Islam In Europe

Insult: Fractured States?

Part 4: Media: A Catalyst for Change

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South Court Auditorium

LIVE from the New York Public Library

www.nypl.org/live

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: Good evening, I'm going to say just two words, and the two words are, welcome to the New York Public Library. I'm the director of Public Programs, now known as LIVE from the New York Public Library. It is a delight to be hosting this last evening of Islam in Europe, and now it is my great pleasure to introduce to you Mahnaz Fancy.

MAHNAZ FANCY Thank you Paul. Good evening everyone. As Paul mentioned I am Mahnaz Fancy, I am the Director of Development at the Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund. We've been a collaborating partner in this three day program on Islam in Europe. I'd like to thank LIVE

from the New York Public Library, and the European Union National Institutes for Culture for organizing this in conjunction with the ten day Muslim Voices: Arts and Ideas Festival, which was organized by BAM, the Asia Society, and the NYU Center for Dialogues. In particular I'd like to thank my friends and co-conspirators in Islam in Europe, Paul Holdengräber, Martin Rauchbauer, and Zeyba Rahman. You have been such a pleasure to work with.

Tonight we are presenting Media: A Catalyst for Change, the fourth of five panels in this important discussion that permits a fascinating perspective on one of the most urgent of issues in our world today: the relationship between Muslim and Western societies in Europe and beyond. Over the last two days we have looked at Islam in Europe as an issue from various angles: the history behind it, which traces all the way back to the medieval ages with the Crusades, to the more recent history including colonialism and empire; the situation we find ourselves in today, which is produced by the migration populations from all over the Muslim world looking for economic opportunity and political freedom in Europe; then, the particular identity of Muslim European youth, who find themselves negotiating a complicated identity as European citizens who are simultaneously marginalized because they are only seen in terms of the stereotypes and misconceptions that have dominated the world since 9/11. Our speakers have compared and contrasted the differences and similarities between the Muslims in the US and Europe, in rich provocative conversations involving some of the finest thinkers on both sides of the pond.

The issue that emerges most strikingly here is that the relationship between Muslim and Western societies is fraught with miscommunications and misconceptions that stem from the negative stereotypes of Muslims and Islam. According to the 2008 Gallop Poll, *What A Billion Muslims*

Think, a majority of Muslims all over the world said that the most important thing to improve this relationship would be if the West could know as much about Islam and Muslim culture as they—we—know about the West and its culture. Therefore, public education—cultural diplomacy—becomes as crucial as other forms of diplomacy, which is why this program, and the Muslim Voices Festival as a whole, is so heartening to Muslim New Yorkers like me.

Onto our topic, cultural diplomacy. This is where media comes in: where art, music, and literature serve to open our eyes to people in other parts of the world, or different cultures, media is the primary platform through which stories and views from across the world are shared. Today, the global reach of TV, film, and new media present the most powerful tool for reaching across the divide, and improving our conversation across the divide.

I'd like to introduce my colleague, Shamill Idriss. He is the Executive Director of the Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund, who will introduce our esteemed panel for tonight, and tell you how the Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund has a mission to bring media into focus for this urgent issue. Thank you.

SHAMILL IDRISS: Thank you very much Mahnaz, and thank you Paul for having us here, and thank you all for spending your evening with us tonight. We have a little bit over an hour to hear from a very esteemed group of panelists here, so I'm going to get right to the issue. I may intervene from time to time to tell you a little bit about what the Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund is doing in this area, but we are here primarily to hear from our panelists, and I will be introducing them one at a time.

First I'd like to start with our esteemed panelist who really needs no introduction, Her Majesty Queen Noor, who is going to set the stage for us a little bit tonight. Her Majesty really does need no introduction, but I'm going to try anyway. She is an international public servant, a tireless activist on issues of world peace and justice. She is engaged as a leading spokesperson and advocate on issues ranging from refugee rights, to disarmament, to international conflict resolution. On this specific issue of using media as a catalyst for furthering cross cultural understanding, particularly between Western and predominantly Muslim societies, she has shown especial leadership. In 2007 she launched with the New York Tribeca Film Festival the Media and Humanity Program, we've been very pleased at the Media Fund to be involved with some of those screenings, they are really quite eye opening and inspiring. In 2007 also, at the Cannes International Film Festival she launched Cinema Varité, which is a program to foster international film with a social conscience.

What that I'd like to start the panel by asking you, Your Majesty—first of all, thank you for being with us. You are pulled in many different directions and asked to do so much, and you do so much. Why this particular issue of navigating across cultural identities, and why media in particular? Why is this so important to you?

HER MAJESTY QUEEN NOOR: Bismillah, ar-Rahman ar-Raheem. I also want to add my thanks to our hosts and sponsors, especially the New York Public Library and the European Union National Institutes for Culture, and for my colleagues at the Alliance of Civilizations

Media Fund for producing this event. And of course for the organizers of the larger festival, Muslim Voices: Arts and Ideas.

What a timely moment this is for this panel—there hasn't been an untimely moment, but this is a particularly timely and encouraging moment for this kind of focus, and for us at the Media Fund this a great opportunity, thank you for the platform that we have this evening, to talk a little bit about our work and why we believe that the research we have undertaken, that we will begin to introduce tonight, is of enormous importance, and a resource and valuable asset in trying to make the case of the importance of media not only in ways that we have seen sadly, disproportionately the negative impact of media in terms of cross cultural relations, in terms of the way that it's been used politically to polarize different groups within countries, within societies, as well as among cultures and civilizations, and also our research points out, and builds on research already undertaken in this country over many decades, to focus on inter-group relations in *this* country—the challenge of Arab-Americans and other minority groups—our research has taken that beyond to show how media can be used to humanize, and to bridge the divides between different groups that may be polarized for different reasons at any moment in time.

So from my perspective—I was actually asked to speak for a disproportionately long amount of time at the outset of this, but I would just locate myself in the context of this group by saying that my—maybe most people know but I'm not sure—my grandparents arrived at Ellis Island from Lebanon, from Beirut, at the end of the century before last. They were Orthodox Christian immigrants. I grew up in a Judeo-Christian society here in the United States, with all of the privileges and blessings of that, became a Muslim and married a Hashemite direct descendant of

the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and have spent over 30 years now trying to work to bridge some of the divides that will come up in this conversation and have already been discussed in the course of this festival.

So that is why I am personally committed. It's 30 years of living in the Middle East, 30 years of traveling around the world to a wide range of conflict regions, and working on a range of different conflict recovery and conflict prevention issues, and in all of these cases media had a very important role to play, as a catalyst in many cases for conflict, and when used by those groups who are thank God increasing in number around the world as a way to promote reconciliation and an understanding of the common bonds we share, the common values, common aspirations no matter among which cultures, societies, ethnic groups, religious groups, tribes. That can be a very potent force for healing, and for developing a sense of solidarity and community that is the path to peace.

