JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY OF PEACE AND CONFLICT

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### Journal for the Study of Peace and Conflict
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The JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY OF PEACE AND CONFLICT is the annual journal of the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, with its office at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, 900 Reserve Street, Stevens Point, WI 54481. Officers are Executive Director Deborah Buffton (University of Wisconsin-La Crosse), Associate Director Sarah Stillwell (University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point), and Administrative Director Kathryn Blakeman. The Institute is committed to a balanced review of diverse perspectives. Views of the authors are their own. The Journal is a refereed journal. To purchase a copy, send $15 to the Wisconsin Institute at the above address.

CALL FOR PAPERS: The 2008-2009 issue of the Journal will publish a variety of scholarly articles, essays, poetry, and book reviews on topics such as war, peace, global cooperation, domestic violence, and interpersonal conflict resolution; including questions of military and political security, the global economy, and global environmental issues. We wish to promote discussion of both strategic and ethical questions surrounding these issues. Our audience includes scholars with a wide range of interests within the academy and educated members of the general public. Contributors should avoid discussions accessible only to specialists in their field. Submissions are accepted on a continuing basis. Contributors should first contact the office at wiinst@uwsp.edu for a brief style sheet.
# Journal for the Study of Peace and Conflict
## 2007-2008 Annual Edition
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The 2007-2008 issue of the Journal for the Study of Peace and Conflict contains articles on a variety of topics drawn from disciplines ranging from political science and history to literary criticism and poetry. The first article, by political scientist and legal specialist Leonard Cutler, explores the legal status of the American detention center at Guantanamo Bay, arguing that the policies followed by the George W. Bush administration are violations of both the Geneva Conventions and American civil and military law and calling for the immediate closing of the facility.

There follows a series of five essays exploring multicultural issues, several of which are based on papers presented at the Wisconsin Institute’s 2007 conference on multiculturalism, pluralism, and globalization at the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse. Eric Kraemer begins this section with a philosophical examination of America’s pluralistic democracy, using conceptualization drawn from Plato’s writings to stress an “active constructionist” approach, by which ethnic groups are encouraged not to surrender their cultural traditions, but to adjust them for the benefit of the larger multicultural community. Political scientists Mojtaba Mahdavi and W. Andy Knight follow with a critique of Francis Fukuyama’s “End of History” and Samuel P. Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” theories, arguing for a third approach entitled the “Dignity of Difference,” which breaks with the assumption of tension between the West and the rest of the world and embraces cultural differences and understandings. Next, historian Scott Savran discusses the Shu’ubiyya movement of the 8th to 10th centuries that challenged the ruling Arabs for cultural leadership in the Islamic world, arguing that this debate illustrates the cultural diversity of Islamic society and the need to avoid simple stereotypes of “Islam.” Alexander Spencer contributes a thoughtful inquiry into the link between terrorism and immigration, questioning the use of tight immigration restrictions as a weapon to defeat terrorism as both based on false assumptions and potentially self-defeating. In the final article of this section, Martha Addante examines multicultural tensions in modern British society through a careful analysis of the characters in Zadie Smith’s novel, White Teeth.

This issue also includes a poetry section: a series of evocative and moving poems by Vivian Teter, reflecting on issues of human tragedy and survival. Daniel M. Smith, a retired army officer, follows with an opinion piece on the Iraq War, arguing that the Bush administration’s decision to invade Iraq was flawed and its occupation policies misguided and incompetent. The issue ends with a short book review section.

I would like to express my thanks to the authors and contributors to this issue, to the referees who volunteered their time to read and evaluate manuscripts, and to my associate editor Kent Shifferd for helping with the selection process. As always my greatest debt is to my co-editor, Kathryn Blakeman, who contributed the great majority of the correspondence, editing, formatting, and other tasks required to produce the issue.

William B. Skelton
Emeritus Professor of History
University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point
Closing the Guantanamo Bay Detention Facility Without Further Delay: Does This Proposal Serve The Common Good?

By Leonard Cutler

In the immediate aftermath of the horrific events of 9/11, the United States government in conjunction with NATO and numerous allies conducted a military campaign in Afghanistan, which deposed the Taliban, destroyed al-Qaida camps, and dismantled most of the terrorist infrastructure in that nation by the end of December 2001. Approximately 700 suspected al-Qaida and Taliban fighters were turned over to the United States for disposition, and they were transported to Guantanamo Bay for internment.

Seven years later about 265 detainees remain in Guantanamo and there have been several reports that those held in detention facilities have been victims of persecution, ill treatment, mental and physical health breaches, and cruel and unusual punishment. In February 2006, an independent panel of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights issued a Report on the Situation of Detainees at Guantanamo Bay. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concluded that international human rights law is applicable to the situation of detainees at Guantanamo Bay and it was being violated by the United States government. Given the fact that detainees were denied access to justice, a principal recommendation of the Report was to close down the Guantanamo Bay facility without any further delay. (Working Group on Arbitrary Detention)

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that, although he could not necessarily agree with everything in the report, “I would think that for the common good sooner or later Guantanamo would have to be closed, and hopefully it would be done as soon as possible.” (Annan)

The official U.S. response to the report and comment from Secretary General Kofi Annan came from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld who flatly rejected the call to shut down Guantanamo and asserted that the facility held several hundred terrorists who posed a substantial risk to U.S. citizens if released. He also said that the Secretary General had no first-hand knowledge of Guantanamo, and had based his criticism of the facility on “stories by detainees who were trained to lie.” (Sampson)

In the succeeding months, worldwide calls to close the prison continued with widespread support from the European Union, the European Parliament, various Christian world leaders, several European ambassadors, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Amnesty International, and select members of the United States Congress.

In a testy exchange with U.S. Secretary of State Condolezza Rice, British Attorney General Lord Goldsmith, in early May 2006, made a forceful public call for the shutdown of Guantanamo:

... the existence of Guantanamo Bay remains unacceptable. It is not only right to close it as a matter of principle, but in doing so would help to remove what has become a symbol to many right, or wrong, of injustice. The historic tradition of the United States as a beacon of freedom, liberty, and justice deserves removal of this symbol.” (Goldsmith)

Secretary of State Rice in response insisted that:

... the United States doesn’t desire to keep Guantanamo in being any longer than it’s needed because we
don’t want to be the world’s jailer. We must recognize, however, Guantanamo is there for a reason. There are some people who cannot either be safely released to their countries or certainly released at all. What would be the alternative? We will not release people on the streets to do harm again, but if the alternative is to try people, that is what we want to do and are looking for the means to do it, including the fact that the fate of military commissions is being reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court. (Onikepe)

President Bush reinforced that message after the U.S.-European Summit meeting held in Vienna in early June. He suggested that he was committed to ending Guantanamo but “there are some who need to be tried in U.S. courts. They are cold-blooded killers and they will murder somebody if they are let out on the street. I am waiting for the Supreme Court to determine the proper venue in which these people can be tried.” (Pantesco)

Within days of the president’s statement, three detainees committed suicide at Guantanamo Bay, which produced a renewed condemnation of the facility from the European Parliament and a Resolution from that body to call for President Bush to close the camp immediately. The Committee Against Torture (CAT), a panel of ten independent experts on adherence to the United Nations Convention Against Torture, issued a report on United States Adherence to the Treaty Against Torture, which concluded that the United States had employed techniques in prisons such as Abu Ghraib, Afghanistan, and Guantanamo that constituted torture, cruel treatment, sexual humiliation, mock drowning, and the use of dogs to induce fear. These findings were corroborated by U.S. government documents, including F.B.I. memoranda and written testimony provided by lawyers from the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps to the Senate Armed Services Committee. The military lawyers insisted that such methods constituted humiliating and degrading practices and had the cumulative effect of being abusive treatment in violation of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions. The United Nations Committee Against Torture reported that under such horrific conditions it was not of any surprise that detainees committed suicide, and therefore Guantanamo had to be closed without further delay.

The Department of Defense rejected any call for closure of Guantanamo. Rear Admiral Harry Harris, the camp’s then commander, said the suicide of the three inmates was an act of asymmetric warfare against America because they had no regard for life, neither ours nor their own. Another U.S. official, Colleen Graffy, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy, told the BBC the suicides were “a good PR move to draw attention, a part of a strategy to use suicide bombings or hangings as a tactic.” (Cloud) These comments, most unfortunately, reveal profound disassociation from humanity and provide far greater fuel for fodder to close Guantanamo than any report from the United Nations. President Bush expressed grave concern about the suicides and said “we’re now in the process of working with countries to repatriate people, but there are some that—if put on the streets, could create grave harm to American citizens and other citizens of the world.” (White House Press Conference)

To be sure, the administration could call the three inmates terrorists, but it could not say they were tried and convicted of anything. It could also say that the men were treated humanely, but the administration could not say that they were treated in accordance with established domestic and international legal standards, since it maintained that those standards did not apply to inmate detainees at Guantanamo.
Military Commissions and the Supreme Court

As stated at the outset of this essay, in late 2001 the Bush administration decided to establish a detention center outside the center of ongoing military conflict in Afghanistan because it was of considerable value to remove suspected al-Qaida terrorists to a more secure facility—hence Guantanamo, the oldest existing U.S. military base not on American soil. Guantanamo was ideal because of the fact that it was a highly protected military base and because of its unsettled legal status, which placed it outside jurisdiction of any court. Of the detainees still at Guantanamo, almost 65 percent are from just four nations: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. (Jansen) The Saudi Ambassador to the United States, Prince Turki al-Faisal, formally requested that all of its nationals, 95 detainees including two men awaiting trial by military commission, be returned to Saudi custody by the end of 2007. That has not happened.

President Bush created military commissions to put on trial al-Qaida and other terrorist suspects for violations of the law of war. He did so by military order, bypassing the criminal justice system and the military courts under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). The commissions were to be held in secret at any time, and the defense could be refused access to any evidence—including material that might establish innocence. The defendant need not be present for all proceedings if classified or security issues were raised. Hearsay evidence was admissible as probative. The Executive controlled the entire proceedings with no appeal available to any civilian court. The court of last resort was President Bush for final review of any commission verdict. In early 2002, President Bush determined that no detainee was entitled to prisoner of war status and that the Geneva Conventions did not apply to the alleged terrorists who were now labeled “enemy combatants.” (Powell and Taft, p. 319) Some detainees who were held without counsel and incommunicado for almost four years challenged their inability to dispute the basis for their detention. In 2004, the Supreme Court, in a pair of landmark decisions, Hamdi v. Rumsfeld and Rasul v. Bush, rejected the administration’s claim and ruled that the detainees must have a venue to contest their designation as enemy combatants. However, the Court failed to rule on the issue of military commissions as created by the military order, the applicability of the UCMJ to detainees, or the role that the Geneva Conventions played with respect to the 400 men then held at Guantanamo Bay.

Congress, for its part, passed the Detainee Treatment Act (DTA) in 2005 which essentially mandates that American policy conform to the provisions of the Anti-Torture Convention, the Geneva Conventions, and the Hague Conventions with respect to the treatment of those foreign citizens held by United States military authorities in our confinement facilities anywhere around the globe. The law, however, also stripped all federal courts of habeas corpus jurisdiction involving any of the detainees at Guantanamo Bay, including, according to President Bush at the signing ceremony, any current litigation before the courts. There were over 200 suits pending, including Salim Ahmed Hamdan’s, which challenged the president’s military order, military commission, and the role of the UCMJ and Geneva Conventions as they applied to the detainees.

President Bush, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, and Secretary of State Rice insisted that the future status of Guantanamo was inextricably intertwined to the outcome of the Hamdan case. Please bear in mind that an initial threshold question was whether the Court even had jurisdiction to entertain Hamdan’s appeal since Congress, by its enactment of the Detainee Treatment Act of December
2005, presumably removed such jurisdiction.

On the last day of its 2006 term, the Supreme Court decided *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, a 5-3 ruling. Chief Justice Roberts did not participate in the decision since he was a member of the court that had considered the case on appeal in 2005, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. Justice John Paul Stevens, joined by Justices Breyer, Ginsburg, Souter, and Kennedy held that the Court did indeed have jurisdiction to hear this appeal, since the DTA was not explicit in denying habeas jurisdiction in pending cases.

The five-member majority ruled that the president’s military order was not authorized by Congress, the military commissions were structurally and procedurally deficient, and, most importantly for international humanitarian law, the Geneva Conventions did apply to all detainees held at Guantanamo.

The immediate reaction from human rights groups, the European Parliament, and the United Nations was to renew their call for the prompt closure of Guantanamo. The top legal advisor for the U.S. State Department, John Bellinger, issued a statement expressing conceptual support for the closure of Guantanamo Bay, after assurances were provided that the detainees would not pose a security risk or be subject to torture when returned to their native countries. Bellinger emphasized that several countries blocked the return of their nationals, and in other cases no assurances were provided by home countries that transferred detainees would not face human rights violations after they left U.S. custody. A particular case in point involved a group of Uighurs, an ethnic minority that lived in Western China. Two dozen were captured by United States forces in Afghanistan. China demanded their return. However, the United States refused because of the fear that they faced persecution by the authorities once they were placed in the hands of the Chinese Government. They were allegedly responsible for sporadic bombings and other violence in the Xinjiang region.

Five of the Uighurs were temporarily settled in Albania in a refugee camp until they could be permanently placed in a host nation willing to accept them. The balance remained in U.S. custody at Guantanamo with very little prospect for resettlement in a third country, despite the fact that they were now considered No Longer Enemy Combatants (NLEC’s). The U.S. Government refused to provide asylum or permanent sanctuary for the Uighurs in the United States.

**Center for Constitutional Rights Report on Torture, Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment of Prisoners at Guantanamo Bay**

To add further salt to the Guantanamo hemorrhage, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), a public interest law group specializing in humanitarian law issues and representing over 200 of the detainees at Guantanamo litigating against the Bush administration, issued the most comprehensive primary source account ever published of ongoing abuse at the prison, detailing systematic physical, psychological, sexual, medical, and religious abuse of the detainees. It was issued just ten days after the *Hamdan* decision, and relied upon first-hand chilling accounts of torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment drawn directly from habeas counsels’ unclassified notes (CCR).

Prisoner statements were made to counsel during in-person interviews conducted at Guantanamo beginning in the fall of 2004, and all such information provided to counsel was presumed secret until cleared. Such information must be provided to the Department of Defense (DoD) privilege team for review and clearance. Once
cleared, the information carried no restriction. All of the information reported by the prisoners and graphically included in the report were cleared by the DoD privilege team, and reported incidents were corroborated by other public sources, including government documents.

Prisoners interrogated at Guantanamo were:
- Held in solitary confinement for periods exceeding a year;
- Deprived of sleep for days and weeks and, in at least one case, months;
- Exposed to prolonged temperature extremes;
- Beaten;
- Tortured in foreign countries or at U.S. military bases before transfer to Guantanamo;
- Sexually harassed and raped or threatened with rape;
- Deprived of medical treatment for serious conditions, or allowed treatment only on the condition that they cooperate with interrogators; and
- Routinely short-shackled [wrists and ankles bound together to the floor]. (CCR, p. 2)

The Guantanamo albatross had acquired an iconic dimension not unlike the notorious photo of the hooded prisoner at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. As a human rights debate, it will eventually take its place alongside other wartime travesties, including the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, the prosecutions under the Espionage and Sedition Acts of World War I, and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus during the Civil War.

Despite the Supreme Court’s decision in Hamdan, which marked a setback for the president’s claim of unfettered executive power for trying and punishing suspected terrorists of war related crimes, Guantanamo’s future remained uncertain because the Court only dealt with ten cases in which the administration charged individuals before military commissions. There were two pending lawsuits in the United States Court of Appeals being pursued by CCR, among others, affecting all of the detainees still held indefinitely in a state of legal limbo, “the legal black hole, because they could not contest the jurisdiction, competency, or even the constitutionality of military tribunals” and they were held without charge, and with limited due process. (Swift) These cases were working their way to the United States Supreme Court, while legislation affecting both detention and trials at Guantanamo loomed in Congress.

Congress and the Future of Guantanamo

Congress became the pivotal branch of government to determine how the detainees were to be prosecuted, tried, and punished as alleged terrorists, and through its approval of such rules it would impact upon the fate of the Guantanamo Bay facility in the ongoing war against terrorism.

If Congress decided to alter the UCMJ and overrule the Geneva Conventions, the president could have his military commissions with procedures as he wanted. That would have required Congress publicly to decide: 1) that it no longer wanted to abide by the principle of uniformity recognized in the UCMJ by the Court; 2) that it no longer required the military commissions to abide by the law of war or; 3) that Congress no longer considered the Geneva Conventions to be binding on the United States.

If Congress decided to explicitly eliminate federal habeas corpus jurisdiction of pending cases in the Detainee Treatment Act of 2005, then all litigation affecting the detainees at Guantanamo would have been removed from federal court jurisdiction, including the United States Supreme Court. Constitutionally, Congress, in
Article III, Sect. 2, has the authority to determine appellate jurisdiction for the Court “with such Exceptions, and under such Regulations as it [Congress] shall make”; in Article I, Sect. 8, Congress constitutes “Tribunals inferior to the Supreme Court, defines offences against the Law of Nations, and makes Rules concerning captures on Land and Water.” The Detainee Treatment Act of 2005 gave the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia jurisdiction to determine the validity of any final decision rendered by a military commission. The scope of such review was very limited.

In *Hamdan*, the Court found that Common Article 3 applied to the conflict with al-Qaida. In addition to imposing constraints on the use of military commissions because it requires that Hamdan be tried by a “regularly constituted court affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples,” Common Article 3 also prohibits “[o]utrages upon human dignity, in particular, humiliating and/or degrading treatment” (6 U.S.T. 3320), which the United Nations and the CCR, among others, have documented at Guantanamo.

Former Secretary of State Colin Powell argued with senior members of the administration, including Vice President Cheney, as early as late 2001, that international law, including Common Article 3, had to govern how detainees were treated, even if they were not in a military uniform or representing any legitimate government. Nearly five years later in retirement, Mr. Powell, in an address at the Aspen Institute, told his audience, “the value of holding prisoners at Guantanamo is murky at best, but the price America has paid is simply too high. Guantanamo must be closed immediately.” (Sanger)

A major problem that arose for members of both houses of Congress post-*Hamdan*, regardless of their party affiliation, was clearly codifying definitional terms to be employed for the rules of interrogation pursuant to the Geneva Conventions. “Indispensible judicial guarantees, humiliating and/or degrading treatment” required explicit clarification even if the system developed was grounded in the fundamental rights of the UCMJ and the Geneva Convention. Certainly the UCMJ and rules for general courts-martial abide by the principle of American justice and include numerous due process safeguards that are better than the procedure of the military commissions.

In his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales urged Congress to authorize military commissions to try detainees post-*Hamdan*. He added that Congress needed to consider Defense Department regulations and the UCMJ when creating procedures to try detainees under military commissions, and clearly define how Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions applied to terror detainees. According to his prepared remarks, Gonzales said:

The Hamdan decision now gives Congress and the administration a clear opportunity to work together to reestablish the legitimate authority of the United States to rely on military commissions as one tool to bring the terrorists to justice. Taking this cooperative approach will allow us to structure an effective system the world will look to with both appreciation and admiration.

In the wake of the Hamdan decision, we all have a common goal: to provide flexible but fair procedures that will enable us to try al Qaeda terrorists for their war crimes, without compromising our National values or the safety of the American people. It is imperative that we move quickly, and the administration stands prepared to provide assistance in this effort. (Gonzales Testimony)
That view was essentially supported by Representative Duncan Hunter (R-CA), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, who expressed real concerns about adopting military court-martial structure and procedure because it could force detainees’ release and create evidentiary problems. In a prepared statement, Hunter said:

In the time of war it may not be practical to apply to rules of evidence what we do in civil trials or court-martials for our troops. Will commanders and witnesses be called from the frontline to testify in a military commission or can we use reliable hearsay and sworn affidavits? I note that hearsay is allowed in international war crimes tribunals for Rwanda and Yugoslavia.

So let’s see if there is a practical need or reason to change the rules. We have to give the executive the power to fight this war. This is not a separation of powers issue, it is an issue of how to defeat the enemy. The Supreme Court says we need an adjustment, but in doing so let’s not forget our purpose is to defend our nation against the enemy. We won’t lower our standards, we will always treat detainees humanely, but we can’t be naive either. (Hunter Opening Statement)

The Military Commissions Act of 2006

The administration subsequently prepared its own legislation, which rejected the court-martial procedure as not practicable for trying enemy combatants. It permitted enemy combatants to be tried and punished at any time without limitations and specified that evidence, regardless of how it was gathered, would be admissible if the military judge determined it had probative value. Furthermore, it permitted the exclusion of trial defendants to prevent them from hearing classified evidence against them, although the exclusion should be no broader than necessary, and it required that a declassified summary of information was to be given to the defendants. Lastly, the Geneva Conventions, Common Article 3, was not to be a source of judicially enforceable individual rights, despite that fact that the Supreme Court firmly embraced the Geneva Conventions which included the requirements that a detainee be present at his trial. The administration bill revoked that right.

President Bush became the administration’s principal advocate for the new proposed Code of Military Commissions, particularly the requirements related to Common Article 3. Since the McCain Amendment of the Detainee Treatment Act prohibited “cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment,” as defined by reference to the established standard of the United States Constitution [conduct that shocks the conscience], the administration viewed it as consistent with, and a useful clarification of, our obligations under Common Article 3. If Congress incorporated the terms in the McCain Amendment to Common Article 3, it would satisfy our treaty obligations under international law, and if Congress set forth a definite and clear list of offenses to be considered war crimes punishable or violations of Common Article 3, then it would satisfy the requirements of the War Crimes Act which makes any violation of Common Article 3 a felony offense.

The Bush administration’s authorization for techniques to handle and interrogate prisoners, including prolonged exposure to extreme temperatures, long periods in stress positions, and strapping prisoners to metal contraptions and force-feeding them, certainly ran afoul of the requirements in Common Article 3 that prohibited “outrages upon personal dignity, in particular, humiliating and degrading treatment.” In conjunction with the introduction of the Military Commission Act of 2006, the Pentagon
released the new army manual, Human Intelligence Collector Operations, which applies to all the armed services, not just the army. It explicitly bans beating prisoners, sexually humiliating them, threatening them with dogs, depriving them of food and water, performing mock executions, shocking them with electricity, burning them, causing other pain, and water boarding. Additionally it was announced that it is DoD policy that all detainees will be treated humanely and in accordance with U.S. law and the law of war, and that the government shall apply without regard to a detainee’s legal status, at a minimum, the standards articulated in Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions.

What is of interest in the bill proposed by the president, is that it would establish in law a two-track system creating restrictions for military personnel, but permitting the C.I.A. to continue to exercise substantial flexibility with respect to the use of its interrogation procedures. The last ten pages of the legislation made it clear that the techniques used by the C.I.A. on senior al-Qaida members who had been held abroad in secret sites would not be prohibited and that the interrogators who engaged in those practices both in the past and in the future would not face prosecution.

John C. Yoo, a law professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and the former Justice Department official who helped develop the administration early legal response to the terrorist threat said, “The net effect of the new legislation in the interrogation context, is to allow the C.I.A. flexibility of the sort that the revisions to the Army Field Manual have denied to the Pentagon.... There is a rejection of what the Court did in Hamdan, which is to try to judicially enforce the Geneva Conventions, which no court ever tried to do before.” (Liptak, p. 1)

When Alberto Gonzales served as chief counsel to President Bush in January 2002, he authored a confidential communication that focused on the War Crimes Act and the potential implications for the administration. In that memorandum he urged the president to declare the war in Afghanistan, including the detention of the Taliban and al-Qaida terrorists, exempt from all provisions of the Geneva Conventions. He stated: . . . the War Crimes Act, banned any Americans from committing war crimes—defined in part as “grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions. It is difficult to predict with confidence how Justice Department prosecutors might apply the law in the future . . . especially since some of the language in the Geneva Conventions, outlawing outrages upon personal dignity and inhuman treatment of prisoners was undefined.

If Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters did not have Geneva Convention protections it substantially reduces the threat of any domestic criminal prosecution under the War Crimes Act. Your determination would create a reasonable basis in law that the Act does not apply which would provide a solid defense to any future prosecution. (Gonzales)

In the end after strong protests from Secretary of State Colin Powell, the administration revised its policy. In February 2002, it proclaimed that, while the United States would adhere to the Geneva Conventions in the conduct of the war in Afghanistan, captured Taliban and al-Qaida fighters would not be given prisoner of war status under the Geneva Conventions. It was a position that administration lawyers believed would protect U.S. interrogators or their superiors in Washington from being subjected to prosecution under the War Crimes Act based on their treatment of prisoners. (Cutler, p. 84)
Critics of the administration’s approach argued that Congress, if it approved such legislation, would make the United States the first country to repudiate the language of the Geneva Conventions, which is the first international treaty to gain universal international acceptance (192 member-states of the United Nations as well as the Vatican and Palestinian Authority), and that by amending the War Crimes Act those who may have committed outrages upon personal dignity could no longer be prosecuted for humiliating or degrading war detainees. Coupled with the efforts to limit due process procedures, despite the Supreme Court concerns in Hamdan, the Bush administration had raised serious concerns that such policies would cause the United States to sink lower in the eyes of the world, and create challenges for the moral and legal basis for the war on terror being waged by the United States. (Crane)

Because of fierce resistance from Senators John Warner, John McCain, and Lindsay Graham to the administration’s legislation and acceptance by the Senate Armed Services Committee of their serious alternative (Flaherty, p. 1), which required adherence to Common Article 3 in the treatment of detainees and created a trial process closer to the rules of the UCMJ, President Bush dropped his insistence on redefining the obligations of the United States under the Geneva Conventions, and agreed to negotiate a compromise proposal.

A few days prior to the recess, an agreement was announced by the president who stated that the compromise provided effectively for the government to capture, detain, question, and try the terrorists. The language agreed upon recognized the president’s authority as provided by the Constitution and by the legislation to interpret the meaning and application of the Geneva Conventions for the United States, and prohibited any detainee from invoking the Geneva Conventions, or protocols in any habeas or civil action against the United States in any court of the United States.

Under the agreement, Congress would codify the limits by outlining in the War Crimes Act several grave breaches of Common Article 3. The president would establish through executive rule any violations for handling of terrorism suspects that fall short of a grave breach. Those rules would be published in the Federal Register. Grave breaches were spelled out in several pages and included such acts as murder, mutilation, intentional serious bodily injury, sexual assault, torture and mental stress, extreme physical pain, burns or serious physical disfigurement, or serious physical abuse.

The Congress agreed to a White House proposal to make the standard on interrogation treatment retroactive to 1997, to exempt C.I.A. and military personnel from prosecution for past treatment under standards the administration considered vague. Any evidence obtained by techniques that violate the Detainee Treatment Act would be prohibited, as would hearsay evidence that the defense successfully argued is not reliable or probative. The language also provides that classified evidence can be used against charged detainees in military commission trials, but that a summary of that evidence must be provided to defendants.

In a comment on the agreement, Senator McCain declared that the compromise gave the president what he needed to fight the war on terror and bring the terrorists to justice, adding that, in his view, the integrity and letter and spirit of the Geneva Conventions were preserved. In reality, the agreement barred all detainees from using our federal courts for challenges to detention through habeas corpus proceedings. That meant that all pending lawsuits were null and void as well as any prospective lawsuits in the
future from detainees held in facilities outside of the United States.

It is clear that the agreed-upon legislation was designed to ensure that the detention and interrogation policies adopted by the Bush administration in 2002—and ruled illegal by the Supreme Court in *Hamdan*—were permitted to continue through the C.I.A. The 94-page text contains language to support such interrogations by the C.I.A., while improving the odds of obtaining convictions of detainees and immunizing officials for previous violations of the War Crimes Act governing detainee abuse. Stephen J. Hadley, national security advisor, who was a principal negotiator for the administration, insisted that the agreed-upon legislation met the C.I.A.’s needs for the future.

