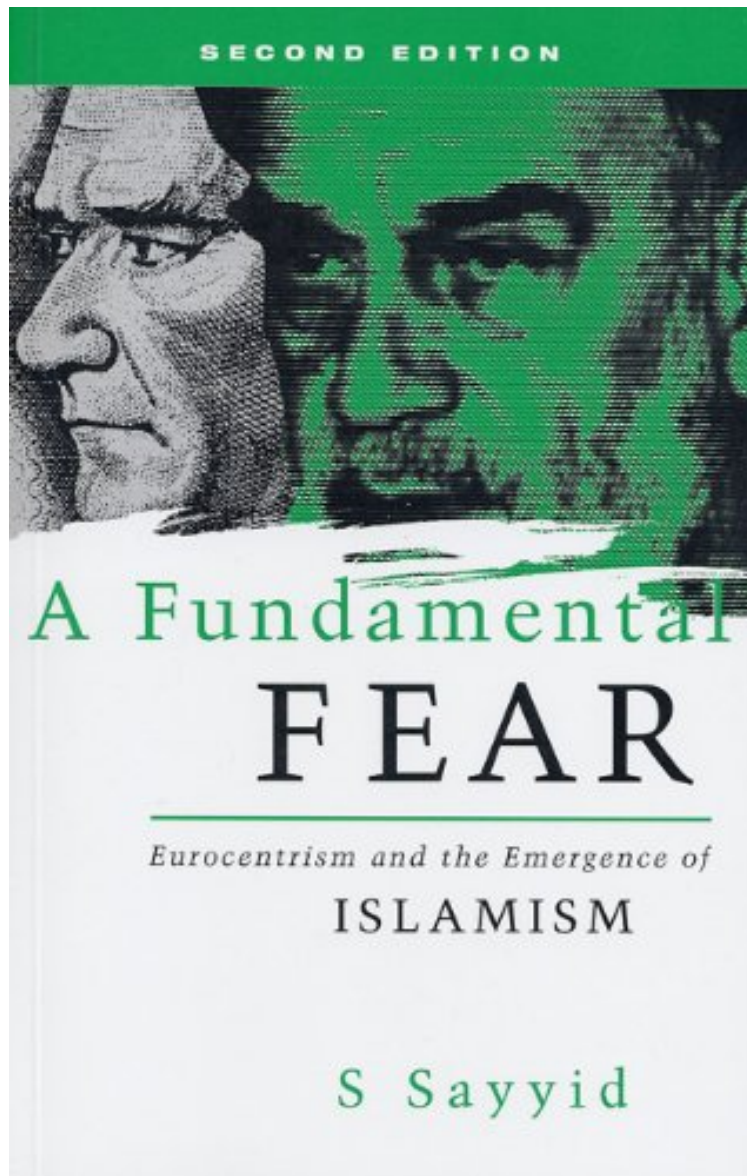


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A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism

Bobby S. Sayyid

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Bobby S. Sayyid : A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism:

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book that actually goes beyond the usual clichés and tries to analyse what is undoubtedly a complex phenomenon. The author offers a radical re-interpretation of political Islam, which while not necessarily compelling in every way, it is at least always interesting. There is much to disagree with the author's analysis, but it is difficult to ignore what he says. The scorched earth style critique the book offers leaves few prisoners. Perhaps, the book is overtly harsh on American academics and Middle East specialists, but it is difficult to fault its relentless logic. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in contemporary politics, while some of the conceptual language takes some getting used to, I found it worth the effort, and I think most open-minded readers will. 8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Timely book that explains the current U.S.- Muslim conflict

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In the aftermath of US cruise missile attacks on Sudan and Afghanistan, it becomes ever more necessary to understand so-called "Islamic fundamentalism". Madeline Albright's declaration of war against "Islamic extremism" highlights how important it for us in the United States have a better understanding of events in the Middle East. If we are going to go to war against over a billion Muslims, we Americans need to know what we are going to war against. The strength of Sayyid's book is that it manages to explain the Islamic resurgence without seeing it as a local difficulty that only happens in one or two special cases. What he seems to be suggesting is that political Islam is nebulous but at the same time powerful force in the world. It is unlikely to be beaten down by 70 odd cruise missiles. The book is organized in 5 main chapters, these chapters place the current Islamic revival in its historical context. The book concludes by arguing that rise of political Islam is linked to the decline of the West and as such it is a phenomena that will continue to perplex and confound our policy makers until we come to terms that our days as undisputed "masters of the universe" are over. 8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. American Imperialists vs Islamist Rebels?

By A Customer
Americans in post 9-11 or those wedded to postivist models of social analysis will not get this book. They will complain that it does not provide data, there is no surveys, there is not ethnography, no statistical models. This book will not tell you how to spot an Islamist, it will not tell you how many people there are in HAMAS. So why rate this volume so highly? The merit of this book is that it tells what the contemporary conflict between Islamists and American imperialists is about. The author argues that Age inaugurate by Columbus appropriation of the Western hemisphere (which coincided with ethnic cleansing of Muslims and Jews from Spain) is in crisis. The unraveling of the myth of western/white superiority is making increasingly difficult for the western global state to manage the world through persuasion that it has all the good ideas, thus to preserve its superiority it has to flex its military muscle to an increasing extent. The author suggests that Islamism has taken hold of the Muslim imagination, because it does not kow-tow to the western model, as such the attempt to destroy Islamism can only be understood as attempt to preserve the current global order. No doubt the author would see the war against terrorism as war between imperialists and rebels.

This is a provocative account of the ways in which Muslim identities have come to play an increasingly political role in recent years. Theoretically innovative, it shows how Islamic movements -- despite the wide variety of their manifestations -- are best understood as a continuation of political and cultural decolonization. The fear and anxiety aroused by the so-called Islamic threat is not a myth nor is it simply a consequence of terrorism or fundamentalism. The emergence of Islamism signals the end of the uncontested notion that West is best. As the author demonstrates, Islamism means having to rethink Western identity and its place in the world, having to come to terms with the idea that the West is just another civilization among many. This study draws upon the full breadth of poststructuralist thought as a means of better understanding Islamism. As such, it is necessary reading for all those who are interested in the Muslim world -- in both its state and diasporic forms -- as well as academics concerned with questions of race and place in a poststructuralist context.

"Sayyid's book has considerable intellectual and personal drive, showing how the adoption of a poststructuralist perspective can alter our perception of important matters of cultural politics." --Nations and Nationalism
"A theoretically sophisticated attempt to read contemporary Muslim political identities as a symptom of Eurocentrism's decline." --Global Society
"A welcoming change... should be of great interest to those who wish to look at the phenomenon of political Islam and the divination of the clash between the West and the rest from a more sophisticated and theoretical angle... a worthy contribution." --Impact International
"[Sayyid] takes a fresh look at how Islam has reached its much-maligned status... Not only is [Sayyid] polemical, incisive and engaging, he is at times poetical. His use of metaphor and analogy serves to illustrate the complexity of the issues that he is putting across." --Sociology