

CHAPTER FOUR

Monstrous Muslims

Historical Anxieties and Future Trends

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ISLAM, MUSLIMS, AND POPULAR CULTURE

Disney's animated film *Aladdin*, released in 1992, was both a critical success and a box-office hit, earning more than \$500 million worldwide. It went on to win several awards, most notably for its music. Unfortunately, not everyone was pleased with the film. The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee protested the lyrics in the opening song, which began with the lines, "Where they cut off your ear if they don't like your face."¹ Other critics pointed out the movie's portrayal of Aladdin and Jasmine, the protagonists, as characters with Anglo features that contrasted with the dark-skinned and exaggerated racial features of the villains in the film. Filled with a smorgasbord of exotic locations, dress, and objects, *Aladdin* is typical of what Americans associate with Islam. Many of the representations of Muslims in American popular culture are rooted in these images of the fantastic—flying carpets, magical genies, and exotic landscapes. These images and the characters that accompany them are productions of Orientalism, a system of symbols that relies on the exotic.

The majority of portrayals of Muslims found in American popular culture are of this variety—flying carpets, genies, and magic lamps, what we might call "soft Orientalism." In my 2015 book *Muslims in the*

Western Imagination, I detail the commodification of Orientalism, which functioned as a symbolic consumption of the Orient itself. "In many cases, the consumption was literal—seen in purchasable commodities—textiles, lighting fixtures, furniture, *objects d'art*, jewelry, and other products."² In addition to these products, the Orient is present in metaphorical acts, such as the viewing of an Orientalist painting by Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863),³ reading of a romantic Orientalist novel, or seeing one of the numerous films that feature Muslim characters. The production of these films was part of the larger fad of Orientalism and Egyptology, also evident in popular architecture, that was often featured in theaters and movie houses. The films shown in these venues often highlighted Orientalist themes of the romantic sort—a dashing Arab sheik, damsels in distress, exotic locations, and of course the harem. Although less common in television, the comedy series *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965–70) provided Americans with a variety of images connected to the East and Islam, including the title character, who calls her white husband "master."

The exotic also has a dark side, seen in many of the images of Muslims in literature, film, and television that feature Arab despots, murderous Turkish sultans, and more recently, homicidal terrorists. This is the "hard Orientalism" that is contrasted to the more romantic portrayals that many Americans may be more familiar with. As Edward Said wrote, there is a stock type of Muslim character who is "backwards, degenerate, uncivilized, and retarded."⁴ The analysis of Islam in popular culture is typically focused on these negative portrayals of Muslims, which include characters inspired by Orientalism and the more recent villainous types situated in political discourse, such as the hijacker and suicide bomber. Jack Shaheen notes in his study of Arab characters in Hollywood films, "Beginning with *Imar the Servitor* (1914), up to and including *The Mummy Returns* (2001), a synergy of images equates Arabs from Syria to the Sudan with quintessential evil."⁵

Muslims have been a fixture in American popular culture from the earliest days of the nation, even predating the writing of the Declara-

tion of Independence. The United States of America has never had a friendly relationship with Islam; in fact, the earliest references to Muslims express concepts related to barbarianism, violence, and criminality. These references first appeared in stories about the Barbary Coast, where Muslims were referred to the “monsters of Africa.” Muslim characters, first identified with Barbary pirates, appeared in everything from dime store novels to board games. As Paul Baepler writes, “In addition to the published historical accounts of slavery in North Africa, the Barbary captivity topos appeared in at least four early American novels, nine early plays, ten dime-store novels, and almost a dozen Hollywood movies.”⁶ Later, North African Muslims were replaced with Arabs, Persians, and South Asians as characters featured in comics, cartoons, advertising, movies, television, and other modes of cultural production.

