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Though the formal academic of study of Islam and Muslims in the United States did not begin until the twentieth century, modern academic narratives in Islam and Muslims have drawn from or responded to a stock of tropes, symbols, and images of Islam and Muslims circulated in the nineteenth-century United States. Nineteenth-century American understandings of Islam and Muslims were not always negative. Even among Islam's American critics, prejudices against Islam and Muslims arose out of differing motivations and circumstances. These rich, diverse, and contradictory cultural structures have informed twentieth-century American engagements with Islam and Muslims, including the formal study of these topics.

Like European Christian writers since the time of the Crusades, some nineteenth-century Americans associated Islam and Muslims with religious heresy, a schismatic movement that divided the Christian Church—in short, a doctrinal problem with which God the Son would have to dispense in the end times (Ernst 2003). As the Second Great Awakening swept across the antebellum United States, American Christians of various sorts came to believe increasingly that the end of the world was near. Millennial beliefs flowered, among other places, in the Millerite movement, which predicted that the Second Coming of Christ would occur in 1840s.

Josiah Litch, a Methodist minister, was one such figure, positing that a fall of the Muslim Ottoman Empire in 1840 presaged the return of the Savior. A writer and editor, Litch penned several books supporting his view, carefully interpreting the history of Islam in light of the

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Christian scriptures, especially the Book of Revelation. In the 1838 edition of *The Probability of the Second Coming of Christ about A.D. 1843*, Litch painstakingly reconstructed the history of Islam from the time of the Prophet Muhammad to the Ottoman Empire to accord with his reading of the New Testament. Litch was only one in a long line of prophetic voices who linked the decline of the Ottoman Empire to the millennium, and this trope remained important in the thought of millennium-minded Americans from the Gilded Age through World War I. Though the Ottoman Empire would fall after the First World War, various Christian preachers, novelists, and commentators would continue to cast the fall of "Muslim power" as a precursor to Christ's return, especially in more recent times.

As powerful as these millennial voices were, however, Muslims and Islam represented more than theological schism to white American writers of the nineteenth century. Enlightenment thinkers' will to know the world—sometimes in order to rule it (Said 1978)—also led to more self-consciously objective accounts of Islam and Muslims. For example, Washington Irving (1783-1859), author, journalist, and U.S. ambassador to Spain, wrote a biography of the Prophet Muhammad, a book designed for the "family library." *Mahomet and His Successors* (1849) was designed to increase the reader's general knowledge by offering an engaging, objective, and readable narrative. Relying largely on European translations of Islamic texts and especially on Gustav Weil's pioneering *Mohammed der Prophet* (1843), Irving narrated Muhammad's religious career in Mecca, where he began receiving the qur'anic revelations, and his political leadership in Medina, where Muhammad ruled from 622 C.E. until his death. Following Gustav Weil, Irving saw the Muhammad of Mecca as a sincere man suffering from delusions, seizures, even epilepsy. In Medina, Irving asserted, Muhammad became a sometimes vindictive and violent leader, though he was still prayerful, humble, and generous.

Irving's story was an early American attempt to understand the figure of Muhammad from an academic perspective; it emphasized the "historical Muhammad" over the "Muhammad of Islamic faith." While clearly rejecting older, parochial European views of Muhammad as a religious imposter, Irving's more sympathetic account renders Muhammad an ultimately tragic figure, a well-intentioned man suffering from delusions of grandeur. It is a portrait of the Prophet that few Muslims would recognize or accept. It is also a portrait of Muhammad that many non-Muslims continue to hold up as the truth.

American understandings of Muslims and Islam also played an important role in the emerging gender relations of the antebellum era. Muslims and Islam were symbols of male domination and female submission, of sexual excess and fun. In the 1800s, a significant number of American men journeyed to the Christian Holy Land in Palestine, recording their impressions of Middle Eastern Muslims and Muslim holy sites in popular travelogues. The chance to travel to the Middle East was an opportunity to affirm their male identities abroad at the same time that women were claiming their rights and asserting their power at home. These male writings sometimes contained wild fantasies about Muslim harems, and some male travelers even dressed up like Turkish sultans, imagining themselves as potent men who dominated exotic Oriental women at will (Marr 2006).

