Anxiety De Jour:
The Manufacturing of Anti-Muslim Sentiment in the Wake of 9/11

Gregg CARTER
University of Texas—Pan American – Texas / USA

Books Reviewed:

Esposito, John L. & Ibrahim Kalin, ed. *Islamophobia: The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Kumar, Deepa. *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire.* Kindle Edition. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2012.

Lean, Nathan. *The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims.* Foreword by John L. Esposito. London: Pluto Press, 2012.

Sheehi, Stephen. *Islamophobia: The Ideological Campaign Against Muslims* . Kindle Edition. Atlanta, GA: Clarity Press, 2011.

Sufficient evidence exists to suggest that people are, in large part, intelligent and compassionate beings. However, the specter of danger can transform groups of otherwise rational individuals into easily unnerved mobs, often prone to xenophobic tendencies and random acts of violence. Psychologists refer to this phenomenon as "Group Think" or "Mob Mentality." At the emotional core of this phenomenon is fear, which is a natural human response to a perceived threat. When properly managed, fear often becomes a powerful tool with unifying potential. Conversely, fear improperly managed is frequently more threatening than the stimuli that originally created it. In this context, fear is easily manipulated, culturally divisive, and is potentially self-replicating. Still, a nation regularly reflects its cohesion through a common fear. Historian H. W. Brands notes that many nations were founded upon the perception of external danger, the existence of which prompted the banding together of previously disunited groups.[1] Brands expounds upon this idea by noting that the United States is a nation of immigrants, and therefore lacks a shared ancestry, language, and cultural experience. Consequently, the existence of a common enemy has frequently acted as a social adhesive. Still, during times of war or economic uncertainty, Americans become susceptible to irrational fits of anxiety. Numerous examples appear throughout the twentieth century that evidence such behavior. When the United States became involved in World War I, the Wilson administration sought to suppress anti-war dissent by passing anti-sedition legislation, the

---

[1] H. W. Brands, *The Devil We Knew: Americans and the Cold War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994), v.

effects of which produced an environment that proved nearly as precarious for American citizens in their own country as was for their enemy thousands of miles away. The resulting hyper-nationalism that spread throughout the country exacerbated anti-German sentiment across the U.S. and created a *de facto* police state that forbade criticism of the U.S. government. The creation of this environment stood in utter contradiction to the founding principles of the United States; however, such efforts sustained popular compliance with all national wartime endeavors and regulations, albeit through coercion. Twenty-three years later, Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor prompted the Roosevelt administration, finding it impossible to ascertain the loyalty of foreign-born and first generation Japanese American citizens living in the U.S., to order the internment of all Japanese Americans based on unsubstantiated reports of a possible invasion. As the Pacific War intensified, the American media increasingly portrayed Japanese as sub-human animals, conjuring an American anxiety over the "Yellow Peril" and transforming the Pacific Theater into one of the most violent episodes in the history of human conflict. Such was the popular distrust of the Japanese American population, that when the U.S. Supreme Court heard cases challenging the constitutionality of Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, the high court upheld the order on two of the three occasions.[2] The cessation of hostilities in 1945 brought no respite to America's collective distress. The advent of the Cold War redirected American anxiety toward Communism and dread of the International Communist Conspiracy. Political crusaders, such as Senator Joseph McCarthy, exploited American anti-communist angst as a means of acquiring fame and political power. That they often violated the civil rights of those they accused seemed inconsequential. Even so, it is easy to reflect upon the many flaws in American culture and attribute the injustices that resulted to an absence of national morality. This is especially true when considering phenomena such as the Red Scare, which in retrospect resulted from a seemingly irrational fear of a communist plot to achieve world domination that never materialized. However, when we consider the events that immediately preceded the second red scare, (the atomic spies, Soviet Union detonating an atom bomb, and the fall of China to Communism), the threat appeared real to those living during that turbulent period. There is always speculation concerning the nature of the relationship that exists between a nation's government and its citizens—in particular, how said government communicates with its citizens and how its citizens communicate with each other. Western culture proclaims its moral superiority to the other nations of the world by pointing to its standards of popular sovereignty and individual freedom. Americans, in particular, views themselves as guardians of humanity's inalienable rights. Americans believe this because this is the story fed to Americans from an early age. This is the process of assimilation, and it is one of the many functions of propaganda. Propaganda determines how a nation's citizens comprehend the world around them, with the news media fueling the conversations that reinforce this comprehension.[3] Although Americans often struggle with the pejorative overtones of the term

