

# LIBERAL OR IMPERIAL? U.S. DISCURSIVE FORMATIONS OF THE MUSLIM IMAGE

WALEED F. MAHDI

Navigating popular conversations around Islam and Muslims across Eastern-Western sociocultural and geopolitical terrains reveals a critical site of inquiry that necessitates unpacking the discursive formations of the Muslim image in the West (i.e. the United States for the purposes of this study), especially in the twenty-first century. The narrative of *Islamophobia* in particular continues to shape Western polarised understandings of Muslims, materialising more frequently in various systematic and popular means of racial profiling that render American Muslims increasingly alienated. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) has published reports since 1995 that demonstrate an increasing sense of antagonism in the U.S. private and public sectors against Muslims, as well as those who are profiled as such, i.e. Sikhs, South Asians, Arabs and others. The September 11th attacks in particular led to the popularised notion of ‘home-grown terror’ and laid American Muslims captive to the *citizen-terrorist* trope (Volpp, 2002).<sup>1</sup> This sense of fear speaks from a history of a dichotomised perception of political Islam, or Islam for the sake of conflation, as the antithesis of Western liberal democracy; thereby stripping history from the complexity of its colonial and postcolonial past.

This work theoretically locates *U.S.-based Islamophobia* in two prominent discourses, i.e., *American orientalism* and *American exceptionalism*. It re-emphasises an argument promoted by Nayak and Malone that international relations scholars interested in exploring U.S. identity and foreign policy need to engage with such discourses (2009). Hence, this chapter seeks to interrogate the underpinnings of the discourses in an attempt to locate the source generating forms of sustenance to the narrative of *Islamophobia*. To this end, my primary argument articulates a paradox essential to the U.S. global identity that celebrates ‘America’ as a set of timeless and universal human ideals, yet confines it to the reality of the ‘United States’ as a nation state. It is this

seemingly contradictory characterisation of the United States, I argue, that misconfigures American attitudes towards and sustains their perceptions, if not misconceptions, of Islam and Muslims. This argument neither brands 9/11 as *the* turning point in the history of the U.S.' encounters with Arabs and Muslims, nor de-emphasises the relevance of this particular incident for Americans and its impact on the lives of millions of Arabs and Muslims, including their diaspora in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

### Why Do They Hate Us?

'Americans are asking', wondered President George W. Bush (2001) in his post-9/11 congressional speech, 'Why do they hate us?' In an attempt to provide an answer to such an urgent question, he speculated:

'They hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other. They want to overthrow existing governments in many Muslim countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. They want to drive Israel out of the Middle East. They want to drive Christians and Jews out of vast regions of Asia and Africa. These terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life. With every atrocity, they hope that America grows fearful, retreating from the world and forsaking our friends. They stand against us because we stand in their way.'

This polarising assessment of the terrorists' cultural and religious identities as the driving force for their extreme acts of violence against civilians in the United States reduces Americans to *infantile citizens*, to borrow Lauren Berlant's (1997) sense of the term,<sup>3</sup> as it renders the history of U.S. foreign policy interventions across the globe in an interlocked rivalry with the Soviet Union absent. It denies Americans the right to self-critique in considering the 9/11 attacks as a 'blowback', to use a popular CIA term, for U.S. short-sighted global politics (Johnson, 2004). Equally important, this response signifies an official endorsement of the validity of Huntington's (1993 and 1996) 'Clash of Civilizations' thesis in describing the prospect of the relationship between the United States and the Arab and Muslim worlds.

This assessment, I argue, is theoretically grounded in a U.S. national narrative that claims uniqueness of the American experience and celebrates the United States as the world's force for goodness. This is further enforced by referencing the U.S. Orientalist repertoire of images that

homogenises Arabs and Muslims and ascribes villainy to them (Said, 1979/1994). The Bush administration's post-9/11 domestic and global policies in combatting terrorism – met with little public criticism in the immediate aftermath of the attacks and further sustained by the Obama administration – reflects a governing continuum deeply shaped by serious national security concerns that foreground the nation's interests and renders Americans with a subscription to Arab or Islamic identities marginal.

