

Islamophobia

Historical Antecedents: Changing Perception of Islam

- Edward Said: *Covering Islam* (1981). Post-oil crisis conjuncture and the new image of Islam in the Western media: "immediate and unrestrained, functioning like a proper name."
- Immediacy of the image vs. Narrative causality.
- Dad Tuastad: "New Barbarism" thesis. Neo-conservative writing in the US in the 1990s: a *specific connection* between "terrorism" and the "Arab" or the "Muslim mind."

A Short History & Definition

- Runnymede Trust Report (1997): “Islamophobia” (xenophobia, Europhobia): “a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam—and, therefore, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims.”
- Islamophobia attributes an essentially evil and specifically violent and oppressive nature to Islam in a *reductive and stereotyping* manner which *forecloses* rational, analytic and informed response. NB. Not a doctrine, but an affective-discursive formation developed in the media and public sphere.

Islamophobic Statement

- (i) “Muslims are prone to violence”
- (ii) “Muslims are extremists”
- (iii) “Muslim men oppress women”
- (iv) “Muslims engage infiltration”
- (v) “Muslims are sexually dysfunctional”
- These affective ideas or statements, all of which are negative, disturbing and anxiety-ridden (violence, extremism, oppression, secrecy, perversion) are often linked to each other in a fluent, associative chain and are *projected* onto the Muslims: securing a moral position in a phantasmatic way.

Islamophobic Fantasy

- Racism: not a doctrine, but a fantasy
- Phobic object (object of desire) is a response to internal needs (psychic dynamics or fluctuation).
- It is always found: phobia is attached to, or projected onto an external, actual object. ("Islam")
- Construction of an imaginary scenario (reduction, distortion).

Islamophobia as Racism 1

- Racism is an operation of racialization: selection of racial markers (skin color, physiological features) on the border between nature and culture.
- Franz Fanon's analysis of "Negrophobia" and anti-Semitism. Culture as racial marker: Islam's excess religiosity. Violent, backward, oppressive, a "threat", i.e. a radically non-negotiable cultural difference.

Islamophobia as Racism 2

- Corporeal schema, clothing as second skin.
- Muslim woman's veil as a surface of racialization. Race and gender functioning through each other.
- The veil is made the metonymy of Muslim culture as such, constructing patriarchal gender oppression as the essence of this culture.
- The narrative of "saving Muslim women from oppression."
- The veil as the blind spot in the field of vision.

Islamophobia and Securitization

- Jihadism as terrorism.
- Fantasy is a constitutive part of reality.
- Self-fulfilling prophecy, positive feedback loop (consolidation of Islam).
- E. Said's opposition between immediacy of image vs. narrative mediation and Terranova's criticism: mutation of orientalist hegemony in the media: *affect* functions as passage between between ideas and facts.
- Islamophobia as an essential element of the new assemblage of security or securitization.