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Article abstract

This article examines how everyday mobile media produce discursive and affective modes of closeness that circulate as part of the Canada-US border-making process under the Muslim ban. I contend that although the #WelcomeToCanada hashtag, which was made popular by Justin Trudeau's tweets in response to the US travel ban, presents an inclusive, multicultural Canada that appears to contrast the white supremacist, xenophobic narrative of Donald Trump's executive order, its performance of flexible Canadian borders actually renders ubiquitous, and therefore *augments*, the default whiteness of the heteropatriarchal national body imagined by liberal narratives of inclusion. I compare #WelcomeToCanada to Sikh Canadian comedian Jus Reign's Snapchat story about the Quebec City mosque attack and suggest that his overly faced selfies reveal the violence of a colourblind state gaze that functions like so-called neutral algorithmic vision. Jus Reign's excessive closeness to his smartphone performs an ambivalent rupture of the universalizing vision on which neoliberal multiculturalism is based, emphasizing the racist logics of facial detection technology even as he characterizes Islamophobia as a particularly US discourse.

Close Encounters Under the Muslim Ban: Mobile Media, Intimacy, and Augmented Whiteness

DANIELLE WONG[1]

This article examines how everyday mobile media produce discursive and affective modes of closeness that circulate as part of the Canada-US border-making process under the Muslim ban. I contend that although the #WelcomeToCanada hashtag, which was made popular by Justin Trudeau's tweets in response to the US travel ban, presents an inclusive, multicultural Canada that appears to contrast the white supremacist, xenophobic narrative of Donald Trump's executive order, its performance of flexible Canadian borders actually renders ubiquitous, and therefore *augments*, the default whiteness of the heteropatriarchal national body imagined by liberal narratives of inclusion. I compare #WelcomeToCanada to Sikh Canadian comedian Jus Reign's Snapchat story about the Quebec City mosque attack and suggest that his overly faced selfies reveal the violence of a colourblind state gaze that functions like so-called neutral algorithmic vision. Jus Reign's excessive closeness to his smartphone performs an ambivalent rupture of the universalizing vision on which neoliberal multiculturalism is based, emphasizing the racist logics of facial detection technology even as he characterizes Islamophobia as a particularly US discourse.

Dans cet article, Danielle Wong se penche sur la façon dont les médias mobiles produisent au quotidien des modes de proximité discursive et affective dans le contexte du processus d'établissement de la frontière canado-américaine sous l'interdiction musulmane. Selon Wong, il est vrai que #WelcomeToCanada, un mot-clic popularisé par une série de gazouillis publiés par Justin Trudeau suite à une interdiction de voyager aux États-Unis, présente l'image d'un Canada inclusif et multiculturel qui semble contraster d'avec le récit suprématiste et xénophobe sous-tendant le décret de Donald Trump. Cependant, la façon de représenter la souplesse des frontières canadiennes dans ce mot-clic rend en fait omniprésent, et donc augmente*, le caractère blanc de l'organisme national hétéropatriarcal imaginé par les récits libéraux d'inclusion. Wong compare #WelcomeToCanada et l'histoire partagée sur Snapchat par l'humoriste canadien sikh Jus Reign au sujet de l'attentat contre la mosquée de Québec. Elle laisse ainsi entendre que les égoportraits au cadrage serré montrent la violence du regard d'un état qui se dit insensible à la couleur de la peau tout en ayant l'effet d'un algorithme soi-disant neutre. La proximité excessive de Jus Reign à la lentille de son téléphone intelligent opère une rupture ambivalente de la vision universalisante sur laquelle repose le multiculturalisme néolibéral et met en évidence les logiques racistes de la détection faciale alors même que Jus Reign dit de l'islamophobie qu'il s'agit d'un discours américain.*

When Fadwa Alaoui attempted to enter the USA at the Quebec-Vermont border in January 2017 with two of her children and her cousin, US border officials ordered her to turn over her smartphone and passcode. The agents questioned the Moroccan Canadian woman and her cousin separately, interrogating them about their Muslim faith, the mass shooting at a Quebec City mosque the month before, their views on President Donald Trump, and the videos of Muslim prayers on Alaoui's phone. After being held at the border for four hours, Alaoui and her family were denied entry into the US, as the border agents cited "videos on [their] phones that are against [the US]" (Rukavina). The Quebec resident was one of many Muslim travellers detained or turned away under Trump's 2017 directive to temporarily ban travellers from seven Muslim-majority countries. Executive Order 13769, titled "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States," came into effect on January 27, 2017, and indefinitely suspended the entry of Syrian refugees, prohibited all other refugees from entering the country for 120 days, and banned the entry of foreign nationals from Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Iran, Yemen, Sudan, and Libya. The executive order, which is more commonly referred to as the Muslim ban or travel ban, was revised in March 2017 to remove Iraq from the banned list, and then again in September of that year, removing Sudan and adding Chad, Venezuela, and North Korea.[2] Despite several legal challenges of various versions of the travel ban at lower courts, the US Supreme Court upheld the executive order on June 26, 2018.

A day after the White House announced the Muslim ban, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tweeted, "To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith. Diversity is our strength #WelcomeToCanada" (@JustinTrudeau). In an indirect but clear response to the Trump administration's travel ban (one *Politico* writer described Trudeau's post as a "subtweet"), the prime minister followed up this tweet with a touching photo of him kneeling or crouching to greet a Syrian child at a Toronto airport. The photo was taken during Trudeau's 2015 meet-and-greet with some of the first Syrian refugees to arrive in Canada after the federal government announced an initiative to accept 25,000 Syrian refugees by February 2016. During the event, Trudeau handed out winter coats to arriving Syrians and assured them, "You're safe at home now" (Austen). In the tweeted image, Trudeau and the Syrian girl hold each other's gaze while they are surrounded by others who look on with seeming approval. The photo was posted with the caption: "#WelcomeToCanada."

