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Debating the Umma: Intellectual Masculinity and the Rhetoric of Mehdi Hasan in Post-Network Journalism

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Abstract

This article explores the mediated masculinity of British-American journalist and political commentator Mehdi Hasan through the intersections of postcolonial theory, masculinity studies, media studies and digital journalism. Using the theory of hegemonic masculinity by Raewyn Connell, theory of performativity by Judith Butler, and the work of Amanullah De Sondy on *Islamic masculinities*, the essay claims that Hasan performs what can be called "intellectual masculinity": a rhetorical and epistemic mode of masculine authority grounded in debate, factual accuracy, moral argument, and adversarial journalism. Unlike the dominant Western representations of Muslim men as either violent extremists or submissive moderates, Hasan occupies a third position, that of the scholar-combatant whose authority derives from preparation, eloquence, and institutional literacy.

By close readings of three major media moments. Hasan's 2013 *Oxford Union speech on Islam*, his 2019 interview with Erik Prince on Al Jazeera, and the 2024 launch of the independent platform *Zeteo*. This study traces the trajectory of his masculine performance from theological vulnerability to adversarial confrontation to entrepreneurial "platform masculinity." The article further contends that the migration of Hasan from *MSNBC* to *Zeteo* exemplifies larger shifts in post-network journalism where marginalized journalists are increasingly seeking authority outside of legacy institutions. The study places Hasan alongside Jeremy Paxman and Ravish Kumar to demonstrate how adversarial masculinity is mediated by race, class, colonial history and platform capitalism.

In the end, the article adds to the interdisciplinary debates in media studies, gender theory, journalism and postcolonial humanities by showing how Muslim masculinity is negotiated in the digital age through rhetoric, visibility and performance. Hasan's public persona reveals the possibilities and burdens of intellectual masculinity for diasporic Muslim men in heavily securitized media ecologies.

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Keywords: Mehdi Hasan, Muslim Masculinity, Postcolonial Media, Hegemonic Masculinity, Zeteo.

Introduction

The figure of the Muslim male in contemporary Western media has historically oscillated between two reductive archetypes: the dangerous extremist and the obedient moderate. Both constructions operate within what Jasbir Puar calls the securitized logic of post-9/11 discourse, where Muslim identity is rendered intelligible primarily in relation to violence or the performance of disavowed violence (Puar 159). Such representations deny Muslim men access to what Raewyn Connell famously terms "hegemonic masculinity," the culturally exalted form of masculinity that legitimizes male dominance and structures social power relations (Connell 77). Within this framework, the Muslim masculinity is constantly coded as excessive, suspect, foreign and in need of surveillance.

One particularly compelling figure in this discursive landscape is Mehdi Hasan. Hasan was born in Swindon, England in 1979 to Indian Muslim parents from Hyderabad and inhabits multiple intersecting locations: British, Muslim, South Asian, diasporic and elite-educated. An Oxford University's Politics, Philosophy and Economics graduate, Hasan initially rose to prominence as a journalist and political commentator for Channel 4 and Al Jazeera English before hosting *The Mehdi Hasan Show* on *MSNBC* from 2020 to 2024. His subsequent exit from *MSNBC* and the establishment of the independent media platform *Zeteo* in 2024 marked a major shift from institutional journalism to platform-based entrepreneurial media.

But Hasan's significance goes beyond journalism. His public persona is a complex performance of masculinity constructed through race, religion, empire and media spectacle. Hasan's masculinity, in contrast to the hypermasculine militarism of the "terrorist" stereotype or the passive accommodation of the "good Muslim," is one of rhetorical combat, evidentiary rigor, and intellectual aggression. He interrupts guests, cites statistics rapidly, deploys moral argumentation, and weaponizes civility itself. His power is not physical but verbal; he rules by discussion. The article proposes the term "intellectual masculinity" for Hasan's performative mode.

According to this definition, intellectual masculinity is a form of masculine dominance attained through linguistic confrontation, institutional literacy, argumentation skill, and epistemic control. For underprivileged men whose bodies are not automatically granted access to hegemonic authority, it is especially pertinent. In ways not expected of white journalists like Jeremy Paxman, Hasan's brown Muslim body must consistently exhibit reason, poise, and

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expertise. As a result, his masculinity is both defensive and aspirational. It exposes the racial presumptions that underlie hegemonic settings while simultaneously attempting to gain access to them.

This article analyses Hasan's performance during three significant events: the 2013 Oxford Union speech "*Islam Is a Peaceful Religion*," the 2019 Head-to-Head interview with Erik Prince, the founder of Blackwater, and the 2024 launch of *Zeteo*. When taken as a whole, these texts show a shift from platform-based entrepreneurial defiance to institutionally sanctioned Muslim respectability. The study places Hasan in the context of larger theoretical discussions about digital journalism, postcolonial media representation, televisual authority, and Islamic masculinities.

The article's methodology makes use of multimodal media analysis, performance studies, and discourse analysis. It treats masculinity as a recurring sequence of stylized acts performed in front of audiences rather than as a necessary characteristic, drawing on Butler's idea of performativity (Butler 179). Thus, gendered performances are examined in Hasan's interruptions, gestures, verbal cadences, evidential appeals, and camera contacts. This investigation has transdisciplinary importance. For gender studies, Hasan offers a case study of Muslim masculinity negotiated under conditions of racial surveillance. His transition from *MSNBC* to *Zeteo* serves as an example of how platform capitalism transforms journalistic authority for journalism studies. Hasan shows how diaspora subjects use elite Western rhetorical tropes to challenge imperial narratives in postcolonial studies. Most significantly, Hasan's career demonstrates how epistemic authority rather than physical force is increasingly used to perform masculinity in modern media.

Literature Review

Hegemonic Masculinity and Marginalized Men

The core of modern masculinity studies is still Raewyn Connell's *Masculinities*. Connell rejects biological essentialism and instead conceptualizes masculinity as a relational social practice structured through power hierarchies (Connell 71). Hegemonic masculinity represents the dominant configuration of gender practices that legitimizes patriarchy and secures male authority over subordinated masculinities and femininities. Crucially, Connell highlights that hegemonic masculinity is not fixed but rather historically contingent. Different hegemonic ideals are produced by various institutions and communities. Access to hegemonic masculinity is frequently restricted or conditional for coloured and religious minorities. Even though they may engage in patriarchal processes, Connell defines "marginalized masculinities" as forms

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influenced by racial and class marginalization (Connell 80). This predicament is best illustrated by Muslim guys in the West. Suspicion, rather than authority, frames their masculinity.

Jasbir Puar extends this analysis in *Terrorist Assemblages*, arguing that post-9/11 political discourse constructs Muslim men as inherently backward, misogynistic, and threatening (Puar 161). Liberal Western states depict themselves as sexually progressive while portraying Muslim communities as essentially violent and patriarchal through what she refers to as "homonationalism." Muslim masculinity thus becomes a justification for military intervention and domestic surveillance. Muslim men face a dilemma under this paradigm. They run the danger of validating aggressive stereotypes if they display anger or assertiveness. They run the risk of feminization and political oblivion if they exhibit softness or moderation. This dichotomy is exactly how Hasan's public persona functions.