This exoticization of Islam and the Muslim Orient provided ample fuel for the sarcasm and skepticism of writer Mark Twain. In *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), Twain wrote a devastating critique of the Holy Land tourist industry and the Westerners who were dumb enough to succumb to its temptations. For Twain, the Muslim Orient was neither holy nor mysterious; it was a creaky repository of antiquity, offensive to the "modern" American outlook he espoused in his journalism. In his depictions of Turks, Jews, Arabs, and North Africans (or

Moors), Twain employed funny, bigoted, and well-known stereotypes that reflected an ultimately superficial view of the places and people that he encountered. Many of Twain's stories were not based on direct observation, but on fantastic tales crafted for Western tourists and the observations of Western missionaries and diplomats. Twain exaggerated for comic effect, and seemed to mock his own ethnic chauvinism. But in so doing, he also rendered characterizations of the Orient and the Oriental as misogynistic, backward, savage, despotic, and fanatical, borrowing from and reproducing a stock of images already well-known in the West.

His critique notwithstanding, Americans, especially men, continued to embrace what they saw as the undeniable magic of the Muslim Orient. In 1872, for example, Muslim signs were incorporated into the ritual acts of an American fraternal organization, the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, or the Shriners. Thousands of white and later African American males eventually joined the Shriners, which traced their lineage to the "Grand Shaykh" of Mecca and to Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam. They attended lodges named after important Arab-Islamic places like the "Kaaba" and "Medina," and wore red Turkish fezzes on the heads. On the one hand, the Shriner engagement with Islam was burlesque, a marvelous public display; on the other hand, some Shriners seriously studied Islamic history both to establish their fictive links to the Islamic past and to discern the universal message of wisdom in Islam. George Root's *The Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine* (1903, revised 1916), for instance, was a romp through Islamic history that showed how Islam, like all "true" religion, contained the values of science, reason, and the solidarity of all humankind.

For a few, Islamic religion was no burlesque. It was a religion to be taken as seriously as any other. It was the truth. Alexander Russell Webb (1846-1916), who was one of the first prominent white U.S. citizens to convert to Islam, defended Islam as a rational, scientific, and

progressive religion. His small book, *Islam in America* (1893), denied the idea that Islam was the religion of the sword or that it oppressed women. For Webb, Islam was the perfect Victorian religion that stressed propriety and cleanliness as well as ethics and spirituality.

Along with Webb, Afro-Caribbean author Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912) was another nineteenth-century American author to treat Islam as a legitimate religion, one worthy of study and human respect. Blyden's classic, *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race* (1887) represented a scholarly break-through in the Anglo-American study of Islam since it examined how Islamic theology and ethics shaped the indigenous Muslim cultures of West Africa. According to Blyden, Islam in West Africa promoted human equality and built indigenous black civilization. It contributed to the building of black nations, the molding of black character, the development of industry and philanthropy, and the education of black minds. His understanding of Islam's positive influence on people of African descent would be repeated over and over by African American Muslim converts in the twentieth century.

Many other nineteenth-century themes in the U.S. understanding of Islam and Muslims would be repeated in the early academic studies of Muslims in the United States. Though Muslim slaves and early Arab immigrants had received some coverage by journalists in the nineteenth century, the formal study of Muslim Americans was pioneered by sociologists from the 1930s to the 1950s. That it was sociologists who first studied Muslims should comes as little surprise: during the middle of the century, anthropologists largely studied persons outside the United States; most white historians had little interest in ethnic and racial minorities until the 1960s; religious studies had yet to be established as a real field; and Islamic studies was pursued mainly in Europe.

In a very real sense, the sociological study of Islam and Muslims was meant to address the direct or indirect threat that Muslims represented to the internal security and cultural cohesion of the United States. Images of Muslims alternated between the fearful political radical and the pitiful religious dysfunctional. Sociologist Erdmann Beynon's 1938 article on Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam explored accusations of human sacrifice within the movement, but concluded that the movement was largely a product of displaced, working-class black Americans trying to achieve social status. Even more print was generated inside the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which as part of its domestic surveillance of African American social movements begun after the 1919 Red Scare, tracked the Moorish Science Temple, the Nation of Islam, and other "potentially radical" groups (Donner 1980).

