

Muslims and the Media after 9/11: A Muslim Discourse in the American Media?

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Abstract

This paper seeks to answer two questions: Has there been a shift in the representation of Muslims by the American media in the wake of increasing number of Muslims living here, and could Muslims speak for themselves through an autonomous Muslim discourse in the post-9/11 period? Using the tools of postcolonial analysis, I analyze the coverage on Muslims in the mainstream media following the 9/11 attacks. I find that there was a shift, in the form of a differentiation between moderates and fundamentalists. Additionally, the same tropes used to represent Muslims in the colonial discourse were now employed to the fundamentalist “Other.” Muslims could speak up; however, this could not avoid reproducing the dominant discourse. Yet, the presence of a significant Muslim minority offers opportunities for broadened boundaries of “American” citizenry that can be realized by growing activism to this end.

Introduction

It has been a while since “Islamophobia” became the Muslims’ dominant perception of the American media’s coverage of Islam and Muslims. In this

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paper, I will go beyond simply probing the veracity of this widespread perception of American media bias against Islam and Muslims. My fundamental concern is the current shape that the discourse on Muslims takes when its “Other” came to reside within the same territorial boundaries. It is noteworthy that the phrase “the fastest growing religion in the U.S.” has become another catch phrase in the media for Islam, right alongside its enormous anti-Islamic content.

Does this imply a radical transformation of the discourse? I believe that this everyday observation calls out for a critical revision of the literature dealing with the media’s portrayal of Muslims. Indeed, the challenging question today is the prospect of essentializing the Oriental and, in turn, the western identity subsequent to the massive scale of immigration to the West from the “Orient.” If the West has an unceasing need for the Orient in order to construct its own identity, how will it maintain this identity’s integrity if the Orient infuses within it today? Has this development affected how the media represent Islam?

Even before the mounting public visibility of Muslims in the West, the ongoing Palestinian question was severe enough to occupy a focal place on the news.¹ But after the Gulf War, and especially after the World Trade Center attack of 1993 and the embassy bombings in 1998, coverage of Muslims started to occupy an important place in the news. Thus, the American public was constantly exposed to a negative image of Islam and Muslims. Consequently, the image of American Muslims took shape alongside the images of Muslims on television. This Muslim image is known to anybody: irrational terrorists, airplane hijackers, and suicide bombers who wage war against “civilization” and “democracy” in the name of jihad (holy war) to establish the Islamic way of life against the *kafirun*, who are unbelievers to be either converted or killed.²

Beyond all of that, the 9/11 attacks were perhaps the single most important turning point in the American Muslim experience. Apart from its negative consequences on their daily lives, the media’s coverage of Islam reached an unprecedented intensity. This demands a thoughtful inquiry: Does this new wave of representation simply follow from the previous decades? The crucial component of this question’s answer is the role of the new actors in the American public sphere, namely, American Muslims. How do American Muslims relate to this picture? We have seen many more Muslims on television or in the newspapers after 9/11 than ever. Is it possible to discern a general pattern, a common discourse in how Muslims responded to this event, or are there more ruptures than commonalities? In

essence, how did the Muslims respond to the 9/11 tragedy? Is it now possible to talk of a “Muslim discourse” in the American media as a site of resistance, or were statements made by Muslims easily appropriated by the mainstream media to underpin the dominant discourse?

Therefore, my research is twofold: On the one hand, I will seek to find out whether there is anything novel in the representation of Islam and Muslims in the current American media that differs from the colonial discourse. And, if so, does this have anything to do with the Muslim presence in the United States? That is to say, could Muslims construct a Muslim discourse that affects how the media represents them?

This set of questions is pivotal for me, because I consider an independent discourse of Muslims in the American public sphere to be existential. It is a leading indicator of whether the Muslims’ existence in the United States is still an auxiliary to the American way of life, in the form of consumers of American culture, or active participants in and contributors to it with its enriching way of life. The moment we can choose the latter, we can look at the future of Muslims in the United States with confidence.

The theoretical framework to address these issues is given below. Subsequent to this part, methodological concerns will be presented. Thus, media material on 9/11 will be scrutinized from two angles: The American media’s dominant patterns will be identified, and the Muslim response to it will follow suit. In the end, I will discuss my findings for the prospects of Muslims in the New World.

Theoretical Considerations

It has become conventional to start all analyses of the Orient with a reference to Edward Said’s path-breaking *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979). In fact, Said was not the first to present this challenge to Orientalism. His peculiarity lies in the fact that he adapted the theories of Foucault³ and Gramsci to colonial literature in order to show how the regime of disciplinary power inscribed in Orientalism transforms the “real” East into a discursive “Orient,” or rather substitutes the one for the other.⁴ This influence is apparent when he defines Orientalism through its four aspects: as academic, a style of thought based on an “essential” distinction between East and West, a discourse, and a hegemony.⁵ Gramsci’s influence on this definition is more about how the cultural hegemony at work gives it durability and strength, and the civil domain of cultural relations as the medium through which power operates most effec-

tively.⁶ Foucault's impact, on the other hand, is more related to how power, as an impersonal force, makes its subjects the objects of power through knowledge and Orientalist "discourse," thereby producing the Orient as not only essentially distinct but also inferior. This, in turn, reinforces the West's own image of itself as a superior civilization.⁷

Media representation of other cultures should be analyzed within this theoretical framework. Scholars involved in media studies now commonly refer to what they call a large gap between what news producers claim their work to be and what social scientists call it. News producers claim that news stories reflect reality, whereas social scientists speak of "constructing the news."⁸ There is an ideology of journalism made up of such elements as "freedom of the press," "objectivity," "fairness," "impartiality," "balance," "the reflection of reality," "true representation," fact vs. opinion, and so on,⁹ as if there were no cultural mediation between what journalists transmit and what the audience perceives. The standpoint I adopt here, known as the "culturological view," pays attention to the force of broad cultural symbol systems, semiotic analyses of journalism, and journalistic ideologies. This approach claims that "[a]n event is not just a happening in the world; it is a relation between a certain happening and a given symbolic system."¹⁰ From this perspective, "the basic definition of the situation that underpins the news reporting of political events, very largely coincides with the definition provided and legitimated by the power holders."¹¹

In short, the fact that journalists think that they "record the events," and that there is a distance between fact and fiction in news production is nothing more than an ideal. Correspondingly, the study of narrative and fiction is becoming increasingly important, where the emphasis is more on texts as cultural constructions. As Bird and Derdenne write: "Cultural anthropologists have not only rediscovered narrative as an important element in the cultures they examine, but have also begun reflexively to rethink their ethnographic narratives – their news stories – which had long been treated as objective accounts of reality."¹² In other words, the proper way is to treat a genre as a particular kind of symbolic system and to look at news as narratives and stories. In this symbolic system, the facts, names, and details change almost daily; however, the framework into which they fit (the symbolic system) is more enduring. For, as Bird and Derdenne state, "... it could be argued that the totality of news as an enduring symbolic system 'teaches' audiences more than any of its component parts, no matter whether these parts are intended to inform, irritate,

or entertain.”¹³ Arguing that news stories, like myths, do not “tell it like it is,” but rather tell it “like it means,”¹⁴ insinuates the existence of an ideal story, which is an archetype that does not exist but that is recreated in individual tellings.¹⁵

To sum up, given the power-culture link that demystifies the cultural sphere’s claim to autonomy from politics, as represented by Said and his sourcebook *Orientalism*, I subscribe to the view that the mass media’s products, as part and parcel of Gramsci’s civil society, are entrenched with relations of power and serve to perpetuate and confirm the hegemonic order. Therefore, what the particular news stories tell is the grand narrative that is positioned in the dominant discourse. In the case of the American media, as Said has shown in *Covering Islam* (New York: Vintage, 1997), what is represented is defined in terms of whether it is for or against American interests.¹⁶

