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#STOPISLAMOPHOBIA:

THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION, DISIDENTIFICATION AND RESISTANCE

by

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#stopislamophobia: The Politics of Representation, Disidentification and Resistance

Master of Design, 2015
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Abstract

This thesis investigates the interpellation of a conflicted Muslim identity by Islamophobic content propagated and mediated on social networking sites impressing the normative idea that Islam is terror. In context of media convergence and the attention economy, complex flows of Islamophobic ideology originating from old and new media are explored by analyzing videos, news stories, blogs and opinion pieces retrieved from my Facebook timeline, in addition to stories of resistance to Islamophobia occurring on various sites such as spoken word performances, blogs and theatrical performances. This analysis informs Disidentity, an interactive recorded-video installation project in which as a Muslim subject I enact a disidentificatory performance that provides the observer of this installation an opportunity to resist the impressed discourse.

keywords: Islamophobia, stereotypes, news media, media convergence, resistance, disidentification

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To Izdeyar, Shehrezade and Nariman

and my parents

#stopislamophobia:

The Politics of Representation, Disidentification and Resistance

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Preface

Researching this thesis has been an extremely difficult process, the affect of Islamophobic hate on social media I have been exposed to caused numerous breakdowns forcing me to pause on several occasions. I use the term story throughout this thesis to describe events and instances of Islamophobic media retrieved from my Facebook timeline that were shared with me by my network of friends in the form of news articles, blogs, videos that qualified mention, analysis and a retelling. Questioning an effective means of resistance to this hate, I dug deeper into these social media stories structured by my critical evaluative framework and began to see ideological patterns emerge within the arresting dominant narrative of Islamophobia circulating on Facebook and Twitter.

On a personal note, choosing to retell these stories was liberating. Before conducting this research I counted myself as an observer on Facebook and Twitter, rarely posting or commenting. I would skim my timeline, scanning what friends shared for objects of interest. I was unengaged, withdrawn and dormant due to the fantasy of foreclosure of politics, an idea that states political participation online is futile and indeed a fantasy. Yet I found respite by discovering many counter narratives of hope resisting Islamophobia, existing on the fringe of an overwhelming dominant discourse/ narratives in social networks. For that I am grateful to my online network of friends who shared these stories of resistance because they helped me drag myself back to life and forge on with this thesis, but above all I am thankful to those who created them in the first place.

1. Introduction

We collectively inhabit a world that is always on, as theorist Paul Virilio (2005) says due to the ubiquity of screen-based technologies and an information overload contained within. Calling it a false day, Virilio likens the constant, round the clock illumination of telecommunication devices to a sun that has arisen, ushering in "world time" that "escapes the diurnal-nocturnal alternation that previously structured history"(14). A world that is always on and accessible is exemplified by CNN and other 24-hour channels for television and more importantly, the World Wide Web (Virilio). Theorist Jean Baudrillard laments this as an invasion of the private sphere of an individual that was once an imaginary protector, a relief providing an exteriority of the other, by permitting the monitoring screen including television and other telecommunication mediums to unfold the entire universe unnecessarily upon itself. The monitoring screen, with its deluge of information, is loaded with telematic power exerting affect on the individual, likening the individual to a terminal in multiple networks (Baudrillard 2012).

The concept of media convergence posited by theorist Henry Jenkins is vital to this thesis. Jenkins earnestly argues the coming together of old and new media where old media, typically are television, film, radio and print and new media are the Internet, specifically social media sites like Facebook and Twitter in context of this thesis (2006, 2). Described as a cultural shift, convergence causes a flow of content and a blurring of lines between the two mediums, with users constantly migrating between multiple media platforms in search for information (2). This thesis investigates the complex flows of Islamophobic ideas originating from various sites on both old and new media. I argue if not for convergence, how would it come to pass that Islamophobic narratives, ideas and stories originating from a Fox News telecast directed at a North American audience or a

news article printed in the Daily Telegraph in the United Kingdom are found on social media?. In social media flows of messages, the message keeps circulating and re-circulating within the networks we create; with each share or referral subjectivity of the networked user who shares it is added on to the message in the form of a statement, comment or opinion why it was share worthy. With each log in to Facebook, one's timeline is rife with new stories shared within the network of friends. These new stories take priority based on the algorithm in use by Facebook (or Twitter for that matter), pushing all preceding shares downward and out of sight. Despite this ephemeral mechanism, I maintain the temporality of Islamophobic media content that is shared on social networks extends far beyond this downward sinking motion. If only the affect of each Islamophobic story I encounter could be replaced as swiftly as the shares on the timeline. In my experience, exposure to such stories has been paralyzing to the extent that it makes me question my identity.

To query the concept of identity and how it is formed, I consider Marxist theorist Louis Althusser's theory of the ideological state apparatus or ISA, that functions by disseminating ideology, forming subject positions and interpellating identity. Culture theorist Stuart Hall suggests in *Media and Representation* that power cannot be taken out of the equation of representation, indicating that power and ideology attempt to fix meaning (1997). Regarding power, the political economy lens afforded by theorist Tiziana Terranova in her book *Network Culture* terms the dissemination of ideology through ideological state apparatuses as the "perversion of communication" due to the political and oligopolistic control of the media by the few (Althusser 1970; Hall 1997; Terranova 2004).

The research question this thesis investigates is— how can we resist Islamophobia on social media by using the communicative power of networked media? In employing the afore mentioned ideas, this thesis argues that flows of Islamophobic messages on

Facebook and Twitter can impress the normative idea that Islam as a culture inflicts
terror upon users of these networks, cultivating fear of Muslims and can interpellate
Muslim subjects in an ideological position fraught with precariousness and guilt.

In addition, this thesis explores media resistance to these Islamophobic stories,
first by analyzing counter narratives to Islamophobia I encountered on Facebook during
this research. It is worth noting how these counter narratives occur in various sites:
street protests; spoken word performances; blogs; theatrical performances, yet thankfully
due to the media convergence I referred to earlier, these resistive acts are also found on
social media as user generated content. I began to question my own role in resisting
Islamophobia, considering that as a Facebook user I am withdrawn and non-
participatory. It was after encountering theorist José Esteban Muñoz's
Disidentifications: Queers of Race and the Politics of Performance that I began to
consider disidentificatory performance as a method for my own personal resistance to
Islamophobic messages on social media. I take note of Muñoz's proposal to view
disidentificatory performances providing the spectator a capacity to resist the normative,
and to instead disidentify with that world and perform a new one(1999, xiv).

In my thesis project entitled Disidentity, I invite observers to view my subject
position and conflicted identity as a Muslim and expose them to the piercing narrative of
Islamophobic stories circulating and re-circulating on Facebook and Twitter. The intent
is to have the observer feel what I feel— visceral discomfort and distress induced by
Islamophobic stories circulating social media. My choice to use the news telecast
aesthetic, despite that it is representative of old media, is based in my recognition of the
news room as a symbolic representation of an idealogical state apparatus. I observe the
newsroom as a seat of idealogical power that can be employed to manipulate public
opinion and fix meaning; this is informed by Morse's study of news anchors using a
discourse analysis lens. In the Disidentity project, I apprehend the position of power by

assuming the role of a news anchor and conduct my disidentificatory performance in the format of a news broadcast.

1.1 Scope and Limitations

The scope of this thesis is two fold. This thesis seeks research and analysis of Islamophobic stories and resistance encountered and experienced by me on my Facebook timeline, that originate from various sites in the form of television news programs, news website articles, blogs, citizen protests etc. Post-analysis, these stories as data collected are to be retold in the form of an interactive recorded-video installation, as a performance of my disidentification with Islamophobia titled Disidentity which was exhibited in the Digital Futures thesis exhibition.

At this point however, it is also important to make clear that my argument is not an exploration of Islam, its theology or practice, or a study of radicalization, militancy or its causes in Muslim communities.

1.2 Methods

This thesis seeks research and analysis of Islamophobic stories and resistance encountered and experienced on my Facebook timeline and is divided into various stages and sections: data collection in the shape of stories shared by my network of friends on Facebook including narratives of Islamophobic videos and articles from various news organizations such as Fox News, the Guardian and the Telegraph to name a few. I reviewed user-generated videos, blogs, articles representative of resistance to Islamophobia also shared with me on Facebook and Twitter. I developed a theoretical framework, affording me a variety of lens for analysis of the data, comparing contrasting viewpoints of theorists, writers, bloggers and comments by Facebook and Twitter users. In addition to attending talks by critical theorists of subjectivity like Rosi Braidotti.

The primary research method employed in this research is auto-ethnography. As a qualitative social research method, auto-ethnographer Carolyn Ellis describes auto-ethnography as both process and product in which the researcher becomes the subject of research (Ellis 2010, p1). The stories analyzed in this thesis are my personal experiences on social media through the screen. Describing auto-ethnography as "making the personal political", communications scholar Stacy Holman Jones posits auto-ethnographic research as a radical democratic politics that creates dialogue and debate initiating social change through performance (2005, 763). According to Holman Jones, a key challenge for auto-ethnographers is to produce texts that offer interpretive, qualitative, narrative and critical inquiry that "unfold in the intersubjective space of individual and community and that embrace tactics for both knowing and showing" (767). I employ theorist José Esteban Muñoz's theory of disidentification as a lens to study counter narratives to Islamophobia(1999). Muñoz's study creates a performance studies lens theorizing the political force of performance and performativity

of queers and minority subjects of all races. This lens is key in determining my own video-recorded performance to be presented at the thesis exhibition.

I employ Stuart Hall's Politics of Representation to dissect the production and signifying practices of old media. In order to investigate interpellation of Muslim identity, I employ Louis Althusser's theory of idealogical state apparatus and subject formation. I look at the complex flows of circulation and re-circulation of Islamophobic stories on social media sites Facebook and Twitter by referring to media convergence theory as proposed by media scholar Henry Jenkins(2006).

My analysis of media ownership is afforded by the political economy lens as posited by media and culture theorist Tiziana Terranova(2004). The role of the news anchor as a key personality in disseminating news to audiences is studied through the discourse analysis lens of media theorist Margaret Morse(1986). I deconstruct Islamophobic myths by employing a semiotic analysis lens proposed by Roland Barthes(1972); myths encoded within popular television series like Homeland circulating freely for networked users to consume.

For the purpose of the exhibition piece, I have considered and drawn inspiration from the *Emotion Design* method proposed by acclaimed user-centred design guru, Donald Norman in his book by the same name (2004). In this interaction design approach, Norman informs designers to consider three levels of processing undertaken by an observer or user: visceral; behavioural; reflective (11). In order to breakdown the user experience of the installation, I employed a design technique used by ambient experience designers at Philips retrieved from a design case study involving the creation of an actions-based matrix determining the flow of entire experience in sequential tables; this tool for designers foresees any gaps or glitches that could be otherwise overlooked(Rutgers 2014).

My exhibition piece is an interdisciplinary project, a recorded-video installation informed by many areas of knowledge. By employing various theoretical lens, I was able to analyze the media data or stories representing Islamophobia to structure a script and to inform my performance. This technique allowed me to construct my resistive and disidentifying subject position within the numbing cacophony of reported Islamophobic discourses online for my thesis project "Disidentity".

2. Islamophobia and Conflicted Identity—Whats at Stake?

"... the dread and hatred of Islam – and, therefore, the fear and dislike of all, or most Muslims" Runnymede Trust, a British independent race equality think-tank defining Islamophobia in a report titled *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*, 1997.

2.1 How to spot a terrorist — the definitive guide

An article was shared by a Facebook friend on my Facebook page titled "How to spot a terrorist living in your neighbourhood - We know what kind of people are tempted by Islamic Extremism - now we need to do more to stop them". Curious, I clicked the link that transported me instantly to the article published on the website of the newspaper Daily Telegraph based in the United Kingdom on May 28 2013, written by journalist Alan Judd. The Telegraph was the most visited news website in Britain in 2008, becoming the third most visited newspaper website in Britain, with 1.7 million daily browser views in 2010 (Kiss 2008).

The article narrates how Dame Stella Remington, the former director general of the British intelligence agency MI5 called for ordinary British citizens to "inform on neighbours they suspect of extremism"(Judd 2014). The journalist while normalizing citizen surveillance, emphasized how it needs to happen more. It is troubling to note, the article claiming knowledge of "radicalization" by referencing "studies" of terrorist acts committed in Britain, aims to educate an average citizen in the fine art of surveilling Muslim neighbours by tossing them into the murkiness of indeterminacy(Judd 2014).

Therefore, the all-encompassing statement that radicalization can happen to anyone, is inclusive of all Muslims, including my family and me (Fig 1 Appendix D).

In one clean stroke, this somber, menacing warning took in its fold almost two billion bodies globally - collapsing us all as "Muslims", eliminating difference between progressive, liberal, non-practicing, moderate, conservative and radical individuals into a singular social entity or a zero institution, as posited by theorist Slavoj Žižek (2001, 221-3). Building on Claude Levi-Strauss's concept of an empty signifier, Žižek declares zero institutions to be empty signifiers having no determinate meaning; in this case despite radically different descriptions of their collectivity, people are nevertheless understood as members of the same tribe. A zero institution hence eliminates radical antagonisms, divisions and differences amongst the collective (Dean 2005).

In the article, Judd suggests a loose framework based on statistics gathered from recorded acts of Islamic extremism in Britain that can be viewed as telling signs of radicalization in British Muslim society. Judd declares, emphasizing his lack of surprise, how most extremists are: single Muslim males aged between 16-34; he factors in economic status of unemployment and/or under-employment amongst others (Judd 2014).

The writer cautions that these indicators should not be applied to the Muslim community at large, yet by advocating the need of being surveilled by their neighbours, he abjects the entire Muslim community in Britain into a precarious existence of uncertainty and vulnerability.

Some of the causes of radicalization Judd specifies in the article are: interaction with radicalized peers, either directly or online; images on mainstream news channels of Muslim casualties from Western bombs; images and stories of ill-treated prisoners. In addition, Judd's article goes on to present a list of behavioural indicators displayed by Muslim neighbours to be taken as telltale signs of possible radicalization. Some of the

changes in behaviour stated are: ostentatious insistence on religious ritual; withdrawal from interaction with women and disapproval of "feminine dress"; obsession with physical fitness; adopting traditional "Arab" dress or abandoning it to not attract attention(Judd 2014). Broad, sweeping and expansive, these signs reaffirm how anyone can be radicalized; hence Judd's article insinuates that everyone is a suspect, an imminent threat (Judd 2014).