In what was billed a critical Cairo speech to Arabs and Muslims, President Barak Obama (2009) attempted to lay out an alternative framework for comprehending the trajectories of U.S.-Muslim tensions. In this way he attempted to offer a different response to the most asked question by Americans, *why do they hate us?* Although he ascribed the tension to many 'historical forces that go beyond any current policy debate', that have manifested in 'conflict and religious wars', he insisted that this tension was fed by 'colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims, and a Cold War in which Muslim-majority countries were too often treated as proxies without regard to their own aspirations'. 'Moreover', he continued, 'the sweeping change brought by modernity and globalisation led many Muslims to view the West as hostile to the traditions of Islam.'

President Obama's explanation, unlike President Bush's identity-based reading of U.S.-Arab/Muslim tensions, challenges the rhetorical norms embraced by U.S. leaders in cleansing the Self (the United States) from any blame in the dramatic escalation of hatred against its foreign policies. It departs from, what Semmerling (2006: pp.5-6) called, Americans' repertoire of 'stereotypes, ideologies and myths' that constitutes their primary cultural code of reference to Arabs and Muslims. More importantly, it invites a rereading of the dominant discursive formations of the Muslim image in American culture that heavily underlay President Bush's speech. To capture this rereading, let us examine such discourses in more depth.

### **Discourses of *Self & Other***

Many U.S. writers, directors, musicians, journalists, media pundits, TV show hosts, cartoonists and even politicians, are still consumed, when making reference to Arabs and Muslims, by a European orientalist heritage that mainstreams politicised Western forms of knowledge of the Orient as a cultural other (Said, 1979/1994). This heritage has long defined the logic, if not legitimacy, of Western forms of colonialism (European)

and neo-colonialism (American), (Said, 1993). The American orientalist project, Said argued, is especially politicised by the presence of Israel – a self-declared ‘Western’ state with a unique U.S. alliance – in ‘the middle of Islamic oriental world’, which produces a heavily-circulating rhetoric in U.S. political, social and cultural productions, that renders Arabs and Muslims as anti-Western irrational terrorists (1998b). It is this sense of politicised orientalism that characterises Semmerling’s (2006) repertoire of dichotomised and fear-inciting myths about Arabs and Muslims.

Meant in the Barthesian (1972) sense of mythology, a myth is characterised not by its proximity to truth, but its potential to circulate without being critically contested. These myths promote three misconceptions of Arabs and Muslims. First, they construct images of Arabs and Muslims through a nationalised, racialised, gendered and sexualised Manichean paradigm of binary oppositions, i.e. *us vs. them*. In this regard, Arabs and Muslims are often associated with mental inferiority, uncontrolled passion, violent behaviour and backward lifestyles. Their women are viewed as veiled and, therefore, submissive to the will of the brutality of their men. At times, Arab and Muslim men and women are both rendered as sexually available; while women are often depicted as sensual and exotic, yearning for romancing with the civilised American, their men are castrated as a feminised enemy. The emasculating images of prisoners in U.S.-sanctioned Abu Ghraib exhibited the latter sense of this sexuality. Second, they lump the two identities, *Arab* and *Muslim*, into one homogenous category that can be profiled according to names, facial features, dress codes and a distinctly heavy English accent. This disregards the complexity of both the Muslim world, of which Arabs constitute less than 20%, and of the so-called Arab world, of which the presence of Persians, Turks, Kurds, Berbers, Christians and Jews make the region far from being either ethnically or religiously homogenous, but rather ever more multi-layered (Mahdi, 2014). Third, they cast these two assumed-to-be mutually interchangeable identities in spatial terms and ascribe to them elements of enmity. Drawing a picture of Islam as a political doctrine that endorses, if not calls for, acts of terror, and of its adherents as fanatics permanently engaged in weaving plots to undermine the security of the United States, is not possible without resorting to a geographic mapping of this threat to a number of countries allocated alongside the presumed east-west divide.

Perhaps *American orientalism* is best articulated in the writings of Lewis (1990) and Huntington (1993), in which they posited the current U.S.-Muslim tension within a historical continuum bound to an inevitable clash of civilisations. Lewis’s half-a-century scholarship has been dedicated