The compromise legislation was a constitutional due process paradox. It guaranteed for Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of the September 11 attacks, more rights and procedural protection than those individuals who may have been minor-level detainees who had been sold into American custody by bounty hunters after the defeat of the Taliban in Afghanistan in late 2001. The lawfulness of these individuals’ continued detention was predicated on evidence secured by torture that was not shared with the prisoner, that he had the burden to rebut, and he had to do so without the assistance of counsel.

More importantly, the denial of any habeas corpus challenge to indefinite detention, which was a principal feature of the compromise, raised serious constitutional issues, since it runs afoul of Article I, Section 9 of the Constitution that insists that habeas can only be withdrawn in the face of rebellion or invasion, or if the public safety is jeopardized. Both have to exist in order to empower Congress to legally suspend habeas. Rebellion did not exist, and the nation had not been invaded in a fashion to justify suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. On September 11, 2001, America was attacked. However, the detainees currently held at Guantanamo were for the most part captured in Afghanistan and brought to Guantanamo after the defeat of the Taliban. Most did not have any direct connection to 9/11, and such a connection cannot be automatically presumed. The Constitution cannot be interpreted to mean that if there is an invasion, habeas can be suspended over six years later for those aliens held in U.S. custody.

This habeas-stripping legislation overruled *Rasul v. Bush*, decided by the United States Supreme Court in 2004, in which the Court held that the Federal District Court in Washington D.C. had jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 to hear the prisoners habeas corpus challenges to the legality of their detention at Guantanamo Bay. While many of these prisoners had been held in custody for over six years, none to date had a habeas hearing.

In the closing weeks of its 2008 term, the Supreme Court weighed in on this issue when it ruled in the case of *Boumediene v. Bush.* This sharply divided 5-4 holding, issued by Justice Anthony Kennedy for the majority, declared that the detainees retained the constitutional right to seek a writ of habeas corpus. In reiterating the Court’s finding in *Rasul*, that although Cuba retains dejure sovereignty over Guantanamo Bay, the United States was in a unique situation of exercising complete jurisdiction and control over the naval base and as a result the Constitution protected the foreign detainees held there. *(Kennedy)*

The *Boumediene* decision is limited with respect to its impact because the military commission trials against Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and the others formally charged will proceed as scheduled. As well, this decision did not rule on the executive’s power to detain indefinitely those foreign citizens who
are suspected of committing acts of terrorism against the United States. It will affect the more than 200 prisoners who have filed habeas corpus petitions challenging their unlawful enemy combatant status, many of whom, as previously discussed, have been in custody over six years. They are not subject to immediate release, nor for that matter, an immediate hearing, or a guaranteed hearing, but there will be a process developed for a timely and fair hearing.

Conclusion
Congress Rejects Justice, Fairness, and the Common Good

Although Congress enacted a compromise Military Commissions Act of 2006, it is fatally flawed because it denies justice to hundreds of men who have been captured and held in a legal black hole since 2001. In addition to giving the president maximum flexibility to indefinitely detain alleged terrorists without having to charge them, and providing him with the authority to unilaterally reinterpret the Geneva Conventions, the Act redefines unlawful enemy combatant to include: any person who engages in hostilities against the United States or who purposely and materially supported hostilities against the United States. This overly-broad definition could subject U.S. citizens as well as foreign aliens to detention and trial by military commission.

Despite the most recent Supreme Court decision in *Boumediene*, which entitles the detainees at Guantanamo to seek a habeas hearing, although it doesn’t guarantee one, the MCA currently bars any legal actions based on the Geneva Conventions, directly or indirectly. It permits coerced evidence to be admissible if a judge considers it reliable, and it permits evidence seized even if it were obtained without a search warrant, whether that evidence was located outside the United States, or within the United States.

The Bush administration has become the world’s principal jailer in the war on terrorism, and, as a result, the United States has assumed the onus for detaining terrorism suspects, whether at Guantanamo, Diego-Garcia, or secret C.I.A-run prisons in Eastern Europe, North Africa, or other unidentified sites around the globe. Many nations are privately content with the United States detaining these suspected terrorists, because the detainees pose just as much a threat, if not more, to these regimes. As a result, it has given some of these governments the opportunity to criticize our policy without having to share in the responsibility of detaining and trying their own terrorists.

Closing down Guantanamo at this time is hardly the solution for the detainees still held there. The credibility of our government over their treatment has been damaged to the degree that such an action would hardly be viewed as legitimate in many segments of the international community. Furthermore, the Bush administration will not just surrender control over them. They could be transferred to other defense locations outside the United States where they might be subject to more severe inhumane or degrading treatment, because conditions of confinement and procedures established to review such cases are worse than those at Guantanamo.

There are currently about sixty-five detainees on a Pentagon list to be transferred or released subject to ongoing discussions between the United States and other nations. This group is in the No Longer Enemy Combatant category (NLEC’s), and vigorous action is required by the Bush administration to have European allied countries accept some of the detainees into their states. European Union officials continue to negotiate with the State Department to achieve that objective.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, in recent testimony given to the Senate Appropriations Committee, said: “The
United States has been unable to close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay because it has been stymied by legal and practical questions about what to do with the center’s detainees.” (Gates) Regardless, United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights and counterterrorism, Martin Scheinin, and leaders of 34 international bar associations and law societies from around the world still call for the immediate closure of Guantanamo Bay. “Few governmental operations in democratic countries have shown such a profound disrespect for the rule of law. Guantanamo Bay has come to signify injustice for some at the hands of the powerful.” (Amyot)

The Bush administration must “deinstitutionalize its system of indefinite detention without charge” at Guantanamo. The purpose of incarceration of most of the detainees is not to bring criminal charges against them but to extract information from them on other terrorism suspects. As of this writing, almost seven years after the establishment of the detention facility, twenty detainees have been charged and arraigned since the Hamdan decision.

The first American war crimes trial since World War II convened in late July 2008. The unlawful enemy combatant defendant tried by military commission was Salim Ahmed Hamdan who was in United States custody since 2001 when he was captured in Afghanistan and was accused of working as Osama Bin Laden’s driver and taking part in a conspiracy by Al-Qaida and providing material support for terrorism. In 2006 Hamdan had successfully challenged President Bush’s military commission system as constituted because it violated both statutory and international law. The judge presiding over the commission trial denied Hamdan’s right to protection under the Fifth Amendment because “there are substantial practical arguments against applying the Fifth Amendment with full force and effect in Guantanamo Bay; that the alternative remedy the Congress has provided is considerably less protective than the Fifth Amendment, but is consistent with minimal protections guaranteed to unlawful combatants under Article 3.” (Gilmore)

On August 6, 2008, after a two-week trial and three days of deliberations, a jury panel of six senior military officers found Hamdan guilty of providing material support for terrorism but acquitted him on the charge of conspiracy. The verdict was automatically appealed to a special military appeals court, and may eventually return to the Supreme Court to address claims that the military commissions established by the Military Commissions Act of 2006 do not meet American standards of due process and fundamental fairness.

The Uniform Code of Military Justice and the rules for general courts-martial are the benchmarks for all trial structures and procedures related to detainees held at Guantanamo. The existing military controls provide numerous due process safeguards that are far better than those proposed in the Bush administration’s Military Commissions Act of 2006, and ultimately accepted by Congress in its torturous compromise legislation. United States Attorney General Michael Mukasey’s view that terrorism suspects must be tried by military commission because of national security concerns rings hollow since the military justice system is versatile enough to effectively address both the detainee’s rights as well as national security issues.

Our nation should remain on the offensive to protect the American people. We should continue to bring the world’s most dangerous terrorists to justice, and we should do so in the context of the rule of law. Law is supposed to be a thing for the common good, and obedience to it is desirable on the part of individuals as well as the government. The fact that we are a
government of laws and not of men is one of the most enduring features of the American system. The purpose of the government is to be a servant of the people, and everything it does it does in our name; every power that it exercises, we have delegated to it. The Constitution reflects the position that we do not want our government to act arbitrarily or capriciously, and that we want governmental authority to remain subordinate to the rule of law.

Arrest and detention without charge truly offends the Constitution and should never be permitted. Using humiliation and degrading abuse in interrogations is un-American, and seizing citizens of foreign nations and placing them beyond the reach of law is antithetical to the principles of justice which we hold so dearly as core values of our society. Human rights guarantees provided in international treaties and instruments which focus on the common good and to which the United States is a signatory, as well as customary principles of international law to which we subscribe, must be upheld in word, deed, and spirit.

Congress had the opportunity to ensure that the treatment of detainees met our legal obligations under international law, and that our government used only lawful interrogation methods. Congress had the opportunity to keep us in full compliance with the Geneva Conventions. Congress had its chance, as Justice Stevens said in the final line of his historic opinion in Hamdan “… to ensure that the Executive is bound to comply with the Rule of Law that prevails in this jurisdiction.” (Stevens)

Congress enacted compromise quick-fix legislation that will do little to repair the legal defects that both the Hamdan and Boumediene decisions exposed in the administration’s approach to military commissions and habeas corpus. Furthermore, the adopted Military Commissions Act of 2006 did nothing to help to redress the serious injury to our international credibility caused by over five years of policy at Guantanamo that fell far short of minimum global standards of justice. It was left to the United States Supreme Court to determine that Congress yet again will have to redefine the processes and procedures that exist in current law to create a system that is consistent with the American values of fairness and justice. And ultimately, it will be the Court that will determine whether the actions taken by the political branches of government can be reconciled within the framework of the Constitution.

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“The Detainee Treatment Act of 2005,” gave the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia jurisdiction to determine the validity of any final decision rendered by a military commission. The scope of such review was very limited.


6 U.S.T. at 3320 (Art. 3, § I(d)).


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The Problem of the One and the Many: Immigration, Multiculturalism and Pluralism

By Eric Kraemer

In his dialogue, *The Republic*, the work which arguably marks the beginning of political science¹, Plato famously does several things—he investigates and refutes the major theories of justice of his day, he proposes a theory of the ideal state, and he argues that justice for both individuals and states consists of harmonious relations between their parts. For Plato the just state has harmonious relations between the classes and types of individuals that constitute it, and the just soul has harmonious relations between its various parts. But, surprisingly, Plato also raises a deep metaphysical problem in *The Republic*, the problem of the ‘One over the Many’. This problem is posed by the following question: How is it that there can be *many* different things that have *one* common feature? For example, there are many red things. In virtue of what are they all red? This problem is called the Problem of Universals and it applies to all instances where many things have a common feature. Plato’s own answer to the Problem of Universals is to postulate the existence of a special abstract item, a Form, in which the various particulars are said to “participate”. So, for Plato there is a form, Redness, in which all red things somehow “participate”.

(Even his most ardent followers admit that Plato’s answer to the problem of the one over the many is problematic and many thinkers, as we shall see, have proposed alternative answers to the Problem of Universals.)

It may seem puzzling why Plato sought to combine questions of justice with the metaphysical worry of the one over the many. Some may be inclined dismiss this latter effort, regarding his metaphysical discussion as a misguided diversion from serious investigation into political matters.² This paper, however, argues for the opposite view. I argue that Plato’s attempt to combine political philosophy and metaphysics was not misguided, and that, even if we disagree with Plato’s particular political and metaphysical views, his strategy serves as a useful model in our own era for facing pressing political problems Plato could not imagine.³

Plato avoided worries posed by multicultural and pluralistic democracies, ‘MCPDs’, in three ways. First, lacking the concept of human rights to protect minorities and based on negative historical experience, Plato rejected democracy as a form of mob rule.⁴ Second, Plato’s ideal state was a uni-cultural state to which each member contributed in virtue of the special role assigned by the state. And, third, Plato’s ideal state was not pluralistic in that of its members were trained by the state to see the world in the same way. Plato’s conception of the ideal state is about as far as one can imagine from MCPDs, which pose the most interesting new political developments in our current world. While pluralistic or multicultural states have long existed, these have tended to be monarchy-led empires in which a particular culture, religion, or set of mores were privileged.⁵ Modern MCPDs are different. As democracies, MCPDs guarantee basic rights for all. As multicultural states, MCPDs officially sanction no specific mores. And, as pluralistic communities, MCPDs are replete with conflicting viewpoints on how humans should behave.

Plato’s question of how to relate numerous particulars, *the many*, to a universal over-arching form, *the one*, directly applies to present-day MCPDs. These communities face global pressures from increased immigration which, in turn, produces enhanced multiculturalism and pluralism. These
forces subsequently put great strains upon a community, including augmenting the risk of conflict. Communities experiencing disturbances$^6$ caused by the influx of significant new variety then turn to ask the important question: what characteristics are required for proper inclusion as a member of an MCPD? What features should immigrants$^7$ possess to “participate” in the official Form of a particular community? Answering this first question is of great import, as membership confers valuable rights, benefits, liberties and protections on those who have it. In return for membership, individuals have typically been expected not to retain certain features that clash in certain ways with their new community. But, this raises problems in the modern context and leads to a second important question: which practices, if any, should immigrants be required to discard as multiculturalism and pluralism are, arguably, important features$^8$ for a community to encourage?

**Rejecting Some Traditional Answers to Plato’s Question**

The two questions just mentioned are of direct concern to us all. But, before we can answer them we first need to be clear about what kind of feature we are looking for. That is, we need consider Plato’s Problem of Universals in context. Take the contentious term, “American”. “American” is the term that we citizens of the United States use to pick ourselves out, to distinguish ourselves from everyone else.$^9$ Following Plato we can ask: “What makes the current 300 million plus Americans all Americans?” Is there some objective entity that makes all Americans American? If not, then what sort of answer can we give to Plato’s problem?

There are three standard objective answers to the Problem of Universals: (1) Plato’s Theory of Forms, (2) Aristotelian Essentiaalism, and (3) Resemblance Theory. Although each of these seems seriously flawed, each also helps guide us in finding a better answer. Let us briefly consider each in turn. Plato’s own answer is to that there is an abstract item, the *form* Americanness, that existing in a special non-natural realm with regard to which all Americans “participate”. This answer raises other difficult questions. Where was Americanness before the continent was inhabited? What does it mean to “participate in Americanness”? How can one show that a person does or does not participate?$^{10}$ These embarrassingly unanswerable questions cause most to abandon Plato’s solution and look elsewhere.

Aristotle, Plato’s most famous student, urged that what was in common was something essential, an *essence* not to be found in another realm of reality but in the different individuals themselves.$^{11}$ This view is found attractive by contemporary philosophers who think that modern science has provided persuasive examples of essences, such as the basic structure of chemical elements and of genes.$^{12}$ While Aristotle’s view has appeal if we think of advances in the sciences, when we ask instead what American “essence” might actually be shared by all Americans, the apparent hopelessness of finding an illuminating answer is daunting.

To be sure, noted nineteenth century commentators, such as De Tocqueville, made sweeping statements about the American character and claimed that America was “exceptional”. And, following De Tocqueville Seymour Martin Lipsett has claimed:$^{13}$ The American Creed can be described in five terms: liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism, and laissez-faire. (Lipsett, 19) But, to take the further step to claim that all Americans share all of these features seems clearly unfounded. It seems fairer to take Lipsett’s claim, not as a descriptive claim on what all Americans believe, but, instead, as prescriptive comment about widely shared which values.
Philosophers who reject both Plato and Aristotelian approaches as equally mysterious often opt, instead, for explaining common features in terms of resemblance, urging that there was a basic resemblance to be found between items having the same feature. Their standard illustrations involve color; they point out, for example, how various instances of red resemble each other with respect to color, urging that it is basic resemblance which explains what we take to be common features.\textsuperscript{14} But when we talk of one American resembling another, we need to ask: in what respect do all Americans resemble each other? Given our great variety, such natural candidates as culture, outlook on life, and ideology all seem rather dubious. To claim that we all resemble each other with respect to our nationality is empty—as nationality is a purely legal matter, it can radically change as new legal categories and exceptions are established. So, the appeal to resemblance will not help provide an objective answer.

In sum, the three standard objective answers to Plato’s problem face serious objections. Before considering a more adequate alternative, we should note attractive elements from each of these views that it would be helpful to preserve in coming up with a better answer to Plato’s problem. With regard to Plato theory of forms, Plato’s suggestive language use of “participating” is attractive. We like to think of being American as somehow participating in American life. With respect to Aristotle’s Essentialism, while the notion of “essence” is too strong, the weaker notion of a set of critical or defining elements also seems attractive. And, even if there is no perfect resemblance between all Americans, this does not mean that we Americans should not be concerned about a significant similarity across members of our culture. Cultures with only minimal similarity to bind their members are at risk for conflict. So, with the three elements of participation, critical features and similarity as desiderata, let us turn to a fourth alternative.

**Constructive Nominalism Defended**

Although my discussion so far has been largely negative in terms of arguing that several different account of the feature of being American will not work, I want to insist, before proposing a positive account, that this negative discussion provides an important positive lesson. I am revising this paper less than three months before the 2008 elections. As recent political discussion makes abundantly clear, it is common for many engaged in political discourse to talk in ways that appear to appeal to metaphysical views they would reject. For example, we find one politician currently using the slogan, “An American president for America.”\textsuperscript{15} The implication, of course, is that one candidate is a real American and the other candidate is not. To make such a claim seem plausible one requires an objective account of what a real American is. As suggested above, one might urge, with Plato, that only one candidate participates in the form Americanness. Or one might claim, with Aristotole, that only one candidate has the correct American essence. Or perhaps most insidious of all, one might advocate, with resemblance theorists, that only one candidate properly resembles true Americans. All three of these accounts, when made explicit, are seen to be deficient. Yet, the fact that this slogan is currently being used shows how easy it is to be fooled into thinking that there is an objective account to be given for what an American is. To resist being misled by such slogans one needs to have a firm grasp of a different kind of solution to Plato’s problem.

The most radical approach to Plato’s problem of universals takes this problem to be a pseudo-problem\textsuperscript{16}; there is nothing to solve because there is nothing universal between two similar, resembling particulars except for certain names that we use to attach
to them. This view is standardly referred to as “Nominalism”. For Nominalists, there is nothing objective or intrinsic in the particular that picks out anything essential, there are only certain conventions that help guide the application of certain words. There are just names that happen to fit certain individuals and not others; the reasons for fit are arbitrary, although this arbitrary status may not always be readily apparent due to the constant reinforcement of convention by custom, training, law, education and social conditioning.

While the Nominalist view may not work for the examples singled out by Aristotelian Realists and Resemblance Theorists, namely, natural kind and color predicates, such as ‘gold’ and ‘red’, for many cases, such as the predicate ‘American’, the Nominalist strategy seems well suited. According to the Nominalist, there is nothing intrinsic to all Americans, no special form or essence, nor is there a basic resemblance between Americans. People are Americans only because of social conventions concerning the term “American”. Although controversial as a general approach to universals, Nominalism provides a good account of being an American.  

There is no one thing that we are picking out when we use the predicate ‘American’. There is a list of standard but arbitrary procedures that create an appropriate use of the term ‘American’, a list that all of us can, if called upon, provide. This list would include: birth, naturalization, parental naturalization, and a special Act of Congress. Recent changes to the test to qualify for citizenship underscore its arbitrary nature: Patrick Henry is out, Susan B. Anthony is in; naming branches of government is out, while explaining how checks and balances work is in. Those who passed a previous test might not be able to pass the current test. No one has yet done research to determine how many native born Americans could pass either test. And, no one knows what future tests might look like. This should make it absolutely clear to potential holdouts just how arbitrary being an “American” really is. What makes it appropriate to apply the term to a particular individual is that the individual has a set of features that fits one of a number of different recipes currently sanctioned by institutions empowered by current conventions to create Americaness. The class of those who count as Americans is a socially constructed grouping; it is not a natural kind such as a biological species or basic chemical element. Once this point is firmly grasped, the utter irrelevance of such recent slogans as “An American president for Americans” becomes painfully obvious. And, it becomes clear that those who are using the term “American” in this context are not using the term as a mere description, but as a coded prescription to pick out a special group of Americans who are to be preferred to others. But is it appropriate to use the term “American” in such a sense? This leads us back to our initial two questions regarding immigration.

**Multicultural and Pluralistic Citizens**

While some will reject what they take to be implicit racist or xenophobic implications in the current use of the slogan, “An American president for Americans,” it is not clear that all prescriptive uses of the term “American” should be ruled out. Remember the two hard questions for social philosophy raised by multiculturalism and immigration pressures: [1] what features should all citizens have? And, [2] what practices are problematic? Once we realize that there is no such thing as an American form or essence, and that there is no fundamental resemblance relation that holds between all Americans, does that mean that as long as one of the legal recipes is officially followed, that any set of commitments and behaviors should be allowed in any citizen of a MCPD?
Let us first consider the view that the only features that citizens of an MCPD should have are those required for citizenship, that there are no features which are to be regarded as problematic. Let us call the view that any citizen of an MCPD should be allowed to express herself in any manner consistent with her heritage (cultural, religious, social), the “Maximal Liberty” view. There are several standard arguments that can be presented in favor of such a view. First, one can appeal to the importance of maximizing personal liberty for its own sake, as the fundamental American value. (It is, after all, the first element on Lipsett’s list!) Second, those who are not exclusive libertarians can appeal to John Stuart Mill’s classic arguments in *On Liberty* that argue that maximal liberty will also maximize the overall happiness of the society. And, third, following the line of argument recently set out by a number of authors who base their concerns for conduct on one’s religious obligations, one might urge that the demands of one’s specific culture, that is, one’s cultural obligations (which importantly include one’s religious commitments) must trump any requirements imposed by the state. One might attempt to justify such a claim by appeal both to the importance of protecting cultural pluralism in an MCPD and the importance of respecting the freedoms of thought, expression, and religion. Thus, there are impressive arguments in favor of the Maximal Liberty view that proponents of a positive prescriptive account of “American” must confront.

Although liberty, happiness, and freedom of religious expression are important for any worthy MCPD, several objections show that the above concerns are insufficient to establish the Maximal Liberty View. First, the appeal to liberty is flawed because, while liberty is an important value, it is not the only value. And it remains to be demonstrated that the value of liberty in an MCPD outweighs concerns for minimal social cohesion.

Second, the appeal to maximal happiness is dubious. While we agree that no essential features are had by all Americans, as Lipsett’s list demonstrates there are still commonly found features. Most native born Americans are educated in a common educational system with the result that most acquire a common knowledge base plus enculturation into similar overlapping sets of values. While not all Americans share all the same knowledge and values, enough share enough to ensure the basic working of the society. Those who share common knowledge and values are able to engage in all the workings of the greater social structure. Immigrants to the United States would do well to acquire sufficient common knowledge and become aware of prevalent values so as not to be prevented from doing so as well.

A related concern is that current educational practices are not perfect; there are biases that favor of certain sub-cultures and reinforce prejudices against other sub-cultures. Only by becoming aware of what these flawed educational practices are can members of different cultural groups bring to light these imperfections, help to bring about important changes in public perception, and, thus, effect valuable change for the benefit of all cultural groups.

Further, the case can be made that adherence to a policy of non-alignment in important ways with the larger culture will likely lead to multicultural conflicts. If those who immigrate to get specific benefits in a new culture feel no obligation to make any change in any way whatsoever, this is a likely recipe for resentment, and eventual conflict. Consider political refugees who take advantage of opportunities provided by US culture to those with requisite education and training, yet refuse to live with other groups, and aim their life efforts towards returning to their original homeland. It is hard not to see how such attitudes would promote general resentment. Perceived lack of
contribution to the community is awkward.22

Finally, the appeal to the moral priority of cultural obligations (including religious obligations) over all other concerns, even the laws of the state, is suspect. Here’s why. First, the experience of the past century or so of functioning MCPDs is testimony that much cultural practice can and usually will transit successfully from one locale to another without serious challenge. So, if large amounts of cultural practice is can be maintained through immigration, then it remains to be argued why every bit of cultural practice needs to be retained. The process of immigration necessarily involves a major change, moving from one living situation to a very different living situation. Customs that worked well in the earlier context (such as clothing habits) may not be as appropriate, even for the immigrant, in a new environment.23 The psychological need to hang on to familiar practices can be met without all old practices being retained. Second, MCPDs by their very nature are open to their members changing affiliations and practices. Certain cultural practices, such as early marriage, necessarily limit possible and seemingly legitimate change.24 Third, other cultural practices are widely regarded in MCPDs as both harmful and discriminatory. For many citizens he practice of female genital excision (“mutilation”), for example, seems to be such a case. Thus, there is a strong at least prima facie case against always respecting imported cultural practices.

Since the major arguments for the Maximal Liberty View face serious challenges, it is worth considering a limiting prescriptive answer to the above two questions. To direct our discussion let us consider three guiding principles that readily appear central to all MCPDs. These are the principles of Permissiveness, Politeness, and Protectiveness. In virtue of their pluralism, MCPDs need to promote permissiveness to respect widely different practices. Without different sub-groups engaging in different practices no society can be pluralistic. MCPDs, in virtue of being multicultural, need to practice politeness across cultures with respect to allowing different behaviors and modes of expression to proceed without ridicule and interference. This is so that those engaging in different practices are not alienated from the greater society.25 And, given inevitable power differentials between different groups, MCPDs should also protect minority practices that differ from those of the dominant majority.

The three principles also justify sanctioning26 a particular sub-culture within an MCPD when a particular sub-group’s practice principle fails to follow a given principle. Practices which ridicule or deliberately insult behaviors of particular sub-groups are problematical as are practices which attempt to stifle the free expression of others. And, practices which harm others are definitely suspect. Still, appeal only to the three principles will not suffice. MCPDs must also promote the right to liberty of expression. There are significant difficulties weighing this right against a concern for politeness.27 Thus, there is the potential for conflict between the principles of politeness and permissiveness. Further, the principles of permissiveness and protectiveness will often be at odds with each other with respect to permitting practices that are harmful or at least very risky.28 And, most problematic of all, in an MCPD one can expect significant disagreement as to what practices count as polite or as harmful. The controversies over the practice of requiring women to wear the veil as well as the practice of female genital excision are cases in point. Given that disagreement will arise in an MCPD, one needs to ask how its citizens should engage in discussion regarding official policy to regulate practices. Clearly one must recourse to a means of public engagement that is appropriate for an MCPD. Thus the attempt to answer our
second question regarding problematic practices in an MCPD in turn leads us back our first question regarding the features that all citizens of an MCPD should possess. I have claimed that citizens in an MCPD should be willing to engage in public discussion regarding practices in an appropriate manner. This answer, in turn, now leads me to reflect on what the appropriate manner of public discussion might be. I will consider four different attempts to characterize appropriate public discussion for an MCPD.

First, although already rejected for other reasons, it is worth pointing out the limitation of applying the Maximal Liberty View to public discussion in an MCPD. The Maximal Liberty approach will not lead to effective public discussion. If all that governs public discussion is individualistic expression of one’s deepest cultural values and subsequent voting, the minority opinion is always doomed; individualistic expression has no value except for its expresser. To engage in meaningful discussion in an MCPD, their citizens must opt for a different approach.

To be effective in the public square, citizens in an MCPD should approach public discussion in a manner that will appear both sufficiently non-parochial (that is, not limited to the mores of one’s own sub-group) and sufficiently universal, i.e., aimed at all sub-groups of the society. There are at least three different strategies that one might use to accomplish these two goals. These are, in order of strength, the Public Reason Approach, which one typically associates with John Rawls, the Multiply-Determined Strategy of Robert Audi, and a third, weaker alternative, the Developing Mixed Stance that I wish to propose here. Let us consider each of these approaches in turn.

First, one might suggest that each citizen in an MCPD should identify a set of purely impersonal principles governing human practices that do not favor any particular sub-group but which work for the obvious benefit of the whole. These principles should be the basic principles to which one is committed and the only principles that one uses in reasoning about public matters. With such a set of principles one can then argue for a particular public policy in such a way that one’s auditors will be able to view one’s effort as non-partisan and from a general moral perspective. An example of this approach might involve appealing to the widely shared Golden Rule in a public discussion while making it explicit to all that one is not attributing the Golden Rule itself to any specific religious creed or cultural tradition. Appealing only to attractive basic moral principles that are universally or at least very widely shared is a very powerful strategy. This broadly Rawlsian approach has the obvious advantages of emphasizing fairness and of attempting to undercut rejections of one’s efforts as partisan.