2.2 Ideological State Apparatus

The Daily Telegraph article prints a statement made by the former director of British Intelligence MI5 and built upon by Judd, reads as a symbolic marriage between the repressive State Apparatus and communications Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) theorized by Marxist theorist Louis Althusser. Althusser describes the state, army, police, prisons and courts as institutions in the public domain as a repressive force intervening "in the interest of the ruling classes" directed toward the working class in classic Marxist terms (Althusser 2014, 243). Meanwhile the ISA are specialized institutions lying in the private domain such as the press, radio and television amongst others representing the interest of the ruling classes and keeping the balance of power tipped in their favour. Stuart Hall counts power as an essential element that cannot be excluded from the equation of representation. Hall asks, "Who has the power, in what channels, to circulate which meanings to whom?" (1997). In proliferation of ideology, it is through the dissemination of mass produced messages that those in power construct identity in a way that implicate the public in the meaning including Muslims. This is the mechanism by which media messages of Islamophobia take within its fold all Muslims, including myself, irrespective of our political viewpoint or anyone else's for that matter.

Althusser goes on to describe ideology as a "system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group" (253). Ideology therefore plays a distinct role in forming subject positions. However, the essential difference between repressive and ideological state apparatus is that the former functions mostly through "violence" or regulation, and the latter functions "massively and predominantly by ideology" (244). He defines the role of the communications apparatus as one that constantly reinforces ideology by repetitively bombarding citizens with "daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism, etc., by means of the press, the radio and television"(250) of which Islamophobia is an example. Antonio Gramsci terms this as "common sense" described as maintaining the status quo by working class subjects that believe ideological messages serving the interest of the ruling class to be natural or "the way things are" (1971, 422). In the case of the Daily Telegraph article, the ideology of fear thy neighbour set in motion by the former head of the MI5 supplements the message of the article, in fact it becomes a point of departure.

2.3 Manufacturing Identities and Subject Positions

Regarding Althusser's work as key in theorizing subject formations and interpellation of identity, queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz in his book *Disidentifications: Queers of Race and the Politics of Performance* describes interpellation as the essentialized understanding of identity: Muslims are like this; Latinas are like that; that reduces an identity to its lowest common denominator or what culture theorist Edward Said regarded as a radical terminal of generalizations. In his classic book *Orientalism*, Said refers to orientalists, for having the tendency of taking the greatest amount of variety of identities and "always restraining, compressing downwards and backwards to the radical terminal of generality" (1978, 231). The generalization and

formulation Said refers to, where an Oriental Man is first an Oriental and only second a man is reinforced by the sciences; being an Oriental was categorized as a species and generalizations of Orientalness — ultimately an ontogenetic explanation for every member of the species, to be applied universally, barring any individual instances to the contrary. Therefore, no member of the species could escape the "organizing claims on him of his origins" as laid out in the "radical terminal of generality" (231). Employing this orientalist frame, the interpellated Muslim identity as suggested by the Telegraph article, has the potential to be converted into a ticking time bomb of terror. In *Disidentifications,* theorist José Esteban Muñoz argues three modes in which a subject is constructed by ideological processes as proposed by French Linguist Michel Pêcheux (1982). Pêcheux, in adherence to Louis Althusser's theory of interpellation proposes: "good subjects" who choose the path of identification and assimilation with the "discursive and ideological forms"; "bad subjects" turn against, revolt , rebel or "attempt to reject the images and identificatory sites offered by dominant ideology […] 'counteridentify' and turn against the symbolic system"; disidentification is the third mode, in which subjects neither identify nor counter identify with dominant ideology, in fact it is a "strategy that works on and against dominant ideology" (Muñoz 1999, 11; Pêcheux 1982, 156). With constant reinforcement of Islamophobic ideology disseminated by the communications apparatus on its citizens including Muslims, good subjects believe and conform by adopting the discourse as interpellation makes them the subject of the statement/claim. Muñoz describes ideology is an inescapable realm as both good subjects in their assimilatory position and bad subjects despite taking an anti-assimilatory stance are still confined within ideology.

2.4 The Politics of Representation

In his theory on the politics of representation, acclaimed theorist Stuart Hall described the image as the saturating idiom of communication worldwide, irrespective of whether it is a still image or video, or how it is transmitted on any media as a sign of late-modern culture that is not limited to post-industrial societies but is a worldwide phenomenon due to the global expansion of communication. Hall postulates representation as the way ideas are given meaning; ideas could be topics of discussion, events, people and situations being represented (1997). What is being represented through a message, an image or text stands in for the actual object. This lens provides an approach to address this troubling and problematic representation of Muslims as a social group via Islamophobic messages on various sites. I consider the case of prominent author and philosopher Sam Harris calling Islam "a mother lode of bad ideas" as a guest on Liberal comedian Bill Maher's television show *Real Time with Bill Maher*(Stern 2015) . Harris went on to declare millions of Muslims as supporting terrorists.

Furthermore, as a consequence of deplorable shootings and attacks in Paris, Sydney and Ottawa to name a few, Muslims are seen as complicit in supporting terrorism due to a perceived failure to noticeably condemn atrocious acts of terrorism(Evans 2015; Stern 2015). In the wake of the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris on January 7 2015, Rupert Murdoch, owner of NewsCorp, tweeted on 9th January 2015, "Maybe most Moslems [sic] peaceful, but until they recognize and destroy their growing jihadist cancer they must be held responsible"(Evans 2015). Confronted by such Islamophobic messages, I am an identity in conflict, being represented under its all-inclusive sign that signifies an ontogenetic explanation for all Muslims, to be applied universally, barring any individual instances to the contrary. Hall mentions this a distortion of identity, where Muslims are represented as terrifying, barbaric and violent by such messages of Islamophobic

ideology. I am reminded of Judith Butler in her book, *Bodies that Matter* (1993) where

she asks "What are the possibilities of politicizing disidentification, this experience of

misrecognition, this uneasy sense of standing under a sign to which one does and does

not belong?" (219). Although I refer to all audiences being interpellated by Islamophobic

ideology, this thesis focuses on the interpellation of the Muslim identity and subject

formation primarily, with the intent to represent in the thesis project Disidentity.

In Section 1 I argue that a newspaper printing an article picking up on an

Islamophobic statement by a state official that suggests that any Muslim can be

radicalized and hence is an imminent threat, symbolizes a marriage of the repressive

state apparatus and the ideological state apparatus of communication. The ideological

state apparatus functioning by ideology is thereby attempting to interpellate Muslim

identity and subject formation to be feared by their British neighbours and one that

requires constant surveillance.

In Section 2, I investigate the ideological state apparatus of communications itself

in the light of media convergence. I look at how private and corporate interests and

power determine the ideological message that is to be disseminated to audiences. I also

investigate media ownership with an approach of political economy as postulated by

media and culture theorist Tiziana Terranova. I explore techno utopianism, which

according to theorists Lisa Nakamura and danah boyd occurs in our heralding of

innovations in technology. In addition I offer analysis of Islamophobic stories collected

from Facebook that have originated from various sites. I apply this analysis to four

examples— the role of a news anchor through the discourse analysis lens of media

theorist Margaret Morse; deconstructing Islamophobic myths encoded within popular

television series like Homeland circulating freely for networked users to consume by

employing a semiotic analysis lens proposed by Roland Barthes; A marketing video

produced by Facebook that comes under attack by Islamophobic Facebook users.

3. Convergence: Islamophobia, Old Media, New Media

Stuart Hall counts power as an essential element that cannot be excluded from the equation of representation. Hall asks, "Who has the power, in what channels, to circulate which meanings to whom?" (Hall 1997). In this section I attempt to answer this crucial question posed by Hall in the context of production of Islamophobic messages on old and new media. I rephrase Hall's question as— who has the power, in what channels, to circulate Islamophobia to whom?. I address this by creating the context of techno utopianism as whereby democratic values and credibility are associated with both old and new media technologies. I also look at media ownership through a political economy lens by theorist Tiziana Terranova in her book *Network Culture*. It is also vital to review ISA's, because they exist in the private domain as institutions and organizations in the pursuit of profit. Having been a part of media organizations, I can vouch for the phrase "if it bleeds it leads" as an unfortunate industry mantra. I supplement this with personal experience in the form of an auto ethnographic analysis gained by over a decade's experience in senior management positions at broadcast media institutions in Pakistan. Therefore, some examples and references given are based on my experience in Pakistan. In this section, I also consider examples of Islamophobic ideology found on Facebook yet produced on various ideological state apparatus, that are circulated in mainstream and social media in the form of news broadcasts, popular American TV shows and Hollywood blockbuster movies that may impress fear of Muslims as common sense.

Hall describes the production of meaning as a process, an activity that is undertaken to give or attribute meaning to things and communicate meaning to others, otherwise it would suffice to say that all meaning pre-exists and is fixed within objects. Hall refers to this production of meaning as "signifying practices" of which media is a key component, a widespread technological network circulating meaning(1997). I thread this

argument with Louis Althusser's assertion that the idealogical state apparatus interpellates identity and forms subject positions by constantly bombarding its audience with ideology. These are signifying practices, and as such these institutions exert power on the social by producing meaningful representations. However, this is not the only way meaning circulates within society—personal communication being an obvious example (Hall 1997). Yet with the ubiquity of technology, social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, media begins to substitute for face-to-face and person-to-person communication exchange.

danah boyd, in her book, *It's Complicated*, argues how biases in technology exist due to techno utopianism associated with the introduction of any new technology as a "tool to end social divisions". Boyd points to a similar techno utopianism associated with the introduction of the Internet (158) as with the telegraph in 1858 and how it was seen as a vital cord to "bind all the nations of the earth". Much like the internet, users and viewers of old media like television and in particular news reporting and journalism share utopian fantasies associated with them.

3.1 The Fourth Pillar of Democracy Utopia and Media Ownership

Nawaz hopes media would play its role as true fourth pillar of state in larger national interest
-15 August 2014, headline in the Daily Times quoting the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Nawaz Sharif

The concept that media, meaning broadcast, print and subsequently other telecommunication technologies, serve as the fourth pillar of democracy was introduced by Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle (1841). Crediting the Irish political theorist Edmund Burke for coining the term, Carlyle regards the fourth pillar as "whoever can speak, speaking now to the whole nation, becomes a power, a branch of government, with

inalienable weight in law-making, in all acts of authority" (Carlyle 1841). In his essay "Towards a Semiological Guerrilla Warfare", Umberto Eco (1973) spoke of a means of effectively seizing political power in a country by the person who controls communications, dismissing the need to bring out tanks, something army generals would do in backward countries.

In what is arguably a utopian context of the fourth pillar, media represents public opinion, it performs a check and balance on the part of the public on issues regarding corruption, abuse of power, etc. accountability and scrutiny of the three pillars the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, on behalf of the public (Yusuf, 2013). It is thus disturbing to observe how media organizations present themselves to audiences in their triadic role as gatekeepers, watchdogs and agenda-setters (Yusuf, 2013). This is observed as an industry standard in Pakistani news media culture including frequent advertisements in which news networks proudly announce themselves as the first with breaking news or bringing information to the audience before anyone else.

Theorist Tiziana Terranova in her book *Network Culture* states that there can be no democracy without a space provided for citizens where they can express, communicate and share opinions and remains skeptical of media being termed as the "the new public sphere" (2004, 132). She maintains that media power seems to be exclusive to those in power due to a restriction of access and control of media to those who can afford it. Relating back to Althusser and the ideological state apparatus as belonging within the private domain, Terranova declares a "perversion of communication" that occurs due to control of media driven by corporations, tycoons, political and private interests actively in the pursuit of capital (134)."Democratic" media under control of the few, drowns out opinions and voices of the many. The shaping, nay "manipulation" of public opinion is engineered through strategies of media warfare and dissemination of ideology serving the interests of those in power. Terranova states that television audience is "held hostage

by powerful media monopolies" and their techniques of propaganda, spin and simulation (135). It is within Terranova's political economy framework I consider the case of Fox News and Rupert Murdoch the CEO of NewsCorp.

On 9th January 2015 Murdoch tweeted from his Twitter account, "Maybe most Moslems [sic]peaceful but until they recognize and destroy their growing jihadist cancer they must be held responsible" (Evans 2015). As with the Daily Telegraph article mentioned in the previous section, Murdoch's tweet flattens out the entire Muslim population into a singular, zero institution in Žižek's terms. His tweet however was met with severe criticism, the most notable response given by acclaimed British author J.K Rowling (See Fig. 2)

News organizations rely on credibility and objectivity of the news they report, ideal qualities to possess as the fourth pillar of democracy. Considering how Fox News positions itself to the audience by using the slogan "Fair and Balanced", a documentary titled *Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism*, released on 13th July 2004 featuring interviews with former Fox News employees, anchors and producers. The interviewees provided material evidence in the form of inter-office memos reportedly received by them from Fox News senior management containing specific instructions on what issues to talk about, which ones to avoid and dictating the stance to be taken by news anchors and hosts (Outfoxed 2004). Murdoch chose to express his conservative right-wing political stance on an issue by sharing it on Twitter despite his position as the owner of a media empire and his opinion trickled down to be expressed as his network's stance as well through news telecasts. This was exemplified when a Fox News host Judge Jeanine Pirro in her show "Justice" took a hardline against all Muslims exactly one day after Rupert Murdoch sent out his Islamophobic tweet.

Fig 2: Rupert Murdoch & JK Rowling tweets
Retrieved from: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2906778/JK-Rowling-condemns-Rupert-Murdoch-Twitter-blames-Muslims-Paris-terror-attacks.html.

Fig 3: Judge Jeanine Pirro "You are in danger, I'm in danger"
Screenshot taken from: http://www.foxnews.com/on-air/justice-jeanine/index.html#/v/3982602485001.

3.2 Cultivation of Fear in the Pursuit of Ratings and Capital

NewsCorp is the parent company of Fox News, the 24 hour cable news channel that Rupert Murdoch, the Chairman and CEO of NewsCorp founded in 1996. Although it can be argued that analysis of Fox News in this thesis is perhaps taking the easy way out, since Fox News has been widely criticized by academics, media personalities like Jon Stewart and media theorists alike for being biased and openly right leaning (Outfoxed 2004). Yet, according to an article published in the Huffington Post on 31st December 2014, Fox News retains top slot in the cable news genre for the year 2014 despite all the criticism (Kissell 2015). Fox News has managed to retain its top ranking beating competitors like CNN and MSNBC, achieved when the overall genre of cable news is facing a decline in the United States. Popularity of TV channels is measured by a ratings system that determines how many eyeballs are watching which channel at what time. Ratings for television audiences in the United States are measured by an independent company, AC Nielsen as it is industry practice to have a neutral party record and tabulate ratings to avoid conflict of interest. Based on this rating, channels set advertising rates in the market as high rating is read as high popularity and translates into high profit(Kissell 2014). In other words fear mongering, ratings and profit make for a profitable business.

