://muslimcanada.org/sufi/whoarewe.htm.

Interview with author via Zoom, 31 July 2020.

For more on the Lucis Trust Library in New York City, visit https://www.lucistrust.org/arcane_school/library/new_york_headquarters_library.

Carol Sill's archive project on Shamcher can be found at http://www.shamcher.org.

The Sufi Circle Canada has a well-structured online presence. In particular, their website provides much of this oral history along with more information about the community. Visit https://www.sufimovementincanada.ca/ABOUT/about-sufi-circle-canada.

Nizamuddin Awliya (d. 1325), who is buried in New Delhi, was one of the foremost Chishti Sufi teachers and saints. His dargah or shrine is a popular site of pilgrimage and is in the same neighbourhood (basti) where Inayat and Vilayat Khan are buried.

Music sheets with lyrics were passed around, so that everyone could sing together.

Interview with author, 21 February 2020, Vancouver.

Interview with author, 21 February 2020, Vancouver.

Celia Genn has studied the Inayati Order in Australia through a sociological lens, not as a Sufi tradition but as an “Asian-derived” New Religious Movement. She has explored the institutionalization of the community and how its non-Muslim followers have propelled Khan's philosophy of “universalism” to the forefront of the Inayati Movement, which for Genn is the reason why it has succeeded (Genn 2007:2004). Differing categorizations still persist in the study of Inayat Khan's movement among various scholars who study its complex institution and affiliates.

Interview with author, 16 August 2018, Toronto.

Wali Ali Meyers is a student of Samuel Lewis, who initiated him in 1970 to become a teacher (shaykh) of Sufism. Meyers continues to hold retreats and teachings, while remaining the director of the Esoteric School of the Ruhaniat International. More about him can be found at https://www.ruhaniat.org/index.php/explore/leaders/2012-06-15-13-40-56.

Interview with author, 16 August 2018, Toronto.

Interview with author, 16 August 2018, Toronto.

Interview with author, 16 August 2018, Toronto.

For more on Jewish Sufi traditions, see Emily Sigalow's American JewBu: Jews, Buddhists, and Religious Change (2019). Sigalow engages figures like Samuel Lewis as examples of universal and Jewish Buddhists. Presumably, the first American Jew who became a Sufi was none other than Inayat Khan's first student, Rabia Martin (aka Ada Ginsberg [d. 1947]).

Kestenbaum 2016. “5 Jewish Sufis You Should Know.”

There has also been research on the Mawlawi Order in western Europe, for example, by Gritt Klinkhammer in Germany (2009).

For more on the history of this space, visit https://scalar.usc.edu/works/the-house-of-love-and-prayer/the-house-of-love-and-prayer.

Interview with author via Skype, 8 June 2020, Vancouver and Kingston.

Gold and his spiritual teachings and movements elide easy categorization. Petsche writes that the “central message that binds Gold’s work is that people need to be shaken out of their mechanical, sleep-like condition in order to transform spiritually and become conscious” (347). Gold is the author of several books, including Autobiography of a Sufi (1977) and Secret Talks with Mr. G (1978). Petsche has indicated that much of his self-narration of his life seems to parallel the life of G.J. Gurdjieff, so it is difficult to determine how much of it is real. He is also known for the Institute of the Development of Harmonious Human Being (IDHHB).

An important study on the Beshara community in the United Kingdom, see Taji-Farouki (2007).

Interview with author via Skype, 8 June 2020, Vancouver and Kingston.

Interview with author via Skype, 8 June 2020, Vancouver and Kingston.

For more on the Mawlawi Order of America, see Simon Sorgenfrei’s dissertation, American Dervish: Making Mevlevism in the United States of America (University of Gothenburg, 2013).

In his autobiography, Murat Yagan writes that he thinks that the Canadian Turkish Society did not ask him to act as the translator because he was not a “proper Moslem” See Johnston and McIntyre 1984: 146.

Interview with author via Zoom, 21 August 2020. Vaughan-Lee’s Golden Sufi Center is in Northern California. However, a small group was organized by Dale Genge after Vaughan-Lee visited Vancouver in 1992; he had gone there to give a talk about Sufism and dreams at the Vancouver Jung Society. The group meets on Salt Spring Island and has around nine people. None of the Canadian students are Muslims, though some of Vaughan-Lee’s students in California are Muslim (i.e., Iranian). One member of the Canadian group is Indigenous.