But, while some serious thinkers may be capable of producing and using such a set of neutral principles, it seems clear that this strategy, laudable though it is, is beyond the grasp of most human beings. For most people, it is their cultural and religious views which serve as basic points of reference, which determine their reactions to challenging situations. Asking them to deny what they take to be their identity, while an interesting moral strategy, is not psychologically realistic. And, there is also the unconscious concern that those who do not explicitly make reference to their cultural biases in a discussion may be hiding something.

Robert Audi offers an interesting alternative to the Rawlsian approach to public discourse. Although Audi’s discussion has mostly been limited to concerns involving religious views in the public square, his approach can be broadened to include all culture-based claims. For Audi, it is permissible to have motivating parochial (religious or cultural) reasons for views on social practices that one publicly expresses just so long as one also has, and clearly
enunciates, equally motivating secular reasons for the same views. That is, so long as one’s views can be seen to be over-determined, both by one’s culture and by impartial moral concerns, then one can count one’s overall presentation as appropriate for an MCPD.

This multiply-determined approach has clear advantages. An Audi-type approach can accommodate those many members of society for whom Rawls’ requirement of a pure public reason are just too demanding. And, by requiring an appeal to common impartial moral concerns, the proponents of this approach can also avoid the charge of only being narrowly culturally biased. Further, it is useful for the immigrant in that it does not require her to ignore her cultural heritage, but, rather, it encourages her to investigate she can make her cultural beliefs fit with general moral principles of the MCPD in which she finds herself.\(^{31}\)

Still, there may be some, especially new immigrants, for whom even the loosened strictures of Audi’s basic account are too stringent. Consider the possible case of someone who is (1) able to identify her own culture-based reasons for her support of particular policies, (2) aware of serious cultural differences between her views and those in other sub-groups in her MCPD regarding those same policies, (3) interested in finding the sort of reasons to support her views that will carry weight with those outside her sub-group, but (4) still not yet able to identify any culture-neutral moral principles to which she might appeal. Is there no contribution in an MCPD that such citizens can make to public discussion? Must they be told not to speak until they have learned what sort of culture or religion neutral reasons they might use in a public discussion? There is a third approach that might allow such citizens into the public discussion. To see this, let us distinguish between those members of the culture who satisfy the four conditions just mentioned from those who do not satisfy the third condition.

Contrast, for example, someone, A, who favors veil wearing for women, knows the practice to be controversial and is searching for culturally and religiously neutral reasons that would influence others with a different person, B, who favors veil wearing but regards all who disagree as heretics with whom she need not be concerned. It seems that persons such as B, those who are only interested in appealing to culture-specific reasons from their own sub-group are not acting appropriately as members of an MCPD. They have not yet made the transition from being an adherent to a particular cultural perspective to being citizens of an MCPD. And, as such, they are definitely in need of education regarding what is expected of those who live in an MCPD. On the other hand, people such as A seem to be in a different situation. They seem to have already made the transition to living as a member of an MCPD. While they are in need of more information to be more effective, it seems that those like A, unlike those like B, have a role to play in the public square.

This case suggests a third strategy, what I will call the Developing Mixed Stance, which some new citizens might employ.\(^{32}\) For those who adopt this stance what is key is the commitment to search to find appropriate, culture and religion neutral reasons to support one’s public policy views for which one already has cultural and religious reasons. Those who are in this stance contribute appropriately to public discussion by enunciating their cultural reasons for a particular policy and then by asking other members of the society for help in producing appropriate culture-neutral reasons that would support that policy. The reactions that their requests receive will help those in this developing stance to achieve a better understanding of what neutral reasons work in their MCPD. (This
strategy is intended as transitional to one of the other two discussed above.) Thus, there seem to be a spectrum of three different but related ways in which one might appropriately engage as a citizen of an MCPD. As long as one uses one or another, one is acting appropriately as a citizen. One will probably find oneself more naturally fitting one of these approaches than another, but all three are open. And, this should be of comfort as we consider the many difficulties that we all face adjusting to new challenges.

To bring this discussion to a close let us ponder curious recent case involving labor negotiations at a chicken processing plant in Shelbyville, Tennessee, which seems to illustrate many of the points that have been presented. The focal point of labor negotiation involved determining which eight paid holidays the 400 employees at the plant would receive during the year. What made the situation unusual for Tennessee is that 250 of those represented were Muslim workers who were of Somali origin. The union representing all of the workers agreed to a change in paid holidays. In particular, Labor Day was traded to management for Id al-Fitr, the culmination of the celebration of Ramadan, and the most important religious holiday in the Muslim calendar. While on first blush this change might seem contrary to union interests, being a devaluation of Labor Day, additional reported specifics explain why the union agreed to the change. First, two traditional Christian holidays, Christmas and Easter, were retained. Second, the plant had a history of always requiring workers to work on Labor Day, so the plant had been in operation on that day for the past 23 years with workers receiving pay. Third, the plant had experienced problems the past year with almost complete absenteeism by the Muslim workers on Id al-Fitr causing the plant to close. The decision to exchange Labor Day for Eeyd was one that made great sense in the particular context. One can imagine the interplay of a variety of cultural factors during these negotiations, but one can also clearly see how concerns for fair treatment would also have played a significant role. May this example provide hope as we anticipate an increasingly multicultural and pluralistic future!

References


Plato, *The Republic*.


Notes

2 I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for insisting on this objection.
3 Plato constructed his ideal state on the model of classical Greek city states, independent self-sufficient units, whose goals consisted in defending themselves from other states. There was no question of a multicultural state for Plato.
4 Plato viewed the condemnation to death of his teacher, Socrates, as a powerful negative example of such mob rule.
5 The empires of Alexander, Rome, Charlemagne, the Ottomans, Genghis Khan, the Holy-Romans, the Austrian-Hapsburgs are western examples with which I am familiar.
6 Here I have in mind examples such as the United States, which is very much concerned at present with a wide variety of issues involving immigrants, and EU countries such as France and Germany, where the complexion of the society has been undergoing a radical change without significant corresponding intentional social discussion about how to define proper membership.
7 In fairness the same question should be asked of all native-born members of the society.
8 One contemporary contentious example is that of the veil. Is adult veil-wearing in public in modern Turkey, for example a feature which should now be allowed while veil-wearing in public schools by children something that should be forbidden?
9 U.S. citizens do not apply this term to Canadians, who are also inhabitants of North American, or to Mexicans, who live in Central America, or to Peruvians, who live in South America.
10 Plato’s term, “participate,” which makes sense in the political context of the democracy that Athens made famous, seems incomprehensible outside of this context.
11 See, for example, the Ackrill translation of Aristotle’s The Categories, 1966.
12 See, for example, Brian Ellis, 2001.
13 I am very grateful for a member of the audience at the conference where this paper was presented for this reference.
14 See, for example, H. H. Price, 1953.
15 See Neuswijk, August 11, 2008.
16 A pseudo-problem is a technical philosophical term for an alleged difficulty which turns out on close examination not to be a problem at all. The classic example is the question “How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?” Once we see that angels are defined as non-physical beings we see that it is no longer interesting to ask a question about them which presupposes that they have the physical feature of taking up space, as dancers do.
17 See Armstrong, 1989. In what follows I will only assume Nominalism with respect to notion such as being an American.
18 According to U.S. law, only native-born Americans are eligible to run for the office.
19 There are certain affinities with this view that the principle of Maximal Liberty that John Stuart Mill argues for in On Liberty, his classic defense of personal liberty.
20 See, for example, Philip Quinn, 2006.
21 A recent non-U.S. example of such conflict involves the problems faced by Rom immigrants who flee Romania for a better situation in Western Europe.
22 The same can be said about those native-born who live in sub-groups which are similarly perceived as disengaged from the larger community.
23 Clothing habits seem to be such a case.
24 Mandatory early marriage customs are an example.
25 This would justify such legal principles as punishing hate crimes.
26 By “sanction” I intend a wide spectrum of possible responses from legal interdiction to official condemnation.
27 The controversy regarding hate speech is a case in point.
28 Mandatory helmet laws for motorcyclists exist in some jurisdictions but not in others.
29 This is Rawls’ famous appeal to “The Veil of Ignorance.”
30 For a nice summary of Audi’s view, see Audi, 2007.
31 One concern for Audi’s approach is whether we can ascertain, in a particular case, whether someone who cites both cultural and culture-neutral principles in defense of a particular policy is really equally motivated by both. Perhaps she is simply latching opportunistically onto a set of general moral principles to which she has no serious commitment. Suppose her purpose in mentioning these principles is to try to make the defense of a practice important to her culture seem less narrowly parochial than it really is. The alleged deception may be deliberate, or, as in the case of self-deception, somewhat hidden.
32 Although the present discussion often refers to immigrants, this last strategy might
be usefully employed by young native-born citizens who are developing their understanding of what proper citizenship entails.

33 One might think of them as being related by the Wittgensteinian notion of “family resemblance.” See Wittgenstein, 1958.

34 The negotiations at Tyson Food Inc.’s chicken processing facility in Shelbyville, Tennessee, were reported in the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*, August 7, 2008, in an article by Steven Greenhouse for the New York Times News Service.

35 I am indebted to helpful comments and suggestions from members of the audience who heard an earlier version of this paper at the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies Conference, Multiculturalism, Pluralism and Globalization, October, 2007, in La Crosse, Wisconsin. I am also especially indebted to very thoughtful criticisms from two anonymous reviewers which have improved this effort considerably.

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On the “Dignity of Difference”: Neither the “End of History” nor the “Clash of Civilizations”

By Mojtaba Mahdavi and W. Andy Knight

“No race possesses the monopoly of beauty, of intelligence, of force, and there is place for all at the rendez-vous of victory.”


Introduction

Over the past two decades, the world has been rocked by two seismic-like events: the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989 and the crumbling of the World Trade Center Towers on September 11, 2001. While there are several explanations for these disparate events, both have in some way contributed to the revival of old assertions regarding “the superiority of the West” and concomitant “inferiority of the Rest.”

In previous eras, politicians and scholars utilized this representation of the world as justification for Western colonialism, arguing that it was the “civilizing mission” of the West, and the “white man’s burden” to bring Western values and institutions to inferior and less advanced societies. In our contemporary post-colonial world, however, this colonializing gesture is now dressed up in new language. The West is generally represented as the only society or civilization that defends democracy and human rights, while the Rest purportedly lacks, or resists, such noble modern and enlightenment values. Related to this representation are the suggestions that any resistance to Western values, institutions, and power is a mark of rage, irrationality, and backwardness and that the West is justified in globalizing its model of progress.

The West versus the Rest dichotomy, however, is not new; it dates back to the early sixteenth-century colonial period and has survived in various forms ever since. Before the collapse of the Berlin Wall, politicians used an us-versus-them distinction to justify the Cold War between twentieth-century capitalism and communism. In the early twenty-first century, this construct has been used to identify new enemies of the West, notably the Orientalist East and, more specifically, Islamic and Confucian civilizations. After the tragic events of 9/11, Western politicians have substituted the “Cold War on communism” with “the war on terrorism.”

In this article, we examine critically the most recent iteration of the West-versus-the Rest dichotomy found in both Francis Fukuyama’s The End History and Samuel Huntington’s The Clash of Civilizations theses. Fukuyama’s universalist argument suggests that although traditions and cultures of the Rest may be devoid of the internal dynamism associated with democratization, they are indeed capable of adopting Western liberal democracy. Francis Fukuyama asserts that Western liberal democracy has clearly triumphed over its challengers, especially over communism, and that in reality the Rest has little choice but to join the West in embracing Western neoliberal values and forms of government. For Fukuyama then, The End of History means that by the advent of the twenty-first century, Western liberal democracy had already prevailed across the globe as the singular and superior way of governing global diversity.

Samuel Huntington’s particularist argument, on the other hand, suggests that the Rest is incapable of democratization; the West must simply leave them alone and maintain its superiority. Huntington, Fukuyama’s academic mentor, basically argues that
Western-Centrism: Two Faces

Western-centrism equates modernity, progress, and civilization with the superior West and it associates tradition, backwardness, and barbarism with the exotic and inferior Rest/East. It is precisely in this context that the old form of colonialism was revived in a new ideological form, i.e., one of development and modernization in the post-colonial era. The former colonies would be retained within the West's orbit by ensuring that they adopted Western values, goals, and institutions. The only legitimate model put forward was a non-communist model of development, a Western liberal-capitalist model. The Western path to development and democracy, it was argued, not only would save the Third World (developing and underdeveloped countries) from the danger of the Second World (Communist bloc headed by the Soviet Union), and, as important, emancipate these countries from their traditional values that stood as impediments to the spread of both liberalism and capitalism.

During the past two decades, there has been renewed theorizing of the same old Western-centrism in two different ways: Fukuyama's universalism and Huntington's particularism. Reflecting on the collapse of Soviet-style communism, Francis Fukuyama proclaimed in his 1989 essay “The End of History?” and later in his book The End of History and the Last Man (1992)
that Western liberal capitalism had defeated its two major opponents, fascism and communism. The collapse of the Soviet Union, Fukuyama argued, signaled nothing less than “the end of history as such: that is the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.” (1989:271)

At the centre of Fukuyama’s thesis was the idea that Western liberal democracy had proved itself to be the best and, indeed, the only viable option for the governance of the many and diverse countries of the contemporary world. *The End of History* thus revived the old developmentalist claim that Western liberal capitalism is a universal paradigm, one that could be embraced by countries in both the North and the South. Although Fukuyama suspected that there might be lingering resistance to the liberal-capitalist model, including neoliberal globalization, he predicted that the Rest would eventually see the error of its ways and embrace the intellectual and material value of liberal capitalism. Like the West, the Rest would come to understand that the modern world had arrived at the end of history because “the basic principles of the liberal democratic state could not be improved upon.” (1989: 272)

Samuel Huntington’s particularism, in contrast, warned against Fukuyama’s overly-optimistic view of history and the universality of the Western paradigm. According to Huntington, one should not expect the future to be one of peaceful coexistence across civilizations, but rather one of violent clashes and conflict between civilizations. His objection to the principle of “Endism” obviously was centered on any proclamation of the superiority of the West. Instead, Huntington argued that the “weakness and irrationality” of the Rest stand as an enduring obstacle to the global spread of Western values and institutions. “The hope for the benign end of history,” Huntington argues, “is human. To expect it to happen is unrealistic. To plan on it happening is disastrous.” (1989)

In developing his critique, Huntington argues that, so far, conflict, not cooperation, has dominated the nature of post-Cold War politics. Moreover, he claims that “the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will be not primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominant source of conflict will be cultural. ... The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics.” Like Bernard Lewis before him, Huntington argues that the “fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.” (1993, 22) He reasons that the world is comprised of seven or eight major civilizations—Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and possibly African civilizations.” (1993, 25) For Huntington, the domination of the West over the Rest would remain an ongoing source of conflict between the two. “The next world war, if there is one,” he suggested, is likely to be triggered by “the conflict between ‘the West and the Rest’ and the responses of non-Western civilizations to Western power and values.” (1993, 41) In the post-Cold War era “the Velvet Curtain of culture,” he explained, “has replaced the Iron Curtain of ideology.” For Huntington, “this is no less than a clash of civilizations—the perhaps irrational but surely historical reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the world-wide expansion of both.” (1993, 31-32)

Thus, for Huntington, fundamental and innate differences among civilizations will necessarily lead to civilizational conflicts. “The efforts of the West to promote its values of democracy and liberalism as universal values, to maintain its military predominance, and to advance its economic interests engender countering responses from other civilizations.” (1993, 39) The hegemony of the West, he contends,
promotes “the growth of civilization-consciousness” on the part of the Rest and “de-Westernization and indigenization,” such as the rise of Asianization in Asia and (re)Islamization in the Muslim world. (1993, 26) The greatest conflict, he suggests, will be between the West and either Confucian or Islamic civilizations, or both. Given these non-negotiable facts of contemporary politics, the West, according to Huntington, has only two options. First, the West should consolidate its power and defend itself against the Rest. And second, the United States should consolidate its relations with Europe and Latin America, maintain friendly ties with Japan and Russia, and protect its interest against non-friendly civilizations, in particular Islamic and Confucian civilizations. In doing so, moreover, the West should exploit differences among these civilizations and, in the process, maintain its economic and military superiority. (1993, 48-9) In other words, Huntington’s advice to contemporary Western policymakers is to follow the old colonial policy of divide and rule over non-Western civilizations.

Although it is difficult to assess the direct impact of Huntington’s work on Western policymakers, especially in the United States, it is probably no coincidence that the Bush administration has frequently pulled out the “clash of civilizations” card to justify its war on terror and its unilateral foreign policies. American conservative politicians have often suggested that our enemies hate us because they hate our values and our civilization: Our enemies attacked the World Trade Center because it is symbolic of the center of Western civilization.

**Neither “The End of History” nor “The Clash of Civilizations”**

*The End of History* and *The Clash of Civilizations* positions are actually two sides of the same coin: both theses turn the West and the Rest into monolithic categories. *The End of History* implies that the West offers a universal paradigm of development and democracy—the West is the best and the Rest, lacking its own models of development, should and will follow the West. Similarly, *The Clash of Civilizations* implies that the West is the best and, as such, it must prevail over cultures with different histories, values, and institutions.

However, both theses are seriously flawed. The major flaw in *The End of History* thesis is derived from its central claim, which assumes that it is scientifically objective, culturally neutral, and universally applicable to all societies. *The End of History* thesis also assumes, incorrectly, that there is only one path to modernity, the one already tread by the West which the Rest has no choice but to follow. According to this view, the culture and tradition of non-Western societies are simply residual factors. The Rest, or the global South, is itself considered a residual category because its character, cultures, traditions, and institutions are examined in terms of Western standards, not in terms of its own values. Thus the reference point remains the West. Put another way, the Rest is defined not in terms of what it is but in terms of what it lacks. This is obviously an ethnocentric dichotomous view which ignores the possibility that societies can modernize themselves by reinterpreting their own traditions and cultures. Moreover, *The End of History* thesis confidently overlooks conflicting tendencies within Western modernity itself; among them are expressions of liberty, human rights, and democracy as well as systemic violence, colonialism, and totalitarianism.

“Rather than the ‘end of history’, Joseph Nye argues, “the post-Cold War world could be described as the *return* of history.” Liberal capitalism has various kinds of fragmented competitors in the forms of ethnic, religious, and national communalism. “China and
Russia use capitalism and global markets, yet neither is liberal nor fully capitalist.” Similarly, different forms of religious fundamentalism have challenged the hegemony of liberal capitalism. (Joseph Nye, 2007, 266)

The Clash of Civilizations thesis is also ripe with contradictions. First, the argument underlying this thesis relies on a vague, abstract, and wholesale notion of civilization identity. As Dryzek reminds us, civilizational identities do have to be mobilized; they are not just “there, or automatically generated by culture.” (2006: 36) As we have witnessed with Slobodan Milosevic and Osama bin Laden, civilizational identity is mobilized through a discourse that of necessity must create a constitutive “other.” Furthermore, the Clash of Civilizations thesis discounts the fact that there is always a contest over the definition of civilization and over who gets to represent a civilization. Civilizations are not unitary entities; there are official and unofficial, current and countercurrent, voices within each civilization. Each civilization is a dynamic plural entity, not a “shut-down, sealed-off” unit. (Said, 2001)

There is no single West. Western civilization is, and continues to be, an amalgam of liberalism and fascism, democracy and dictatorship, development and underdevelopment, equality and inequality, emancipation and racism. It has built modern civilizations while brutally destroying other civilizations. It has simultaneously created modern democratic institutions and modern techniques of torture. It has contributed greatly to democratic nation-building in the global North and launched military coups and state terrorist operations to overthrow nationalist governments in the global South. It has promoted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on the one hand, while protecting the most brutal totalitarian/authoritarian regimes. It has fought genocide in Europe, yet committed systematic violence and torture in Abu Graib and Guantanamo Bay. These are but a few of the juxtapositions that convey the idea that there is no single West.

Correspondingly, there is no single Rest. Each and every non-Western civilization has a similar history of difference and contradiction. Who defines what Africa stands for: Nelson Mandela, a prophet of non-violence and a pioneer of peace, or Idi Amin, a symbol of barbaric violence? What characterizes Indian civilizations: Mahatma Gandhi’s non-violence or some brutal traditions embedded in the Indian caste system? Similarly, who and what can best represent the Confucian and/or Asian values: Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore who argues that the Asian model of development justifies authoritarianism, or the Japanese model of Asian democratic politics? In the same way, who or what best represents Islamic civilization: over a billion Muslim people who live peacefully in the five continents of the globe, or a tiny group of violent Muslim extremists? Saudi Arabia’s autocratic king, or the democratically-elected Indonesian president? Saddam Hussein, the former dictator of Iraq, or Iran’s reformist ex-President Mohammad Khatami? The great number of Muslim democratic scholars, or a few violent Jihadist extremists?

Samuel Huntington argues that Western civilization/culture is unique and fundamentally different from other civilizations, especially the civilization represented by Islam. For Huntington, it is not Islamic fundamentalism but the fundamental essence of Islam that makes it incompatible with modernity and democracy. The inevitable fusion of religion and state is something that historically and intellectually attaches to Islam: while “in Islam, God is Caesar,” in the West “God and Caesar, church and state, spiritual and temporal authority, have been a prevailing dualism.” (1996, 70) Huntington’s essentialist argument is that the Islamic mind and democracy are mutually exclusive and inalterably grounded in culture. Yet, one of
Huntington’s many critics, Nasr Hamed Abu Zeid, rightfully reminds us that “to speak about an ‘Islamic Mind’ in abstraction from all constraints of geography and history, and in isolation from the social and cultural conditioning of Islamic societies, can only lead us into unrealistic, even metaphysical, speculations.” (Abu Zeid, 2000)

Likewise, as Fred Halliday argues: “there is nothing specifically ‘Islamic’ about” obstacles that hinder democracy in the Muslim societies, though some of these obstacles “tend to be legitimized in terms of Islamic doctrine.” Any argument about incompatibility or compatibility between Islam and democracy adopts “the false premise that there is one true, traditionally established ‘Islamic’ answer to the question, and this timeless ‘Islam’ rules social and political practices. However, there is no such answer and no such ‘Islam.’” (1996, 116) For Halliday, Islam is so broad that “it is possible to catch almost any fish one wants. It is, like all the great religions, a reservoir of values, symbols and ideas .... the answer as to why this or that interpretation was put upon Islam resides ... in the contemporary needs of those articulating Islamic politics.” (1994, 96)

According to Norris and Inglehart, data and empirical evidence suggest that when political attitudes are compared, “far from a clash of values, there is a minimal difference between the Muslim world and the West,” and they are “similar in their positive orientation toward democratic ideals.” More importantly, “support for democracy is surprisingly whispered among Islamic publics, even among those who live in authoritarian societies.” The empirical evidence urges “strong caution in generalizing from the type of regime to the state of public opinion.” (2004, 154-55) Authoritarian regimes, Islamist or otherwise (Ayoob: 2007, 629-643), do not represent the state of Muslim public opinion. The Western strategic relations with “palace fundamentalism” in the Arab Middle East is a case in point where the interests and intentions of political leaders vary from those of the people: “The young executives working for Boeing and McDonnell-Douglas seem more like the ‘cousins’ and ‘brothers’ of the Emirs than do young, unemployed Mustapha and Ali, strolling the streets of Cairo in humiliating uselessness.” (Mernissi: 2003, 57).

The second major flaw of The Clash of Civilizations thesis revolves around Huntington’s claim that civilizational difference necessarily leads to conflict. Evidence to dispute this claim is not hard to find. There are sizable minorities in each and every civilization, and they generally live peacefully together: Asians and Africans in the United States; Africans, Caribbeans, and Indians in Britain; Chinese and Indians in Canada; and North Africans in France. Two of the largest Muslim communities in the world can be found in Indonesia and India. These countries are not entirely Muslim countries, but their Muslim and non-Muslim populations live together in relative peace. That said, we do acknowledge that cultural difference can at times lead to conflict, particularly if such difference is politicized. In the contemporary era, much of this politicization can be attributed to the failure of Western post-colonial policy toward the Rest, and especially towards the Islamic World. Under the shadow of the Cold War, liberal and leftist individuals, ideas, and institutions were considered to be major threats to the West. The West and pro-Western regimes in the Muslim World often exploited extremist Islamists to push back the leftist and progressive alternatives. The West protected corrupt secular authoritarian polities so long as they remained loyal to Western interests. Some Western governments launched several military coups against neutral/non-aligned democratic nationalist governments, e.g., note the American-sponsored military coups in Iran (1953) and in Chile (1973). The United States supported Islamist
extremism so long as it was instrumental in shoring up American Cold War policy. The Islamists, for example, were instrumental in fighting Soviet Communism in Afghanistan in the 1980s, a contribution, albeit indirect, to a U.S. Cold War foreign policy goal.

Furthermore, history suggests that civilizations have contributed to the development of each other. Scholars agree that Islamic civilization and Muslim scholars very much contributed to the revival of modern Western civilization during the Renaissance and Enlightenment eras. The West returned to its great ancient Greek tradition through the Arabic translations of Greek scholars available in the Muslim world. (Nakosteen, 1964) The scholarship of Medieval Islamic giants like Al-Kindi, Al-Razi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Rushd, contributed to the reasoning and rationality that made Western science possible and provided the critical thinking which led eventually to the Reformation. Thus Islamic civilization contributed not only to the scientific and literary revival in the West, but also to the intellectual challenges to Christian theology. (Ghazanfar, 2004)

It is therefore legitimate to challenge the assumption that the West and Islam, even the West and Islamism, have been in a constant fundamental clash. The West supported the totalitarian Ba'athist regime of Saddam Hussein during, and arguably before, the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). It has consistently supported the Egyptian autocratic regime under Sadat and Mubarak after President Sadat made peace with Israel. It has had long-standing relationships with the Arab oil monarchies, in particular Saudi Arabia. We should not forget that American-sponsored “jihad” against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan led, in part, to “the emergence of Al-Qaeda, whose leaders, including Osama bin Laden, were once favourites of the CIA.” (Ayoob, 2005: 954) Indeed, since the 19th century, the West has supported, to use Fatema Mernissi’s phrase, “palace fundamentalism” (2003) of the Saudi regime—a fanatic ideology known as Wahhabism taught in radical Islamist schools (madrasas) in Pakistan and which gave birth to the Taliban. Thus, the symbiotic relationship between Western liberal democracies and palace fundamentalism challenges the simplified binary of the liberal democratic West versus the traditional autocratic Rest. The relationship between the West and the Rest is far more complex than clash or cooperation.

In addition, there are several examples of clashes within civilizations, not between civilizations. The Iran-Iran war (1980-1988) and the Iraq-Kuwait war (1990) are two cases in point where two Muslim countries were engaged in intra-civilizational conflict. More important, in the 1990 and 2003 American wars against Iraq, some Muslim countries (e.g., Turkey and Saudi Arabia) were solidly on the American side, while France of the Western civilization opposed the 2003 American war against Iraq. This line of argument captures the core of the realist critique of The Clash of Civilizations thesis by suggesting that states, not civilizations, continue to be the primary actors of international politics. States act in their own best interest and will, more often than not, forsake their traditional civilizations in favour of political, economic, and military interests. (Fouad Ajami, 1993)

Several scholars have offered alternatives to Huntington’s reductionist, deterministic, and confrontational civilizational thesis. Some argue that contemporary global instabilities are more appropriately understood as a “Clash of Globalizations.” (Stanley Hoffmann, 2002) According to Hoffmann, the thaw of Cold War confrontation revealed a number of seething civil and ethnic conflicts. The dominant tension of the decade following the end of the Cold War can be characterized not as a clash...
of civilizations but as “the clash between the fragmentation of states (and the state system) and the progress of economic, cultural, and political integration – in other words, globalization.” (Hoffmann, 2002) Each of the three aspects of globalization, to which Hoffmann refers, has the seeds of actual and potential conflict that can produce the “clash of globalizations.”