to promoting a civilisational and confrontational rivalry between Islam and Christendom. His reading of the Western confrontation with the Muslim world is further elaborated on by Huntington (1996), who prophesied a looming clash between the Arab/Muslim and the Western/Christian worlds in the aftermath of the Cold War. The attacks of September 11th have further augmented this vision, transforming it into a narrative proliferating many post-9/11 problematic images, research and policies, that reduced the globe into a site of clashing religions. Capitalising on a historical Muslim-Christian rivalry in search for converts and universality, the 'clash of civilisations' narrative has appealed to Muslim and Christian hardliners subscribed to popularised prophecies of an ultimate apocalypse. President Bush's use of religious terminology, e.g. 'crusade on terror' as a slogan for his declared war on terror – though gaining some resonance among neoconservatives and new-born evangelicals – invoked a history of grievances deeply engraved in the Islamic collective memory of the two century-long Crusades waged in the name of Christianity against the world of Islam. Reducing geopolitical encounters to religious affairs is reminiscent of Al Qaeda's usage of a politicised reading of Islam in an attempt to legitimise its radical interpretation of the complex concept of *Jihad* (struggle).<sup>4</sup> Such references to an eternal division between Muslims and Christians have contributed to invoking this troublesome history as a continuation to define the present, if not the future, of U.S.-Muslim encounters.

A deeper look into the 'clash of civilisations' narrative unveils two premises that constitute its major flaws. First, it envisions conflict, to borrow Doran's (2008) criticism, as an inter-civilisational product, while dismissing potential inner-conflicts rising within each civilisation. Conflict, in other words, is an outcome of a cluster of socio-economic, political and even religious factors, shaped by a clash of interests that are not necessarily confined to certain geopolitical boundaries. Second, it replicates an essentialist assumption in orientalist scholarship that those clashing civilisations are homogenous in nature and can be defined by certain geopolitical boundaries. Mapping the *West*, in general (and the United States, in particular) as the land of Christendom, and the *East*, in general (and Arab and Muslim nations, in particular) as the land of Islam, denies multiculturalism and pluralism an interactive role in each civilisation's sociopolitical systems, legitimising instead a systematic process of alienation of Muslims living in the West and Christians living in the East.

A more nuanced reading of the clash of civilisations narrative has to address its rhetorical significance for the earliest forms of Western

imperialism, i.e. *mission civilisatrice* (civilising mission) and *manifest destiny*, which led to the formation of various movements of resistance that embraced cultural identifications as effective strategies for rallying the support of locals (Said, 1998a). Hence, such a narrative is best located at the core of Western-mania for global dominance.

While the *American orientalist* discourse and clash of civilisations narrative have both greatly shaped Americans' perceptions of Arabs and Muslims as a homogenous and distinctly opposed cultural *Other* that bears an imminent threat to the United States, their conception of the *Self* is mostly defined by their subscription to the discourse of *American exceptionalism*. This discourse tends to celebrate the uniqueness of the American experience in world history and its geopolitical, socio-economic, cultural and moral distinction from the rest of the world (Nobel, 2002). It transcends Anderson's (1983) sense of a uniquely imagined homeland, i.e. that Americans are exceptional, or different, because they are not Europeans, Asians or Africans. It is rather an embodiment of a rhetoric that locates the United States of America as the world's beacon of liberty, democracy, freedom, and justice; an *exception*, as Rodgers (2004) puts it, 'to the rules and imperatives of history itself', (p. 44). Thus an important component of American exceptionalism is the portrait it draws of America as the world's only country that cherishes a set of grand values and principles, granting its citizens full rights to citizenship and prosperity.

The second and most important component of American exceptionalism is its promotion of the entitlement of this distinct America to the world's leadership. Similar to the discursive formations that once underwrote the English and French civilising imperialist projects, American exceptionalism has projected a leading global role for the United States, forging a significant resource in the formation of U.S. foreign policy by providing the U.S. policymaker with the impetus to draft interventionist foreign policies during both World Wars, the Cold War and the War on Terror. President Woodrow Wilson's decisions to engage the United States in global conflicts—particularly during World War I (i.e. declaring war on Germany and interfering in the politics of Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua)—are usually cited as the earliest measures that transformed the United States from isolationism into that of aggressive internationalism.<sup>5</sup> His policies could not be advanced without appealing to the rhetoric of exceptionalism and the moral imperative to fight evil in the world, both to strengthen the fabric of the 'international community' and enhance U.S. long-term security, thereby gaining congressional and public support for these foreign policy engagements.

Drawing from these two discourses, i.e. *American orientalism* and *American exceptionalism*, one can fathom the theoretical groundings of President Bush's response to Americans' post 9/11 inquiry of *why do they hate us?* The intersectionality of such discourses has provided a polarising cultural framework that strengthens U.S. policymakers' appeals to the public for support of their foreign policies. It is this cultural framework that continues to operate in U.S. political and popular culture – currently captured through the wave of Islamophobia – despite President Obama's Cairo speech that suggested a more nuanced understanding of the Muslim world. The question that arises in this context relates to the source that is generating sustenance for this cultural framework. This source, I argue, is located in the paradoxical nature of the U.S. global identity.

