

MULTICULTURALISM, ISLAM AND THE CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS THEORY: RETHINKING ISLAMOPHOBIA

105

Gabriele Marranci

In this article, I discuss how Islamophobia is not an unfounded hostility against Islam, but a hostility that has its last raison d'être in the fear of multiculturalism and its consequences. To demonstrate this hypothesis, the article analyses the opinion, expressed by Huntington and shared by some intellectuals and politicians, that we are experiencing a clash of civilisations between the West and Islam. By contrast, I argue that Europe perceives Islam as a transruptive (Hesse 2000) force that, through transculturation processes, might be able to challenge the alleged Judaeo-Christian heritage of Europe. Islamophobia stems from the defence and resistance against the possible effects of real multicultural contacts between Islamic values and European-Western ones.

KEYWORDS multi culturalism, Islamophobia, racism, Euro-Islam

Introduction

What is Islamophobia after September 11th 2001? Why does the Huntingtonian (Huntington 1993, 1996) clash of civilisations theory seem to mark the political relationships between the West and Islam? This article tries to discuss these two questions. Islamophobia has been described as a form of racism as well as an unfounded fear of Islam. Islamophobic attitudes are increasingly pervading not only mass media (Ruthven 2002), but also European political life (Mustafa 2002). The aftermath of September 11th has been marked by an increase of special laws that aim to prevent terrorist acts from Muslim extremists. Although many European politicians are keen to argue that all these laws are

not against Islam, but against terrorists, the language that they use and actions that they undertake led Muslims to have the opposite impression.

As I shall discuss in the next paragraphs, after September 11th, the myth of a Europe founded on Judaeo-Christian values has been reinforced by marking the differences between Islam and the West rather than trying to undermine them. Why does Europe, as a socio-political entity, feel the need to mark such imagined boundaries between the Islamic culture and what Huntington, along with other intellectuals, call 'the Western civilisation'? I suggest that Europe fears that, in a real multicultural environment, Islam might transform what Europe is today (or maybe wants to be in future). So, Europe asks its Muslims to become *Muslims of Europe*, in other words Muslims that re-elaborate their cultural and religious meanings to become citizen of a new Europe, which include also Islam. But, at the same time, Europe acts in such a way that Muslims can only remain *Muslims in Europe*; in other words, aliens in a Christocentric European environment. Islamophobia is part of this process and has socio-political effects that are affecting Muslims as well as non-Muslims.

'Take Care There is a Muslim Here!'

Djamal, one of my Algerian friends living in Italy, had an incident with his scooter. He broke his right shoulder and was hospitalised for a week. When I went to visit him, he was sharing his hospital room with four Italian men. While I was in the corridor, one of his roommates approached me, and, whispering in my ear, said 'Take care, there is Muslim here, an Algerian. We do not know where he is and who he is'. I was surprised, but I could easily guess who the Muslim man may have been. Then, the man went back to his bed and, smiling to Djamel said again, 'you know, we have to be careful, we have a Muslim in this ward, I think an Algerian man'. 'Really?' answered Djamel, looking at me and laughing. The man turned his face back to me, 'Do you know this guy?' Pointing to Djamel, 'He is a very kind person. When I need it, he helps me a lot. He is the kindest person here'.

On the Runnymede Trust web site (www.runnymedetrust.org), in accordance with their 1997 publication *Islamophobia — A Challenge for Us All*, we read that 'the term ... *Islamophobia* has been coined to refer ... to anti-Asian racism in general and anti-Muslim racism in particular'. In other words, Islamophobia is seen as a special, sophisticated, form of racism. Physical characteristics were, and are, particularly important in the construction of racist theories. The Nazi scientists and anthropologists tried to identify, and then re-image, the physical characteristics of Jewish people (for instance, the hooked nose) to develop and reinforce their anti-Semitism. Cultural representations and physical stereotyping assisted Italians and Germans (as well as other Western and non-Western societies) to develop a 'fear' and a 'hate' for the Jewish people. However, in particular after September 11th, people tend to stereotype Muslims on the base of religious features rather than body-physical characteristics. It was not because

of the colour of the skin or because of his Pakistani origin that a Sikh was killed by an American on 15 September 2001, but because the Sikh's turban and a seemingly Muslim-like beard style had misled the killer, who thought he was killing a religious Muslim.

