

8. Literary Engagements with the War on Terror

John Updike, *Terrorist* (2006)

- Updike's 22nd novel; seeks to explore religious fundamentalism through the figure of the American-born Muslim teenager named Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy (aged 18) in New Jersey; Ahmad idealizes his absent Egyptian father; disrespects his Irish-American mother. The Jewish guidance counselor Jack Levy reveals to Ahmad that Ahmad has fallen for a counter-terrorism government sting operation. Ahmad does not follow his imam's demand to blow up Lincoln Tunnel.
- 167: Ahmad's disregard for his mother
- critique of Western media, consumerism, and sexual mores
- ultimate confirmation of Western approach; clichéd depiction of the non-Western

9. Conclusion: The War on Terror and National Identity

- few significant differences between the approaches of the Bush and of the Obama administration
- continuing fear of terrorist threats (Aug. 2011 CNN poll: 36% find “good reason” to be personally “afraid of terrorist threats”)
- growing skepticism between U.S. and Europe (after Germany and France refuse support for the invasion of Iraq in 2003); international isolation (against UN)
- restriction of civil liberties inside the U.S.
- war crimes, Guantanamo, and disregard for human rights damage international reputation of U.S.
- Pres. Bush’s approval ratings: late Aug. 2001: 50 %, early Oct. 2001: 90 %
- Pres. Obama’s approval ratings: late April 2011: 47 %, early May 2011: 56 %
- May 2, 2011 Pew Poll: “72% say they feel ‘relieved’ by Osama bin Laden’s death, while 60 % feel ‘proud’ and 58 % say they are ‘happy’.”



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6 ECTS credits for participation and a seminar paper

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DETAILS ABOUT PROGRAM AND APPLICATION

<http://international.uni-graz.at/summerschool-guss>

University of Graz
Office of International Relations
Universitätsplatz 3, 8010 Graz, Austria
summerschoolguss@uni-graz.at

APPLICATION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 29TH, 2012



RECOGNITION OF CREDITS (ECTS)

6 ECTS credits will be awarded to students for active participation, attendance and the successful completion of a seminar paper.

COSTS

Please visit our website:

<http://international.uni-graz.at/summerschool-guss>

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

University of Graz
Universitätsplatz 3
8010 Graz
Austria

summerschoolguss@uni-graz.at

MORE INFORMATION ONLINE

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VENUE/ SEGGAU CASTLE

The venue of the summer school is "Seggau Castle" located 45km south of Graz (<http://seggau.com>).

!!! APPLICATION DEADLINE!!!
February 29th, 2012



Summer School on the Americas

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 - full room and board (double rooms) in three-star hotel with pool etc.
 - tuition and course materials
 - excursion to Graz
- There is a possibility of a small UDE subsidy (around 75 €).
- Inquiries to former participants:
 - corinnavdh@yahoo.de
 - jessica.von-helden@stud.uni-due.de
 - katharina.vonelbwart@hotmail.com

Summer School on the Americas

Seggau Castle (Austria), July 15-29, 2012

- Applications should contain:
 - a letter of motivation (why do you want to participate)
 - a copy of your *Studienbuch* or Transcript of Records
 - a curriculum vitae (in English)
 - a letter of recommendation from one of your instructors (in English or in German; from an instructor in the Anglophone Studies Department or in another department)
- Applications should be sent to:
Prof. Dr. Josef Raab, Nordamerikastudien, Universität
Duisburg-Essen, 45117 Essen
- **Deadline: February 29, 2012**
- More information on the summer school:
<http://international.uni-graz.at/summerschool-guss>

Ten Years After 9/11

Course Evaluations

- Would you rather have two exams or one?
- Did the Midterm Exam give you a chance to show what you know?
- Was there too much use of YouTube material in this lecture course?
- Comments on the reader
- Comments on the presentation style
- Comments on the topics chosen for the individual lectures

Ten Years After 9/11



Josef Raab

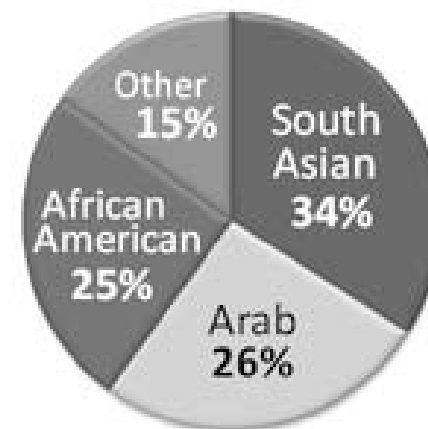
Lecture 11: Islamophobia

The Impact on Arab-Americans and Perceptions of Islam

1. Introduction
2. The “Clash of Civilizations”
3. Post-9/11 Islamophobia
4. Engagements with Post-9/11 Islamophobia in Film
5. Literary Engagements with Post-9/11 Islamophobia
6. Plans for an Islamic Center and Mosque Two Blocks from Ground Zero
7. Conclusion

1. Introduction

- Islamophobia: prejudice against or hatred or fear of Islam and Muslims. The term dates back to the 1980s but became prominent after 9/11.
- In the months following 9/11, hate crimes against Muslims and people perceived to be Arab increased to 34 or 40 times their pre-9/11 numbers. They subsequently remained steady at twice the pre-9/11 number.
- Reports of workplace discrimination against Muslims quadrupled in 2002.
- In Islamophobic discourse nationality (i.e. Arab), religion (Islam), and politics (terrorism, fundamentalism) tend to get amalgamated.
- But: Muslims are the most racially diverse religious group in the U.S.A.