Islamic Masculinities and Postcolonial Identity

The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities by Amanullah De Sondy offers an essential paradigm for comprehending Muslim male subjectivity in modern international culture. De Sondy contends that conflicts between colonial-modernist paradigms of male power and Qur'anic principles have formed Islamic masculinity (De Sondy 12). Colonial and nationalist discourses frequently redefine masculinity through dominance and political control, whereas prophetic masculinity in Islamic traditions stresses justice, kindness, humility, and social duty. Due to their structural exclusion from cultural legitimacy and hypervisibility in the media, Muslim men from the diaspora are particularly affected by this dilemma. According to De Sondy, Muslim men are often shown as either fanatical or assimilated, denying them nuance (De Sondy 31). Therefore, it is possible to see Hasan's rhetorical approach as an effort to recover Muslim masculinity by intellectual rather than military methods.

Orientalism by Edward Said is still crucial to this conversation. In contrast to the rational and masculine West, Said shows how Western discourse has historically portrayed the Orient as irrational, emotional, feminine, and inferior (Said 40). By mastering the exact rhetorical devices often associated with elite Western masculinity, Hasan's public performances subvert this dichotomy.

Journalism and Televisual Masculinity

Journalism as performance has been studied by media researchers more and more. David Buchbinder argues that televised authority is produced through vocal control, posture, interruption patterns, and gaze management (Buchbinder 91). Tim Sebastian and Jeremy Paxman are examples of adversarial interviewers who represent a uniquely British type of masculinized authority based on elite institutional confidence. In the past, white male authority figures who are

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perceived as professional rather than emotional have been given preference in television news. This antagonistic legacy is passed down to Hasan, who racializes it. His disruptions are not always justified. They must be supported by precise and convincing evidence. Here, Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "cultural capital" is helpful. Hasan has elite institutional capital that somewhat mitigates racial marginalization because of his Oxford education, accent, and rhetorical fluency (Bourdieu 243). However, because of his continued suspicion due to his Muslim identity, this capital is still conditional.

Platform Journalism and Entrepreneurial Masculinity

New forms of masculine performance have emerged as a result of journalism's transformation in the digital age. In her research on "platformed masculinities," Nikki Usher looks at how journalists who are abandoning established institutions portray independence and taking calculated risks as traits of men (Usher 2036). People like Matt Taibbi, Bari Weiss, and Glenn Greenwald are increasingly portraying themselves as dissidents freed from corporate censorship. In a similar vein, Sarah Banet-Weiser contends that neoliberal media culture honours individual entrepreneurship and authenticity as indicators of masculine empowerment (Banet-Weiser 45).

The journalist develops into a brand rather than just a reporter. Despite significant postcolonial distinctions, Hasan's development of Zeteo falls neatly into these phenomena. Hasan connects his business identity to migrant past, anti-war ethics, and community responsibility, in contrast to many white male journalists who construct platform independence through libertarian language. Few studies look at the mediated masculinity of a single Muslim journalist across institutional and platform contexts, despite a large body of research on Muslim representation and digital journalism. That gap is filled in this article.

Methodology

This study employs qualitative discourse analysis and performance analysis to examine Hasan's mediated masculinity across three primary media texts:

1. Oxford Union Debate, "Islam Is a Peaceful Religion" (20 June 2013)
2. *Head to Head* interview with Erik Prince, Al Jazeera English (8 March 2019)
3. "Why We Launched Zeteo" (15 February 2024)

The study integrates textual analysis with visual and vocal analysis. Transcripts were reviewed alongside video recordings in order to assess verbal rhetoric, interruption patterns, body language, camera framing, pacing, and audience response.

Judith Butler's theory of performativity, which views gender as a recurring series of socially understandable behaviours rather than a stable identity, serves as the foundation for the

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analysis (Butler 179). Therefore, in Hasan's example, masculinity is viewed as a media performance that is influenced by institutional frameworks and audience expectations. The study does not aim to ascertain Hasan's personal opinions or "real" identity. Rather, it examines how media discourse produces, disseminates, and interprets masculinity. The study's exclusive focus on Hasan rather than comparing audience reactions is one of its limitations. Future studies might contrast Hasan with individuals like Fareed Zakaria, Maajid Nawaz, or Wajahat Ali.

The Oxford Union, 2013: Vulnerability and Theological Masculinity

An important early expression of Hasan's intellectual masculinity may be seen in his 2013 Oxford Union lecture, in which he defended the idea that "*Islam Is a Peaceful Religion*." Hasan enters a setting traditionally linked with imperial male authority as he speaks in front of a largely white British audience at one of the country's most prestigious debate organizations. His opening strategy is strikingly vulnerable. Instead of starting off aggressively, Hasan declares, "I am a Muslim." In addition, I am a father. And I'm afraid. The prevalent stereotype of the intimidating Muslim man is challenged by this rhetorical device. Here, fear is pushed inward rather than outside. Instead of taking responsibility for violence, Hasan presents himself as emotionally impacted by it. However, weakness soon turns into controlling argumentation. Hasan turns to facts, pointing out that the vast majority of Muslims worldwide oppose violence. The core of intellectual masculinity is this transition from emotion to facts. Hasan quickly switches between personal testimony and empirical argument to build authority.

Citation of religion is also important. Hasan uses Qur'an 5:32 to denounce violence, portraying the text as moral proof rather than illogical dogma. By doing this, he presents Islam in a way that is consistent with liberal reason. Hasan's argument style also perpetuates a number of elite British masculinity norms. His pacing accelerates during rebuttals, his tone sharpens when challenged, and he frequently interrupts opponents to reclaim the floor. Such moments reveal the influence of Oxford debating culture. Crucially, Hasan's act deviates from respectability politics in liberal multiculturalism. He offers more than just an apology for radicalism. Rather, he vigorously challenges how Islam is framed. Therefore, his masculinity is combative rationalism rather than passive moderation. The conflicts noted by Connell and Puar are reflected in this hybrid performance. Despite his continued racial and religious marginalization, Hasan has some access to hegemonic masculinity through institutional literacy and mastery of rhetoric.

Head-to-Head and the Performance of Adversarial Masculinity

A notable increase in rhetorical hostility may be seen in Hasan's 2019 conversation with Erik Prince. In this instance, Hasan fully embraces the British media tradition of confrontational interviews. The interaction sets up a conflict between two opposing masculine stereotypes.

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Prince is a prime example of corporate and militarized masculinity: affluent, white, involved in state violence, and connected to Blackwater's activities in Iraq. Hasan is the epitome of postcolonial and intellectual masculinity.

Hasan uses interruption to take control of the discourse right away. Hasan instantly reframes the conversation using the word "massacre" when Prince tries to euphemistically refer to Blackwater's actions as "security contracting." The interruption serves as a moral redefinition as well as an act of hostility. Throughout the interview Hasan repeatedly cites reports, statistics, and governmental findings. He makes extensive use of documentary evidence. Because Hasan cannot rely only on institutional legitimacy, as Jeremy Paxman did, this empirical method is essential. He needs to keep proving his authority. This dynamic is reinforced by visual performance. Hasan speaks quickly, keeps eye contact, leans forward, and makes movements with documents. At first, Prince exhibits easy dominance, but with time, he grows defensive and clearly upset.

Hasan's postcolonial awareness is also revealed in the conversation. Hasan shifts the conversation from abstract security concerns to issues of empire and accountability by bringing up histories of Western imperialism and connecting them to current military operations. Interestingly, Hasan makes few overt allusions to Islam during the conversation. He is able to occupy universal liberal ground while subtly advocating for Muslim war victims thanks to this secular framing. In this case, his authority is not theological but rather legal. Thus, what this essay refers to as antagonistic intellectual masculinity is embodied in the Prince interview. Hasan challenges tangible power by using preparation, interruption, and precise words as weapons.