---

[2] The third case involved a petition for a writ of habeas corpus filed on behalf of Mitsuye Endo, who claimed to be a loyal citizen of the United States at the time of her incarceration. The Court ruled that she was, in fact, loyal and ordered her immediate released. It is relevant to note, however, that the Court published its decision following a presidential order ending the policy of internment. For a more detailed discussion on this topic, see Geoffrey R. Stone, *War and Liberty: An American Dilemma—1790 to the Present* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co.), 75-77.

[3] Erin Steuter and Deborah Wills, *At War with Metaphor: Media, Propaganda, and Racism in the War on Terror.* (Lanham, MA: Lexington Books, 2009), KL 387. NOTE: "KL" refers to the equivalent of page numbers for sources on Kindle e-reading devices.

propaganda, it is an essential tool of all government in all countries. Indeed, the literature of Thomas Paine and Samuel Adams played a central role in creating the American nation. Still, Americans view propaganda as a mechanism used only by totalitarian dictators and other similarly repressive governments. Perhaps this is due to the nature of this particular beast. Propaganda feeds on emotion rather than information, and for it to be effective, stories must clear, succinct, and unburdened by complexity.[4] In the context of a government's foreign policy, propaganda is the means through which a government persuades the populace of the intrinsic impartiality of its objectives, and in times of war, the unqualified malevolence of the enemy. It is during times of conflict that propagandists often manipulate a nation's anxiety into something more closely resembling a national panic. This is as true in the current War on Terror as it was at the onset of the Great War. The following will document the ways in which language finds use as a weapon that exploits popular anxiety of an external threat in order to maintain support for fight the War on Terror. In doing so, polemicists perpetuate xenophobic notions under the guise of patriotism that work to marginalize the social 'other', who are viewed as representing a potential threat to Western society.

In *Islamophobia Industry*, Nathan Lean maintains that American and European apprehension toward Islam and the Muslim world following the attacks of September 11, 2001 epitomize a social paroxysm in that they are a premeditated effort by a small cadre of xenophobic ideologues who seek to propagate anti-Islamic sentiment for their own interests. Lean's thesis is fairly straightforward and stated clearly in the first fifteen pages of the text. His goal is to correct the "…unfair and imbalanced representation of Islam and Muslims by calling attention to the small band of hucksters who benefit from the pain of others…" (13). According to Lean, prior discourses on the subject of Islamophobia have focused too much on establishing parameters for their study—their efforts thus mired in technicalities. For that reason, the author hopes to avoid such "etymological roundabouts" by addressing the subject from an intentionally broad perspective. Lean defines Islamophobia, in its most basic form, as "…the fear of Muslims and Islam…" reasoning that it is fear that ultimately leads to acts of "…hatred, hostility, and discrimination…" toward Islam and the Muslim community (13).

The subject matter addressed in the text applies to a variety of academic disciplines. Elements of political science and sociology overlap with those of international studies, history, and psychology. Given the comprehensiveness of the author's argument, this multi-disciplinary approach seems all too logical. Arranged thematically, each of the book's seven chapters addresses a particular aspect of synthetic Islamophobia. Lean begins by linking the process of manufacturing fear with the social and historical significance of the monster, as well as the narratives through which they disseminate fear. He argues that the social perception of the monster finds relevance in all cultures, proliferating fear by reminding us of our own weakness. Ironically, the allegorical monster has one unique utility that makes it an effective implement of propaganda—it has a unifying quality. According to Lean, the monster functions as a metaphor for all things different and foreign, possessing the capability of upsetting the *status quo*. As foreign creatures, monsters are easy to hate—after all, they are different in both appearance and behavior. As such, they have no feelings, no rights, and by the end of the story, monsters are ultimately doomed. The author explains that following the attacks of September 11, 2001, members of the media and the U.S. government referred to the 9/11 hijackers and Osama Bin Laden as monsters. While it is entirely possible that "monster" references occurred for lack of a better word, Lean suggests that this was part of a deliberate effort on the part of