For instance, economic globalization is the cause of much of states’ and the world’s inequality, but the fetishism with global competitiveness has basically hindered states and other actors from addressing this problem. The end result could be a clash between haves and have-nots. Cultural globalization has encouraged homogenization and, in particular, Americanization. But it has also attracted a visceral and, in some cases, vituperative anti-U.S. and anti-Western culture backlash. Political globalization is generally characterized by the growth of international, regional, and trans-regional institutions and networks. Some of these networks are heavily influenced by the global hyper-power, the United States. Others are led by sovereignty-free actors that are challenging the legitimacy and authority not only of the world’s hegemon but also of sovereignty-bound regional and global institutions. (Kobrin, 1998) While globalization was supposed to usher in a period of “Enlightenment-based utopia that is simultaneously scientific, rational, and universal,” Hoffmann puts it best when he suggests that this Enlightenment stereotype of globalization has provoked “revolt and dissatisfaction.” “Globalization, far from spreading peace, thus seems to foster conflicts and resentments.” (2002)

Benjamin Barber (2002) offers a similar line of argument by suggesting that the twenty-first century represents an era of the collision between Jihad and McWorld. This collision is occurring between “the forces of disintegral tribalism and reactionary fundamentalism” (Jihad) and “the forces of integrative modernization and aggressive economic and cultural globalization” (McWorld). (2002, 245) “The Jihadist’s quarrel,” Barber argues, “is not with modernity but with the aggressive neo-liberal ideology … they are not even particularly anti-American.” According to Barber, they do not hate us because they hate our values. They “suspect that what Americans understand as prudent unilateralism is really a form of arrogant imperialism.” This is not therefore a clash of civilizations “but a dialectical expression of tensions built into a single civilization” created by McWorld; this is clearly a “war within civilization.” (2002, 248-249)

In a similar vein, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue that “Empire is the new world order.” (2000, 3) Empire “is the political subject that effectively regulates [the] global exchanges, the sovereign power that governs the world.” (2000, xi) Empire is neither reducible to the United States nor any other form of imperialism. (2000, xiv) Unlike imperialism, empire is not imposed on people; rather, it is a complex web of institutions and socio-political and economic relations through which people participate in the making of empire. We participate in the construction of empire by our active participation in the political rule (good citizen) and economic regime (good consumer). We live in the post-modern age and empire is the dominant rule of this age; it has no foundation, no centre; “Empire is the non-place of world production where labor is exploited.” (2000, 210) The “new proletariat” is “multitude” with no centre, no place; like empire, it is, at once, everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Multitude is “counter-Empire.” (2000, 207) It is no longer a traditional working class but a joint global axis of resistance against complex networks of empire. (2000, 55) In our post-modern age, the paradigm of the West versus the Rest has transformed into the relations of Empire versus Multitude.
In sum, then, contemporary global tensions can more accurately be described not as a clash of civilizations, but, rather, as a clash of fundamentalisms (Ali, 2002), a clash between two versions of political extremism, a clash between two tiny aggravated minorities who exploit religious/cultural rhetoric and discourse for political purposes. This clash can also be characterized as a clash between market fundamentalism and religious fundamentalism. In either case, this is little more than a “clash of ignorance” (Said, 2001) in which democracy and social justice are “caught between a clash of movements, each of which for its own reasons seemed indifferent to freedom’s fate.” (Barber, 2002, 245) The so-called clash of civilizations is an attempt at a discursive mobilization of civilizational identities which, if not seen for what it is, can become a self-fulfilling prophesy.

The sad story of the invasion of Iraq on false pretenses in 2003, and the bitter story of the chaos and violence in post-Saddam Iraq, is an eye-opening example of world order run by the arrogance and self-delusionment of an empire—a world essentially being run by a non-democratized global order. In February 2002, then American Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stated:

As we know, there are known knowns. There are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns. That is to say, we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also the unknown unknowns, the ones we don’t know we don’t know.

(Department of Defense news briefing, 2002, quoted in Hart Seeley, 2005).

But Rumsfeld, to use Slavoj Zizek’s argument, never mentioned the “unknown knowns”—that is to say, “the disavowed beliefs, suppositions and obscene practices we pretend not to know about.” (2004, 10, quoted in Mooers, 2006, 3) To mention a few, the Abu Graib scandal, the rendition strategy, and the false accusation about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

The Third Way: On “The Dignity of Difference”

With the failure of imported and imposed Western theories of development and democracy, the idea of indigenous/homegrown theories of development became popular in the 1970s through the 1990s. African, Asian, Islamic, and other models of development emerged to offer a local way of development. The experience was not totally successful because the local elites in those areas often manipulated cultural values and consolidated their authoritarian, patrimonial, racist policies. A few exploited traditional values to rationalize authoritarianism and to reject democracy and human rights as Western values. The fact, however, is that democracy and freedom, social justice and respect for human beings, are not exclusively Western ideas. These are universal values embedded in all cultures. Local elites need to extract and purify their cultures, investigate their traditions, and interpret their traditional values in ways that support the application of modern democratic values. The more local elites communicate with the modern world, the better the chance that they will be able to find a “third way.” The third way synthesizes universal values of democracy and social justice with the particular institutions of a country or civilization. We live in a global village and must interact and learn from each other. Under such conditions, the paradigm we need now is not The Clash of Civilizations; it ought to be a Dialogue Among Civilizations. (Fred Dallmayr, 2002) It is only through dialogue that we will be able to appreciate The Dignity of Difference (Jonathan Sacks 2002), i.e., that we realize that difference ought not to be a source of conflict but rather a source of diversity and richness.

The dignity of difference rejects the extremes of universalism and
particularism. The dignity of difference stands for self respect and respecting others. It implies frank self-critique and the constructive criticism of others, and promotes dialogue among ourselves and others. It requires a careful critique of global and local models. This means that each culture or nation should engage in a critical dialogue with its own traditions and formulate the universal values of democracy and social justice in a local language that can be implemented through its own institutions. Nations could be rich in energy, Ali Shariati argues, but remain poor as long as their resources are not refined. They could sit upon rich resources but remain stagnant and ignorant until they extract and refine the enormous resources of society and convert the degenerating and jamming agents into energy and movement. (Shariati 1981)

The dignity of difference never suggests that we should not learn from other cultures or nations, or that they have nothing new or valuable to offer to our own culture. The dignity of difference calls for a “third way” and not solely “my way.” Put differently, the best way to eliminate the West-versus-the Rest dichotomy is a third way, one in which the West is not the best and the Rest can take the best of the West. Similarly, the West can and should take the best of the Rest, as the UN did in 2007 when UNESCO designated that year as the “Year of Rumi” to mark the 800th birthday of the eminent Muslim mystical poet, Jalaladdin Rumi. Rumi was one of the greatest spiritual figures of all times and is known for his message and call for love, humanity, and peace. For Rumi, “our mother is love! Our father is love! We are born from love! We are love! All loves constitute a bridge leading to the divine love; to love human beings means to love GOD.”

Another approach to embracing dignity of difference can be found in Canada. Canada, through the institutionalization of multiculturalism and its various mechanisms of ethnic and cultural accommodation, has in many respects contributed to the development of a third way, a way that respects the other and even celebrates diversity. In this respect, Canadian society has generally tended to reject the clash of civilizations thesis in favor of dialogue among the many civilizations that comprise its polity. Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Baha Abu-Laban suggest that “accommodation is a Canadian way that has deep historical roots, and moreover the question of how we relate to the other as groups, as citizens, or as individuals is one that is unavoidable and that each of us navigates on a daily basis in a variety of settings.” (2007, 33)

Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban provide some insight into the Canadian approach to dignity of difference. At a time when Muslims in Canada feel particularly besieged, it helps when their fellow Canadians demonstrate deep and abiding respect for what Muslims believe in and what they regard as sacred. This act “can go a long way toward accommodating diversity.” (Abu-Laban & Abu-Laban, 2007, 33) So, the act of having Muslim prayer rooms at the Toronto International Airport next to a Christian chaplaincy is symbolic of the respect for the other and of the dignity in difference.

Similarly, when controversies surround the actions, dress, and symbols of Muslims in the province of Quebec, it helps that the Quebec government has provided “avenues for civil dialogue and for accommodating diversity in a serious and equitable manner.” These include establishing institutional mechanisms through which complaints can be aired and diversity accommodated, such as the recently established Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences headed by historian and sociologist Gérard Bouchard and author and philosopher Charles Taylor. (http://www.accommodements.qc.ca/).
The third approach to the embrace of dignity of difference can be found in what John S. Dryzek calls “discursive democracy.” According to Dryzek, the key to the development of discursive democracy is the ability of a plural society to decouple “the deliberation and decision aspects of democracy, locating deliberation in engagement of discourses in the public sphere at a distance from any contest for sovereign authority.” (2006, 47) Drawing on the work of Chantal Mouffe, Dryzek advocates agonism as one possible means of bridging gaps within plural societies. According to Mouffe, there are times when deliberative democracy is unable to process or resolve deep differences that exist in a plural, multiethnic society. In such cases, instead of denying the passion associated with these deep differences or papering over the differences, the introduction of agonism will “combine continued contestation with deep respect for the adversary.”

Dryzek actually disagrees with Mouffe on some points and suggests some modifications to her thesis. One such modification is his embrace of Lijphart’s notion of “consociational democracy” as a means of taking divisive issues out of the democratic debate. However, some of the examples used by Dryzek as successful consociational democracies (e.g., Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, and Switzerland) are now experiencing problems with the issue of accommodating difference and diversity. This in itself demonstrates that respect of difference must be inculcated throughout the plural society and not just be left in the hands of elites.

What does the dignity of difference mean in foreign policy terms? It means a radical shift of perception on the West’s strategic thinking about its role in the global affairs. As Kishore Mahmubani (May/June 2008) argues, the West assumes that “it is the source of the solutions to the world’s key problems. In fact, however, the West is also a major source of these problems. Unless key Western policymakers learn to understand and deal with this reality, the world is headed for an even more troubled phase.”

The dignity of difference can provide us with a counter-theory to the Western-centric theories of Fukuyama and Huntington. On this view, difference and diversity are not the source of tension. Embedded in all cultures is a radical call to justice and truth, so all cultures and traditions “have a significant potential role in conflict resolution and not merely, as many continue to believe, in conflict creation.” (Sacks 2002: viii) To reach this potential, we must trust the dignity of the other. We need “to see in the human other a trace of the divine Other … to see the divine presence in the face of the stranger; to heed the cry of those who are disempowered in this age of unprecedented powers.” (Sacks 2002:208) The world must be “enlarged by the presence of others who think, act, and interpret reality in ways radically different from our own. We must attend to the particular, not just the universal.” In short, “we must learn the art of conversation, from which truth emerges.” (Sacks 2002: 20)

More specifically, even one of the modest critiques of the current foreign policy of the West suggests that “the United States needs to recognize that terrorism is not the result of blind hatred of Western civilizations, as the Bush administration insists, but rather an extreme response by a few to U.S. policies that most Arabs see as hostile.” (Ottaway et al 2008: 31) The same report suggests that the current U.S. policy of regime change, isolation, and military confrontation with Iran “plays into the hands of hardliners” in Iran. “The United States should attempt to formulate a nuanced engagement policy.” A successful engagement policy would integrate Iran into the global economy and “will provide more fertile ground for political reform in Tehran and dilute the control of hard-liners,
who thrive in isolation.” (Ottaway et al 2008: 32)

The same policy of engagement must be pursued in Iraq: a new political process should bring all the Iraqi groups together “with the help of the United Nations, other international organizations, and Iraq’s neighbors.” Such policy of “internationalization” can succeed if “the United States does not interpret ‘internationalization’ to mean pressuring other countries and international organizations to carry out and pay for policies already formulated in Washington.” (Ottaway et al 2008: 33)

Likewise, concerning the Israel-Palestinian issue, the United States must realize that President Mahmoud Abbas lacks a sufficient domestic legitimacy to conclude a peace agreement. The United States must therefore “convert from a policy based on severe sanctions against Hamas and the territory it controls and instead come to terms with a revival of a Palestinian national unity government like the one that existed until June 2006.” (Ottaway et al 2008: 35)

Last but not least, the credibility of the American policy of democracy promotion has been seriously undermined. “The United States quickly recoiled when initial efforts led to results it neither anticipated nor was willing to accept, such as the victory of Hamas in Palestine and the strong showing by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.” Hence, when U.S. allies in the Middle East—Jordan, Egypt, and Bahrain—cracked down on democratic demands, “the U.S. government looked at short-term security interests and kept silent.” (Ottaway et al 2008: 37) A radical shift in the current American policy/rhetoric of democracy promotion is warranted:

The idea of democracy promotion needs to be clearly differentiated from that of regime overthrow, not only because the conflation of the two ideas is counterproductive, but because the overthrow of even the most tyrannical regime does not necessarily lead to democracy, as Iraq shows. Separating regime overthrow from democracy promotion is not just a question of language, but also of tools used in promoting more open political regimes. Sanctions, for example, should have no part in a program of democracy promotion (Ottaway et al 2008: 38).

**What is to be done? Future research and multilayered levels of analysis**

What is to be done to achieve a more peaceful world, along the lines advocated above? It is becoming increasingly evident that the Western declared policy of exterminating extremists and terrorists is bound to fail because the efforts to understand the underlying reasons for radical extremism have been superficial at best. In large part, the policy of the United States in response to 9/11 seems to have been based on the assumptions underlying Huntington’s thesis of clash of civilizations. In our opinion, this policy response is flawed and as such is likely to make the clash of civilizations a self-fulfilling prophesy. Offering up the dignity of difference alternative, as well as a more critical and inclusive policy of multiculturalism and a radical approach toward accommodating difference, may be necessary to counter the clash of civilizations policy responses. However, these responses may not be sufficient to address the complex and multilayered problem we are currently facing.

We suggest that, in developing a future research agenda on this subject, as a first step, it is important to challenge the dominant Western policies of Islamophobia and excavate the root causes of radicalism and extremism within various cultures, religions, and civilizations. (See Newman, 2006: 749-772) Second, we suggest the necessity of deconstructing the concepts of radicalism, extremism, and terrorism by challenging the ethnocentric discourse which privileges these terms in order to
serve the interest of the global oligarchy. This will require conducting a historical survey of radical and extremist thoughts and actions across civilizations.

Third, it may be useful to embrace a “levels of analysis” framework in order to tease out the plural root causes of radicalism, extremism, and terrorism among various civilizations.

Fourth, given that individuals and groups who choose to pursue policy ends through the utilization of indiscriminate violence are generally small in number and at the margins of the mainstream of any population, religion, or civilization, we submit that it is fool-hardy to paint entire populations, religions, or civilizations with the same radical/extremist brush. So, in devising counter policies to extremist acts like terrorism, policymakers ought to be more judicious in identifying the targets of such counter policies.

Our aim is to encourage researchers and policymakers to move beyond the false occidentalist dichotomy of “Islam and the West” (Brunner, 2007: 958) by raising critical questions concerning the nature, history, and complexity of civilizations; by searching out the multiple root causes of the radical extremist actions and thoughts of terrorists; and by revealing flaws in the current counter-terrorist policy measures adopted by the United States and some of its Western allies. Future research should aim to advance knowledge about the nuances of civilizations and to contribute to a better understanding of the root causes of extremism across civilizations.

Thus we propose that since the root causes of radicalism, extremism, and terrorism are multiple, any public policy response should indeed also be multiple. This would allow for the development of alternative policies to the war on terror, such as those that respect the dignity of difference and promote a multicultural (or multiple socio-cultural) response. Such policy responses should facilitate economic and political inclusion of disadvantaged, minority, and excluded groups (i.e., largely a socio-economic and political response, as opposed to a militaristic one). And it should address the problem at both local and global levels by proposing practical solutions for the democratization of political and economic institutions. Benjamin Barber suggests that policymakers, in response to the current conflict, must begin by “readjudication of north-south responsibilities.” (2002-247) At the global level, we need to democratize global economic and political institutions and to democratize globalization. “The war against jihad will not succeed,” Barber argues, “unless McWorld is also addressed.” (2002, 247)

In other words, our ultimate hope is that future research will be able to suggest an alternative and more nuanced public policy response to radicalism and extremism that can move policymakers beyond the simplistic dichotomy of the West versus Islam, and the simplified and reductionist clash of civilizations or the war on terror.

**Conclusion**

This paper examines the rise and revival of the political construct of the West versus the Rest, especially the theses offered by Francis Fukuyama and Samuel Huntington. We suggest that neither *The End of History* nor *The Clash of Civilizations* adequately captures the complexities of culture or the sources of conflict in contemporary global politics. The current conflicts in the world are not between civilizations but rather between political actors who often do not represent their civilizations adequately, or at all. Contemporary global instability is more accurately understood as a clash of fundamentalisms, and a clash of ignorance in an age of empire.
To ensure that the clash of civilizations does not become a self-fulfilling prophesy, it is important for members of plural societies to move beyond merely tolerating the other and towards actually accommodating difference. Ultimately, the initial step towards a more peaceful world is to listen to others. The Muslim poet Ali Ahmad Sa'id, known by his pseudonym Adonis, reminds us, “in the Koran itself it says that Allah listened to his first enemy, Satan, and Satan refused to obey him. I believe that Allah was capable of wiping out Satan, yet He listened to Satan’s refusal to obey Him.” (Adonis, MEMRI, No. 1121, March 21, 2006)

Bibliography


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Cultural Polemics in the Early Islamic World: The *Shu‘ubiyya* Controversy

By Scott Savran

This article will discuss a cultural debate from the early Islamic world between the proponents of Persian civilization and the supporters of the Arab heritage. It is known as the *Shu‘ubiyya* controversy. The temporal framework for the analysis lies between the eighth and tenth centuries CE. This period marked a crucial stage in the development of Muslim identity, as it witnessed the wide-scale conversion among several non-Arab peoples, such as the Copts, Nabateans, Greeks, and Persians, to Islam. The integration of these diverse cultures into the Islamic orbit resulted in the formation of a sophisticated, cosmopolitan society in which the arts and sciences flourished.

In the context of this burgeoning pluralist community, Muslim patricians sought to define their nascent culture. As influential non-Arabs permeated the Muslim elite class, they infused their own idioms of cultural expression into the Islamic tradition, which had hitherto been Arab centered. In time, a trend coalesced among Muslim statesmen and literati which looked to emulate the ancient cultures of the non-Arab conquered peoples (‘ajam). In particular, the Perso-Aramean civilization of the Sasanians, the dynasty of Persian kings who ruled much of the Middle East prior to the coming of Islam, served as the model for how they chose to articulate their culture. This movement, known collectively as the *Shu‘ubiyya*¹ aimed to incorporate the monarchical traditions and urbaine refinement of the Sasanians into an Islamic format. In contrast, the *Shu‘ubis* stereotyped the Arabs as uncouth nomads of the desert, barbarians lacking an imperial pedigree.

In response to the *Shu‘ubiyya* movement, a dialectical opposition emerged whose proponents modern historians have termed, the anti-*Shu‘ubis*. The anti-*Shu‘ubis* held that since it was the Arabs who brought Islam and since Arabic was the language of the Qur’an, the Arabs should maintain a preeminent position among their fellow Muslims, and their culture should be the face defining Islamic society. They therefore supported a pro-Arab agenda in which they glorified the Bedouin, the indigenous pastoral-nomadic people of the Arabian peninsula, whom they viewed as the backbone of Arab culture. The anti-*Shu‘ubis* praised the steadfastness and munificence of the Bedouin, and defended Arab culture against *Shu‘ubi* invective by emphasizing the eloquence of Arabic language, poetry, and oratory. They also satirized the Persians for what they viewed as their legacy of excessive regal pomp and accused them of oppression and stinginess, despite their lavish displays of wealth. This article will analyze the polemical arguments and themes from both sides of the *Shu‘ubiyya* controversy.

Modern scholarship on the *Shu‘ubiyya* is indebted to the renowned monographs of H. A. R. Gibb and Ignaz Goldziher. Goldziher, influenced by the nationalist scholarship of the late nineteenth century, viewed the *Shu‘ubiyya* as the literary manifestation of the ethnic struggle between the Arabs, who wished to maintain their privileged position in Islamic society, and the Persians, who, experiencing a surge in national sentiment, sought to denigrate the Arabs while reviving the traditions of their past. (Goldziher, pp. 137-163) Gibb, however, noting that ethnic lines between the Arabs and the Persians had become considerably blurred by the time of the *Shu‘ubiyya*, dismissed Goldziher’s view of it being a nationalist struggle. He argued instead that the *Shu‘ubiyya* controversy
embodied a debate among Muslim elites over which direction Islamic society ought to have taken, “whether it was to become a re-embodiment of the old Perso-Aramean culture into which Arab and Islamic elements would be absorbed, or a culture in which Perso-Aramean contributions would be subordinated to the Arab traditions and the Islamic values.” (Gibb, p. 66)

Information on the Shu’ubiyya debate is contained in various types of Arabic sources, including belles-lettres compilations, historical accounts, and wisdom literature. Ironically, the most comprehensive description of the Shu’ubis’ program may be gleaned from the works of their most vehement detractors. The ninth-century anti-Shu’ubi literary savants, al-Jahiz and Ibn Qutaiba, reconstruct the major tenets of the Shu’ubiyya, to which they provide their own retort. Their works (see bibliography) serve as an invaluable repository of the themes, imagery, and symbolism from this dialectic.

The Shu’ubis

The main themes of the Shu’ubis’ praise for the ancient Persians were based on their interrelated ideals of monarchy and cultural refinement, both of which shall be considered in turn. In the mid-eighth century, the ‘Abbasid dynasty of caliphs3 assumed rule over the Muslim world. The ‘Abbasids relied heavily on a centralized bureaucracy, an administrative feature which they had inherited from the Sasanians. The Muslim secretaries (kuttab, s. katib), many of whom were firm supporters of the Shu’ubiyya movement, wished to mold the ruling Islamic dynasty according to the imperial model of the Sasanian polity, which emphasized social hierarchy, sacrosanct kingship, and elaborate ceremonial. They therefore energetically translated Sasanian works of political theory, law, and mirrors for princes into Arabic. They also composed their own works which were strongly redolent of these Sasanian genres.

The most prominent of these writers was Ibn al-Muqaffa’, an eighth century court scribe of Persian descent who converted to Islam. In his noteworthy tract of political theory, Risala fi al-Sahaba (Treatise on the Royal Entourage), he lays out his plan for a state in which Islamic laws are merged with the precepts of Sasanian statecraft. He envisioned a stratified society in which all subjects of the polity were obliged to act according to the prescriptions of their class. He argued that such a system was necessary for the proper functioning of society and for its preservation, since egalitarianism, in his estimation, led to anarchy, which in turn made the state vulnerable to outside invasion. Ibn al-Muqaffa’ also adapted the Sasanian notion of the ruler as the divine intermediary into a Muslim context, arguing that God had exclusively imbued the sovereign with a special capacity for leadership, so that only he could make administrative decisions such as the determination of taxes, sending the army off to war, and the hiring or dismissing of government functionaries. Moreover, according to Ibn al-Muqaffa’, only the ruler was capable of exercising independent reasoning (al-ra’) in making these decisions when the Islamic religious scriptures did not offer a clear direction. (Pellat, Ibn al-Muqaffa’, pp. 24-29)

The Sasanians reified the dignity of the monarch through elaborate ceremonial, a feature which the Shu’ubi secretaries sought to emulate at the ‘Abbasid court. Indeed, we read of many instances of their conspicuous admiration of Persian grandeur, such as with one hubristic prime minister who entered the court of the caliph on a golden winged throne—an old custom of Sasanian functionaries. (Duri, p. 68) From a literary standpoint, the kuttabs’ reverence of the Sasanians’ pomp is demonstrated by the Kitab al-Taj (Book of the Crown), a Muslim mirrors for princes style handbook composed by an anonymous katib describing the ideal station of the monarch and government, and listing the proper rules of etiquette
at court, which are edified by anecdotes from the Sasanian and Muslim kings. Its author idealizes the ‘Abbasid Caliphs as the direct heirs of the Sasanians, whom he portrays as the paragons of kingly virtues. The Taj’s illustration of the grandiose ceremonial and codes of conduct at the Sasanian court is both descriptive and prescriptive. It details how the Sasanians meticulously preserved the king’s majesty by venerating his royal effects, particularly his throne and crown, and by respecting his place at court. The triumphal style of the royal palace, replete with magnificent domes, sumptuous gardens, and an intricate network of arcades, was intended to instill the visitor with a sense of awe. Access to the throne room was determined by a chamberlain and all the retainers, in the presence of the king, were expected to act according to a determined set of protocols: speak only when addressed, do not interrupt the sovereign, and retire only when excused. Furthermore, the king himself was separated by a curtain, and the proximity of his retainers to him was determined by their rank. (Pellat, Le livre)

The Shu’ubis believed that the Sasanians’ monarchial traditions were representative of their cultural refinement. Indeed, with the urbanization of Islamic society, Muslim aristocrats increasingly came to regard Persian modes of art, architecture, industries, cuisine, and literature—especially poetry—as the definitive expressions of their sophisticated society. For the Shu’ubis, poetry functioned as the primary vehicle to articulate their admiration of Persian refinement. This is an interesting development, since the Arabs could boast of a rich heritage in this art. However, traditional Arabic poetry “was the product of a desert tribal society with its own ethos and values; it was created to celebrate these values, and by a ritualistic catharsis to enable its hearers to face issues of life and death in a usually harsh environment.” (Badawi, p. 147) During the ‘Abbasid period, then, many poets, far removed from desert life, came to regard the traditional style as anachronistic. In this context, Persophile poets such as Bashshar ibn Burd and Abu Nuwas abandoned the passé themes of desert campsites and blood feuds, in favor of a new style of poetry (badi‘) which was based on that of the ancient Persians and whose genres, including love, wine, and the hunt, were much more representative of their genteel lifestyle. Poets of this new style conjured themes of bacchanalian merriment, leisurely pursuits, and urbane tastes. A descriptive example can be seen below, where Abu Nuwas, combining illustrations of drinking, the hunt, and royalty, recites a verse in praise of the culture of old Persia:

Wine is passed round among us in a silver jug, adorned by a Persian craftsman with a variety of designs. Chosroes [the title of the Sasanian sovereign] on its base, and round its side oryxes which horsemen hunt with bows. Wine’s place is where tunics are buttoned; water’s place is where the Persian cap (qalansuwa) is worn. (Harb, p. 228)

Yet, the spirit of the Shu’ubiyya can most clearly be seen through its satire against Arab culture. The Shu’ubi polemicists lampooned the Arabs as uncouth heathens of the desert, lacking the imperial pedigree and level of cultural advancement that the Persians possessed. One Shu’ubi thinker, for example, proclaimed that the Arabs “are predatory wolves and frightened beasts which devour each other” (Rabbih, vol. 3, p. 393), while another, ridiculing the abject poverty and gross eating habits of the Bedouin, accused them of eating rats, lizards, and snakes, and running about together naked. (al-Tawhidi, p. 49) In this context, it was commonplace for the Shu’ubis to highlight ignominious pagan Arab customs from the Jahiliyya, such as the Arabs’ practices of kidnapping women during raids to be their wives,
ritual oath by fire (al-hula), and female infanticide. Regarding the last, the early Shu‘ubi poet, Ismail ibn Yasar pokes fun at his Arab patron:

How were we [the Persians] in the long stretch of history?
After all, we raised our daughters while you buried yours alive in the ground!