Zeteo and Platform Masculinity

Mehdi Hasan's mediated persona had a significant shift in 2024 with the introduction of *Zeteo*, indicating his transition from institutional broadcast journalism to entrepreneurial platform media. This shift is profoundly ideological and gendered in addition to being professional. Hasan's exit from MSNBC and subsequent establishment of a stand-alone, subscriber-supported platform are indicative of larger structural changes in modern journalism, where authority is increasingly derived from audience loyalty, digital platforms, and personal brands rather than from established organizations like newspapers or cable networks. Therefore, Hasan's platform turns sheds light on how media power, labour, and masculinity are evolving in the digital age.

Journalism scholars contend that the growth of platform capitalism and the erosion of institutional trust have radically changed the cultural definition of journalistic authority. According to Nikki Usher, journalists are increasingly framing their freedom from institutional

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authority as a sign of masculine authenticity, bravery, and truth-telling, a phenomenon known as "platform masculinity" (Usher 2036). In this context, the journalist becomes a founder, entrepreneur, and ideological dissenter rather than just an employee or anchor. Authority is no longer guaranteed by institutional affiliation; instead, it must be performed continuously through visibility, charisma, and audience engagement.

This shift is best illustrated by Hasan's introduction of *Zeteo*. His exit from corporate cable news is seen as a moral liberation rather than a career dislocation. He portrays himself as a journalist freed from editorial timidity and institutional control, able to finally express the truth without holding back. This performance of platform masculinity revolves around Hasan's debut video's visual elements. In contrast to *MSNBC's* polished and heavily marketed setting, which features formal work arrangements, shiny blue lighting, and a corporate visual identity, the *Zeteo* launch trailer takes a purposefully basic approach. In front of a subdued gray backdrop, Hasan speaks straight at the camera without the ornate staging typical of broadcast television. Authenticity is performed by this visual simplicity. Minimalism frequently serves as rhetorical evidence of sincerity in the culture of digital media.

According to Sarah Banet-Weiser, media personalities are encouraged to portray themselves as unvarnished and autonomous even inside very strategic branding systems since modern platform culture commodifies "authenticity" itself (Banet-Weiser 49). As a result, Hasan's simple visual approach conveys a detachment from corporate mediation. Transparency, seriousness, and moral urgency are suggested by the grey background, lack of eye-catching images, and conversational tone. This artistic approach is consistent with more general post-network digital journalism tendencies. Founders of independent media often create visual identities that are very different from those of institutional television. Home offices, direct-to-camera speeches, simple setups, and podcast studios have come to symbolize intellectual freedom. The rejection of institutional polish frequently determines the aesthetics of the "independent thinker." This symbolic economy is involved in Hasan's *Zeteo* launch. The lack of corporate spectacle turns into an actual show in and of itself.

Hasan clearly presents *Zeteo* as a reaction to institutional limitations in mainstream journalism at the discursive level. He makes numerous allusions to editorial caution, advertiser pressure, and the shrinking parameters of acceptable political discourse in his launch statement. The inference is clear: legacy media organizations stifle opposing viewpoints, especially when it comes to matters like Palestine, US foreign policy, and militarism, even though he refrains from making overt personal assaults on *MSNBC* executives. In order to avoid institutional domestication, Hasan presents himself as a truth-teller. The entrepreneurial mythology of

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platform journalism, according to Usher, is heavily reflected in this vocabulary, where quitting institutions is seen as a manly act of bravery and independence (Usher 2041).

Crucially, there is a strong gender component to this story of freedom. Freedom from institutional control is constructed by platform masculinity as a sign of authenticity and strength. The creator is praised for their willingness to take chances, defy bureaucratic supervision, and autonomously create new media infrastructures. The "founder culture" of Silicon Valley, where masculine identity is frequently associated with disruption, invention, and anti-establishment individualism, is very similar to this entrepreneurial mythos. This larger neoliberal discourse of entrepreneurial self-making informs Hasan's launch speech. His constant focus on "building something new" places him as a creator and builder of alternative media space in addition to a journalist.

However, because it is overtly racialized and diasporic, Hasan's performance of platform masculinity is very different from that of many white male digital entrepreneurs. Hasan places his business identity within a history of migration, struggle, and postcolonial tenacity, in contrast to libertarian or anti-establishment media characters who interpret independence exclusively via individual freedom. He talks about his Muslim family from Hyderabad and the sacrifices his immigrant parents made in the launch video. Hasan turns platform independence into a diasporic story of survival and ambition by referencing Hyderabad and migrant labour. Instead of being solely individual, his entrepreneurial identity becomes collective. Because it challenges prevailing neoliberal notions of self-made success, this racialization of platform masculinity is important. Diaspora studies scholars have long maintained that rather than being solely motivated by individual aspirations, migrant success narratives are often formed by intergenerational sacrifice and collective duty (Brah 193). This heritage is reflected in Hasan's discourse. He presents Zeteo as an ethical continuation of the migrant struggle rather than just a commercial endeavour. The tenacity of immigrant families overcoming marginalization in Western society is symbolically associated with his independence. In Hasan's case, platform masculinity thus becomes both entrepreneurial and postcolonial.

In this context, Hyderabad's invocation is very significant. Hyderabad has long been associated with South Asian Muslim intellectual culture, linguistic hybridity, and colonial transition. Hasan subtly places himself into broader histories of Muslim movement, colonial displacement, and diasporic adaptation by mentioning his family's origins there. Therefore, his success as an entrepreneur is framed as the continuation of a transnational Muslim intellectual heritage rather than assimilation into American capitalism. This is very different from the hyper-

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individualized masculinity often associated with independent media entrepreneurs or Silicon Valley founders.

Hasan's platform shift exposes the inconsistencies and precariousness inherent in digital masculinity. Zeteo gives him more editorial independence, but it also increases his reliance on algorithmic visibility and audience support. Although platform journalism frequently fosters new types of dependency, it also offers freedom from corporate organizations. Hasan is now accountable to subscribers, donors, and digital viewers whose ongoing financial support keeps the channel afloat rather than network executives or advertisers. Because freedom and precarity are co-produced, this dynamic illustrates what academics refer to as the paradox of platform capitalism (Srnicek 71). As a result, the platform journalist needs to perform consistently. Digital founders rely on constant visibility and audience involvement, in contrast to broadcast anchors whose authority is partially derived from institutional longevity. Hasan needs to consistently create material, be relevant to the audience, foster subscriber loyalty, and protect his platform from ideological assaults. His personal branding and authority become inextricably linked. A journalist becomes part of the media ecosystem.

The performative aspect of masculinity is strengthened by this change. The entrepreneur must simultaneously exhibit resilience, decisiveness, intellectual confidence, and emotional authenticity in order to be considered platform masculine. This balancing act is reflected in Hasan's rhetorical approach during the *Zeteo* launch. He portrays himself as emotionally genuine but analytically rigorous, professionally controlled but ethically offended. Because digital audiences increasingly demand constant accessibility and personal transparency from public figures, such performances are labour-intensive.