Popular culture is a broad subject whose definition and scope has been much debated by scholars. As noted above, Muslim characters appear in a large corpus of materials—advertising, board games, signage, and other materials. In earlier centuries, Americans could purchase such products from a catalogue. “In the absence of a widespread ability to travel with ease, Victorian Americans could simply open the illustrated catalogues, Products from the Orient, to easily recreate the harems, bazaars, and palaces that they read about in travelogues and saw on display in fairs.”⁷ Today, consumers purchase movie tickets, cable television subscriptions, comic books, and other materials that feature Muslim characters and imagery. The vast majority of this imagery is negative. “Islam has become a mysterious and dangerous religion to Western audiences who continue to gain most of their information about Islam from the media,” Mahmoud Eid and Sarah Khan remark.⁸

In this chapter, I will limit the discussion to movies, television, and comic books, due in part to their wide reach and their role in mediating values. The relationship between social beliefs and popular culture is an important one. In the case of Islam, around which a good deal of

anxiety exists, we see the expression of these concerns in movies, television, and elsewhere where Muslim characters, images, and themes are found. The French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu described this relationship as one between the *habitus* (the often unconscious collection of beliefs and attitudes held by a social group) and the modes of cultural production (literature, art, storytelling, movies, television) that reflect the *habitus*. In America, the society's anxieties, beliefs, and values find their way into popular culture, reflecting what people believe about Islam and Muslims and giving them a tactile expression.

Since 2001, many more movies have featured stereotypical and pejorative portrayals of Arabs and other Muslims than pre-2001. Over the past decade, Muslims have appeared in ever more diverse ways in popular culture, a trend that is due to several factors—the visibility of Islam since 9/11, the growing presence of Muslims in various industries, and the popularity of social media, which provides alternative outlets for the production of imagery about Muslims. Although some of the old symbols remain, they are complemented by images of Muslims that challenge the imperial narrative. Contemporary portrayals of Muslims in pop culture range from the sheiks, terrorists, and sultans of Hollywood film to the superheroes, heroines, and social revolutionaries found in comic books.

ISLAM IN THE WEST: A BRIEF HISTORY

Islam is a fixture of the Western imagination, attached to an important set of representations in the popular cultures of Europe and later the United States. From the beginning, Islam has been “the other, the enemy, always the disturbing faction.”⁹ Islam functions as a kind of metric for the way the West defines itself. “By ranking the Other, we are able to define the self, and our self identity as that which we are not.”¹⁰ In Europe, images of Muslims appeared shortly after Islam emerged as a world power. Early imaginings about Muslims, who were called Saracens throughout the Middle Ages, relied on biblical escha-

tology about Satan and the End of Days. The early Saracens were nothing more than “actors in the divine drama of the last days,” identified with the four beasts of the Apocalypse.¹¹

When these ideas became expressed in popular culture—literature, art, and drama—they were situated in anxieties about monsters, the devil, and Christian identity. Medieval representations of Muslims were largely monstrous, seen in creatures such as the *cynocephalus* (dog-headed man), Saracen giant (cannibalistic), and Black Saracen (a demonic killer of Christian saints). The idea of Muslims as non-human was situated in the medieval belief in monsters, fear of the foreign and strange, and the idea that Muslims were a “race of dogs.”¹² In the Renaissance, many of these characters were replaced by Turkish villains representing the threat posed by Ottoman power, typically shown with a turban, surrounded by their Jewish co-conspirators, killing Christ or executing a Christian saint.

During the Age of Exploration, Turkish monsters persisted and were joined by the “Moorish” characters that appeared in the explorers’ early imaginings about the Americas. Scholars have described these imaginings as a product of *Maurophilia*, a process of re-naming peoples and places in the Americas that includes descriptions of American Indians as Moors and the re-naming of Indian cities as Cairo or Baghdad. As Anouar Majid points out, “So interchangeable were Muslims and Indians in the conquistador’s minds that they called Indians ‘Muslims’ and Indian temples ‘mosques.’”¹³ A few centuries later, Orientalism inspired a new generation of Muslim characters, including the decadent and cruel despot, the female seductress, and the oversexed Arab, that still persist today.

Gothic horror was heavily influenced by Orientalism. In fact, scholars have often described it as a genre that combines Orientalism, a resurrection of medievalism, and a pronounced anxiety regarding women and foreigners. Gothic literature includes a long list of Muslim villains, such as the Moorish demon Zofloya, featured in Charlotte Dacre’s 1806 book of the same name, and William Beckford’s homicidal sultan

Vathek (1786), who sacrifices children and has an Indian male lover with green teeth. Like mummies and zombies, after the monsters of Barbary made their way into American literary culture, they entered the cinema. Movies, then television, are the venues for many of the characters and images associated with Islam in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Today, Muslims are commonly featured in revenge movies like the *Taken* franchise, which includes an Arab sheik who holds young American women in a white slavery ring, and television programs like *Homeland*, which despite its harsh representation of Muslims has garnered numerous awards. The majority of the Muslim characters we see are violent men, while Muslim females are often subsidiary, occupying the role of wife, concubine, or captive of the villain. Typically cast as foreigners, these characters rarely reflect the long history of Muslims in the Americas.