(al-Isfahani, vol. 4, p. 538)

The Shu‘ubis further ridiculed what they regarded as the coarseness of the Arabs’ speech. In contrast to the beautiful Persian dialects, the Arabs, they claim, had thick voices because they talked with camels, so that if they spoke in public to an assembly, the listeners might as well be deaf. (al-Jahiz, al-Bayan, vol. 3, p. 14) On a related issue, one of the most conspicuous cases of the Shu‘ubis’ derision of the Arabs can be seen with their mocking of the commonplace custom of Arab orators to shake a stick for emphasis, or to lean on a bow or spear during public addresses. They argued that these were tactics whose purpose was to distract the listeners from the empty content of the speakers’ words. They further disparagingly asserted that those who employed staffs when speaking displayed “the characteristics of camel drivers, the roughness of the Arabs, and the haughtiness of the Bedouin.” (Ibid, p. 12)

The Shu‘ubis’ polemics against the Arabs most often took the form of a contrast in which they juxtaposed positive portrayals of the Persians’ monarchical splendor and sophistication against derogatory stereotypical images of the Bedouin. This can particularly be seen with their ridicule of the Arabs’ dress and weaponry. The Shu‘ubis contrasted images of the Arabs’ tattered clothing, such as their coarse woolen cloaks, worn sandals, and turbans, with illustrations of Persian nobles wearing their finest clothing (zay), which included silk embroidered robes and soft leather shoes. The Shu‘ubis similarly mocked the Arabs’ primitive weaponry and fighting tactics. They contrasted the sophisticated armor, weaponry, and siege implements of the Sasanians, along with their sophisticated war strategies, with the Arabs, whom they satirized as fighting with sticks and stones, and being afraid to fight at night. Below, al-Jahiz mimics a Shu‘ubi making this accusation in a belabored diatribe against the Arabs:

You used to ride your horses into battle without saddles. If they did have saddles, then they were made of skins and did not have stirrups ...
You never used to fight at night, so you knew nothing of night raids nor of ambushes ... You knew nothing about the front guard, nor the rear guard, and you knew nothing about implements for war, such as the ballista, catapult, and siege engine. Nor did you know anything about trenches, spikes, zippers, trousers, sword hilts, brass drums, banners, armor, chain mail, bells, whips, crossbows, nor about hurling Greek fire. (Ibid, pp. 16-18)

This contradistinctive imagery comes together vividly in the Shu‘ubis’ boasts of their nasab, or “inherited glory” from the Persian kings. In this vein, Bashshar ibn Burd boasts of his Persian ancestry:

Is there a messenger who will carry my message to all the Arabs ... To say that I am a man of lineage, lofty and above any other one of lineage:
The grandfather in whom I glory was Chosroes and Sasan [the legendary ancestor of the Sasanian dynasty] was my father ... How many, how many a forbear I have whose brow was encircled by his diadem,
Haughty in his court, to whom knees were bowed,
Coming in the morning to his court, clothed in blazing gems,
Splendidly attired in ermine, standing with curtains,
The servitors hastening to him with golden vessels: He was not given to drink the thin milk of goatskins, or to sup it in leather vessels; Never did my father sing a camel-song, trailing behind a scabby camel Nor did we roast a skunk with its quivering tail, Nor did I dig for and eat a lizard of the stony ground . . . We are kings, who have always been so through long ages past. (Schoeler, pp. 279-280)

A similar specimen of this genre can be seen with the following oft-cited verse attributed to the founder of an independent dynasty in eastern Iran (but composed by one of his court poets), which sought to wrest itself from the political yoke of the ‘Abbasids:

I am the son of the noble descendents of Jam [a legendary Persian king] and the inheritance of the kings of Persia has fallen to my lot. I am reviving their glory which has been lost and effaced by the length of time . . . Before the eyes of the world, I am seeking revenge for them - though men have closed their eyes and neglected the rights of those kings, yet I do not do so . . . With me is the banner of Kabi [the ancient standard of pre-Islamic Persia], through which I hope to rule the nations.

Say then to all the sons of Hashim: [by which he means the ‘Abbasid Caliphs] ‘Abdicate quickly before you have reason to be sorry: We have conquered you by force, by the thrusts of our spears and the blows of our sharp swords. Our fathers gave you your kingdom, but you showed no gratitude for our benefactions. Return to your country in the Hijaz, to eat lizards and to graze your sheep; For I shall mount on the throne of the kings, by the help of the edge of my sword and the point of my pen!’ (Stern, pp. 541-542).

The anti-Shu‘ubis countered the Shu‘ubi lampoons with a comprehensive defense of Arabic culture, in which they highlighted the Arabs’ “Bedouin virtues.” Whereas the Shu‘ubis stereotyped the Arabs as uncivilized desert dwellers, the anti-Shu‘ubis praised the stalwartness of the contemporary Bedouin, whom they viewed as the inheritors of the proud cultural tradition of the nomadic Arabs of the Jahiliyya. They argued that the desert climate and nomadic lifestyle which made the Arabs poor also made them hearty, virtuous, and generous. Ibn Qutaiba, for example, claimed that the harsh desert living “accustomed the Arabs to distress and made them forbearing and courageous.” (Ibn Qutaiba, “Kitab al-’Arab”, p. 282) Likewise, the historian al-Mas‘udi maintained that the Arabs’ decision to live in the desert was their conscious choice, as they believed that this environment, far removed from the polluting, deleterious effects of the city made them sound of body and mind. He writes,

The Arabs prefer the Bedouin lifestyle and residing in the desert. Therefore, amongst all of the peoples, they are the strongest of resolve and forbearance, as well as the healthiest and most powerful of body. They are also the most protective of their honor, the most sagacious, and more excellent than
any of their neighbors. This is all a result of what the purity of the climate and vast open spaces of the desert has imparted upon them. (al-Mas’udi, vol. 2, p. 336)

Furthermore, much as the Shu’ubis believed that royal effects were imbued with the Persian kings’ majesty, the anti-Shu’ubis viewed the physical expressions of the Bedouins’ lifestyle, such as their tattered clothing, ramshackle weaponry, livestock, and simple sustenance, as marks of honor and indicators of the Arabs’ virility. Since this idea was most often conveyed through polemical contrasts with the Persians’ luxuries, this article will examine this issue in the section on anti-Shu’ubi critiques of the Persians.

The Bedouin have always been recognized for their ethos of generosity. Indeed, the Prophet Muhammad himself is reported to have pronounced, “When you are in need of something, ask the Arabs. For they are endowed with three characteristics: the nobility of their personal merit, mutual shame, and the beneficence of god.” (Rabbih, vol. 3, p. 318) The anti-Shu’ubis considered the Arabs’ generosity to be especially merit-worthy considering their hardened conditions. Because of their straightened circumstances, argues Ibn Qutaiba, “The necessity for one to preserve his neighbors and to protect their property superseded any obligations he might have to his close friends. One of them would give generously to his neighbor and safeguard his money with his own money.” Hospitality was also considered by the Arabs to be a supreme virtue. The Arabs shunned hoarding and, when one of them acquired wealth, it was expected that he would distribute it among members of his tribe. On this, Ibn Qutaiba remarks that “The Arabs are totally hospitable in every way. They prefer being generous over receiving generosity, are the best in gift giving, and strive to be without property.” (Ibn Qutaiba, “Kitab al-‘Arab”, pp. 282-283)

Lastly, the anti-Shu’ubis refuted Shu’ubi arguments that the Arabs were uncivilized by demonstrating that, despite their harsh lifestyle, the Arabs possessed a degree of cultivation on par with the other civilizations, as witnessed through the beauty of the Arabic language, as well as through their skill in poetry and oratory. The supporters of Arab culture believed that these qualities were proof of the Arabs’ eloquence (balagha). For example, one admirer of the Arabic language writes, We have not found among the other languages anything that can compare to the purity of Arabic. By this I mean the joy in its words, the melody which we find in its letters, the intervals which clarify their emissions, the equilibrium which we experience in its patterns, and the balance which is maintained in its structures. (al-Tawhidi, p. 48)

Similarly, Al-Jahiz claims that Arabic poetry is rhythmic and harmonious, unlike Persian poetry whose tempo is static and dull. (al-Jahiz, al-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 385) Al-Jahiz also asserts that whereas Persian poets and public speakers are obliged to consult established studies of rhetoric and oratory, for Arab poets, the words come spontaneously, as if they are inspired. He explains that this is because the Arabs’ precarious life on the move has endowed them with the ability to improvise. It is thus not necessary for them to ponder long or to seek aid from manuals. (Ibid, vol. 3, p. 28) The anti-Shu’ubi position on the eloquence of the Arabs may be summed up by al-Jahiz’s declaration:

If you were to take the hand of a Shu’ubi and bring him to the lands of the pure Bedouin Arabs - those treasure mines of complete eloquence - and brought him to a Bedouin poet of great genius, or an eloquent orator, then he would know what you said was the truth, and he would witness the proof with his own eyes. (Ibid, p. 29)
The anti-Shu’ubis further defended the Arab orators’ custom of employing a stick for emphasis, a practice which was a paramount focus of Shu’ubi derision. Al-Jahiz, for instance, cites Solomon’s wielding of a stick during public exhortations, as well as the Prophet’s use of a cane during sermons. From this, he argues that the Shu’ubis’ defamation of the stick may be construed as an attack against the Prophet himself. (Ibid, p. 89)

Along with their praise of Arab culture, the anti-Shu’ubis stigmatized those features of Persian society which the Shu’ubis so effusively praised. First, they vigorously criticized the Persians’ legacy of absolute monarchy and social hierarchy, since both were at variance with Islamic precepts of equity. Unlike the free-spirited Arabs who eschewed state control and hierarchies, the Sasanians, the anti-Shu’ubis argued, oppressed their citizens, not allowing the pious and the meritorious to advance ahead of members of the aristocracy. Al-Amiri, for example, a strident critic of the Sasanians, believed that one’s piety should supersede one’s social rank, and severely criticized the Sasanians’ social classification. He writes,

The Iranian monarchs had declared themselves masters and everyone else their vassals. Forced to remain in one station, intelligent, freeborn men had been prevented from acquiring praiseworthy attributes and from striving for the dignity and prominence to which they naturally aspired. (Marlow, p. 89)

The anti-Shu’ubis also went on the attack against what they regarded as the pompous displays of royalty of the ancient Persians as well as their material decadence. Whereas the Shu’ubis highlighted themes of monarchy such as ceremonial and royal insignia as marks of honor and proofs of majesty, the anti-Shu’ubis viewed them as representative of their oppression. Al-Jahiz, for example, scolds the Sasanians for their reliance upon royal paraphernalia such as crowns, cushions, and thrones in order to intimidate their subjects. He then asks his reader,

Shouldn’t kings instill fear in the hearts of the recalcitrant and command the respect of the commoners by virtue of the greatness of their own rule and by the power of fate, or should they simply use effects? Is the only remedy to cause fear amongst them? . . . Isn’t it rather dignity and affection which benefits the people and brings about obedience amongst them? (al-Jahiz, al-Bayan, vol. 3, p. 115)

The anti-Shu’ubis, moreover argued that the material simplicity of the Arabs was not due to a lack of sophistication on their part, but rather a deliberate effort to avoid what they feared were the effeminizing effects of the Persians’ fineries. In this context, the anti-Shu’ubis disparagingly contrasted the Persians’ items of luxury which they considered excessive, particularly their elaborate clothing, royal paraphernalia, advanced weaponry, and decadent cuisine, against the simple objects of Bedouin life. On this, al-Jahiz praised the Jahiliyya Arabs for their preference for sandals over soft leather shoes that the Egyptian and Persian nobility wore. (Ibid, p. 106) He also lamented the ‘Abbasids taking up the wearing of extravagant Persian headgear, while the Prophet achieved a dignified appearance by simply veiling his face with his turban. (Ibid, pp. 117-118) For his part, Ibn Qutaiba emphasized that whereas the Sasanians’ courage came from their superior weaponry and military organization, the Arabs were more intrepid because they went into battle without these things. He proclaims,

The Persians boast of their asawira (noble warrior class) and their marzbans (military commanders), who I attest certainly possessed courage and bravery. Yet, the difference between the Arabs and them is that the Persians
possessed more money, were better equipped and had more solid fortifications. They also possessed a more organized society, fighting under the leadership of a king . . . The Arabs however, during that time were separated and unorganized . . . Most of them fought on foot with a blunt sword and bendable spear. Their horsemen fought on Arabian horses with shabby saddles without stirrups, or with not saddles at all . . . Yet, the Arabs shuddered from flight and prided themselves on their forbearance. (Ibn Qutaiba, “Kitab al-‘Arab”, p. 289)

With regards to this anti-Shu‘ubi notion of the superiority of the Arabs’ material simplicity over the Persians’ opulence, Umar, the early caliph (634-644) and follower of the Prophet, served as the paradigm. Al-Jahiz repeatedly quotes Umar’s proclamation that, “the Arabs’ turbans are their crowns.” (al-Jahiz, al-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 88; vol. 3, p. 100) Furthermore, a common theme for both al-Jahiz and Ibn Qutaiba is Umar’s ban on Persian clothing and gear, particularly saddles and stirrups. Al-Jahiz mentions that when Umar noticed some of his fellow Muslims acquiring some Persian accoutrements, he scolded them, saying, “You are living dirtily. Cut your stirrups so that you have to spring from your saddles. Walk barefoot or wear sandals. Then you will know what discomfort is!” (Ibid, vol. 3, p. 24) Similarly, Ibn Qutaiba alludes to Umar’s calling on his fellow Muslims to wear loin cloths and sandals, to throw away their soft leather shoes and not don the decadent garments and silk of the ‘ajam, since the Prophet had commanded these things. (Ibn Qutaiba, ‘Uyun, vol. 1, p. 132) Another interesting example can be seen with the famed anti-Shu‘ubi philologist al-Asma‘i, who rebuked a man for consuming a rich meat relish, calling it, “food for the Persians, the diet of Chosroes.” He then complained, “This was not the diet on which the family of [Umar] al-Khattab subsisted. Ibn al-Khattab used to flog for such a thing as this.” (al-Jahiz, al-Bukhala’, p. 180)

Finally, the anti-Shu‘ubis argued that, unlike the Arabs who were known for their hospitality, the Persians, despite their predilection towards splendor, were actually quite miserly. The particular targets for this criticism were the kuttab, and it is they, against whom al-Jahiz takes aim in his Kitab al-Bukhala’ (The Book of Misers). This work contains entertaining, disparaging anecdotes of the stinginess of the Persian bureaucrats of his day. Al-Jahiz writes of one man, for example, who wrests a coin from a beggar’s hand when realizing that it was the wrong denomination. (Ibid, p. 36) Al-Jahiz regales his reader with dinner table tales which serve as evidence of the Persians’ avarice. He lists various stratagems that impolite Persian guests employ to hoard food for themselves, such as double-dipping or snatching morsels from the hands of others at the table. Such slanderous exposes of the alleged mealtime miserliness of the Persians are also commonplace for Ibn Qutaiba, who recounts a story of how one of the leading Persian bureaucrats, Sahl ibn Harun, scolded a servant for throwing away a perfectly fine chicken head while preparing soup. (Ibn Qutaiba, ‘Uyun, vol. 1, p. 49) One of the most egregious cases of food economy, however, can be seen with one man who al-Jahiz claims advised his children to do the following: Don’t throw away the stones of dry and juicy dates, but accustom yourselves to swallowing them and get your throats to let them go down. Date-stones consolidate the fat on the belly and it keeps the kidneys warm with this fat. Take as an example of this the bellies of milchgoats and all animals foddered on date-stones. (Ibid, p. 87)

**Conclusion**

The Shu‘ubiyya debate drew to a close in the tenth century. Yet the language and stereotypes of Shu‘ubiyya have
continued. We read of a similar type of cultural controversy occurring between Slavs and Arabs in eleventh-century Muslim Spain. (Monroe; Larsson) More recently, twentieth-century Arab nationalists have termed minority groups as well as communists and western apologists ‘Shu’ubis’ who wish to undermine Arab solidarity. Saddam Hussein, for example, referred to the Shiites of Iraq as Shu’ubis because of their supposed connection and solidarity with Iran. (Jawad, p. 53) The frequent occurrence of this term in describing ethnic conflict among Muslims has led some scholars, Arab and non-Arab alike, to see the Shu’ubiyya as a perennial Islamic phenomenon, occurring over time between those purporting to be upholding the Arab-Islamic tradition and those who wish to corrupt Islam with outside beliefs. (Duri; Hanna and Gardner, pp. 335-352) I would argue, however, that such a viewpoint essentializes the issue, and that all cases of ethnic conflict among Muslims must be viewed in their own social and historical context. The historical Shu’ubiyya debate, for example, revolved around a newly-formed cosmopolitan society that sought cultural direction, whereas the term today is used primarily by secular Arab leaders in order to legitimize an ethnically-based political ideology. Thus, the modern use of the term ‘Shu’ubiyya’ as well as the resuscitation of age-old stereotypes are merely anachronistic.

In conclusion, this discussion offers insight for how we view Muslim peoples. Modern media and literature tend to lump all Muslims into the broad, static category of Islam, as if a religion in and of itself may function as a solitary actor. Though we may speak of Muslims as a group of people sharing a common set of beliefs and religious identity, it is dangerous to reduce an entire people to a term, since it runs the risk of neglecting the existence of cultural diversity and conflict over space and time within that group. The Shu’ubiyya controversy indicates to us the heritage of cultural, intellectual, and ethnic pluralism for those people of the world calling themselves Muslims.

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Notes

1 Shu’ubiyya translates literally as “pertaining to the people.” It is derived from the Qur’anic proof text (13:49), which reads, “Oh men, We have created you from a male and a female, and We have made you into groups (shu’ub) and tribes (qaba’il) that you may come to know one another.” (Mottahedeh, p. 164)

2 A regnal title meaning “successor to the Prophet.”
Pellat has demonstrated that this work has been falsely attributed to al-Jahiz. (Pellat, *Le livre*, pp. 11-17)

The *Jahiliyya*, which means the “age of ignorance,” refers to Arabian society in the immediate centuries prior to the coming of Islam.

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Investigating the “Immigrant Terrorist” as a National Security Concern

By Alexander Spencer

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, have made the issue of immigration into a concern for national and international security. Traditionally, security concerns around migration have revolved around social or economic security. This has involved the threat of higher crime rates, the threat to the native language and culture, as well as the threat of citizens losing their employment due to cheaper immigrant labor, rather than actual physical security. However, this paper hopes to examine the specific link between immigration and terrorism after the terrorist attacks of September 11 (hereafter 9/11). In response to the attacks by 19 foreign terrorists, governments have introduced tighter immigration controls and restrictions as part of their counter-terrorism offensive. It has become widely accepted by politicians to view immigration as an important tool in the so-called “war on terrorism.” They have articulated a link between immigration and international terrorism that has found its way into government policies. Are immigrants really potential terrorists? Is this linkage between immigration and terrorism a valid assessment of the current situation? Are counter-terrorist measures involving anti-immigration policies a good or effective way of fighting international terrorism? This essay will critically examine the idea of an “immigrant terrorist” and reflect on the usefulness of linking terrorism with immigration. It will also briefly indicate a possible explanation for why this connection has become so widely accepted by indicating the socially-constructed nature of immigrants and terrorists.

In pursuit of this goal, the paper will first establish some of the instances when governments used immigration policies as a tool in the war on terrorism. Section two will highlight some of the literature behind the idea of linking terrorism to immigration, followed by a brief look at other instances in history when immigrants were targeted in response to a national security threat. The fourth section will assess the validity of this nexus and evaluate the effectiveness of such measures, as well as put forward the argument that there are clear empirical and rational reasons for questioning the link between immigration and terrorism. The fifth section will highlight the socially-constructed nature of the immigrant as a potential terrorist, and the final part will summarize the main findings and draw tentative conclusions, as well as briefly reflect on the problem of evaluating the effectiveness of counter-terrorism policies in general.

Linking Immigration to Terrorism: Government Responses

Since 1970, the number of international migrants has more than doubled, from 82 million to around 175 million in 2000. This figure represents around 2.9 percent of the world’s population, which means that one in every 35 persons was an international immigrant in 2000. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of migrants in the world increased by 14 percent. This signifies a rise of 21 million in ten years. In 2000, 63 percent of the world’s migrants lived in developed countries, with most migrants residing in Europe and making up 7.7 percent (56.1 million) of the European population. (United Nations 2002) Out of the total number of migrants worldwide, refugees made up around 9.5 percent or 16.6 million in 2000. (United Nations 2003) According to the International Organization for Migration (2005), there were an
estimated 185 to 192 million migrants around the world in 2005.

Terrorism is no new phenomenon. One of the earliest groups cited are the Sicarii, who were a Zealot religious sect fighting against the Roman rule in Palestine during AD 66-73. During the Middle Ages, a religious sect of Ismailis and Nizari called “Assassins” struggled against the empire of Saladin, and in the sixteenth century small “terrorist” groups in Albania and other regions resisted the armies of the Ottoman Empire. The term terror was first used in 1795 as a policy to protect the fragile government of the French Republic from counter-revolutionaries, and from the mid-nineteenth century to the First World War revolutionaries and anarchists used bombings and assassinations as frequent weapons in their struggle against autocracy. (see Sinclair 2003; Carr 2002; Anderson/Sloan 2003) After the Second World War, terrorism became an important part of the anti-colonial struggles, and many scholars have argued that the period between the late 1960s and the late 1980s is marked by traditional or so-called “old terrorism,” which can be roughly divided into different types such as left- and right-wing as well as ethno-national separatist terrorism. (Guelke 1998, Waldmann 1998) Since the mid-1990s and the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York in 1993 and the sarin gas attack in the Tokyo underground by the Aum Shinrikyo cult in 1995, some authors argue that we are facing a “new terrorism” with new characteristics. (Simon/Benjamin 2000) Although the newness of terrorism today can be questioned (Copeland 2001; Spencer 2006), we are being told by many of the policymakers and leading terrorism experts that the new terrorism requires totally new counter-terrorism measures to deal with it effectively. (Laqueur 1999; Lesser et al. 1999; Aubrey 2004) “Nothing less than a sea-change in our thinking about terrorism and the policies required to counter it will be required.” (Hoffman 1998: 212)

September 11, 2001, was a big shock. Around the world, governments scrambled to implement a vast range of different counter-terrorist policies to prevent such an attack on their country and to reassure their population that they were safe. As part of this wave of counter-terrorism measures, the idea that restricting immigration enhances national security has been used by different governments over the last couple of years to justify a vast range of immigration control policies. (Martin/Martin 2004)

Leading this move to include immigration policies as part of the war on terrorism is the United States. Soon after 9/11, in October 2001, President Bush issued the Homeland Security Presidential Directive 2 entitled “Combating Terrorism Through Immigration Policies,” which explicitly links immigration and terrorism and outlines the plan to fight terrorism with immigration measures. (Bush 2001) In March 2003, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) was incorporated into the massive new Department of Homeland Security (DHS), formally making immigration a national security concern and bureaucratically linking the two matters. (Kerwin 2005)

As a direct response to the 9/11 attacks, although no exact numbers are available, the INS arrested and detained more than one thousand mostly Arab and Muslim foreigners for immigration law violations in an effort to uncover possible terrorists among them. They were rounded up following an administrative order by Attorney General John Ashcroft and kept detained for a period ranging from a couple of days to several months. They were not allowed to communicate with the outside world, had no direct access to lawyers, and their relatives were not given information about their situation. Many, since then, have been deported.
on immigration violation charges.
(Carey 2005)

Apart from this immediate backlash against immigrants and foreigners, the United States implemented a number of immigration-related measures. For example, the United States has increased the security facilities and personnel on all its borders and revised measures for the better vetting of immigrants and other individuals applying for entry visas, particularly students and entrants under the U.S. refugee program. In order to track people coming to the United States, certain foreigners are required to register with authorities upon entering and leaving the country. For example the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) requires foreign nationals in certain age groups and genders from 25 predominantly Muslim states such as Iran, Morocco, Pakistan, and Indonesia to register with the INS. Personal interviews at an INS office and notification to the INS of any change of address, employment, or school for certain immigrants and foreigners have also been introduced. The non-immigrants who must follow these special procedures also have to use specially-designated ports when they leave the country and report personally to an INS officer at the border on the day of their departure. (Lebowitz/Podheiser 2002)

Apart from these policies and the immediate targeting of immigrants in a massive preventive detention campaign following 9/11, the U.S. Congress has passed new legislation that subjects non-citizens to a number of other wide-ranging discriminatory measures. The most comprehensive set of new laws against terrorism targeting immigrants can be found in the USA PATRIOT Act in Sections 411 to 418 entitled “Enhanced Immigration Provisions.” The USA PATRIOT Act gives the attorney general exceptional power to detain non-citizens without a hearing and without having to clearly show that they pose a threat to national security or a flight risk. He only needs to declare that he has “reasonable grounds to believe” that the non-citizen or foreigner is involved in some form of terrorism to justify the potentially indefinite “mandatory detention.” Furthermore, the act allows foreigners to be deported for associational activity with an organization deemed to have links to terrorism, whether or not there is any connection between the individual’s actions and any kind or threat of violence, let alone terrorism. Part of the U.S. policy has also involved law enforcement officials using ethnic profiling in the hunt for terrorists, treating immigrants as suspicious based on little more than their national origin or Arab ethnicity. (Cole 2002a)

The United States is not alone in the move to link immigration to terrorism. Tightening immigration, asylum, and border controls have been a central aspect of British counter-terrorism since 9/11. Politicians in both the Labour and Conservative Parties have continuously talked about terrorism in connection to immigration. A study by Jef Huysmans (2005) has examined parliamentary debates in the United Kingdom since 9/11, which have explicitly made the connection between terrorism and immigration, asylum, or refuge. His findings show “that asylum especially and migration more generally was an important element in the framing of the fight against terrorism.” (Huysmans 2005: 2) Most dominantly, this connection was made with the introduction of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 (ATCSA) in December 2001, which enhances and partly substitutes the Terrorism Act of 2000. The ATCSA explicitly deals with immigration matters and links them to terrorism in Part IV of the act, fittingly entitled “Immigration and Asylum.” There are three main issues in this section. For one, it deals with the retention of fingerprint data in asylum and immigration cases, as well as “an attempt to short-circuit any claim to asylum by making the tribunal focus upon the Secretary of State’s reasons
for denying the claim.” (Walker 2003: 24) The most controversial, however, are the provisions in ATCSA which enable the U.K. Home Secretary to order the detention without trial of foreign individuals suspected of planning or intending terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom or internationally. (Payne 2002). These provisions led to accusations that the British government was holding individuals unlawfully on the ground of nationality and therefore breaking Article 5 of the European Convention of Human Rights on the grounds of national security. (Cornish 2005)

Although a detailed investigation of the nexus between terrorism and immigration in national political debates in European Union member states is clearly needed, it is clear from a quick scan of the member reports to the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee that many states in Europe have also reacted to terrorism with immigration-related counter-measures. For example, France has established joint border patrols with Italy, the United Kingdom, and Belgium to prevent migrants with a valid visa in one country from moving to another. (Gregory 2003; Shapiro/Bénédicte 2003) France has also increased the funding to the border police to control illegal immigration. Germany has also increased the resources available for its border guards and focused its measures on preventing entry to illegal immigrants. In addition, more information, including biometric data, will be collected from visa applicants falling into certain categories. (Hirschmann/Leggemann 2003; Glaessner 2003) Spain has also implemented a number of immigration measures in the name of fighting terrorism. It has increased its border-security and surveillance along its south coast and has tightened already-strict domestic immigration law. (Alonso/Reinares 2005; Brotóns/Espósito 2002)

**Linking Immigration to Terrorism: Scholars and Think Tanks**

Apart from governments, some scholars and think tanks, especially in the United States, have argued that immigration and terrorism are linked and that immigration policies are essential in the war on terror. “[T]here is probably no more important defensive weapon in our arsenal than a well-functioning immigration system.” (Krikorian 2002) One leading terrorism expert on al-Qa‘ida, Rohan Gunaratna, has highlighted that “[a]ll major terrorist attacks conducted in the last decade in North America and Western Europe, with the exception of Oklahoma City, have utilized migrants.” (cited in Leiken 2004: 6)

The fact that the nineteen 9/11 hijackers were of Arab origin and nationals of countries outside the Western cultural hemisphere, has created a link between foreignness and threat. It is possible to argue that it is totally rational to treat Arab and Muslim foreigners differently now, in light of the fact that al-Qa‘ida, the group presumably behind the attacks of 9/11, is made up almost entirely of Muslims of Arab origin and has threatened to continue attacks against Western civilians. We were attacked by foreigners, and therefore it makes sense and is justified to focus our efforts in combating terrorism with immigration policies which can stop threatening foreigners from entering our countries. (Margulies 2002)

There are a number of studies that aim to highlight this link between immigration and terrorism and argue that immigration restrictions are essential in the fight against terrorism. For example, Steven Camarota (2002) emphasizes the link between immigration and terrorism by examining the immigrant background of 48 foreign-born terrorists who committed crimes in the United States between 1993 and 2001. He examines how these terrorists entered the United
States and concludes that they used a large number of different ways, including temporary tourist, student, or business visas, crossing the border illegally, and filing asylum applications. Furthermore, he notes that 36 percent of the examined foreign-born terrorists were found to be legal permanent residents or naturalized U.S. citizens. As a result, he calls for tighter controls and the reduction of all kinds of immigration and points out that a country’s immigration system is one of the most important tools in the war on terrorism “because the current terrorist threat comes almost exclusively from individuals who arrive from abroad.” (Camarota 2002: 5).