Media theorist George Gerbner's *Mean World Syndrome* (MWS) is a culmination of the Cultivation theory, recording the affect of violent themes on television. MWS provides a lens warranting exploration of messages normalizing Islam as terror being produced on cable tv news networks such as Fox News based in the United States. Gerbner's Cultivation theory speaks of television and its mass produced messages as instrumental in creating social reality for the viewer. According to the MWS, media reporting back-to-back bad news about terrorism, terrorist attacks and security concerns cultivate fear and mistrust in the masses (Gerbner 1986). To consider an example from

Pakistani media, where I spent more than a decade in senior management positions, an analysis of of 9 popular Pakistani talk shows was conducted on 2 May 2014 by Gallup Pakistan. The research found 46 percent of airtime in these popular talk shows is dedicated to security related issues such as terrorism and the Taliban. This fear-mongering is not unique to Pakistani media and will be revisited shortly. Consistent pressure is exerted upon producers by higher management in media organizations to create programs for ratings and popularity as grounds for acquisition of further capital.[1] Any product showing gains in ratings are trumpeted in the market by the network to maximize their claim to higher financial gains for advertising slots and more capital. Performance reviews are conducted of all productions including broadcast and associated social media platforms in a series of regular fortnightly meetings, based on the data provided on audience viewership or ratings by neutral data collection organizations. In the name of refining products, stakeholders such as producers, writers, editors are asked to devise and commit strategies, methods and debate inclusion, exclusion or infusion of innovative elements in productions under scrutiny for more popularity. These meetings serve a singular agenda to make the channel more profitable. The proliferation of channels, messages and information has led to a race amongst content producers in Pakistan's corporate news media being constantly challenged to inject shock spectacle to make an impact to bolster ratings, viewership and profit. Globally, television advertising has always had the biggest share of the pie. However, according to the Price Waterhouse Coopers report on *Global Entertainment and Media Outlook 2014-2018*, it is projected Internet advertising will be closing in on TV advertising with video taking the lions share in terms of growth (pWc 2014).

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[1] This finding is based on 12 years of experience in upper management positions in various Pakistani television networks

Internet advertising will account for a staggering $194.5 billion dollars, with TV

advertising just a little over $200 billion dollars in 2018. The staggering growth can be

understood with figures from 2009 where Internet advertising was $58.2 billion and TV

was $132 billion dollars(pWc 2014).

The profit combined with the desire of content producers to prove the popularity of

their sites to gain more advertising is reflective of the relationship dynamics that exist

between corporate television and advertisers, where ratings act as means for profit for a

channel. In order to generate ratings, sure fire stories that bleed are prioritized in

editorial considerations and control. A shift is already taking place with the migration of

major news corporations onto the Internet. Referring to "digitization" of content leading

to convergence, Henry Jenkins deems this duplication of content on both old and new

media as a factor in media convergence (2006, 11). In my opinion the danger lies in how,

with this transference of content, messages loaded with Islamophobic ideology first

produced on television, print or radio, get duplicated and circulated onto the Internet

and in particular social media. In order to investigate the relationship between ISA's and

the social media universe that circulate these messages, I refer to Danah Boyd's theory of

the attention economy. In doing so I am not implying that all subjects are simply

interpellated by Islamophobic ideology but that a common sense, perhaps slips through

in these flowing streams of information. Dominant Islamophobic ideas become

inculcated in messages that are sent by those circulating them in dissent or even with

ironic or resistive statements.

3.3 The Attention Economy of Networked Media

danah boyd in *Streams of Content, Limited Attention: The Flow of Information*

through Social Media speaks of a shift in the media landscape from a centralized source

of content and information such as television onto an era of networked media. Although centralized sources of information had power over distribution in the era of passive consumption of information by audiences, it is not the case in the fragmented world of networked media. This accounts for a shift in dynamics of power: from control of distribution to a desired control of attention, from the "push" of content to the "pull" of attention (29). boyd terms this the "attention economy" in "The Destabilizing Force of Fear" where institutions in the business of producing and disseminating information such as news organizations rely on people giving them attention. Boyd asserts that the attention economy therefore provides fertile ground for the culture of fear (2012, p1). Boyd regards the culture of fear as the ways "in which fear is employed by marketers, politicians, technology designers [e.g., consider security narratives] and the media to regulate the public" (2012, p5). As discussed in section 1, the ideological state apparatus serve to protect the interests of those in power. boyd's argument can be viewed as a transference of a similar dynamic onto networked media.

For the fragmented networked user, the promise of universal access to information or its democratization does not in any way guarantee that a user will know where to look for it. Considering 500 million tweets daily, or 1.35 billion users of Facebook sharing links amongst their friends, users of the network cannot possibly sift through all of them, which is where referral comes into play; creating a hierarchy of roles (Twitter 2014; Statisa 2014). boyd regards strong personal networks on Facebook and Twitter as who you know determining what you know calling it "homophily" (30). It is from amongst those in a users network, information is relayed and passed on based on what is being curated by the few (boyd 172). This is the notion of collective intelligence proposed by media scholar Henry Jenkins as a natural means amongst networked users to share information of interest in a vast and seemingly infinite cosmos of information (Jenkins 2006). Users acting as filters are imbued with trust by less active users, who

assign value and quality to the information shared by filters since filters "spend time on news sites and curate information for less active users" (Phillips 2012, 676). According to boyd, the downside to homophily amongst networked users actively contends with the techno utopian democratic notions of a shared informational structure of the network(32). Homophily prevents a transference of different perspectives and opinions amongst networked users from taking place.

I argue that due to media convergence and the attention economy of networked media, ISA's such as news organizations are cultivating fear onto their fragmented, networked audiences. A review of this spread of Islamophobic content will assist my argument. The examples that follow were shared on Facebook by my network of friends who shared these stories as a resistive act, yet the recirculation of these messages, despite its resistance, results in the recirculation of Islamophobia. It is more likely, as Hall's theory suggests that most people take an oppositional stance— sometimes accepting part of the dominant meaning and sometimes objecting to pieces of the ideology espoused therein. The first story I investigate is a video of the opening monologue of a Fox News program "Justice" hosted by Judge Jeanine Pirro. Importantly, the clip from the show was shared with me by my network of friends on Facebook. I do not subscribe to cable TV and it is highly unlikely I would have come across this clip otherwise. The video of the monologue has in fact been circulated and re-circulated on social media networks and debated upon for its Islamophobic content. I analyze the clip using a critical discourse analysis lens Margaret Morse proposes (1986, 55). Arguing the news as "an indispensable ideological tool" and a "staple of democracy" in Western society, Morse elaborates on the symbolic value of television news. Morse stresses on the importance for television news to appear credible and objective, in comparison however she warns that news in a subjective rhetorical mode can have a much more powerful impact on the audience

(Morse 1986, 55).

3.4 Story: Justice with Judge Jeanine Pirro

On January 10 2015, Judge Jeanine Pirro, a former prosecutor and judge, made an opening statement on her show "Justice" on Fox News, emphatically stating the need to kill all "radical Islamists" (Pirro 2015). The pathos of her argument was supplemented by visuals of Charlie Hebdo shootings on January 7 2015 and archive footage of Islamic State (ISIS) terrorists. With great alarm and a defiant, fierce conviction she warns[2]:

> "We need to kill them. We need to *kill* them, the radical Muslim terrorists hell-bent on killing us. You're in danger. I'm in danger. We're at war and this is not going to stop….hopefully everybody now gets it. And there's only one group that can stop this war: the Muslims themselves. Our job is to arm those Muslims to the teeth. Give them everything they need to take out these Islamic fanatics. Let them do the job. Let them have at it. And as they do, we need to simply look the other way…Force Arab nations to choose. They're either with us or they're against us. And stop with this nuclear negotiation nonsense. They don't operate the way we do. You can't negotiate. You can't mediate. You can't bargain. You can't even reason with these people!…They can kill us, but we can't hurt their feelings? I'm surprised there isn't a new executive order that simply says "don't offend Muslims"…And when they want to shut us up, they call us "Islamophobes." …This surrender, this refusal to call it what it is is an insult to my father, my grandfather and everyone who served in armed forces, who fought to protect what is sacred to every American.
>   Yes, it is time for this to be over."

She then proceeds to criticize liberal political correctness on part of the US government declaring it a weakness in the "war" against terror.

Highlighting the difference between print and television news, Morse indicates the dynamic of who is delivering television news as a factor in its reception and credibility. The etymology of the word anchor, used for the person reading the news to the audience, is traced back to the strongest runner of a four person team in an athletic relay race, responsible for collecting and carrying the baton and running the last leg of the race till the finish line (57). In the case of Jeanine Pirro, the virtue of being a former judge who

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[2] For a full transcript see Appendix B

now hosts a program called Justice appears to be a clear ploy by Fox News to grant her voice additional credibility. I mention additional here because according to Morse there are other factors that also add to the credibility of news personalities. News anchors become familiar personalities for audiences due to the regularity with which they feature on the channel and familiarity begins to foster a form of trust. Morse counts sincerity as a key element adding credibility to the news anchor delivering the news. In Pirro's case, her oratorical style seems more of a sermon or a judge delivering a verdict in alignment with her show's theme "Justice". Her speech is representative of her mission to say it like she sees it, based on facts she has reviewed unseen to the audience. Therefore, Pirro's body language and her discourse is convincingly sincere with the subject she is enunciating (64). Morse also mentions the importance of the gaze of the anchor while delivering the discourse. Pirro's gaze is constantly transfixed at her imagined audience, maintaining eye contact continuously, adding to the sincerity and credibility of discourse(see Fig.3). The temporal quality of Pirro delivering her monologue is "live" even if the telecast has been prerecorded or actually live.

Pirro's monologue is reminiscent of what theorist George Gerbner regards as the "divergence between symbolic reality and objective reality" and television's versions of the facts contributing to the simulated reality a viewer may experience (Gerbner 1983, 21). Continued exposure of viewers to such emphatic messages on security may cultivate fear of Muslims and Islam and mistrust amongst society since mainstreaming of an issue such as security makes it the most prevalent social reality and common sense.

At the end of the clip, Pirro mentions that the time for living in fear of Islamist radicals is over, and moderate Muslims should be armed by the United States to stop them. Stuart Hall maintains how meaning is open to interpretation because multitudes of meanings can be associated to any event, object or message. If deriving meaning can shown to be be mathematically or scientifically precise, then the debate on meaning

would be resolved without any ambiguity, resulting in uncontested absolute meaning. Hall claims "that's what power in signification is intended to do: to close language, to close meaning, to stop the flow" (Hall 1997).

Next I look at messages or programs produced by ISA's infused with ideology by investigating the poster of a popular TV series Homeland. Using theorist Roland Barthes semiotic analysis tool as a lens to identify Islamophobic myths propagated through these messages. It is also important to note that although these messages originate on television, yet it was shared with me on Facebook and this is an even more mainstream example as the previous one.

The Homeland poster image and caption announcing the show has circulated and re-circulated on social media presenting Pakistan as a hostile, backward country and Pakistanis essentialized as threats enslaved by an oppressive ideology for the US mainstream audience(see Fig.4 Appendix D). The post-structuralist linguist and semiotician Roland Barthes in his seminal work Mythologies (1972) expanded on linguist and semiotician Ferdinand Saussure's Model of Signs by adding a layer of myth. Barthes made a distinction between two kinds of meaning that can be coded within a message by its producer. Denotative meaning or literal meaning and connotative meaning or what is being implied, encoded within a message that can be decoded by the reader of the message. Barthes argues how the connotative meaning becomes the myth—or a bearer of ideology for the reader of the message who is exposed to myths in everyday life. The myth of the Homeland poster is investigated using Barthes' model of mythologies. In this semiotic analysis I consider the Homeland poster as a sign: the image itself becomes a signifier, that is literally the objects that are contained within the image; signified is the idea or concept behind the objects contained within the frame; together the signifier and the signified constitute the denotative meaning or the sign. In order to expose the

connotative meaning of the poster another layer of analysis is added where the sign of the previous reading becomes the signifier (Barthes 1982).

3.5 Story: Homeland TV Series

The Golden Globe and Emmy award-winning television series Homeland has accumulated critical and global acclaim since it premiered in 2011. However the primary focus for this thesis is the show's 4th season. According to AC Nielsen the independent TV rating company in North America, the season premiere of the show measured an audience of 1.86 million people. For context, the plot features the homecoming of an American Marine, Brody, after 8 years of captivity by Al-Qaeda in Iraq. Not joining in on the celebration is CIA operative Carrie, who strongly suspects Brody of having been "turned" and working for the enemy. Carrie initiates an investigation, surveilling Brody on grounds of her suspicion, ultimately revealing Brody's conversion to Islam and as a sleeper agent who plans to carry out a terrorist attack (IMDb 2011). Brody's conversion to Islam is revealed to Carrie coinciding with his intent to carry out a terrorist act establishing a firm relationship between Islam and terrorism for the audience. The fourth season of Homeland premiered in October 2014, Claire's new assignment sees her based in Pakistan for the entire season.

In case of this example, what is signified includes: Claire is standing in the midst of burka-clad figures; she is dressed in red; the other figures are in grey; by virtue of composition and placement, Claire appears to be in a position of prominence, the central point of focus; the only pair of eyes is looking directly into the camera are Claire's, all other figures seem to be looking onward out of the frame; the text Homeland is written in a gradient red and the television channel name and date is advertised bottom composed in a dull gold hue; Claire is white and her blonde hair appears to flow freely underneath the red garment. The only visible face is Claire's— white, blonde and defiant in a sea of

faceless hence expressionless figures: Claire's expression is anxious yet her gaze is defiant; Her red hood differentiates her from the banality of grey around her, instantly forming a connection with the text "Homeland" also written in red; the grey burkas signify Muslim women; the red reminiscent of blood; the grey – death. Together the signifiers and the signified create the sign: Claire embodies the homeland; surrounded, she is anxious yet determined; she is the only face in the crowd; this is her story and no one else has an identity; by virtue of her position in the centre of the frame, she is instantly transported to the centre of the world, perhaps fulfilling her manifest destiny as its saviour(See Fig. 5).