During this period, the FBI was rightly concerned, in a sense, about African Americans' loyalty to the United States. The million and a half blacks who had moved north as part of the migrations between World War I and World War II joined with black immigrants from the Caribbean and northern blacks to create various social and political movements expressing solidarity with colonized people around the world. Like their nineteenth-century emigrationist forebears, Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and African American religious groups such as the Moorish Science Temple and Nation of Islam specifically questioned the stake of African Americans in the American nation-state, imagining their communal allegiance to lie elsewhere—with people of African descent, with Moors, and/or with Muslims. In the 1930s, some pro-Japanese activists generated sympathy among some African Americans for the idea of "colored solidarity," the uniting of all non-white people. While such movements never really amounted to any direct security threat to the American nation-state, the symbolic challenge to white supremacy was palpable (Allen 1994).

In its analysis of that threat, FBI field agents and even anonymous scholars hired by the FBI to study African American new religious movements downplayed these groups' religious nature. Calling these movements "cults," they maintained that groups such as the NOI were religiously-veiled movements that hid the political aspirations of movement members and the chicanery of movement leaders. The mainstream white press largely cooperated in this effort, disseminating images of black Muslim movements as "improper" religion, as Sylvester Johnson has put it. What was *really* behind the popularity of these movements, according to most press accounts, was the pitiful working-class Negro fooled by a member of his own race into giving up his rationality, his finance, and his very agency in the attempt to gain some sense of dignity and self-determination (Johnson forthcoming).

This basic analysis was repeated at least in part by the sociologist of religion who issued what was the first, prominent full-length academic monograph on Muslims, of any sort, in the United States. The publication of C. Eric Lincoln's *Black Muslims in America* (1961) was an important event, linked as it was to other middle-class African American efforts to shroud the civil rights movement in an aura of Americanity. Echoing a sentiment that would be expressed later in Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Lincoln asserted that the Nation of Islam must be categorized primarily as a black nationalist movement. Black nationalism, he said, must be understood to be "first a defensive response to external forces—hostile forces that threaten their creative existence" (43). The actual content of this black nationalist ideology was less important than the role it played in responding to the ill feelings of working class blacks toward their oppressors. "It matters little," wrote Lincoln, "whether the homeland of the dispersal Black Nation is said to be Asia or Africa. For the black nationalist, the black Zion is wherever whites are absent" (63).

According to Lincoln, the group's Islamic identity was incidental to its success as a social protest movement. "So long as the movement keeps its color identity with the rising black peoples of Africa," he argued, "it could discard all its Islamic attributes--its name, its prayers to Allah, its citation from the Qur'an, everything 'Muslim,' without substantial risk to the appeal to the black masses" (210). This was a movement, Lincoln asserted, in which "religious values have a secondary importance," whose main mission was to provide a sense of group solidarity in the midst of racist oppression (26, 43, 46, 215). Islam functioned to veil black resentment in religious garb. Nation of Islam members, like other black nationalists, "are grateful for a mystique, especially a dignified religious mystique that rationalizes their resentments and their hatreds, rendering them spiritual virtues in a cosmic war of good against evil" (46).

Lincoln's separation of Black Muslims from other Muslims as objects of study also served, no doubt unconsciously, the interests of immigrant Muslims who wanted to claim Islam as a source of identity and belonging in America (Curtis 2007). In the postwar period, even as black Muslims Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad dominated press coverage in news magazines and on television and concerned intelligence agencies and civil rights leaders alike (McCloud 1993), scholars began to notice the presence of a new sort of Muslim in the United States. These were C. Eric Lincoln's so-called "Moslems," or as Malcolm X put it, the "orthodox Moslems from Africa and Asia." Though the Arab and South Asian immigrants who came to the United States from 1880 to the 1920s sometimes garnered the attention of the media and even a few scholars, their religious lives, especially those of the Muslims among them, were not the focus of scholarly attention.

It was not until the 1950s and 1960s that these Muslim Americans were studied as religious people. Once again, a sociologist took the lead. Abdo Elkholy (1966) juxtaposed

Muslim Arabs Americans in Detroit with those in Toledo. Elkholy criticized his subjects in Detroit, whom he found to be insufficiently assimilated into American culture. He blamed their working-class economic status, since they worked “almost solely in the auto factories of Detroit.” He also argued that “these Moslems live in a ghetto-like community in Dearborn. Besides delaying the process of assimilation, the residential concentration of the Detroit community has perpetuated the traditional conceptions of family and social relations, as well as of religion and of the sectarian conflict between Sunnis and Shi’ahs” (16). Whereas the building of strong ethnic, kin-based, and religious enclaves would be read later as part of what it meant to be an assimilated, mainstream American (Sollors 1987), for Elkholy such resources were evidence of a failure to assimilate.