In the hospital, the Italian man was not able to recognise Djamel as a Muslim. The man was only interested to warn other people of an invisible, dangerous, alien presence: 'Take care, there is a Muslim here!' Indeed, if you only look at his face, Djamel could have been, for instance, an Italian or Spanish, or Greek, person, so the Italian man could not identify him as such a threatening presence. Muslims neither have peculiar physical features, nor define themselves as an ethnic group as the Jewish community tends to do (a point recognised in the British law by the exclusion of Muslims as Muslims from the *Race Relations Act* 1976). For instance, racist labelling could not be applied to Muslims as a group, because there are many Western people who convert to Islam. Some of them might even decide to fight alongside terrorist groups as we have seen in the case of Johnny Walker, the so-called American Taliban (Mardsen 2002). Hence, cultural and religious signifiers are the most important factors for developing *Islamophobia*.

The Clash of Civilisations: Institutionalising Islamophobia?

The mass media as well as thousands of commercial publications and articles concerning Islam have tried to explain to non-Muslims what Islam may be (see, for instance, Trifkovic 2002). Rather, what they tend to present to the reader is a distortion and grotesque image of it (for more about this topic, see Ruthven 2002, Poole 2002). As we have seen, it is not through the stereotyping of physical characteristics that *Islamophobia* spreads, but through the misrepresentation of the Muslim world, and the representation of their life-style as alien from Western society. The misuse of Islamic texts, the reproduction of orientalist, and colonialist images of Muslim men as violent and patriarchal and of Muslim women as submissive and oppressed, of which also academia is not immune (see, for instance, Shankland 2003, 70), facilitate the representation of Islam as barbaric culture, and hence founded on anti-Western values. In this way, Muslims are increasingly represented as members of a threatening 'transnational society', in which people want only to 'stone women', 'cut throats, and 'beat their wives'. Inevitably, of course, some people may then feel the need to defend the 'Western civilisation' against this 'enemy within'. To use the words of the Italian primer minister, Silvio Berlusconi:

We are proud bearers, *conscious of the supremacy of our* [Western] *civilisation*, of its discoveries and inventions, which have brought us democratic institutions, respect for the human, civil, religious and political rights of our citizens, openness to diversity and tolerance of everything ... *Europe must revive on the basis of common Christian roots.* (*The Guardian*, London, 27 September 2001; 15, emphasis added)

Before Berlusconi's statement, an influential Italian journalist, Oriana Fallaci, wrote an essay concerning September 11th. It was then published as a small book, entitled *The Rage and the Pride*. In Italy alone, it sold more than 700,000 copies in matter of days. In this essay she argued:

I consider them [the terrorists] people who want to show-off and nothing more. And, in the case of those who pray to Allah, [they want] a place in the Paradise of which the Koran speaks: the paradise in which heroes fuck [sic.] the Uri.

... I say: Wake up, people, wake up! ... you don't understand, or don't want to understand, that what's under way here is *a reverse crusade*. Do you want to understand or do you not want to understand that what's under way here is a *religious war*? A war that they call Jihad. A *Holy War*. A war that doesn't want the conquest of our territories, perhaps, but certainly wants to *conquer our souls*. ... They will feel authorized to kill you and your children because you drink wine or beer, because you don't wear a long beard or a chador, because you go to the theatre and cinemas, because you listen to music and sing songs... (Fallaci 2001; translation by author and emphasis added).