Muslims have always complained about how the media represent them, but until recently, an extensive literature had not been developed on this subject.¹⁷ More recently, however, apart from a limited number of books, some articles have opened up this field.¹⁸ Many of these works draw on *Orientalism* to frame their approach. Thus, the *Orientalist* perceptions in depicting Muslims are overtly emphasized.¹⁹ Some, such as Christopher Allen’s article and Mahboub Hashem’s piece in Yahya Kamalipour’s edition, also seek to identify the catch phrases and tropes. What matters most for this paper is that almost all of them share the argument that the media’s representation of Islam is unitary, atavistic, struck in the past, violent, and anti-woman. Coverage of the Oklahoma bombing served as an exemplary case for this point. Until Melani McAlister’s challenge, though, this conviction was not shattered by means of a new theoretical understanding of the current representations, although there were sporadic referrals to differences between Muslims.²⁰

The main difference of my approach is my attempt to account for the differentiation among Muslims as portrayed in the post-9/11 media and to identify its theoretical relevance. Following McAlister, I contend that *Orientalism*’s binary opposition between the Orient and the West does not completely hold true now. However, I also believe that *Orientalism* still provides the best tools with which to understand the western portrayal of Islam and Muslims. In other words, for the most part, how the West has understood and portrayed the Orient still has relevance. My attempt will also include the revision to this framework.

Methodological Considerations

Since Islam has been a topic of central concern in the news for quite a long time, it would entail a much greater project to cover all of this period in order to present a complete picture of the media's coverage of Islam and Muslims during the relevant period. Therefore, I did not scan all of the media articles or take a random selection of news stories that could be more appropriate for purely empirical researches. Instead, I took certain snapshots throughout the first few months after 9/11 and looked at how the mainstream media covered these specific moments. Moreover, some catch words that we heard frequently during those days served as a point of departure for searching the news sources.

Today, the term *media* does not denote only television channels, newspapers, and magazines, but also the Internet. For this reason, my material includes highly visited news sites. In contrast to the few Muslim professionals in the mainstream media sources, it is easy to find many Muslim organizations, along with their press releases, on the web. Given this fact, focusing on the Internet media seemed to be a far more appropriate way to approach this whole issue. More importantly, thanks to the Internet's development, news stories in the printed and visual media can now be accessed, thereby making the Internet an all-encompassing media source.

Consequently, my primary source of information was the Internet. For this research, I focused more on the mainstream media rather than the tabloid magazines and radical publications of the right and the left. Sources like PBS, MSNBC, CNN, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post* were scrutinized during the first few weeks after 9/11. Additionally, in order to hear Muslim voices, the web sites of leading Muslim organizations were selected. In this regard, particular attention was paid to www.islamonline.net, which is one of the leading news sources targeting American Muslims.

It should be mentioned that MSNBC's website, which also includes the material broadcast on NBC or published in *Newsweek*, contains the highest number of articles cited in this research. Hashem found more relevant articles in *Time* than *Newsweek* in his research²¹; however, the reverse is true for my study. In some cases, this was a deliberate choice on my part. I picked the best examples of the tropes out of several different news sources, and MSNBC proved to have more valuable articles in this regard. My study also differs from Hashem's study and others that employ content analysis, which can be argued to be "more scientific." But, given that I seek to iden-

tify common tropes rather than locating frequent catch phrases, this is not a major flaw of my method. After all, the exact effect of media coverage on different audiences remains a mystery.

One final word should be said about the seemingly disproportionate weight of Internet articles. First, most of those articles were also published in the relevant news magazines or broadcast on television channels of the same media conglomerates. So, I do not think that my method is biased against those other media. Those media conglomerates are aware of the fact that some audiences prefer television while others follow the news more on the Internet. Therefore, they try to reach out to all of these different audience segments by providing the same material through different media.

Needless to say, my research is based upon textual analysis. While I go through these sources, I look for those rhetorical strategies of the media that seek to represent Islam or Muslims. Although Said does not specify such tropes in making his points, David Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993) has been my primary source of inspiration. While Spurr identifies 12 tropes in colonial representation of the "Other," four of them were more essential for my research: debasement, surveillance, appropriation, and affirmation. As will be seen later, these categories provide a powerful tool for unpacking American media representations of Afghanistan.

The American Media's Islam and Muslims

The American media no longer present a monolithic discourse. Yet, this does not rule out the possibility of identifying at least a contested space between some patterns. Given the fact that the American public had never been exposed to such a massive coverage on Muslims in such a limited time, it is extremely difficult to gather everything that was said about Islam and Muslims. Nevertheless, I will present some basic tropes that were readily available and quite effective in perception formation.

As we remember, even on the first night of the events, blame was laid squarely on some Muslims, mainly Osama bin Laden and his organization. But it was difficult to know whether this was because of the material evidence present at the time or because it was just the most likely thing. The story made complete sense to the American public: A different sort of suicide mission, one involving hijacking airplanes, had been carried out by Islamic terrorists. Yet, when events unfolded in a swift manner to include the war on Afghanistan, the media engaged in an enormous coverage of

Muslims abroad. In this context, American Muslims for the first time appeared extensively on the screen. This is where we can pursue the answers for the questions at hand.

For quite a long time, “western” academia has perceived the non-western world with a crude modernist stance. This should be considered along with the relationship between academia and media, which constitutes one of the significant topics in *Covering Islam*, and academia’s effects on the media. In the modernist view, whatever the West experienced during its own modernization process constitutes the basic standards that any kind of subsequent modernization attempts in the underdeveloped world should follow. This quite ethnocentric unilinear view of modernity still prevails in much of the social science literature on area studies. Along these lines, I expect that the civilizing narrative of colonial discourse should have played itself out through the rhetorical strategies used to cover the war on Afghanistan. Therefore, what follows is an attempt to identify the tropes that were employed while covering 9/11 and the war on Afghanistan.

Rhetorical Strategies in the Coverage of 9/11 and the War on Afghanistan

Differentiation: The most remarkable shift in the representation of Muslims was the media’s departure from the monolithic representation of Muslims, one of Said’s main criticisms,²² toward a fragmented perception. The mainstream American media stopped essentializing the Muslim world as a monolithic bloc whose basic character of Islam overrode all of its inner differences and proved that these differences were irrelevant. Instead, a differentiation strategy between two types of Muslims was pursued: Fundamentalists (ie., Muslim extremists, Islamists, Islamic radicals) vs. moderate Muslims. The mainstream media, following the government, was careful to maintain a fine line between these two groups. While moderate Muslims were not considered a threat to American interests, fundamentalists/extremists were considered enemies, and generally called “terrorists.” As a catch word, many media outlets preferred the term *Islamic terrorist*.

Newspapers, magazines, and television channels used certain images to characterize fundamentalism: hijackers, suicide bombers, or anybody who acts on the political sphere with an Islamic discourse, whether he or she resorts to violence or not.²³ Kamalipour rightfully understands the West’s

definition as referring to “those states, leaders, and organizations that have challenged many of the presuppositions of the Western ideologies regarding secularism and development theories.”²⁴

This meaning seems to have underlined the media’s dominant perception. In general, all sorts of Islamic revivalism were labeled “fundamentalism.”²⁵ Although there were some dissenting voices on the margins, such as Oliver Roy’s differentiation between neo-fundamentalism and Islamism,²⁶ the former usage prevailed.