MUSLIMS IN AMERICA

The historical presence of Muslims in America is not reflected in the presentation of Muslims in popular culture. As noted above, the Muslim has historically been seen as an Other, an outside, foreign, and exotic identity that is alien to the United States. Much like non-Protestant groups like Catholics, Jews, and Mexicans, Muslims are viewed as external. John Bowen describes this as part of the larger “rhetoric of Islam-bashing.”¹⁴ Even though Muslims are constantly described as un-American, immigrant, and foreign, in reality, Muslims have been present in the Americas since the beginning of the nation, first as individuals forced into slavery, later as immigrants. One of the oldest U.S. Muslim communities is in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, founded in 1934.

Today, Muslims play many roles in American society. Malcolm X is a cultural icon, visible on everything from posters to T-shirts. The late Muhammad Ali, perhaps the best-known American Muslim, also has an iconic status as both an athlete and an activist. Ali is in the company of numerous professional athletes and entertainers. Muslim athletes

include the NFL players Ryan Harris, Aqib Talib, and Isa Abdul-Qudus and the basketball players Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Kenneth Faried, and Nazr Mohammed. Muslims in entertainment include comedians like Dave Chappelle and Maz Jobrani and rappers such as Akon, Mos Def, and Lupe Fiasco.

African American Muslim communities are particularly well established and today they make up the largest numbers of American Muslims. Immigrants also make up large communities of American Muslims, but are far more recent than African American Muslims. White converts, who compose the smallest group of American Muslims, are growing in number and are also becoming more visible as scholars, community leaders, and social activists. Shaykh Hamza Yusuf is one of the best known of these white converts, a respected scholar and co-founder of Zaytuna College, the first Islamic college in the United States.

American popular culture does not typically focus on these Muslims, nor on the long history of Islam in the United States. Instead, the focus is on non-Americans—Arabs, Iranians, and South Asians who live outside the United States. These groups represent particular anxieties about economics (such as the oil sheik, a popular character in film and television), politics (the Iranians featured in movies about hostage-taking), and violence (the Pakistani or Afghan terrorist common in both movies and television dramas). Characters identified as American Muslims have only recently started to emerge and they are few in number. Rarely do these portrayals include African Americans, in part because Islam is viewed as the antithesis to America. Identifying Muslims as Americans continues to be resisted, something seen in both political discourse and popular culture.

AMERICAN HEROES AND MUSLIM VILLAINS

A catalogue of all of the character types, narratives, and tropes associated with Muslims in American popular culture is an immense undertaking. The remainder of this chapter focuses on two types of narratives—one

that examines some of the negative depictions of Muslim men in movies and television, and one that looks at the production of positive Muslim characters in comic books and cartoons. The disparity in these representations shows that, although the vast majority of Muslims in popular culture receive a negative and stereotypical treatment, there is movement away from this standard.

The first type of narrative focuses on the rescue narrative that features an American hero and Muslim villain. Stories of savages (Indians, Africans, Mexicans, Muslims) kidnapping white women, attacking civilization, and threatening American homogeneity originate in the captivity narratives associated with the Barbary Coast and the kidnapping stories involving Native Americans. The captivity narrative is America's "first coherent mythical literature," according to the historian Richard Slotkin.¹⁵ As Greg Siemenski has pointed out, captivity narratives have often functioned politically—against Native Americans, French "papists," and the heroes of the American Revolution held "captive" by British tyranny.¹⁶ More recently, they have been popularized in books, films, and television shows featuring Muslim villains.