Interview with Raqib Brian Burke, 17 May 2022, Vancouver.

Burke interview, 17 May 2022, Vancouver.

Burke interview, 17 May 2022, Vancouver.

Burke interview, 17 May 2022, Vancouver.

Interview with author via Skype, 8 June 2020, Vancouver and Kingston.

I profile Ghazi in chapter 5.
41 For more about Seemi Ghazi and the Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality, visit http://wisemuslimwomen.org/muslim-woman/seemi-bushra-ghazi-2.

42 Visit the Vancouver Rumi Society, https://sites.google.com/site/rumisocietybc/home.

43 For more about Muzaffer Ozak's teachings, see Love Is the Wine: Talks of a Sufi Master in America (2009), compiled and edited by one of his students and successors, Ragiq Frager al Jerrahi al Halveti. For more biographical information about Ozak and his time in America, see Gregory Blann's Lifting the Boundaries: Muzaffer Efendi and the Transmission of Sufism to the West (2015).

44 I am grateful to Cem Aydogdu, the translator and murid of Sherif Baba, who took the time to speak with me from Turkey on 11 August 2020 and replied to my regular messages. All of this helped me map the history of Sherif Baba in Turkey, the United States, and Canada, as well as some of his teachings.

45 Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.

46 Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.

47 Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.

48 For a study of sama in the Nimatullahi Sufi Community in Toronto, see Ghani 2018.

49 For more on Dr Ahmet Fuad Sahin, visit http://iqra.ca/2017/dr-ahmet-fuad-sahin-appointed-to-order-of-canada.

50 The Jerrahi Order has an expansive transnational network and various sub-branches. Its main headquarters, in Chestnut Ridge, New York, is led by shaykh Yurdaer Doganata al-Jerrahi; other centres are in California (led by Ragib Frager al-Jerrahi), Chicago, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia. There are also centres in Argentina, Chile, Spain, Italy, Brazil, and Australia. The only Canadian branch is in Toronto.

51 Interview with author, 26 October 2019, Toronto.

52 Interview with author, 26 October 2019, Toronto.

53 Interview with author, 26 October 2019, Toronto.

54 Interview with author, 26 October 2019, Toronto.

55 For more on the community, visit their website at http://www.jerrahi.ca/aboutus.html.

56 Interview with author, 3 January 2018, Toronto.

57 For more on Kenan Rifai and the Rifai in Turkey, see chapter 5.

58 Interview with author, 3 January 2018, Toronto.

59 Accessed via the Canadian Institute of Sufi Studies website, which also offers a short documentary titled Islamic Mysticism- The Sufi Path, which captures the early story of Coskun. Visit https://www.rifaisufi.org/about-us.

60 Interview with author, 3 January 2018, Toronto.

61 Interview with author, 3 January 2018, Toronto.
One particular political reality in the Turkish diaspora is the presence of both Sufi and Muslim communities and their differing opinions about the Gülen Movement led by Fethullah Gülen, a Turkish scholar. His movement has reached into more than a hundred countries around the world. One focus of the movement is education, and it has established schools across Turkey. His movement blends together various facets of Turkish identity, Islam, Sufism, and activism based on service. Since his falling out with the current president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, he has been in political exile in Pennsylvania. The military coup that took place in 2016 in Turkey was allegedly organized by Gülen’s followers. Political tensions between Gülen and Erdoğan have carried over into the diaspora. For more on this movement, see J.D. Hendrick’s Gülen: The Ambiguous Politics of Market Islam in Turkey and the World (2013).