In this article, I consider how feelings and performances of intimacy produced under or as responses to the Muslim ban on mobile media platforms function as part of a North American surveillant assemblage (Ericson and Haggerty). By this, I mean the processes of contemporary state and corporate surveillance that operate beyond "raw" forms of monitoring to encompass, through digitization, integrated, seemingly passive, and more ubiquitous modes of bordering. More specifically, I analyze how mobile media like Twitter and Snapchat produce discursive and affective modes of closeness between self and Other on multiple levels—between algorithmic lenses and the racialized body, the nation-state and the individual, and the material and virtual self—that circulate as part of the Canada-US border-making process. I contend that although the #WelcomeToCanada hashtag presents an inclusive, multicultural Canada that appears to contrast the white supremacist, xenophobic narrative of the US Muslim ban, its discursive and embodied positioning of Canada as a caring and moral community elides the nation's ongoing settler colonial and racist histories. As a posture of multicultural care, #WelcomeToCanada performs an expansion of Canadian borders[3]

that actually renders ubiquitous, and therefore *augments*, the default whiteness of the heteropatriarchal national body imagined by liberal narratives of inclusion. Here I deploy Btihaj Ajana's concept of "augmented borders" to consider social media's role in enacting a discourse of flexible Canadian borders that operates in conjunction with the extended reach of state surveillance under the travel ban. Whereas "flexibility" and "expansion" in this context often indicate relaxed border control, Ajana's concept of augmentation articulates how borders are further intensified by their diffuseness and invisibility. I suggest that rhetorical border flexibility and expansiveness enhance the whiteness of the multicultural state by bringing whiteness to the always-on background.

If the #WelcomeToCanada tweets demonstrate how mobile media performance can visualize and enact multicultural recognition as a ubiquitous default setting, then comedian Jasmeet Singh Raina's satiric Snapchat videos reveal the violence of a colourblind liberal gaze that functions like so-called neutral algorithmic vision. I consider how the Sikh Canadian social media producer's Snapchat videos following the Muslim ban and the Quebec City mosque attack concurrently disrupt and affirm #WelcomeToCanada's multicultural discourse by causing the Snapchat facial detection algorithm to "glitch" when he comes too close to the camera. As Raina brings the iPhone lens so close to his face that he evades its computerized vision for fleeting moments, he temporarily brings the ubiquitous digital lens to its virtual limits and becomes illegible—failing to be a *recognized* subject. Through his excessive closeness to the phone, he performs an ambivalent rupture of the universalizing vision on which neoliberal multiculturalism is based, emphasizing the racist logics of facial detection technology even as he characterizes Islamophobia as a particularly US discourse. By analyzing these mobile media performances together, I address the travel of histories, theories, and performances of race across the US-Canada border by examining how the Muslim ban brings to the fore augmented borders that produce modes of transnational, pervasive whiteness.

Augmented Borders, Augmented Whiteness

Alaoui's experience at the Canada-US border demonstrates that the networked mobile device is a site of "augmented borders"—what Btihaj Ajana theorizes as the incorporation of Big Data, including social media, online search histories, credit records, and mobile sensors, into border management strategies that render borders increasingly ubiquitous and "*everywhere*," not just at official border stops (61). Crucially, Ajana's concept of augmented borders reorients the concept of bordering itself, as she contends that borders are no longer just fixed spatial divisions that separate one country from another, but are "infinitely and invisibly embedded within mundane administrative processes and bureaucratic organisation" (Ibid). Thus, my extension of Ajana's notion of augmented borders to everyday social media platforms offers a performance theory of border-making: the notion of augmented borders situates practices of surveillance at the very centre of border-making. Borders are not *a priori* to such practices, but constituted *in* and *through* surveillance procedures.

While the concept of fluid borderlands did not necessarily emerge with contemporary new technologies, mobile media foreground the virtualization of borders and their impact on everyday life. As borders are rendered ubiquitous in the Information Age, so is the terrorist

threat: the threat is not just "out there" as a fixed object, but disembodied and everywhere. Within days of the second version of the travel ban coming into effect, the US also banned electronic devices larger than a mobile phone from coming onto airplanes travelling from ten major airports in the Middle East. The Department of Homeland Security described this decision as one based on "evaluated intelligence" that indicated that "terrorist groups ... are aggressively pursuing innovative methods to undertake their attacks, [including] smuggling explosive devices in various consumer items" ("Fact Sheet"). The series of Muslim bans issued to protect the nation from racialized bodies and new technologies reveals not only an ongoing post-9/11 War on Terror that renders Muslim and "Muslim-looking" people national security threats, but the ways in which the War on Terror emerges within an aesthetic and discourse of *intimate borders* in contemporary surveillance culture.[4] In the first decade after 9/11, the dangerous mobile-phone-holding brown figure was often the terrorist or suicide bomber in popular cultural productions like the film *The Hurt Locker* (2008), and television series like *Homeland* and *24*. As digital technologies developed during and because of the post-9/11 War on Terror, the terrorist threat became more than the brown body itself; it became the threat of racialized virtual networks. In their 2018 book on the "terrorism threat," counterterrorism consultant Michael Kraft and former senior US foreign service officer Edward Marks state that:

> The technological developments since 9/11 have especially complicated the situation by further empowering both governments and nonstate terrorist groups. The Internet, drones, and cyber warfare, with the latter even producing its own form of terrorism—cyber terrorism—have changed the landscape for terrorism and countermeasures. (3)

On the one hand, new technology indexes the threat of transnational networks that emerge and are forged virtually "at home." In a public memo posted in 2015, then-FBI director James Comey stated that "counterterrorism" remained the agency's top priority, but that "the threat" has changed significantly from being a foreign one, in which outside terrorist operatives get within US borders to recruit, to a domestic one, where "homegrown violent extremists [...] may aspire to attack the United States from within" after being indoctrinated by "poisonous propaganda and training" on the Internet ("Threats"). The image of the domestic terrorist threat, therefore, is of *Internet-using* brown subjects who cross borders virtually, becoming radicalized "from within" through transnational networks. It is the digital terrorist's perceived "hypermobility" (Ahmed 73), after all, in the technologized forms of the airplane, online forum, or virus, that poses a threat to the nation.