In the majority of Hollywood movies, Muslims are associated with faraway lands, harems, palaces, and other symbols of the exotic. According to Stephen William Foster, the exotic is "a great zero, a place-holder about which is elaborated complex semantic systems and cross references defying the imagination of even the most far-out science fiction novelist."¹⁷ Films like the Indiana Jones franchise that feature a bevy of frightening characters from the Orient (including Muslims) have helped establish a particular set of ideas about Muslims that reflect American anxieties and reinforce claims of American exceptionalism. In *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), the East is full of foreign dangers including poisonous drinks, giants, killer snakes, man-eating crocodiles, human traffickers, and human-sacrificing cults. This is the East that necessitates an American hero. As Ella Shohat argues, "The American hero—often cinematically portrayed as a cowboy—is an archaeologist implicitly searching for the Eastern roots of Western

civilization. He liberates the ancient Hebrew ark from illegal Egyptian possession, while also rescuing it from immoral Nazi control, subliminally reinforcing American and Jewish solidarity vis-à-vis the Nazis and their Arab assistants.”¹⁸

Arabs are also popular characters in Hollywood films outside of the adventure-fantasy genre, typically cast as some kind of villain—a rapist, kidnapper, invader, or terrorist. The Arnold Schwarzenegger movie *True Lies* (1994) is one of numerous features that involve a kidnapping, American hero, and evil Arab terrorists. In this film, the Arab villains are gunned down in such an indiscriminate and wild fashion that one loses track of the body count. In the 2008 Liam Neeson rescue-revenge fantasy film *Taken* (now a franchise with numerous installments), the main character rescues his daughter from the clutches of an obese Arab who has plans to rape her. In this film, sexual trafficking is “portrayed as stocking the harems of the Eastern world with young white women, where they will be made to serve the exotic sexual whims of the Orient.”¹⁹

Iranian characters demonstrate the lingering anxiety surrounding the 1979–81 American hostage crisis and its aftermath. The 1991 film *Not Without My Daughter* tells the story of an American woman trapped in Iran during the Revolution who escapes with her daughter from the clutches of a malevolent husband. The movie was based on the book of the same title, which was one of many accounts (both real and fabricated) of white women marrying foreign men from whom they then had to escape. The 2012 film *Argo*, which tells the story of American embassy workers trapped in Iran after the storming of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, also follows the formula of the captivity narrative—with a twist. The American CIA agent who rescues the Americans (who are captives of the Revolution, unable to leave Iran without his help) is an unsavory character, a kind of anti-hero. The film also includes several fabricated incidents that are indictments of American hubris, imperialism, and incompetence.

300 (2006) is a movie that is at first appearance a story about an ancient battle between the Spartans and the Persians. As numerous

scholars and film critics have pointed out, the film is really about the civilizational battle between the West and Islam. Hamid Dabashi called the Persians the “nightmares of the White Christian America,” who function in a “Christological” narrative that professes “hate for being other than white, male, Christian, and heterosexual.”²⁰ The Persians are a monstrous lot, including hunchbacks with filed teeth; deformed lesbians who are part of a sex orgy in a harem lorded over by the Persian king Xerxes, a giant who fancies men; and other scary creatures from the East. The Islamic references in the film include the harem, Persians wearing turbans, Orientalist costumes, and the use of code words about submission, the battle between democracy and barbarism, and civilization. As I have written elsewhere, “300 is not about an ancient battle—it’s about the West’s advanced and modern civilization over Islam’s backward and brutal culture.”²¹

Muslim characters in American television predate 2001, appearing as oil barons in nighttime soap operas and in other minor roles, but there was an exponential increase in the era following 9/11. Among the television shows that scholars have described as being part of the “Terror TV” phenomenon is the Showtime drama *Homeland*, which focuses on the fallout of an American soldier (“Brody”) kidnapped in Afghanistan, held and tortured, and finally released. When he returns home, it is revealed that he has gone to the dark side and become a Muslim—a cruel, sex-crazed, and terroristic Muslim. Even when his storyline fades, the main character Carrie, a neurotic CIA operative who lives on a steady diet of benzodiazepines and coffee, is challenged with bad Muslim after bad Muslim, who kidnap, terrorize, torture, and kill good Americans in many episodes.