This differentiation strategy provided the media with great flexibility both to denigrate the enemy, as embodied by Osama bin Ladin and the Taliban, and, at the same time, not to jeopardize relations with Muslim groups at home or with “Muslim allies” abroad. This double-faced strategy operated on two levels: on the one hand, (moderate) Muslims were portrayed as American patriots if they were American residents or sympathizers with the 9/11 tragedy. In the first case, these Muslims were often depicted as “targets of misdirected anger.”²⁷ The victimization of Muslims was, in most cases, accompanied by the catch phrase of Islam being the “fastest growing religion in the U.S.” These were Muslims who were saddened by 9/11, just like their fellow citizens, who participated in blood drives and categorically condemned the attacks. These Muslims were said to “make an incredibly valuable contribution to our country.”²⁸ They even go to war for the American cause, which is the best proof that they are as American as any other fellow citizens.²⁹ In short, they were “ambassadors of Islam” in the United States.³⁰

Opposed to this group was the radical branch, and President Bush clearly drew the line between these two separate entities:

The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam³¹ itself. The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them.³²

How did the media represent those people who “practice a fringe form of Islamic extremism that has been rejected by Muslim scholars and the vast majority of Muslim clerics”?³³ What are their aims and why do they have these aims? These questions and the many catch phrases that we heard in that speech formed the public discourse’s agenda during the subsequent weeks. Following President Bush, who provided his own answers, the mainstream media became very preoccupied with these questions. For the most part, they gave their answers with reference to the scenes of people from the Islamic world. But no better example fleshed out the picture of

fundamentalism than the Taliban regime, which is the main subject of the following section.

Afghanistan: A Story of Civilization and the White Man's Burden

It is not surprising to see the media championing the modernist outlook in their coverage of the non-western world. When Said wrote his *Covering Islam*, Islam was represented as simply a resurgent atavism. But today, when the dominant differentiation strategy is taken into account, a different picture of the non-western (namely, Muslim) world is noticeable. The Muslim world is no longer represented as a coherent, monolithic entity; to the contrary, it is represented as a world torn by a harsh clash. One side includes fundamentalists who try to overthrow the current secular regimes (mostly the friends of the United States), substitute the civil code with the Shari`ah and wage war to destroy Israel (the only democratic country in the Middle East), eradicate religious minorities, and oppress women by forcing them to cover from head to toe. The other side is made up of moderate Muslims, especially women, who suffer from current – or fear prospective – oppression by those fundamentalists and thus struggle against their attempt to take control of Muslim countries.

During the time under review, while scenes of angry mobs burning American flags to protest the United States illustrated these fundamentalists, Pakistan's General Musharraf, who opened his country for American operations, represented moderate Muslims. These two camps clashed everywhere from Morocco to Malaysia.³⁴ In the United States, while most American Muslims were depicted as representing moderate Muslims, the existence of factions funded by Saudi extremist organizations is acknowledged and is even voiced by an American Muslim.³⁵

The war on Afghanistan, on the other hand, was presented in order to reproduce the modernization narrative from the beginning to the end: At the outset, the Taliban and its barbarism fed the violence; then, the white man brings civilization and we end up with emancipation. In the first place, the Taliban was the real symbol of fundamentalism, whereas the Northern Alliance represented moderate Islam, despite the fact that the burqa was first enforced by its government, headed by Burhanuddin Rabbani (1992-96). Furthermore, a representative of this former government stated that they had the same roots as the Taliban and did not disagree with the Taliban on enforcing the Shari`ah.³⁶ Yet, this blurred past of the Northern Alliance was simply forgotten.

REPRESENTING AFGHANISTAN: A NEW PAGE OF THE COLONIAL DISCOURSE

The war on Afghanistan was not covered as simply the elimination of those who harbor terrorism. There was a larger latent story underlying it: The white man was bringing civilization to the oppressed people by overthrowing a medieval theocracy. In a sense, the war did not get its moral justification just from retaliating against terrorists who carried out 9/11 and killed thousands of “innocent civilians” and their sponsors, who are equally responsible for them by harboring those terrorists. It was also justified as a civilized nation’s duty to emancipate the people, especially women, from the oppression of an atavistic government. Any kind of media news or article about the suffering of people under the Taliban would reproduce this latent story. Alternatively, every symbol or action that would link Afghanistan with modern countries, such as television, radio, the unveiling of women, and theatric activities, would count in favor of the civilizing mission.

To this end, following Spurr’s categorization, I will show how Taliban-ruled Afghanistan was negated through its horrifying conditions (debasement); how it was made visible to the western gaze (surveillance); how vast resources were wasted and humanity was deprived of them just because of this government, and, therefore, need to be put in the service of humanity (appropriation); and how American involvement reversed Afghanistan’s bad luck (affirmation).

SURVEILLANCE: The Taliban, who had ruled the country since 1996, were not brought to the visual attention of the western gaze. Even at the time of the alleged massacre in Mazar-e-Sharif, the media kept their silence.³⁷

Although the Taliban did make the news from time to time with its devastating policies (e.g., the destruction of the giant Buddha statues in Bamiyan in 2001 and its treatment of women³⁸), these events were just familiar events from the Muslim world, with its inherent religious intolerance and oppression of women. In one exceptional instance, a news story by Preston Mendelhall brought Afghanistan to the public attention: “Afghanistan is in eye of beholder: A country torn apart by war maintains its pride, hospitality.”³⁹

After 9/11, American public opinion was suddenly bombarded with the tragedy of the Afghan people. Many events that had not been covered sufficiently at the time they happened were found to be noteworthy just prior to the war.⁴⁰ In a sense, Afghanistan was brought under the western gaze when the United States assumed the mission of emancipating and civilizing that country. At that time, it was quite easy to find an enormous number of

articles on every aspect of Afghanistan. Once the media adopted this attitude, western eyes turned their attention to Afghanistan and it came under surveillance, only the first step toward appropriation.

APPROPRIATION: There is no longer any classical colonial relationship in which a colonizer formally appropriates the natural resources of the colonized. However, the interests of world powers involve treaties with natural resource-rich countries designed to exploit those resources. In the colonial literature, the colonized states' natural abundance is the subject of desire for the "western man," but this is represented as a "response to a putative appeal on the part of the colonized land and people" that "awaits creative hand of technology."⁴¹ In the media's coverage of Afghanistan, we find analyses focusing on its strategic location for the route of a natural gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan. In an article with a self-revealing title, "Businesses see opportunities in new Afghanistan," the journalist says:

The prospect of peace also is triggering hope for a multibillion dollar project to build an 890-mile pipeline that would carry natural gas across Afghanistan, linking central Asia to Pakistan ... A main attraction for global companies is the nation's location between central Asia and the growing economies of south Asia.⁴²

Afghanistan's natural resources certainly should not remain untapped; accordingly, the author does not conceal the intentions of American companies for the post-war order:

Several American companies have called me in the past two months to find out more about the prospects for post-war mining and hydrocarbon acquisition. ... From this mixture of developmental actions built upon humanitarian foundations, a new Afghanistan can rise out of the ashes.⁴³

Thus, a picture of Afghanistan that was under the western gaze and had vast resources from which humanity could benefit was drawn. As the article's title suggests, it is a call to help Afghanistan exploit its riches: only a humanitarian aim designed to help a poor country. The next step was to depict the miserable conditions under which its people lived because of the Islamic theocratic emirate's primitivism and barbarity. The following strategy (e.g., debasement) will illustrate that point.