SHAMILL IDRISS: Thank you very much. You mentioned research and I should mention the research that Her Majesty has noted. We at the Media Fund have funded at Harvard, MIT, and the New School for Social Research projects looking at the impact that visual media has issues of identity formation and inter-group relations.

We'll cite some of those findings as we go, but since you mentioned research, I want to turn to one of our lead researchers on the panel, Emanuele Castano, who is at the New School for Social Research and is a social and political psychiatrist, with an expertise in nationalism and—what did I call it?

EMANUELE CASTANO: You called me a psychiatrist.

SHAMILL IDRISS: Oh! My apologies. I might need that. There's no couch on the stage, unfortunately. With an expertise in nationalism, international relations, and conflict resolution. You contributed chapters to a number of books, but the one I want to note here particularly relevant for our conversation, because a lot of this discussion is also about navigating identities in Europe, is *The Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology and Transnational Identities: Becoming European in the EU*. I'm very interested in this. Can you speak more from a general perspective? We have people on this panel who are activists on the ground doing things. You're really looking at how people go about navigating multiple identities in our increasingly diverse, complicated world. Can you talk a little bit about what process that entails, and connect it to what is happening in Europe today from your perspective?

EMANUELE CASTANO: As many of you know, Europeans have been handling multiple loyalties and identities for quite a while. Certainly with the emerging European identity, embryonic, sometimes catatonic, after attempts to pass a European constitution, but there are also other identities that have been important for Europeans, sometimes for centuries—regional and national identities. I'm Italian, you will often hear me define myself as European, and they all become important and relevant at different times. Also they have different content. Regional identities are primarily, if not exclusively, ethno-cultural identities in Europe, with some exception when they become politicized. The emerging European identity is primarily civic identity. But of course the political discourse is still dominated by national identity, because they

have the two elements: both an ethno-cultural component and the strong civic component that has been enforced, for at least 150 years, but in some cases for centuries, by common institutions and practices.

The issue becomes why national identities are dominating. From the research in social psychology but also the social sciences generally, the dominant perspective is that there is nothing essential about these identities: they are continuously created, maintained, and contested in everyday life. And that's good news I think, if we are attempting and hoping for change and for inclusion of minorities in these identities, because it's a matter of political struggle in a way.

I think this is not only for the majority non-Muslim members, to speak about the specific issue at hand, but also from the perspective of Muslim minorities within European countries. A good example is the British Muslims. Different voices are present in Britain. One perhaps presented by the Muslim Parliament of Great Britain on the one hand, who argues for the importance and primacy of Islamic identity, both as religious and political, and criticize any involvement in British political life, because that is detrimental to Islamic identity. On the other hand you have other forces in the UK, fortunately, I would say, more representative, who argue for the opposite. Both quote the Prophet, peace be upon him, and interpret him in extremely different ways. The same quotes are interpreted in ways that support their view of identity: in one case, compatible with a British civic identity, in the other case, absolutely incompatible. For us the good news is that there is nothing essentialist about these identities. We create them and believe them. They are a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy.

SHAMILL IDRISS: Let me just ask you quickly as a follow up. You talk about these being contested and not static, one of the things the research we funded has found is that when people see images of communities with which they empathize or relate being victimized or humiliated, that grows in them a stronger sense of affiliation with that identity. Do you see that, and does the research bare that out? The identity that you assert most strongly may be the one that you feel is most under attack, or is that a falsehood?

EMANUELE CASTANO: There is nothing like a negative common fate to boost a sense of belonging and identity, and there is a lot of evidence now that we can experience emotions vicariously when we see our own people victimized, in any context, for any social identity—gender identity, sexual identity, national identity and so on. That is certainly true, and I think those images are problematic. I actually think the debate, as of last night on the news whether or not to release these last documents from the CIA interrogations and the debate is, is this going to fuel propaganda or not? It's an interesting question. That's exactly what the research that the Alliance is funding is going to establish.

SHAMILL IDRISS: You've actually led quite nicely to the next two panelists I wanted to turn to, because you talked about two things, and the first, I'm going to turn to you Andrea. Andrea ter Avest Dahm is a dramatist from Denmark who won critical acclaim when you developed a play called *The Hijab Monologues*. It was really when you developed them, in the midst of the Danish cartoon controversy, in January of 2006. This issue of images, humiliation, and how that can cause people to assert more strongly the identity that they feel is under attack—you were on the ground and you actually did not shy away from this issue, but went directly at it. I'm curious

if you could just tell us a little bit about what your experience was, what was the reaction, what did you find?

ANDREA TER AVEST DAHM: Yes I'd love to. My experience is that fiction, or in this case storytelling, is huge and powerful tool. I think in the case of *The Hijab Monologues* or *The Headscarf Monologues*—

SHAMILL IDRISS: Actually, I should ask you to explain briefly to us *The Hijab Monologues*. What was the play?

ANDREA TER AVEST DAHM: I interviewed—or met, I'd like to call it—over a hundred women all living in Denmark, only some of them wearing headscarves, some of them hating headscarves, some of them spitting at women wearing headscarves, some of them couldn't care less about headscarves. So a very different range—a Catholic nun wearing a headscarf—a very different range of women. From those hundred women, 18 women were selected, so *The Hijab Monologues*—or maybe the translation should be *The Headscarf Monologues*—is 18 monologues. They present very different truths, and almost always contrasting truths.

What I find with these *Hijab Monologues*, it did more than just change opinions, it actually changed behavior. So in that sense I think it's a huge and powerful tool. But I met that in my process of writing them, I was fighting that powerful tool as well. Which meant, for example, the director of the play and of the theatre, were asking me, I mean repeatedly shouting at me that I wasn't doing my research right, because where were the stories of women being raped on their

wedding night? Where were the stories of the women leaving their family because they want to become suicide bombers? Where were the stories of women being beaten up by their husband because they refuse to wear the hijab, the scarf? So we had to acknowledge that there were certain stories that were expected, and this is by an intellectual, creative class in Denmark, this is not just anybody. So we had to acknowledge that part of our audience would also expect those stories. And then the fight was for me to keep adding the stories that were not proving and confirming that which we expected, or that which some people expect, but to come with other stories.

I had to use a few tricks to do that. To, in a way, to catch the audience off guard. I found that a lot of time people are very much on guard when it is about these issues. They have decided what they think is right and what is their truth, and it's very hard for them to meet or be open about another truth. This is where I think that media, especially when we talk fiction, has an enormous potential, because the thing that is very different when you perform fiction—this play was performed by three very Danish looking, and very famous actresses. So what happens is the audience comes in, they sit down, they relax, and open up, like they would do when they go to a fiction or a film, because there what you do is you identify with the character, because otherwise you can't follow the story. So what you want to do is identify. This is what the audience was doing with these stories, but normally it is the opposite of what you do when you read the newspaper, or you meet someone that's very opposite to you. You have already decided, I don't like you. So these women were not wearing scarves. They were looking very Danish. So this is one of the ways how we trick the audience into being, maybe, open minded.