But in Toledo, it was a different story. Men, women, and children participated in the life of the mosque, attending Sunday school classes, welcoming inter-faith couples into their congregations, contributing to civic life, smoothing over the generation gap, and proudly proclaiming their pride in America. That hundreds of Toledo Muslims had found economic success in the bar and liquor store business was another sign of Americanization for Elkholy. He noted that much of the $80,000 price tag of the 1955 mosque was paid with liquor money. Elkholy concluded that Muslims who actively participated in mosque activities were more likely to assimilate into middle class American culture than those who did not. Such findings contradicted the assumptions of some social scientists, who thought that “foreign” religions such as Islam prevented strong identification with American values and beliefs.

Elkholy’s image of the well-assimilated American Muslim was, however, a fleeting one. First-generation students from Asia and Africa in the 1950s and post-1965 immigrants from Africa and Asia literally changed the face of Muslim America. It is estimated that from 1965 to

1997, approximately 1.1 million of these new immigrants were Muslims (Nimer 2002). While many of these people had no interest in religion, some of them, especially their children, sought leadership roles in the Muslim American community. These Muslims, many of whom had never received formal training in Islamic studies, represented themselves as the authentic voice of Islam, and for the most part, the media, middle-class black leaders, and the intelligence services, otherwise ignorant of diversity among Muslims abroad, believed them (Curtis 2006).

In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars also accepted this vision for the study of Islam in America more generally. With the so-called Black Muslims declared to be "fake," some scholars turned their eye toward the "authentic" black Muslims, slaves who had been forcibly removed from Africa. The only studies of black Muslims worthy for publication, it seemed for a while, were the dead ones—people such as Kunta Kinte who either were Muslim or traced their roots to Islam in West Africa. Alex Haley's *Roots* (1976) captured this historic moment of ethnic identity-making, using his search for a Muslim African ancestor to include African Americans in the immigration drama that made one American. In addition to Haley's bestseller, Terry Alford told the amazing story of Abd al-Rahman Ibrahima, the slave who return to Africa, in *Prince among Slaves* (1986). And Alan Austin (1984) produced what was, from the researcher's point of view, the most useful of all these works—an edited collection of primary sources about Muslim slaves.

In the meantime, the study of contemporary Muslims in the United States began to focus in earnest on the immigrants who had arrived since 1965. In the 1980s, increased attention to the formal study of Muslim Americans echoed larger changes in the academy. Muslims began to be viewed through the lens of multiculturalism. But the Muslim role in the multicultural narrative of the nation was ambiguous and contradictory. The "Muslim" was not just another thread in the

American cultural quilt to be "celebrated." The "Muslim" was also potentially dangerous and transgressive. Postwar U.S. foreign policy combined with an array of cultural, political, and economic interests to make Arab and South Asians, Islam and Muslims, important symbols in the debate over what it meant to be American (McAlister 2001).

The academic literature on Muslim American immigrants attempted to confront the challenge of Muslim marginalization by showing (1) how poor images of Arabs and Muslims were as morally reprehensible as any other stereotype (Shaheen 1984); (2) how one-sided U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East was rightly challenged by Muslim American immigrants (Haddad 1991), and (3) how Muslim American immigrants, like all other immigrants, were normal human beings struggling with the tension between assimilating into mainstream American culture and preserving their traditional Islamic values. It was this last thread that became truly dominant in the Islam in America literature.

Yvonne Y. Haddad emerged as the *doyenne* of this school of thought, producing a remarkably diverse and long list of publications on Muslims in the United States and Canada. In her 1987 book, *Islamic Values in the United States*, co-written with Adair T. Lummis, she claimed, seemingly forgetting about Elkholy's work, that "no other study has attempted . . .to consider the role of the mosque/[Islamic] center in helping Muslims to integrate into American life and culture" (6). Using interviews and questionnaires, Haddad and Lummis showed that "some Muslims are feeling at home and welcome assimilation into American life, while others are genuinely concerned that it will jeopardize the maintenance of Islamic values" (171). This theme, the conflict between Islamic values and assimilation into American literature, has had great staying power in the scholarly literature. Even in 2000, John Esposito, in an introduction to *Muslims on the Americanization Path?*, co-edited with Haddad, argued for this intellectual

framing of Muslim American experience: "Integral to the experience of Muslims, like all religious or ethnic minorities, is how to deal with the question of integration or assimilation. . . . The primary question facing Muslims in America is whether or not they can live Muslim lives in a non-Muslim territory." (3, 5). Such language utilized the intellectual categories of nation and religion, or "America" and "Muslim," to obscure other primary questions facing Muslim Americans—mundane, everyday questions like how to get a job, how to get into medical school, or recover from alcohol addiction.

