Islamophobia
Historical Antecedents:
Changing Perception of Islam


• Immediacy of the image vs. Narrative causality.

• Dad Tuastad: “New Barbarism” thesis. Neo-conservative writing in the US in the 1990s: a *specific connection* between “terrorism” and the “Arab” or the “Muslim mind.”
A Short History & Definition

- Runnymede Trust Report (1997): “Islamophobia” (xenophobia, Europhobia): “a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam—and, therefore, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims.”
- Islamophobia attributes an essentially evil and specifically violent and oppressive nature to Islam in a reductive and stereotyping manner which forecloses rational, analytic and informed response. **NB.** Not a doctrine, but an affective-discursive formation developed in the media and public sphere.
Islamophobic Statement

• (i) “Muslims are prone to violence”
• (ii) “Muslims are extremists”
• (iii) “Muslim men oppress women”
• (iv) “Muslims engage infiltration”
• (v) “Muslims are sexually dysfunctional”
• These affective ideas or statements, all of which are negative, disturbing and anxiety-ridden (violence, extremism, oppression, secrecy, perversion) are often linked to each other in a fluent, associative chain and are projected onto the Muslims: securing a moral position in a phantasmatic way.
Islamophobic Fantasy

• Racism: not a doctrine, but a fantasy
• Phobic object (object of desire) is a response to internal needs (psychic dynamics or fluctuation).
• It is always found: phobia is attached to, or projected onto an external, actual object. (“Islam”)
• Construction of an imaginary scenario (reduction, distortion).
Islamophobia as Racism 1

- Racism is an operation of *racialization*: selection of racial markers (skin color, physiological features) on the border between nature and culture.
- Franz Fanon’s analysis of “Negrophobia” and anti-Semitism. *Culture as racial marker*: Islam’s excess religiosity. Violent, backward, oppressive, a “threat”, i.e. a radically non-negotiable cultural difference.
Islamophobia as Racism 2

- Corporeal schema, clothing as second skin.
- **Muslim woman’s veil** as a surface of racialization. Race and gender functioning through each other.
- The veil is made the metonymy of Muslim culture as such, constructing patriarchal gender oppression as the essence of this culture.
- The narrative of “saving Muslim women from oppression.”
- The veil as the blind spot in the field of vision.
Islamophobia and Securitization

• Jihadism as terrorism.
• Fantasy is a constitutive part of reality.
• Self-fulfilling prophecy, positive feedback loop (consolidation of Islam).
• E. Said’s opposition between immediacy of image vs. narrative mediation and Terranova’s criticism: mutation of orientalist hegemony in the media: affect functions as passage between between ideas and facts.
• Islamophobia as an essential element of the new assemblage of security or securitization.