(audience laughs)

SHAMILL IDRISS: We haven't done that here, I'm sorry.

HER MAJESTY QUEEN NOOR: We're trying.

ANDREA TER AVEST DAHM: Yes, we're trying. One of the other ways, of the 18 monologues, there was none that in the beginning tells us if the woman was wearing a scarf or not. Some of them told it halfway or at the end, some of them didn't tell it at all. It very easily becomes irrelevant whether this woman was wearing the scarf. What became relevant was the woman behind the scarf.

SHAMILL IDRISS: It's interesting because although there are probably many people who would not include on stage theatre in "media," but the real link, I think, is the issue of storytelling and you've hit right on it.

I don't mean to keep doing this but again, you've prompted these research findings. One of the other research findings—and I'm always aware of the two people on my left because I'm a pretender when it comes to academia, so tell me if I get this wrong. One of the research findings we found is that in issues of identity formation, what people's attitudes are around group identity, their own and that of others, is processed at least as much or more through emotional experience as it is through rational deliberation. And this is obvious in some ways, like how you just put it. If you read a story of Hurricane Katrina victims in this country versus seeing

something on television where people are suffering, you have a completely different experience, and the emotional power of media, theatrical plays, probably reaches people on a level that might challenge people's notions of identity—their own and others—in ways you can't necessarily do by arguing with them about facts.

ANDREA TER AVEST DAHM: This is very true, yes.

SHAMILL IDRISS: I do want to turn to you Mohamed. Mohamed El-Fatatry is the CEO and Founder of Muxlim.com, which is a Finnish social media company serving Muslim lifestyle and market. It's actually the largest Muslim social networking website. It has if I'm right, 1.5 million monthly visitors, and 150,000 registered users. In addition to marketing to Muslim communities, it also provides space for exchange, blogging, video sharing, this kind of thing.

One of the things that Emanuele said that I want to pick up on is this issue of political and religious identity, and then, other kinds of identity. He mentioned that in the UK one of the things that happens is that British Muslims are often times encouraged to put forward, defend, assert the political and religious identity, whereas there's a counter trend to push—you said the opposite but you didn't define what the opposite is, and I actually want to turn to Mohamed to define that. Can you tell us about these different kinds of identity, and how you use new media to try to get at this issue?

MOHAMED EL-FATATRY: From the moment we started the social media platform, the focus was always on Muslim lifestyle, as opposed to just being Muslim or any other definition. By

lifestyle we mean that we went and asked British Muslims, tell us about your Muslim lifestyle, it seems that that definition has been over the years distorted a bit. They started to speak about how religious they are, when in fact that wasn't really what we were asking about. When we got another group of Muslims and we asked them, please tell us about your lifestyle, simply, then they started to say all the things they do in their daily life, that may or may not be influenced by their identity and their religion.

So this is the definition of the Muslim lifestyle that we try to enforce on our network. Basically putting everything into perspective, not making being Muslim only about religious or political messages, but rather being Muslim is something that transcends all that we do in our lives—the fashion, sports, music, entertainment, all of that is a very important part of our identity as a whole.

This is what we've been emphasizing. We reach people in 190 countries on the network, so definitely everybody is represented. We also feel very strongly that new media and social media is the only opportunity for both producers and consumers of that media to be both in their own comfort zone. So there is no friction whatsoever. People who may not necessarily be connected to traditional media streams or may not necessarily go attend a play or watch a movie, they are still being represented, they still have an equal voice, and they are able to reach other people who may not necessarily be interested in listening to them.

SHAMILL IDRISS: Now, I hate to make you representative of an entire group of people but you have no choice, because you are our only Muslim who happens to live in Europe on the

stage. So, we're talking about Muslim identity in Europe. Both from your own experience and from running the company, can you talk a little bit about these issues of contested identity, and how you see things playing out now? I'm very wary being an American and putting too fine a point on this, on what's happening in other places, but we do see in European countries a shift politically to the right, oftentimes on issues of attitudes towards immigrants, Muslim minorities, other minorities, Jews as well, not happening everywhere but in multiple countries right now. I'm curious, what is your perspective of what's happening?

MOHAMED EL-FATATRY: I completely agree that there is a sense of expecting to hear something when a Muslim is even featured in the media. I remember a story from when a journalist from a very very important European newspaper wanted to interview me, and the article had a personal perspective. He said, let's go around Helsinki to all the places that matter to you, and I will take pictures of you there and I'll discuss those places with you. Therefore, he said, let's start from mosque so and so. And I told him, why did you assume that the mosque would be one of the places I would even chose? And later I communicated to him that, although the mosque is an important part of me, I don't necessarily feel that I have to go to a particular mosque and portray that as part of my Muslim lifestyle.

My Muslim lifestyle is running a company. My Muslim lifestyle is reaching so many people and becoming a media entrepreneur. This is my Muslim lifestyle. Being Muslim and believing in Islam definitely affects all that, but it does not mean necessarily that the mosque has to be the starting point.

SHAMILL IDRISS: We also have on our stage a world renowned political theorist, Benjamin Barber. He is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at Demos, he is the President and Director of the non-governmental organization CivWorld at Demos. He's written 17 books—you haven't written another one since I got this two days ago? Seventeen books. Many of the books touch directly on these issues, but one of the first ones that I read was *Jihad vs. McWorld*, which captures in a very provocative phrase many of these themes.

He's received many honors: a knighthood from the French government, the Berlin Prize of the American Academy of Berlin, the John Dewey Award. He's written in so many scholarly and popular publications and periodicals I'm not going to even begin listing them.

Professor Barber, you've heard this. You've studied these issues and written about them for a long time. Can you react to what you've heard, and maybe put forward some of the questions that you see?

BENJAMIN BARBER: Thank you Shamill, I will try to do that, and I'll try to comment a little on what we've heard and bring it back to Her Majesty's initial putting on the table of what I think is the crucial issue this evening, which is the role of media in exploring all the kinds of things we've talked about here and over the last several days. The issues that have been put on the table with regard to the role of Islam in the world, in the Western world the intercultural inter-civilizational dialogue between the Muslim world and the Western world.

The comment I want to make is, Her Majesty said quite specifically that the media can play a positive role. She's extremely diplomatic, more diplomatic than I am probably, since I'm an American academic I can afford to be perhaps more blunt about these things than some of the other people in the room might want to be, and I want to be a little blunt because she generously said the media can play a role that can help heal, can help bridge, can help humanize. We all know whether we're talking about cable television, whether we're talking about Hollywood, whether we're talking about even the new media, that it often fails to do that, and instead does something much worse. It demonizes rather than humanizes, divides rather than bridges, it doesn't reconcile but pushes people apart.