Similarly, Janice L. Kephart (2005) wants to show that “[t]errorists have used just about every means possible to enter the United States, from acquiring legitimate passports and visas for entry, to stowing away illegally on an Algerian gas tanker.” (Kephart 2005: 7) The study examines 94 individuals considered to be linked to terrorist organizations. In this case, to make the link between immigration and terrorism even more visible, only terrorists linked to immigration violation are included. She goes so far as to include only the six of the nineteen 9/11 hijackers who actually seem to have violated any immigration rules. Apart from linking immigration to terrorism, she also focuses specifically on political asylum seekers and refugees as potential terrorists. Kephart argues that claims for political asylum are a good way for terrorists to enter a country, by pointing out that it keeps them from being deported quickly and gives them the opportunity to move around the country. Furthermore, the fact that many asylum decisions are not based on hard evidence but on the word of the applicant makes fraudulent claims easier for terrorists. (Kephart 2005: 26)

In a more detailed study of 212 known terrorists arrested or killed in North America and Europe, Robert S. Leiken (2004) highlights that all were visitors or first- or second-generation immigrants. He believes that terrorists exploit generous Western immigration policies to infiltrate the country in order to recruit new members, create facilities to aid their cause, and form sleeper cells ready for new terrorist attacks. He concludes that global terrorism and immigration are clearly linked, as nearly all terrorists in the West have been immigrants. (Leiken 2004: 24) More recently, Robert Leiken and Steven Brooke (2006) have reinforced this claim in one of the leading terrorism research journals by examining 373 terrorists and emphasizing “a close link between immigration and terrorism.”

Along similar lines, Michelle Malkin (2002) claims weak immigration policies are responsible for the terrorist attacks in the United States. In her best-selling book Invasion, she blames inadequacies and failures of the U.S. immigration service for letting terrorists and other threats into the country. In a very aggressive, sensationalist, and extremely nationalist style she argues that the U.S. government should not allow any travelers or immigrants into the United States from regions where al-Qa’ida has a foothold, and should introduce visa requirements for all countries in the world. Furthermore, she calls for a crackdown on all illegal immigrants and suggests that they should be placed in detention facilities and deported as quickly as possible. To name but a few of the extreme measures proposed, Malkin suggests that the United States should secure its ports of entry and militarize the borders with Mexico and Canada, as well as not accept any new asylum seekers. (Malkin 2002: 229-238)

The History of Immigrants as National Security Risks

The 19 foreign terrorists involved in the 9/11 attacks seem to have succeeded in turning immigration into a national security issue. Traditionally, immigrants are seen from an economic point of view and in some cases
considered a problem of social security, as a threat to the jobs of the native population, a threat to the native culture and language, and a source of crime. (Tirman 2004a) Nevertheless, most governments have had moments when they have feared immigrants and blamed specific groups who were seen as a threat to the country’s physical security. For example, the immigrant German population in the United States and the United Kingdom during the First World War faced a number of discriminatory measures. Thousands of German and Austrian immigrants were suspected of subversion and arrested, and German-Americans stood a chance of losing their jobs and businesses as well as being assaulted in the street in a wave of anti-German hysteria. (Gerstle 2004) Another example is the internment of Japanese-Americans and immigrants during the Second World War. The shock of Pearl Harbor, in some aspects very similar to the shock of 9/11, led to the incarceration of thousands of Japanese immigrants and native-born citizens in guarded camps surrounded by barbed wire, as it was feared that they could sabotage military installations and infrastructure and prepare for a Japanese invasion. (Cole 2003)

The brief historical excursion into the plight of immigrants in situations of national security highlights the fact that immigrants are easily targeted. As David Cole (2002b) points out, “[s]acrificing foreign citizens’ liberties is always tempting as a political matter. It allows those of us who are citizens to trade someone else’s liberties for our security.” The supporters of the use of immigration policies in fighting terrorism argue that it makes sense to target immigrants and foreigners as all hijackers and terrorists were of Arab origin. It is therefore a rational way of reducing the terrorist threat. (Carey 2002)

Nevertheless, there are serious failures in many of the arguments for linking terrorism to immigration, and it is rationally possible to argue against such measures. The kind of literature by Leiken and Malkin, mentioned above, is egregiously flawed. For example, their selection of the dependent and independent variables in their research is academically questionable, if not outright wrong. They do not examine immigration as a whole, but select only cases where terrorists abused immigration to argue that immigration should be limited. Selecting only positive independent variables (immigrants with connections to terrorism) to show how immigrants or weak immigration policy is responsible for terrorism cannot be classed as susceptible to such an ideology, generated suspicion in the general public. As a measure to prevent further attacks, government authorities arrested 750 immigrant members of these communities in November 1919 and deported around 250. This was followed by a second wave of arrests in January 1920 involving the apprehension of more than 4,000 suspects, mostly immigrant radicals, and the deportation of just under 600. (Murray 1955:79-82)
serious scientific research. (Van Evera 1997) This kind of positive case selection cannot be called an academic investigation but must be regarded as a politically-motivated front for arguing against immigration, using the currently hot topic of terrorism to hide alternative ulterior motives. By securitizing the subject of immigration and making it an issue of national security, it becomes extremely difficult to make any objection to the new immigration policies, as doing so, as some may argue, would threaten the safety of the country and its people. (Freitas 2002)

Apart from this flaw in the research in some of the literature by certain scholars and think tanks, there are also a number of arguments why immigration policies are rationally a bad way of fighting international terrorism. For example, Donald Kerwin (2005) points out that introducing restrictive immigration policies in the fight against terrorism is contrary to the economic liberal idea of the open and free market. The prosperity and power of the West relies on easy and fast access to the global economic market and labor, and therefore “[i]t is self-defeating to embrace security measures that end up isolating it from those networks.” (Kerwin 2005: 750) As a result of tighter immigration policies, and especially visa restrictions, the United States will probably witness slower economic growth in a couple of years. Kenneth Rogoff (2004) highlights the extent to which foreign scientists, engineers, and businessmen contribute to the growth of the U.S. economy and emphasizes that over 2.5 million highly-qualified foreigners, holding leading positions in science and industry, work in the United States. More than 30 percent of all PhDs awarded in science and mathematics and half of all graduates in engineering have come to the United States on foreign and student visas. Not only do these students contribute $12.3 billion to the U.S. economy (Treyster 2003), but traditionally many of those who complete their studies remain in

the country and work, thereby continuously contributing to the economic growth of the U.S. “The U.S. economy grows in no small part by skimming the cream off the rest of the world’s workforce.” (Rogoff 2004: 71)

However, with visa restrictions playing a major role in the immigration policies used in the war on terrorism, many of these workers, who “serve as key transnational links for the increasingly globalized U.S. economy” (Rogoff 2004: 71), will not be able to come and stay in the United States any more. This trend is clearly visible in the statistics. The number of foreign students enrolled in U.S. education facilities declined from 586,323 in 2002-03 to 572,509 in 2003-04 and 565,039 in 2004-05. There has been a significant drop of students from Muslim countries such as Pakistan (–9.8 percent between 2002-03 and 2003-04 and –14 percent between 2003-04 and 2004-05) and Indonesia (–14.9 percent between 2002-03 and 2003-04 and –12.6 percent between 2003-04 and 2004-05). (Institute of International Education 2005)

Others focus on particular anti-terror immigration policies such as deportation. Authors such as Joan Fitzpatrick (2002: 2) believe that “[d]eporting international terrorists is a remarkably short-sighted and self-defeating policy.” It seems questionable to want to deport people who authorities suspect of having connections to terrorism rather than charge them criminally and put them in prison. If people are deported for having connections to terrorism, does this not give them the possibility of pursuing further terrorist activity abroad where the government authorities do not have the same ability to keep an eye on them? If they are truly terrorists, does deportation not give them the possibility of attacking Western targets abroad? Surely it would make more sense to let them stay in the country and keep them under surveillance. (Romero 2003: 103)

Again, different scholars question the utility of tightening border controls and
argue that it is impossible to make borders impervious to terrorists. Didier Bigo (2002: 3) believes that “[t]he idea of a Maginot line against clandestine actions, requiring total security of air space and of sea and land borders, is not only illusionary, it is also prohibitively expensive in both human and monetary terms, and these resources would be better spent on more flexible and pre-emptive approaches.” Specifically, in the case of the United Kingdom, Elspeth Guild (2003) questions the reasoning behind the government maintaining its border controls with the rest of continental Europe on the grounds of national security while not having systematic identity checks on the Irish-U.K. border. We are told that new terrorists have strong independent financial means and a well-organized network support system in place around the world. If this is the case, they will surely be able to enter the country somehow. At the same time, making entry hard for legal immigrants will undoubtedly lead to an increase in immigrants attempting to enter the country illegally. As these ways of entry become more appealing, and in some cases the only way of getting into the country, illegal smuggling will subsequently increase, which in turn also gives terrorists the chance to enter. Susan Martin and Philip Martin (2004: 336) argue that there is little reason to believe that “the smuggling and trafficking operations, which themselves show little if any regard for human life or dignity, would not move terrorists along with economic migrants if the price was right.”

Apart from these specific arguments against some immigration policies as tools in the war on terrorism, there is a larger more general argument to be made. Not one of the 9/11 hijackers was an immigrant, and all had entered the United States on temporary visas. Yet, in the post 9/11 era, the argument that lax immigration controls make the country more vulnerable to terrorism has been made by governments, scholars, and groups like the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS). These long-time opponents of immigration have attempted to turn those concerns about security into a general argument against openness to immigration.

The term “immigration” refers to two very distinct issues. On the one hand, it refers to “the action of coming to live permanently in a foreign country”; on the other it can also be used to describe “the place at an airport or country’s border where government officials check the documents of people entering that country.” (Oxford Dictionary of English 2005: 866) Permanent immigrants make up only a very small percentage of the total number of the hundreds of millions of foreigners who enter Western states every year. While concern for public safety is generally a positive thing, many of the measures implemented cast an unacceptably wide and uneven net. “The ‘terrorist’ has become the post-modern substitute for the ‘vicious class’ that nineteenth-century immigration laws constructed as a tool of immigration control.” (Aiken 2000: 55) The distinction between foreigner and immigrant has become blurred in government policies, and the dual meaning of the term “immigration” has been exploited.

For one, this is evident in some of the scholarly writing on the subject mentioned above. All of the studies use an extremely broad and in some cases incorrect definition of the term “immigration.” Most include all kinds of movements by foreigners, thereby failing to distinguish between permanent and non-permanent stay in a country. They seem to equate immigrant with foreigner. However, the central characteristic of the concept of immigration is the permanent settlement in a foreign country. Many of the studies consider people who have entered the country on temporary tourist, business, or student visas to be immigrants. The use of the term “immigration” in this way is too all-
embracing to be used as the basis for any policy recommendations. The focus has to be more specific. If all terrorists can be classed broadly as immigrants, then we can also class them as foreign, Middle Eastern, Muslim, young, male, dark skinned, or dark haired, or having two arms, two legs, and one nose and being human. All of these classifications are true but not very useful for stopping terrorism. (Taylor 2002)

This extremely broad definition of immigrant is also reflected in the policies employed by many Western governments. However, focusing on certain specific immigrant or ethnic groups is both under- and over-inclusive at the same time. For one, it is under-inclusive because there are white U.S. or European nationals who may also be terrorist threats. Treating such a large group as suspicious means that government authorities will miss genuine terrorists who do not fit the profile. (Romero 2003: 106) At the same time, it is over-inclusive because the vast majority of Arab and Muslim immigrants and visitors have no involvement in terrorism whatsoever. Singling people out for Arab and Muslim appearance alone is dangerously overreaching.

Governments have consistently argued that these sweeping measures are necessary to prevent further attacks. However, focusing on certain ethnic groups or religions will undermine the all-important legitimacy of Western governments in the fight against terror. It is in al-Qa’ida’s interest to characterize the conflict as the West against Islam or the United States and its allies against Arabs. The more we act in ways that support the image of the West versus Islam, the more likely it will be that al-Qa’ida and other groups are able to attract support for their terrorist cause. International terrorism requires an international response, and it is therefore essential to maintain as broad a coalition of different governments as possible. However, when counter-terrorism policies target a certain ethnic group because of its nationality or religion, they may antagonize the group’s home government or its fellow nationals whose cooperation is essential in the war on terrorism. Countries could react to measures targeting their citizens by reducing or even withdrawing their support for international counter-terrorism initiatives. (Cole 2003: 183-210).

In addition to this international perspective, one has to consider that many of the harsh measures related to immigration, such as registration, preventive arrests, detention, and deportation, have reverberated strongly within the entire immigrant community and have reduced the will of the Arab or Muslim community to cooperate with authorities in the fight against terrorism. As these measures have antagonized parts of the immigrant population and inspired fear of law enforcement, they have clearly impeded the investigation of terrorist activity in some ethnic communities. These measures have increased the mistrust of government and risk alienating large parts of the immigrant community who would otherwise be very willing to cooperate. Counter-terrorism which enforces or tightens immigration laws will prevent immigrants from coming forward and reporting suspicious, potentially-terrorist activity in their community if they themselves face arrest, detention and deportation. As David Cole (2002a) points out, law enforcement is more effective when it works with rather than against communities. If there is reason to believe that there are individuals potentially planning terrorist acts in the Arab or Muslim immigrant community, authorities would surely benefit more from working together with the large majority of law-abiding and innocent members of the community in order to identify possible threats, rather than alienating the whole community by treating many of its members as suspicious.
There are examples where immigrant communities have played an important role in dealing with terrorist groups. Immigrants with an Arab background helped the French authorities dismantle the Algerian Armed Islamic Group in 1995, and Turkish immigrants in Germany assisted in tackling elements of the Kurdish PKK. (Faist 2004) However, the perception is widespread in Muslim communities, even the most Westernized, that racist and unfair measures target them in the war on terror. “The prosecutions of the charities, the surveillance, and the visa discrimination – all of these actions deprive Muslims of their social place and constrict their access to mainstream ... society.” (Tirman, 2004b)

The feeling in these communities of being treated unfairly will undermine the legitimacy of the Western world with its claim of standing for democracy, political freedom, due process, and equal protection, and make the fight for the hearts and minds of the people more difficult. Furthermore, studies have shown that where laws and policies are perceived to be unfair and illegitimate, members of the community affected by them are more likely to be involved in crime, because people obey laws not because they worry about being caught, but because they consider these laws or rules to be fair and legitimate. (Cole 2002a)

The focus on Arab or Muslim immigrants and foreigners not only risks isolating and alienating this community, but it also reinforces racial, religious, and gender stereotypes in the general population. If Muslim immigrants are increasingly segregated, stereotypes based on ignorance will become the norm, further isolating immigrants, which in turn can encourage the growth of genuinely harmful attitudes in the immigrant communities and in Western governments and populations. (Lohrmann 2000)

Among immigrants, refugees deserve a separate mention in order to underline the questionability of linking immigration and terrorism. Although refugees only represent a very small proportion of all international migrants, the nexus still seems to have been made by governments introducing stricter asylum policies as part of the war on terrorism. These restrictions are reflected in the numbers of refugees taken in by Western governments. The United States has reduced the number of refugees it admits dramatically in recent years. In 1999, it admitted 85,006, in 2000, 72,515, and in 2001, 68,426. Only 26,622 were let into the country in 2002, and 28,306 in 2003. (Refugee Council USA 2003)

Table 1: Refugees allowed into the United States.

Although no refugees were among the nineteen 9/11 terrorists, the attacks have created the public perception of refugees as potential terrorists and undesirable elements in society. Government reaction has reinforced this perception, and even international organizations such as the United Nations have declared that states must ensure “that refugee status is not abused by the perpetrators, organizers or facilitators of terrorist acts.” (United Nations 2001a)

Again, there are arguments against this linkage of refugee and terrorist. International refugee law explicitly excludes those people from protection who have committed serious crimes against humanity or have violated human rights. (Zard 2002: 32) Some commentators argue that infiltration of a Western country via its refugee program is unlikely, as terrorist groups
prefer to use operatives who will not have immigration problems. As Howard Adelman (2002) points out, there are far easier ways of entering a country than through the refugee channels. Upon entry, a refugee is exposed to government authorities and has to pass a security clearance, give personal information, and fill out forms. “Any sophisticated terrorist would reasonably be expected to avoid such an exposure.” (Adelman 2002: 11) Other writers believe that targeting refugees is wrong and poses risks, as indifference to refugees compromises safety around the world. Refugees can become dangerously radicalized and join terrorist organizations out of resentment of the West for denying them a better life or out of a lack of alternatives and the necessity of supporting their families. (Helton 2002: 1-2) Theresa Sidebothom (2004) argues that it would make more sense to encourage people to speak out against their governments and to support their democratic activities or their moderate Islamic views by giving them a safety net or somewhere to flee if it is needed. She highlights that this was the case during the Cold War, when the United States supported pro-democracy groups within communist countries and granted asylum to activists and opponents of these regimes.

The obvious irony of linking refugees to terrorism is that many refugees flee their home countries because they are classed as terrorists there or are fleeing the same extremist Islamist regimes or groups who sponsor, harbor, or tolerate terrorism. So while trying to protect Western people from terror, these anti-asylum measures take a heavy toll on victims of violence and terror in other parts of the world. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Ruud Lubbers (cited in United Nations 2001b) stated shortly after 9/11 refugees are the victims of terrorism, not its perpetrators.

As we have seen, many authors argue that immigration policies as a counter-terrorism tool are ineffective. They highlight the fact that the arrests of immigrants and foreigners and their deportation following 9/11 have yielded very little in terms of prosecuting terrorists. As Nora Demleitner (2004: 572) points out, “many of the terrorism prevention mechanisms instituted in the wake of 9/11 proved fruitless in detecting undocumented aliens, but not terrorists.” Taking into consideration that thousands were arrested in the United States and Europe, the number of prosecutions of foreign terrorists in the West such as Zaccarias Moussaoui is extremely low. According to a list issued by the U.S. government, which outlined the charges brought against those arrested, fewer than five of these charges related to terrorism, while the majority appear to be related to immigration violations. (Martin 2002: 26) Adding to this is the fact that many of those arrested, such as Zaccarias Moussaoui, were apprehended using traditional law enforcement techniques, not the immigration system. (Kerwin 2005: 762)

If it is possible to make rational arguments against these immigration measures, as well as to question their effectiveness, one has to ask how they were implemented with so little controversy in the first place, and why they are still considered to be an essential part in the struggle against terrorism. Rather than actually protecting the population from terrorism, have these measures only been implemented “to reassure certain segments of the electorate longing for evidence of concrete measures taken to ensure safety?” (Bigo 2002: 3)

**The Socially-constructed Nature of the Immigrant as a Potential Terrorist**

There are a number of practical explanations why immigration has been linked to terrorism. For example, Victor Romero (2003: 103-104) believes that it makes sense from a U.S. government perspective to use immigration policies
to fight terrorism. It provides a large number of options. If there is enough proof, the foreign terrorist can be arrested and imprisoned; if there is not enough evidence, he can be deported. It is also easier to deal with suspected terrorists and advance an investigation in the framework of immigration law rather than in criminal law because, for example, non-citizens are not automatically provided with a lawyer in deportation proceedings.

A more theoretical attempt to explain the linkage between terrorism and immigration could go down a neo-liberal road. Neo-liberals argue that “state preferences matter most in world politics” and that “societal ideas, interests, and institutions influence state behaviour by shaping state preferences.” (Moravcsik 1997: 513) Thus, states act according to the interests of certain groups in society. So, in our case, neo-conservative groups in the Center for Immigration Studies, for example, have managed to capture the state apparatus and make its preferences in line with the groups’ interests. As immigrants are normally non-citizens and are not able to vote and therefore have no direct voice in the democratic process, they are a particularly vulnerable minority, and thus it is easier for groups calling for the limitation of immigration to impose their interests on the state. A more detailed examination of the groups involved and their underlying interests, as well as the procedures used to gain influence, would be needed to assess the potential of a neo-liberal explanation.

Taking a more social constructivist perspective and assuming that “[s]ocial threats are constructed, not natural” (Wendt 1992: 405), one could argue that the idea of Muslim foreigners and immigrants as potential terrorists was constructed as early as 1993 with the first World Trade Center bombing and substantially reinforced by the extraordinary events of 9/11. The idea of foreigners of Arab or Muslim origin being potential terrorists shaped the behavior of policy makers: they introduced immigration policies as part of the fight against terrorism. This behavior in turn reinforced the link between immigration and terrorism in the public mind, and shaped the meaning of immigration in general and the norms that govern it. At the same time, government behavior introduced the idea in ethnic communities of being treated unfairly, leading potentially to alienation, and shaping the behavior of these groups possibly leading to support of terrorism. This in turn reinforces the idea of fighting terrorism with immigration restriction and is reflected in state behavior.

So it was the nineteen attackers of 9/11 that substantially altered the public idea of immigrants, morphing them into a direct threat of national security. Guild (2003: 336) believes that “[t]he 9/11 attacks transformed the face of the foreigner into a prima facie face of terrorism.” The immigration policies introduced as part of the war on terror, as well as the arrests, detentions, and deportations of immigrants, reinforced this idea. As Demleitner (2004) points out, detention and deportation create the impression within the larger public that immigrants, at least those from Muslim countries, are criminals and potential terrorists. Not only will immigration policies in the war on terrorism alienate the immigrant community, but such measures will reinforce the public’s perception of immigrants as potential terrorist threats, in turn increasing the alienation of the community in a kind of vicious circle. Both the feeling of alienation and the perception of that community as alien can lead to increased segregation and possibly radicalization, stoke anti-Western sentiments, and provide for a more acute security threat. (Ashar 2002) The discourse on terrorism has become intertwined with the discourse on immigration. Discourse constructs what we consider to be problems, in our case immigrants and their potential to be
terrorists. The world around us is a product of discourse, and the construction of the border as the front line in the fight against terrorism has led people to perceive things crossing this line as potential threats. (Pickering 2004).

Public opinion polls seem to support this interpretation. Opinion polls in the United States show a strong support for the use of immigration policies in the fight against terrorism, and shortly after 9/11 89 percent of those questioned thought that it was justified to detain immigrants. A further 72 percent supported the use of ethnic profiling and interviews of men from the Middle East. In addition, 92 percent supported imposing stricter immigration and border crossing policies as a way of dealing with terrorism. Similarly, public opinion polls published in the United Kingdom on the subject also show strong support for the use of immigration policies in the fight against terrorism. An ICM Research poll carried out for the BBC in April 2004 showed strong support (62 percent) for detaining foreign terrorist suspects indefinitely. A different study in 2003 demonstrated that 82 percent of those questioned thought that it was certain or likely that “terrorists linked to Al Qaeda are entering Britain as asylum seekers,” and 74 percent supported the suggestion of detaining “all immigrants and asylum seekers until they can be assessed as potential terror threats.” A Populus survey conducted after the London bombings in July 2005 showed that 88 percent agreed with using “tighter controls on who comes into the country” as a “measure that could be taken to try and reduce the threat of further terrorist attack.” A YouGov survey showed that 46 percent of the public in the United Kingdom saw Islam as posing a threat to Western liberal democracy. Furthermore, 60 percent supported the idea that the British security services should focus their intelligence-gathering and terrorism-prevention efforts on Muslims living in and seeking to enter Britain. At the same time, an opinion poll conducted for the Guardian newspaper among Muslims in Britain showed that 64 percent felt that Britain’s anti-terror laws were used unfairly against the Muslim community. A different poll among Muslims found that 42 percent felt that they were “an object of suspicion” since the London bombings on July 7, 2005. One opinion poll even suggested that 80 percent of those Muslims questioned in the United Kingdom saw the war on terror as a war on Islam.

Conclusion

Not for the first time have terrorist acts and crisis situations such as 9/11 made immigration a national security issue in the eye of the public and a concern for governments. However, theoretically examining the advantages and disadvantages, one can rationally make an argument that questions the link between immigration and terrorism. Apart from the flaws in some of the literature supporting this connection, there are other questionable issues in the argument. Generally, the idea of tighter immigration runs counter to the liberal economic maxim of open markets on which the power and dominance of the West is based. Specific immigration measures such as deportation and the tightening of borders are questionable in their logic and effectiveness. The term “immigrant,” Muslim or Arab, has proved to be too all-encompassing, involving and discriminating against too many innocent people. Immigration measures, as a tool in the war on terrorism, might even prove counter-productive, as they can make whole ethnic communities feel targeted. By focusing on them and making them feel alienated, one risks losing the vital support they can offer in investigating real terrorist threats. In addition, the targeting of certain ethnic communities can lead to the loss of support from their home countries, which is vital in the fight against international terrorism. The danger is especially acute and
ironic for refugees, as those fleeing terror become the first victims of the fight against it.

This essay has argued that the perception of foreign immigrants as potential terrorists seems to have been widely introduced or at least strengthened by the events of 9/11. This perception was then reinforced by the behavior of the government, which introduced anti-immigration policies as a response. This response produced the idea within certain ethnic communities that they were being unfairly targeted and led to more alienation and segregation from society and potentially to dangerous radicalization. The result was the reinforcement of the public perception of these communities as alien and dangerous. Through these kinds of interaction circles, the immigrant is being socially constructed as a potential terrorist.

As we have seen in theory, there are rational reasons to question the use of immigration policies in the fight against terrorism. But, how do we know if any of the policies intended to combat terrorism are really any good? How can we tell a good counter-terrorism measure from a bad one? As much in a fight against terrorism as against conventional enemies, inadequate measures of effectiveness can contribute to complacency, poor resource allocation, and dreadful surprises. (Byman 2003a)

Unfortunately, for all the significant research that judges military effectiveness (Biddle/Long 2004), measures of counter-terrorism policies remain shallow. In contrast to a traditional military campaign, there is no enemy capital to take over or industrial base to destroy.

Apart from theoretical discussions, as the one above, about different counter-terrorism measures such as military strikes, special counter-terrorist units, or internal security arrangements, there have been attempts to measure practically the effectiveness of certain counter-terrorism policies. As indicators, government officials point to the numbers of terrorist incidents and arrested and killed terrorists, as well as the amounts of terrorist financing that have been confiscated as an indicator. In the case of the United States, Demleitner (2004: 552) points out that the prosecution of illegal immigrants is used to display the government’s successes in protecting the homeland. However appealing and easy this measure of success is, an approach based on “body-count” or the number of suspicious immigrants arrested and deported can be deceptive. (Byman 2003b) At the same time, academics often refer to more sophisticated equations involving time series in risk management and cost–benefit calculations. They believe that a successful counter-terrorism measure reduces the amount of terrorist violence. Therefore, if the level of terrorist incidents is plotted over time and against some policy indicators, it is possible to see whether the measure is effective or not. The central argument, in other words, is that certain effective counter-terrorist policies will produce a change in the terrorists’ modus operandi, which will be visible in the pattern of incidents. Here it is assumed that terrorist groups act in a rational way, reflecting and substituting certain types of action for others when faced with excessive difficulties. They believe terrorists to be rational actors. Terrorists have a certain limited budget and try to maximize the effect of their resources. Measures taken to raise the cost of certain types of terrorist activities lead them to use other types of tactics whose cost has not risen. (see Landes 1978; Brophy-Baermann/Conybeare 1994; Enders/Sandler 1993)

However, there are a vast number of difficulties with these practical rationalist means of evaluating counter-terrorism measures. The overall size of a terrorist group is often unknown, and many of those captured or killed are low-level recruits who can be replaced.
easily. Indeed, a terrorist group that loses members to arrest or targeted killings may actually increase in overall size if the crackdown generates a backlash. For example, the Provisional IRA capitalized on an indiscriminate British crackdown to gain recruits. (Pillar 2001: 217-235) Furthermore, the ability to regenerate is being ignored, and the method also fails to reveal the effect counter measures have on the terrorist's morale, fundraising, and recruitment in general. In addition, the dramatic fluctuations and random character of terrorism can give a country and its population the feeling of safety, seemingly indicating the effectiveness of the existing counter-terrorism measures. A surprise attack may, however, shatter these illusions and illustrate the uselessness of such measures. Some have argued that in order to tackle a question one would have to set up two worlds, one in which nothing is done to combat terrorism and one where measures against it are implemented. Furthermore, in order to find out exactly which measures were effective, one would have to create a large number of different worlds where only one counter-measure would be tested against a large number of combined terrorist tactics. (Tudge 2004)

So what standards could be used to assess the success or failure of existing counter-terrorism measures? So far "[t]here is almost a complete absence of high quality scientific evaluation evidence on counter-terrorism strategies" (Lum et al. 2006: ii) and "[a] concrete methodology for studying a state’s ability to cope with wide-scale terrorism remains to be developed." (Morag 2005: 308) It seems inappropriate to evaluate a socially-constructed threat-response to a socially-constructed threat with rationalist methods, whether by a theoretical evaluation as was predominantly the case in this paper or a practical evaluation of certain measures along the lines of Walter Enders and Todd Sandler (1993). An alternative method is called for.