---

[4] Ibid., (KL 387).

the U.S. government to dehumanize Muslims, much the same as they had the Japanese during the Second World War (19). Furthermore, Lean demonstrates how the seeds of Islamophobia take root and become a part of the public conversation; thus suggesting a pattern of progression, starting with Internet blogs and spreading to mainstream news and religious discourse. Lean notes that anti-Islamic rhetoric increased dramatically when the plans to establish a mosque and an Islamic cultural center at the Park 51 Center in New York City became public. A number of internet bloggers, expressing their objections to the project and its location, began suggesting the possibility that the Center might become a center for funding and recruiting terrorists, thus introducing anxieties of a foreign menace into social consciousness. In this context, the Internet functions as an unfiltered tool for the spread of anti-Muslim propaganda. Soon, members of the mainstream broadcast media began to base their opinions on the information they received from these blogs. Thus, the anti-Islamic rhetoric transitioned from a virus to a pandemic, as the numbers of Americans who heard these messages increased exponentially. Lean notes that Islamophobia, as is true with most fear-based propaganda, is effective because it is both airborne and contagious. As the author points out in subsequent chapters, for political or religious demagogues, Islamophobia has an addictive quality. The nationalistic sentiment generated by anti-Islamic rhetoric attracts both political and religious opportunist who, like Joseph McCarthy during the Red Scare of the 1950s, work to exasperate public fear of Muslims for personal gain (31;108).

A journalist by trade, Lean is a solid writer and make use of a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, employing a methodology that is both qualitative and quantitative—the vast majority of the latter appearing early in the text in the form of public opinion polls. Still, Lean does not always utilize these statistics effectively. This is most noticeable when he attempts to demonstrate the idiosyncratic bias and xenophobic discourse emanating from the various news media outlets. Lean provides numerical data intended to demonstrate that the reporters for Fox News use inflammatory terms or phrases more frequently than do their counterparts at CNN. However, rather than demonstrating the level of nefarious intent on the part of Fox News, Lean's statistical data suggests that CNN is only slightly less guilty of disseminating anti-Islamic sentiment than their opposite numbers at Fox News. While the author generally seems aware of the potential pitfalls that often accompany such socially controversial topics, he does little to disguise the obvious contempt that he holds for neo-conservative ideology. As such, his asymmetrical methodology exposes him to potential criticism from academics within the various applicable disciplines. Such criticisms notwithstanding, the author's decision to consider the deliberate engineering of Islamophobia from a topographical perspective does stimulate continued discourse on the topic. While his text offers nothing in terms of new information, Lean does demonstrate an evolutionary pattern for the spread of Islamophobia.

Still, the book has several weaknesses. Most notably, Lean does not attempt to conceal his contempt for conservative ideology. This is problematic for reasons previously stated. The parameters that Lean established for his discussion on Islamophobia at the beginning of the book often appear lopsided as the reader progresses through the text. Though the role of the media in spreading Islamophobia cannot be understated, the author's tendency to focus his criticism almost exclusively on Fox News, simply because they use inflammatory language a bit more often than do other outlets, essentially excuses the latter from their share of the responsibility. It would seem more prudent to argue that somewhere along the line, those in the news media managed to conflate popular notions of Islam, the Muslim, and the terrorist. Regretfully, the average person is either unable, if not unwilling, to conceive of these three

terms as having separate meanings: a religion, an adherent to said religion, and a sociopath who at some point misinterpreted the aforementioned religion. This allusion to humor where obviously none exists is an effort to make a point. The media is not solely responsible for the spread of Islamophobia, any more than a commercial is solely responsible for the sales of a particular product. In order for any discourse to influence public opinion, there must be a public that is open to said influence. In this context, it matters not if one ideological group behaves slightly more ethical than another, each is still perpetuating the same fear as the other. By failing to say as much, Lean does his cause and himself a disservice. Likewise, Lean has a tendency to speak in all-encompassing terms, suggesting that if one conservative commentator voices an opinion; all conservatives in the country will adopt this opinion verbatim.