We have to be very aware of that because I think what I just heard onstage is three or four wonderful examples of what dialogue, what real information, knowledge, what real debate and discussion does: it deepens, it complicates, it problematizes, it gets us to see sides that we didn't expect, it challenges our prejudices or just even the generalities that we live by, it makes us see things a little bit differently. Certainly the data in the study that you pointed to suggests understandings of European identity that are not essentialist. You made that point very clearly. Often in Europe we talk about European Christians up against Muslim immigrants. The problem is, a lot of Europeans aren't very Christian, particularly the ones who self-identify as Christian. The Pope recently complained that European Catholics are in an eclipse, and that in many ways Europe is no longer a Catholic entity, so we can't make that generalization. And of course, an awful lot of Muslims aren't immigrants. An awful lot of Muslims are Europeans, not just first, but second and third generation European, and their Muslim religious background is only one dimension of a genuinely European identity.

But we tend to jump to the conclusion, helped by media, that when you talk about Muslims in Europe you're talking about the other, outsiders, non-Europeans, and therefore you are faced with the problem of integration or assimilation and how to fit them in. As my friend Tariq Ramadan said to me last week in Istanbul, people ask him how are we going to fit you in? And he says, actually, I've been *fit in* for several generations. I'm a Swiss citizen teaching at Oxford. He still can't get into the United States, because he's seen here as a dangerous outsider, but in fact he's European, who happens to be Muslim. He takes that very seriously and incorporates that part of his identity.

So that's one form of complexification and deepening, the sort of thing that we wish the media did more. Andrea talked about the tricks of art, the tricks of fiction. Of course the great thing about art is that art is about the illusion of reality, but of course it's through the illusion that we actually get to realities that are deeper than what "real journalism" gets us. Cleary what you did also is get Danes to face up to the fact that their preconceptions and prejudices about what maybe a Muslim immigrant—who wore a veil, or didn't—thought and looked like. Obviously in your work you made it very clear that it's much more complicated: behind each veil, or behind each face that isn't veiled, is a complex human being who has many identities, some of which you can agree with, some of which look different but are much more complicated. In doing that, you humanize the situation, you create an atmosphere in which tolerance is possible.

But again, you did what media so often do not do. You challenged and you contradicted.

ANDREA TER AVEST DAHM: Can I add something? I think it has partly to do with the pace. The normal media now has to tell stories within two minutes, or within one headline, or paint a picture of a figure within half a minute. In *The Hijab Monologues*, or in fiction, therefore I think this Cinema Varité has a huge future and huge potential—we have two hours in a fiction film. I had ten minutes per person to get in depth. It's a different pace, and in that sense it's easy to blame the media but we can't expect for them to do the same. We will be disappointed again and again.

BENJAMIN BARBER: That's a wonderful point. Anyone who watches CNN or any cable network knows that every interview starts with, "We only have a minute now," and "In a minute could you quickly say…" Before you've even been asked anything you're being told your time is up. And twitter and tweeting and so on has in fact turned necessity into a virtue—though, not much of a virtue. So, you're absolutely right. Time, deliberation.

Mohamed, what you said again. You have a website that allows Muslims to go on and find a variety of representations of themselves, their lifestyle, their culture.

MOHAMED EL-FATATRY: And non-Muslims by the way, five percent.

BENJAMIN BARBER: Terrific, there you are. So once again, using new media to, in a sense, complicate, problematize identity in a way that helps us all understand that as human beings we are all distinctive but we share commonalities.

But now comes to your question Your Majesty. What does the media do to help this? Not much. Very, very little. By media here I don't just mean cable television, local papers and so on. I particularly mean that part of media that has a far greater influence on us—I mean Hollywood, I mean Madison Avenue. Most of us spend a little bit of time watching TV. The kids go to school for six hours a day for 30 weeks a year, but we are exposed to advertising, to Hollywood, to television 60 to 70 hours a week for our whole lives. Fifty-two weeks a year. So what goes on there is a kind of invisible pedagogy that is much more important, shaping what we think and how we see the world than any of the things that happen in the classroom or on a website. And there I fear that the very things that are being challenged on this stage and have been challenged over the last couple of days, are constantly reinforced.

When Hollywood came to the end of the Cold War, they did not breathe a sigh of relief. They said, Oh my God, who will be the villains now? And there was of course an easy target after all—the Muslim world and specifically the Arab Muslim world. Little complicating factor there, of about 1.3 billion Muslims on earth, only 250 million of them are Arab, but that doesn't matter in Hollywood. Every Muslim is an Arab, every Arab is a Muslim, we've got a new enemy. And if you look at the plots of the films and so on, the heavies nowadays tend to be Arab and or Muslim, with very little discrimination beyond that. It's easy to create a stereotype.

So what the media do at their worst—they're not always at their worst, as the Queen has said, but they often are—instead of challenging stereotypes, they pander to, reinforce, and confirm stereotypes. Without even trying. If you go to a good Hollywood thriller you have a great time and it hardly registers that three or four of the villains actually look kind of Arab, are kind of

brown-skinned, and maybe said Inshallah once in a while, or mention Muhammad—they didn't say "Oh Jesus," they said something else, and so you kind of got the hint. And without knowing it, over time, the stereotype of a Muslim as the new villain, to replace the Russian, or the Cold Warrior, or the Pole, has taken over in the popular imagination. Getting around that in young people, by having lessons by school work, by good media, is very very tough.

I think we really need to come to terms with the challenge of conventional ubiquitous commercial media, and the way in which they constantly work against everything we just witnessed here on stage.

HER MAJESTY QUEEN NOOR: And not just here, but in the rest of the world. Because in the Arab and Muslim world, and I imagine in much of the rest of the world, about 80% of the films that are shown in movie houses are from Hollywood. That figure is going to be changing soon, as industries are getting better organized, and Shamill might even address that. But, to date, generations have been influenced by these images that America has of them. So that is the other side of the coin. It's not just how generations are impacted here, through Hollywood and a variety of different media platforms, including of course video games and others that are particularly insidious, and are watched more than anything else perhaps by young people.

I think this is where our Media Fund comes in—in recognizing that commercial films do have exactly the kind of impact that you're talking about, on both sides of what many characterize, and I think the polls indicate, is a divide in which there is mistrust and fear and lack of respect.

Polls show on both sides of the Muslim, if you will, and Western divide. Though I hate to say that. I think that is where we are today, but it is not an essential or natural divide.