Some hold that all of Sufism is *adab*. Sufi masters over the centuries have written on this and trained their *murids* in various aspects of *adab*. You can see this in the writings of the Ahmed Tijani (d. 1815), the Algerian *shaykh* and founder of the Tijani Sufi Order, which is prominent in North Africa and in the global west: “Etiquette (*adab*) among the jurists is an expression of righteous deeds (*qiyyām*) following what is legally obligatory and the example of the Prophet. These include deeds of excellence and those strongly encouraged pertaining to the (external) states of people, whether while sleeping, awake, eating or drinking, in remembrance and in supplication, and things like this. Among the Sufis, etiquette is an expression of all acquired virtue and piety. It is the description of all noble attributes and praiseworthy character traits related to the divine adoration and the exaltation of divinity. Whoever gathers such traits in himself becomes refined and well-mannered in the presence of God the Exalted, and in the presence of His messenger, God’s peace and blessing upon him. The first (juristic) meaning of etiquette is thus contained within the second” (qtd in Wright 2020: 80).
3 Sama, Shab-i arus, and Rituals of Remembrance

1 This community has centres in Canada, Mexico, and the United Kingdom.
2 The use of sound in Islamic traditions is very common. One can easily note the sonic expressions of Quranic recitation (tilawa) to the call of the adhan. Still the place of music, dance, and sounds generally are quite complex within the development of Islam. For instance, music has been a point of tension for some reformist communities, which has even continued to influence diasporic Muslim communities in Canada. For more see Michael Frishkopf studies of music amongst Canadian Muslim communities (2011).
3 Jean-Louis Michon (2006) categorizes Muslim philosophers such as the Brethren of Purity, Ya`qub al-Kindi (d. 873), and Ibn Sina (d. 1037) as representing a school of thought that was interested in the science of music. The other school, or tendency, was found among the Sufis. The Sufis were interested in music, but their focus was on refining the qalb (heart) and soul in order to achieve union with the Divine (158–9).
4 We see this ritual practice especially in Mughal India. There, the sharing of sama among non-Muslims was one influential way in which Sufism spread in the Indian context Lewisohn 1997: 10; During 2018.
5 Some hadith traditions claim that the Prophet Muhammad permitted dance. For example, the musnad of Ahmad Hanbal (d. 855) related that Abyssinians were in the presence of Muhammad where they danced and played the tambourine, and he listened to them. Lewisohn 1997: 25.
6 For more on this discussion, please see Küçük 2010.
7 It seems that both the Ghazali brothers, Ahmed and Hamid, forbade the use of stringed instruments in sama, associating their use with other forms of social gatherings seen as antithetical to God. Clearly, though, not everyone takes this stance, given that the use of stringed instruments is common in the Canadian sama. Michon 2006: 168.
8 Interview with author, 19 February 2020, Vancouver.
9 Interview with author, 17 May 2022, Vancouver.
10 Interview with author, 17 May 2022, Vancouver.
11 Interview with author, 17 May 2022, Vancouver.
12 Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.
13 Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.
14 Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.
15 Interview with author, 15 December 2019, Toronto.
16 I use the term anti-Sufis here to broadly refer to the diverse groups of Muslims who find Sufism and/or its expressions theologically problematic. I borrow that term from Sirriyeh’s book Sufis and Anti-Sufism (1999). In that book she maps “some of the ways in which Sufis has been challenged over the last two centuries by the forces of anti-Sufism, understood at times as opposition to Sufism in all its aspect,
at times as criticism of certain Sufi beliefs and practices regarded as unacceptable innovations with no authentic basis in the Qurʾān and Sunna, no laudable purpose” (xi). An example of such a practice critiqued by some anti-Sufis is the sama.

18 Interview with author, 15 December 2019, Toronto.
19 Interview with author via Skype, 17 May 2019, Kingston and Montreal.
20 Interview with author via Skype, 17 May 2019, Kingston and Montreal.
21 Interview with author via Skype, 17 May 2019, Kingston and Montreal.
22 Interview with author via Skype, 17 May 2019, Kingston and Montreal.
23 Interview with author via Skype, 17 May 2019, Kingston and Montreal.
24 Interview with author via Skype, 17 May 2019, Kingston and Montreal.
25 Interview with author via Skype, 17 May 2019, Kingston and Montreal.
26 Interview with author via Skype, 17 May 2019, Kingston and Montreal.
27 In May 2020, Evanson, who heads the Sema Space in Montreal, held an online sama or “Infinite Sema” via Zoom. Unlike her regular monthly gatherings in Montreal, which include live music, zikr, and sama, this online gathering included the singing of ilahis and zikr, and those who wanted could turn. The gathering was focused on sacred audition. The small gathering about fourteen people included participants from Vancouver, Montreal, and beyond. It started with the reading of poetry by Rumi, which discussed al-Hallaj.
29 The ilahis were from the booklet titled Tasavvuf Iahliler: Ilahi Lyrics in Turkish and English, edited by Cem Williford April 2008.
30 For more information about this organization, https://csaturkishstudies.wordpress.com/#:~:text=The%20Canadian%20Society%20for%20the,Ottoman%2C%20Turkic%20and%20Ancient%20Anatolian.
31 I discuss these dynamics further in chapter 5.
32 Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.