In spite of the stated shortcomings, Lean has made a valuable contribution with his book. Perhaps it is enough that he has asked Americans to reflect on how we form our opinions, and more importantly, from whence we receive our information. It is not difficult to recognize the hateful, hypocritical discourse that emanates from the major news media outlets, online blog sites, and the xenophobic, hyper-nationalistic opinions advocated by socio-political talk radio personalities like Glenn Beck, Sean Hannity, and Ann Coulter. If nothing else, Lean proves that there is an abundance of hypocrisy circulating throughout the world. *Islamophobia Industry* will find acceptance from a broad audience, in spite of its overt bias, due to the equally annoying and overt bias of those who revel in the manufacturing of fear and hate.

As suggested, it is too common to find biased writing on an emotion-laden topic such as Islamophobia, but it is rare to find a writer as punctilious and thorough as Deepa Kumar. Her book, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire,* is meticulously arranged—explaining in detail the author's argument, her methodology, and the rationale supporting her conclusions. The text consists of ten chapters, each subdivided into three sections that incorporate various sub-topics in support of her thesis. It would seem that necessity dictated the layout of her book. Writing on a topic as potentially divisive and inflammatory as Islamophobia demands that an author remain hyper-vigilant toward all matters concerning means and contention. This is especially true when considering the sociopolitical cliques whom she believes are responsible for demonizing Muslims for nefarious reasons. Kumar realizes that her critics will comb through her text looking for the most insignificant mistake with which to discredit her argument and attempt to destroy her credibility.

Kumar opens with an account of her experiences following the attacks of September 11, 2001—in particular; she recalls the castigation she endured from both a colleague and later a Winn Dixie cashier. In both instances, her antagonists sought to vent their frustration, which stemmed from the World Trade Center attacks, by verbally accosting the author—all the while dismissing the fact that she is not of Middle Eastern descent, and perhaps more relevantly, is not Muslim. The author would later learn of similar events that took place across the U. S.—of an Arab student assaulted at a nearby university, and a Sikh Indian man killed in Arizona because he was wearing a turban. The author goes on to notes that the U.S. government, in the weeks following the attacks, began detaining and questioning scores of Muslims living in the United States without probable cause and in violation of the civil liberties (KL 99). Kumar attributes the aforementioned to the intentional misinterpretation and misrepresentation of Islam, perpetrated in an effort to encourage Islamophobic sentiment throughout the country. The author argues that the vilification of Islam is a creature of racism, and more precisely, of imperialism (KL 106). Kumar states that her book does not address the religion of Islam; rather it concerns itself only with the concept of Islam from a Western perspective. Likewise, she suggests that her intended contribution is to address Islamophobia from the context of

American political, historical, legal, and social ideology, in order to demonstrate how anti-Muslim racism continues to be a tool of the social elite (KL 119).

Kumar places the notion of "Islamic Peril" in Western European historical context by identifying examples of anti-Muslim sentiment artificially manifesting itself during the eighth and eighteenth centuries. She challenges the conventions of Orientalism in chapter one, arguing that oversimplified contemporary notions of East and West were a product of social elites, who intentionally exploited the various differences between the two regions for political reasons. Kumar takes exception to the arguments of certain Orientalist historians, in particular Bernard Lewis, who portrays the relationship between Muslim and Christian as driven by conflict (KL 132). The author suggests that the truth is more complex and dynamic, arguing that the antagonism between Islam and the West has little to do with religion. She reasons that Western appraisals of Islam were a construct of political rivalries and imperial agendas (KL 229). In support of this argument, Kumar points to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a period in which Orientalism translated into justification for European colonialism. Specifically, she directs her attention to regions of the Middle East and North Africa—their proximity to Europe contributing to Western notions of Islam. Similarly, she addresses the residual significance of Orientalism that continues to linger in modern society. She points to five racially motivated narratives, (Western representation of Islam as monolithic, sexist, irrational, inherently violent, and incapable of governing itself), with origins in the tenants of Orientalism—indicating a connection between modern Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment from the Dark Ages.