And the Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund, and this research that will be more fully presented at the end of this year, but what we are talking about to some extent tonight, is an attempt to present scientific analysis, or evidence, of how different groups respond to media depictions of members of their own groups, or members of other groups, in a range of different situations. What the research has shown is that the media has enormous power to perpetuate or generate inter-group bias—you see the example of Rodney King. Or if you think about the imagery of Gaza, or if you think about the recruitment videos made by extremists using Abu Ghraib and other kinds of imagery that strike, as they would at any culture, right at the heart of pride and self respect. What has also been proven in our research is the power of perceived humiliation. That kind of imagery causes, fomenting rage and a need to regain self esteem, and to act out on behalf of those seen to be humiliated or assaulted or attacked. The media's role in communicating social norms that inform our biases, and we've made some references to how that occurs.

If you look in this country, which is one of the departure points for the Media Fund's work, if you look at the impact The Cosby Show had, and The Jeffersons, really transforming the media image of African Americans in this country, and the impact that had on both the African-American communities and their own self esteem, and sense of identity within the larger American society. We are taking that beyond to a cross cultural level, if you will.

And there is the point you already made, about how our attitudes and beliefs are so much informed by our emotions. How are emotions are affected, which is of course a component part of everything I've already said.

So the Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund is focusing on research as a means to reach people like you, to reach industry leaders, those who are producing media in different forms, the media content—trying to promote a greater awareness and consciousness of the impact that these stories, and the way they are told, and the nuancing that can take place that will not undermine the commercial reliability of a film, but also be a more responsible, constructive, and peace-building approach to that awesome power that we've been discussing.

SHAMILL IDRISS: Thank you. I do want to pick up on this social norms issue, because one of the things the research showed is about this issue of social norms and how we subconsciously calibrate our attitudes around what we think society will accept. And that we get a lot of that information through what we see presented in the media.

You mentioned The Cosby Show. I met a month ago with Alvin Poussaint, who Bill Cosby had asked to serve—he is a psychiatrist actually, at Harvard—he served as a script consultant on Cosby's request for all of the scripts that went through The Cosby Show, because Cosby very openly said to him, I'm concerned that there are no African-American script writers in the room, and it's likely that we'll fall back into the same old storylines of broken homes and drug violence, and I want a different kind of program. Will you vet every script to help make them more authentic as to what growing up in this country as an African-American is like, and also

help to purge some of these more sensationalist and fallback tropes. Poussaint was very articulate and powerful when talking to me about the impact that had not just on others, as you were saying, views of African-Americans, but the number of African-American students, he said, who came through Harvard Medical School, where he now is, who told him that they first got the idea of being a doctor by seeing a black doctor on television. Seeing a middle class family with a lawyer mother and a doctor father broadened the thinking for a lot of people about what the social norms could be.

Now picking up on this, one of the things that we've done is work with a number of other organizations on an initiative called Muslims on Screen and Television, which meets with script writers, producers, and researchers for existing, popular programming, and doesn't put any pressure on them, but invites them if they want to introduce a Muslim character into one of their programs. Not because it's nice to Muslims because that does not sell in Hollywood, I think you're absolutely right on that. But because it makes good drama, good sitcoms, and it will be a far more popular and compelling program that we can help. We can provide introductions to baseline characters. If you want to write in a Muslim American journalist, we'll introduce you to ten of them. You want the same role that Poussaint Played. You want to know what a name might be, or what a food might be, what might be an authentic storyline, we can help with that. It's a service, it's not a pressure technique.

And that's the point, because I think what you said put us right up against it—there's the commercial imperative, and nothing really competes with that.

HER MAJESTY QUEEN NOOR: And by the way there's an enormous receptivity to this information. I think many members of the Media Fund, who are involved in production of films in Hollywood, have found when they have tried to better nuance characters and situations, they've found there was a real openness to that kind of information, and a willingness to respond. Which I think we were startled by. We weren't convinced that there would be that kind of response.

SHAMILL IDRISS: I want to turn to the audience in this last half hour, but I want to first give each of the panelists time to respond, because Ben you put some things on the table. First we'll go back to you if you've got a reaction here, then we'll turn to the three of you.

BENJAMIN BARBER: The obvious and necessary work has to do with character, and the role of Muslims and so on. The Cosby family is an example. But a lot of what goes on is invisible and we don't see it. Let me do a little test here. I'm going to say a word and you tell me what first comes to your brain. Terrorist. What's in your head now, honestly?

HER MAJESTY QUEEN NOOR: Tamil Tiger.

BENJAMIN BARBER: Thank you Your Majesty. But here's—I was working with Bill Clinton in the 1990s, and when Oklahoma City happened, everyone said this is an act of terror, and everybody assumed this was going to be some kind of Muslim terrorist event. It turned out to be an American. We had a terrorist event yesterday in Washington DC, and it turns out it was an American Neo Nazi, 88 years old. I don't know how he got that old and kept all of his prejudices

in tact, but he did. A couple weeks ago we had the murder of a doctor by a terrorist. We tend, though, not to use the word, although it fits the formal conceptual definition of somebody who uses violence to impose an ideology on people, about people to whom it applies but who belong to our group. It's easy to use the word on others.

So it may be that Hollywood can make some adjustments and have a Muslim doctor and a Muslim teacher, guess who's coming to dinner, my Muslim fiancé, isn't that nice and we'll get that far, but it's not going to get to the point where it stops talking about terrorism and terrorists.

The greatest thing I believe President Obama did in Cairo was something he didn't say. He didn't use the word terrorist. He simply stayed away from the word, understanding that the associations in that part of the world, it's understood as a kind of slander, even though technically it clearly applies to some of the behavior of some of the people in that part of the world, just like it applies to a lot of the behavior in our part of the world—to American Protestants and secularists who also do terroristic acts. So we have to also think about the role of language and terms, which may not just be about cultural stereotypes, but may be about the way we attach prejudice to certain terms that don't seem to be related to issues that are on the table, but in fact really are.

SHAMILL IDRISS: Well thank you. You're bringing us back down to earth every time we try to get off, but that's the role and we appreciate it very much. I do want to turn to the audience unless there's a burning response. Mohamed?

MOHAMED EL-FATATRY: I have a burning response. I only want to share an observation here, since the President's speech was just brought up. We actually had the privilege of meeting the public engagement team at the White House, one day after the President's speech. It was very clear to us that there is really a change in direction. The representatives of the public engagement team told us, we do not ever want to use words such as counter-this or anti-that: it is a completely proactive approach to engaging with the Muslim community. We, as our possible partners moving forward, would like to make it very well known.

So I just wanted to emphasize in this case, from a personal observation, that political leadership can also help tremendously in changing social norms and the openness of society as a whole to the Muslim community.

ANDREA TER AVEST DAHM: The reason I think this can keep going on and why Hollywood is so effective in selling so many tickets when they tell these stories these ways, in my experience, is because we really need to confirm our superiority. I'm talking for Europe but this was the case when I was developing my play, when I saw the women who were mostly afraid of hearing other stories, and had to keep shouting that they were suppressed, they must be suppressed. Find the stories that they're suppressed! It was because they needed to confirm that they were liberated. It was because they were insecure.