On the other hand, because the post-9/11 smartphone is particularly hypermobile, it is not only symbolic of a border-breaching threat, but also of a border-crossing *promise*—what Mark Andrejevic calls the "promise of the drone." This promise simultaneously claims that profiling is an algorithmic decision and renders state surveillance intimate, social, and affective. Andrejevic contends that the common smartphone, tablet, or laptop can be understood as a drone or probe in an age when the figure of the drone brings together information and ballistic technology: "it is not simply a weaponized mobile camera ... but an indefinitely expandable probe that foregrounds the seemingly inevitable logic of algorithmic decision

making" (195-96). Under this promise, the drone is today's "(inter)face" of emerging practices of monitoring and surveillance, as it is the "always-on, networked, mobile, sensing device" (Andrejevic 196). The augmentation of borders in everyday surveillance culture is therefore mutually constitutive of the hypermobile threat that is both targeted by *and produces* the continual "optimization of capture systems" in digital technologies (Chun 69). Put differently, borders continue to be reconstituted through system updates that unfold on and as social media, seen, for example, in upgrades to facial recognition and GPS-based apps. The intimately global terrorist threat emerges not as a breach of state borders, but as their necessary logic.

While computerized profiling is conceived of as algorithmic, and therefore objective and non-human, it is part of a culture in which surveillance operates as discourses, affects, and technologies of *closeness*. The mode by which the networked devices senses involves affects of familiarity of and authenticity, as post-9/11 surveillance society demands the performance of "voluntary" transparency at official borders, and the aesthetics of warmth and authenticity in the way users "share," self-disclose, tag their locations, and self-circulate on social media—a culture of surveillance that privileges the white body as the safe and transparent subject (Hall 129, 185). Thus, while the promise of the drone may seem to de-emphasize the material body, the virtualization of everyday surveillance and the apparent elusiveness of "the threat" in the Information Age actually place the racialized and gendered body—the opaque body—under constant scrutiny and surveillance. People of colour and women, for instance, are especially targeted by online harassment and "doxing" on social media and other online cultures like video gaming.

By blurring the lines between state, corporate, and cultural surveillance, the everydayness of mobile media foregrounds the ubiquity of surveillance culture and border-making's language of closeness—a language and posture through which performances of neoliberal multicultural care and intimate racial encounter are enacted. Whiteness in the multicultural narrative becomes augmented in the sense that it, like borders in the digital era, is diffuse and mobile enough to retain its neutral omnipresence even as national borders seemingly widen to include more "difference." In a sense, whiteness-as-postraciality operates like Ajana's augmented borders: as a mode of border management that creates "the means by which freedom of mobility can be enabled, smoothened and facilitated for the ... belonging citizens," while concurrently exercising security checks on those considered "high-risk" bodies (Ajana 66). Just as the national security threat is no longer only the "raw" form of the monstrous terrorist body, its antidote, neoliberal whiteness, is virtualized by the performance of multicultural border expansion. Rather than being fixed in white bodies, whiteness's diffusion—its capacity to maintain a default mode of power relations despite, or *because*, the national populace is becoming more ethnically or racially diverse—is actually what intensifies it.

Hence, as I analyze Trudeau's #WelcomeToCanada tweets, I consider how the viral image of Trudeau's face-to-face encounter with a Syrian refugee circulates as augmented Canada-US bordering and border-making. As he greets the refugee, the prime minister's discursive and embodied poses figure Canadian borders as flexible and accommodating in contrast to the US, thereby augmenting whiteness as the universal mode of national and transnational belonging.

#WelcomeToCanada: Multicultural Care and Intimacy

Trudeau's #WelcomeToCanada message to those "fleeing persecution" was retweeted more than 400,000 times, and the subsequent photo was "liked" by more than 200,000 Twitter users (Figure 1). The #WelcomeToCanada hashtag became a Twitter trend after Trudeau's tweets, with users tweeting about the pride they felt in being Canadian under the Muslim ban, quoting the prime minister's declaration that "diversity is our strength," and expressing gratitude for living in or immigrating to such a "welcoming" country. Edmonton-South West Member of the Legislative Assembly Thomas Dhang, for instance, tweeted moments after Trudeau responded to the executive order on social media: "As a child of refugee parents, Canada has always been a welcoming home for my family and I couldn't be more thankful #ableg #WelcomeToCanada" (@ThomasDhangAB). Graphic novelist Sara Mayhew tweeted a statement that was retweeted more than a thousand times and "liked" by four thousand users: "Today the US President can no longer claim to be the leader of the free world—that now belongs to Prime Minister @JustinTrudeau #WelcomeToCanada" (@saramayhew). American news media also took note of the apparent contrast in the leaders' approach to immigration, with a *New York Times* article stating that while Trump's executive order "stranded people around the world and provoked condemnation, Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada took to social media to restate the country's open-door policy" (Austen). By distancing himself from Trump and drawing near to the Syrian refugee, Trudeau undermines US exceptionalism and presents Canada as the "true" state of exception.