Kumar addresses U.S. policy toward Islam in the context of the Cold War. She indicates that the United States, in accordance with its policy of communist containment, often supported Islamic organizations ideologically incompatible with the values of atheistic communism, secular nationalism, and politically like-minded leftist groups around the world. She argues that political Islam is not a natural phenomenon in Muslim societies, and that more often than not, the inclination within these societies is to separate religion and politics. Kumar states that "Radical Islam" is a byproduct of historical conditions that worked to initiate fundamentalist inclinations in all four of the world's major religions. For that reason, the author believes that America's post-Cold War foreign policy led to the War on Terror, a war publicized and perpetuated by both neo-conservative and liberal ideology. The goal of this policy is essentially the continuation of American global primacy and leadership throughout the world. Kumar concludes by discussing the application of Islamophobia as a means of generating and maintaining support for U.S. foreign and domestic policy. In doing so, she show a relationship between the Red Scare of the 1920s and 1950s, and the Islamophobia that pervades contemporary American society—concluding her discourse with a discussion on those, she considers "the New McCarthyites."[5]

Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire is a solid work that targets a broad audience, though the academic reader may find Kumar's step-by-step approach redundant and somewhat distracting. All the same, Kumar's use of history as a means of attacking Islamophobia is effective. Her clarity and attention to detail make it difficult to find much fault in either her arguments or her conclusions. While her reference pages include Islamic scholars from around the world, John Esposito and Zackary Lockman appear to merit the lion's share of attention. Though it is likely that the proximity of her topic restricts the availability of primary sources, she makes good use of media coverage of various political rallies, editorials concerning U.S.

---

[5] Kumar defines Green Scare, (Green representing the color of Islam), as "…the construction of the overarching *Islamic Terrorist* enemy that must be fought at home and abroad…" (KL 167).

foreign and domestic policy, transcripts from interviews and court testimony, as well as assorted blog postings. Overall, this is a solidly written book that is worth reading.

In *Islamophobia: The Ideological Campaign Against Muslims,* Stephen Sheehi views the propagation of anti-Islamic sentiment as an effort toward assimilating Muslims into the American society where they will present less of a threat to U.S. global intrests (KL 647). For this reason, the author avoids addressing such topics as Muslim-American identity or dissimilarities between U.S. and European Islamophobia—preferring to focus solely on the form and function of American Islamophobia. Unlike both Lean and Kumar, who link the spread of Islamophobia with discourse that is specifically designed to advantage certain groups in Western society, Sheehi argues that fear of Islam permeates all layers of American culture and, possessing no political allegience or preference, is universally embraced and disseminated by all news media outlets. Sheehi perceives Islamophobia in the abstract, which is to say that it lacks the structure of a political ideology and manifests itself without a noticeable point of origin. The author writes with the goal of addressing Islamophobia as an ideological phenomenon, existing as a product of North American culture, which finds its origins in America's racist past. As such, he attempts to historicize Islamophobia within a political context in order to demonstrate its ferocity.

Stimulated by U.S. imperialistic aspirations and functioning as a sociopolitical means to an end, the author asserts that Islamophobia is simply racism by another name. Though lacking structurally, Islamophobia wields tremendous political, social, and economic influence. Nevertheless, Sheehi reasons that Islamophobia loses both potency and appeal if it is not expressed in a manner that is palatable to Americans—delivered incrementally to disguise its racial overtones, and thus causing the irrational to appear as both a natural and logical conclusion. Sheehi contends that for this to occure, Islamophobia must act on two levels—first influencing individual thought and perception; and second, combining with external variables to influence social and political action. In order to best demonstrate this social facet, the author has structured his book to accomodate a dual methodology, which anchors analysis of the imperialistic application of Islamophobia to an assessment of works written by Bernard Lewis and Fareed Zakaria, the exploits of Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Irshad Manji, and speeches by Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama (KL 699). The author's intent is to demonstrate the real effect of Islamophobia as it evolved from the aforementioned abstract into U.S. foreign and domestic policy—often with adverse civil and legal ramifications.