1. Introduction

- Muslim population of the U.S. estimated at 2.7 mio (or 0.9 % of the population)
- Media reporting has contributed much to Islamophobia.
- Western Islamophobic views:
 - Islam is one block (monolithic) and unresponsive to change (static).
 - Islam is “other,” has different values from the West.
 - Islam is inferior to the West, barbaric, primitive, and sexist.
 - Islam is violent, aggressive, supportive of terrorism
 - Islam is a political ideology, used to control people.
 - Anti-Muslim hostility is seen as the natural response to these perceptions.
- → self-righteous Western constructions of identity in opposition to the alleged deficits of Islam

2. The “Clash of Civilizations”

- Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: Terrorism’s Challenge to Democracy* (1995)
 - struggle between globalization and the corporate control of politics, on the one hand, and traditional values and religious orthodoxy, on the other
 - global market forces threaten traditional cultures and values
 - traditionalists strike back against the perceived threat of foreign intrusion
- Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1997)
 - prediction that the cultural and religious identities of people will be the primary source of conflict after the end of the Cold War
 - “The principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.”

2. The “Clash of Civilizations”

- Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1997)
 - Both Christianity and Islam contribute to this clash of civilizations, as both are missionary and both have an exclusive claim to truth.
 - Edward Said’s critique of Huntington’s monolithic view of Islam: “My concern [...] is that the mere use of the label «Islam», either to explain or indiscriminately condemn «Islam», actually ends up becoming a form of attack [...] «Islam» defines a relatively small proportion of what actually takes place in the Islamic world, which numbers a billion people, and includes dozens of countries, societies, traditions, languages and, of course, an infinite number of different experiences. It is simply false to try to trace all this back to something called «Islam», no matter how vociferously polemical Orientalists [...] insisted that Islam regulates Islamic societies from top to bottom, that *dar al Islam* is a single, coherent entity, that church and state are really one in Islam, and so forth.”
- In 2000, the UN named 2001 the “Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.”

3. Post-9/11 Islamophobia

- After 9/11: Screening of (alleged) Arabs and Arab-Americans at airports; some are detained and cannot leave the U.S.
- Sept. 20, 2001: U.S. Department of Justice legalizes detention without charges for 48 hours
- Deportation proceedings against almost 14,000 people from countries perceived as Muslim
- “With respect to the investigation and prosecution of alleged incidents involving violence or threats, the Civil Rights Division, The Federal Bureau of Investigation, and U.S. Attorneys’ offices have investigated approximately 380 such incidents since September 11. The incidents have consisted of telephone, internet, mail, and face-to-face threats; minor assaults as well as assaults with dangerous weapons and assaults resulting in serious injury and death; and vandalism, shooting, and bombings directed at homes, businesses, and places of worship.”
- Sikhs, because of their resemblance to the stereotypical image of Muslims, became victims of harassments, assaults and murder.

3. Post-9/11 Islamophobia

The Village Voice, July 8, 2003:

Solana Pyne, “Making Enemies: Post 9-11 Crackdowns Spurring Prejudice”

The government’s roundup and detention of U.S. citizens and immigrants perceived to be Arab, South Asian, or Muslim is likely fostering discrimination and prejudice above and beyond the impact of 9-11, say social psychologists.

The violent attacks of September 11 and their aftermath have created a real-world experiment for social scientists who usually develop their theories in university labs. Their research, much of which is still in progress, shows that the more positively people feel toward their country, the more likely they are to hold anti-Arab prejudices. Taken with statistical evidence of hate crimes and job discrimination, the new research suggests that while the shock of the attacks sparked bigotry against those associated in

3. Post-9/11 Islamophobia

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American minds with Islam, subsequent sweeping crackdowns, such as the government roundup and detention of Muslims, are sending "social signals" that are worsening the biases. ...

One of the new studies found that after 9-11 people thought better of politicians, firefighters, and Americans in general, but felt more negative toward U.S. citizens of Arab descent, new immigrants, Palestinians, and residents of Islamic or Middle Eastern countries. The findings ... dovetail with other, smaller studies in the wake of 9-11 that found that the more positively one felt about the U.S., the more likely one was to be anti-Arab.