But Haddad's contributions to forming the subfield of Islam in America went beyond her specific arguments. Haddad became especially important as an editor of scholarly volumes and convener of conferences and symposia on Muslims in America. In *The Muslims of America* (1991), an edited volume produced from a conference at the University of Massachusetts, her contributors offered coverage of Muslim American politics, Muslim women, Islamic education, Muslims in prison, and more. Then, in *Muslim Communities in North America* (1994), edited with Jane Idleman Smith, Haddad presented, in what is arguably still the most helpful academic work on the diversity of Muslim Americans, twenty-two separate chapters on Muslim religious groups and populations across North America.

Both of these edited works included chapters on African American Muslims and signaled a larger scholarly trend of including black Muslims in the study of Islam in America. A host of scholars in the 1990s and first decade of the twenty-first century attempted to re-insert African Americans Muslims into the scholarship about Islam in America. Aminah McCloud, Richard Brent Turner, Edward Curtis, and Robert Dannin challenged, albeit in very different ways, the lines of religious authority and ethnic separation that had been drawn between Muslim American immigrants and African American Muslims in the academic literature. McCloud (1995)

presented an overview of over twenty different African American Muslim organizations, which had a variety of Islamic doctrinal orientations, sometimes aligned more with Sunni Muslims than with the Nation of Islam. Dannin (2002) unveiled more details about these Sunni Muslim practitioners in an important ethnography. Turner (1997) revealed the important influence of early pan-African thought and the Ahmadiyya movement in the formation of African American Islam. Gomez (2005) unearthed new data on the presence of Muslim slaves in the Americas. Curtis (2002, 2006) insisted on seeing heretical Muslims just as authentically Muslim as anybody else, but also attempted to trace the incorporation of historically Islamic traditions, including Sunni texts and practices, into African American Muslim movements.

Alongside the authoritative peer-reviewed research on both indigenous and immigrant Muslim Americans there developed a popular genre of Islamophobic literature casting American Muslims as a fifth column, a Trojan horse for Islamic terrorism. *Militant Islam Reaches America*!, for example, was the title of a 2002 W. W. Norton book by jihad-watcher Daniel Pipes. Pipes, who became well-known in the United States for his writings about radical Islam and his work with CampusWatch.Org, claimed in this book that militant Islam was the greatest threat to the West since Soviet communism. He argued that militant Islam's supporters advocate the imposition of *shari'a*, or Islamic law and ethics, in every country around the world, including the United States, where a great many militant Muslim immigrants are ready to use various ends, both violent and non-violent, to replace the Constitution with the Qur'an. Pipes denied the presence of a "clash of civilizations" between Islam and the West; he asserted, instead, that there is an internal war within Islam between more "modern" views of the faith, which are more secular in nature, and militant Islam, an ideology that seeks the destruction of American-style democracy in favor of Islamic fascism.

These polemics about the "Muslim threat" treated Muslims in the United States primarily as a foreign presence, as persons untouched by the historical contexts in which they moved and operated. In this style of historical narrative, the Muslim protagonists were seen either as foreign agents, or in a more sympathetic light, as humans struggling to reconcile their "traditional" Islamic views with "modern" American culture. Pipes equated Americanization with secularization, entirely missing the well-established idea, no matter what one's political bent, that religion has always played a role in American public life. American-ness was constructed as an ideal-type—often middle-class and white in nature—against which Muslims can be measured.

Oddly, this Islamophobic literature thus appropriated some of the same questions asked by the more respectable scholars of Islam in America, but simply gave different answers. If the question was whether Muslim Americans were successful assimilating into American culture, the Islamophobic answer was that, regrettably, the Muslim could not do so by virtue of being Muslim. It was crude, but it did resonate with various readers who were often predisposed, by virtue of their political and religious prejudices, to distrust Muslims.