Subsequently the form signifies that: the burka clad figures represent the Muslim women of Pakistan depicting an ideology of oppression— faceless and expressionless, stripped of their identity; Claire's red garment is reminiscent of red riding hood referencing the Little Red Riding Hood, a popular children's fairy tale, positioning the grey burkas as a threat, like wolves surrounding her that may attack at any moment. (Barthes 1982). The myth propagated as a result is: Claire represents the West, threatened and surrounded by the oppressive ideology of Islam; although anxious, the West is determined, unleashing its agents on foreign hostile lands, for the sake of preserving its way of life, for the sake of the US homeland. The mythical sign or signification however, becomes complete with the addition of the caption or the text that reads the title of the show "Homeland". According the Barthes, the form of the mythical layer on its own impoverishes the meaning, as Claire is situated without context; yet it is the concept that enriches the myth, situating it firmly within a context. In case of this poster, the title Homeland lends full enrichment to the concept that enables the observer to interpret and derive meaning from the image (Barthes 1982). For its many inaccuracies in the portrayal of Pakistan, the show has drawn severe criticism in the form

SIGNIFIER	SIGNIFIED
Claire is standing in the midst of burka clad figures. Claire is dressed in red, the other figures are in grey. Claire is white, her blonde hair flows freely. Claire is looking directly at the camera, all other figures are looking onward out of the frame. The text HOMELAND is written in a fading gradient red. A date and channel name are written at the bottom in dull gold hue. By composition Claire is placed in the centre.	The only visible face is Claire's, She is white, blonde and defiant in a sea of faceless and expressionless figures, Claire's expression is anxious yet her gaze is determined. The red hood differentiates her from the banality of grey. forming an instant connection with the text in red "Homeland". The red is reminiscent of blood and the grey - death.
SIGN (Myth Signifier)	**(MYTH)SIGNIFIED**
Claire embodies the homeland. She is anxious yet determined. She is the only face in the crowd, it is her story that matters, no one else has an identity. By virtue of her position in the centre of the frame she is automatically placed at the centre of the world- perhaps fulfilling her manifest destiny.	The Burkas signify throngs of oppressed women of Pakistan depicting an ideology of oppression; faceless and expressionless women stripped of their identity. Yet Claire's red riding hood attire poses these characters as mysterious, a threat even, like wolves surrounding her that can attack at any moment.
SIGN (MYTH)	
Claire represents the West, surrounded by the threat of an oppressive ideology (the burka narrows it down to Islam) making it anxious, yet it is determined. Unleashing its agents on foreign hostile lands for the sake of preserving its way of life, all for the sake of the homeland.	

Fig 5: Myth Analysis of Homeland Poster (From Author's Notes)

of blogs and op-eds shared online. Even the Pakistani embassy in the United States were concerned about the signification of the show and the potential impact of a negative, stereotypical portrayal of Pakistan and its people. The embassy went on to officially lodge a complaint with Showtime, the company that produces Homeland (Hameed 2015). The Pakistani characters in the show speak incorrect Urdu, forcing critics to question if the producers used Google translate instead of hiring a native speaker of the language. Amongst other complaints were depicting Pakistan as a terrorist-haven to which the Pakistani embassy's letter adds "A little research would have gone a long way in correctly portraying the culture, language, people and landscape of the city/country" (Hameed 2015).

Although Showtime reportedly never officially responded to the Pakistan Embassy's complaint, David Nevins, President of Showtime Networks speaking during a question and answer session at the Television Critics Association press tour stated how Homeland is ultimately a work of fiction, yet the portrayal of Pakistan in the show was "very defensible" as the producers of Homeland were informed by a large amount of research and reporting on Pakistan (Littleton 2015). Instead, claiming free speech, Nevins directed producers not to shy away from addressing "sensitive and complicated geo-political issues" as a result of any criticism, complaints or objections (Littleton 2015). In Homeland's case, despite being shot on location in Cape Town, South Africa, the signifying practices of media according to Hall's theory of representation attempt to fix meaning that implicates all Pakistanis as living in a "hellhole" that is Pakistan (Hall 1997; Littleton 2015; Hameed 2015).

The semiotic analysis determines how Homeland results in the production of a highly exaggerated, stereotyped, homogenizing version of Pakistan, where Muslim women live in a state of oppression; faceless and expressionless, stripped of their identity

Fig 6: Tweets sent after watching American Sniper
Retrieved from: http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/rania-khalek/american-sniper-spawns-death-threats-against-arabs-and-muslims

Fig 7: Vish the Facebook "Terrorist"
Retrieved from: http://blog.angryasianman.com/2014/12/facebook-features-sikh-man-in-video.html.

meanwhile the protagonist embodies the West, surrounded by wolves and under threat. The president of Showtime Network David Nevins, while dismissing allegations made by the Pakistani embassy of misrepresenting Pakistan, claimed the show's producers based the storyline on facts. Bringing free speech into his remarks is a questionable occurrence since recorded complaints are about misrepresentation or distortion of facts (Hameed 2015). Viewing this as a Pakistani subject who was born in Pakistan and lived there for 35 years, I can verify: Pakistan is not a "hellhole"; the culture of female oppression is not absolute as depicted in the poster. The portrayal of Pakistanis in a binary formation as either threat or as collaborators to the West reduces and flattens the diversity of opinions prevailing in a country of 180 million people. Dissemination of such ideological messages is dangerous because uninformed Western audiences might read Homeland's version of Pakistan as fact as suggested by theories of Barthes and Hall. Thus increasing potential for ideas to spread to other media like Facebook and Twitter (Littleton, 2015). A blog published on the Washington Post website called Homeland "the most bigoted show on Television" (Durkay 2014) to which a subscriber to the website commented, "All I can say is: don't care, don't care, don't care, don't care, don't care, don't care, don't care and yes Islam is a global monster. Love the show BTW" (Durkay 2014).

To elucidate how such produced ideological messages impact social experiences online and investigate further, I look at a Hollywood blockbuster movie American Sniper that created a major stir on Twitter when some movie goers after watching the movie took to Twitter stating they want to kill Arabs (Khaalek 2015).

3.6 Story: *American Sniper*

The movie *American Sniper* was released in the United States on 16th January 2015. The movie broke several box office records and earned the distinction of being the

top grossing war movie of all time by earning $248 million dollars in the first 6 weeks

after its release (Mail Online 2015). *American Sniper* was nominated for six Academy

awards and won an Oscar in the category of Best Achievement in Sound Editing (IMDb

2015). The movie directed by Oscar-winning director Clint Eastwood has been advertised

as a true story based on the autobiography of US Navy Seal sniper Chris Kyle - "America's

deadliest sniper" with 255 kills (Zennie 2012). The plot revolves around Kyle and his life,

growing up in Texas wanting to be a cowboy, however in his thirties he is shown

watching the events of the 9/11 attacks unfolding on television. Kyle enlists in the US

Navy SEALS and is deployed to Iraq. Extremely proficient and lethal as a sniper Kyle's

struggle doesn't seem to be with his missions, his conflict appears to be about the reality

of the war he is in. Coincidentally, his death didn't occur in the field of battle, he was shot

at a Texas gun range by a 25 year old veteran who was reportedly suffering from Post

Traumatic Stress Disorder (West 2015). Although the movie depicts Kyle as an

emotionally complex character in conflict, his autobiography is more revealing regarding

his ideological stance. The author Kyle refers to Iraqis as "savages" throughout the book

and the act of killing them as "fun" that he "loved" doing, going as far as to say the "I hate

the damn savages" and "I couldn't give a flying f**k about the Iraqis" (West 2015). This

dehumanizing element as argued by psychologist Dr. David Livingstone Smith strips

human beings of their human essence. Livingstone postulates that it is only by stripping

human beings of their essence or by considering them sub human or less than human

instances like slavery, torture or genocide can be explained (Smith 2012, 13). In the

movie, out of the four Iraqi children featured, three were terrorists and the fourth one

was shown being tortured by a fellow Iraqi hence representing all Iraqis as evil or as

victims of acts of evil perpetrated by other Iraqis.

    Fox News created the icon of Chris Kyle following the release of the movie. By

responding to criticism about Kyle "the good soldier" versus an "American psychopath"

with a bloodlust, Fox News took it upon itself to defend *American Sniper* by shifting the discourse from criticism of the movie(West 2015). One can argue that Fox News worked as an ISA promoting Kyle's dehumanizing Islamophobic ideology to its audience. As argued by Stuart Hall, the impact on audience is likely to be Kyle's version of Iraqis as "savages" implicating all Iraqis in its meaning perceived as common sense. Fox News named Chris Kyle, the sniper depicted in the movie an American hero, shunning his critics as cowards or non-patriotic in the process. This is achieved by what post-humanist theorist Rosie Braidotti regards as "hyper-individualistic branding" and "the power of identification and the mass appeal triggered by images and representations of dominant icons" (2008, 11). In the creation of the patriotic hero Chris Kyle, Fox News infused Kyle with a religious, totemic function by specifying in terms of the personal sacrifice he made and how he suffered "so that we may be better off" (Braidotti 2008, 11). This element of personal sacrifice is evident when in the movie Kyle's father is shown talking about three types of people in the world - sheep, wolves and sheep dogs. Indicating punishment in the case of non-compliance, Kyle's father takes off his belt and places it on the dinner table symbolizing his desire that Kyle and his brother should grow up to be sheep dogs and protect their own. This gesture is reminiscent of Noam Chomsky's "military humanism", a term he uses to define "adventures set out to save the civilized world 'homo humanus' from its enemies 'homo barbarus', under the venerable banners of liberty, decency and democracy" (Chomsky quoted in Braidotti 2013, 124). Indoctrinated with a potent mix of military humanism and dehumanizing all Iraqis referring to them as the enemy and savages, delusions of being a sheep dog that protects its own, Kyle's autobiography suggests his regret for not being able to kill enough of "them"(West 2015). These messages are what Braidotti terms as the formation of a new "semiosis of killing" created for the social imaginary with a new celebrity - Chris Kyle (Braidotti 2013, 124; Khaalek 2015; Guarino 2015).

There has been much commentary in blogs; newspaper articles raising alarm over this outburst of hate pouring onto the Internet by those who praised the movie. However, criticism levelled against the movie included accusing the producers of altering history, misrepresenting reasons of the Iraqi occupation by US-led forces and tying 9/11 to the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein (Khaalek 2015; Guarino 2015). Figure 6 depicts tweets by enthusiastic cine-goers expressing the desire to kill "ragheads" and shooting "Arabs", presumably members of the Fox News audience that received and embraced Kyle's message. The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), founded in 1980 with the objective of safeguarding Arab American civil rights, mutual understanding and cultural heritage, recorded a rapid increase in the number of threats and hate messages received by them and their members in response to the movie, prompting ADC to write letters to director Clint Eastwood and actor Bradley Cooper.

Establishing two sides to the argument of connections propagated by social media, danah boyd observes optimism associated with the benefits of access to information for users and pessimism with the potential of increased level of inequality (2014, 172). In the context of Islamophobia, the focus of this thesis, it has been observed how social media communities on sites like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter are rife with hate speech and racism. Similarly, it is instructive and worth probing how Islamophobic messages are shared by users who propagate hate and by those who are critical of it as discussed earlier. boyd maintains that behaviour of social media users is affected by a migration of personal prejudices and biases of users onto these otherwise democratic technologies.

There is evidence that social media hate speech reflects Islamophobic social behaviour. An article on a British news website The Independent on 2 January 2015 written by journalist Oliver Wright takes note of an increase in accusatory and hate-filled comments on popular social networking platforms like Facebook and Twitter, where users have labelled Muslims collectively as "rapists, pedophiles and comparable to

cancer" (Wright 2015). This article observes the phenomenon of online Islamophobia in the British context. The article quotes the London Metropolitan Police reporting a 65 percent increase in hate crimes against Muslims in the city of London for 2014, pointing to a pattern mirroring abuse offline and online in the journalist's analysis. The increase in online hate has also been tied in with actual events being reported in media, such as the murder of a British Army Soldier, Fusilier Lee Rigby (Wright 2015).

An interfaith organization Faith Matters based in the United Kingdom, which runs a helpline for victims of anti-Muslim violence wrote official complaints to Facebook and Twitter about the increasing Islamophobic content that goes unmoderated and unchecked on its sites. Speaking of the disappointing response received from Twitter and Facebook, Fiyaz Mughal, the Director of the Faith Matters recorded how it was "morally unacceptable that social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, which are vast profit-making companies, socially engineer what is right and wrong to say in our society when they leave up inflammatory, highly socially divisive and openly bigoted views" (Wright 2015). Mughal is referring to the Facebook terms of service last revised on January 30th 2015. Article 7 of the terms of service under the heading "Safety" reads "You will not post content that: is hate speech, threatening, or pornographic; incites violence; or contains nudity or graphic or gratuitous violence". Similarly article 9 states "You will not use Facebook to do anything unlawful, misleading, malicious, or discriminatory" (Facebook 2015). Mughal's frustration is based on Islamophobic pages titled "Islam, the religion of hate", "Don't Hate Islam", "I Hate Islamic Terror" to "I hate Islamic teachings" existing on Facebook unmoderated despite terms clearly prohibiting hate speech. It is a noteworthy concern that Islamophobic hate speech on social media may lead to hate crimes against Muslims as evidenced in Wright's article. In the next example I demonstrate how Islamophobic hate speech is not limited too Muslims only.

3.7 Story: "Vish" the Facebook Tip terrorist

In a brief twenty eight second Tip video posted publicly by Facebook on December 2 2014, a bespectacled, turbaned, middle-aged, bearded actor called "Vish" gives Facebook users tips on how a "Like" can improve their Facebook timeline. The post has approximately 4.6 million views, 16,000 likes and almost 850 shares. To date, the post has accumulated 628 comments, many of them prejudiced and racially motivated. Comments include calling Vish a "raghead"; "Could be a terrorist"; "ISIS"; "Osama"; "Camel Jockey" among others (Yun 2014). A notable comment is "Couldn't they find a normal looking American to do this?"(see Fig. 7)

Vish is Vishavjit Singh, an American software engineer and a cartoonist who happens to be Sikh. Sympathetic Facebook users made several attempts to silence detractors with denunciations that Vish is not a Muslim but Sikh. In this analysis, I suggest that we conflate both racism and religious intolerance; in fact I will argue that Vish's example reveals how commonly social media users employ biological notions of race to create stereotypical identities of Muslims. Theorist Sut Jully posits "race" using prominent American sociologist W.E. Dubois's definition as a "difference of hair, skin and bone"(Jully 2007). In doing so, it important to establish an understanding of what theorist Lisa Nakamura refers as "nineties neoliberalism"(2008). Borrowing the term from critical race theorists Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Nakamura maintains how the mid-nineties was politically a time of "colour blindness", where "to speak of race is to enter a terrain where racism is hard to avoid" ; this resulted in a more "universalist" approach such as the utopian attribution of democracy and equality to the internet (Nakamura 2008). In a crucial turning point of racial politics, colour blindness made way for ethnic, religious and cultural differences constituting identity instead of biological notions of race. In the course of my research, I came several instances in the form of

comments made by Facebook users in response to stories about Islamophobia where they questioned the relationship between racism and religious intolerance.

Throughout the Facebook Tip video, Vish does not make any claims about his religious beliefs, yet based purely on his appearance and the stereotypical beard, a turban which is not exclusive to Muslims and the colour of his skin, it was assumed by Facebook users that Vish is a Muslim. In response to the hate filled comments received by the video, several users expressed disgust for the hate spewed at Vish and some mentioned Vish is Sikh not Muslim hence the hate is unjustified. By such detractions, the normative of hate against Muslims is unfortunately strengthened further despite the target of Islamophobic hate comments in this case was not a Muslim.

3.8 Synthesis

In Section 1, I argued the flattening of Muslim identity into a singular social entity or zero institution by the ideological state apparatus functioning by ideology. Islamophobic messages circulating and re-circulating on mainstream and social media can place the Muslim identity in conflict represented under its all-inclusive sign that signifies an ontogenetic explanation for all Muslims, to be applied universally, barring any individual instances to the contrary. Islamophobic ideology thus attempts to interpellate and establish Muslim identity as one to be feared and requiring constant surveillance as common sense. Ideology is disseminated by the communications apparatus on all citizens including Muslims. Good subjects, Muslims and non-Muslims alike—accept, assimilate and conform by adopting the discourse because interpellation hails them as the subject of the statement/claim.