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**Notes**


3 One has to also note that it is difficult to differentiate between a state harbouring terrorists and a state granting asylum to people fleeing political persecution.


Multiculturalism and the Nation in Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*

By Martha Addante

In *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis*, John Clement Ball suggests that novels constitute cities as much as planners, builders, and politicians do. (19) Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth* offers one blueprint of London, and England more generally, from the perspective of former colonial subjects. It is a work of the imagination which re-invents the nation; that is, it is a social practice which contests official concepts of the nation—what it means to be British in light of gender and racial difference. In short, *White Teeth* represents the British homeland as it is perceived and experienced by women migrants, the “ghostly” others whose presence, according to Fredric Jameson, could be felt in the texts of Modernist literature though they remained unnamed until recently. While Jameson’s evocation of the “invisible” but “essential” others (“Modernism and Imperialism” 50) remains genderless, it must be noted that the haunting spectres of Modernism were colonial subjects who were rendered invisible because of their gender as well as their race. As I will illustrate through a brief history of British immigration policy, colonial subjects provided “the theatre in which modern European [in this case specifically British] identities were shaped and revamped” even though “this shaping of identity was predicated on the invention and exclusion of...colonial subject[s] [and female subjects I would add] as a figure[s] of alterity.” (Gikandi 7) In short, *White Teeth* is part of the cultural revolution which heralds the “margins coming into representation.” (Hall 34) However, it bears remembering that those margins are defined both in terms of race and gender. Specifically, *White Teeth* not only presents the social and political spaces within London as navigated by gendered subjects of the former colonies, but also maps the nation in relation to images of past colonial landscapes so that London becomes reconstituted by the past and present, transformed by multiple, crisscrossing roots and routes. Zadie Smith’s novel, as Ian Baucom says of Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses*, “collapses the multiple landscapes of [Britain’s] past onto the metropolitan expanse of its postimperial present.” (212) In short, Smith rejects homogenous notions of Britain, presenting instead a heterogeneous concept of nation where diversity and tolerance are the only means to peaceful co-existence.

While some theorists readily proclaim the decline of the nation and claim its insignificance and irrelevance in this age of globalization, such pronouncements are premature. After all, while capital and technology may flow uninhibitedly across borders, such is not the case with movements of immigrants still subject to state immigration policies and border security measures. Moreover, its influence is still widely and immediately felt in “everyday contexts” such as social services, labour laws, and education. Women often experience state legislation in terms of “interference in family and social life.” (Smith “Nations in Decline?” 27) For example, when health and welfare programs are cut, they often become the unpaid health providers for their families. (Tickner 196) Such situations reinforce the notion that for women the personal is the political.¹ The female protagonists in *White Teeth* confront the nation and national policies in other ways, yet it is their encounters with, what Anthony Smith terms, “cultural resources” (20) that shape their perception of space and maps of Englishness. Such resources include: myths of origins and ancestry, myths of election, collective attachments to sacred ancestral
homelands, myth-memories of golden ages, and ideals of sacrifice and destiny. (21) The extent to which they conform or challenge the above nation-building processes determines not only their sense of belonging to Britain, but also their maps of contemporary Britain.

The danger inherent in cultural resources is that they often lead to what Fredric Jameson terms “reified cultural patterns.” For Jameson, “cultural structures and attitudes” are “reified cultural patterns” that were once “vital responses to infrastructural realities...as attempts to resolve more fundamental contradictions—attempts which then outlive the situations for which they were devised” only to become part of a new problem. (Jameson “Third World Literature” 94)

In short, as Imre Szeman highlights, the nation itself is such a “reified cultural pattern.” In White Teeth, contemporary Britain presents a new problem. For Jameson, imperialism results in such a situation where lived experience “no longer coincides with the place in which it takes place.” (Jameson “Cognitive Mapping” 349) Instead, its rationale resides elsewhere, “bound up with the whole colonial system of the British Empire that determines the very quality of the individual’s subjective life.” (349) The problem arising is that “those structural coordinates are no longer accessible to immediate lived experience.” (349) If imperialism caused a fissure between experience of daily life in London and the economic and social structures that ground our understanding of that experience, then our present moment of late capitalism brings with it its own contradiction. For post-imperial Britain a new problem emerges: how to imagine and represent the formerly colonized other within its borders that, according to Jameson, “is its essential other component or opposite” and has until recently remained “invisible.” (“Modernism and Imperialism” 50) In short, if, as Baucom argues, “in cultivating an empire, England has made itself host to a thousand and one narratives of belonging” (221), then the question remains, how will it begin to translate these other narratives into “maps of Englishness?” Such a task is vital in promoting national cohesion and peaceful relations among diverse cultural groups that constitute the nation.

Hence, the project of remapping the British nation must account for the occluded others within its borders. White Teeth is engaged precisely in this process. It redefines Englishness from the perspective of those formerly unrepresented and marginalized, challenging previous notions of Englishness defined as singular and homogenous and depicting instead a nation marked by routes rather than roots. In order to better understand the present “fundamental contradiction” that is Britain, it is necessary to briefly summarize the history of immigration in England since World War II and the independence of its former colonies. Such a step is vital because, as Szeman puts it, “all attempts to resolve the ‘fundamental contradictions’ of the present through cultural production must pass through the concretized history of previous attempts to solve the contradictions of earlier infrastructural realities that have since changed in form and character.” (55) White Teeth is a response to a contradiction that was itself an attempt to solve an earlier dilemma. Specifically, it is a response to a situation created by British immigration policy that defined the nation in terms of race, yet was itself an attempt to curb New Commonwealth immigration resulting from the earlier British policy of Pax Britannica. The following will briefly summarize two distinct and contradictory chapters in British immigration policy: the years between 1948 and 1961, the phase James Hampshire terms, “the period of imperial citizenship,” and the nearly two decades from 1962 to 1981, the interval he terms, “the period of exclusion.” (18)

Post-war immigration policy reinforced the notion of imperial citizenship. In
theory at least, the British Nationality Act of 1948 conferred United Kingdom citizenship rights to all colonial citizens. As Francesca Klug confirms, “under Britain’s nationality laws there was no legal distinction between people born in the U.K. and any other part of the Empire.” (18) It is worth noting though that the invention of Citizenship of the United Kingdom and Colonies (CUKC) by the British government in 1948 did not confer equal citizenship to all British subjects. Rather it was instated “to put the seal on British domination.” (17) Implicitly, in Britain the construction of the myth of the nation centred on the notion that the descendants of the Anglo-Saxons possessed rights to the homeland and innate superiority over inhabitants of the dominions. (16, 18) As a result, tension between the official understanding of national identity and informal definition of who belonged continued in spite of the BNA of 1948. As James Hampshire points out, in reality “the tension between citizenship and belonging continued to shape immigration policy until British citizenship was finally redefined in narrow, post-imperial terms.” (16) That is, belonging was construed restrictively and, as Kathleen Paul says, rooted in the assumption that “real” British citizens were white, and were men, I would add. (Paul 462)

Dual notion of citizenship continued to characterize immigration and citizenship discourse throughout the second phase of British immigration policy. In fact, as Christian Joppke argues, there were two “key objectives” in the construction of British immigration policy: to restrict the right of entry of coloured citizens of the empire and embrace the descendants of the Old Commonwealth (settlers), who just happened to be white. (Joppke 101-5) Indeed his argument is supported by a number of key events. A month before the Royal Assent of BNA 1948, the Empire Windrush arrived in Britain carrying 492 Jamaican immigrants, incurring vast disapproval from politicians and civil servants alike. Even the Colonial Office sought to clear itself of any involvement in the incident, claiming it “did not know who were the ‘ringleaders’ of the ‘incursion,’” but that it “was certainly not organised or encouraged by the Colonial Office or the Jamaican government.” (quoted in Paul 457) Immigration to Britain would only be “welcomed without reserve,” according to the report published by the Royal Commission on Population in 1949, “if the immigrants were of good human stock and were not prevented by their religion or race from intermarrying with the host population and becoming merged with it.” (quoted in Paul 463)

The immigrants who arrived in 1948 were deemed neither. As a result of the Empire Windrush incident, the British government enacted a series of immigration laws which restricted the entry of commonwealth citizens and redefined U.K. citizenship. In 1962, the conservative government passed the Commonwealth Immigrants Act which, for the first time, restricted the right of British subjects to enter Britain. It was viewed by many critics as racist. The Act limited citizenship to those born in the United Kingdom or who held a U.K. passport issued by London authority, and enforced immigration controls on all those born outside the United Kingdom or holding a colonial-government-issued passport. In effect, controls applied to New Commonwealth citizens, blacks and Asians, more than Old Commonwealth subjects. Case in point, it excluded from controls Irish immigrants who in practice were ensured unrestricted entry. While the government did include provisions to regulate Irish immigration, it clearly stated in Parliament that it would not enforce such measures. The Act, CIA 1962, was only the first in a series of laws to restrict the entry of CUKCs.

The 1971 Immigration Act further defined the terms of U.K. citizenship and right of entry into England. The Act divided colonials into two groups:
patrials and non-patrials. In order to be a patrrial and granted access into Britain, one had to be a U.K.-born CUKC, or resident of the U.K. for more than five years, or have a parent or grandparent born in the U.K. (the grandparent clause was later dropped but reintroduced in 1973). The latter condition clearly benefitted Old Commonwealth citizens, but not New Commonwealth citizens. Hampshire confirms, “the patriality provisions were designed to secure access for Australians, Canadians, and New Zealanders while denying it to the New Commonwealth.” (41) In short, the Act annulled the old notion of imperial citizenship.

While the 1971 Immigration Act eliminated rhetoric of imperial citizenship, the British Nationality Act of 1981 devised three new categories of British subjecthood. Citizenship of the United Kingdom and Colonies was superceded by British citizenship, citizenship of the British dependent territories, and British overseas citizenship. While the first category included citizens of the U.K. whose parents or grandparents were born, adopted, naturalised, or registered as citizens or permanently settled in the U.K., the latter two designations did not include right of entry. According to Hampshire, the latter designations existed as categories “to mop up various former CUKCs who were without local citizenship in their country of abode but, crucially, they did not carry the right of entry to the United Kingdom.” (43) This Act marked a profound change in the concept of citizenship, defining membership exclusively in terms of the national community. (43) Moreover, for the first time in British history, it replaced the tradition of *jus soli* (citizenship by territory) with *jus sanguinis* (citizenship by descent). This means that currently a child born in Britain is not automatically granted legal citizenship. Citizenship is acquired only if one of the child’s parents is a British citizen or is permanently settled in the U.K. (regardless of where the child is born). Such legislation once again ensures easier acquisition of British citizenship for the descendents of Old Commonwealth settlers, most of whom were white, than for those born anywhere else in the Commonwealth. (43)

If the period of exclusionary citizenship was the response or solution to the concept of imperial citizenship, the former itself over time became a “reified cultural pattern” to which texts such as *White Teeth* have offered their own critical response. Such texts belong to a new phase in British national policy that Hampshire terms, “the period of renegotiation.” (18) The focus since the 1980s has been on the social and cultural impact of immigrant communities on British society. There has been a considerable re-evaluation of the definition of citizenship and notion of Britishness. *White Teeth* is part of the cultural revolution hailed by Stuart Hall as “the emergence of new subjects, new genders, new ethnicities…new communities, hitherto excluded from the major forms of cultural representation.” (Hall 34) As such, it offers new maps of Englishness, in this era of multinational capital, charted by subjects located on the margins of British society.

The attempt to express this new contradiction, namely the effort to reinvent new constructions of Britishness by the formerly marginalized, has resulted in the invention of new forms of literary expression. According to Jameson, formal patterns are “symbolic enactment[s] of the social within the formal and aesthetic.” (The Political Unconscious 77) Forms of aesthetic expression are ideological in nature; that is, they provide formal “re/solutions” to social contradictions or problems. Jameson writes: “the aesthetic act is itself ideological, and the production of aesthetic or narrative form is to be seen as an ideological act in its own right, with the function of inventing imaginary or formal ‘solutions’
to unresolvable social contradictions.” (79) For Jameson, postmodern space with its “suppression of distance,” homogeneity, and fragmentation, is symptomatic of a historical dilemma: “our insertion as individual subjects into a multidimensional set of radically discontinuous realities.” (“Cognitive Mapping” 351) I will suggest that in White Teeth, paradox is the outward manifestation of the text’s attempts to come to terms with a deeper social contraction—how to imagine the British nation from the perspective of the invisible others inside its immediate state borders.

While paradox is common to many postmodern texts, in White Teeth it gives expression to the contradiction arising from British immigration policy as it seeks to define ever more narrowly the parameters of the nation. Paradox becomes the logical response to an impossible condition: seeking to represent the excluded and invisible—no longer scattered across the Empire—but within the nation’s borders. In fact, paradox has long been the conventional response of feminists seeking to highlight the absurdity of a patriarchal/se克斯ist system. According to French feminist, Luce Irigaray, paradox appears incomprehensible only from the standpoint of reason, of official, codified knowledge. (Irigaray 29) In White Teeth paradox is the logical response of the text attempting to reconcile the contradiction between traditional notions of belonging and the real transformation of the definition of Britishness as it is experienced by migrants from the former colonies.

The central paradox of White Teeth is the play between roots and routes. Smith suggests that the various routes crisscrossing the nation represent the multiple origins or roots that have shaped British national identity. While roots underscore the embeddedness of origins—biological, national, or cultural—routes point to the antithetical ways that they are displaced, and not only re-rooted but rerouted. For example, Mr. Hamilton’s homogenized formulation of the nation, whereby common biological traits are markers of national communities, is debunked by hybrid notions of ethnic and national communities. According to Mr. Hamilton, Congo natives could be identified by the “whiteness of [their] teeth” (Smith White Teeth 144) and as a result of this particular innate characteristic “died because of it...see a flash of white and Bang! As it were.” (144) Yet his own false teeth, as well as Clara’s artificial teeth, as Molly Thompson suggests, are also pearly white, exposing the folly of Mr. Hamilton’s concept of a nation’s people as sharing common natural or biological inheritance. (125)

Not only does Mr. Hamilton imagine a racially homogenous community of tribesmen, but he re-imagines the racial composition of the British army, remembering it as exclusively white. When he is “given the opportunity to rewrite history here and now,” he reconstructs a racially segregated British army, deciding “there were certainly no wogs as I remember...the Pakistanis would have been in the Pakistani army.” (144) As in his construction of the community of Congo tribespeople, Mr. Hamilton once again insists on biological roots as the basis community solidarity. However, his sermon on the third molars, the wisdom teeth, exposes the problem with notions of roots altogether—they are vulnerable to distortion and infection, leading only to trouble: “they grow crooked or any which way...they stay locked up there with the bone—an impaction...and terrible, terrible infection.” (145) In short, Mr. Hamilton’s concept of community based on notions of common genetic inheritance is discredited.

Like many of the male characters in the novel, Joyce Chalfen, and the entire Chalfen family, also reflect a narrow concept of Britishness founded on roots. The opposing concepts of community as represented through Alsana Iqbal and
Joyce Chalfen illustrate Chandra Mohanty's argument that gender is a relational term and “to define feminism purely in gendered terms assumes that our consciousness of being 'women' has nothing to do with race, class, nation, or sexuality.” (12) While both women laud the benefits of hybridity, Joyce Chalfen and family represent a rather exclusive model of Britishness, one which privileges whiteness. The Chalfens are the quintessential liberal middle-class family. They are “more English than English” (Smith White Teeth 273) even though they are third generation. They represent those immigrants of “good human stock” who eventually assimilated to the British way of life. Hence, while she celebrates diversity in theory, such is not the case in practice.

According to Joyce, in her bestselling gardening book, “cross-pollination produces more varied offspring, which are better able to cope with a changed environment.” (258) Her philosophy applies to both plants and humans. Yet Pirjo Ahokas suggests that, for Joyce, cross-pollination is “to be restricted to the same species.” (122) Joyce treats her wards as if they were a sub-species. Her charity and goodwill toward the Iqbal and Jones offspring reeks, as Ahokas argues, of colonialism’s civilizing mission. This is evident upon her first meeting Irie and Millat, the two “exotic,” “brown strangers,” as she refers to them. It is upon the first encounter that Joyce reveals a number of her own cultural assumptions and stereotypes about minorities in general: Millat’s parents “must have something arranged for him” because “he [is] a Muslim boy” (266); “Afro-Caribbeans seem to find it hard to establish long-term relationships” (268); Jamaican parents “just don't appreciate their children sufficiently.” (270) She makes similar assumptions about Irie and Millat’s home environments: “…and your headmaster explained to us how your own home environments aren’t exactly...well...I’m sure you’ll find it easier to work here.” (268) It becomes Joyce’s mission then to “civilize” or, in her floral vocabulary, “prune” her young wards: “Nurture, thought Joyce. Be patient, water regularly, and don’t lose your temper when pruning.” (268) As an upstanding citizen, Joyce construes the above subjects as outsiders in need of an “English education.”

Despite her own Irish roots, Joyce’s mission to “prune” Irie and Millat links her in the history of British colonialism. As the narrator describes:

Joyce was descended from the kind of bloody-minded women who continued through the African swamps even after the bag-carrying natives had dropped their load and turned back, even when the white men were leaning on their guns and shaking their heads. She was cut of the same cloth as the frontier ladies who, armed only with a Bible, a shotgun, and a net curtain, coolly took out the brown men moving forward from the horizon toward the plains. Joyce didn’t know the meaning of backing down. She was going to stand her ground. (290)

Indeed Joyce ploughs on in her duty to re-educate Irie and especially Millat. However, the headmaster’s scheme to “bring children of disadvantaged or minority backgrounds into contact with kids who might have something to offer them. And there could be an exchange, vice versa” (256) is as ill-thought as previous colonial projects.

In fact, the headmaster’s project, which Joyce so determinedly and dutifully takes on, directly parallels the disastrous colonial project undertaken by the school’s benefactor nearly a century earlier. Sir Edmund Flecker Glenard, “impressed by the Jamaican’s faith but despairing of his work ethic and education...admired the Englishman’s work ethic and education but despairing of his poorly kept faith,” (252) decides to ship his Jamaican workers to a newly-built compound in England where they would work alongside the English packaging cigarettes and taking instruction from
them in the evenings, and on Sundays, take the English to church and teach them how to worship. (254)
Unfortunately, the project fails when Glenard’s “subsidies dried up” and the Jamaicans, rerouted to their new homeland, were left to sink or swim; however, this incident debunks the notion of the nation as united by a common ancestry. Similarly, Irie too is abandoned by Joyce: “the more progress Irie [makes]—whether in her studies, her attempts to make polite conversation, or her studied imitation of Chalfenism—the less interest Joyce showed in her.” (278)

By linking current neo-liberal multicultural policy with previous colonial projects, Smith not only uncovers a host of assumptions about the superiority of Britain and the inferiority of minority culture still inherent in British policy vis a vis colonial subjects, but she also firmly roots Joyce and the Chalfens, themselves the descendants of immigrants, in the long history of British colonialism.

If Joyce fits the definition of Britishness, then Irie Jones is representative of the sort of subjects against which Britishness defines itself. Irie is the daughter of a British father and Jamaican mother. She believes “she was all wrong” and had been dealt “dodgy cards”; that is, she had inherited all the “wrong” physiological characteristics: her grandmother’s “substantial Jamaican frame,” (221) and along with the “mountainous curves, buckteeth and thick metal retainer, impossible Afro hair, and to top it off mole-ish eyesight that in turn required Coke-bottle spectacles in a light shade of pink.” (224) So while her mother tried to convince her she was “fine,” Irie only saw “England, a gigantic mirror, and [herself], without a reflection. A stranger in a strange land.” (222) She struggles to belong, as is evident in her re-reading of Shakespeare’s sonnet 127 where “she had thought she had seen something like a reflection.” (227) Irie identifies with the sonnet claiming, “I just thought...like when he says, here: Then will I swear, beauty herself is black...And the curly hair thing, black wires—.” (227) But the reflection quickly vanishes when her teacher enlightens the class, “the sonnet is about the debate between her natural colouring and the makeup that was the fashion of the time.” (227)

This moment in Irie’s development is vital though because it marks one of the first instances where she begins to remap British culture and create a space for herself within it. While her roots place her outside the traditional construction of Britishness, she begins to search for a way to reread cultural texts. Her reinterpretation of the Shakespearean sonnet is significant moreover because it belongs to a body of work that is a quintessential English cultural artifact. It is part of public culture, and Irie, as a representative of the cultural minority, performs what Bhabha would term an act of enunciation, of cultural translation.

It is only after an act of self-violence—a hair disaster in which she attempts to “beat each curly hair into submission,” (229) resulting in the burning of her hair follicles—that Irie begins her journey to discovering and accepting her roots. She visits her grandmother, Hortense Bowden, and for Irie, that house is “an adventure.” (330) It is there she reads about the “other Jamaicans, fallen short of the attention span of history” and discovers “so this was where she came from.” (331) If Irie could not find her reflection in the gigantic mirror that was England, she finds it in the Bowden women. Her grandmother remarks: “Bwoy, sometime it like lookin’ in a mirror-glass’...You built like me, big, you know! Hip and tie and rhas, and titties. My mudder was de same way. You even named after my mudder.” (318) However, most importantly, Irie uncovers her own family history and learns of her great-grandmother, Ambrosia, and grandfather, Captain Charlie Durham. It is here she learns of past routes intersected, crisscrossed, and coming...
together to create new roots that cumulatively constitute Britain today.

It is the story of Ambrosia and Charlie Durham that ultimately supplant notions of the nation built on common roots or ancestry. The coming together of these lovers illustrates that Britain, as a result of its past colonial mission, is not founded on common ancestry that can be traced back to any single source. Rather it has been remapped by numerous routes travelled by migrants that have reterritorialized the nation and redefined the notion of Britishness based on a common Anglo-Saxon origin possessing innate superiority and therefore granted the right to rule over others. The story begins when Captain Durham, stationed in Jamaica, decides Ambrosia, his landlady’s adolescent daughter, requires an “English education.” Ambrosia learns “letters, numbers, the Bible, English history, trigonometry—and when that was finished, when Ambrosia’s mother was safely out of the house, anatomy, which was a longer lesson, given on top of the student as she lay on her back, giggling.” (296) The romance between Captain Durham and Ambrosia ends rather quickly, but the significance of their involvement is that it marks a mixing of roots as a result of routes travelled by the British during colonialism. When Hortense migrates to England with her own family, she travels a similar route returning to the land of her father. England, in short, is reterritorialized by the past, by its history of colonialism, and the consequences of which continue to shape the nation in the present.

Irie’s re-education at the hands of Hortense Bowden ultimately enables her to feel at home in her own skin and in the nation. While she can only dream of the “land of accidents” in which “birthplaces are accidents, that everything is an accident, “ (335) she is able to envision “a time not far from now, when roots won’t matter anymore because they can’t because they mustn’t because they’re too long and they’re too tortuous and they’re just buried too damn deep. She looks forward to it.” (437) In short, while roots help Irie find a reflection and sense of belonging, she also comes to understand that roots are and have always been mixed as a result of migrations and routes travelled by her ancestors. For the nation, this means that no unitary definition of Britain is possible, especially since British imperialism remapped not only the world, but consequently also supplanted homogenous notions of Britishness. By the end of the novel, we see Irie “seven years hence” with her daughter, whose paternity is uncertain, and, given Magid and Millat are twins, “she could not know if the choice would make any difference. Because whichever brother it was, it was the other one too.” (426) Her daughter, will “never be mapped exactly nor spoken of with any certainty” (437) because her roots are too entangled. And this is the face of the nation with which Smith leaves us.

While many of the characters in the novel profess concepts of the national community based on myths of racial or cultural purity, Alsana Iqbal, like Irie, also challenges those definitions of the nation and envisions a Britain where cultural hybridity is the norm. Like Mr. Hamilton, Samad Iqbal also holds fast to infectious notions of roots, this time cultural roots. For Samad, “tradition was culture, and culture led to roots, and these were good, these were untainted principles.” (161) Hence, despite having himself been “corrupted” by England, he derides his wife, Alsana, for her choice in dress: “Running shoes and a sari?...What is that?...You do not even know what you are, where you come from.” (166) Yet Alsana challenges notions of cultural purity, claiming: “you go back and back and back and it’s still easier to find the correct Hoover bag than to find one pure person, one pure faith, on the globe. Do you think anybody is English? Really English? It’s a fairy tale!” (196) Alsana not only questions Samad’s understanding of what it means to be Bengali, pointing
out that Bengalis in fact descended from Indo-Aryans who migrated to Bengal and mixed in with indigenous groups there, but also challenges myths of Britishness that claim common ancestry extending back to Anglo-Saxons. As a result of past migrations—routes traveled—"roots will always be tangled" (68) and, as Alsana underscores, have in fact always been tangled. Hybridity—not racial or cultural purity—has always been the norm.

While there are moments when even she wishes to cling to notions of roots, for the most part Alsana adheres to notions of hybridity and is thus comfortably "involved" in British life.7 Hence, when she sees her son, Millat, on television at a protest supporting the book burning of an inflammatory Muslim writer—a parody of the Rushdie affair—she decides to teach her son a tough lesson: "all his secular stuff...all had been placed on the funeral pyre, now a smoldering mound of ashes, which was giving off fumes of plastic and paper, stinging the boy's eyes, which were already filled with tears." (197) Unlike Irie, whose exclusion from concepts and official constructions of the nation leads to self-loathing and self-abuse, Millat's exclusion leads to anger and frustration, erupting in violence: though Millat knew nothing about the writer nor about the "dirty book," he did know "he had no face in this country, no voice...until the week before last when suddenly people like Millat were on every channel...radio...newspaper and they were angry, and Millat recognized the anger, thought it recognized him, and grabbed it with both hands." (194) Yet for Alsana, cultural hybridity demands tolerance. As she explains to her husband: "Look...when my little group get together, if we disagree about something, we can sort it out. Example: Mohona Hossain hates Divargit Singh...She likes that other fool with the eyelashes like a lady! But we compromise. Never once have I burned a single video of hers." (193) Her tolerance is born out of an understanding that people are "involved" as a result of their multiple journeys—routes—which have led them all to the imperial centre: "Involved is neither good nor bad. It is just a consequence of living, a consequence of occupation and immigration, of empires and expansion, of living in each other’s pockets." (363) Such is the lesson she attempts to teach Millat. To be involved in British life, to be British, requires acceptance of collective diversity and tolerance.

In short, Smith rejects unitary notions of Britain, presenting instead a heterogeneous concept of nation where hybridity and tolerance lead down a difficult path yet are the only ways to achieve peaceful co-existence. Smith's novel challenges previously-held notions of citizenship and belonging based on common ancestry (roots), substituting instead a concept of Britishness based on diversity and difference (routes). While there is no "Happy Multicultural Land" in White Teeth, Smith proposes a model for sustainable multiculturalism.

