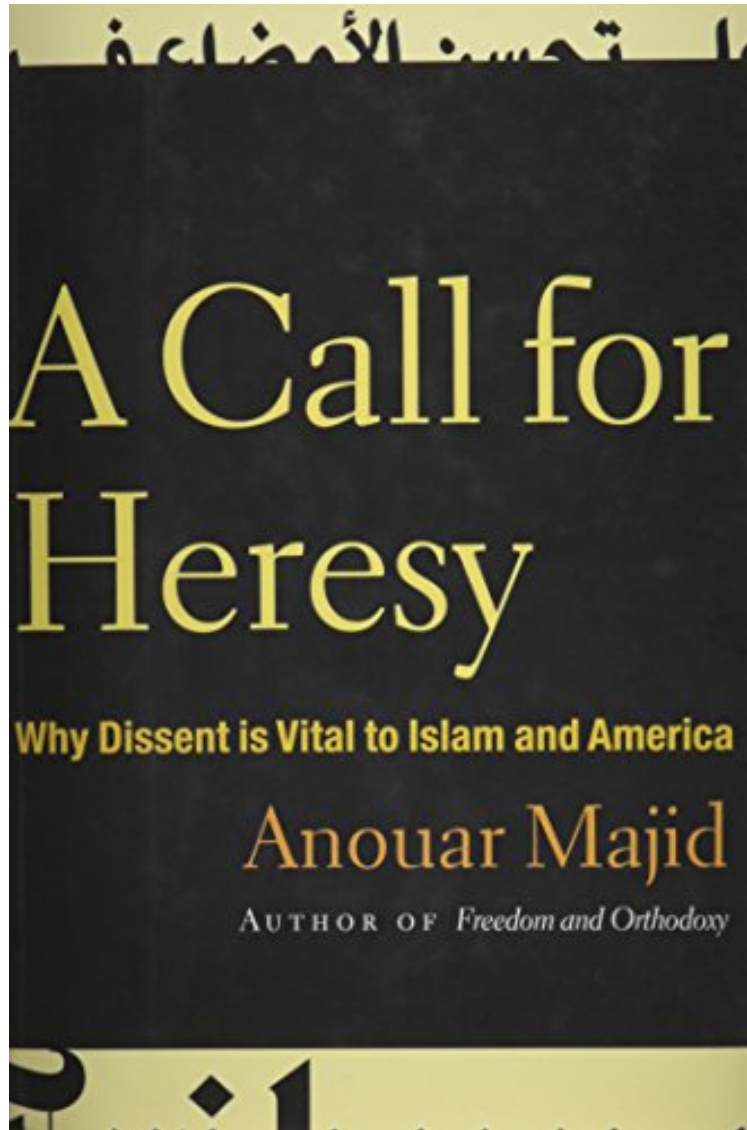


A Call for Heresy: Why Dissent Is Vital to Islam and America

Anouar Majid

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Anouar Majid : A Call for Heresy: Why Dissent Is Vital to Islam and America before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Call for Heresy: Why Dissent Is Vital to Islam and America:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. we know that we have made great mistakes, But there doe's not seem to be ...By panagoulisWay too angry and scary, we know that we have made great mistakes, But there doe's not seem to be other countries that step up to the plate . My family ask me to put the book down, mainly because I became so angry . I 'm equally worried about the author and his role as a professor, who's mind he is screwing up. BAH