In Section 2, I questioned who has the power, in what channels, to circulate Islamophobia to whom?. As investigated, flow and exchange of content is blurring the

lines between old and new media due to media convergence, with users constantly

migrating between multiple media platforms in search for information. I argued if not for

convergence and the complex flows between old and new media, how would it come to

pass that Islamophobic narratives, ideas and stories originating from a Fox News telecast

directed at a North American audience or a news article printed in the Daily Telegraph in

the United Kingdom are found circulating and re-circulating within the networks we

create on Facebook and Twitter. I observed the utopian idea of news media as the fourth

pillar of democracy yet a political economy lens reveals a perversion of communication

by dissemination of ideology serving those in power and questionable credibility due to

its reliance on popularity and profit. News organizations in the business of producing

and disseminating information now rely on people giving them attention due to the

attention economy prevalent in networked media. The danger lies in how, with this

transference of content, messages loaded with Islamophobic ideology first produced on

television, print or radio, then get duplicated and circulated onto the Internet and in

particular social media. Then I observed examples of Islamophobic stories found on

Facebook that revealed how Islamophobic ideas can be transmitted through: a news

program; a popular television series; a blockbuster Hollywood war movie; a Facebook

marketing video.

In employing the afore mentioned ideas, this thesis argues that flows of

Islamophobic messages on Facebook and Twitter can impress the normative idea that

Islam as a culture inflicts terror, upon users of these networks, cultivating fear of

Muslims and can interpellate Muslim subjects in an ideological position fraught with

precariousness and guilt.

4. The Project Disidentity

This thesis investigates the research question: How can we resist Islamophobia on social media using the communicative power of networked media? In addition, as a withdrawn and non-participatory user of social media, I question my own role in resisting Islamophobia. This section identifies key findings employed to develop a design brief for the project disidentity informing the script content and observer interaction. I also investigate the theory of disidentification as a method of resistance to Islamophobia looking at examples of resistive acts found on social media sites as user generated content. I explore the possibilities of disidentificatory performance as suggested by Jose Esteban Munoz for my recorded-video installation Disidentity, probing the pedagogical potential and provide the spectator a capacity to resist the normative of Islamophobia and disidentify with it by using the hashtag #stopislamophobia for the interactive installation.

4.1 Disidentifications

In *Disidentifications,* theorist José Esteban Muñoz argues three modes in which a subject is constructed by ideological processes as proposed by French Linguist Michel Pêcheux (1982). Pêcheux, in adherence to Louis Althusser's theory of interpellation proposes: "good subjects" choose the path of identification and assimilation with the "discursive and ideological forms"; "bad subjects" turn against, revolt , rebel or "attempt to reject the images and identificatory sites offered by dominant ideology [...] 'counteridentify' and turn against the symbolic system"; disidentification is the third mode, in which subjects neither identify nor counter identify with dominant ideology, in fact it is a "strategy that works on and against dominant ideology" (Muñoz 1999, 11;

Pêcheux 1982, 156). Muñoz presents disidentification succinctly as,

> Disidentification is about recycling and rethinking encoded meaning. The process of disidentification scrambles and reconstructs the encoded message of a cultural text in a fashion that both exposes the encoded message's universalizing and exclusionary machinations and recircuits its workings to account for, include, and empower minority identities and identifications. Thus, disidentification is a step further than cracking open the code of the majority; it proceeds to use this code as raw material for representing a disempowered politics or positionality that has been rendered unthinkable by the dominant culture. (1999, 31)

I now consider a few normative ideas that Islamophobic ideology impresses upon subjects based on the examples discussed in sections 1 & 2, I paraphrase here based on conducted analysis: All Muslims are an imminent threat because anyone can be radicalized; Muslims are responsible for the jihadist cancer afflicting the world; Moderate Muslims should be armed to the teeth so they can take out the radicals and the West should look the other way; Muslims are savages; Islam is a motherlode of bad ideas and so on. As considered in sections 1 & 2 Islamophobic meaning is encoded within these stories that become vessels bearing ideology. The disidentifying subject must first decode the encoded meaning and then proceed to disidentify with it by rethinking and recycling its meaning and that leads to empowerment. It can be argued that Pêcheux's three modes of subject formation can also be viewed as three modes of resistance. Good subjects and bad subjects are assimilatory and anti-assimilatory positions respectively, but they both work within the ideological framework. Good subjects have been discussed at length in Sections 1 & 2 as accepting Islamophobic ideological forms and discourse as common sense. In context of resistance I will now elucidate on disidentification with examples of resistance found on Facebook. Both examples are unique, one is a video of a spoken word performance and the other a blog post. I offer analysis using the disidentificatory lens that is meant to elucidate minoritarian politics proposed by Muñoz.

Story: Nasim Asgari Spoken Word Performance

A video of a performance by spoken word artist Nasim Asgari was shared with me on Facebook. The performance was recorded at a public protest titled, Toronto Gathering for Victims of the Chapel Hill Shooting- Stand Against Islamophobia at Yonge-Dundas Square, Toronto on February 13th 2015 (Sayed-Rehman 2015). The protest was organized in response to the tragic Chapel Hill shooting of 3 Muslim students in North Carolina, United States on February 10th 2015. In her spoken word piece titled "When Hatred Knocks at Your Door," Asgari emphatically declares "this is not another apology letter for crimes I have not committed...I have unapologetically decided to raise my voice and pen, the most powerful weapons I own to show the whole world...I am a Muslim girl who is breaking stereotypes on a daily basis... I refuse to accept we are all the same...I don't want to fit into your system of robots and puppets." Asgari's performance is in direct response to the impressed normative idea that collectively holds all Muslims responsible for radical Islam. Clearly adopting the anti-assimilationist approach, Asgari defiantly rejects the idea of taking responsibility for crimes that she has not committed. The video is shaky and low-quality, presumably shot from a smart phone by an attendee of the protest, yet Asgari's message is conveyed with potency. In what Muñoz refers to as the transformative power of disidentification, Asgari successfully expands and problematizes identity and identification when she speaks about: her Islamic conservative attire as an independent choice opposed to being seen as a sign of enslavement and a barrier; pointing to herself while saying media has labelled people like her terrorists; the people on the bus who refuse to sit next to what the media calls a potential terrorist and so on.

Story: The iCondemn App

As argued in section 2, there have been constant demands for Muslims, especially

moderate Muslims to bear responsibility for Islamic extremism. A lack of condemnation

is seen as complicity on part of all Muslims. This has been observed as a repetitive theme

in conversations on social media as recorded earlier with Rupert Murdoch's tweet.

Published on January 9, 2015, the blurb on the webpage Muslim Matters describes

blogger Daniel Haqiqatjou as an author who writes and lectures "on contemporary issues

of Muslims and Modernity" (Haqiqatjou 2015). In this act of disidentification,

Haqiqatjou presents the "worlds first Muslim denunciation app: the iCondemn". Satirical

and witty, Haqiqatjou presents the faux app in the form of screenshots, displaying the

various features available to users. Haqiqatjou sequentially breaks down each feature

thematically, with the intention of taking condemnation of terrorism by Muslims to the

"next level". He calls the app a 21st century solution to meet increasing demands of

condemnation from Muslims.

> "With the iCondemn®, Muslims can say "not in my name" at the speed of life!™ And
> non-Muslims no longer need to wonder whether 1.6 billion Muslims around the
> world feel the guilt and sincerely apologize for that latest reprehensible crime some
> idiot carried out while shouting "Allah u Akbar!""

As seen in the screenshots taken from Haqiqatjou's blog (see Fig. 8), the app

moves on to Muslims condemning: "Bieber Fever", referring to the teenage pop sensation

Justin Bieber; the series finale of the popular sitcom "How I Met Your Mother" that left

fans quite unhappy with the producers of the show; taxation without representation;

denunciation of the fact that the past is not alterable and other "frustrating laws of

reality." (Haqiqatjou 2015). However, one act of condemnation cuts

Fig. 8: Screenshots of the Muslim iCondemn App by Daniel Haqiqatjou (Used with Permission)
Retrieved from:http://muslimmatters.org/2015/01/09/get-the-muslim-icondemn-app/.

right to the bone: "Muslims cut to the chase and... just get on knees to beg forgiveness. 'Sorry we exist'." However in a brief break from satire, Haqiqatjou points to the people asking Muslims to condemn radical Islam as those who "don't have a single Muslim acquaintance" or "don't know how to use a search engine" then dismissing the notion altogether. Haqiqatjou's powerful blog piece decodes the impressed dominant ideology of Muslims collectively responsible for terrorism, stripping it bare and in doing so exposes the minoritarian and disempowered positionality of Muslims interpellated by Islamophobic ideology.

Muñoz describes disidentification as a modality of performance (1999, xiv). When I consider my own contribution to resistance against Islamophobia, I am intrigued by Muñoz's assertion that disidentificatory performance is the act of reformulating the world through the politics of performance, describing it as an anti-normative option, a social critique and a performance of politics. As argued in Section 1, communications based ideological state apparatus constantly reinforce ideology by repetitively bombarding citizens with "daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism, etc., by means of the press, the radio and television" of which Islamophobia is an example. (Althusser 1970, 250) However, theorist Umberto Eco's reading of cultural context of the receiver of a message is vital and cannot be overlooked. Eco declares the simplistic flow of communication sender/channel/receiver a fallacy because the code or pre-knowledge employed by the receiver to decipher the meaning of the message lies in their own unique cultural and social context. Eco focuses on the receiver of the message or "where the communication arrives" as a tactical and viable solution in the battle of "man against the technological universe of communication" calling it the guerrilla solution (1986, 142). The guerrilla solution he proposes is "the universe of Technological Communication [...] patrolled by groups of communications guerrillas, who would restore a critical dimension to passive reception." (144). Therefore, the space of solution

is where the communication arrives i.e. the receiver and their cultural context and the guerrilla tactician's role is to media and political literacy. In my performance I request observers to become a part of the world I am making by inviting them to wilfully exercise their political agency by sending a tweet using the hashtag #stopislamophobia.

4.2 The Trending Twitter Hashtag

I explore sharing mechanics and efficacy of the Twitter hashtag and its resistive use on Twitter, in context of the #illridewithyou movement that originated in response to a terror attack at the Lindt cafe in the busy central business district of Martin Place in Sydney, Australia in 15th December 2014. This is relevant to my interactive installation Disidentity as I will be requesting observers to express their opinion through a live tweet they can make. In the absence of a policy on copyright or trademark of the hashtag by Twitter, Twitter users are free to choose any hashtag they prefer to use. A trademark lawyer gives advice that hashtags can be trademarked if one is offering a product or a service but even then use cannot be restricted by any other user.

Twitter can be described as a democracy because its network-structure treats all tweets as equal. The only hierarchy and a cause for much envy amongst its users is the impact or reach of each user, measured by the number of followers a user has. In November 2013, a report published on the website Business Insider, numbered Twitter accounts at 883 million with a user base growing at an estimated rate of 11 new accounts per second. Twitter reports 241 million accounts out of the total 883 million as 'monthly active' users, tweeting an over-whelming 500 million tweets each day. With nearly 9,100 tweets per second, Twitter accounts are discerned between active users who tweet regularly and almost forty percent of users who don't tweet, 'listening' to others tweet instead (Business Insider 2013; Twitter 2014). Twitter users can pick up information

through a two-way information dissemination function within the network; first,

followers receive an instant alert when a new tweet is posted by anyone in their network

with the tweet showing up in their news feed; while the second encourages users to

actively search for information, employing the hashtag "#" search criteria. Users employ

this function to look up trending topics or topics being tweeted about the most, or search

tweets by particular subject in the entire Twitter network For instance, users can type

#stopislamophobia and receive tabulated results of all tweets containing

#stopislamophobia. Alternatively, by using the hashtag prefix in their tweets, Twitter

users can empower their message by making it discoverable to any Twitter user searching

for tweets on the subject, not necessarily limiting it to their followers only. The use of the

hashtag is not limited to Twitter, as a post made on other platforms such as Facebook,

Instagram, YouTube can also be tagged with a hashtag making them discoverable to

anyone using a search engine like Google or Yahoo. (Phillips 2012, 673; Bruns 2013, 92).

On Twitter, the re-posting and re-sharing of information or tweets, by other users

is known as re-tweeting. Here, users re-tweet by copying a tweet received and re-posting

it on their own timeline, which shares it with their own network of followers. In doing so,

they both spread information to a much wider and broader network, and they also

become individually involved and counted in the networked conversation (Payne 2013).

Social media scholar Danah Boyd endorses certain motivations for re-tweeting by Twitter

users; "to amplify or spread tweets to new audiences"; "to publicly agree with someone";

"as an act of friendship, loyalty, or homage"; and "self-gain, either to gain more followers

or reciprocity from more visible participants" (Boyd 2010, 6). Motivations are broad for

users (re)sharing information, with one or to any number of motivations may provide

prompting. The #illridewithyou movement is investigated to probe the potential of the
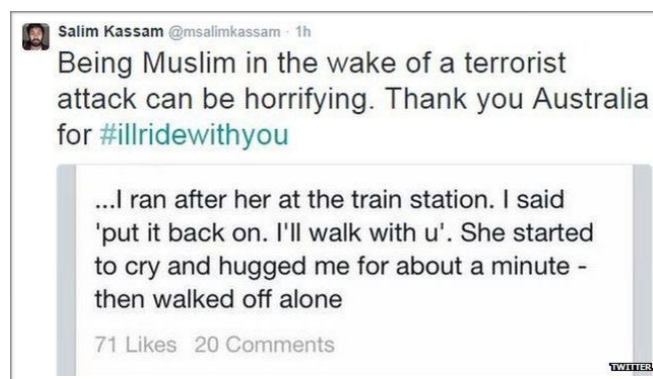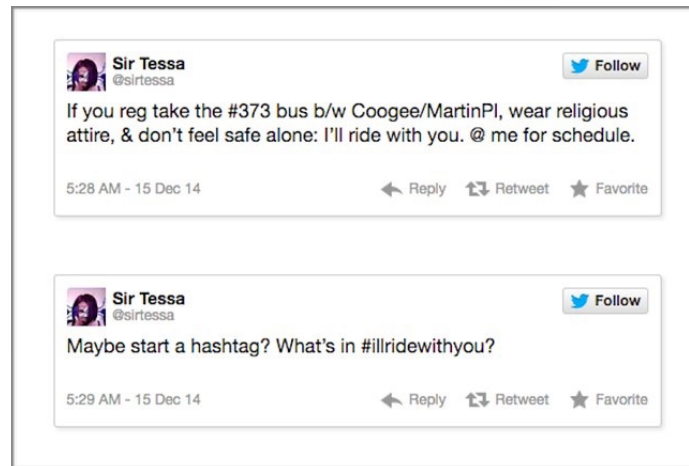
Fig. 9: #illridewithyou Tweets
Retrieved from: http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-30479306

Twitter hashtag as an example of citizens engaging in resistance and democratic action.