DEBASEMENT: Afghanistan was a war-torn country in the grip of rival factions and suffering from every kind of adverse condition. The people's

misery was already so explicit that there was no need to exaggerate things. Yet the effect created by the news stories was that the whole country was experiencing this catastrophic situation, because Afghanistan was under Taliban rule. This was all that these fundamentalists could offer as a form of government. They were morally responsible for 9/11 and also responsible for their mismanagement of Afghanistan. That is why the civilized world had to intervene both to eliminate future attacks against the United States and to liberate the people from oppression. As Yuka Tachibana claimed: They were tired and desperate, their clothes shabby and covered in dust. The children's faces were unwashed. They were Afghanistan's invisible people.⁴⁴ In general, in the words of Sean Federico-O'Murchu, the Taliban regime offered the following scene: "... A portrait of tribal feuding, endless cycles of revenge and bloody massacres."⁴⁵

The situation of women under the Taliban served as the symbol of this more generalized aspect of debasement. From the very beginning of Taliban rule, this was the hottest topic for news agencies. The symbol of their oppression was the burqa, which became a crucial indicator that was seen to represent the trajectory of civilization or modernization for the Afghan people. Hence, it also provided the entire moral justification for the war. In a sense, it was as if the whole war was designed to emancipate women from the burqa, to remove the veil:

Anyone who has paid attention to the situation of women in Afghanistan should not have been surprised to learn that the Taliban are complicit in terrorism. When radical Muslim movements are on the rise, women are the canaries in the mines. The very visible repression of forced veiling and loss of hard-won freedoms coexists naturally with a general disrespect for human rights. This repression of women is not about religion; it is a political tool for achieving and consolidating power.⁴⁶

Replicating a colonial theme that western imperialism was necessary to save Muslim women from their oppressive cultures, Afghan women were presented as waiting for a hero to emancipate them:

After five years under the Taliban-enforced burqa, these women are waiting, they acknowledge, for someone to announce that it's OK to take off the once-mandatory covering.⁴⁷

Still, the task was tough. After all, this was the second confrontation of medieval barbarism with civilization. In the first one (the Soviet invasion), the civilized side could not succeed:

No math in the world, no body counting, can substitute for an understanding of the local populace, local traditions. You cannot break their resolve. They aspire to die for Allah in their understanding. This is paramount, and unlike the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, the whole civilized world is behind the United States. We should not miss this opportunity. America has a great chance to finish the job that the Soviets failed for one reason or another.⁴⁸

And the course of events had proved civilization absolutely powerless in this land as elsewhere in the Muslim world, at the hands of fundamentalists:

Perhaps it was naive, but like many foreigners there, my parents and their friends hoped to give Afghanistan exposure to the best of the West – its legal codes and literature, its engineering training and medical technology – without messing up the local culture or imposing their own. Before the Iranian Revolution, it seemed so clear what “development” was – a steady march toward improved education and health, with the gradual embrace of Westernization and secularization. How wrong they were: when the mullahs toppled the Westernized, secularized Shah of Iran, it popped the stock development myth of a steady march toward Westernization in the Muslim World.⁴⁹

AFFIRMATION: Then comes the intervention and attainment of the civilizing mission: helping the country exploit its resources, ensuring stability and ending ethnic violence, and, most important of all, emancipating the women. The whole narrative is encapsulated in the symbolic action of removing the burqa:

And the mustached commander had lived in a modern villa with a pool, multiple satellite phones, and an armored Cadillac. Zakki, who has communicated since the Taliban retreat with Dostum and citizens in Mazar by satellite phone, said, “Men are shaving their beards. Women are burning their burqas. All of these things are happening in Mazar-e-Sharif.” While these reports also could not be confirmed independently, the mood on the street in Pakistan among Afghan refugees who came from Mazar-e-Sharif was jubilant. “I’m so happy. When Dostum was in Mazar we had dance clubs and women wore pants – even short pants. It was just like living in America,” said a Dari-speaking female entertainer from Mazar who now lives in Peshawar. “It’s time to burn our burqas; my hometown is free!”⁵⁰

In another instance, Hillary Clinton wrote a notable article that epitomizes these points altogether. Even its title suffices to reveal the mind-set of the “liberators”:

New Hope for Afghanistan's Women: As liberators, the U.S. has an opportunity – and an obligation – to insist on an equal role for women in Afghanistan's future. ... I am reminded what she said that day as I watch women in Afghanistan begin to emerge from the oppression of the Taliban. Some are choosing to remove the burqas they had been required to wear in public. Some are becoming journalists again, their voices heard on radio, their faces seen on television.⁵¹

Education, which is very much in line with civilization and modernity, was now possible after American intervention. Dreams of little girls could now come true:

Twelve-year-old Parisa Barai brushes stray strands of hair from her face, tucking them beneath her brightly colored veil, and speaks of her dream of becoming a surgeon, a dream that until a month ago was all but inconceivable. ... That women and girls have returned to classrooms in Kandahar is a visible sign of progress in this city that just a month ago was the spiritual home of the Taliban. But there's still much more work to be done.⁵²

Thus, the mainstream American media has told us all about the war on Afghanistan: what kind enemy the Taliban were, and how they threatened the free civilized world externally and also their own people. So, what does this have to do with the other Muslims? Can the Taliban be picked as representatives of all Muslims? It goes without saying that, as stated at the outset, a totalizing picture of Islam is no longer the case, for we have witnessed a change in the American media's strategy to represent Muslims. They do not essentialize the diversity within Islam; in contrast, they portray the whole Muslim world as torn between two poles: moderate Muslims vs. extremist Muslims. Still, we observe another essentialization. Now, the media have two "Islams" instead of one. What they depict as "fundamentalist" is uniform all over the Muslim world. The following strategy identifies how the media employed this mode of representation.

Essentialization and Globalization: Now the media had only one kind of Islamic fundamentalism/Islamic terrorism, and its essential characteristic was not resorting to violence to kill innocent civilians. Rather, it was characterized by an anti-imperialist attitude, whether it was a terrorist organization or a peaceful Islamic organization that promoted self-rule in the Muslim world and, to this end, tried to replace "the friends of the U.S." by popularly elected leaders. As we recall, in Bush's words, these were also the people who "want to overthrow existing governments in many Muslim

countries, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan.”⁵³ One could wonder why this cannot be considered a legitimate goal from the perspective of those who believe in democratic values.

This vision covers up all kinds of ideological differences between the Taliban, who were, in one view, simply strict followers and implementers of the Hanafi sect rooted in the traditional Indian madrasahs and other Islamic movements.⁵⁴ In fact, in almost every Muslim country there has been a persistent cleavage between Islamist intellectuals who want to formulate a more dynamic view of the Shari`ah, and traditional ulama who oppose any kind of critical reflection on the legacy of Islamic jurisprudence. This historical cleavage has always been ignored, except by such people as Oliver Roy,⁵⁵ who differentiates between neo-fundamentalists (e.g., the Taliban) and such Islamists as the figures mentioned above.

Through this strategy, it becomes unclear just where fundamentalism begins and moderate Islam ends. This blurred line makes every Muslim a potential fundamentalist and puts the burden of proof on Muslims to show that they are not fundamentalists. Moreover, it gives the media the freedom to represent certain practices of ordinary Muslims as indications of fundamentalism. As a result, the media can target even the absence of such practices as dating as an instance of atavism and, in turn, fundamentalism.