And in that way if I put it then for Europe, I can imagine that the European identity, we're insecure. We don't know what we are anymore. Then we see some people that have an identity and they're very secure. That we can't handle. That's too threatening. So we had to put them

down. We have to make stereotypes there, because in that way we keep confirming every time again that we're the superior.

ANDREA TER AVEST DAHM: Whatever you were going to say before, Emanuele, I have to ask you to respond to that, because that is precisely your research. So please, respond to that and then we'll turn it over.

EMANUELE CASTANO: I don't know about Europeans having low self esteem. As I was mentioning before, it's always an issue of self definition. By depicting the other in a certain way, you are also depicting yourself. By otherness you define yourself. Certainly one of the most well documented tendencies in psychological research is the need for a stable, secure, and positive self esteem at the individual level. But we also derived this from a collective level, from our membership in a variety of groups. And therefore there is the possibility of that.

The little research that addresses specifically this question doesn't seem to really find a link between what we call in group love, and out group hate. They seem to be somewhat related, but also are by and large independent. I'm answering as an academic here, but there's not enough evidence for me to give you a clear cut answer. But I wouldn't say it's always a consequence of the need to establish a positive self esteem. It may be a component at different times.

To quickly follow up on something, with regard to the specific mission of the Alliance and what Her Majesty was mentioning before, when we hear of this intervention in media and the more positive depiction of Muslims—we've seen this for women, particularly in advertising, a debate

has been going on in this country for 20 years, certainly for gays, and other minorities—there is often the criticism that people want to do social engineering. This is really such a false start, because we don't realize that we are always doing social engineering, whatever we are depicting. The issue with media, as Benjamin said, is depicting a reality, that is one particular reality. The issue is to, in a way, to change and make it more diverse and more representative—so in a way the opposite of social engineering. Mirror the reality, as opposed to imposing one unilateral reality to the audience.

SHAMILL IDRISS: Thank you, that's very helpful to hear actually.

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: We have a mic, so if you could take the mic, stand up, and ask a question, rather than give a comment. Questions take about 45 seconds.

Q: My question is, what about the other direction? You need to be involved in also addressing the perception of Westerners in Muslim societies, because I think it goes both ways. There is also that stereotype. Does your media initiative deal with that at all?

SHAMILL IDRISS: I will tell you briefly, the two places where we're doing our primary work are one in Hollywood, and two in the Middle East. The research findings that we are coming out with towards the end of this year, we have an agreement from the Dubai Film Festival to translate all of them into Arabic. We're going to be writing it up and distributing it at the film festival to Arab world media leaders. As Ben has properly pointed out, that is a very small percentage of the Muslim world, but in this issue—and not surprisingly, President Obama

recently reflected this in terms of where he spoke and what he spoke about—what's going on in the Middle East is the primary fault line for these political issues and the issues of relationships, so, the first thing that we're doing is making sure the research gets there. We're having a panel dedicated to us at the festival to talk about it. We're looking at launching a Middle East short film competition connected to reality TV program, where people can watch the short films that are created and vote on the film that they most like in the Dubai festival. Then at the end of next year we'll screen the winners, and the top ten candidates will have immediate acceptance into a number of film training programs. The Tribeca Institute here in New York has already offered free slots, the Middle East Media Foundation based in Abu Dhabi is offering ten slots, and the Royal Film Commission in Jordan is offering slots, so we're also doing work there.

The theme of the film, which is getting at your issue, is very much around media for social change, biases and stereotypes that need to be torn down in your society, and targeted at young people.

HER MAJESTY QUEEN NOOR: These are universals, is the idea. So, they apply. In fact, the King Hussein Foundation's Media in Humanity Program has looked in—our special emphasis actually has been within the Middle East, and we've been looking within the Middle East for film content that is humanizing groups on either side of conflict lines, with special emphasis on the Arab-Israeli conflict. We've had a very hard time, actually, finding film product that was not just one side or the other, but in fact was balanced. So far, two of the best films that we've shown over the last several years at the Tribeca Film Festival have been produced one by an Israeli-

Palestinian partnership, and the other by an Israeli, but the stories were about Israelis and Palestinians coming to discover one another's humanity, in the context of very unique situations.

MOHAMED EL-FATATRY: I have a very small plug to mention here. The world's largest Muslim lifestyle network is based in Finland. Over half of the users are based in Europe and North America, so they are already very much Western. The tools are out there for whoever wants to use them. I believe this is another subtle way of changing the idea all around the world of who westerners are, because some of them are also Muslims.

BENJAMIN BARBER: I mean, it is a pity. There is a film that some of you have seen called *The Band*, about an Egyptian band that gets caught up in the wrong town in Israel. It's a charming, wonderful film, and good for peace and so on. For political reasons the Culture Minister of Egypt has not been willing to release that film in Egypt, which is really a pity. So you're right that it needs to be a two way process, *but*, I have to say, as the author of *Jihad vs. McWorld*, the fact is that McWorld, Hollywood, American television are already everywhere. So if you are living in the Muslim world, well I totally agree there ought to be more exposure to the humanistic outside. But the fact is there's an awful lot of exposure to the films, the television programs, the advertising of McWorld—Coca-Cola is everywhere, Nike is everywhere, and they have their own invisible ideologies attached to them, so while we need a balance, the situation does not start with 'bias on both sides and we've got to be open to the other side, they have to be open to us…' We start with a world in which the dominant ethos is the ethos of commercial McWorld, and so there's a lot of pushing back against that.

Although that does not exonerate folks in the Middle East from trying to have a more balanced real picture, whether it's of Israel or the United States or the West, there is a certain unbalance in the starting situation that makes it a little more difficult to get the balance thing you hope for. CNN's in Cairo, Al Jazeera's in New York and that's very nice, but the fact is there's an awful lot of us already there, in the commercial world.

SHAMILL IDRISS: This is in fact why the program we developed for the Middle East is quite different. It's not about getting American characters into productions made locally, because American characters are all over the media waves, a whole range of them. But there is an issue

about mobilizing and giving platforms to young people who want to use media for social change, for exactly the same purposes—dealing with diversity issues and this kind of thing.

What I'd like to do, because if we continue this way we'll get only one more question and response, so I'd like to take three questions, and then we'll turn to our panelists.

Q: We are talking about media as a catalyst. Isn't it more up to the public to do advocacy to the media for how media should be. Because the problem is the media, and you are kind of talking like we are the victims, and we are not. So the issue is, what do we do? And who is doing advocacy? And since we are talking about Europe, more than we should be talking about the United States and the films, I would like to know if you can compare how media covers Islam and Muslim issues in Europe and in the United States. And by media I mean the press.