Hasan's connection to censoring discourse is another example of the paradoxes of digital masculinity. Hasan, like many independent media entrepreneurs, uses the terminology of suppression and silence to describe institutional limitations. However, this discourse is complicated politically. On the one hand, Hasan sincerely criticizes the limitations of mainstream political discourse and corporate caution, especially when it comes to U.S. foreign policy and Palestinian representation. However, platform entrepreneurship itself now revolves around the language of "being silenced." Public intellectuals frequently turn institutional dispute into symbolic capital in the context of digital media. Authenticity is demonstrated through conflict with institutions. Hasan's situation is different since the politics of racialization influence how censorship is perceived and described. In Western media organizations, Muslim journalists and pundits have always faced more scrutiny, particularly when it comes to talks about war, terrorism, and the Middle East. Hasan left *MSNBC* in the midst of intense discussions about pro-

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Palestinian voices in American journalism and media coverage of Gaza. As a result, his story of editorial restraint touches on larger histories of Islamophobic mistrust and racialized exclusion. In Hasan's instance, the racial politics of visibility themselves are inextricably linked to the politics of platform masculinity.

Hasan's ethical framing has remained relatively consistent throughout his career, despite these structural changes. Hasan consistently portrays journalism as a kind of moral responsibility rather than just information creation, whether at the *Oxford Union*, on *Al Jazeera*, at *MSNBC*, or through *Zeteo*. Justice, telling the truth, and accountability to underrepresented groups are constant themes in his discourse. There are indications of prophetic ethics in his discourse even when overtly religious rhetoric is muted.

In order to interact in secular public spaces, Amanullah De Sondy contends that modern Muslim public personalities frequently adapt Islamic ethical concepts into universal humanism language (De Sondy 141). Hasan is a prime example of this dynamic. His moral lexicon, which is focused on accountability, oppression, and speaking truth to power, recalls prophetic traditions within Islamic ethics, even if his journalism rarely explicitly highlights theology. This continuity is significant because it shows that Hasan's intellectual masculinity encompasses both ethical orientation and strategic performance. His combative approach is presented as a moral obligation rather than a spectacle in and of itself.

Hasan attains what could be called subcultural hegemony in progressive digital journalism through Zeteo. He holds a position of leadership, prominence, and influence inside this particular media environment. He becomes the institution itself rather than just an employee working under institutional supervision. He establishes the platform's ideological character, employs contributors, and sets editorial direction. According to Connell, Hasan transitions from a position of marginalized masculinity in mainstream American television to a more dominant role in a forward-thinking digital area (Connell 81). However, this hegemony is still restricted and contingent. In comparison to prominent network anchors and corporate media elites, Hasan continues to hold a marginal place within the larger American television culture. He doesn't have the same level of institutional importance as people like Chris Wallace or Anderson Cooper. His power is still focused in internet and progressive niche audiences rather than throughout the country's media landscape.

The splintered character of authority in the platform era is revealed by this tension. There is no longer a single, cohesive hegemonic center in modern media culture. Rather, a number of overlapping publics vie for legitimacy and prominence. *Zeteo* by Hasan is a prime example of how underrepresented voices can use alternative infrastructures to gain substantial influence

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while still being shut out of mainstream institutional dominance. Hasan's move to *Zeteo* highlights how media work, racism, and masculinity are changing under platform capitalism. His decision to become an entrepreneur is a reflection of larger changes in journalism, where authority is becoming more and more dependent on audience intimacy, internet visibility, and self-branding. However, Hasan's platform masculinity is still unique because it is influenced by Muslim ethical discourse, postcolonial history, and diaspora. He portrays not just the architect of neoliberalism but also the intellectual entrepreneur of the diaspora, whose power comes from a combination of rhetorical precision, moral seriousness, and migrant tenacity.

Comparative Framework: Hasan, Paxman, and Ravish Kumar

When Mehdi Hasan, Jeremy Paxman, and Ravish Kumar are compared, it becomes clear that adversarial journalism is never just a neutral professional approach but rather a culturally coded presentation of masculinity influenced by colonial history, racism, class, language, and institutional legitimacy. Despite the fact that all three personalities are connected to confrontational interviewing techniques, their performances have quite diverse meanings because they work in different media ecologies and hold different positions within hegemonic power systems. Their divergent approaches show that journalistic masculinity is historically conditioned and politically mediated rather than universal. One can gain a better understanding of how media masculinity functions in postcolonial and transnational contexts by contrasting Hasan's "intellectual masculinity" with Paxman's patrician authority and Kumar's vernacular moralism.

In British TV journalism, Jeremy Paxman is arguably the most well-known example of confrontational masculinity. Paxman developed the image of the unrelenting interrogator whose power came from institutional importance and elite British confidence throughout his lengthy career on BBC Newsnight. Repetition, sarcasm, interruptions, extended eye contact, and obvious skepticism characterized his interviewing approach, which came to be associated with what detractors frequently referred to as "Paxmanism" (Higgins 44). However, because Paxman's violence came from within the symbolic authority of the BBC an organization traditionally linked to reason, impartiality, and national legitimacy it was culturally understandable as professionalism.

Paxman's masculinity can be characterized as patrician masculinity, a type of elite male authority based on institutional power, upper-middle-class confidence, Oxbridge culture, and whiteness. Since the BBC itself serves as a legitimizing framework, his performance rarely needs to be justified. Because institutional power is ingrained in systems of cultural capital that normalize elite behaviour, Pierre Bourdieu contends that it frequently appears natural (Bourdieu 170). Paxman's interruptions are seen as proof of journalistic discipline rather than emotional

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excess. Because white British masculinity has historically occupied the normative center of public discourse, his confidence is interpreted as intellectual seriousness rather than arrogance.

In his well-known 1997 interview with Conservative MP Michael Howard, Paxman repeatedly asked, "Did you threaten to overrule him?" twelve times, demonstrating this institutional trust (BBC). Since then, the exchange has become a classic example of adversarial journalism in British media mythology. However, Paxman's perseverance and the ease with which he assumes the position of interrogator make the moment illuminating. Before challenging political authority, he never has to prove his validity. His institutional affiliation, accent, and whiteness already indicate reason and reliability. Because Paxman represents a masculinity that is both institutionally and culturally accepted, Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity is helpful in this situation (Connell 77). From a position of presumed belonging, he engages in confrontation. By contrast, Hasan inherits Paxman's adversarial format without inheriting the structures that make such aggression culturally effortless. Similar strategies rapid interruptions, forensic probing, prolonged eye contact, and moral confrontation are frequently used in Hasan's interviews, but their reception is essentially influenced by race and religion. Hasan's assertiveness runs the risk of being interpreted through Islamophobic frameworks of rage, fanaticism, or extremism because he is brown and Muslim. This exposes the racial imbalance that underlies media power. The same performative act interruption carries radically different meanings depending upon who performs it.

Whiteness serves as an invisible standard in Western media culture, as scholars of racial discourse have frequently observed (Hall 225). Because neutrality is racially coded, white male journalists like Paxman are rarely asked to demonstrate their neutrality. However, Hasan enters media environments that are already tainted with distrust. His body is overdetermined by post-9/11 narratives concerning Muslim masculinity. According to Jasbir Puar, Muslim men are often framed in Western political discourse through what she refers to as "terrorist masculinity," a figure linked to violence, irrationality, and the threat to civilization (Puar 161). As a result, Hasan's interviews take place in a highly scrutinized environment. He has to constantly manage the possibility that his assertiveness will be seen as a sign of emotional instability rather than professionalism.

Hasan compensates through evidentiary rigor. Unlike Paxman, whose authority often derives from demeanor alone, Hasan constructs legitimacy through preparation, documentation, and factual precision. Statistics, reports, quotes, and archive references abound throughout his interviews. Hasan frequently uses official records, casualty statistics, and congressional findings to support his argument in his conversation with Erik Prince. This evidentiary style reflects what

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may be called intellectual masculinity: a mode of masculine authority rooted not in institutional inheritance but in epistemic labour. The distinction is crucial. Paxman can interrupt because he represents the institution; Hasan interrupts in order to earn institutional legitimacy. As a result, his masculinity is essentially labour-intensive and performative. It requires constant demonstration of proficiency. In *Win Every Argument*, Hasan himself recognizes this dynamic and highlights preparation as the most important tool against formidable opponents (Hasan 43). In racist media culture, preparation becomes a survival tactic rather than just a professional skill.