Fallaci's words may be seen as a hysterical and irrational reaction to the tragic events of September 11th. Yet her sentiments and emotions have elements in common with some (but recently not only) right-wing European politicians, who strongly believe that the Western world is threaten by something called 'Islamic civilisation'. Among others, one of the most explicit Islamophobic politicians was the Dutch media presenter and politician Pim Fortuyn. He published a book entitled *Against Islamicization of our culture* (Fortuyn 2001), in which not only did he try to show how Islam was incompatible with Western culture, but also dangerous for the survive of 'Western civilisation'. In 2001, he defined himself as the 'Samuel Huntington of Dutch politics' and stated 'I am ... in favour of a cold war with Islam ... I see Islam as an extraordinary threat, as a *hostile society* ... If I can legally manage it, I would say: no Muslim come into this country any more' (quoted in Lunsing 2003, 20; emphasis added). Are Berlusconi, Fallaci, and Fortuyn¹ (and similarly Le Pen in France), alongside many other politicians, Islamophobic? If we look at the definition provided by Runnymede Trust Commission:

[Islamophobia is] an unfounded hostility towards Islam. It refers also to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs. (Runnymede Trust 1997)

We could only agree that they are, because of their idea of Islam as fixed and monolithic. It would be easier to blame Berlusconi, Fallaci, Fortuyn, and Le Pen of ignorance and mass media dependency. Yet it is important to acknowl-

edge that their Islamophobic attitudes are rooted into a complex socio-political ideology. Samuel Huntington has argued that:

the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural ... The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future. (1993, 22)

He indicated eight 'major civilisations' that will interact with each other in different ways. However, according to him, the main conflict will be between the 'Western civilisation' against the Confucian and Islamic civilisations. Huntington has emphasised that the struggle:

occurs at two levels. At the micro-level, adjacent groups along the fault lines between civilizations struggle, often violently, over the control of territory and each other. At the macro-level, states from different civilizations compete for relative military and economic power, struggle over the control of international institutions and third parties, and competitively promote their *particular political and religious values*. (Huntington 1993, 29; emphasis added)

It is to the religious and cultural values that Huntington paid more attention, particularly in his book *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996), in which the question mark of the previous essay (*Clash of Civilizations?*) was removed. According to him the 'Velvet Curtain of culture' would replace the 'Iron Curtain', by finding its most dangerous front in the historical, military confrontation between the Christian civilisation and the Islamic one. We may try to understand what led Huntington to interpret the relation between Islam and 'Western culture' as a conflictual dichotomy. It was the assumption that Islam (and at a certain level Confucianism), challenges the 'perfect' and progressive Greek-Judaic-Christian heritage on which all the West is, according to him, founded.

Of course, Huntington's theory has several weak points as, for instance Fox (2001) and Pippidi and Minreuda (2002) have argued. They have suggested that Huntington has a broad and confusing definition of civilisation, has sharply tried to define where one civilisation ends and the other begins, and finally, has a monolithic perception of the West and Islamic cultures. In particular Pippidi and Minreuda (2002) negatively commented on Huntington's attempt to assimilate American and European cultures into a single model. The recent tensions between France and the United States about the 2003 Gulf War may show that Pippidi and Minreuda's critique was certainly well-founded. Hussein (2003) made another interesting remark. He suggested that the most important weak point in Huntington's model is his view that there would be a transnational link between Confucianism and Islam. Hussein has challenged Huntington's knowledge about Islam, arguing that in both his article and book Huntington seemed unaware of the Islamic theological divisions between 'People of the Book' (Jews and Christians) and *kafir*, disbelievers (Polytheists). Indeed, Hussein (2003) has showed

that, for theological reasons, if transnational links might exist between Islam and other 'civilisations' these could only be developed alongside the Judaeo-Christian line.

Notwithstanding these points, in this article I am not interested in the accuracy of Huntington's theory, but in its political and social effects. What Huntington has expressed in his academic research, is what, as we have seen, many people perceive in their everyday lives and what is often suggested in the current political discourse. Today, the idea of a *clash of civilisations* is not only a fashionable theory, but also a cultural and social reality for a large percentage of Western people. Although I agree with Halliday when he has observed:

It is tempting, but misleading, to link contemporary hostility to Muslims to the long history of conflict between 'Islam' and the West ... without evidence. Even more so is it mistaken ... to ascribe contemporary hostility to 'Islam', to the end of Cold War. (Halliday 1999, 894)

Nevertheless, the language of Cold War, always marked by the antithesis between 'evil' and 'good', has been increasingly adopted by western politicians speaking of Islam. This obscure rhetoric and schizophrenic language concerning Islam, which is often employed by right-wing and populist politicians and then spread by mass media, has facilitated the transfer of unfocused and irrational fears for the future to a more acceptable *Islamophobia*. For instance, a few days after the September 11th attacks in the United States, one of my American friends lost his job. He wrote to me:

I am one of the victims of September 11th, you know, I lost my job because of Muslims, and their God. I lost my job because their evil actions ... next time, if we don't react, what I am going to lose ... my friends, my parents ... life?