In accordance with this totalizing picture of Islamism, one of the basic concerns that occupied media columns was the causes for the 9/11 attacks. Along with the catch phrase “hijacking Islam,” Bush’s question on this issue opened up a new discussion and provided the media with another catch phrase: “Why do they hate us?” Bush is clear about his stance on this question. For him, the perpetrators of this crime hate the United States because:

They hate what we 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.⁵⁶

Once Bush broached this question, all of the media followed suit. Apparently, there were two different sides: the external stimulants and the internal problems of Muslim societies that produced such a culture of hate. When scrutinized in detail, media articles⁵⁷ show some clear patterns. On the one hand, Bush’s argument amounts to saying that these fundamentalists’ bigotry and hatred of freedom make them enemies of all freedom-loving countries. This outlook also makes all “Arab and Muslim friends of the

U.S.” correct and justified in their suppression of the opposition, as if those “freedom loving” governments were protecting themselves against the threat of fundamentalist tyranny.

Alternatively, those who look at the “roots of Islamic rage” highlighted either American foreign policy in the Middle East, especially its unconditional support for Israel and sanctions against Iraq, or such internal problems as rulers, failed ideas, and the rise of fundamentalism. Yet, the tension between the two camps is retained in these arguments. In most of those articles, even though those who feel resented were not always portrayed as condoning extremism, they still urge the United States to realize that there is fertile soil for fundamentalists as long as their frustration with the United States continues.

All in all, what is not questioned is the monolithic structure of Muslim fundamentalists. It was all over the world, from American Islamic centers⁵⁸ to Pakistan, where American flags were burned, and to Gaza, as the *Washington Post* reported in its “Bin-Laden Poster Seen at Gaza Rally.”⁵⁹

After all, surrounded by fundamentalists, Israelis were used to living with this terror:

Looking for a glimpse of what may be in store for Americans in the age of global terror? Take a ride to Tel Aviv’s Ben Gurion Airport, where security measures are probably the tightest in the world.⁶⁰

CNN, while reporting world reactions to terrorist attacks, makes an interesting hierarchy of leaders. After the statements of several leaders, statements of Palestinian organizations were given, and all of those statements carried a sense of revenge:

Sheikh Yassin, leader of the Islamic militant group Hamas, said: “No doubt this is a result of injustice the U.S practices against the weak in the world.”⁶¹

This is not surprising, for CNN also repeatedly broadcasted scenes of rejoicing Palestinians after the 9/11 attacks. In another instance:

A tide of religious and nationalistic fanaticism is on the rise throughout Islam, from the Philippines to Gaza and Libya and Algeria, from Afghanistan and Iran and Iraq to Lebanon and Sudan. Here in Israel we have been on the receiving end of this lethal fanatic tide: almost every day we witness the link between hateful incitement and mass murders, between religious sermons that celebrate jihad and its fulfillment in suicide bombs against innocent civilians.⁶²

Thus, Islamic fundamentalism was essentialized, and an image of its monolithic nature without any internal contradictions was created. All kinds of Islamic movements throughout the Muslim world were lumped together, without any concern about whether they were traditional or modern, violent or peaceful. The covert message was evident: The world was now facing a global wave of Islamic terrorism that had to be eliminated for the sake of world peace. Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, suicide bombings in Palestine, the Kashmiri independence movement, and Muslim-run relief organizations were all different faces of Islamic fundamentalism. In this perspective, any kind of civil rights movement by Islamically oriented people against oppressive practices can easily be labeled as the outer face of hidden agendas, not a struggle for democracy. Hence, all kinds of dissent will be suppressed in the name of suppressing a totalitarian ideology; in other words, of saving the country from a medieval theocracy.

So far, I have identified the mainstream American media's general mode of representation of Islam and Muslims after 9/11. If we go back to the foundations, Said is often criticized for neglecting ruptures within the discourse. This is not the case with Spurr, who dedicated the last part of his book to areas of resistance within the colonial discourse, following Foucault's appropriation of Heidegger's theory of language. In his words:

It is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined, but this juncture is imperfect; discourse can be not only an instrument or an effect of power, but also a point of resistance. "Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (1980:101).⁶³

Along these lines, I will discuss whether there is an alternative Muslim discourse in an alternative public sphere that serves as a site of resistance to the dominant discourse.

The American Muslim Response to 9/11: Muslims Speaking for Themselves

In the colonial discourse, the colonized peoples do not speak for themselves. Rather, they are only the object of representation on which power is to be exercised. Said's example in *Orientalism*, where, on an issue related to the Palestinian conflict, the Israeli side is represented by an Israeli lawyer

while a former ambassador in an Arab country who has no formal training in Oriental studies speaks for the Arab side, can be recalled here.⁶⁴ From that time until the 9/11 attacks, the American Muslim community underwent drastic changes. For one thing, Muslims now had many leading organizations to represent themselves at the governmental level. In the media, even though there was no nationwide Muslim-owned or -run newspaper or weekly newsmagazine, some Muslim journalists began to write for the daily newspapers and weekly journals.

Right after the attacks, when some people from the Middle East were proclaimed to be the alleged perpetrators, Muslim speakers began to appear on television programs. Afterwards, many interviews with Muslim leaders and scholars appeared in the newspapers. American Muslims were no longer silent. In fact, the web sites of Muslim organizations posted press releases day after day, Muslims were writing articles to explain their standpoint, and some news reports were even prepared by Muslim journalists.

This is not to say that a monolithic Muslim bloc was expressing a collective viewpoint. The only point that brought these various organizations and people together was their categorical condemnation of the attacks and rejection of any kind of connotation whatsoever between Islam and terrorism.⁶⁵ This was strongly welcomed by the American media. Furthermore, the American media were quite eager to host Muslim leaders, intellectuals, and scholars who wanted to express their opinion about the incident. Most of their questions were about the meaning of jihad and martyrdom, the relationship between Islam and violence, and the causes for the clear anti-American sentiment among Muslims. Apart from these interviews, many Muslims wrote articles in daily newspapers and weekly newsmagazines. Lastly, Muslim views appeared on media releases of the web sites of several Muslim organizations and as articles on Islamic web sites. Taken altogether, these opinion pieces in no way gave the impression of a common American Muslim discourse. To the contrary, my conclusion is that they reinforced the dominant discourse of two-tiered Muslims.

For the purposes of my research, the most appropriate way seems to be setting apart the standpoints adopted by certain groups and their points of disagreement with other Muslims on basic questions that the American public has addressed.

Categorizing Muslim Standpoints: Apologists, Dissidents, and Critics

This fragmented set of standpoints did not escape the attention of some Muslims. One of them identifies two extremes in these responses: those who fall prey to conspiracy theories and others who are filled with an unwarranted guilt complex and so became apologetic.⁶⁶ Actually, with this kind of analysis, it is proper to delineate a third group of opinion leaders, who have a more balanced position. Thus, we can talk about three “ideal types” in a Weberian sense.⁶⁷

Dissidents were predominantly active on the Internet rather than in the other media. They questioned everything in the official story. The media were wrong by blaming Muslims without any evidence about the perpetrators’ identity. But they were quite sure that it was committed either by MOSSAD or the CIA.⁶⁸ There was a hidden agenda going on, and that was the pipeline story. The United States had already planned to attack Afghanistan in order to control the pipelines; the rest of the story was just to save face.⁶⁹ The United States had no superior moral position with which to judge Osama bin Ladin; after all, he was on the CIA’s payroll. The Taliban was also an American creation, in collaboration with Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency. The real global terrorist was the United States, who was now paying the price for its terrorist actions. In a sense, Osama was the man who woke Americans up and made them aware of their government’s wicked policy in the Muslim world.

The Taliban was the Americans’ enemy just because it was trying to implement Islam in its totality. The United States’ allies, the Northern Alliance, was composed of war criminals who stood accused of pre-Taliban atrocities in Afghanistan. Yet, these people are quite reluctant to remember what the Muslim world or Islamic groups worldwide had done for the suffering people during those times, and to question if the Taliban were in a superior position when compared with the Northern Alliance insofar as atrocities are concerned.