If 9/11 prompted a "renewal" of white nationalism in Canadian national identity, as Sedef Arat-Koc argues, #WelcomeToCanada seemingly marks a shift away from this form of nationalism and toward the multicultural inclusion of Muslims and other racialized subjects. Arat-Koc contends that the reconfigured post-9/11 Canadian identity made apparent the tensions "inherent in liberal Canadian multiculturalism from its inception [...] It therefore involved a confirmation, crystallization, and rigidification of the preexisting implicit boundaries of a *white* national identity and belonging" (33). I suggest that the #WelcomeToCanada campaign's apparent move away from the white nationalism associated with Trump's America actually racializes and genders "safe" intimacy and cross-cultural contact as white and heteropatriarchal. While the Trudeau government in fact implemented

Fig. 1. Trudeau's #WelcomeToCanada tweet on January 28, 2017. Screenshot taken by author.

a tight cap on the number of privately sponsored Syrian and Iraqi refugees who would be permitted into the country just a month prior to the prime minister's #WelcomeToCanada posts, the image of the nation that was circulated by the hashtag depicted a compassionate, benevolent, and, importantly, flexible national community.

Through text and image, the tweets position Trudeau as a symbol of a caring and liberal host nation—a position that is further emphasized by the smiling face of a Syrian adult woman who has seemingly approved of, or is perhaps grateful for, this paternal care. After all, the common narrative that emerged during the Syrian refugee crisis about the West's failure to maintain democracy in Syria is often a gendered one about the failure of a guardian. For instance, one foreign affairs columnist for the *Guardian* states that the Syrian civil war is the "epic failure of our age," and critiques Western democracies for their "timidity," as they "hover[ed] passively on the sidelines in Syria, restricting themselves to counter-terrorism operations and vain calls for peace, and by failing to punish war crimes" (Tisdall). The West's timidity, vanity, failure, and passivity in Syria is countered by the image of the attentive and caring adoptive father whose "strength," as Trudeau puts it in in his tweet, is its compassion.[5]

As Trudeau locks eyes with the Syrian child in the #WelcomeToCanada photo, his kneeling posture and face-to-face proximity to her connote not only sincerity in Western contexts, but responsibility. Emmanuel Levinas famously argued that the "facing position, opposition par excellence, can only be as moral summons" because the Other "imposes" on the self through expression (196, 199). Levinas posits that the ethical relationship between self and Other emerges in the face-to-face encounter because the Other's "destitution and nudity—its hunger [...] promotes my freedom, by arousing my goodness" (200). This encounter between a national self and the racial Other is, therefore, one that promotes and solidifies the Western nation's goodness in the face of the refugee's destitution. By being accountable to the Other through the moral summons of their facing position, Trudeau embodies the master narrative of the Canadian nation, which, as Sunera Thobani has pointed out, sees its nationals as "responsible citizens, compassionate, caring, and committed to the values of diversity and multiculturalism" (4).

The idea of responsibility, however, is not unidirectional. While the national community understands itself as a parent that must care for the displaced refugee, the refugee who is to be liberated must also be grateful and use her freedom responsibly. Clad in a visibly new winter jacket—perhaps a quintessential Canadian marker of the arriving immigrant—the Syrian child embodies a "not-yetness" that promises to be reconciled through her successful inclusion into the national community. This promise is entrenched in an imperial discourse that Mimi Thi Nguyen describes as the "gift of freedom." Nguyen theorizes the gift of freedom as an "assemblage of liberal political philosophies, regimes of representation, and structures of enforcement that measure and manufacture freedom and its others," and contends that it is through gift giving that encounters with the racial Other are appropriated into liberal empire (12). Nguyen notes that because the gift shapes a relationship between the giver and receiver that positions the recipient as *indebted*, the gift is part of an economy that disavows its perceived "openhanded nature" (7). The gift, in fact, *subjects* the receiver to an endless debt that demands expressions of gratitude and shapes her possible futures, for the promise of freedom is always yet to come (9). The image of the Syrian child in the photo visualizes a transition that emerges in the expansion of national borders; as she stands in the liminal space

of the airport with the tag still on her winter coat, she marks and is marked by the economy of gifts: the promise of freedom through economic mobility, the futurity of belonging, and the debt of gratitude.

That the appropriation of this racial encounter into multicultural progress is made possible by the performed expansion of borders reveals that the whiteness of the settler colonial state and its political subject is augmented and ubiquitous. As scholars such as Glen Coulthard and Lisa Lowe have demonstrated, the enfranchised liberal subject has historically been conceptualized and universalized as white and male, and conceived of through a settler colonial framework of citizenship. As Coulthard argues, the liberal discourse of recognition maintains the colonial status quo, demonstrated by the fact that the Supreme Court of Canada secures an "unprecedented degree of protection for certain 'cultural' practices within the state," but consistently refuses to recognize Indigenous people's self-determining status based on the persistent belief that Indigenous peoples were and are too primitive to bear political rights (451). Trudeau's and other Twitter users' enthusiastic invocation of "diversity" continues to secure a liberal discourse of "cultural" difference that elides Indigenous sovereignty and the nation's ongoing racist settler colonial histories. Thus, while Levinas's conceptualization of the "facing position" as a "moral summons" may seem to theorize ethical "politics of recognition" (Charles Taylor), the settler colonial state's face-to-face encounter with the Other is not reciprocal, but maintains a colonial relationship. In fact, as Coulthard points out, it is not recognition that the state requires from previously self-determining groups, but their land, resources, and labour upon which the colonial state's economic, social, and territorial infrastructures are built (451).