### **Liberal or Imperial?**

My use of the terms *America* and *United States* may seem arbitrary and interchangeable. However, it is worth mentioning that I use the term *America* to continue to remind the readers of the meta-narratives embraced to celebrate the uniqueness and exceptionalism of the United States as an 'American nation', which shares a set of ideals, values and principles to be packaged and sent around the globe through the known process of Americanisation, often conflated with globalisation and neoliberal politics. Using the term *United States* reiterates my thoughts of the United States of America as a nation state that plays a vital nationalist role globally, and that is set to maintain the country's prosperity and protect its sovereignty through the deployment of soft and hard power.<sup>6</sup> Central to this paradox is a moral dilemma that continues to generate sustenance to the aforementioned discourses of orientalism and exceptionalism. Kane (2008) identifies a critical contradiction in Americans' conception of 'virtue' and 'power':

'Americans nursed a grave suspicion of power because power threatened individual liberty and endangered virtue, yet simultaneously they maintained that the growth of American power was a natural product of American virtue, the just desert of industrious labor in an abundant land... If virtue led to great power, how was that power to be used so as not to destroy virtue?' (p. 12).

In other words, how would the United States of America—whose exceptionalist narrative projects a moral imperative to exercise power beyond its borders—be able to exercise its power without hurting its self-generated images of global distinction, failing its self-commitment to the

ideals of freedom, democracy, self-determination and philanthropy, without being perceived as another imperial power?

Understanding the nature of the U.S.'s display of power through its rhetorical, diplomatic and military encounters with the Muslim world requires a reading of the paradox that lies in Americans' perception of *virtue* itself. On the one hand, Americans cherish a *virtue of innocence* which prescribes a providential myth of a mission to benevolently embrace humanity by displaying qualities of goodness towards the world. On the other hand, there exists another virtue which Kane (2008) aligns with 'a fiercely parochial nationalism that exalted the particular nation at the expense of the universal, emphasising qualities of self-assertion and patriotic pride', (p. 13). The U.S.'s employment of its power in the Muslim world could be interpreted as an embodiment of one of the two virtues. Those who believe in the *innocence virtue* would describe the exercise of power as a sign of *liberal internationalism* that serves to embitter the international community. Others would read its use of power as the ultimate reflection of *imperial internationalism*.

To illustrate the two readings, it is constructive to reflect on an important decision in the history of U.S. foreign policy that formulated a new tradition for U.S. presidents to follow: President Wilson's decision to transform foreign policy from isolationism into internationalism in the second decade of the twentieth century (Ikenberry, *et al*, 2009). Both Knock (2009) and Slaughter (2009) argue that Wilson's foreign policy vision was not primarily concerned with spreading democracy worldwide. Rather, he sought to construct an organised international order; a noble cause shaped by his advocacy for the creation of the League of Nations, for which he received the Nobel Prize and was celebrated as the champion of liberal internationalism. To support their argument they refer to Wilson's famous 'Fourteen Points' speech to Congress on 8 January 1918, in which he stressed two important ideals. First, he highlighted his belief that democracy, trade, law, and security are achievable because he perceived the world as both progressing and modernising. Second, he called for enhancing free trade and economic exchange and constructing international law and international bodies for collaboration. This reading of Wilsonianism is contested by others who believe that it is an early manifestation of imperial internationalism. Both Ikenberry (2009) and Smith (2009) read President Bush's decision to wage war on Iraq in the twenty-first century as a continuation and affirmation of Wilson's imperial ambition of a U.S. leading the role in promoting democracy around the world. Drawing from Wilson's fourteen points, they illustrate how Wilson conditioned achieving peace and cooperation with the adoption of

democracy as a governing system. Also, Wilson's call for strengthening the fabric of the international community assured a central leading role for the United States on the global stage (Ikenberry, 2009).