4 The Politics of Consuming Rumi

1 The Facebook post has since been removed; however, its content became part of a longer blog piece, found here: https://muslimmamas.com/where-is-islam-in-rumi-by-baraka-blue.
3 William Jones played a key role in transmitting the history and literature of the east to the west while he served in government in Bengal and Calcutta from 1783 to 1794.
4 This race-centred approach to philology would inform the development of religious studies in Europe. For more on this, see Masuzawa 2005.
5 Chris Martin has spoken publicly about how important Rumi, and later Sufism, was for him while he was divorcing the American actress Gwyneth Paltrow; see Doyle 2015.

6 Many in the scholarly and non-scholarly worlds are expressing concerns about literal translations of Rumi. An even more fascinating trend is now unfolding: the popularity of Rumi’s poems has led to a new (unintentional) trend of outright misquoting Rumi, especially on various social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. An example of this was when Tiffany Trump, a daughter of Donald Trump, posted a (supposed) Rumi quote on Instagram. In addition to a photograph of herself dressed in a silver and beige skating outfit for the television show Dancing with the Stars, she wrote: “Raise your words, not your voice. It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder.” – Rumi #rumi #rumiquotes. https://jezebel.com/did-tiffany-trump-post-a-fake-rumi-quote-on-instagram-1834511565.

7 This question of how to process the various new spheres of popular culture, especially in this era of new media technology, has long been a field of inquiry among cultural and communication studies scholars, such as Neil Postman (d. 2003), Umberto Eco (d. 2016), and Paul Gilroy.

8 For more on the global reception and success of the Turkish series Resurrection Ertugrul, visit https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2020/aug/12/ertugrul-how-an-epic-tv-series-became-the-muslim-game-of-thrones?fbclid=IwAR03riLB0eEm9Eq8gy0CcHzw6hSCbgHyjeDPGdFXMGUC6LjaZpi9Y.


10 Thanks to my colleague Ashwini Vasanthakumar for recommending this helpful article to me.

11 Schimmel (1992) explains that the ghazal is “the traditional form of love lyric, consists generally of five to twelve lines and employs one single rhyme throughout the whole poem. The rhyme often grows into a radif, an overrhyme that consists of a word, several words, or even a full sentence” (38).

12 Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.

13 Interview with author, 17 May 2022, Vancouver.

14 For more about Zuleikha, who is currently working in India and offers various movement-based classes, visit her website: https://zuleikha.com/about-zuleikha.

15 For more on Mercan Dede, visit his website http://www.mercandede.com.

16 Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.

17 Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.

18 For more about Tanya Tawhida Evanson, visit http://www.mothertonguemedia.com/info_bio.html.


21 Interview with author via Skype, 8 June 2020, Vancouver and Kingston.

22 Interview with author, 15 December 2019, Toronto.

23 Furthermore, universities, including the University of British Columbia, with which Ghazi is affiliated, have served as important institutional spaces for
organizing collaborative events. For instance, when Omid Safi was invited to
deliver a public lecture sponsored by UBC, he also spent time working with Sufi
communities in Vancouver through partnership with Ghazi. Post-secondary in-
sstitutions from Toronto to Vancouver have played a vital role in offering spaces
where speakers on Sufism or whirling can give public talks and share in classroom
presentations.