Ironically, this view both defamed and praised Osama bin Ladin or the Taliban. On the other hand, it also had no concern about the mindset that justified civilian massacres. Some even claimed that the American people deserved this because they were supporters of the United States’ worldwide state terrorism. After all, in Afghanistan the same number of people were killed by American bombs as had been killed in the 9/11 attacks ... that this war was simply a war against Islam, and not against terrorism as always

phrased. There was nobody to define the difference between Islamic fundamentalism and Islam.⁷⁰ Advocates of this standpoint never thought about asking themselves if Muslims were ever responsible for any of the negative images of them produced by the largely corporate-controlled American media.

When taken separately, some arguments of this position are reasonable; however, when they all come together they lead to self-righteousness and hinder self-criticism. Indeed, even such a tragic massacre did not help some of these people question whether there were any problems within Islamic societies that produced such an insensitivity toward civilian lives. In this vein, it is wrong to assume that there is any difference between them and those Americans who scapegoated Islamic civilization as a whole and held the culture of Islamic societies responsible for fomenting hatred toward non-Muslims, almost always referred to as infidels. For those Americans, Muslims were attacking the United States because they were enemies of the freedoms found in the “civilized world,” while for those Muslims, Americans deserved that revenge because only the West was responsible for the Muslim world’s suffering, as though the Muslim world was completely innocent in this regard. The following passage exemplifies many of these points, although the article’s general argument may not be representative of this stance:

If anything, Osama bin Laden exposed the lies of American idealism and values of freedom, self-determination, pursuit of democracy and justice around the world, and brought to light a bankrupt foreign policy, and lack of respect for human rights and the rule of law. Bin Laden exposed the hypocrisy of American values and idealism that are evoked publicly, but pursued with a vengeance to serve the economic and political national interest of domestic lobbies, from the Jewish lobby to the corporate military-industrial complex and the oil lobby.⁷¹

The second group of people, mainly consisting of the leaders of various Islamic organizations, adopted the opposite stance. In the first place, they accepted that this crime had been committed by Muslims.⁷² They totally neglected American policies abroad and behaved more patriotically than many Americans, to such an extent that they never accepted any criticism of American foreign policy by Muslims and even concealed such facts as the Taliban’s collaboration with the United States.⁷³ If the officials believed that some Muslims were behind these attacks, they would not question it.⁷⁴ Perpetrators of these crimes were not only violating Islamic principles, but

they were also not Muslims.⁷⁵ Moreover, they were in no way martyrs, because martyrdom could only be possible under the rule of caliphate, which had ceased to exist long ago, or only during wars between states.⁷⁶

If Muslims were living in the United States, this group asserted, they had to adopt the American stance and place their citizenship before any feeling for fellow Muslims abroad. In addition, politics was not a business for Muslims.⁷⁷ Extremism was a more serious problem for them than for Americans, and the reason for the continued turbulence in the Middle East was this extremism. The United States was a great country of freedom, and it had best values of humanity. All American Muslims should stand shoulder to shoulder with the American government in its fight against terrorism, and, if called to serve in its armed forces, should not hesitate to join.

The third group of people, who criticized both stances, consisted of some Muslims who were shocked by the events and, as a result, felt the need to question their culture and social structure. Although they did not fail to acknowledge the frustration of Muslims with American foreign policy, their main goal was to call fellow Muslims to self-criticism. They acknowledged the difficulty of being American Muslims, of struggling at home with the false images, which drives them to be role models and detach themselves from any kind of violent action, while at the same time being aware of their responsibility to their fellow Muslims abroad. A statement by Ingrid Mattson, vice president of ISNA-US, is worth quoting, since it recaps many of these points:

But frankly, American Muslims have generally been more critical of injustices committed by the American government than of injustices committed by Muslims. ... For the last few years, I have been speaking publicly in Muslim forums against the injustice of the Taliban. This criticism of a self-styled Muslim regime has not always been well-received ... our legitimacy in the Muslim world is intimately linked with American foreign policy. ... We have to speak against oppressive interpretations of Islam and against emotional, superficial, and violent apocalyptic depictions of a world divided. And in our desire to show ourselves to be patriotic Americans, we cannot suppress our criticisms of the United States when we have them.⁷⁸

That is why they were opposed to the idea of launching a war against Afghanistan, which would only escalate the violence.⁷⁹ Yet, they strongly supported bringing those people to justice and punishing them after a fair

trial. The most typical example of this balanced attitude is that of Muqtedar Khan. Among many of his articles, two stand out: “Memo to American Muslims”⁸⁰ and “Memo to Americans.”⁸¹ Taken separately, they give the impression that the first one represents an apologetic attitude while the second one exemplifies self-righteousness. However, a careful reader can find sensitivity in him about the suffering of Muslims all over the world as well as a call to self-criticism for both Muslims and Americans. He joins those who seek to answer the question: “Why do they hate us?” but the answer in his memo to Americans is:

There are several theories being advanced by various commentators explaining why Muslims generally hate the United States. The silliest of them is the one that the Bush administration and the conservative elements in America entertain. They insist that Bin Laden and other Islamic militants hate America because they hate American values of freedom and democracy. ... It is not a hatred of democracy and freedom but the desire for one that has made many Muslims hate the U.S., whom they blame for the perpetuation of undemocratic polities in their world. Surely there are some Muslims who argue that democracy like everything Western is un-Islamic and evil.⁸²

Although it is very difficult to find even one example that represents a certain group’s entire set of attitudes, Muslim stances could be described along these crude lines. The only strategy that all Muslims employed altogether was their detachment from violence. Accordingly, they tried to save Islamic concepts from the “hijackers of Islam,” by rejecting that the perpetrators were martyrs or engaged in jihad.

To sum up the Muslim response to 9/11, it has to be said at the outset that Muslims had never had such an opportunity to speak up for themselves and to tell the American public about Islam. Condemnation of the violence was a common position, and it seems that it really had the desired effect on certain segments of society. Actually, this was what the American media also intended. They needed to represent “moderate Muslims” to the American public, as opposed to fundamentalists, and these figures were good examples. Thus, Muslims were incorporated into the mainstream American discourse.

An alternative approach might suggest that Muslims themselves created the differentiation between moderates and radicals that the media would pick up later. Though this is a question of empirical research, it seems to me that since this appeared as the most viable strategy toward the Muslim world in

the international arena, the media simply followed the government. When Islam appeared as an alternative discourse for Muslims in recent decades, the previous political strategy of deemphasizing Islam ceased to be a viable policy. Thus, as is most explicit in today's Greater Middle East project, Islam would be a target of those political projects that seek to turn it into a subservient religion. Yet, as I pointed out earlier, the common attitude among Muslims to detach themselves from extremism has undeniably contributed to the media's strategy.

Still, inasmuch as some criticisms appeared in the Muslim-owned media against the United States that seemed to hold it responsible, not to mention the wide-ranging opposition of Muslims to the idea of war, some Muslims were represented as not being sufficiently condemnatory of the incidents and, therefore, supporters of the fundamentalists. This assertion allowed the basic differentiation strategy to be perpetuated. Since the effects of the media on the public's attitudes may be another topic of research, any argument concerning the influence of the Muslims' appearance in the American media on the image of Muslims will be speculative. Nonetheless, the proliferation of favorable opinions about Islam and Muslims among the American public may be an outcome of this Muslim appearance.