HER MAJESTY QUEEN NOOR: That's a good point, because there's a dramatic difference between the way international stories, and especially—those of us in the Middle East notice how the Middle East is covered in the United States on mainstream US channels, and in Europe it's almost completely different. There's almost no coverage here of international affairs in general on the mainstream television channels that are viewed by the majority of people. You have to look really hard. You cannot find Al Jazeera International. Maybe you can in New York, but I can't find it anywhere. It's an *excellent* channel. It is modeled on BBC, but it is balanced, it is professional. It is not simply a translation of Al Jazeera in Arabic, which does tend to reflect more regional biases, much as American channels reflect regional or national biases. But there is

a dramatic difference, and you all **(gesturing to the other panelists)** should be discussing what all is available.

SHAMILL IDRISS: Everyone will get a chance to respond, but I would like to take a few more questions first.

Q: My question is framed by fact that I'm African-American, and I'm Muslim, and my family is American, for generations and generations. When you talk about these perceptions of African-Americans—we were talking about Muslims and you also said The Cosby Show—this informed me, but this is one of very few, over many many years of programming. Now as a Muslim I'm getting it from the other side now. It's like I'm America's worst nightmare, but I'm American! So the question is, what do we do? What is the path forward when we've seen how long it has taken for African-Americans to be recognized—and I can't even say that it's all the way there now, we've obviously made great strides—how do we do this, how do we move things forward for Muslims as well, who are—I'm Muslim, but I'm not Arab. I'm as American as anybody else here. How do we move this forward so that it doesn't take as long?

Q: I'd like to focus on language, and the fact that there is this proliferation of new language developed by academia and the media, that has the purpose of demonizing and marginalizing the Muslim globally. I'm wondering, in the context of creating a consciousness around how to liberate ourselves from our prejudices, how do we begin to address the misuse of terms like jihadist, Islamist, Muslim versus the West. We have people who are good-willed trying to

mitigate bad effects, but incorporating those terms themselves. Is it about reclaiming language? Or just disregarding it and creating new language? I don't know but it's problematic.

SHAMILL IDRISS: I'd like to give you all the opportunity to respond to any of the questions that have come up. Andrea.

ANDREA TER AVEST DAHM: Well I agree straight away that we can't victimize and say it's the media. Because I'm sorry to say, but we are the media. The media is writing what we are buying, what we want to read. In my play we gave the audience three of the stories we knew they wanted to have. And then we decided that was only one third of the play, and I think the newspapers are doing it the opposite way around maybe. But we have huge responsibility as *consumers* in deciding where and what we buy, and where and what we see. It's not just products, it's what we choose to on the channel, when we choose to zap away, which internet site we choose to visit. Because what they're doing is they want to sell newspapers. They want to sell news and what they're selling is what we're eating.

So I agree with you that we can't say 'It's them.' It is us. And therefore, it's really nice to have the good opinions, but what is much harder is to have the behavior that goes together with it. I think it's hard to make the change. I see it's hard to make the change.

MOHAMED EL-FATATRY: I have a small thing to say here about McWorld. Our company helps mainstream brands directly address and engage with Muslim consumers, and we are sometimes asked the question, aren't you really trying, with this consumerism, to build

something that is new to Muslim culture? And I say, Muslims are already consumers, they are already customers of those big brands. The missing part here is those brands recognizing those consumers as a valuable consumer segment and then perhaps not supporting the medias that portray Muslims in an unfair manner.

So this could also be, again, part of how the McWorld does *not* conflict with anything, and it could be another way of changing social norms.

EMANUELE CASTANO: Very quickly about the question of language, it's a very good question. Every year when I teach my classes on social psychology and I discuss research on prejudice, often most research is done on prejudice against African-Americans, so that's most of the evidence that's presented. And I always have a couple of students, African-Americans in my class, asking that question, aren't you reifying those categories, and contributing to this? It's always an embarrassing moment. I get this every year, and every year it's still embarrassing.

I don't really have an answer for that. Hopefully we don't have to eliminate this category and these words, but try to change the implicit and explicit associations people have with these categories.

BENJAMIN BARBER: Let me answer first the question that was asked in the back about—it's not really the media's fault, because it's the people who don't tell the media what they want. It's true in general that commercial capitalism is always saying, we just give people what they want. That's always what they say. They spend billions in advertising and marketing and to shape

young people, and they advertise to four-year-olds and they market to two-year-olds, but they say, we just give two-year-olds what they want. As if two-year-olds start with a set of desires.

So there is a dialectic. It's true we shouldn't turn consumers into victims. They are complicit in the choices they make. But it's also true that the mass media and commercial capitalism has a lot to do with shaping what it is that people want. There is a top down as well as a bottom up, and I want to say particularly about tough issues where people do horrendous things—as happened in Rwanda, or happened in Serbia in the 1990s.

What a lot of people don't know is that the genocide against Muslims in Serbia and Croatia started as a campaign on the radio, from Belgrade radio. It was top down. It was a government-inspired, official attempt to stir up old hatreds that actually had—maybe they were there, but for generations and generations they were dormant and people were living together. They were stirred up. Hutus and Tutsis, same thing in Rwanda. They had lived together for quite a long time. Yes there were hostilities, yes there were resentments about an aristocratic tribe against a less aristocratic tribe, but the reality is, it was radio stations spouting for months messages of hate, and actually instructing people what to do, that inspired and got that genocide to work. Did it count on deeply seated resentments and hatred, which is part of being a human being? Yes. Would it have happened without an irresponsible, top down, elite-inspired media? My answer is no.

I think that's true of the media. The media once had their *own* responsibility as the Fourth Estate, as part of educating the civic republic, turning us into good citizens, informing us, deepening the

discussion, and instead, in the name of profit it has totally abandoned that role, and sees its only role as to make a profit for its share holders in whatever way it can do that. If it can do that through education, fine, but education doesn't pay too big. It's much easier to do it the way it does it now.

So though I completely agree that we don't want to turn ourselves as consumers into victims, we do have a role play. The fact is there is a powerful top down component in commerce, in media, in advertising and marketing, that make it very tough for those who, from the bottom up, say we want something different than what you are giving us. We want to remember that, so that while we ourselves change the demand structure, we also have to go to the suppliers and find ways politically and elsewise to change what the supply is, to change what the top down message is. Otherwise they will use their monopoly control of the media—whether it's a state in Africa or the Middle East, or corporately owned commercial media here—they will use, in the name of giving people what they want, will continue to perpetrate, whether it's genocide or the corruption of young people, they will continue to use the media in ways that your foundation is trying to challenge.

HER MAJESTY QUEEN NOOR: On one of the points you made, organizations like Search for Common Ground are in fact using the lessons of the horrors of the Balkans, of Rwanda, in Africa and other parts of the world, to use radio and to use media for constructive purposes.

I think one of the things we haven't talked much about, though it has come up, is the impact of politics on what journalists and media entities—on the approach they take to different subjects.