Story: #illridewithyou

On 15th December 2014, at the Lindt cafe located in the busy central business district of Martin Place in Sydney, Australia, Man Haron Monis, armed with a shotgun took 18 hostages in a standoff lasting 16 hours. As the events unfolded, Monis shot one of the hostages and was himself shot dead by the police during the raid. This incident resulted in the death of two hostages from amongst the patrons and cafe staff, while 4 others were reported injured during the Tactical Operations Unit raid to end the crisis (Alexander 2014).

Within four hours of the hostages being taken, the hashtag #illridewithyou began trending on Twitter with 150,000 tweets according to Twitter Australia. #Illridewithyou is attributed to Rachael Jacobs from Brisbane Australia whose Facebook status update spoke of her encounter with a Muslim woman in her train seen taking off her head scarf or hijab, looking visibly upset. In her status update Jacobs mentioned: "I ran after her at the train station. I said 'Put it back on. I'll walk with u'[sic]". According to Jacobs, the woman started to cry, hugged her and walked off alone. Jacob's update inspired Twitter user @sirtessa who initiated the hashtag along with details of her travel route for the day asking anyone feeling unsafe in the wake of the cafe incident that she will ride with them(see Fig. 9). More Twitter users began tweeting using the hashtag urging other users to include their transit routes and times to make it a genuinely useful gesture. Aimed at Muslim Australians fearing an Islamophobic backlash to the Lindt Cafe siege in the form of attacks on public transport, the gesture and its spirit was appreciated by many Australians. Users like Salim Kassam using the Twitter handle @msalimkassam expressed his fear and his gratitude in a tweet saying "Being Muslim in the wake of a terrorist attack can be horrifying. Thank you Australia for #illridewithyou".

The pre-emptive use of #illridewithyou however was criticized by an Australian Member of Parliament of the Liberal party, who slammed the campaign a "typical left wing black arm band brigade campaign" in a series of tweets from his Twitter handle @GchristensenMP (Bourke 2014). In an interview to the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper, published on December 18 2014, Christensen said that such campaigns take away attention from "radical Islam" and continued on to criticize political correctness. He also warned how not allowing the frustration felt for radical Islam to vent will result in a "groundswell" of hatred for Islam. He added this conversation needs to take place "rather than people saying 'don't mention the I word because if you do someone will get bashed up on a bus" (Bourke 2015).

In the same article in the Sydney Morning Herald, another Liberal party MP Ewen Jones is reported to have chosen to distance himself from Christensen's remarks by calling them "completely insensitive" and "ignorant". In his interview, Jones spoke about understanding the difficulty of not hating and not "judging an entire religion" in the wake of the hostage crisis. It can be argued that Jones's effort to placate any potential hostility or anger directed toward Australian Muslims is in response to the hostage crisis, yet it seems conflicted. Talking about his motivation behind calling out Christensen's remarks he said, "otherwise everyone thinks all white Australia is like that". He did, however go on to add that this is not about white Australia, or any politician, this is about the whole country (Bourke 2015).

These acts of citizen resistive politics manifest themselves online and offline demonstrating use of social media to effect and affect affirmative action toward Australian Muslims. The trending hashtag #illridewithyou served as a rallying point for networked users to organize around a cause they were actively participating in. Theorist Danah boyd regards trending topics on Twitter as a means to overcome the fragmentary quality of homophily amongst networked users as it brings to light "a topic that gained

traction in one segment of the network to broader awareness" (2010, 34). Hence I

consider using the hashtag #stopislamophobia for my thesis project. #stopislamophobia

is not an original hashtag created for this project, it is an ongoing conversation amongst

users from all over the world who speak out against Islamophobia by posting their

support for the cause. By employing #stopislamophobia, I encourage observers of my

installation to become a part of the ongoing conversation by exercising their political

agency.

Next I discuss the thesis project Disidentity. Although there are two iterations for

Disidentity the conceptual considerations apply to them equally.

4.3 Conceptual Considerations

I decoded stories of Islamophobic ideology in Sections 1 & 2 by employing various

theoretical lens and analyses that inform the script and situate my performance in the

newsroom as a site of disidentification deconstructing communications based ISA. In my

installation Disidentity, I apprehend the position of power by assuming the role of a news

anchor and conduct my disidentificatory performance in the format of a news broadcast.

The decision to stage the newsroom is based on the analysis in section 2 where I argue

the news room as a symbolic representation of an ISA. Morse asserts the symbolic value

of television news as an indispensable ideological tool and a staple of democracy in

Western society(1986).

Employing Morse's study of news anchors using a discourse analysis lens, the

news anchor occupies a seat of idealogical power that can be employed to manipulate

public opinion and fix meaning. In Morse's analysis of visual cues for a credible newscast,

a news anchor delivering the news content should be able to convince the audience of the

sincerity with which information is enunciated. Morse establishes importance of the gaze

of the anchor transfixed at the imagined audience, maintaining eye contact continuously as adding to sincerity and credibility of discourse. In addition, the temporal quality of a newscast as a space that appears "live" to the audience whether pre-recorded or actually live serves the installation well by adding a sense of timelessness to the experience. Furthermore, it can be argued that as a person of a visible minority who may be Muslim, delivering stories on Islamophobic ideology creates a visual tension for the observer. An irony where I appear to be interpellated by the ideology that is disseminated through the content I elucidate without questioning it. I open the news telecast with the story of "How to Spot a Terrorist" that was discussed in Section 1. In Technology News, I present news of the iCondemn app discussed earlier in this section. However, my conflicted identity begins to reveal itself to the audience as I introduce news items such as Judge Jeanine Pirro's monologue and the spoken word performance by Nasim Asgari.

In order to get an industry perspective on video-based installations, I consulted with Gabriel Barcia Colombo, a video artist based in New York City. I was introduced to Colombo's work upon attending his talk at the TalkXTalk series of lectures at OCADU and by participating in his workshop on the software MAX in Spring 2014. Colombo is a practitioner of digital art with screen-based video installations.

Colombo mentioned the challenge of producing video art on the screen for an exhibition environment where the observer/user/audience may be unable to experience the piece in its entirety, a valuable insight vis-a-vis user experience design considerations for my own project. However Colombo's insight on the acceptance of interactive video installation as an art form and the ubiquity of the screen in the social context is encouraging. Pointing to the pioneering days of photography, Colombo predicts a similar route for the screen as a means of social commentary by the artist.

Margaret Morse terms video installation the most complex art form in contemporary culture that allows the visitor, as opposed to the artist to perform the

piece. She describes temporal unfolding as a limitation of video installation art due to juxtaposition of time it takes for the observer to: take in the apparatus of the installation; the cycle of the video loop playing out; precious reflective processing for the observer on the message. This poses a problem distinct to video art and hinders "the experience of transformation to occur" for the observer (1990, 166). This relates to Colombo's concern with a loss of meaning due to the observer's inability to experience the entire piece. Arrived upon mid-way, the video installation running on an endless loop risks depriving the observer of the complete experience as intended by the artist. To minimize the risk, I incorporate an ultrasonic range finder in the installation that activates the performance video upon detecting the observer in proximity to the installation.

Considering the scale of the projected image, I was inspired by feminist, post-modern and conceptual American artist Barbara Kruger's public installations in which she covers walls, ceilings and floors in public spaces such as museums, shopping malls, train stations with black and white images juxtaposed with aphorisms such as an image of a hand holding a card with the text "I shop therefore I am" or "All violence is the illustration of a pathetic stereotype" with politically incorrect, racial, sexual and gender-related terms such as "towel-head" and "camel-jabber" to name a few. Important in Kruger's work is the post-modern critique and the context in which her art is in. Kruger's statement "I shop therefore I am" directly addressing consumer culture was aptly placed in a shopping mall in order to emphasize short attention spans of viewers. Kruger communicates directly with them directly using "short, declarative statements" that manifest social, cultural and political critique (Wolfe 2015, p 2). In Disidentity, I employ the gaze momentarily to look directly at the observer in standby mode, implying a behind the scenes environment where the anchor is seen gesturing to and communicating with his off-screen production crew, checking his phone and having coffee staring at the observer, waiting on his audience to activate the news telecast.

4.4 Key Requirements of Observer Experience

Although the project underwent several iterations due to valuable feedback, impressions and critique from peers and the thesis committee, I identified three experiential requirements as key for an observer to experience in the exhibition piece. The project seeks to: expose the observer to the narrative of Islamophobic stories interpellating Muslim identity via Facebook and Twitter; provide counter narratives to Islamophobia found in the form of resistive user generated content on Facebook and Twitter signifying resistance and to provide observers a platform in the form of the hashtag #stopislamophobia, as an opportunity for them to exercise their political agency, if they choose, by using the hashtag on Twitter and Facebook.

4.5 Emotional Design Method

Inspiration was drawn from the Emotion Design method proposed by Donald Norman for the thesis project "disidentity". In this interaction design approach, Norman informs designers to consider three levels of processing undertaken by an observer or user: visceral; behavioural; reflective (Norman 2004, 11). Norman indicates each process requires a different style of design. Developed in conjunction with psychologists, the emotion design approach borrows from "three different levels of the brain: the automatic, prewired layer, called the visceral level; the part that contains the processes that control everyday behaviour, known as the behavioural level; and the contemplative part of the brain, or the reflective level" (Norman 2004, 11)

Merely evoking a visceral response in the observer such as annoyance or perhaps even distress by exposing them to Islamophobic stories is not satisfactory nor the full desired intent of the installation experience. Although the stories selected for a retelling

in the exhibition piece are liable to do just that, this project seeks to evoke a response that is visceral, behavioural and reflective for the observer. Norman describes the visceral layer as fast, making judgements about good/bad or safe/dangerous rapidly. This is the key visceral response of the observer intended upon exposure to Judge Jeanine's Islamophobic video referenced earlier. Affective processing for the observer begins once the visceral response sends signals to the motor system controlling muscles or movement. The measure of success for the installation will be to ensure the observer has time to respond to requests made by the news anchor to send a tweet reflectively, instead of walking away annoyed or distressed. The script and visual treatment of the recorded performance responds by achieving a balance in the manner information is disseminated to the observer, in measured values without any jarring and/or shocking elements.

Initial designs for the interactive installations do not feature disidentificatory performance because it had not been incorporated in the thesis at that time. However, they are available for reference in Appendix A.

4.6 Disidentity (V1)

Disidentity is a projection based video installation with designed interactive elements that encourage observer input. In standby mode with no observers in proximity of the installation, Video A plays on both screens, the onscreen anchor is on standby. In standby, the onscreen anchor: stares at the camera; takes a phone call; has his feet up on the table; looks impatient; drums the table in front of him; gets up and walks off screen and peeks to check if anyone is there.

The moment motion by observers is detected by the range finders , Video B is activated on both screens, replacing Video A and transitions into a news style graphics
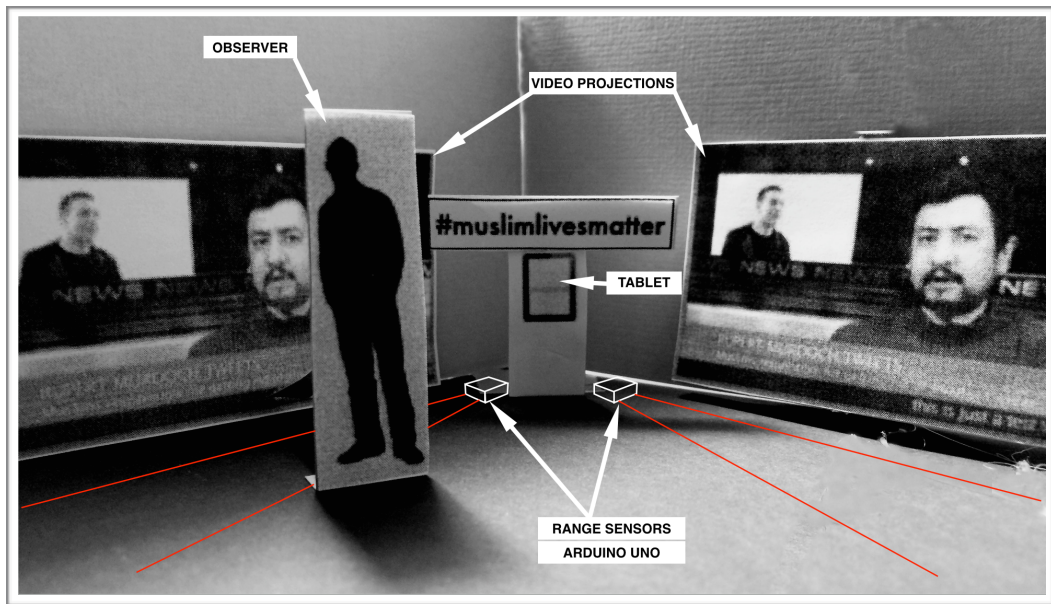
Fig. 10 : Disidentity V1 (Image by Author)

Fig. 11: Possible Installation configurations (Images by Author)

bumper. Video B is the actual scripted newscast and it contains the scripted piece of the performance. The Anchor looks relieved and begins to deliver information with gusto and robustness. Video B runs its entire duration with the onscreen anchor signing off in the end and the video transitions into a graphics bumper and Video A commences playback in standby mode. As Video B plays out, observers will be periodically reminded to participate, contribute content and tweet by the anchor making announcements of "have your say", "We would love to hear from you", "Send us a tweet" supplemented by lower thirds (graphic banners) that periodically display hashtag information. Observers can tweet using their own smartphones or mobile devices. If a tweet is sent by the observer using the publicized hashtag, #stopislamophobia, the Twitter API with Processing software and an Arduino microprocessor will mine the Internet for any tweets sent using #stopislamophobia. The mined tweets will be accumulated and displayed on the iPad for review by the observer. The goal of the interaction is to encourage observers to exercise their political agency by speaking out against Islamophobia and become part of the ongoing conversation on the Internet.

For the video recorded performance, my intent is to create the environment of a news room. Not having an actual news studio available, emulating a news telecast meant creating a virtual news environment by using the green screen technique. In post production, video editing software enables background removal for any video shot using the green screen technique by a process called "Chroma Key" and replaced with any desired background. I will however mention this technique can be applied on any background as long as it is solid and evenly lit.