The recognition discourse of diversity allows the state-sanctioned (white) subject to be universalized as human. Multiculturalism became a state policy in Canada in 1971 that recognized "contributions" from ethnic communities, and solidified French and English as the official languages of the nation. While the policy was to distinguish the Canadian "mosaic" from the American "melting pot" by attesting to Canada's successful transition from a white settler colony to a welcoming, diverse society, scholars have argued that official multiculturalism affirms the authority of the French and British as the country's "founding nations," and thus its legitimate subjects (Thobani 144-45). After all, when then-Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau addressed the House of Commons concerning the policy in October 1971, he stated:

> [T]he individual's freedom would be hampered if he were locked for life within a particular cultural compartment by the accident of birth or language. It is vital, therefore, that every Canadian, whatever his ethnic origin, be given a chance to learn at least one of the two languages in which his country conducts official business and its politics. ("Canadian Multiculturalism Policy")

Therefore, this narrative of cultural diversity emerges from a postracial logic that is based on the promise of transcending the obstacle of the "accident" of race in order to adopt the official languages needed to "contribute" economically and politically. Only the individual who can participate in the capitalist nation-state in such a way is free. #WelcomeToCanada relegates race to the background by presenting the encounter between nation-state and stranger as already determined by a framework of liberal diversity.

In this way, the nation's whiteness is also made to be a background to this futurity—one in which the Syrian refugee's success and political inclusion are hinged on her future economic participation. Just as liberal multiculturalism promises equal opportunity *regardless* of race, state use of Big Data border management purports to be neutral because algorithms are supposedly unable to "see" race the way humans do. Paralleling Andrejevic's concept of the promise of the drone, diversity as surveillance operates as a "continuous background presence" that passively collects, analyzes, and responds to data from encounters in order to "capture all of reality" through new, "always-on" technologies (22). In popular discourse, multicultural care and the drone's form and aesthetic come together in #WelcomeToCanada, with Trudeau using the everyday medium of Twitter to perform and circulate an authentic encounter with a Syrian refugee family. It is not so much that the #WelcomeToCanada image seems candid, but that the photo was tweeted, rather than disseminated in a formal press release or traditional news media, that gives the image its everyday authenticity. The hashtag and social media platform invite interactivity, as Twitter users are able to share the post, and to participate in, comment on, and reproduce its narrative.

In contrast, Jasmeet Singh Raina's Snapchat performance in response to the travel ban and the subsequent Quebec City mosque massacre is characterized by limited interactivity and greater ephemerality. In addition to only being visible to users who have subscribed to Raina (better known by his online moniker, Jus Reign) on the app,[6] Snapchat deletes photo and video stories from its server after a twenty-four-hour period, making media on this platform more fleeting than tweets. The technical and formal components of Jus Reign's Snapchat videos reflect their ambiguous and potentially subversive interventions in discourses about the US-Canada border under the travel ban. Rather than staging self-Other and human-machine intimacy as seamless, authentic, or evenly participatory as I have suggested #WelcomeToCanada does, Jus Reign's use of everyday mobile media emphasizes the ephemerality and *glitches* in computer vision. His close-up, face-to-face interaction with his smartphone lens performs racial misrecognitions that briefly confuse the virtual Snapchat lens and human face—momentarily disorienting the mobile app's ability to locate and map an individual subject. As Jus Reign brings his phone's lens close to his face after he is detained at the US-Canada border and again after the Quebec City massacre, I suggest that he performs an ambivalent intimacy with corporate, social, and national gazes—an intimacy that both challenges liberal multicultural discourse and attributes Islamophobia in Canada to US politics.

Glitchy Lenses: Jus Reign's Overly Faced Performances

In February 2016, Jus Reign made Canadian news headlines after he tweeted and made a Snapchat story about his ordeal with Transportation Security Administration (TSA) staff on his way home to Toronto from San Francisco. In the Snapchat story (a series of short Snapchat videos) filmed by Jus Reign on his mobile phone at his gate in a San Francisco airport after being released from private inspection, he says that TSA agents asked him to remove his turban and then ushered him into a private screening room when he refused. Jus Reign was told to either take his turban off or book another flight. After the social media producer removed his turban and had his hair "played" with by TSA officers, he was

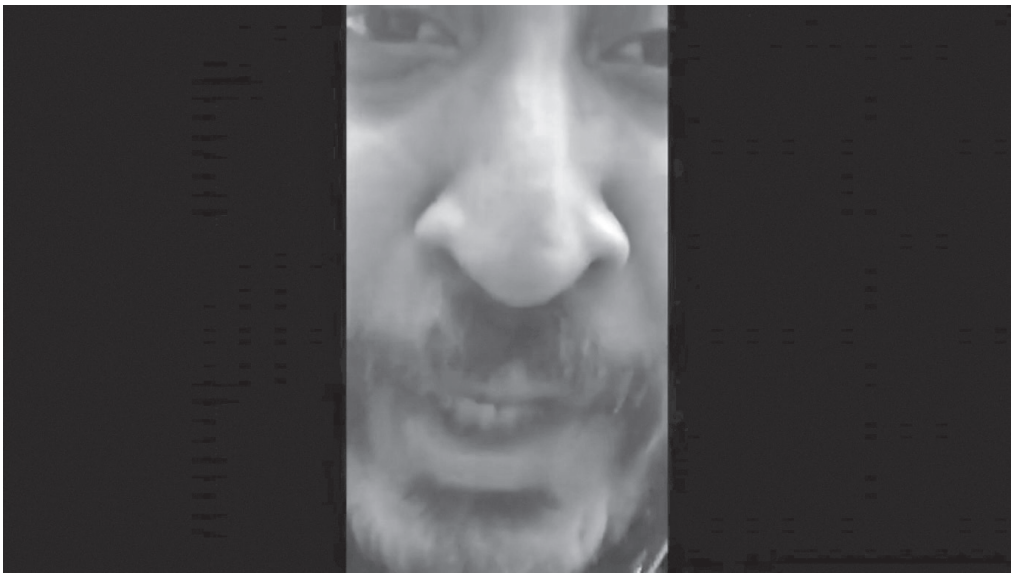

Fig. 2. Jus Reign describes his detainment at a San Francisco airport in February 2016 via Snapchat. Screenshot taken by author of a screen capture of Jus Reign's story that was uploaded to YouTube.

refused a mirror to use for re-tying his turban, and was made to walk in public across the terminal with an uncovered head to the nearest bathroom ("TSA ASKS"). As Jus Reign narrates his ordeal at the US border in his Snapchat story, he brings his iPhone closer and closer to his face so that only the front section of his face is visible in the frame when he emphasizes that TSA agents did not provide him with a mirror for retying his turban (Figure 2). The Snapchat story, even though it "disappeared" from viewers' phones after they watched it, was widely shared and circulated online and through broadcast news media in Canada.