24 For more on Small World Music, visit https://smallworldmusic.com/about
/#historySection.

25 Featured poets and performers included Sahar Golshan, Khashayar Mohammadi,
Bänoo Zan, and storyteller Ariel Balevi, as well as An Ensemble, comprised of
Bamdad Fotouhi (percussion), Nima Safaei (santour) and Kouhyar Babaeian (tar),
Zohreh Shahbazy (percussion), Kianoush Khalilian (ney) and Shahin Fayaz (tar, setar).

26 You can learn more about the author on her website: https://shenizjanmohamed
.com.

27 Interview with author, December 2018. Toronto.

28 Interview with author, December 2018, Toronto.

29 Interview with author, December 2018, Toronto.

30 Interview with author, December 2018. Toronto.

31 Email correspondence with author, 14 July 2022.

32 Interview with author, 24 June 2020, via Skype.

33 Interview with author, 24 June 2020 via Skype.

34 Interview with author, December 2018, Toronto.

35 Interview with author, December 2018, Toronto.

36 The next Sufi Poet Series was scheduled for the end of April 2020, but because of
the COVID-19 pandemic, it was cancelled. The theme of this second series was to
be the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif.

37 For more, visit the homepage of the Noor Cultural Center, https://noorculturalcentre
.ca/about-2/the-founders.

38 The Noor Center has since closed permanently due to financial pressures.

39 For more on Small World Music, visit https://smallworldmusic.com/about
/#historySection.

40 For more about this workshop, visit http://www.harbourfrontcentre.com/whatson
/learning.cfm?id=7227&festival_id=204.

41 Ismaili prayer structure differs from that of Sunni and other Shia Muslims. For
instance, Ismailis tend to pray three times a day and often gather to pray on Fri-
day evenings as a congregation. Their prayer does not include salat (or namaz),
where they prostrate themselves. Instead, Ismaili prayer includes various recita-
tions of the shorter surahs of the Quran, as well as a recitation of the lineage of
some of the Imams going back to Ali. Men and women pray side by side and are
led in prayer by one man and one-woman prayer leader, who are appointed by the
Aga Khan.

Interview with author, 15 December 2019, Toronto.

For more on the charity Canadian Arabic Orchestra, visit [https://canadianarabicorchestra.ca/home](https://canadianarabicorchestra.ca/home).

Interview with author, 15 December 2019, Toronto.

For more about Niyaz, visit [https://www.niyazmusic.com](https://www.niyazmusic.com).

Interview with author via Skype, 17 May 2019, Kingston and Montreal.

Interview with author via Skype, 17 May 2019, Kingston and Montreal.

Interview with author, 17 May 2022, Vancouver.

More about the Meditation Center can be found on its website, [https://www.sufimeditationcenter.com](https://www.sufimeditationcenter.com). The community has a robust online and social media presence that includes Facebook and YouTube and their homepage. It livestreams its events on Facebook.

Interview with author, 18 February 2020, Vancouver.

For some historical context regarding the Naqshbandi, specifically in the Ottoman context, see Dina Le Gall's *A Culture of Sufism: Naqshbandīs in the Ottoman World* (2005).

Interview with author, 18 February 2020, Vancouver.

Interview with author, 18 February 2020, Vancouver.

Interview with author, 18 February 2020, Vancouver.

You can learn more about Rumi restaurant at [https://www.restaurantrumi.com/?lang=en](https://www.restaurantrumi.com/?lang=en). For more on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani in Montreal, see Mercier-Dalphond 2021.

Various scholars, such as Vaziri (2015), have underscored Rumi's humanism, perennialism, Islamic-ness, and much more.

Interview with author, 15 December 2019, Toronto.

Interview with author, December 2018, Toronto.

Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.

Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.

Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.

Interview with author, 19 February 2020, Vancouver.

Interview with author, 19 February 2020, Vancouver.

5 Gender Dynamics in Sufi Rituals, Praxis, and Authority

Cornell (2019) points to parallels between Rabia and Plato's Diotima as another possible example of the influence of Neo-Platonism on the development of Sufism, especially as the “Lover” (188–96).
For more about the tradition that developed around Fatima, and its linkages to Maryam, see Alyssa Gabbay, *Gender and Succession in Medieval and Early Modern Islam: Bilateral Descent and the Legacy of Fatima* (2020).

