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## FREEDOM AND ORTHODOXY

A profile of Anouar Majid, *Freedom and Orthodoxy: Islam and Difference in the Post-Andalusian Age*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004. 288 pp. \$49.50 (cloth); \$19.95 (paper).

**M**AJID'S SECOND WORK OF NON-FICTION contains a survey of recent literature on globalization and a historical argument that "the West" has been using Christianity to conquer the world since 1492. Majid believes that if the U.S. does not cease trying to remake the world in its own image, then catastrophes far worse than 9/11 are in store. In his opinion, increasing economic inequality and cultural imperialism threaten to destabilize the world. This book, which would be more accurately titled "American Globalization from 1492 to the present," can be divided into two parts, the method in each being an assortment of reviews of scholarly texts. In the first half of the book, Majid makes a historical argument that America's current involvement in Iraq is part of a colonizing mission against Muslims and Native Americans that dates back to 1492 Spain. In the second half of the book, Majid surveys several recent books on globalization, his favorite among them being Sophie Bessis' *Western Supremacy: The Triumph of an Idea*.

A strong critic of American foreign policy, Majid's work suggests that the motivation behind America's current involvement in Iraq is not to spread freedom but to Christianize the world. Dealing with English language sources, Majid spends the first half of the book explaining the Christian motivations behind America's treatment of Muslims and Native Americans during three time periods: 1492, 1776, and during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The second half of the book is a survey of contemporary writings on the perils of globalization. The historical thesis in the first half of the book is that Europeans and Americans have been trying to colonize, conquer, and convert the world since 1492 as evidenced by their similar treatment of Muslims and Native Americans. Majid ends the work with a call for an increased respect for local cultures, or what he calls provincialism, rather than a wider spread of Christian consumerism.

After a brief discussion of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in the first chapter, Majid chooses three historical periods to illustrate his thesis that surface economic and political aims camouflage the crusader impulse, with religion playing a less visible but undiminished role in each. In 1492 the motivations fueling Spain's two-front war against the Muslims and Aztecs were explicit, as in the words of Bernal Díaz del Castillo: "We came here to serve God and the king, and also to get rich." In the second chapter, Majid refers to Harvey's *Islamic Spain* and Todorov's *The Conquest of America* as his main sources for linking Catholic Spain's *Reconquista* with the conquering and converting of the New World.

The second period is revolutionary America, where Majid provides a multitude of examples illustrating these correspondences in the minds of the colonists. Sylviane Diouf's *Servants of Allah* and Robert Allison's *The Crescent Observed* are two sources among many, which Majid successfully mines to link "Moors" and "Indians" in the American "social imaginary." Majid also points out the hypocrisy of building a nation on both liberty and slavery. Certainly Majid is correct that issues of race and religious pluralism are still important in America over two centuries after the signing of the Constitution.

Majid argues in Chapter Four that from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, the religious element in colonization has become hidden beneath economic imperialism. Majid invokes a diverse set of textual sources to support his argument, including European descriptions of his native Morocco (Majid is particularly fond of Edith Wharton), portrayals of indigenous peoples in Mexican literature, and Abdelrahman Munif's *Cities of Salt* quintet. Here Majid concludes his historical argument that "The Muslims' plight is basically the same as Native Americans'—both are engaged in various forms of resistance to repeated colonial incursions and policies of dispossession."

In the final two chapters Majid refers to the attacks of September 11 as a "peril of empire" that will only get worse if the U.S. does not reconsider its economic and cultural imperialism. Here his method is to survey contemporary works on globalization. In chapter five, Majid refers to Hardt and Negri's *Empire* and Bobby Sayyid's *A Fundamental Fear* as suitably identifying "Muslim Otherness," before suggesting that Sophie Bessis' book is the best work on America's globalizing efforts. After this meditation on the effects of American imperialism, Majid ends with an ethical call for pluralism and respect for a multiplicity of cultures and peoples. Majid argues that to be a cosmopolitan world citizen is a pretentious desire for homogeneity and control, while instead we should be humble in recognizing that we are all provincial. In other words, provincialism, or respectful dialogue between cultures, is preferable to cosmopolitanism, or the Americanization of the world.

The title is misleading in that readers will be disappointed if they pick up this book hoping to learn more about Islam. The book discusses freedom, orthodoxy, and difference, not in regards to Islam, but in terms of Christian America. Of these four complex concepts, Majid explains what he means by freedom the most clearly when he argues that the only kind of freedom America tries to export is that of excessive materialism. Perhaps Majid's earlier work *Unveiling Traditions: Postcolonial Islam in a Polycentric World* contains more information about Islam, but here the focus is clearly on Christian America. As a Moroccan American writer Majid is clearly concerned with issues of hybrid identities, but here he often assumes the categories of "the Muslim world" and "the West" even while criticizing Samuel Huntington's use of them in *Clash of Civilizations*.

Overall, Majid brings together a wide variety of sources in an interesting way and this work is accessible to a general audience. It should appeal in particular to readers concerned with the Americanization of the world and those interested in the religious or cultural history of modernity that continues to influence world politics. Readers critical of the current war in Iraq as an expression of American imperialism will especially appreciate the second half of the book including the concluding chapter which calls for pluralism or "provincialism" against Christian and Muslim messianism.

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