Hasan's intellectual masculinity challenges the notion that white Western men are inherently capable of rational authority. Hasan appropriates the very rhetorical traditions traditionally associated with imperial British masculinity by becoming an expert in elite debate culture. His forensic interviewing style, Oxford education, and command of political discourse turn the instruments of elite British journalism into tools of postcolonial critique. In this way, Hasan's performances demonstrate what Homi Bhabha refers to as colonial mimicry, which is the appropriation of imperial forms by the colonized subject in ways that quietly undermine imperial authority itself (Bhabha 86). Hasan exposes the establishment's exclusions while speaking its language. If Paxman represents institutional hegemonic masculinity and Hasan represents diasporic intellectual masculinity, Ravish Kumar offers yet another model that may be termed vernacular moral masculinity. The tone, cadence, and rhetorical approach of Kumar's journalism, especially during his tenure at NDTV, are very different from those of Paxman and Hasan. Kumar frequently uses silence, patience, and emotional control, while Paxman and Hasan often use interruption to dominate. His interviews are more conversational, slower, and quieter. He often waits after posing a question, exposing evasiveness through discomfort and quiet.

A distinct kind of masculine dominance is shown by this use of quiet. Kumar's reserve conveys moral gravity and ethical endurance as opposed to hostile disruption. Siddhartha Rao describes this style as “vernacular masculinity,” rooted less in elite institutional aggression than in ethical proximity to ordinary citizens (Rao 214). Because of his Hindi-language journalism, Kumar is more in touch with the general populace than with the elite culture of the city. Instead of using dominance, his masculinity is revealed via witness, empathy, and sincerity. Here, the linguistic aspect is particularly crucial. English, which has historically been connected to elite education, colonial government, and international journalism, is the primary language used by both Paxman and Hasan. In contrast, Kumar uses Hindi, which has distinct cultural and socioeconomic connotations in Indian media culture, to perform masculinity. Hindi journalism has historically been positioned as more populist and less cosmopolitan than English-language media. Kumar’s authority therefore derives not from elite polish but from vernacular intimacy.

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He cultivates emotional solidarity rather than institutional isolation by addressing viewers as "doston," or "friends," rather than as impersonal citizens. Different perspectives on nationalism and postcolonial identity are also reflected in this divide. The British establishment is strongly associated with Paxman's masculinity. Hasan's masculinity is global and diasporic, balancing American media culture, Muslim identity, and Britishness. In contrast, Kumar's masculinity is firmly rooted in Indian democratic concerns about linguistic hierarchy, media control, and authoritarianism. His controlled approach frequently serves as moral opposition to the hyper-nationalist violence that permeates a large portion of modern Indian television news.

The three journalists' connections to organizations and online media platforms also vary greatly. The BBC played a major role in securing Paxman's power. His reputation was linked to the prestige of British public broadcasting even after he quit full-time broadcast journalism. However, institutional rupture happened to both Kumar and Hasan. Following mounting political and business pressure related to the Adani deal, Kumar left *NDTV* and eventually turned to independent and digital media (Kumar). In a similar vein, Hasan quit *MSNBC* before starting *Zeteo* in 2024. These changes reflect more general changes in journalism, as authority is moving more and more from institutions to platforms and individual brands. However, there are differences in the aesthetics of masculinity even here. Hasan's platform masculinity is still global and professional. There are remnants of elite broadcast journalism in his visual presentation, which includes professional branding, crisp rhetoric, and studio lighting. In contrast, Kumar's online presence is quite private and austere. He frequently makes appearances in straightforward monologues, modest studio settings, and plain attire. Kumar plays the ethical witness, whereas Hasan plays the intellectual founder. Both use distinct masculine scripts to subvert established institutions.

Thus, the comparison of Hasan, Paxman, and Kumar shows how highly field-dependent masculinity is in journalism. Connell highlights that rather than being a single, universal form, hegemonic masculinity varies depending on historical and institutional conditions (Connell 81). Because Paxman's masculinity is consistent with prevailing racial, class, and institutional legitimacy systems, it is hegemonic in British public broadcasting. In vernacular digital publics that prioritize moral sincerity above elite aggression, Kumar's masculinity becomes hegemonic. Between these structures, Hasan is in an unstable transitional position. He shares Kumar's experience navigating institutional precarity and exclusion while utilizing Paxman's confrontational tactics. This middle ground is deeply postcolonial. Hasan challenges the racial presumptions of Western institutions that have historically been established by empire. He is not entirely inside or outside of hegemonic systems. His masculinity therefore remains hybrid,

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adaptive, and performative. In response to racialized expectations, he must constantly adjust his level of anger, civility, evidence, and emotional tone. The unequal constraints governing access to media authority in modern liberal democracies are exposed by such work.

In the end, the comparative approach makes the main point of this paper clear: masculinity in journalism is a socially created performance mediated by race, language, colonial history, institutional legitimacy, and platform economics rather than just a question of personality or style. The confidence of the establishment is indicated by Paxman's interruptions. Kumar is an ethical witness through his silences. Diasporic intellectual conflict is symbolized by Hasan's evidential hostility. When taken as a whole, these three individuals show that adversarial journalism is also a struggle over whose masculinity is seen as genuine, authoritative, and reasonable in public society.

Intellectual Masculinity as Diasporic Performance

Across the three case studies examined in this article the 2013 *Oxford Union* debate, the 2019 *Head to Head* interview with Erik Prince, and the 2024 launch of *Zeteo*, the mediated masculinity of Mehdi Hasan emerges as fundamentally diasporic in structure, performance, and political meaning. A constant balancing act between institutional inclusion and racial otherness, legitimacy and suspicion, and belonging and exclusion shapes Hasan's public character. As a Muslim of Indian Hyderabadi descent who was born in Britain and works in prestigious Anglo-American media organizations, Hasan represents what Homi Bhabha refers to as the "in-between" state of postcolonial identity, existing in a transitional cultural space that is neither completely outside of dominant structures of power nor fully assimilated (Bhabha 56). As a result, his masculinity is never just "performed"; rather, it is continuously translated across institutional, racial, religious, and national settings.

In Hasan's instance, understanding diasporic masculinity is inextricably linked to the colonial pasts that still influence how the West views South Asian and Muslim men today. In order to defend imperial dominance, colonized masculine subjects were often feminized in colonial language. Bengali and South Asian men were portrayed by colonial administrators as "effeminate," emotionally unstable, intellectually weak, and incapable of political self-rule, according to Mrinalini Sinha's seminal study of British colonial India (Sinha 15). As a result, colonial masculinity was racialized: British men saw themselves as virile, disciplined, and logical, whereas colonized men were seen as submissive and unworthy. These caricatures served as ideological justifications for the empire itself rather than being accidental biases. To rule colonized populations, imperial discourse first had to construct them as insufficiently masculine and therefore unfit for sovereignty.