The Arabic language, which is gendered, also informed these metaphysical approaches. As Schimmel (1992) explains, “for the Muslims this view – which stands in stark contrast to the Prophet’s own words and practice – was facilitated by the fact that Arabic word *nafs*, which was usually understood as the *nafs ammāra*, “the soul inciting evil” (Sura 12/53), is grammatically feminine and thus could be associated with any number of images and metaphors. This negative attitude was strengthened by another grammatically feminine word, *dunyā*, ‘this world,’ ‘the world of matter’ (as contrasted with *al-ākhira*, the “other world”). Representations of the material world as dangerous woman occur in Islamic literature as they do in Christian texts as well as in Manichaean and gnostic writings” (96–7).

Many contemporary Sufi communities continue to evoke expressions of gender, especially of the feminine, through cosmological orientations. An example is the Maryamiyya’s focus on Mary, which developed from the mystical vision of the Virgin Mary by Frithjof Schuon (d. 1998) in 1965. This experience altered the course of his Alawiyya branch and led to the group being renamed the Maryamiyya (see Sedgwick 2004; 2016). However, despite taking a metaphysical approach to gender that privileges the feminine, which in turn influences the theological and philosophical discourse of the movement, the social and institutional structures of some Traditionalist-oriented Sufi movements, like the Maryamiyya, still tend to reinforce a gender hierarchy, especially of a patriarchal nature.

*Mukhannath*, which Schimmel (1992) translates as “hermaphrodite,” is another reoccurring figure in the poetry of Rumi. In Rumi’s tales, this figure is “a model of those unreliable, hypocritical ones who belong neither to this world nor to the other, and he cannot help telling of such a person who met a shepherd and then complained that the buck in his herd had given him a funny look and laughed at him” (103).

There are few Sufi sources written by women. One is by the fifteenth-century Damascene Aishah al-Bauniyyah and is titled *The Principles of Sufism*, which has been translated by Emil Homerin (2016). This is a Sufi manual on comportment and practice.

Catherina Raudvere (2002) also captures how Sufi women had to negotiate various public and private spaces in contemporary Istanbul during ritual participation, such as during *zikr*.

Abbas (2002) explores Sufi shrines, such as to Bulleh Shah in Kasur, Bibi Pak Daman, Data Ganj Bakhsh Hujwiri, Shah Hussain, and Mian Mir in Lahore, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar and Shah Abdul Latif in Sind, and Bahauddin Zakariya and Rukunuddin Shah Alam in Multan. At these various shrines, Abbas found women leading rituals such as sama. She highlights how the feminine trope or voice of Sufi women has been maintained in poetic traditions that are sung, such as Qawwali music.

For more on these figures, see “Gendering Sufism” in Sharify-Funk et al. (2017).


Interview with author, 18 February 2020, Vancouver.

Sufi women have a varying presence in the Persian tradition of Sufism, an important thread that has not been properly captured by my study due to this book’s limited scope. I hope that future scholarship on Sufism in Canada will consider this important dimension. Javad Nurbakhsh, the Sufi shaykh of the Nimatullahi Order, which has a branch in Toronto, has published a hagiography of Sufi women titled *Sufi Women* (1983), which is available in English.

Interview with author, 3 January 2018, Toronto.


Cemalnur’s global presence can be seen in her Twitter following, which has almost 100,000 followers. She has also established Islamic studies academic positions, named after Kenan Rifai, at the University of North Carolina and Kyoto University. Visit her website [http://cemalnur.org/contents/detail/cemalnur-sargut-kimdir/12](http://cemalnur.org/contents/detail/cemalnur-sargut-kimdir/12). Samiha Ayverdi, a Turkish writer and Sufi, succeeded Kenan Rifai. For more on Cemalnur, please see Sharify-Funk et al. (2017).


Muzaffer Ozak al-Jerrahi has published many books in English for a western audience, such as *Blessed Virgin Mary* (1991), which captures again a classical trend of the veneration of the creative feminine principle in the figure of Mary.

Interview with author, 3 January 2018, Toronto.

Interview with author, 15 December 2019, Toronto.
Interview with author via Skype, 17 May 2019, Kingston and Montreal.

This comment was relayed to me during my conversation with Cem Aydogdu, the translator and murid of Sherif Baba Çatalkaya, on 11 August 2020.