Conclusion

American Muslims are in a struggle for existence as an essential part of American society. Challenges of both historical and contemporary relations between "the West" and the Muslim "Others" led to an identity crisis on both sides. Throughout its history, the West has constructed its identity by opposing itself to its "Other": Islam. Although it is not fair to say that the United States, which did not have a direct confrontation with Muslims up until very recent times, did inherit the western legacy of colonialism and conflict totally, it can be argued that this cultural heritage had a great effect on forming its perceptions of Muslims. After all, for Paul Findley's elementary school teacher, the defining feature of Muslims was: "They aren't like us."⁸³ Now that this "Other" is not a total outsider anymore, but has been far more visible with its Islamic centers and Islamic organizations, with its women in hijabs and men in turbans; and now that Islam is always called the "fastest-growing religion in the U.S.," "American identity" is in need of redefinition.

Similarly, Muslims who have traditionally felt antagonistic toward "the West" in general, and the United States in particular after Israel was estab-

lished at the cost of lives and properties of their fellow Muslims, are aware that they are no longer a marginal minority. Native-born generations and converts have become an important segment of the American Muslim community, and more and more Muslims now hold important societal positions. This has crucial implications: On the one hand, it complicates the traditional conceptions of Muslims worldwide about the West and the Westerners who they used to perceive in antagonistic terms. On the other hand, American Muslims feel the need to define themselves vis-à-vis the United States and their fellow Muslims.

The September 11, 2001, attacks against the symbol of American economic and political might, which also targeted thousands of civilians,⁸⁴ were attributed to people who had Muslim origins. Regardless of the extent of the official story's truth, Muslims knew that there was no way to keep silent. On the other hand, the mainstream media's coverage of 9/11 did not disparage Islam itself; rather, the media followed a complicated course by praising Islam as a peaceful religion while simultaneously defaming "fundamentalism," whose meaning was left intentionally fuzzy. The whole media coverage can be read from this essential distinction between (moderate) Islam and fundamentalism.

Moreover, these two groups of Muslims were not portrayed as having a serene relationship. To the contrary, every part of the Muslim world was portrayed as experiencing a deep cleavage between these two groups trying to shape the Muslims' future. Underlying this dominant mode of representation was a modernizationist outlook, and the well-worn modernization narrative was reproduced when covering the war against the Taliban, which was a prototype of the fundamentalists. The clash was constructed as a war between civilization and barbarism. What the coverage on the Taliban added to this picture was the embodiment of barbarism. This turned the war on Afghanistan into a movement to liberate women from medieval barbarity, where the burqa symbolized their oppression. In this struggle, the Northern Alliance represented the moderate Muslims. From there on, an essentialization strategy was employed to lump together all kinds of fundamentalisms.

American Muslims were not a monolithic bloc that could respond to events in the world and the dominant representations of Muslims. Although they were united in condemning the attacks and in their attempt to prove that Islam had nothing to do with terrorism, they differed in all other respects. For one thing, American Muslims finally began to speak for themselves. But what they said usually could not override the recent dominant

discourse on Islam. The more profound effect of the Muslim presence in the West, namely, the negotiation of Muslim and western identities, has yet to be seen.

Notes

1. For contrasting images of Palestinians, see R. S. Zaharna, "The Palestinian Leadership and the American Media: Changing Images, Conflicting Results," in *The U.S. Media and the Middle East: Image and Perception*, ed. Yahya Kamalipour (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 37-47. Despite the relatively positive portrayal during the first Intifada, there is no question that the negative image of Palestinians as terrorists remained dominant, as many public opinions surveys confirmed.
2. Marvin Yakos, *Jesus vs. Jihad: Exposing the Conflict between Christ and Islam* (Florida: Charisma House, 2001), 181-83.
3. Foucault develops a powerful argument linking all forms of the will to knowledge and all modes of cultural representation of the "Other," or marginal constituencies, more or less explicitly to the exercise of power. Second, his understanding of "discourse" – the medium that constitutes power and through which it is exercised – "constructs" the objects of its knowledge. In other words, discourse produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics* (London and New York: Verso: 1997), 36.
4. *Ibid.*, 36-37.
5. It simply means going beyond direct forms of political control (*dominio*), and unveiling the complex interlocking of political, social, and cultural forces that enables and perpetuates authority. In this picture, it is culture where the struggle for hegemony ("war of position") takes place. Hegemony is "in the strongest sense 'a culture,' which is also the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes." Raymond Williams, "Hegemony" and "Traditions, Institutions and Formations" in *Marxism and Literature* (1976), 8.
6. *Ibid.*, 37-38.
7. *Ibid.*, 39.
8. M. Schudson, "The Sociology of News Production" in *The Social Meaning of News*, ed. D. Berkovitz (USA and UK: Sage: 1997), 7.
9. E. Bird and R. Dardenne. "Myth, Chronicle, and Story: Exploring the Narrative Quality of News" in Berkovitz, *Social Meaning*, 333.
10. Schudson, "Sociology," 16.
11. *Ibid.*, 11.
12. Bird and Dardenne, "Myth, Chronicle, and Story," 334.
13. *Ibid.*, 335.
14. *Ibid.*, 337.

15. Ibid., 338-40.
16. Ibid., 42-51.
17. Yet, it is increasingly becoming an attractive topic of inquiry. After Said's *Covering Islam*, Kamalipour's *The U.S. Media and the Middle East: Image and Perception* made a great scholarly contribution on this subject. Also Edmund Ghareeb, *Split Vision: Arab Portrayal in the American Media* (Washington, DC: Institute of Middle Eastern and North African Affairs, 1977) (an extended volume was published in 1983) and Michael Hudson and Ronald Wolfe, *The American Media and the Arabs* (Washington, DC: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1980) are valuable resources on this subject. Probably theoretically the most rigorous and most recent work is Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
18. See, for example, "Has the New York Times Negatively Stereotyped Muslims for the Past Forty Years?" www.geocities.com/Athens/Agora/4229/nyt.html; Bashy Quraishi, "Islam in the Western Media," *On-Line/More Colour in the Media: The Multicultural Skyscraper Newsletter* 1, no. 3. (12 October 2001); Sayyed Yousif el-Khoei, "Islam and the West: Western Media Coverage of Islam – A Critical Review," *Political Islam and the West*, 29-30 October, 1997; Christopher Allen, "Islamophobia in the Media since September 11th," *Exploring Islamophobia: Deepening Our Understanding of Islam and Muslims* (29 September 2001); Elizabeth Poole, "Media Representation and British Muslims," www.al-bab.com/media/articles/poole0005.htm; Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, "The Language of Islamophobia," *Exploring Islamophobia: Deepening Our Understanding of Islam and Muslims* (29 September 2001); "The Media and its Representation of Islam and Muslim Women," http://victorian.fortunecity.com/coldwater/439/muslimwomen_media.htm.
19. Melani McAlister is the most important scholar to challenge the binary opposition between the West and Islam as the ultimate determinant of this representation. She argues that "in the last fifty years, the meanings of the Middle East in the United States have been far more flexible, and rich than the Orientalism binary would allow." Ibid., 270.
20. Hashem, for instance, refers to the radical vs. moderate dichotomy drawn in *Time* and *Newsweek*, but this does not lead him to incorporate this fact into his theory. Ibid., 157.
21. Ibid., 155.
22. Said, 1981, 38-45.
23. Macksood Aftab "What does fundamentalism really mean?" *Islamic Herald* (April 1995). www.ais.org/~bsb/Herald/Previous/495/fundamentalism.html.
24. Yahya Kamalipour, "The Crisis of Political Legimacy," in *The U.S. Media and the Middle East: Image and Perception*, ed. Yahya Kamalipour, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 14.