Notes

1 The impact on women resulting from cutbacks in social services and healthcare varies according to class. Upper and middle class women are able to render services from the market—an option not always available to working class women (Steans 128).

2 According to Kathleen Paul in “The Politics of Citizenship in Post-War Britain,” during initial talks regarding the BNA, civil servants assumed that colonials and residents of the U.K. would be given separate citizenship because a shared citizenship would be “such an artificial entity that it would not be politically practical to propose it.” (Foreign Office Memo quoted in Paul 469) However, when the Colonial Office objected that separate citizenship would not be received well by colonial peoples, debate swung in their favour.

3 Similar sentiments were expressed nearly three decades later by PM Margaret Thatcher in her now infamous televised interview in which she states, "People are really rather afraid that this country might
be rather swamped by people with a different culture...if there is any fear that it might be swamped people are going to react and be rather hostile to those coming in.” (Thatcher quoted in Klug 20)

4 The following is not a summary of all Acts passed restricting entrance of CUKCS into the U.K. It is meant to offer a context for which to read the social contradiction mapped by White Teeth.

5 According to Hampshire there were a number of practical reasons for the privilege granted to the Irish: it would be costly and almost impossible to police the Northern Irish border and such a move would be unfavourable among Northern Irish Unionists.

6 Here Joyce participates in the reproduction of the nation by partaking in the ideological reproduction of colonial discourse and by transmitting British culture to the wayward generation of immigrant children. Such a function is, according to Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, one way women participate in state practices.

7 For example, she fears “dissolution, disappearance” and envisions the day when Millat (genetically BB; where B stands for Bengaliness) marrying someone called Sarah (aa; where a stands for Aryan), resulting in a child called Michael (Ba), who in turn marries somebody called Lucy (aa), leaving Alsana with a legacy of unrecognizable great-grandchildren (Aaaaaaa!).” (272)

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A Selection of Poems
By Vivian Teter

21st Century Q & A

What is your name
    oh Other
    One?

    My name is
    your name
    oh other One.
Primer

(for Jason, Bobby, and Laren, who filmed Invisible Children about Uganda’s “Nightwalkers”)

I.

The children look up.
See, in their eyes, how quickly they learn

that, once cut
off, lips
do not grow back.

Ears cut off
do not grow
back.

Lips, ears
cut from the face, the head
—these never grow back.

Lips, ears, noses
cut and cut
never and never and never.

Your lips, your ears, your nose
where they were
—the children look up

into this, their only text.

II.

"Her lips, her ears, her nose all
cut to scars, we saw her, we listened, she
told us how and when.
We sat next to her, surrounded
by her children. We send one message back:
her eyes
her eyes are
very beautiful."

III.

"When sun's rays machete the mango branches
we look up.

When sun plummets
we look for one another.

When day thrashes toward drowning
we abandon our villages
to the stride and swagger of lordly lions
dressed in weapons and commands.

Sun sinks in grief sick to the marrow
veins of violet light spill

and our bodies become small boats
invisible over night's ocean.

Together we travel toward
silver shields of town lights
to lay ourselves down in the streets
hundreds of us together

and hundreds more curl in courtyards
of church and school.

When the sun falls out of the sky
like the head of a corpse into a mass grave

lordly lions roam in hunger
and together we disappear."

IV.

"A 21st-century text
—how can it be

and why did we not see it
in print

on our screens, our hundred channels?
Neoned here in our cities of wealth and power

blind while history scrawls itself in human flesh
spit from a human mouth."
V.

"That night when you found us
your cameras hung like guns
from your shoulders and we flinched
to run.

Then we saw your faces.

What could have brought you
to us? What terror or hunger
brought you
to us?"

VI.

"We who have
ears quieted ourselves
and listened, far and hard.

We who have
eyes looked. With our lenses
and film, we witnessed, befriended

and with our lips and their spirit
together we found words
and images, images and words

to translate,
in the intersection
of their terror and our emptiness,

a place
where children can walk
sunlight or starlight

and never be cut
and not
disappear."
The Ascent

Light
lighter, so light
—the child rises
writhing upward
twisting
and finally lifting
far above the faint
skeletal print
left
like a hieroglyph
in the blank sand.
Now the child floats
over the earth
eyes open
skin taut, knees
unwieldy, drawn
to heaving ribs as it
labors day and night
arms reaching
fingers spreading
and cupping
as if catching a ball
of air, of breath, a small
globe only it can see
its gaze intent as a laser
probing, scanning, spinning
— heart
a tiny gold seed
ticking night and day:
nineteen ninety
eight, nineteen ninety
nine, two thousand. Two
thousand and
one, two thousand and
one, two thousand
and one. . .

(After Sebastiao Salgado’s
Uncertain Grace)
On the Distance Between Heaven and Hell

There is a boy who sleeps in the bathtub at night to protect himself from bullets.

This is in Baltimore.
This is in the 21st century.

There is a woman still searching for her sister, swallowed a year ago a fault opening, fast, deep, in a mountain of garbage 650-feet high.

It oozes toxic black oil, black mud that runs down to the shacks.
The children, too, work this dump—black feet, black teeth.

"They work in garbage, play in garbage, and wash in garbage," the good doctor observes.

This is in Manila.
This is in the 21st century.

And there is more, and it draws nearer.

Downstairs, a little girl comes to stay with her grandfather.
Her mother lives on booze and crack in the back of a station wagon.

I see the station wagon come and go. When it is gone for three weeks, I stop to play with the child.

"Will you be my mother?" she asks.

I take her hand, I start a new game with her.
Each time I explain, "I have to go now."

In my dreams all night I am searching the 21st century for what to say to the boy curled in the bathtub, to the exhausted doctor and lost sister, to the girl who wants another mother.

These are days of heaven in some places in the world.

These are days of hell in others.
Walk out the door one morning, or turn the corner and tumbling us toward one another a sudden fault, fast, deep swallows the distance between the two.
Arctic Zones

“. . .there still existed. . . something and someone still pure and whole, not corrupt, not savage, extraneous to hatred and terror, something difficult to define. . . but for which it was worth surviving.”—Primo Levi

You lean forward
in your ice-encrusted fur parka,
your thick gloved hands gripping
the black telescope.
You are all silhouette etched against
a world zeroed down to harsh white
horizon no matter which way you turn
and you hunch, totally faceless now,
hushed, shoved to the ripest of attention
as you search for
what?
where? for
any sign, any
opening forward, any
way toward Yes, toward
Survive:

So that,
when we look
down the tunnel of years
from our eerie suburbs
and see, fierce in the glare, you
on Geographic’s page,
face erased,
an icy wind howls
through our spines
and at once
we know
the great empty sweep,
a zone where we turn
our isolate, individual lights
into one light
fiercely forward.
Vivian Teter's chapbook of poetry, *Translating a Bridge*, in part focuses on the theme of a bridge between privileged and marginalized peoples and includes poems for the "Lost Boys" of Sudan, with whom she has worked the past four years. Twice nominated for a Pushcart Prize, her work has appeared in *Poetry East, Spoon River Poetry Review, Passages North, Missouri Review, Green Mountains Review*, and other national journals. A graduate of Hollins University (BA) and the University of Arizona (MFA), she has been awarded writing fellowships at The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts as well as Byrdcliffe Artists Colony. She currently teaches literature and creative writing at Virginia Wesleyan College in Norfolk, Virginia.
Why George Bush Could Never “Win” in Iraq
By Daniel M. Smith

“Iraqi democracy will succeed, and that success will send forth the news, from Damascus to Tehran, that freedom can be the future of every nation.”

More than 65 months have passed since President George W. Bush launched the second Iraq war on March 19, 2003, promising to liberate the Iraqi people from the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein and the world from the threat of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists.

That regime change was only the first—albeit indispensable—step on the Bush agenda for Iraq had been evident throughout 2002. In his State of the Union Address on January 29, 2002, the President made it clear that “The United States of America will not permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most destructive weapons.” The next seven months saw an intensifying propaganda effort and covert actions intended to weaken the regime and, perhaps even bring it down. By October 10, 2002, the coming war was all but declared when Bush told the nation in a prime time speech: “The fundamental problem with Iraq remains the nature of the regime itself. ... Regime change in Iraq is the only certain means of removing a great danger to our nation.”

As became clear in the United Nations Security Council and other international forums, Washington planned on installing (or at least having the principal say in installing) a responsible, “democratic” government—defined as one friendly to the United States and willing to provide cheap oil and natural gas. But the United Nations was not buying Washington’s “evidence” about Iraqi stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons. Even among the individual allies, only Britain offered a substantial number of troops for the coming invasion.

The Bush “diplomatic case” for war was, of course, pure show. It simply would not do for Saddam to remain in power, for that would leave in place both his vast security structure and his control of Iraq’s enormous petroleum reserves. One way or another, Saddam had to go and his successor had to be indebted publicly to the Bush administration and soto voce to the “friends of Bush” who ran America’s oil industry.

With its attention focused on getting the inside track to exploit Iraq’s oil after Saddam, the White House failed to detect—or simply discounted—the extent to which world opinion had turned from wholehearted sympathy after al-Qaeda’s September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon to overwhelming opposition to Washington’s preparations for war against Iraq. Indeed, in the month between Secretary of State Colin Powell’s presentation of America’s indictment of Iraq to the Security Council and the start of the war, the number and the size of anti-war and anti-U.S. demonstrations grew. The opposition was fed by revelations that, one by one, undermined each of Washington’s “justifications” for forcible regime change. By March 17, 2003, the date that Bush issued his ultimatum to Saddam to leave Iraq, the hypocrisy of the Bush White House stood exposed. This war was about oil and who would be the “spigot-keeper.”

Of course, Bush is not the first president to be cited for hypocrisy in governing nor will he be the last. But he may well be among those whom Dante consigns to the ninth circle of hell for betraying another’s trust—specifically, his promise that Iraq would enjoy freedom, stability, peace, and prosperity.
and serve as a model of democracy for the rest of the Arab world.

Surprisingly for one whose business interests centered on oil, Bush and many in his inner circle either ignored or were unaware of the political foundations of Islamic culture that differ from western secularism.

When Bush went before the UN General Assembly in September 2002 and called on the world community to end the brutal treatment of Iraqis by Saddam, he cast regime change as a moral cause deserved by Iraqis and a strategic goal necessary for world peace and prosperity. However, his pledge to replace Saddam’s autocracy with a democracy met with little approval, understandably so in a region in which most governments were autocratic and the “strongman as ruler” was the expectation.

What Bush failed to understand was that Western liberal democratic theory provides a different basis for political organization than is found in traditional Islamic cultures. That difference is the result of the central place of Islam in the daily lives of the faithful.

In the Western liberal democratic tradition that Bush experienced as he matured, every individual is endowed with a God-given urge for individual freedom. Democracies rise when a people voluntarily cede some freedoms in return for communal benefits, e.g., physical security. Yet in virtually every Middle East society, it is community, not the individual, that constitutes the essential context. Individuals are free to act as long as they remain within pre-existent societal norms. While this may seem a difference without a distinction in that all forms of governance contain some restrictions on individual actions, a society that permits civil liberties may have any form of government whereas a society based on civil liberties invariably is democratic.

Put another way, government that fails to regulate behavior is not governing. Government that regulates all behavior is tyranny. Government that is itself regulated is democracy.

The failure of the occupation authorities to make this distinction led them to issue decrees that hastened and intensified the disintegration of Iraqi society beyond what the war itself caused. The Iraqi armed forces and police were disbanded and the bureaucracy purged of all Ba’ath party members. With no jobs, no pensions, and a heavy-handed reaction to protests against occupation policies, even those who had cheered when U.S. forces initially rolled into Baghdad took up arms against the occupying authorities. Not until 2007 did the Western occupation forces finally tumble to the fact that in Iraq, it is community that confers legitimacy and community that withholds it. That is why tribal sheiks and elders still exercise so much influence even in countries with the trappings of modern nation-states. Once the Western military forces understood this point, the “nationalist” insurgency dropped significantly and, as a result, exposed the non-Iraqi terrorists to capture or death.

So what is the current state of affairs?

Saddam and his regime are gone, but Iraq—still occupied by 135,000-155,000 foreign troops—is not free. Its economy is still not fully functioning, local elections have again been delayed (they had been scheduled for October 1, 2008). Iraqi-on-Iraqi violence, which had been running over a thousand a month through August 2007, has “stabilized” at between 400-500 per month—better, but hardly peaceful. Most significantly, Iraqis who had traded the uncertainties of life in a squalid, war-torn Iraq for the equally squalid but marginally safer refugee camps in Syria and Jordan seem in no hurry to return to their country. Whatever the sources of their information, the exiles distrust the
glowing reports of progress in restoring basic services, improving security, and a coming boom in oil production.

Instead of peace and prosperity, Bush has given Iraq and the world death—4,400 coalition soldiers and between 100,000 and 750,000 Iraqis—and injuries—more than 36,000 among coalition forces and an uncounted and unaccountable number of Iraqis.

Also uncounted and unaccountable is the loss to the American taxpayer of $850 billion for war that should have been spent on the myriad environmental, economic, and governance challenges the United States confronts. What is even more unsettling is that this $850 billion may be less than one third of the final cost of fighting and occupying Iraq, when long-term costs such as extended health care are included.

On the other side of the ledger, the Bush vision of an ever-expanding arc of liberal democracies in the Middle East has proven to be a mirage. Changes in politics and civil liberties, when they occur, tend to be cosmetic or to apply only to men. As the Olympiad’s “Parade of Nations” this past August 8 clearly demonstrated, many countries still deny women the opportunity to participate in sports even in competition with other women.

As for the United States, if there is to be redemption from the Bush years, it must start with the electorate stepping forward and reclaiming the civil liberties and political rights that Bush grabbed and Congress ceded, whether or not either the executive or the legislature had the right to deny or restrict the public’s exercise thereof in the first place.

As for America’s relations with the rest of the world, foreign autocrats will continue to operate on H. L. Mencken’s observation that most people, forced to make a choice, would prefer security over liberty. Democracy is a risky proposition, but if it really is “of the people, by the people, and for the people,” it is possible for the individual to enjoy liberty and the community safety without resort to autocracy. This is the transformation Bush should have pursued but did not, at great cost to the nation and its ideals.

Colonel Daniel M. Smith graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1966. Commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant of Infantry, Colonel Smith’s initial assignment was as an infantry and heavy weapons platoon leader with the 3rd Armor Division in Germany. Following language training, he then served as an intelligence advisor in Vietnam before returning to the U.S. to do graduate work at Cornell University and teach philosophy and English at West Point.

Subsequent intelligence and public affairs assignments took him to Fort Hood, Texas; the Army Materiel Research and Development Command, where he was the speech writer for the Commanding General; the Defense Intelligence Agency; and Headquarters, Department of the Army. Six of his years with the Defense Intelligence Agency were spent in London working in the British Ministry of Defense and then as Military Attaché in the U.S. Embassy. Colonel Smith retired from the Army in 1992 after 26 years service. From April 1993 to September 2002 he was an analyst at the non-partisan Center for Defense Information in Washington, DC, becoming Associate Director in 1995 and Chief of Research in 1999.

Colonel Smith is a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College, the Armed Forces Staff College, and the Army War College. He joined the Friends Committee on National Legislation in September 2002 as Senior Fellow for Military Affairs.
Robert W. Brimlow’s dual task in this book is to expose the moral and logical flaws in “just war” theory and to build a religious and moral ground for an absolute commitment to nonviolence. 

What about Hitler? is published in the Brazos Press series, “Christian Practice in Everyday Life,” whose books are “motivated by the conviction that, in the contemporary context, Christians must actively demonstrate that their allegiance to the God of Jesus Christ always takes priority over secular structures that compete for our loyalty—including the state, the market, race, class, gender, and other functional idolatries.” Each chapter begins with a passage from the Bible and a prayerful reflection on it, and the book offers, in addition to the discussion of war and nonviolence, a profound meditation on the relationship of the individual to God. Thus, the principal audience for this book will be Christians.

However, Brimlow’s book will also be valuable to a much broader audience. The idea that life is sacred and killing is wrong is shared by many other religious and humanist traditions, and Brimlow’s argument will be valuable to anyone who believes that individuals are under an absolute moral obligation to do good. Moreover, Brimlow spends considerable time discussing contemporary secular arguments in support of a “just war”—with particular attention to Michael Walzer (Just and Unjust Wars) and Jean Elshtain (Just War against Terrorism). His book will be of great interest to those who, like Brimlow, have wrestled with the dilemmas posed to pacifism by Adolf Hitler and Nazism, and to those who have pondered how “just war” theory could be applied to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 or the “War on Terror.”

Brimlow begins with a critique of St. Augustine, the first Christian Church Father to justify war (and whose position has been secularized into modern “just war” theory). From the point of view of the state, Augustine argued that governments are instituted by God to provide law and order for humankind and are authorized by God to use violence to constrain and punish other governments which commit crimes against peace and justice. From the point of view of the individual, Augustine asserted that soldiers are authorized to serve in war because Christians must obey rightful authority (which is the same as obeying God, himself). On the question of whether it is a sin for one soldier to kill another, Augustine responds that it is the intention of an actor which determines the morality of the act. Killing is not in itself evil, according to Augustine, since all people will sooner or later die (and death is not to be feared by Christians who are promised everlasting life). To kill with the intention of doing God’s will (as manifested in the command of an authority ordained by God) is not a sin.

Brimlow counters Augustine with an earlier theologian, Tertullian, who had asserted that service to the state does not supersede service to God. Tertullian also contradicted Augustine’s assertion that intention determines moral value. Instead, he believed that sins—whether worshiping false idols, committing adultery, or killing other human beings—are impermissible to Christians. There is no “good intention” that can remove God’s absolute prohibition of sin. In short, Brimlow takes the position that one’s government can not relieve one of one’s moral obligations. A state can not authorize or excuse sin.

Brimlow then turns to the modern secularized version of Christian “just
war” theory, which he argues is fundamentally flawed in its treatment of the moral status of individuals. He first points out that “just war” theory makes a categorical distinction between soldiers and civilians. Soldiers are legitimate targets in warfare, and there is no moral or legal prohibition from killing a soldier on the battlefield. Indeed, killing other soldiers is what soldiers are expected to do. On the other hand, the ultimate prohibition in war is the intentional harming of noncombatants—“innocent civilians.” (“Collateral damage”—injury of civilians—is acceptable only if it is not intended and is the accidental result of proportional use of force.) However, Brimlow finds this distinction morally incomprehensible. If civilians are innocent, why are soldiers who fight on the side of justice not innocent, as well? How can the conscription of a civilian into the military immediately deprive that individual of all moral status? Brimlow points out that police officers who uphold justice and preserve law and order—exactly the same function that soldiers in a “just war” serve—are not considered to be just targets by those whom they attempt to bring to justice. It makes no moral sense to hold that a soldier fighting a “just war” is not an innocent life which it would be sinful to take.

Conversely, “just war” logic also fails to explain why a civilian is innocent. If civilian consent enables war and if the taxes civilians pay and the goods they make support the war effort, then how can they have a moral status different from soldiers? Brimlow points out that it was on the grounds of the equivalency of civilians and soldiers that U.S. firebombed German cities and atom-bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The moral confusion of this position is untenable. A “just war” can only be fought to uphold morality, but once war has begun, human beings lose moral value.

Next, Brimlow argues that, even if “just war” principles were plausible in principle, they are useless in practice. Using the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 as an example, Brimlow points out that prior to the invasion, it was far from obvious that Iraq posed an objective threat to the world. France, Germany, Russia, and the UN, for example, believed it did not. Moreover, the original justification of the war—that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction—turned out to be false. That American leaders immediately proposed a new justification for the war (to end a cruel dictatorship) shows how malleable “just war” doctrine can be. Furthermore, the concomitant argument that America’s leaders are blameless, in any event, since they acted “in good faith” would make justice and morality relative to the psychic states of national leaders.

Brimlow concludes that “just war” principles are so open to interpretation that they could be applied to virtually any war. He points out that Adolf Hitler could plausibly have used “just war” theory to justify his preemptive attacks against Poland and France. Moreover, if “good faith” is added to the consideration, it wouldn’t matter whether Hitler was wrong about an international threat against Germany, only whether he believed the threat was real. “Just war” theory could equally well be adopted by Osama bin Laden, who claims that the Muslim Middle East is under grave threat from American economic oppression, military aggression, and cultural subversion. Having asserted that al Qaeda committed an act of war against the United States, American leaders would seem to open the possibility that al Qaeda could itself appeal to “just war” doctrine. (Far better, Brimlow argues, to treat al Qaeda as a gang of criminals, to be pursued by normal methods of law enforcement.)

Having thus disposed of arguments in favor of “just war,” Brimlow addresses arguments against nonviolence. He begins with George Orwell who believed that the effectiveness of nonviolence
depends on the opponent. Gandhi succeeded in India, according to Orwell, because the British found his call to nonviolence to be a useful counterweight to India’s more militant independence movements. Furthermore, Orwell did not believe that nonviolence could work against an enemy like Hitler who had no conscience to appeal to. During World War II, Orwell held that pacifism is hypocritical because pacifists preserve their moral self-righteousness while enjoying the fruits of violence employed by others in the defense of their nation’s security. Orwell concludes that, by refusing to engage in violence, the pacifist ultimately helps the cause of evil.

Even more telling, from a Christian perspective, is the case of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian who spent his theological career defending pacifism, but who, in the end, joined a conspiracy to assassinate Adolf Hitler. Bonhoeffer felt himself to be faced by two competing evils: it is evil to kill, and it is evil to allow killers to act. Bonhoeffer did not deny that killing is evil, but he concluded that the dilemma is one which Christians cannot escape. “Bonhoeffer goes on to say that it is not possible for us to escape our responsibility for the course that history takes, for it is a responsibility that has been laid upon us by God.” (123) Or, as Brimlow interprets Michael Walzer’s position, war “is a sin one must commit if one is fully human.” (116)

It is at this point that Brimlow reaches what is either the weakest and most dissatisfying or the most powerful and compelling point of his book. Pacifists who come to this book looking for arguments why pacifism would work—that even Nazis have consciences that can be appealed to, that nonviolence is realistic and practicable—will be supremely disappointed. Brimlow offers nothing but a moral and theological absolute: a sin is never anything but a sin and must never be committed. He returns to Tertullian’s position: service to God comes before service to the state; actions are judged in themselves, not by their consequences; humans can never be under an obligation to sin. Furthermore, he suspects that the temptation to sin, in resisting evil with violence, is not a noble temptation to do good but the ignoble temptation to live. “We must live faithfully; we must be humble in our faith and truthful in what we say and do; we must repay evil with good; and we must be peacemakers. This may also mean as a result that the evildoers will kill us. Then, we shall also die. That’s it. There is nothing else—or rather, anything else is only a footnote to this.” (151)

Thus, Brimlow turns Augustine on his head: Augustine said that since everyone must die, it is not a sin to kill, providing the intention is proper. Brimlow argues that since everyone must die, they must not try to save themselves from death by sinning. Brimlow points out that when Jesus was asked “What good must I do to possess everlasting life?” Jesus repeated six of the ten commandments, with “You shall not kill” at the head of the list. (Matthew 19:16). For a Christian, death resulting from the refusal to resist violence with violence is a mere loss of mortal life. Life prolonged through violence, however, would seem to forfeit the hope of eternal life. Other faiths and moral traditions may choose different terms to express this idea, but its moral logic will remain.

Pacifists who are looking for a practical program of how to resist violence with nonviolence will not find it in Brimlow’s book. What they will find, however, whether Christian or not, is the inspiration to continue pursuing one.

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Cynthia Cockburn’s book From Where We Stand: War, Women’s Activism and Feminist Analysis is her latest report on research she has conducted on gender, armed conflict, and peace activism in a number of countries since 1995. For this book, she completed 80,000 miles of travel to fifteen countries, interviewing 250 women peace activists from Colombia to Sierra Leone to India to the Philippines, and many nations in between, to get their own accounts of their hopes and fears, their values and principles, and their strategies for peace activism.

Cockburn herself is both an academic and an activist, active in the international antimilitarist network, Women in Black. In this book, she does an excellent job of weaving together feminist peace and antiviolence/antimilitarist theory with a record of the reflections of women who protest war and violence, as women and for women. Cockburn intends her work to contribute to answering questions about why so many women choose to organize to protest violence and war, and why they so often choose to organize in women-only groups. The approach she takes, of interviewing the women peace activists themselves, allows us to hear their own voices, to feel something of the intensity of their commitment, and to begin to see from their own perspectives the causes and consequences of the violence and warfare they oppose. And as Cockburn points out, the rich and complex variety of the women’s perspectives and circumstances discourages easy generalizations about all women’s attitudes toward pacifism, nationalism, and the definition and nature of feminism. Nevertheless, Cockburn does draw some strong conclusions from her research about what motivates women to engage in peace activism, and how their organizing and conduct of protest differs from that of the mainstream peace movement.

Cockburn says that she wrote From Where We Stand not only for academics, but for any readers interested in war, peace, and their relation to feminism. The book would be an accessible and clearly-written text to use with undergraduates in peace studies and women’s studies to introduce feminist analysis of the connections among masculinity, militarism, and oppression rooted in gender, race, and class. Through her interviews and commentary, Cockburn explores a variety of types of conflicts and activist responses to them. The first part of the book, for example, includes a chapter on women’s responses to civil war in Sierra Leone, ethnic conflict in India, and class warfare in Colombia, and another chapter on transnational organizations for peace protest, such as Women in Black and Code Pink, which have responded to the global war on terror and attendant violations of human rights and civil liberties. In another chapter, Cockburn examines attempts by women in the former Yugoslavia to connect with one another across the divides created by years of ethnic strife. A chapter on relations among activist women on all sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is followed by a chapter on the largest and oldest women’s peace organization, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, and its role in bringing about the passage of the 2000 UN Security Council resolution on Women, Peace, and Security.

Cockburn examines the differences that exist among the women she interviewed about the meaning of pacifism, nationalism, and feminism. She notes that some view nationalism as a divisive
ideology, others as key to their survival as a people. Some, out of a concern for women and families everywhere, view pacifism as central to their understanding of themselves as feminists, others see pacifism as a position only possible for those whose loved ones are not suffering institutional oppression or violent aggression. Cockburn also found debates among the activists over responding to racism: is opposing racism central to antimilitarism, and do peace activists have a responsibility to not only protest racial injustice, but to aid its victims—immigrants, refugees, and seekers of asylum?

In spite of these differences among the women activists because of where they stand, Cockburn found in her research that when they come together to confront war and violence, they tend to share some organizational and strategic assumptions. In the peace organizations that they form, women avoid forming hierarchical structures, make decisions by consensus, and share responsibility throughout the group for the work they decide upon. The groups tend to be characterized by an insistence that their means of protest and action must be consistent with the ends of peace and justice that they seek. They emphasize the maintenance of relationships within the group, and use dialogue to work through theoretical and practical disagreements. Their public protest often takes the form of silent vigils, symbolic activities such as street theater, and even encampments, such as Greenham Common in England, but they also work more directly within governmental and non-governmental organizations, lobbying, educating, and using the legal system to bring about change. Cockburn argues that while the strategies they use mirror those of the mainstream peace movement, the way they are decided upon and carried out takes a distinctive form. They call attention especially to the futility of war, the links between war and domestic forms of violence, and to the negative impacts of violence on women, children and communities.

Cockburn also concludes from her research that while “feminism” has many meanings for these differently-situated women activists, there are a number of common feminist themes across their practice. For example, these women share an opposition to the way that military forces shape a masculine warrior identity that perpetuates warfare and licenses a proprietary stance toward “their own” women and an aggressive stance toward the women of the enemy. Cockburn argues that reflecting on the practice and theory of these women's groups ought to push academics to reconsider the inadequacies of our understanding of international relations and peace-making and building. These disciplines are incomplete and doomed to be ineffective if they fail to take into account the perspectives of women, who experience the impact of war on the daily lives of their communities, and who carry much of the burden of putting war and violence-torn communities back together again. Cockburn's latest book gives a powerful voice to these women, and should be read by all those who want to understand what feminism has to say to peace activism.

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