In this country we've seen that very very clearly over the past eight years. Really stunning interaction or impact of government policy and attitudes on news media in particular that actually didn't play their role, but abdicated their responsibilities completely. Which is what happens during times of crisis, which are some of the moments you were referring to.

One of the good things is, on the question of academia, on the question of language, on the question of, you made the point Shamill, of political leaders who actually can—and we've seen this in our region, so there are examples, they are rare unfortunately, and ever so precious—political leaders that can have a transformative impact, whether on a country, a region, or world affairs. And today Pres Obama—and I don't want to overdo the impact of speech which I've talked at length about and so many others have—but there was an attention to language, and to nuancing, to history, to culture, to political realities. There is a discussion of mutual respect and interest. There is a window that is being provided us, I think, to work with. He can't do it by himself. He's going to face incredible push back as well.

We all have an obligation, this is just one of our many responsibilities, to try to support and engage—in whatever ways we can, everybody here can engage in some fashion or another—to support the spirit and, more than that, what actually can be accomplished in terms of bridging divides, that he is opening the space for. For discussion and dialogue. For, from the top down, a new kind of approach.

And how do we move all of this forward? Well, I think this festival should be an annual festival. It is one very real and concrete way. The attendance at the festival is one indication for how

hungry people are for understanding, for knowledge, for different perspectives. Not just the Muslim community, but people of so many different communities. What we're trying to do at the Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund is one modest component part that is bringing together different kinds of entities, both old media, new media, or conventional media, social activists, and others to try to look at these issues. But as I've said and as our panelists have said and demonstrated in their own lives and in their own work, there are so many different ways, but the most important thing, and I think it's critical now, is that everyone engage. Support those voices. As I said, there is one voice here now that needs all the support possible, to really fulfill the transformative potential of this new period.

(applause)

SHAMILL IDRISS: Just one more comment from the floor, and then we're going to wrap it up.

Q: Hi, I'm Karen Hopkins, the President of BAM. As a co-organizer of the festival, I'm very happy to hear this panel. This festival, with the nine associate partners, the three presenting partners, the 50 events, the 300 artists and scholars and intellectuals, and 23 countries involved, has been a major undertaking. It leads me to a final question of, how do you see that we can move art and culture to have a larger role at the diplomacy table?

SHAMILL IDRISS: If I may, I think that that what Her Majesty has just said is critically important. Because whatever you want to do, to make that happen, you either have a context that's open to it, or not. Right now, the context is open to it. Funds that were otherwise, maybe

obsessively, targeted purely towards security, counterterrorism issues, are now being expanded and diversified to include outreach, cultural exchange.

There is an appropriations bill moving through Congress right now to make available, with no licensing costs, media of this type. They are talking about non-fiction, documentaries internationally. Now there's been funding from the Ford Foundation to do the reverse, to bring media from all over the world to ITBS—I forget what ITBS stands for now—here to the States. It's been broadcast on a number of different stations, cable and main stations.

So there is an opening now. I hate to fall back on the tried and true 'contact congressman and contact senators,' but there are bills now, this appropriations bill is a critically important one. We are hoping with the main foundation that's moving that forward, the Ford Foundation, to try to advance exactly the same kind of legislation for fictional programming—which is the entertainment programming, which is the beast. Identifying those kinds of programs. They are out there. Sometimes they are hard to find, especially if you're going at the toughest nut to crack like Israel-Palestine. But there are those things out there to make those things available free of licensing.

I want to thank the panelists. We have two minutes. I will give you each thirty seconds for any final comments you have, and we'll close it out. Ben, please.

BENJAMIN BARBER: First, with respect to the Brooklyn Academy—Karen, you know I'm also a supporter of BAM and events like this—one thing we want to do is not just enlist artists

and the arts in this campaign, but embrace them where they already are. Because they're there already, they don't need to be enlisted in a campaign. Supporting the arts is a powerful way to support cosmopolitanism, humanitarianism, and global understanding, and they don't have to be transformed into something other than they are. We are currently cutting the arts badly. To me that is a problem from the point of view of the understanding we are talking about.

Just a second point quickly about language and African-Americans. The great thing about language is that it's dynamic. It evolves. It changes all the time. Part of the answer to your query is that we have to constantly be helping language to change in ways that embrace the new realities—one of the new realities that you pointed out, that a lot of African-Americans are Muslims. And there are also white Americans who come from a Christian background who have embraced Islam. So there are many different kinds of Muslims.

One of the words—sorry this is my last point—

MOHAMED EL-FATATRY: I'll donate my 30 seconds.

BENJAMIN BARBER: Thank you. There's a terrible word, and I shouldn't use it, but I'm using it only descriptively. The word you all know, the word that's been used to defame and hurt people of color forever, it's the word nigger. But in the 1960s Dick Gregory, a wonderful comedian, wrote an autobiography, and he named it *Nigger*. What he said was, Mom, now you know whenever you hear that word they're just talking about my book.

Now this is a way in which he tried to transform the weight and gravity of that word. But that happens all the time. We need to be totally aware of that change of language and of that sense.

EMANUELE CASTANO: Benjamin made a pitch for the arts, I'll make a pitch for scientific research. Hopefully we will continue to support, and support a different kind of research, more engaged, more action oriented, more intervention oriented. Some of the things that are coming out from the Alliance are certainly in that direction. Also as an academic, my wish is that we become more engaged as opposed to retreat.

I hope the times have changed and that, as Her Majesty pointed out, is a good context in which to be engaged. It's probably the moment in which some difference can be made by each of us.

ANDREA TER AVEST DAHM: We are storytelling creatures. So I would say, remember to share your stories. And especially listen to stories. And that's why we have a choice of which stories we listen to.

MOHAMED EL-FATATRY: Well I got it anyway. I'd like to encourage everybody to utilize new media, which will really not require a lot of time investment on your part. Muslim, non-Muslim, Westerner, from the East, really try to use new media to engage with other cultures and communities, and you will really find things that are really fascinating.

SHAMILL IDRISS: You don't have specific site in mind do you? Your Majesty?

HER MAJESTY QUEEN NOOR: Salaam Alaykoum.

(applause)

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: I would like to thank all of you, thank my partner Karen Hopkins, the President of BAM, Vishakha Desai, the President of the Asia Society, Mustapha Tlili, the Founder and Director of the Center for Dialogues at NYU, Mahnaz Fancy who helped us so much to put this together, Zeyba Rahman, without whom I wouldn't have been able to do this, all of our panelists here today, Her Majesty Queen Noor, for coming.

Everybody here has contributed greatly. You have pontificated in the true sense of the word. Build a bridge, I hope we will be able to walk over that bridge. I do hope we will be able to do more programs like this, maybe not with 19 European countries coming together, because I feel like I've aged by 19 years. Please stay for the next panel, I'm sure you will all want to hear more of what Benjamin Barber has to say, and he will be here for the second panel.

Shamill, thank you so much for instigating this conversation.