The most crucial experiment for video was the green screen set up (see Fig 13). The green screen backdrop is a challenge since it demands precise and even lighting of the backdrop and the subject. Any variation in dark or bright spots due to flawed lighting means the background cannot be removed. As illustrated in figure 12 the first experiment

Fig 12: First Test Shoot (Image by Author)

Fig. 13: Green Screen Setup (Image by Author)

Fig. 14: Chroma Key Tests 1 and 2 (Images by Author)

Fig. 15: Testing Multiple screens (Image by Author)

did not yield the desired results. I deduced this was due to incorrect white balance settings on the camera and improper placement of lights causing a discolouring my skin tone, hence my character did not blend in with the background to make it appear as a news room convincingly. With my second attempt, I was able to achieve the desired lighting and tone by shifting both lights and adjusting the white balance setting on the camera to a colder tone to match the tone of the virtual news backdrop (see Fig.14)

Aesthetic considerations regarding motion graphics and music theme were key in order to maintain consistency with an actual news telecast. This was resolved by searching online video libraries where licensed digital news backdrops can be bought and downloaded, complete with essential graphics: opening title; lower thirds; video transitions. For music, I downloaded a licensed, up-tempo, hard-hitting news theme. Together, the graphics and audio help create an effective and convincing news broadcast. As illustrated in Figure 10, the setup for this iteration includes: 2 short-throw Projectors; 2 Arduino Uno's; 2 Ultra Sonic Range Finders (Paralax); 2 Mac Minis;1 iPad; 2 Speakers/Headphones.

Learning Outcomes Disidentity V1:

After experimenting with script, chroma keying and low fidelity prototypes for possible configurations of the installation layout, supplemented with impressions from peers and advisors, I began to question the choice of using two screens to deliver my performance. Each screen is employed to present specific performance content: narratives of Islamophobia on one; stories of resistance on the other. The feedback I received mentioned the two screen dynamic to be a hinderance dividing the observers attention and conceptually undermining the performance. Therefore I tested presenting both narratives on the same screen (see Fig. 15). A happy accident and a eureka moment

occurred when the audio tracks of the two superimposed videos appeared to drown out my monologue. This moment in itself where multiple narratives accompanied my presence on the same screen elicited the conflicted identity that inspired me to pursue this thesis; the feeling that my voice drowned out by voices interpellating my identity, speaking for me and over me. In order to incorporate this into my installation I decided to restrict my design to one screen. It was clear that this accident resulted in a stronger representation of my subject position as an identity in conflict than my earlier iterations. I will now briefly describe the second iteration of Disidentity for the Digital Futures Exhibition.

4.7 Disidentity V2: The Exhibition

The second version of Disidentity is the final iteration to be presented at the Digital Futures thesis exhibition. The design specifications are based on Version 1 although the number of projection screens is reduced to one screen. Another significant change is the decision to display mined live tweets on the projected screen itself, positioned below the anchor instead of the iPad. I employed a design technique reviewed in a case study that ambient experience designers at Philips use to break down user experience as a sequence(Rutgers 2014). I found the technique of creating an actions-based matrix to determine the flow of experience to be effective in foreseeing any experiential gaps or glitches otherwise overlooked(see Fig. 16).

In this performance piece, I present various stories inculcated with Islamophobic ideology experienced and shared with me on my Facebook timeline by my network of friends analyzed in this thesis document. Unfortunately I have been spoiled for choice in terms of islamophobic content available on my Facebook timeline. For my video performance I have selected three stories offering a variety of visceral responses in order

to expose my Muslim identity in conflict, interpellated by discourse around Islamophobia. The shortlisted stories originate from varying sites such as: corporate broadcast media— a conservative right wing blowhard anchor of Fox News declaring all Muslims the enemy that I attempt to question in my performance but I am drowned out; user generated content—a powerful resistive spoken word performance at a public protest in Yonge-Dundas Square by an Iranian-Canadian spoken word artist who refuses to apologize for being a Muslim, captured by a smartphone camera and uploaded and circulated on Facebook; blogs—a satirical "Muslim iCondemn" app created by a blogger as "a 21st century solution" to meet rapidly rising demands for all Muslims to condemn acts of global terrorism. Other stories such as: Rupert Murdoch's tweet about Muslims collectively responsible for terrorism; #illridewithyou tweets; tweets by American Sniper audience are presented in the form of images in Video A standby mode (Fig 17).

The installation is pre-recorded video, yet there is a deliberate play on temporality in order to create an illusion of "live"-ness for the observer by using my performance as a news anchor who is on standby positioned within a frame in the middle of the screen running on an infinite loop (Fig 17). Enhanced by a scrolling news style ticker displaying live tweets at the bottom of the screen, the standby screen presents a layering of live and pre-recorded visual and textual elements. The scrolling ticker functions through the software "Processing", set to mine Twitter for tweets employing the hashtag #stopislamophobia, refreshing and updating every 90 seconds. For interaction, the observer has the choice to play any of the three video stories (Fig 17) by clicking on each window and launching the story (Fig 18) .

In the previous iteration of Disidentity, the observer triggered stories by activating the range sensor due to proximity, a serendipitous discovery activating the installation. However, for the final iteration, the observer points and clicks on a story with a mouse instead. The involuntary, serendipitous dynamic is not representative of

interaction on social media. When users come across previews of stories shared on social media timelines by their networks— amongst thumbnails of selfies, food, vacation getaways and stories loaded with potent Islamophobic ideology, the decision to interact with information is conscious and deliberate.

During setup for the exhibition, a valuable learning outcome was feedback by my peers on censored profanity in one of the American Sniper tweets on display during the standby Video A. Based on my public broadcast training and experience, I had censored the word "fucking" and left the word "rag-head" uncensored. Unwittingly, I did not consider it profane, yet it can be argued that it is as profane if not more so than the word I deemed inappropriate. Therefore, I left the tweet uncensored completely.

Tools & Technology

For the production of the performance I used: a Canon 7D Digital Single Reflex or DSLR Camera; a Green Screen Background for Chroma Key 9' x 10'; 2 Continuous Lights 500W each with soft boxes to diffuse the amount of light; a Zoom H2n Audio Recorder for audio because the general audio microphone on the camera records hollow and unusable quality of sound. I conducted post production and video editing on my Apple Macbook Pro on the Final Cut Pro 7 video editing software. All graphics and music used are downloaded, licensed theme packs available online, for further details see Appendix For observer input and live tweeting, the code was written in Processing software employing a Twitter API that scrapes Twitter and the Internet for posts using the designated hashtag #stopislamophobia (See Appendix C for code).
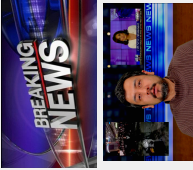
SPECIFICATIONS

Action	No one there	Observer triggers range sensor	Observer tweets	No one there
Onscreen	Video A	Video B	Video B	Video A
Analysis/ Explanation of Onscreen Visualization	On standby, with no observers Video A plays on loop showing news anchor on standby, staring back, looking at his laptop, fiddling with papers, yawning, napping on his chair, having water and at times going off screen	An observer triggers the range sensor activating Video B. Begins with a Breaking News graphic and anchor commences news telecast. Duration of Video B is approximately 5 minutes	News anchor frequently asks observers to "have their say" by tweeting. This call to action is supported by a running ticker at the bottom of the screen. The tweet sent by the observer using the hashtag #muslimlivesmatter appears live on the screen	Video B runs its full duration, anchor signs off, thanks the observers, end credits roll and reset back to Video A standby loop.
Level of Busyness				

Figure 16: Design Specifications
Matrix

Fig. 17: Standby Screen (Image by Author)

Fig. 18: Story Screen (Image by Author)

4.8 Reflections:

In terms of theory and process, Disidentity held many valuable discoveries for me. I feel it is important to state that I did this research and project as a Muslim and as a human being, but perhaps most importantly as a father who wishes that his children do not have to experience my conflicted subject position and identity. Being a disengaged apolitical user of social media, I learnt that I cannot allow myself to be passive in response to ideological messages that I find offensive. Resistance to Islamophobia can take many forms but if the Internet is the new public sphere then opinions need to be expressed and countered. It is a choice all citizens have. Theorist Michel Foucault argued that "Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (1990, 101). My disidentificatory performance exposes my subject position by presenting a variety of visceral responses to various discourses showcased in the installation. It is important to note that almost all of the stories analyzed in this thesis were unknown to my friends in Canada or the very least my non-Muslim friends. The affect of this Islamophobic media circulating social media has been feeding into my life. Yes there is resistance, but it can be questioned how these acts of resistance traverse homophily as posited by danah boyd. The Digital Futures exhibit itself is taken as an opportunity to stage a retelling of selected discourses to a live audience.

The Internet became public almost 3 decades ago, around the same time the term Islamophobia was coined in 1991 – describing a practice that has unfortunately existed alongside other forms of bias, discrimination and prejudice. Islamophobia as an ideology interpellates Muslim and non-Muslim subjects alike and impresses the normative idea that Islam is terror and fear of Muslims, making it appear as common sense. This flattens Muslim identity into an essentialized understanding, an orientalist radical terminal of

generalizations as Edward Said states. I explain this essentialized understanding by applying it to the GermanWings plane crash in the Alps on March 24 2015. The co-pilot Andreas Lubitz, after locking the captain out of the cockpit, crashed the plane killing all 150 people on board (BBC 2015). By this rationale, it can be suggested that all co-pilots be held accountable because they are capable of locking pilots out of cockpits and crashing planes into mountains and should be subjected to surveillance and eyed with suspicion as a consequence of Lubitz's actions.

As evidenced by the variety of sites the stories analyzed in this thesis originate from, there is no singular source for dominant ideology and there is no singular source for resistance and they are all contextual. The scrolling live Twitter feed provides a valuable learning by highlighting multiplicities that exist within resistive discourse and the diversity of opinions within #stopislamophobia. On resistance, Foucault asserts "We must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies" (1990, 100). The video-recorded performance is not an attempt to fix meaning; instead, I am cutting open Islamophobic ideology by exposing my subject-hood in the face of a multitude of dominant and resistive discourses that routinely appeared in my Facebook feed. As argued in Section 2, Stuart Hall cautions that there is no absolute meaning and it is power that attempts to fix meaning. Through performance, I am attempting to construct the disidentifying Muslim subject to be witnessed by observers.

Another revelatory aspect centres around participation by observers in the on-going conversation around Islamophobia by using the hashtag #stopislamophobia, originally planned as a key outcome. In this installation, notably, the #stopislamophobia failed to generate many responses. Earlier in this Section I cite the example of #illridewithyou, a citizen initiated resistive hashtag that trended globally by 150,000

tweets within 4 hours of the Sydney terror attack. Without setting the bar so high, the measure of success for Disidentity will be if observers can be informed of the issues and the plight of Muslim identity in the face of Islamophobic discourse facilitated by my performance.

4.9 Conclusion:

The research question this thesis investigated is: how can we resist Islamophobia on social media using the communicative power of networked media? I posited my response to this question based on the findings of my research; in the age of networked media and as networked publics, we cannot allow ourselves to be passive receivers of ideological Islamophobic messages. I argued, based on the political economy of news organizations such as television and the dynamics of media convergence and the attention economy, the push of content to passive receivers has shifted to a pull of attention from fragmented audiences. I asserted that there is resistance, people who want change speak out and actively resist Islamophobia on various sites by participating in protests, writing blogs, sharing and re-sharing resistive stories on Facebook and Twitter. But fear sells, and Islamophobic content travels rapidly across these mediums. Islamophobia is a *real* problem and it is dangerous because Islamophobic ideology circulates and re-circulates in networked media, impressing the normative idea that Islam is terror upon its networked users and propagating fear of Islam and Muslims that may be seen as common sense in Gramscian terms. It is dangerous because it flattens Muslim identity, eliminating all differences and collapsing it into a zero institution.

Researching this thesis has been a steep learning curve for me. I recall numerous instances where I struggled to stay objective due to online Islamophobic hate in the form of stories, blogs and articles experienced during research. It is troubling that this hate was not personally targeted at me but toward all Muslims. The thesis project Disidentity

is deeply personal and liberating, as injecting myself into the project and making it a performance piece was challenging. Through my installation, I apprehended the position of power by assuming the role of a news anchor and conducted my disidentificatory performance in the format of a news broadcast. I invited observers at the thesis exhibition to view my subject position and conflicted identity as a Muslim, decoding Islamophobic ideology in the process by sharing stories analyzed in this thesis. I revealed how the dynamics are now different, the networked audience are not passive and possess political agency to make their opinion count. However, this unfortunately comes across as a utopian viewpoint associated with technology. I argued that we know what we know on social media networking sites such as Facebook, based on who we know. We construct a network of safe and like-minded friends and acquaintances. Retelling stories experienced on my Facebook timeline at an exhibition in front of a live audience was an opportunity to traverse the bounds of online networks in the spirit of Eco's guerrilla tactician, taking the message to the receiver and Munoz's disidentifying subject exposing a minoritarian subject position. Trending topics on Twitter for instance are a way of challenging this homophily or closed networks, by highlighting conversations that many people are having globally.

As a landed immigrant of Pakistani origin, I must confess feeling and experiencing reasons and emotions behind Disidentity down to my very core. My decade long experience in senior management positions for youth-centric TV channels, combined with journalistic work at a leading news channel afforded me a unique perspective and an in-depth understanding of the difficult and important issues targeted by the project.

I maintain that communication media has unfortunately — and perhaps unwittingly — served in widening the global cultural and economic divides. Efforts for creating awareness of the 'other'— culture, religion, social status — can result in

damaging, false mythical Muslim stereotypes taken as reality by its viewers. This enforced narrative speaks for, and over, the 'other', disallowing millions of people their rightful voice and humanity. If we are to believe in and create a better world, then we all must do our part to restore balance.

It will be an unsubstantiated claim that this thesis has solved the problem of resisting Islamophobia on social media as I am convinced of merely having scratched the surface. It is safe to say that as a result of this thesis, my understanding of Islamophobia is now in a much greater flux and remains a work in progress.

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6. Appendix A: Pre-Performance Iterations

Initial Designs:

I will proceed to describe some of the initial iterations briefly. These design iterations of

the project were conceived prior to my discovery of Jose Esteban Muñoz's theory of

disidentification, hence the vital component of my performance was not considered in

this stage of design. Although I chose to abandon these iterations due to technical

hitches, over-complexity, feedback and impressions I received from peers, I retained

some elements of early prototypes described below for the final iteration.

(a) Complex Web (V1)

The first iteration for the project as illustrated in (fig i) was a projection-based video

installation with multiple screens of varying sizes within a screen. The different screens

and their proportions are a potpourri of popular images, memes and videos from varying

sources shared on Facebook and Twitter determined by the number shares and re-

shares: commercials; most shared news stories; Hollywood blockbuster movie trailers;

most shared memes; most visited websites; most viewed YouTube videos. Co-inhabiting

this rich, complex ecology of imagery found on and from the web are Islamophobic

stories and narratives of resistance to Islamophobia, as some of the many screens within

this screen. The observer is expected to come upon one or more of these Islamophobic

stories by process of serendipitous discovery. The audio/video for selected stories is

activated with proximity detection of the observer to the installation by using range

finders that commence playback. A share button is placed below each of these selected

stories the observer can press if they choose to. This button press action effects the

screen in terms of exuding lines of LED light strips in all directions (see Fig i). These

lights act as a breadcrumb trail leading the observer to another Islamophobic story located within the array of multiple screens and orchestrates the rest of the experience for the observer as they are led from one story to the next. Each time the share button is pressed by the observer sends off a tweet using the Twitter handle @stopislamophobia. Achieved by using Processing software with a Twitter API, the choice of the handle is intended to have the observers action of pressing the share button as joining in on the online conversation against Islamophobia.