4. Engagements with Post-9/11 Islamophobia in Film

- Cherien Dabis (dir.) [Palestinian-American], *Amreeka* (2009)
- a Palestinian single mother and her 16 year-old son migrate from Palestine to Illinois in 2003, after the beginning of the U.S. war in Iraq
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=povvBoKQ6mc>
- against misrepresentations and stereotypes of Arab-Americans (not only Muslims)
- illustrates the long history of Islamophobia in the U.S., also prior to 9/11
attempt to decrease the perceived “otherness” of Arabs and Arab-Americans



5. Literary Engagements with Post-9/11 Islamophobia

Moustafa Bayoumi [Egyptian-American], *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem: Being Young and Arab in America* (2008):

- fact-based episodes of Islamophobia in Brooklyn
- p. 1: surveillance (as potentially dangerous)
- p. 2-3: historical series of “communities of suspicion” in the U.S.; now Arabs and Muslim Americans are the new “problem”
- American Arabs and Muslims as alleged “dangerous outsiders”
- governmental Islamophobia: racial profiling “to combat potential terrorist attacks” (Pres. Bush, 2003)
- typecasting as exceptionally assimilated immigrants or violent fundamentalists (p. 4)
- Arab Americans and Muslims are omnipresent in American culture, yet unknown (p. 5)
- general suspicion against Arab and Muslim Americans; expectation that they apologize for what is not their fault (p. 5)

5. Literary Engagements with Post-9/11 Islamophobia

Moustafa Bayoumi [Egyptian-American], *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem: Being Young and Arab in America* (2008):

- since 2001: a situation “between expectation and frustration” (p. 6) — expectations of the older generation vs. suspiciousness of the culture at large
- Arab-American Christians are also subjected to “the minefield of associations the public has of Arabs” (p. 7)
- p. 9: Brooklyn as the place of inter-cultural co-existence and mingling
- “failed communication” between FBI and Arab and Muslim leaders (because of different priorities and perceptions) (p. 10)
- “Arab-American narratives that are in the end very American stories about race, religion, and civil rights and about how the pressures of domestic life and foreign policy push on individual lives” (p. 11).

5. Literary Engagements with Post-9/11 Islamophobia

Moshin Hamid [Pakistani, grew up partly in the U.S., studied and worked in the U.S.], *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007)

- a novel set one evening in an outdoor café in Lahore, Pakistan, where a bearded young Pakistani man called Changez invites an American to tea and tells him about how he found out of the 9/11 attacks on a business trip in Manila and about his love affair with an American woman (Erica) and his departure from the U.S. earlier in 2001.
- Changez recalls wanting to be part of the U.S. elite (as a financial analyst) and regrets having been on the path to Americanization
- Changez recalls that he “smiled” when the WTC towers came down. He becomes a leader of anti-American protests.
- Is Changez a friendly “lover of America” (p. 1) or a potential terrorist (who “alarms” the American)?

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Moshin Hamid [Pakistani, grew up partly in the U.S., studied and worked in the U.S.], *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007)

- p. 2-3: against easy classifications
- 12-13: suspiciousness of the American; mysteries (e.g. of why tea is refreshing on a warm day)
- 23-24: Americans as “self-righteous” and conducting themselves as the “ruling class”
- continuing sense of unease, of being watched or threatened
- 207-09: ambiguous ending: reference to Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*. Does anyone die? If so, who? Frequent use of “perhaps.” Ambivalent situation and outcome are symptomatic of the relationship between mainstream U.S.A. and Arabs/Muslims/Arab-Americans

5. Literary Engagements with Post-9/11 Islamophobia

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- Who is the “fundamentalist”: the potential U.S. assassin or the anti-American Pakistani? Who is the pursuer and who is the pursued or is there no pursuit at all?
- on the dangers of mis-/perceptions and prejudice
- hearing the side that is more often talked about than heard
- Take nothing for granted! You will probably never know the whole story.

Gregory Orfalea [Lebanese-American], *The Man Who Guarded the Bomb* (2010): series of interlinked stories on the media-propelled distrust of and hostility toward Arabs and Arab-Americans in Los Angeles

6. Plans for an Islamic Center and Mosque Two Blocks from Ground Zero

- Plans for “Park51” sparked “angry protests from some relatives of 9/11 victims, politicians and others who said it would be insensitive to build a Muslim institution close to where Islamic radicals attacked the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001” (*The New York Times*, Aug. 3, 2011).
- Sarah Palin called the planned mosque “an unnecessary provocation” and urged “peace-seeking Muslims” to reject it.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqdkd6YkFag> (on Sept. 11, 2010)

- Freedom of religion as a constitutional right
- Stigmatizing of Muslims as second-class citizens
- Education as a means to move beyond anti-Muslim discrimination
- Muslims as integral members of U.S. society

7. Conclusion

- Continuing perception of Islam as un-American, as “a problem”
- Islamophobia defended as a way of honoring the victims of 9/11
- Barack Obama on Aug. 13, 2010: “as a citizen, and as president, I believe that Muslims have the same right to practice their religion as anyone else in this country. ... This is America, and our commitment to religious freedom must be unshakable. The principle that people of all faiths are welcome in this country, and will not be treated differently by their government, is essential to who we are.”