While the two views of how to characterise the U.S.' display of power continue to be subjects of debate between foreign policy cycles, the paradoxical nature of U.S. identity has already forged a space for U.S. foreign policy to approach the Muslim world with less American public engagement. Since its ascension to the global scale as a superpower in the aftermath of World War II, the United States has thwarted attempts by Arab and Muslim countries to adopt developmentalist economic projects and coerced them into embracing the neoliberal philosophy of capitalism. It has helped uphold corrupt dictatorships that have denied their citizens freedom of speech and violated their basic human rights. It has offered unconditional material, political and cultural support for Israel with a disregard for Palestinian demands of self-determination. It intervened in the local politics of Iran and Indonesia, escalated tension with Lebanon, Libya, and Syria, supported dictatorships in Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and waged wars on Iraq and Afghanistan. The unravelling politics of the Arab Spring in Yemen, Egypt, Libya and Syria, and the consequential unrest in Lebanon and Bahrain, further create additional layers of engagement that deeply position the United States in the liberal-imperial pendulum.

It is not surprising then to witness a sense of consistency in U.S. commitment to its so-called 'War on Terror', as echoed in President Obama's continued adherence to President Bush's policies. America's War on Terror, initially critiqued by liberals as a sign of imperial overreach, is now complicity promoted in the name of cleansing of terror. This would offer a sense of legitimacy and moral support to the U.S. decision-maker in waging drone warfare that breeds more grievances, as it claims the lives of Muslim civilians in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Yemen. In his Nobel Prize Speech, President Obama stated that,

'The United States of America has helped underwrite global security for more than six decades with the blood of our citizens and the strength of our arms. The service and sacrifice of our men in uniform has promoted peace and prosperity from Germany to Korea and enabled democracy to take hold in places like the Balkans. We have borne this burden not because we seek to impose our will. We have done so out of self-enlightened interest, because we seek a better future for our children and grandchildren and we believe that their lives will be better if others' children and grandchildren can live in freedom and prosperity.'

This description of the self-entitled U.S. role in advancing ‘peace and prosperity’ around the world is a contemporary articulation of the above-highlighted double sense of Wilsonianism, that bears the two conflicting readings of the U.S. display of power on the global scale, i.e. liberal *and* imperial.

## Conclusion

In his congressional speech, President Bush (2001) stressed that ‘the terrorists practice a fringe form of Islamic extremism that has been rejected by Muslim scholars and the vast majority of Muslim clerics, a fringe movement that perverts the peaceful teachings of Islam’; that Americans respect Islam which is practiced freely by ‘many millions of Americans and by millions more in countries that America counts as friends, [and whose] teachings are good and peaceful, and those who commit evil in the name of Allah blaspheme the name of Allah’; that ‘the terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself’; and that ‘the enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends... not our many Arab friends, [but] a radical network of terrorists and every government that supports them’.

However, his administration’s security measures have been in tandem with the popularised paradigm of *you are either with us or against us*. Mamdani (2004) pointed out that this paradigm proposes that ‘unless proved to be *good*, every Muslim was presumed to be *bad*’ (p. 15). Such a conflation has instilled fear in the public sphere of Arabs, Muslims and lookalikes, resulting in an alarming increase in the reported cases of violence in the form of harassment, threats and physical attacks, which have recently been expressed through the vandalism of mosques and sharia-banning court cases reflective of a rising wave of Islamophobia.<sup>7</sup> Worse still, the conflation resulted in the catastrophic invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), which caused more Muslim deaths and instability in Muslim-majority countries around the globe. A similar material outcome seems to define the Obama administration as it continues to keep Guantánamo’s doors open and does not hesitate to kill its way to a supposed victory over terrorism. The response of the two administrations, both conservative and liberal, is a material outcome of a polarising contention that frames Americans and Muslims within two broad and opposite polarities, reducing U.S.-Muslim tension into one of enmity; a tension ever more present in the second decade of the twenty-first century.

## References

- Anderson, B. (1983/2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Rev. ed.). London: Verso.
- Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Berlant, L. (1997). *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Bush, G. W. (2001, September 21). A Nation challenged: President Bush's address on terrorism before a joint meeting of Congress. *The New York Times*, Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>. Accessed on February 18, 2014.
- Cainkar, L. (2009). *Homeland Insecurity: The Arab American and Muslim American Experience After 9/11*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Doran, R. (2008). Terrorism and cultural theory: The Singularity of 9/11. *SubStance*, 17(1), 3-19.
- Huntington, S. (1993). "The Clash of civilisations?" *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3), 22-49.
- . (1996). *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Ikenberry, G. J., et al. (2009). *The Crisis of American foreign policy: Wilsonianism in the 21st century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ikenberry, G. J. (2009). Woodrow Wilson, the Bush administration, and the future of liberal internationalism. In G. J. Ikenberry, et al (Eds.) *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the 21st Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Johnson, C. (2000/2004). *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (2nd ed.). New York: Holt Paperbacks.
- Kane, J. (2008). *Between Virtue and Power: The Persistent Moral Dilemma of U.S. Foreign Policy*. New Haven: Yale University.
- Kaplan, A. (2002). *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Knock, T. (2009). Playing for a hundred years hence: Woodrow Wilson's internationalism and his would-be heirs. G. J. Ikenberry, et al (Eds.), *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the 21st Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lewis, B. (1990, September 1). The Roots of Muslim rage: Why so many Muslims deeply resent the west and why their bitterness will not be mollified. *The Atlantic Monthly*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com>. Accessed on February 21, 2014