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Even in seemingly liberal democracies, postcolonial migrants inherit these historical structures. Contradictory images of excess and emasculation have frequently been used to portray South Asian men in the United States and Britain. South Asian masculinity was often classified as bookish, socially awkward, meek, or desexualized in Western media prior to the War on Terror. Stereotypes in popular culture portrayed brown men as academically capable but socially undesirable, technologically proficient yet physically frail. But with 9/11, a more recent language of securitized hypermasculinity collided with these earlier colonial stereotypes. Muslim men were increasingly portrayed as dangerously aggressive, irrationally violent, patriarchal, and politically hazardous rather than as weak (Puar 161). Thus, Muslim masculinity became trapped within a contradictory binary: simultaneously feminized and hypermasculinized, ridiculed and feared, invisible and hypervisible.

According to Jasbir Puar, Muslim males were portrayed in post-9/11 Western political discourse as representatives of "terrorist masculinity," which is characterized by sexism, extremism, and a lack of civilization (Puar 167). Both domestic surveillance and overseas military intervention were justified by this narrative. The male Muslim body became a source of mistrust, seen as a possible security risk rather than as an individual. Because they question the racialized presumptions that underlie both colonial and modern depictions of Muslim men, Hasan's public performances take on greater significance in this context. His media presence demands a distinct definition of Muslim masculinity, one based on intellectual rigor, rhetorical discipline, and ethical seriousness rather than violence or subordination.

Thus, it is possible to see Hasan's masculinity as a type of diasporic intellectual performance. In contrast to hegemonic Western masculinity, which frequently views authority as inherent or self-evident, Hasan's authority needs to be consistently proven and upheld. In a racialized media environment, his interruptions, citations, quick information recall, and deliberately modulated tone are more than just stylistic decisions; they are survival tactics. Because Muslimness in Western speech is often labelled as irrational or emotionally overwhelming, Hasan must continuously demonstrate his reason. Thus, his performances exemplify what Frantz Fanon refers to as the "burden of representation" imposed on coloured subjects who have to constantly navigate the dominant culture's gaze (Fanon 109).

This load is particularly evident in Hasan's anger management. In media culture, anger inhabits a highly racialized space. Aggressive political commentators or white male journalists like Jeremy Paxman are frequently praised for their bravery, toughness, or assertiveness. However, similar actions by brown or Muslim men run the risk of being perceived as radicalism or instability. As a result, Hasan's performances highlight the uneven politics of emotional

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validity. He must continue to be assertive without reinforcing Islamophobic stereotypes, enthusiastic without coming across as obsessive, and forceful without coming off as uncontrollable. Extraordinary rhetorical discipline is needed for this balancing task.

This relationship is perfectly captured by the term "intellectual masculinity," which is created in this article. Instead of using physical dominance or nationalist aggressiveness, Hasan creates masculine authority through preparation, evidence, discussion, and institutional fluency. Argumentation is the source of his authority. He makes the assertion that knowledge itself can serve as male capital, which could be referred to as epistemic masculinity. In this way, Hasan turns weapons traditionally associated with elite Western masculinity like juridical reasoning, Oxford debating culture, and journalistic interrogation into tools of postcolonial resistance. However, this change is never final or steady. Hasan's access to prestigious media outlets is still contingent. Structures of suspicion continue to be applied on his dark Muslim body. According to Stuart Hall, methods of encoding that influence how audiences understand identity before speech even starts are how racial representation functions (Hall 225). As a result, Hasan is already heavily influenced by racial rhetoric when he engages with the media. Stereotypes may be challenged by his persuasive speech and rigorous evidence, but they do not eliminate the circumstances that initially need such overperformance.

Maintaining intellectual masculinity requires a great deal of work. Because errors have disproportionate repercussions, Hasan must always be well-prepared, calm, and factually accurate. A white journalist may be able to withstand factual mistakes or emotional outbursts without having their whole identification category called into question. But every time Hasan fails, he runs the risk of becoming a symbol of larger stories about Muslims and immigration. As a result, his performances require what Erving Goffman refers to as "impression management," which is the ongoing control of conduct in reaction to expected social assessment (Goffman 35). The politicization of representation itself makes this management more intense for racialized media characters. This work encompasses broader structures of diasporic life in addition to journalism. Migration scholars have repeatedly observed that, in order to survive in discriminatory societies, immigrant communities usually place a high value on professional respectability and academic success (Brah 193). This larger diasporic ethic is reflected in Hasan's emphasis on preparation, proof, and rhetorical skill. Intellectual achievement becomes a collective defence against racial marginalization rather than just a personal goal. Thus, both personal agency and social historical pressure influence Hasan's performances.

Intellectual masculinity also offers genuine types of empowerments. Because of his linguistic prowess, Hasan may enter areas that have traditionally been dominated by white male

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authority leaders. He can confront politicians, military contractors, and media organizations on highly visible stages thanks to his Oxford degree, television presence, and digital platform. In this way, marginalized men use intellectual masculinity as a means of gaining access to hegemonic institutions without completely integrating into them. Hasan challenges the exclusions of elite Western media while speaking its language. Therefore, hybridity rather than assimilation characterizes his diasporic masculinity. According to Homi Bhabha, cultural meanings are negotiated rather than established in a "third space" where colonial and postcolonial identities develop (Bhabha 54). Such a place is occupied by Hasan's public persona. He blends professional journalism with activist moral urgency, Oxford debating strategies with anti-imperial critique, and Islamic ethical discourse with secular liberal argumentation. Simplistic divisions between "Western" and "Muslim" identities are undermined by this hybridity. Hasan's masculinity serves as an example of how diaspora subjects can both appropriate and expose the racial and imperial presumptions that are ingrained in elite institutional forms.

Hasan's cerebral masculinity also highlights the emotional costs associated with representation. Self-monitoring all the time leads to fatigue. What W. E. B. Du Bois refers to as "double consciousness," or the experience of simultaneously perceiving oneself through one's own perspective and via the hostile gaze of dominant culture, is reflected in the desire to always be eloquent and collected (Du Bois 8). In addition to performing for his audience, Hasan defies the preconceived notions of Islamophobic criticism. As a result, his cerebral masculinity becomes a burden as well as an armour. In digital media ecologies that are marked by algorithmic outrage and constant visibility, this weight becomes more intense. Social media tools increase scrutiny by allowing both fans and detractors to instantly share videos, statements, and emotional responses. As a result, Hasan's performances are no longer limited to broadcast temporality; rather, they are part of an ongoing digital archive where each action may be politicized, replayed, and reimagined. Thus, maintaining intellectual masculinity in the platform era necessitates ongoing attention to detail. The journalist becomes a constantly watched public brand in addition to being a media professional.

Hasan's move from *MSNBC* to *Zeteo* illustrates how entrepreneurial self-fashioning is becoming a more common way for diasporic intellectual masculinity to function. Hasan has more editorial freedom thanks to platform journalism, but it also increases audience dependence and personal branding. He now needs to keep his influence by subscriber loyalty and persistent digital charisma in addition to journalism. Authenticity itself is becoming more and more

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commodified by modern media workers, as platform capitalism experts point out (Banet-Weiser 52). As a result, Hasan's intellectual masculinity and digital labour become inextricably linked.

Hasan's performances continue to have political significance because they question the limited frames of representation that Muslim males have historically been subjected to. He does not fit either the liberal cosmopolitan idea of silent thankfulness or the stereotype of the violent extremist. Rather, he occupies a third position: that of the diasporic scholar-combatant whose power comes from preparation, intelligence, and rhetorical conflict. This figure broadens the representational opportunities for diaspora people in Western media culture and challenges prevailing notions of Muslim masculinity.