HUNBUG0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must-readBy Roger GreenI have had this book for several years. At times I found it a bit hard going but I have always come back to read more of it, and then to re-read it. The early part has good bits but it doesn't carry the reader along - the reader should persist. I am a voracious reader and have the habit (a bad one in some people's eyes) of folding down corners of pages to mark important points - I am now amazed by how many pages have folded corners - more than any other book I own. In the end I find myself wishing that "A Call for Heresy" was more widely read and influential than it apparently is - perhaps that is because it is from a university press. I am something of a long-time student of religion, especially early Christianity and Islam, and also of American history and politics. I find this book to do an excellent job of pulling the two together. I am Canadian but grew up in the US and was subject to its schooling, and I have lived among Muslims in SE Asia. I would highly recommend this book. The one bad review here is simply nonsense - obviously someone with an axe to grind who approached it negatively. I also like Majid's "We Are All Moors", written two years later, and for quite a while I thought it was the better book. It is better written re. style and organization but I now think that "A Call for Heresy" is the more rewarding of the two.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommendedBy Joseph C. Cods1 - The title - A Call for HeresyToday the Muslim world is in deep turmoil. Islam is in crisis. Terrorism is only one aspect of the crisis. Another aspect is the search for intellectual and theological renewal. Thus a Muslim Heretics Conference took place in Atlanta, March 28-30, 2008, which called for an Islamic Reformation similar to the Protestant Reformation. The slogan of the Christian Reformation was "Scripture alone". The slogan of this mini Muslim reformation is very similar. It calls for a return to the Quran alone. Islamic orthodoxy (sunna) has deviated from the original path. The new movement calls for a return to the one and only source of Islamic Revelation, the Quran. This group of reformists referred to themselves as "heretics" in order to emphasize their criticism of the established orthodoxy. What is remarkable about them is that they use a Christian terminology in their theological discourse, the word heresy being typically Christian. It is used to refer to Churches that deviate in one way or another from the orthodox doctrine. In this context, heresy applies to believers who disagree with the orthodox majority on some theological issues.In his book, Anouar Majid uses the word heresy in a rather improper way. He includes in it the unbelievers who reject the notion of Revelation and the central tenets of Islam. This is never openly stated, but is implied throughout the book.2 - The subtitle - Why dissent is Vital to Islam and AmericaWhat is characteristic of the book is that it is highly critical of Islam and America, by someone who has personal ties to Islam and America. Anouar Majid is of Moroccan origin. He is Director of the Center for Global Humanities at the University of New England, Maine. I assume that he was raised in the Islamic faith in his native Morocco, and that he became, after long years in America, secular minded. He is equally distressed by the decadence of the Muslim world and by the deviation of America from the original path, as it was defined by the founding fathers who created a republic based on secular grounds and egalitarian values. His criticism of Islam and America is therefore grounded in deep love for both of them. This makes his book highly valuable not only for Muslims but also for Americans. It is a thought-provoking reading. I highly recommend it, especially for Muslims who live in America.The book reveals a hidden dimension of Islam that is usually ignored in the Muslim world. I am referring here to the first two centuries of Islam, when orthodoxy was still vaguely defined. This allowed for religious and political dissent to be expressed openly and without violent censorship. With the advent of orthodoxy (defined by theologians and enforced by the Abbasside caliphate) an Islamic Inquisition saw the light, and Islam was taken hostage by the requirements of power. The theological intransigence that is observed today is the legacy of that past, which spells obscurantism, spiritual infantilism and religious decadence.Anouar Majid is a very good student of American history. It's the story of how America became a world power and lost her soul in the process. A Christian saint wrote an autobiography which she entitled "Histoire d'une me" (the story of a soul). In its pages devoted to America, Majid's book traces the story of the American soul. There is here a lot to ponder and reevaluate. This is a very advanced reading of American history.Joseph Cods

A Call for Heresy

From Publishers WeeklyMajid, a professor of English at the University of New England, argues that the practice of discussion and dissent, which he broadly dubs heresy, has died in Islamic cultures and in America, resulting in a dangerous stagnation of thought in both groupsa trait the two groups have in common despite their opposition to each other. Majid is tough on Muslims for reacting to the challenge of modernity by desperately clutching to their faith, even where he believes it's unwarranted as with the use of hijab... He says that Muslims, and some Americans, are incapable of engaging in critical self-examination, afraid to suspend their beliefs even briefly for analysis. He laments that his own native, once cosmopolitan Morocco is currently being overtaken by Wahhabism. Heresy, he believes, will revitalize both societies and rescue them from their current suffocation by right-wing conservatives on both sides. His assertion that the Qur'an is of mixed and possibly nondivine origin will certainly not win any Muslim readers to his view, and his assessment of American culture as too religious is not particularly surprising. Majid mainly and excessively quotes other scholars' works, whereas Majid's own original arguments are preferable but too infrequent.

(Sept.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Anouar Majid is professor and founding chair of the Department of English at the University of New England in Biddeford, Maine. He is the author of *Freedom and Orthodoxy: Islam and Difference in the Post-Andalusian Age* and *Unveiling Traditions: Postcolonial Islam in a Polycentric World*, which was recommended by the American Association of University Professors as a book for understanding the context of 9/11. He is also the cofounder and editor of *Tingis*, a Moroccan American magazine of ideas and culture.