There are other Sufi women leaders in Canada; however, for this book I have looked specifically at communities that are broadly affiliated with Rumi and his legacy. So I have had to exclude other voices. Again, I hope future scholars on Sufism in Canada will develop these threads further. For instance, the Canadian branch of the Azeemia Spiritual and Healing Center Canada, whose current leader is Khwaja Shamsuddin Azeemi, regularly meets in Mississauga in the Greater Toronto Region. That centre organizes an annual Adam’s Day (“Unity in Diversity”) to honour the origins of humanity in the patriarch. That day, initiated by Khawja Shamsuddin Azeemi, is celebrated in America, the United Kingdom, and Canada. The same event celebrates the anniversary of the order’s patron saint Qalandar Baba Auliya, who founded the silsila-e-azeemia in Karachi, Pakistan. The community has centres across Europe, the UK, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, and Canada. It is oriented toward Islam and Sufism but also utilizes colour therapy, meditation (muraqba or mental concentration), and parapsychology while stressing scientific thought. Its website streams events live and provides access to audio and video archives; also, duas can be requested online. The community also commemorates a mehfil e meelad for the Prophet Muhammad and an urs for its shaykh, Qalandar Baba Auliya. The Mississauga branch is led by a Pakistani woman, and much of the organizing of the events involves women and men students. This shaykha holds regular gatherings in her home and has also led zikr and prayers in public gatherings, such as during Adam’s Day.

Her recitations are included in Michael Sells’s Approaching the Qur’an: The Early Revelations (1999) as well as the PBS documentary Islam, Empire of Faith (2000).

Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.

Maududi founded Jamaat-e Islami, a religio-political party in Pakistan. He was a scholar, activist, journalist, and jurist. He died in Buffalo, New York. The Muslim Brotherhood, an anti-colonial social justice movement founded in Egypt by Hasan al-Banna (d. 1949), has become one of the world’s most influential Islamist political movements.

Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.

Interview with the author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.

Interview with author, 18 December 2018, Oakville.

Interview with author, 18 December 2018, Oakville.

A link to the tarot cards is https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/712682/the-sufi-tarot-by-ayeda-husain.

For more, see Katz (2014).

Interview with author, 18 December 2018, Oakville.
Epilogue

1 These individuals have been members of the movement for decades (and thus when labelling this group, a white Sufi community, it erases their presence).
2 See the special issue of *Journal of Islamic Studies* on “Engaged Sufism” edited by Kugle and Shaikh; see also Said, Funk, et al. (2001). Sri Lanka was plagued by civil war for nearly three decades, and this informed Bawa’s approach to non-violence. During his ministry in northern Sri Lanka, he often tried to dissuade his Tamil students from engaging in violence. He arrived in Philadelphia at a time when race-based Muslim organizations like the Nation of Islam (NOI) and the Moorish Science Temple (MST) were forming in America. During his initial ministry there, he attracted many African American students from these organizations. Bawa was himself a racialized man, and this resonated with racialized Americans.
3 Rozehnal (2019) in his study of the Inayati Order and its cyber-presence highlights some of the ways in which Zia Inayat-Khan and his community’s online presence include social justice and activism work.
4 https://www.jerrahi.ca/relief-work.
5 For pictures and more details, visit http://iqra.ca/2014/bridges-beyond-faith-an-event-dedicated-to-peace.
6 https://www.jerrahi.ca/gallery.
7 See other such events on their homepage, https://www.jerrahi.ca/events.
8 For a documentary on the life and activism of El-Farouk Khaki, visit https://vimeo.com/395012143?fbclid=IwAR2HKopRibk4Gym1xifzQlQNt3vcuMApncBvF FOaCP8IPnP36A6MgRy0.
9 Interview with author, 20 February 2020, Vancouver.
10 Whiteness is also not a stable category and never has been. For more on this discussion, see Neda Maghbouleh, *The Limits of Whiteness: Iranian Americans and the Everyday Politics of Race*.
11 Interview with author via Skype, 17 May 2019, Kingston and Montreal.
12 Interview with author via Skype, 17 May 2019, Kingston and Montreal.