In the end, intellectual masculinity as a diasporic performance highlights the conflicting dynamics of inclusion in modern liberal democracies. Hasan's achievements show that Muslim males may become visible and powerful in high-level organizations, but his persistent need to outperform reason highlights the unfair circumstances that underlie this inclusion. Thus, intellectual masculinity serves as both discipline and empowerment at the same time. While granting access to hegemonic places, it also requires constant self-control, poise, and flawless evidence. Thus, Hasan's career sheds light on both the potential for diasporic media presence and the unseen work necessary to maintain it.

Pedagogical Implications

Mehdi Hasan's mediated performances offer incredibly rich teaching resources for modern media studies, gender studies, cultural studies, journalism, rhetoric, political communication, and postcolonial humanities schools. In addition to serving as media texts, Hasan's interviews, debates, and platformed journalism serve as performative archives that allow students to analyse how race, masculinity, religion, empire, and digital communication connect in the twenty-first century. Hasan's rhetorical style provides educators with a modern case study through which theories of discourse, power, and identity can be made accessible and materially relevant to students in a time when journalism increasingly functions through spectacle, algorithmic circulation, and ideological polarization. His public persona is particularly useful pedagogically because it sits at the intersection of multiple debates central to humanities education today: Islamophobia, media ethics, adversarial journalism, diaspora identity, platform capitalism, and the politics of representation.

Hasan's interviews show how authority is created audiovisually rather than only orally in media studies schools. Vocal modulation, posture, camera framing, interruption patterns, editing rhythms, and audience response rather than just content are all ways that media authority is

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established, according to television and communication studies scholars (Buchbinder 91). These dynamics are very evident in Hasan's performances. For instance, students studying his *Head-to-Head* interview with Erik Prince can look at how camera cuts affect viewers' perceptions of moral authority, how factual citation builds credibility, and how interruption serves rhetorically as a device of domination. Through this kind of study, students are able to see journalism as a highly performative and ideological profession rather than just as impartial information transmission. Stuart Hall contends that media representations actively create cultural meanings through framing and selection processes rather than just reflecting reality (Hall 64). As a result, Hasan's performances serve as educational resources for comprehending how public views of Islam, masculinity, and governmental legitimacy are influenced by journalistic discourse.

Raewyn Connell's idea of hegemonic masculinity can be taught with great benefit from Hasan's interviews. Connell views masculinity as a hierarchy of socially constructed gender practices organized by power dynamics rather than as a biological essence (Connell 77). Students can recognize how oppressed masculinities negotiate access to hegemonic authority in classroom contexts thanks to Hasan's media performances.

In contrast to white journalists like Jeremy Paxman, whose institutional authority is culturally accepted, Hasan has to constantly demonstrate expertise, calmness, and reason to refute prejudiced presumptions about Muslim male aggression. As a result, students can compare how diverse interpretations of masculinity are based on national identity, religion, and race. While similar actions by white journalists are seen as professionalism or toughness, Hasan's interruptions may be seen as "aggressive" or "angry." Students can comprehend how hegemonic masculinity functions intersectionally through race and religion rather than just gender through this kind of comparison analysis.

The relevance of Judith Butler's performativity theory to Hasan's public persona is equally significant. Butler contends that rather than coming from an underlying identity, gender is created through "a stylized repetition of acts" (Butler 179). It is possible to interpret Hasan's repetitive actions as performative acts that generate intellectual masculinity, such as leaning forward during interviews, quickly providing evidence, interrupting opponents, maintaining intense eye contact, and altering vocal cadence. When students can see performativity in modern media instead of just via abstract philosophical literature, classroom interaction with Butlerian theory becomes more accessible. Through audience recognition, quotation, and repetition, Hasan's performances eloquently illustrate how gender is enacted. As a result, students might be inspired to examine Hasan as well as their own gender and authority performances in professional, academic, and online contexts.

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Hasan's work offers a useful starting point for studying Orientalism and postcolonial philosophy. Western discourse has long portrayed the "Orient" as illogical, emotional, backward, and feminine in contrast to the rational and masculine West, as demonstrated by Edward Said's fundamental point in *Orientalism* (Said 40). These colonial dichotomies are immediately challenged by Hasan's rhetorical approach. Orientalist presumptions about Muslim irrationality are undermined by his command of Oxford-style debating culture, factual argumentation, and liberal political language. When examining Hasan's Oxford Union address, students can see how a Muslim speaker challenges the ideological underpinnings of Western portrayals of Islam while also appropriating elite Western rhetorical traditions. This makes it possible to talk about how postcolonial subjects deal with institutions that have historically been shaped by empire.

Hasan's work provides a critical framework for talking about modern Islamophobia and racialized citizenship, particularly in South Asian colleges. Muslim men are often framed by themes of violence, extremism, demographic fear, or cultural incompatibility in media portrayals of Muslims in India, the UK, Europe, and the US (Meer et al. 1347). These narratives are complicated by Hasan's media presence, which portrays a well-spoken, combative, cosmopolitan, and institutionally savvy Muslim public intellectual. Thus, teaching Hasan enables students to question the creation and dissemination of media stereotypes. It also makes it possible to compare local and international anti-Muslim rhetoric. Such instructional engagement can promote critical media literacy and democratic discourse for students in areas characterized by ethnic conflict, militarization, or community tensions.

Hasan is a crucial case study for comprehending platform capitalism and the political economy of digital journalism because of his move from *MSNBC* to *Zeteo*. Subscription models, personal branding, algorithmic exposure, and parasocial audience relationships are widely used in modern media. According to academics like Nikki Usher, journalists in the platform era frequently portray entrepreneurial freedom as a masculine attribute connected to authenticity and defiance of institutional control (Usher 2036). Students have the chance to examine how digital platforms alter journalistic authority thanks to Hasan's introduction of *Zeteo*. Questions like: What happens when journalism becomes personality-driven? can be discussed in class. Does platform independence increase ideological polarization or improve democratic accountability? What effects do subscription economies have on editing practices? These inquiries link theoretical media analysis to actual changes in the journalism sector.

Hasan's interviews are very helpful for teaching multimodal discourse analysis from a methodological perspective. Practical analytical tasks such as tracking evidentiary appeals, assessing facial expressions, analyzing camera angles, and categorizing interruption frequency

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might be given to students. These exercises assist students in realizing that media texts convey information not only via words but also through visual and performative aspects. For instance, students could examine how silence, tone, and posture differentially create masculine authority in various cultural contexts by contrasting Hasan's interviewing approach with that of Ravish Kumar or Paxman. By encouraging students to integrate theoretical interpretation with actual observation, these exercises enhance analytical rigor. From a pedagogical standpoint, Hasan's debates offer chances to teach reasoning and rhetoric. Hasan's focus on preparation, evidence, and quick response provides a model for teaching argumentative literacy in an era marked by false information, divisive social media debate, and dwindling public confidence in institutions. His book *Win Every Argument* can be used for public speaking courses, mock interviews, and classroom debating activities. Students can work on creating arguments supported by facts, spotting logical fallacies, and answering challenging questions. These teaching strategies are particularly beneficial in humanities classrooms where students are under growing pressure to exhibit both academic knowledge and transferable communication skills.