Although Jus Reign was documenting an actual event of racial profiling, his Snapchat story is reminiscent of his staged mobile media productions on Snapchat and the now-defunct Vine app. Like his Snapchat story in the airport, these sketches are close-up selfie videos that tightly frame his head and present critiques of post-9/11 racism. A number of these minimally produced short videos depict Jus Reign as both himself and a white character, marked as white-but-not quite with makeshift wigs that do not—cannot—hide the turban underneath. Jus Reign's use of mobile apps whose features are premised on the convenience, pleasure, or even security promised by ephemerality demands an encounter as he leans into his viewers' faces, filling their mobile screens, and desiring (while countering) their stares. His insistence on his phone's and audience's gaze visualizes the War on Terror's scrutiny of religious head coverings. Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai note that, since the very first post-9/11 arrest of a turbaned Sikh man who was removed from an Amtrak train in Providence, Rhode Island for carrying his kirpan (ceremonial knife), "turbaned Sikh men have become substitutes for an elusive Osama bin Laden. [...] Within this fetish of the visible, the turban acquires the force of a tool of the panopticon" ("The Remaking" 82). Jus Reign's mobile media productions

perform this fetish, highlighting both the violence of the panopticon and the pleasures of being watched. The Sikh comedian's overly faced productions create glitches in the seamlessness of the drone/phone's gaze, bringing *race* to the foreground of the algorithmic lens.

#WelcomeToCanada's elision of race and racism was exposed almost immediately after Trudeau posted his popular tweets when Alexandre Bissonnette walked into the Centre Culturel Islamique in Quebec City, and shot and killed six Muslims. Just two hours before opening fire in the mosque, Bissonnette read Trudeau's #WelcomeToCanada tweets. During his trial, the court heard that he made 201 online searches about Dylann Roof, who murdered nine black churchgoers in South Carolina in 2015, in the month leading up to the shooting, as well as frequented Trump's Twitter feed on a daily basis (Page). News coverage also highlighted how Bissonnette was inspired by far-right French nationalist politics and was vocal against Muslim immigration to Quebec on the Internet (Perreaux and Andrew-Gee). The court and media's representation of Bissonnette's fascination with "external" immigration policies in relation to Canada's borders as *social media use* reveals both the national security concern around "radicalization" on the Internet, and the stakes of considering how the virtual platforms on which US-Canada and other international borders emerge and are imagined. While #WelcomeToCanada may have been launched as a neoliberal narrative that universalizes concepts of freedom and diversity, traces of its violent postraciality remain and haunt this "progress."

Shortly after the 2017 Quebec City mosque shooting, Jus Reign posted a Snapchat story in which he plays two people: Jim, who generally presents as Jus Reign without any costumes or filters but with a "rural" or American southern accent, and Bill, who is Jus Reign with a white man's face superimposed on top of his face. The superimposed face was created by a Snapchat "face-swapping" lens that allows users to map an image of a face stored on their smartphone apps onto their faces in real-time. This feature is made available by facial detection technology that identifies human faces from the phone's photo gallery. Included among the other selfie lenses on the app's selfie-recording interface, this face-swap option is presented as one of the playful ways to augment the front-facing mobile camera.

In the story, "Jim" is reading the news online on what appears to be his bed—the camera is too close to Jus Reign for the viewer to see his location clearly—when he is shocked to learn that the terrorist who attacked the Quebec City mosque was not a "jihadi Muslim mud-faced piece of shit," but a white man. "Bill" tells Jim that they need to go into "those countries" to "start shootin' them up, all those terrorists," and not to believe these "alternative facts."[7] At this point, the filter of the white man's face and Jus Reign's "actual" face begin splitting apart, as Jus Reign comes so close to his phone's camera that the Snapchat lens starts to glitch (Figure 3). As the story progresses, the white-face lens no longer fits "properly" on Jus Reign's face in some moments. When Bill begins chanting in support of future Trump re-elections, he thrusts his head forward, "throwing off" the white-face lens so that the superimposed image disappears for a "split second" and reveals Jus Reign's face underneath. At one point, Bill yells, "Alternative facts!" with such emphasis and with such proximity to the camera that his white-face filter falls off completely before rejoining Jus Reign's "real" face a second later. In these "split seconds" when his face is temporarily illegible as a traceable human face to the app software, Jus Reign is disembodied beyond the augmented interface. For just a moment, his face eludes the tracking meshes of the face-altering lens and is too virtual—not human-like enough in the facing position—to be detected properly.

Fig. 3. Jus Reign's face and the white-face filter temporarily split in his Snapchat story about the Quebec City mosque attack. Screenshot taken by author of a screen capture of Jus Reign's story that was uploaded to YouTube.