(b) Complex Web (V2)

Version 2 of Complex Web involved a deconstruction of the elements employed in the earlier version. The installation was retained as a projection of screens but organized on a rectangular grid instead of variable sized screens in the earlier version (See Fig ii). Islamophobic stories such as Judge Jeanine's Fox News video referenced earlier are played as a transcribed audio commentary on loop and broadcast to the room on a speaker. All the images presented on the screen were counter narratives to Islamophobia. Therefore, the dominant ideology of Islamophobia is presented as only audio and the resistive stories were presented visually. Employing a Kinect sensor I proposed an additional layer (layer marked "A" in the figure) overlaying the counter narratives underneath (layer marked "B"). The Kinect sensor detecting the observers presence reveals the counter narratives layer B by subtracting layer A in the shape of the observers silhouette. Yet this version did not have an element of the observer exercising their agency unlike the earlier iteration.

(c) Exercise Agency

This iteration for the project as illustrated in Fig. iii involved the removal of the projection screen completely. The different narratives in the form of preloaded videos were to be played on tablets mounted on stands in a circular configuration. This circular configuration was selected to highlight observer agency in terms of deciding which tablet or story they access and in any order. Each tablet would have a share button mounted underneath it that would enable the observer to share the story. With the share button pressed, the narrative being played on the corresponding tablet would start playing simultaneously on the tablet next to it. This was done with the intention of emphasizing the importance of sharing counter narratives in order to drown out the dominant narratives of Islamophobia. Each tablet was to be hooked up to an X-Bee module with all 5 selected videos loaded on it. Hence 5 tablets would have 5 X-Bee modules networked and communicating with each other. The graph [fig] shows the initial logic that was designed to achieve this.

Learning Outcomes for Pre-Performance iterations:

After impressions and feedback collected from peers and thesis committee, I realized that these iterations were overly complex with high potential to muddle the experience for the observer. Conceptually, they failed to communicate previously mentioned design considerations combined in the form of a singular experience. Complex Web (V1) was abandoned due to the complex nature of determining factors constituting different screens within it. I was setting myself up to map multiple visual elements genre-wise that constitute the internet and their popularity in order to diagrammatically represent the different sizes of screens. A herculean task beyond scope and not vital to this thesis. Complex Web (V2) had no element of sharing and observer input is a key insight to this
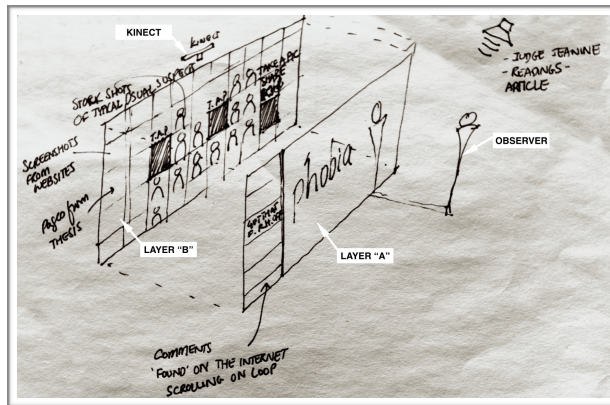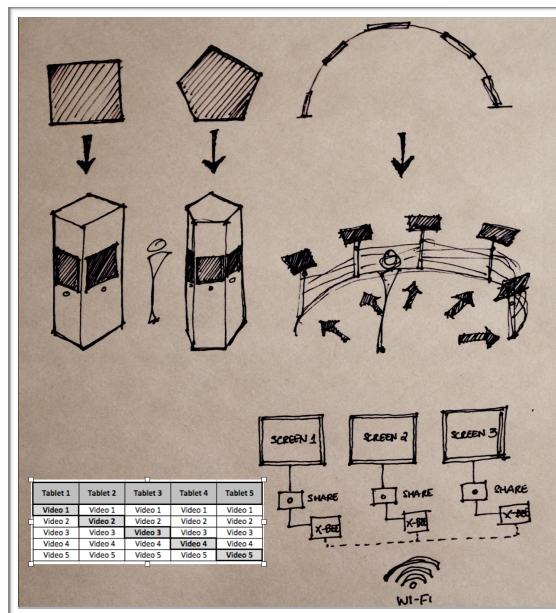
Fig i: Complex Web V1

Fig ii Complex Web V2

Fig iii: Exercise Agency

thesis. Exercise Agency had technical hitches identified by working on the code logic before going into prototyping. At this point in experimentation, I arrived to the conclusion that I was missing an essential element in my project. This is when I came upon theorist Jose Esteban Muñoz's book *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* describing performance as a method of resistance for minority subjects.

Appendix B

Full Transcript of Opening Statement from "Justice" with Judge Jeanine Pirro

10th January 2015 on Fox News

We need to kill them. We need to *kill* them, the radical Muslim terrorists hell-bent on killing us. You're in danger. I'm in danger. We're at war and this is not going to stop.After this week's brutal terror attacks in France, hopefully everybody now gets it. And there's only one group that can stop this war: the Muslims themselves.Our job is to arm those Muslims to the teeth. Give them everything they need to take out these Islamic fanatics. Let them do the job. Let them have at it. And as they do, we need to simply look the other way.It is time for this to be over and stop sending American dollars to any Arab country that does not support this mission, Pakistan at the top of the list.

Force Arab nations to choose. They're either with us or they're against us. And stop with this nuclear negotiation nonsense. They don't operate the way we do. You can't negotiate. You can't mediate. You can't bargain. You can't even reason with these people! Now, Egyptian President el-Sisi - a Muslim in a country 85-percent Muslim - rid Egypt - the largest Arab country - of Islamic fanatics. He threw out Hamas terrorists and outlawed the Muslim Brotherhood, the mother of all terrorist organizations. And ironically, days before the attack in France that same President el-Sisi called for a religious revolution to take out violent jihadists. He called on the imams and the religious establishment to lead the fight, saying the entire world is waiting for their next move. I've been telling you for a year that they're coming for us. That there is a reverse crusade in progress, a Christian genocide. Hundreds of thousands of innocents killed in the Middle East. Seven months ago, I said that we needed to bomb ISIS as it began to steamroll through Iraq. Bomb them. Bomb them. And bomb them again. For which, I was roundly criticized.

Our country's response to this threat? The FBI destroys tens of thousands of documents deemed offensive to Islam. The CIA removes the word "Islamic" before terrorist in the Benghazi talking points. The Ft. Hood massacre, the Oklahoma beheading, both workplace violence. Are we morons?

Of course, none of this should be a surprise given that our president invited the Muslim Brotherhood to fill the first two rows of his "apology for being an American speech" in Cairo in 2009. And as we cower to these Islamic fanatics, our president and former Secretary of State Clinton say they will prosecute the man who made the video - free speech be damned!

They call murders accompanied by "Allah Akbar" workplace violence. This surrender is nothing more than a coward's response to the fear of this fanatical terrorism. And this political correctness will be the death of us.

They can kill us, but we can't hurt their feelings? I'm surprised there isn't a new executive order that simply says "don't offend Muslims". And make no mistake - as sure as I'm talking to you - there will be efforts to limit our First Amendment - our free speech - to comply with Sharia blasphemy laws which call for death to those who slander the prophet Mohammad.

At a time when we have never been in more danger, our president is focused on free community college on his continuing his march to reduce the size of the military and eviscerate our national security. Our government's response to the terror threat is to have interfaith dialogue, to try to understand and empathize with our enemy. And when they want to shut us up, they call us "Islamaphobes."

Muslim groups like CAIR and the Nation of Islam have been integrated into our society. Muslims were even invited to worship at the national cathedral in Washington, DC. We are directed by a political correctness so bizarre so disconnected from reality that it does nothing but assist our enemy in our own destruction.They have conquered us through immigration. They have conquered us through interfaith dialogue. And they have conquered us by co-opting our leaders into a position of embarrassment.Now he Prime Minister of France - just a few hours ago - stated that France is at war with radical Islam. Why can't our president even say the words "radical Islam" or "Islamic terrorists" - let alone protect us Americans. It's not like we haven't suffered from these fanatical terrorists. Thousands of Americans have died at their hands: the World Trade Center, U.S.S. Cole., Tanzania, Ft. Hood, Benghazi. When the head of MI5 - one of the most secretive positions - shows his face to the world saying that Britain is going to get hit next , it is time to get serious.

And as this Islamic cancer metastasizes throughout the world - Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Ansar al-Sharia in Libya, Al Qaeda, ISIS - and as it goes through Europe, it is headed our way. Our forefathers gave up everything, their fortunes, their families, their lives to create a government where free speech and freedom of religion were sacrosanct.

This surrender, this refusal to call it what it is is an insult to my father, my grandfather and everyone who served in armed forces, who fought to protect what is sacred to every American.

Yes, it is time for this to be over.

Appendix C

Processing Code for Disidentity

MAIN SKETCH

```
import processing.video.*;
import twitter4j.conf.*;
import twitter4j.api.*;
import twitter4j.*;
import java.util.List;
import java.util.Iterator;
// scrolly vars
PFont f; // global font variable
float x; // Horizontal location
int index = 0;
String[] headlines = {
"",
};

// twitter stuff
ConfigurationBuilder   cb;
Query query;
Twitter twitter;
ArrayList<User> twittersList;
Timer  time;
int numberSearch = 9;
PFont font;
int   fontSize = 14;

// moo -v
boolean movieBPlay = false;
float resume;
int currentMovie;
int movieCounter = 0;
Movie[] movies;
Movie movieA;
void setup() {
  size(1280, 720);
  x = width;
  font = createFont("NexaLight-16.vlw", fontSize, true);
  textFont(font, fontSize);
  time = new Timer(70000); //1 min with 10 secs
  cb = new ConfigurationBuilder();

  // change your twitter keys
  cb.setOAuthConsumerKey("xxxxxx");
  cb.setOAuthConsumerSecret("xxxxx");
  cb.setOAuthAccessToken("xxxxx");
  cb.setOAuthAccessTokenSecret("xxxxx");
  twitter = new TwitterFactory(cb.build()).getInstance();
  twittersList = queryTwitter(numberSearch);
  // change your moovie files
  movies = new Movie[3];
  movieA = new Movie(this, "kitty.mov");
  movies[0] = new Movie(this, "notkitty1.mov");
  movies[1] = new Movie(this, "notkitty2.mov");
  movies[2] = new Movie(this, "notkitty3.mov");
```

```
  movieA.loop();
}
void draw() {
 movieLogic();
 scrolly();
 if (time.isDone()) {
  headlines[0] = "0";
  twittersList = queryTwitter(numberSearch);
  time.reset();
 }
 //text(time.getCurrentTime(), 20, 30);
 time.update();
}
```

FOR FINDING TWEETS

```
ArrayList<User> queryTwitter(int nSearch) {
 ArrayList<User> twitt = new ArrayList<User>();

 query = new Query("#stopislamophobia");
 query.setCount(nSearch);
 try {
  QueryResult result = twitter.search(query);
  List<Status> tweets = result.getTweets();
  println("New Tweet : ");
  for (Status tw : tweets) {
   String msg = trim(tw.getText());
   print(trim(tw.getText()));
   headlines[0] = trim(headlines[0] + tw.getText());
  }
 }
 catch (TwitterException te) {
  println("Couldn't connect: " + te);
 }
 return twitt;
}
```

VIDEO LOGIC

```
void mouseClicked() {
 println("DO IT TO IT");
 if(!movieBPlay) {
  if((mouseX > 1024) && (mouseY < 256)) {
   currentMovie = 0;
   println("top");
   movieBPlay = true;
   movieA.stop();
   movies[currentMovie].play();
   resume = int(millis())+movies[currentMovie].duration()*1000;
  }
  if((mouseX > 1024) && ( mouseY > 256) && (mouseY < 512)){
   currentMovie = 1;
   println("middle");
   movieBPlay = true;
   movies[currentMovie].play();
     movieA.stop();
   resume = int(millis())+movies[currentMovie].duration()*1000;
  }
  if((mouseX > 1024) && (mouseY > 512)) {
   currentMovie = 2;
   movieBPlay = true;
```

```
    println("bottom");
    movies[currentMovie].play();
      movieA.stop();
    resume = int(millis())+movies[currentMovie].duration()*1000;
   }
  }
}
void movieEvent(Movie m) {
 m.read();
}
void movieLogic(){
 if(!movieBPlay){
  image(movieA, 0, 0, width, height);
 } else {
  if(millis() > resume) {
   movieBPlay = false;
   movies[currentMovie].stop();
   movieA.loop();
  }
  image(movies[currentMovie], 0, 0, width, height);
  movies[currentMovie].noLoop();
 }
}
```

FOR SCROLLING TICKER

```
void scrolly() {

 textFont(font,26);
 textAlign (LEFT);
 fill(255, 255, 255);
 text(trim(headlines[0]),x,height-15);
 headlines[0] = headlines[0].replace("\n", "").replace("\r", "");
  fill(255, 0, 0);
 noStroke();
 rect(7, height-50, 200, 50);
 fill(255,255,255);
  textFont(font,40);
 text("LIVE FEED", 10, height-10);
 x = x - 10;
 float w = textWidth(headlines[0]);
 if (x < - w/2) {
  x = width;
  index = (index + 1) % headlines.length;
 }
}
```

FOR TWITTER TIMER

```
class Timer {
 int savedTime; // When Timer started
 int totalTime; // How long Timer should last

 float msTime;
 int tempTime;

 boolean end;

 Timer(int tempTotalTime) {
  totalTime = tempTotalTime;
 }
```

```
void start() {
 // When the timer starts it stores the current time in milliseconds.
 savedTime = millis();
}

float getCurrentTime() {
 return (msTime = tempTime/1000.0);
}

void reset() {
 tempTime = 0;
 start();
}

boolean isDone(){
 return end;
}

// The function isFinished() returns true if 5,000 ms have passed.
// The work of the timer is farmed out to this method.
void update() {
 // Check how much time has passed
 tempTime = millis()- savedTime;
 if (tempTime > totalTime) {
  end =  true;
 }
 else {
  end = false;
 }
}
}
```

Appendix D

Images

Fig 1: "How to Spot a Terrorist Living in your Neighbourhood" Retrieved from: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/10084172/How-to-spot-a-terrorist-living-in-your-neighbourhood.html.

Fig 4: Homeland Poster
Retrieved from: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1796960/episodes?season=4&ref_=tt_eps_sn_4.