Teaching Hasan necessitates appropriate ethical framing. Reducing classroom participation to either joy or censure carries a danger. Therefore, educators need to promote varied perspectives and critical distance. Important ethical concerns about decorum, disruption, and media spectacle are brought up by Hasan's combative interviewing approach. While some students could see his method as performative aggressiveness, others might see it as essential accountability journalism. Because they compel students to consider more general issues with democratic communication, these arguments are beneficial from an educational standpoint: What is the difference between bullying and diligent journalism? Is it feasible for political media to be "neutral"? When is interruption no longer considered rudeness but rather ethical resistance? Instead of encouraging ideological uniformity, these conversations foster critical thinking. Teachers might highlight the emotional aspects of media representation by teaching Hasan. Muslim students frequently come into media discourses that shape their identities through distrust or securitization in Western or majoritarian contexts. By critically analyzing Hasan's media appearances, educators can foster classroom environments that encourage candid and critical discussion of identity, representation, and belonging. According to Bell Hooks, critical pedagogy should allow students to make connections between lived experience, structures of dominance, and intellectual inquiry (hooks 40). Such a link between theory and actual sociopolitical realities is offered by Hasan's public persona.

Hasan's work can also be linked to more general discussions about neoliberalism, digital labour, and self-branding in multidisciplinary humanities programs. His shift to platform

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journalism serves as an example of how, in the context of late capitalism, intellectual labour itself becomes entrepreneurial. Students can examine how journalists are increasingly acting more like brands than institutional employees and how authenticity is commodified in digital media ecologies. Younger students who are already familiar with social media economy and influencer culture find great resonance in these kinds of conversations. In the end, Hasan's educational value comes from his capacity to materialize abstract theoretical discussions. Students can witness the real-time intersections of media power, rhetoric, race, religion, and masculinity through his performances. As a result, Hasan serves as an educational location that allows for the examination of modern democratic culture as well as a journalist to be studied. In the context of racial surveillance, ideological division, and digital development, his interviews and public discussions show how authority is managed. In this way, teaching Hasan is about giving students the analytical skills they need to critically negotiate the mediated politics of the modern world, not just about understanding one journalist.

Conclusion

According to this article, Mehdi Hasan exhibits a unique brand of "intellectual masculinity" based on moral confrontation, evidentiary rigor, rhetorical aggression, and diasporic self-fashioning. This study has tracked the development of a mediated masculine identity that spans theological defence, adversarial journalism, and entrepreneurial platform authority through close readings of Hasan's 2013 *Oxford Union* speech, his 2019 interview with Erik Prince on Head-to-Head, and his 2024 launch of *Zeteo*. By doing this, the paper has shown that Hasan's career provides a compelling case study for comprehending how masculinity functions within the intersections of digital media, postcoloniality, religion, and race.

The investigation has demonstrated that Hasan's masculinity cannot be reduced to clichéd depictions of Muslim male identity in Western discourse or to traditional liberal professionalism. Instead, Hasan creates authority through what this article refers to as "intellectual masculinity," a performative style where moral argumentation, preparation, discussion, and reference serve as masculine capital. Hasan's authority arises through words, proof, and rhetorical control, in contrast to traditional hegemonic masculinities that are based in military might, institutional inheritance, or physical dominance. He frequently highlights research, factual accuracy, and argumentation quickness as indicators of manly competence in his interviews and public appearances. The figure that appears is the scholar-combatant rather than the warrior or father.

In the context of post-9/11 media culture, this distinction is especially crucial. Muslim men in Western discourse are often caught between opposing but equally reductive stereotypes: the violent extremist and the obedient "good Muslim" who must constantly demonstrate his

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moderation, as scholars like Stuart Hall and Jasbir Puar have shown (Puar 161; Hall 247). By rejecting both militancy and contrite respect, Hasan undermines this dichotomy. He asserts his authority through confrontation rather than by being silent or making accommodations. His performances suggest that Muslim men can hold positions of moral, intellectual, and rational dominance without giving up their ethical seriousness or political rage. However, the story has also highlighted how uneven and conditional Hasan's access to authority is. In contrast to hegemonic white journalists like Jeremy Paxman, whose professionalism is presumed by the institution, Hasan has to constantly project calmness and reason to dispel racialized mistrust. His brown Muslim body joins media environments that are already heavily influenced by Islamophobia, securitization, and colonialism. As such, his masculinity necessitates constant effort. Errors have disproportionate effects; thus, he needs to be more prepared, more evidential, and more verbally disciplined than many of his peers. The exercise of authority itself becomes inextricably linked to the burden of representation.

A key component of Hasan's mediated identity is the idea of the "scholar-combatant." Hasan frequently portrays disagreement as a kind of struggle in discussions, interviews, and online broadcasts. However, rather than using physical force, this conflict is carried out through discourse, proof, and institutional literacy. His performances turn argument into a means of self-fashioning and political resistance. In this way, Hasan reinterprets masculine strength as intellectual endurance, the capacity to endure criticism, maintain cool, and resist authority with reason.

Hasan's ethical worldview has remained surprisingly consistent throughout his career despite these structural changes. Hasan consistently portrays journalism as a moral profession focused on responsibility and justice, whether he is defending Islam at the Oxford Union, questioning Erik Prince, anchoring on *MSNBC*, or creating *Zeteo*. His emphasis on truth-telling, anti-imperial critique, and solidarity with underprivileged populations are examples of Islamic ethical discourse, even when overt religious rhetoric is limited. Because it emphasizes how modern Muslim men frequently integrate religious ethical traditions into broader humanistic and political vocabularies, Amanullah De Sondy's work on *Islamic masculinities* is especially helpful in this context (De Sondy 141).

This translation is best illustrated by Hasan's speech. Even when expressed using language from secular media, prophetic principles continue to molds his masculinity. The significance of analyzing masculinity as a relational and field-dependent phenomena is further highlighted by Hasan's career. This article has demonstrated, using R. W. Connell's paradigm, that masculinity is not a fixed identity but rather varies among institutional contexts (Connell

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77). Hasan holds a variety of masculine roles in various media domains: he is hegemonic in progressive digital journalism, marginalized in mainstream American cable television, and hybrid in transnational discussion culture. As a result, his authority is negotiated, flexible, and situation-specific. This fluidity shows that masculinity is a historically placed act influenced by power and recognition mechanisms rather than a permanent nature. By demonstrating how diaspora intellectuals adapt and modify the rhetorical patterns of previous imperial capitals, the work also advances larger discussions in postcolonial media studies. The conflicting dynamics of postcolonial mimicry are made clear by Hasan's Oxford education and command of hostile British debate culture. In order to attack empire, militarism, and racial discrimination, he concurrently makes use of the language, institutions, and argumentation traditions of elite Western journalism. As a result, his performances highlight the conflicts that exist within liberal democratic media systems that assert universality while nevertheless being shaped by disparate racial and imperial histories.

In the end, Hasan's career sheds light on the intricate relationships that exist in the twenty-first century between media, empire, race, religion, and masculinity. His performances highlight the advantages and disadvantages of intellectual masculinity in a media landscape that is platformed and securitized. On the one hand, Hasan shows how Muslim men from the diaspora can assert their public authority through reason, discourse, and moral seriousness, so broadening the range of masculine identity scripts beyond simplistic caricatures. However, his career also highlights the arduous work necessary to maintain such authority in the face of racialized criticism and digital precarity. In this way, Hasan's importance goes beyond journalism. He stands for a more general shift in the way that masculinity is perceived, challenged, and exhibited in modern, international culture. His public character, which is both institutional and insurgent, intellectual and emotionally charged, ostracized and important, diasporic and globally visible, represents the contrasts of the current era. Through Hasan, one can see how masculinity is increasingly mediated through performance, visibility, intellectual work, and platformed discourse rather than through hereditary authority or physical power. Therefore, the rhetorician, the creator, and the scholar-combatant may have a greater role in the future of media masculinity than the father or the warrior.

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