In 2015, the producers of *Homeland* hired a team of Arabic linguists to paint graffiti on the set. In a subversive turn against the show, which is thought by many Muslims, Arabs and South Asians (including non-Muslims) to be racist, xenophobic, and Islamophobic, the graffiti team wrote Arabic phrases that criticized the show or even made fun of it such as “Homeland is a joke.” As James Poniewozik wrote in the *New*

York Times, “Arguably, this kind of small detail is the greater problem with ‘Homeland’ and other American dramas set in the region: the tendency to use the signifiers of a culture—clothes, music, street urchins, unfamiliar writing—as a kind of spicy Orientalist soup of otherness. Even in a well-intended drama, if you approach another culture as set decoration, in which the alien appearance matters more than the content, you risk sending a subtle but strong message: this is a terrifying, unknowable land where everything goes squibbly.”²² The fact that no one on the production team knew Arabic, or was familiar with Urdu, Dari, or Pashto, all languages represented on the show, makes a powerful statement about who has the power to represent Muslima in popular culture.

The use of master tropes and narratives includes the white hero, villainous foreigner, and superiority of the United States, and often features a voyeuristic journey through a foreign land such as Africa, Asia, or the Orient. *Homeland* is one case where the “I/eye of empire spiraled outward around the globe, creating a visceral, kinetic sense of imperial travel and conquest.”²³ The effort on behalf of the graffiti artists to reclaim the Arabic language can be seen as part of a larger struggle against this presentation of Muslims, with Americans cast in the role of “armchair conquistadors” who conquer the Orient through their televisions.²⁴

COMIC BOOKS AND OTHER HOPEFUL TRENDS

Islam is typically represented in American popular culture as a problem originating from the Middle East that poses danger to the homeland. However, relying solely on these representations ignores the positive and even transformative characters featured in several areas of popular culture. Recently, the Coca-Cola Company and others have featured Muslims in major advertising campaigns, suggesting that American Muslims are being considered a viable economic demographic. This translates to popular culture as well, since it offers a reflection of the marketplace of American sensibilities about Islam,

which are mixed but perhaps on an upward trend. North of the border, this is reflected in Zarqa Nawaz's groundbreaking television show *Little Mosque on the Prairie* (2007–12). *LMP* is an important show, a production that shows Muslims as normalized North Americans. It counters the negative images in television shows like *Homeland* and *24*. Zarqa Nawaz's female characters are involved in issues that affect all North American women, including "business, personal and marital relationships, feminism," with the addition of Islam and the negotiation of one's religion in a secular society.²⁵ The United States has no comparable television show.

Areas of popular culture outside of movie and television merit analysis. The comic book is one such area. As an important cultural text, it has often been used to support the cultural values of the majority. Such is the case of Captain America. At the same time, the comic is a medium that can be countercultural. Comics featuring African American characters have had a presence for decades. In 1966, Black Panther appeared as a prominent character in Marvel's *Fantastic Four* series. A rich character with social significance (he emerged one year after the assassination of Malcolm X), he remains popular today—evidence of the staying power of comic book characters. The presence of minorities in comics, including as superheroes, reflects the fact that there are numerous spaces in popular culture where alternative representations of Muslims can also be enacted. The emergence of Muslim characters in American comics is so new that it has yet to be examined by most scholars.²⁶ Of these characters, *Ms. Marvel* (Kamala Khan) has garnered the most attention. Marvel Comics' superheroine is a Pakistani-American teenager. She has numerous adventures that include storylines that have her interacting with well-established Marvel characters like Wolverine. Created by two American Muslim women, G. Willow Wilson (the author, a white convert to Islam) and Sana Amanat (the editor of the series, a Pakistani American), Kamala Khan represents an effort to tackle issues like race and gender, which are often ignored in comic books.²⁷ Khan's experiences as a Muslim of color, an American, and a

female are highlighted in the story. "A major development, for instance, is the publisher's conscientiousness towards issues around inclusion and intersectionality."²⁸