Sheehi discribes the methodology he used while composing his text as, "conforming to the expected academic consistency that defines good scholarship" However, he states that he has intentionally relied on sources that are readily available to the non-specialist, some of which he discribes as coming from "mainstream Amglophone publishing and media outlets" (KL 763). Admittedly, he equates the skillset used to compose this manuscript to the methodolgy employed by policymakers and journalists—"mainstream, yet not pedestrian…."(KL 763). All the same, the author seems all too eager to lable those with whom he does not agree as, "extremest flakes", a tactic that is habitually employed by the very same political ideologues and mainstream media journalists with whom Sheehi takes issue in his book (KL 687). While it is entirely possible that the author's appraisal of his sociopolitical antagonists is accurate, the inclusion of like tactics in this text does little to enhance the author's position. Indeed, there are moments in the book that are reminicent of a recess skirmish between two school children —the difference being, school children do not know any better. In spite of this, Sheehi is convincing when he addresses the violent effects of Islamophobia. He argues that government organizations and agencies conspire to target and

disenfranchise Muslims and Arabs living in the United States (KL 722). Likewise, he suggests that political interest groups work at the local level to isolate and harass Muslims, social activists, and scholars. His accusation that the news media acts as an *accomplice ex post facto* has merit, and is a point echoed throughout the texts of Kumar, Lean, and Esposito. Sheehi concludes that Islamophobia is the product of a "new era of global capitalism," equating the War on Terror to an American struggle for dominance in the Muslim world (KL 5687). He suggests that altering the nature of discourse on the subject of Islamophobia is the most prudent means of combating its influence.

In a departure to the monographs that make up the bulk of this review, *Islamophobia: The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century,* edited by John L. Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin, bring together a series of articles by scholars who address the growth of Islamophobia in Europe and America within the framework of its depiction as a religious, cultural, and political phenomenon (KL 276). The contributing authors are from the U.S. and Europe, and each contemplates the popular perception of Islam and Muslims throughout the West by evaluating the impact of Islamophobia on the domestic and foreign policies in Western society. Similar to the other authors included in this review, the contributors to this text employ a variety of interdisciplinary methodologies to shape their arguments. The study contains both quantitative and qualitative research; however, many of the arguments furnished in the text rely heavily on analysis of statistical data. In doing so, each author approaches the topic of Islamophobia from their own unique perspective, demonstrating the almost virus-like characteristics to this cultural mechanism.

In the first chapter, "Islamophobia and the Limits of Multiculturalism," Ibrahim Kalin asserts that secular liberalism, informed by the ideals of the European Enlightenment, shapes the debate over Islam in the West because Western culture is unable to accommodate what it considers an alien religion. As a result, the author feels that liberal political systems marginalize Muslims by subscribing to notions that consider secularization as the lone liberating force in the modern world. He goes on to state that perceptions of Islam in the West severely limit efforts toward multiculturalism, the debate over which being important to the understanding of Islamophobia (KL 596). Jocelyne Cesari follows this with "Islamophobia in the West: A Comparison between Europe and the United States," by exploring the structural foundations for discrimination against Muslims in the U.S. and Europe. She notes a difference between Islamophobia, as it exists in Europe and America. Cesari states that Islamophobia is more subtle in European countries because the majority of Muslims who immigrate to Europe are laborers, prompting Europeans to associate the immigrant with terrorism. This stands in stark contrast to American notions of the immigrant, which most often pertains to the influx of unskilled workers from Mexico. Thus, the debate in America over immigration is fueled, not by fear of terrorism as it is in Europe, but by economic considerations. As a result, European Muslims, hindered by anti-terrorism policies that tends to alienate ethnic immigrants, struggle in an environment that drastically limits, if not prevents, social integration. Cesari continues by saying that sensationalist news media stories and right-wing intellectual critiques further exacerbate anti-Islamic sentiment by carelessly connecting the whole of Islam with terrorism. She concludes by addressing the ways in which efforts toward promoting multiculturalism in Europe have failed, make a case that they be reconsidered with greater emphasis placed on the inclusion of minorities' cultural values. Next, in "An Obsession Renewed: Islamophobia in the Netherlands, Austria, and Germany," Sam Cherribi demonstrates how the Dutch and Danish media have influenced the spread of Islamophobia into Germany and Austria. Cherribi argues that media sensationalism institutionalizes suspicion of Muslim immigrants, which, in turn,