By coming *too* close to the camera lens and breaching the "civil distance" (Thy Phu) that is expected between his body and the phone's and viewers' gaze, Jus Reign's glitchy augmented selfies expose how computer vision sees white and brown faces unevenly, and that this unevenness of surveillance functions to reinforce the brown, turbaned, bearded, or veiled "face of terrorism," even if the facts state otherwise. Jus Reign's splitting face visualizes the racial haunting of the presumably neutral, algorithmic screen, linking the perceived "fun" and trivial nature of everyday social media production to state borders. The brown face's breach of the interface reveals the assumed whiteness of the mobile media app's default computer vision, as well as the histories of racial and racist vision that Snapchat denies in its presentation of its facial detection technology as apolitical and universal—an objectivity that is supposedly programmed into the app by scanning "diverse" faces.

Snapchat purchased the Ukrainian facial detection and editing tool Looksery in 2015 and has since allowed users to edit their faces in real-time with an array of cartoonish filters. Snapchat calls these filters "lenses" and describes their detection technology as "object recognition"—an algorithm that the company claims is designed to understand the "general nature of things" in an image, but is not the same as facial recognition because it does not identify a specific face ("Our Approach"). The app's facial detection technology works by creating a face "mesh" that is based on detected "feature reference points" on the human face, such as eye width, jaw drop, and the nose's upward point, and matching that mesh in real-time to the user's face so that its algorithm can map and then alter the appearance of the face on the screen as it moves (Shaburova). The technology uses the Viola-Jones algorithm, a real-time face detection method developed by Paul Viola and Michael Jones. Neither the Looksery's patent nor the Viola and Jones paper on their algorithm refer to race, but the

Looksery patent includes "exemplary" images of faces marked with "landmarks" or feature reference points and a face-mesh alignment that appear to only feature two white men, who model the "mean face" (or average human face).[8] Viola and Jones's paper on their influential method, however, also includes a sample grid of faces from their training dataset, a collection of 4,916 front-facing, mostly smiling faces taken from a "random crawl of the World Wide Web" (Viola and Jones 148). This "face training set" includes the faces of differently racialized people, implying that computer vision is *universal* and comprehensive of a "diversity" of faces. The implications that the Viola-Jones algorithm was formulated out of randomization and that Snapchat does not recognize specific faces but the general *components* of a face are informed by a logic of diversity as surveillance: the universality of this neutral, algorithmic gaze is racialized as *raceless*—as the "mean" or default settings of white and male.[9]

Despite the claim that digitized vision is by nature "more accurate and objective and less subject to the prejudices and apparent inadequacies of human perception," modern facial recognition technology's developments is yoked to post-9/11 national defence and counterterrorism in North America (Gates 10). A claim that circulated in the wake of the 9/11 attacks was that the availability of automated facial recognition systems would have prevented the plane crashes, because in the case of the two alleged hijackers Mohammad Atta and Abdulaziz Alomari, the men were caught on airport security cameras but not identified because the system did not have the technology to recognize them (Gates 1-2). Kelly Gates points out that leading up to the events of 9/11, facial recognition technology vendors were experimenting with applying systems in the "real world," so when the attacks occurred, 9/11 engendered a moment in which facial recognition was defined as a homeland security technology that "made use of an implicit classifying logic, including rhetorical moves that resuscitated antiquated notions of deviant facial types" (101). In other words, contemporary computer recognition of human faces comes out of and is linked to the narratives and anxieties of the War on Terror, and the "national security" need to "see" brown faces more accurately in order to monitor their activities. Gates contends that biometric facial recognition is part of an "array" of technologies that are being developed to address "the problem of 'disembodied identities,' or the existence of visual and textual representations of individuals that circulate independent of their physical bodies" (12). Thus, this kind of bioinformatics works to re-embody disembodied performances and circulations in order to "read" by making legible the whole, intact individual subject.

If Trudeau's face-to-face encounter with the Syrian refugee in his #WelcomeToCanada tweet circulates as an image of multicultural self-Other recognition, the Sikh comedian's *self-facing* intimacy with his phone performs a destabilization of the nation-state's interpolating gaze. Jus Reign's snaps perform race into the "colourblind" Snapchat lenses, at times depicting a split between the virtual interface and his material body that causes the seamless or "accurate" detection of his face to glitch. The tight, overly faced frames that Jus Reign uses in his selfie productions are not conducive to the real-time use of filters on Snapchat, as the camera is *too* close to his face to be read by the software as a human face. His proximity to his smartphone lens involves a posture of intimacy that produces obfuscation rather than stable identification and authentication, contrasting the liberal recognition that is performed by the postures of familiarity in the #WelcomeToCanada hashtag and photo. While Trudeau's #WelcomeToCanada photo places the prime minister within safe, civil distance to the Syrian

child—staging a heteropatriarchal encounter between Trudeau and the refugee—Jus Reign's intimate interfacing with his mobile phone positions his viewers to witness a mode of self-intimacy as the audience watches him *watching himself*.[10]

In addition to troubling the heteronormativity of the "civilly distanced" photo, selfies allow the body to witness its own conversions into material, affective, and data patterns as they turn the mobile phone into a concurrent extension of the body and a technology that abstracts the self (Shipley 404). By employing the selfie mode to perform his own detainment and experiences of racism, Jus Reign stares back at the scrutiny of his ever-watching drone/phone, even as he desires, *demands*, its and others' continual gaze as a social media producer whose career relies upon continual online interaction. Although the self-surveillant mode of his mobile media performances may fixate on his face and turbaned head to invite the attentive gaze of his viewers, his proximity to the phone causes his face to briefly confound their gaze. Not only do his Snapchat images and videos "disappear" after viewing, he is momentarily illegible to the lens, only to reappear as a hyper-visible head. Thus, Jus Reign oscillates between being recognized and misrecognized by the ubiquitous lens, visualizing both the foreigner and the subject who is recognized by the state—the contradictions of liberal multicultural vision and its persistence.