The presence of Muslims in popular culture also includes the production of characters originating abroad that have found their way into American media. One example is *Burka Avenger*, a Pakistani-produced cartoon that has an English-language web site and has been the subject of numerous articles. *Burka Avenger* follows the adventures of Jiya, a schoolteacher who dons a *niqab* (a veil covering the hair and face, except for the eyes) when she takes on her alter ego *Burka Avenger*, fighting the Taliban with books as weapons and fighting for the educational rights of children. The popularity of *The 99*, a comic book series originating in the Persian Gulf that features a large cast of Muslim superheroes and heroines, is another example of Muslim characters entering American popular culture from abroad. Much like *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, *Ms. Marvel*, *Burka Avenger*, and *The 99* offer views of Muslims that counter the tropes dominating the landscape of popular culture. While these examples are dwarfed by the large numbers of pejorative representations of Muslims in popular culture, they may represent the beginning of a more positive trend in the portrayals of Muslims in America.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the common representations of Islam in American popular culture? What do they communicate about American identity and the idea of the foreign?
2. Like Iwamura in chapter 1, Arjana draws on ideas of Orientalism to argue that popular culture portrayals of people and religions different from us are usually inaccurate, that they tell us more about the Westerners who produced them than about the people portrayed, and that these inaccurate fictions have consequences for real people from those groups (in these chapters, Asians and Muslims). Do you agree? Why or Why not? If you agree, what

are the consequences of the way Muslims are portrayed in popular culture for actual Muslims?

3. Identify some characters and storylines from popular culture that challenge what Arjana calls the Orientalist depictions of Muslims. What alternative ways of thinking about Islam and Muslims do they provide?
4. Imagine you are a Hollywood producer and you have been given the green light to create a project about an American Muslim superhero or heroine. What qualities would he or she have? How would you identify the hero/heroine as American and Muslim, and what would the challenges be?

NOTES

1. This line was changed in 1993 to "Where it is flat and immense and the heat is intense."

2. Sophia Arjana, *Muslims in the Western Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 103.

3. Delacroix is known for paintings of Oriental subjects that included acts of violence and cruelty. Examples can be found online.

4. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 207.

5. Jack G. Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (New York: Olive Branch Press, 2001), 14.

6. Paul Baepler, "The Barbary Captivity Narrative in American Culture," *Early American Literature* 39, no. 2 (1994): 221.

7. Naomi Rosenblatt, "Orientalism in American Popular Culture," *Penn History Review* 16, no. 2 (2009): 59.

8. Mahmoud Eid and Sarah Khan, "A New Look for Muslim Women in the Canadian Media: CBC's *Little Mosque on the Prairie*," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 4 (2011): 184.

9. Jack Goody, *Islam in Europe* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2004), 7.

10. Eid and Khan, "New Look," 187.

11. John V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 45–46.

12. Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 159.

13. Anouar Majid, *Freedom and Orthodoxy: Islam and Difference in the Post-Andalusian Age* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 74.
14. John R. Bowen, *Blaming Islam* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 113.
15. Michael Sturma, "Aliens and Indians: A Comparison of Abduction and Captivity Narratives," *Journal of Popular Culture* 36, no. 2 (2002): 318.
16. See Greg Sieminski, "The Puritan Captivity Narrative and the Politics of the American Revolution," *American Quarterly* 42 (1990): 33–52. Also referenced in Abraham Michael Rosenthal, "America in Captivity," *New York Times Magazine*, May 17, 1981, 33–35.
17. Stephen William Foster, "The Exotic as a Symbolic System," *Dialectical Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (1982): 21.
18. Ella Shohat, "Gender and the Culture of Empire: Toward a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema," in *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film*, ed. Matthew Bernstein and Gaylyn Studlar (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 35.
19. Casey Ryan Kelly, "Feminine Purity and Masculine Revenge-Seeking in *Taken* (2008)," *Feminist Media Studies* (2012): 10.
20. Hamid Dabashi, "The '300' Stroke," *Al-Abram Weekly*, August 2–8, 2007, <http://weekly.alahram.org.eg/2007/856/cui.htm>.
21. Arjana, *Muslims in the Western Imagination*, 161.
22. James Poniewozik, "'Homeland,' Graffiti and the Problem of Only Seeing Squibbly," *New York Times*, October 15, 2015, http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/10/15/homeland-graffiti-racist/?_r=0.
23. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 104.
24. Ibid.
25. Eid and Khan, "New Look," 196.
26. My forthcoming book co-authored with Kimberly Fox looks at female Muslim superheroes.
27. Miriam Kent, "Unveiling Marvels: Ms. Marvel and the Reception of the New Muslim Superheroine," *Feminist Media Studies* 15, no. 3 (2015): 523.
28. Ibid.