- Mahdi, W. (2014). Marked Off: Hollywood's untold story of Arabs/Muslims and camels. In A. R. Richards & I. Omidvar (Eds.), *Muslims and American Popular Culture*. California: Praeger.
- Mamdani, M. (2004). *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*. Doubleday: Three Leaves Press.
- Nayak, M. and C. Malone. (2009). American Orientalism and American Exceptionalism: a Critical Rethinking. *International Studies Review*, 11(2), 253-276.
- Nobel, D. (2002). *Death of a Nation: American Culture and the End of Exceptionalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Nye, J. (1990). *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. New York: Basic Books.
- . (2004). *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Obama, B. (2009, December 10). Text: Nobel Prize Acceptance Lecture: A Just and Lasting Peace. Retrieved from <http://www.nobelprize.org>. Accessed on February 21 , 2014
- . (2009, June 4). Text: Obama's speech in Cairo. *The New York Times*, retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Reports. Council on American-Islamic Relations CAIR. Retrieved from <http://www.cair.com/>
- Rodgers, D. T. (2004). American Exceptionalism Revisited. *Raritan Review*, 24 (Fall), 21–47.
- Said, E. W. (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage.
- . (1998a). *Edward Said – The Myth of “The Clash of Civilizations”*. United States: Media Education Foundation. DVD.
- . (1998b). *Edward Said - On Orientalism*. United States: Media Education Foundation. DVD.
- . (1979/1994). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.
- Semmerling, T. J. (2006). *'Evil' Arabs in American Popular Film: Orientalist Fear*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Slaughter, A. (2009). Wilsonianism in the twenty-first century. In G. J. Ikenberry, et al (Eds.), *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the 21st Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Smith, T. (2009). “Wilsonianism after Iraq: The End of liberal internationalism”, In G. J. Ikenberry, et al (Eds.), *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the 21st Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Volpp, L. (2002). “The Citizen and the Terrorist”. *UCLA Law Review*, 49 (June), 1575-1600.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Volpp (2002) argues that American Muslims and look-a-likes have been subjected to various forms of legal and extra-legal violence in the aftermath of 9/11, in response to a sensationalised reading of such citizens as potential terrorists.

<sup>2</sup> Although this work primarily focuses on Muslims, it is hard to neglect the popularised interchangeable use of Arabs and Muslims as one entity. Wherever appropriate, I will inscribe the word *Arab* or *Arabic* to my analysis to demonstrate a purposeful separation between the Islamic and Arabic identities.

<sup>3</sup> The concept of *infantile citizens* presupposes an oversimplifying approach adopted by politicians that imagines citizens as uninformed and ignorant.

<sup>4</sup> *Jihad* (struggle) is classically defined in two ways: (1) a *Lesser Jihad* (the legitimacy in using force to defend one's life, honour, and property); and (2) a *Greater Jihad* (the call to fighting one's personal urges to commit sins). It was in the philosophy espoused by both Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi (1903-1979) and Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) that *Jihad* gained a more political tone, refocussing it to legitimise a revolutionary urge to introduce political Islam – whether state-centred or society-centred– as an alternative to western liberal democracy and other national narratives.

<sup>5</sup> Kaplan (2002) argues compellingly that isolationism was not fully articulated in the United States, which administered imperialist expansionist tendencies through its wars with Mexico in the mid-nineteenth century, and later on, with Spain, Cuba and the Philippines.

<sup>6</sup> Nye (1990 & 2004) spelled out a necessary effective separation between *soft power* (use of diplomacy and economic incentives) and *hard power* (use of military and weapons) in U.S. foreign policy.

<sup>7</sup> Cainkar (2009) details specifics regarding the wave of violence that Arab/Muslim Americans experienced in the post-9/11 context.