encourages politicians to advocate radical, nationalistic policies. He establishes a connection between Islamophobia and xenophobia and argues that films, such as Geeter Wilders', *Fitna*, are directly responsible for an increase in anti-Islamic sentiment throughout the Netherlands. The author goes on to note that the byproduct of this media assault on Islam likewise influences political party doctrine in Austria and Germany, as evidenced by the Austrian Freedom Party's belligerence toward Muslim immigrants. In the same way, the author notes that increasingly, it is Muslim immigrants who are blamed for the increase in criminal activity throughout Germany. In "Islamophobia in the United Kingdom: Historical and Contemporary Political Media Discourse in the Framing of a 21st-Century Anti-Muslim Racism," Tahir Abbas argues that Islamophobia has transcended from a social experience to an analytical mechanism used for the development of foreign and domestic policy (KL 1851). Using a case study approach, the author, seeing religion as playing a more significant role in determining social status, notes a change in how the greater society views ethnic minorities. Abbas takes issue with some of the limitation of the term Islamophobia, saying it lacks sufficient definition and obscures its use by other Muslims (KL 1867). Similar to many of the authors mentioned in this review, Abbas feels imperialism and colonialism are primarily responsible for the stigmatization of Muslims in Western society. Indeed, stereotypes constructed in the past fuel present-day Islamophobia, which in turn influences efforts toward neocolonialism, anti-immigration nationalism, and post war racism (KL 1887). The author believes that the historical marginalization of Muslims, compounded by the intense hate generated after the 9/11 and 7/7 attacks, creates an environment in the U.K. in which Muslims are inherently evil. As a result, Muslims in England enjoy little legal protection against discrimination, unlike Britain's ethnically defined religious communities, (Jewish and Sikh). Muhammed Nimer's, "Islamophobia and Anti-Americanism," argues that there exists a link between Islamophobia and anti-Americanism. He contends that both sides of the professed struggle between Eastern and Western culture ground their opinions of one another upon mere assumption and speculation. As such, the author believes that there is a circular relationship between Islamophobia and anti-Americanism that is characteristically cause and effect. Nimer states that terrorist acts against the U.S. beget a violent American response, which in turn encourages more terrorism (KL 2545). In "Muslims, Islam, Race, and American Islamophobia," Sherman Jackson examines Islamophobia as a form of racism that finds its origins in the American past. He argues that race is an "integral part of American Identity formation," and that "racial agnosticism" holds negative connotations for both Muslims and America (KL 2581; 2615). According to Jackson, there are two racial prototypes in American society, one black and one white. Since Muslims, "don't do race", Muslim Americans have failed to establish their own racial identity. As a result, they inevitably reinforce notions of white supremacy in America by fostering what Jackson refers to as historical amnesia (KL 2598). Jackson concludes by stating that if Muslims fail to establish a racial identity of their own, an identity will be established for them. Like Kumar, Esposito and Kalin have compiled a splendid collection of articles that are both compelling and effective in their arguments. Each of the contributors supports their respective thesis with ample documentation, clearly defining the purpose and scope of their discourse. This text is well written and well organized—clearly intended for both academic and general audiences.

There are a number of common themes addressed by each of the authors under review that merit attention. They all seem to express concern over the accuracy and implications of the term Islamophobia. Each echoes the conviction that Islamophobia possesses political and social utility in Western society, offering a means from which to generate popular support for

aggressive foreign policy through the promulgation of fear. They all correlate Islamophobia to the constructs of nationalism and all but Lean trace its origins to the paradigm of European Orientalism. Like other forms of racism, Islamophobia derives its effectiveness by generating antagonism for a social "other". The argument that, in the absence of a Cold War enemy, the West, (America in particular), found itself in need of a new source of evil to unite in opposition against, has merit if for no other reason than it explains the increase of political figures and social ideologues who seek to disseminate and exacerbate social divisions— marginalizing minority groups in a quest for greater influence and profit. In this environment, there exist certain inherent challenges in addressing topics such as Islamophobia—among them, the potential for adverse repercussions from those who would label a work that is critical of the West or America as anti-American. Mohamed Nimer addressed this with one of the more memorable statements in the book:

> a critical study of Islam or Muslims is not Islamophobia. Likewise, a disapproving analysis of U.S. history and government is not anti-American…one can disagree with Islam…without ill feelings. Similarly, one can oppose U.S. policy without detesting the U.S. as a nation… (KL 2131).