During the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century, the study of Islam in America emerged as a critical and legitimate matter for study in a whole host of academic fields, especially in religious studies and anthropology. It became impossible to speak about those studying Islam and Muslims in the United States as a class of scholars. Instead, various scholars from various fields constructed narratives about Muslim Americans that were often part of larger disciplinary and interdisciplinary projects and not confined solely to the subfield of Islam in America. Leonard (2003) produced the first full-length survey of the literature on Muslim Americans and grouped the literature under several often intersecting themes, including "the development of ethno-racial Muslim communities," "converging histories of the late twentieth

century," Muslims in the public sphere, "identities," "Islamic discourses and practices," and "becoming American."

During this period, religious studies scholars exposed the diversity of religious thought and practice among Muslim Americans, making it impossible to speak of any one Muslim American position on a religious issue or topic. Haddad and Smith (1993) looked at five "sectarian" Muslim American communities, including the Druze, a group that is itself an off-shoot of the Ismaiʻili Shiʻa Muslims. Linda Walbridge (1997) documented the long presence of Twelver Shiʻa Muslims in Greater Detroit, emphasizing the ebb and flow in this community's attempt to preserve their distinctive religious traditions. A number of studies on Sufi Muslims, or those Muslims who seek intimacy with God through various pietistic and sometimes mystical practices, appeared, as well. Hermansen (1997) offered a useful survey of the various Sufi groups in the United States. Trix (2001) and Webb (1994) offered more in-depth treatment of two different Sufi communities in Michigan and Pennsylvania.

Metcalf's edited work (1996), perhaps the most innovative of religious studies books on the topic in this era, brought together a number of religious studies scholars to examine the notion of "space" among Muslim Americans. Chapters in the book revealed the kinds of domestic, international, national, regional, gendered, and ritualized spaces that Muslims had created in their homes, on the street, in their mosques, and in their bodies. The American mosque itself was analyzed from multiple perspectives. Kahera (2002) discussed the aesthetics and gendered space of the mosque, while Bagby's co-authored 2001 report on the American mosque became a much cited study that explored the demographics of mosque-goers in the United States.

Of all the topics that scholars of Islam in America studied in this era, none was more popular than women and Islam, which was often constructed both inside and outside the

academy as they hermeneutical key in understanding Islam and Muslims. Much of the scholarship on Muslim American women was written by Muslim American women themselves. It was generally progressive and activist in nature. Webb's *Windows of Faith: Muslim Women Scholar-Activists in North America* (2000) featured leading voices in American Islam, including Amina Wadud, Mohja Kahf, Amina McCloud, Riffat Hassan and Azizah Hibri. Abou El Fadl (2001), a scholar at UCLA, outlined a case from within Islamic law for gender equality and pluralism. Safi's *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism* (2003) contained a section on gender justice, including a chapter on gay and lesbian sexuality in Islamic tradition.

Anthropological literature rendered the everyday politics and culture of Muslim American life in far more ethnographic detail than had previously been available. Carolyn Rouse's groundbreaking *Engaged Surrender: African American Women and Islam* (2004) described the lives of African American Sunni women in Los Angeles who engaged the Qur'an and Islamic religious traditions in efforts to live their lives ethically. They applied their own readings of Islamic texts to every aspect of their lives--from what they ate to how they lived with their husbands. Loukia Sarroub (2005) celebrated how Yemeni American school children turned their public schools into places where they, in tandem with their teachers, could question competing religious and cultural identities. JoAnn D'Alisera (2004) charted the transnational and diasporic identities of Sierra Leonean Muslim Americans in the nation's capital.

If the first decade of the twenty-first century is any indication, the number of academic studies on Islam in America is not likely to decline anytime soon. In addition to popular books on Muslim Americans by journalists Geneive Abdo (2006) and Paul Barrett (2007) , anthologies of Muslim American writings have appeared by Wolfe (2002), Abdul-Ghafur (2005) and Curtis (2008). An encyclopedia of Islam in the United States has been published (Cesari 2007), and a

new synthesis of Muslim American history is in press (Curtis forthcoming). This abundance of scholarship suggested that after 9/11, Muslim Americans, like Muslims as a whole, became increasingly popular sites for both the academic and popular gaze. As some non-Muslim Americans surfaced their anxieties over what they feared was the violent, woman-hating, intolerant, and generally backward nature of Muslims, many scholars and journalists sought to protect the Muslim body from state detention, media manipulation, and mob violence. No matter what non-Muslim Americans thought about Muslim Americans, it was clear that Muslim Americans had now become a symbol central to the life of politics and culture in the United States.

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