Jus Reign's Snapchat story mocks the absurdity of someone insisting that the Quebec City mosque shooting was committed by "jihadi Muslims," perhaps gesturing to the fact that police initially arrested Mohamed Belkhadir, a mosque member who was trying to help victims after the shooting, and questioned him as a suspect. However, as Jus Reign draws connections between the mosque tragedy in Canada and US border control, he seems to present racist and Islamophobic ideas in his story as mainly US discourses. While his performance as two "white" men discussing the mosque attack may be transnational in its circulation and in its depiction of a North American white supremacy, his donning of a stereotypical US "Southern" accent and his focus on Trump potentially places Canada outside of this kind of racism. The social media producer's performance is haunted by the pervasiveness of transnational whiteness even as he satirizes it, demonstrating how deeply entrenched the myth of Canadian exceptional diversity is in national discourse even when racist violence occurs within national boundaries. Thus, I suggest that Jus Reign's rupture of the perceived objective interface—both the ideology of liberal vision and the digital screen—is emphatically a glitch. The white filter that "slips" off to reveal the racialized face underneath is reattached when the algorithm is able to see and capture Jus Reign again. Hence, Jus Reign's glitchy selfie performance visualizes both the disruption *and* persistence of diversity as surveillance.

Conclusion: "No free ticket to Canada"

The augmentation and virtualization of US-Canada borders has urgent, material stakes. The number of people seeking asylum in Canada has increased since Trump's presidency, with more than 20,000 people making the trek across unguarded and remote locations along the US-Canada border in 2017 (Kassam). By May 2018, the number of people who crossed the US-Canada border to seek asylum was double the number of people who made this journey during the first four months of 2017 (Ibid). These asylum-seekers cross unofficial US-Canada

borders in an attempt to avoid the Safe Third Party Country agreement, which requires refugee claimants to request protection in the country where they first arrive. However, Canadian officials, despite Trudeau's apparent invitation for refugees rejected by the US travel ban to find refuge in Canada's open arms, have made it clear that "freedom" is not freely given. According to officials, more than ninety percent of the asylum seekers in 2017 did not meet the requirements to be considered refugees in the country. In his statements about these asylum seekers, public safety minister Ralph Goodale stated that "[c]oming across the border in a way that seeks to circumvent the law or defy proper procedure is no free ticket to Canada" (qtd. in Kassam).

Goodale's comments remind us that the norm of Canadian borders is to defend the white national body from racialized foreign threats and to bestow upon the "truly needy" refugee a gift of freedom that demands an indefinite debt of gratitude. By putting the #WelcomeToCanada Twitter trend in conversation with Jus Reign's "alternative facts" story, I suggest not only that the Canadian multicultural posture of expanding national borders was not at odds with white nationalism under the Muslim ban, but that the performance of flexible national borders *constitutes* the augmentation of the white nation. My examination of mobile media productions seeks to expand the discussion around state and Big Data surveillance beyond critique of the raw form of border patrol to a contemplation of the everyday modes and pleasures of interfacing with the mobile phone screen. This expansion allows us to query how social media self-presentation both produces and reveals the unstable relationships between seemingly empowering practices of online self-circulation and post-9/11 augmented border-making. As we stare back at a gaze that has become so intimate, we begin to see glitches in these ubiquitous borders—split and splitting moments of racial histories that emerge to interface with us.

Notes

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2 While these revisions may seem to back up Trump's claim that the executive order is not a "Muslim ban," the number of North Korean visitors to the US in 2016 represented well under one percent of the total visitors that year, and the restrictions on Venezuelan travel only barred certain government officials and their families from obtaining tourist and temporary visitor visas ("Muslim Ban 3.0"). The third version of the ban was still, in effect, a Muslim ban.

3 My argument is about the expansion of the border as a national body politic and not necessarily as a zone of division, although the latter is shaped by the former.

4 Scholars like Ralph Jason and Karen Greenberg argue that although Barack Obama's approach to the War on Terror appeared more cautious than that of George Bush's administration, and emphasized the "necessity" of the conflict in Afghanistan in contrast to the "rash war" in Iraq, Obama continued Bush's rhetoric of US exceptionalism in the War on Terror, and even amplified surveillance and drone killings (Jason 16; Greenberg 83). Trump has taken a more militaristic approach in continuing the War on Terror, but by presenting an even vaguer,

more expansive figuration of the "enemy" (in his words, "bad guys"), he intensifies Obama's notion of a terrorist threat who is both "inside" and "outside" of national borders.

5 Trudeau's performance of "good" masculinity, which contrasts Trump's blatantly toxic masculinity, has garnered him the unofficial international title of "woke Canadian bae"—an online term for a socially aware significant other.

6 Jus Reign's Snapchat story was uploaded by one of his viewers to YouTube, where it can be viewed even though the original video is no longer on Snapchat.

7 The term "alternative facts" was coined by Trump's former campaign strategist Kellyanne Conway when she defended Press Secretary Sean Spicer's claim that the media had lied about the small crowd that attended Trump's presidential inauguration. Conway's choice of words became known as a way of naming the post-truth, white nationalist resurgence under Trump's presidency.

8 The Ukrainian company's patent features two faces modelling the facial mapping system. One of them reads as white in a North American and Western European sense, while the other one may be read as Eastern European. This highlights the slipperiness of transnational whiteness and of the idea of "reading race" on the face.

9 The purportedly postracial Snapchat lens has a racist history. The app company launched a "Bob Marley lens" in 2016 that edited users' faces to resemble the singer, darkening the skin, superimposing dreads and adding a knit cap to detected faces. Later in the same year, it released a yellowface filter that enlarged users' front teeth, cartoonishly slanted their eyes and rounded out their faces.

10 Tellingly, Jus Reign's YouTube channel has the tag line: "Watch Me. Hold Me. Love Me," accompanied by a banner photo depicting Jus Reign embracing himself.

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