All the same, it is relevant to mention that fear does serve a function during times of national crisis. Its presence allows a society to make the necessary sacrifices that such times demand. However, Americans seem especially prone to xenophobic propaganda during a national disaster, often allowing it to assume control of social discourse. Subsequently, Americans cover themselves under a flag of infallibility as fear and suspicion disseminate and self-replicate, and in the words of John Keane, "eat the soul of democracy…"[6].Americans instinctively look to their political leaders for protection, who in response tend to appear as the personification of their constituents' social anxiety. The legal scholar Geoffrey Stone argues that, "fear is risk averse," explaining that "we are more likely to flee from a shadow that may be an attacker than to move closer to determine whether it is in fact an attacker"[7].Stone contends that the problem is not fear, but excessive fear—fear that is, "pathological and leads to irrational decisions". There are those who argue that when civil rights are lost, they are lost forever. However, this argument appears irrational considering that national ideals concerning civil liberties have always recovered in the wake of their disruption.[8] Still, this does not justify any effort on the part of the U.S. government to abridge the civil liberties of Muslim-American citizens, or to conduct itself in a manner that helps to spread irrational fear of Muslims. History has demonstrated how such acute social anxiety can adversely influence the very fabric of American democracy. In the 1940s, the Supreme Court noted in *Korematsu v. United States* that "hardships are part of war, and war is an aggregation of hardships.…"[9] While this is certainly true for soldiers in combat, its domestic application is, at best, precarious when we consider whose rights are often sacrificed—members of minority populations and those who voice opposition to war. Edward R. Murrow once commented: "everyone is a prisoner of his own experiences. No one can eliminate prejudice—just recognize them.…"[10] Individually,

---

[6] Geoffrey R. Stone. *War and Liberty: An American Dilemma: 1790 to the Present* (7th Ed, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 168-169.

[7] Ibid., 169.

[8] This statement does not include the War on Terror, the proximity of which impedes any accurate assessment of residual social ramifications.

[9] Stone, *War and Liberty,* 169.

[10] B. William Silcock, Don Heider, Mary T. Rogus, *Managing Television News: A Handbook for Ethical and Effective Producing* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006), 49.

each of the mentioned authors makes a significant contribution to Western cultural debate and, in doing so they acknowledge an enduring flaw in its social pattern.

The consensus solution for the problem of Islamophobia includes calls for more progressive scholastic engagement, increased intellectual discourse, and a more open-minded public. However, such calls fail to consider the tenacity of those who seek to sow the seeds of fear throughout the world. The recent revision of Texas High School history textbooks is a perfect example of how easy it is for sociopolitical ideologues to undermine academic curriculum. Thus, should antagonists of progressive education fail to block its inclusion in schools; they can simply elect to rewrite the textbooks instead. Increased intellectual discourse is equally idealistic in that it is essentially preaching to the choir. Islamophobia and other such social abnormalities are frequent topics in the great conversation, and yet the topic is all but absent from conversations outside academia. Still, the average person, assuming that they have the available time and desire to become informed on the topic of Islamophobia, is unlikely to find much appeal in text that matter-of-factly connect Islamophobia to Orientalism, hyper-nationalism, and the numerous manifestations of otherness. Here is where Lean's stock tends to rise. His intended audience is perhaps the most relevant—the great silent majority, as Richard Nixon was fond of calling them. Surely, one of the more frustrating truths in American culture is that the majority of people are too busy living their lives to concern themselves with peripheral matters. Therefore, all that remain are the left and right wing extremists and those who, unable to form opinions of their own, hang on every radical word of this near-sociopathic minority. While history suggests that anxiety-based propaganda has a relatively short shelf life, its continued appearance in American society, in spite of all the lessons of past experiences, is unfortunate.