25. Aftab, What does fundamentalism really mean?"
26. Oliver Roy. "Neo-fundamentalism." www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/roy.htm.
27. "We Are the Targets of Misdirected Anger." www.msnbc.com/news/629237.asp.
28. www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010917-11.html "Islam is Peace," says president. Remarks by President George W. Bush at the Islamic Center of Washington, DC.
29. Lorraine Ali, "Muslim Warriors for America," *Newsweek*, 15 October 2001. She is an American Muslim.
30. Ayman Muhyeldin, "Ambassadors of Islam: Muslims in U.S. try to educate skeptics of religion's values." www.msnbc.com/news/660574.asp.
31. This phrase also constituted one of the most common catch phrases and was used as the title of many articles.
32. www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html. Address to a joint session of Congress and the American people.
33. Bush, from the same speech.
34. See, for example, Douglas Jehl, "Democracy's Uneasy Steps in the Muslim World," *New York Times*, 23 November 2001; Douglas Jehl, "Moderate Muslims Fear Their Message is Being Ignored," *New York Times*, 21 October 2001; Susan Sachs, "A Nation Challenged: Where Muslim Traditions Meet Modernity," *New York Times*, 17 December 2001.
35. Mustafa Saied, "An Uneasy Tolerance: One American Muslim's view of how forces of hatred find a home in otherwise beneficent mosques and Islamic centers," MSNBC, 3 October 2001. <http://stacks.msnbc.com/news/635263.asp>.
36. "Rabbani-Hikmetyar tartismalari" (The Debate Between Rabbani and Hikmetyar), *Yeni Safak*, 21 October 2001. www.yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2001/ekim/21/gundem.html.
37. "In general, however, the Mazar massacre was brushed aside by the international media, and in particular by the influential American press. The *New York Times* confined the killings to a few paragraphs in a story about Iran on Sept. 16. A reporter in Islamabad offered *Newsweek* a 1,500-word article that was finally reduced to a 150-word snippet." Rupert C. Colville. "One Massacre That Didn't Grab the World's Attention," *International Herald Tribune* (Paris), 7 August 1999.
38. See, for example, "The Taliban's War on Women," *New York Times*, editorial, 6 November 1997; "Women under house arrest in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, editorial, 18 July 1998.
39. www.msnbc.com/news/567093.asp?0sp=n8b5.
40. For example, see the story about the massacre above: "Mazar-i Sharif's bloody history" MSNBC, 9 November 2001. www.msnbc.com/news/655362.asp.
41. David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University press, 1993), 28.

42. 26 November 2001. www.sptimes.com/News/112601/Worldandnation/Businesses_see_opport.shtml.
43. Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*.
44. Yuka Tachibana "Afghanistan's invisible refugees," www.msnbc.com/news/650317.asp. 31 October 2001.
45. Sean Federico-O'Murchu, "Mazar-e-Sharif's bloody history," 9 November 2001. www.msnbc.com/news/655362.asp.
46. Jan Goodwin and Jessica Neuwirth, "The Rifle and the Veil," *New York Times*, 19 October 2001.
47. "Our reporter stumbles through a shrouded world," *Christian Science Monitor*, 10 January 2002. www.csmonitor.com/2002/0110/p1s4-wosc.html.
48. Steven Shabad, "Don't Overestimate Your Superiority," 21 September 02. www.msnbc.com/news/632545.asp. It is interesting to note that even the Soviet invasion was used to serve the United States' portrayal of the war as a war against barbarians. The whole threat of the spread of communism, which led the United States to support the Mujahedeen at that time, was replaced by a renewed representation of a struggle between civilization and barbarism.
49. Carla Power, "An Afghan Childhood," 19 September 2001. www.msnbc.com/news/631312.asp.
50. Colin Soloway and Melinda Liu, "Burning Their Burqas," 12 November 2001. www.msnbc.com/news/656627.asp. It is noteworthy that Dostum, whose cruel war methods are acknowledged in the same report, is still greeted with sympathy due to his "modern" way of life among a bunch of fundamentalists.
51. *Time*, 24 November 2001.
52. "Back to School: Afghan Girls Back in Classroom after Seven Years," 9 January 2002 http://abcnews.go.com/sections/wnt/DailyNews/school_girls020109.html.
53. Bush, 20 September 2001 speech.
54. As Ali Bulaç argues in his column in the Turkish daily *Zaman*, members of Taliban were vigilantly distinguishing themselves from the contemporary intellectual movements of the Muslim world. They did not consider Mawdudi, one of the most important figures of Islamic revivalism, as a genuine scholar, let alone Seyyid Qutb, who is more distant to the traditional *madrasah* Islam. They even excommunicated Hasan Turabi because of his stance in a religious debate. "Taliban Üzerine" (On the Taliban), *Zaman*, 20 November 2001. www.zaman.com/2001/11/20/yazarlar/AliBULAC.htm.
55. "Neofundamentalism." www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/roy.htm.
56. Bush, from his 20 September 2001 address.
57. See Peter Ford, "Why do they hate us?" *Christian Science Monitor* 27 September 2001; Hoda Kotbe "Why they hate us," 7 December 2001. www.msnbc.com/news/667458.asp; Don Ephron, "Why the United States?" 18 September 2001 (interview with Amr Moussa). www.msnbc.com/news/630756.asp; Christopher Dickey and Alan Zarembo, "Checking the Exits:

- Why even Arabs with pro-American sympathies aren't applauding Bush," *Newsweek* (Arabic), 24 September 2001; Fareed Zakaria, "The Politics of Rage: Why Do They Hate Us?" 15 October 2001, www.msnbc.com/news/639057.asp; Gersh Kuntzman, "Blaming a Victim," 17 September 2001, www.msnbc.com/news/630263.asp.
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 62. Amos Oz, "Struggling against Fanaticism," *New York Times*, 14 September 2001. www.nytimes.com/2001/09/14/opinion/14OZ.html.
 63. Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, 184-85.
 64. For a list of Muslim responses to attacks, see: <http://groups.colgate.edu/aaris-lam/response.htm>; www.arches.uga.edu/~godlas/nineelevn.html; <http://home.wlu.edu/~lubint/islamonWTC.htm>; and www.unc.edu/~kurzman/terror.htm.
 65. Saied, 1979, 293.
 66. Shahid Athar, "The Future of American Muslims after September 11," www.islamfortoday.com/athar09.htm.
 67. I need to mention that these groups refer to attitudes, not necessarily to groups of people. In this regard, a spokesperson for a Muslim community might employ one standpoint in a certain setting and a conflicting one in another.
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 69. About the pipeline story, see, Enver Masud, "What Really Happened on September 11 Remains a Mystery," *The Wisdom Fund*, 27 April 2002. www.twf.org/News/Y2002/0427-Mystery.html.
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 71. Mohamed Khodr, "Muslims Silent while Muslims Die," 12 November 2001. www.islam-online.net/English/views/2001/12/article5.shtml.
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80. Muqtedar Khan, "A Memo to American Muslims," www.ijtihad.org/memo.htm.
81. Muqtedar Khan, "Memo to Americans," www.ijtihad.org/memoa.htm.
82. Ibid.
83. Paul Findley, *Silent No More: Confronting America's False Images of Islam* (Beltsville, MD: amana publications, 2001), 19.
84. "The attacks were designed to cause as many deaths as possible, and havoc, and to be a big slap for America on American soil." Ascribed to a senior al-Qaeda operative. "Al-Qaeda Planned to Hit Nuclear Plants, Congress: Arab Journalist," 9 September 2002. www.islamonline.net/english/News/2002-09/09/article45.shtml.