In fact, his company had decided to cut its staff many months before the tragic event. However, my friend was now transformed into an economic victim of the 'evil Muslim' rather than the American market. The former was certainly a more noble and acceptable reason for him to be 'sacked', and very few complaints were made against the company's decision.

Islamophobia, as I shall show in the next section, is increasingly, although unofficially, institutionalised. The idea of Islam that challenges and threatens the Western values and life-styles facilitates the misrepresentation of Europe as a Christian monolithic entity. European politicians are in the process of writing the European Constitution, which may help to represent European institutions less as economic entities and more as socio-political unified expression. The 105 'Fathers of the European Constitution' have to face, among many other issues, the increasing pressure, coming from different socio-political sectors of Europe, to acknowledge the Christian values and heritage of Europe. *The Independent* (London) reported:

Yesterday Gianfranco Fini, Italy's deputy Prime Minister [and member of European Convention] proposed that the EU be described as a 'community that share a Judeo-Christian heritage as its fundamental values'. He added: 'we must make more explicit the roots of European identity, which we see as part of the value of the Christian religion'. (28 February 2003, p. 12)

This idea is shared by a large percentage of the members of the European Convention. This is not a surprise, since even the president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing described the European Union (EU) as a 'Christian Club' (*Independent*, 16 December 2002, p. 10).

Muslims in Europe or Muslims of Europe?

I met Hakim at Bristol International Airport. We started to speak about the life of Muslims in Europe, and he emphasised 'After 11th of September, for many Muslims the life has not radically changed. It has only become worst'. With his sarcasm, he tried to make clear an important point, the life of Muslims in modern Europe has never been easy. Events with international resonance, such as September 11th, or the earlier Rushdie affair, have only made acute a chronic condition affecting the European Muslim communities. Muslims are perceived not only as 'aliens', but also as dangerous, even if they were locally born in the West, or have been in the country for several decades. However, it is not the person per se that it is perceived as dangerous, but his/her Islamic culture and identity.

In 1989 the headmaster of the *Lycée Gabriel Havéz* in Creil, near Paris, decided to exclude four Muslim girls from his school because they insisted to wear their *hijabs* (headscarves). This case became known as the 'headscarf affair' and it was not limited to the *Lycée Gabriel Havéz*. One obvious question to ask is why a headscarf can produce such a turmoil. In her essay, 'The issue of the Islamic Headscarf', Dayan-Herzbrun observed:

School has always been held up in France as the paradigm of integration. The highly ideological notion of integration has no legal status and is not easy to define. It goes back to the idea of an attachment to a collective, and more precisely, in the case at hand, to the fusion of individual into a national community. (2000, 71)

What the headscarves, and the girls wearing them, have challenged are basic French values and principles and among the most important the *laïcité* (secularism) of French institutions. In doing so, the four girls have refused to be seen as integrated or assimilated into the mainstream of society on the terms set out by these basic values. When they decided to wear this Islamic symbol, which per se was not different from any other religious as well as non-religious symbols (such as, flags, baggies and so on), they became the 'aliens' of their society, and of course their French school. So, for the authorities, the only logical solution was

to expel (ghettoise) them, in order to 'save' the integrity and cultural homogenisation of the environment. The issue here, I suggest, is not the girls' 'free-will' or agency, expressed in their decision to wear the *hijab*. Indeed, maybe the girls had even different reasons from each other to wear the headscarf, such as religious freedom, identity affirmation, Islamic commitment, and political resistance.

The real issue is the *hijab* itself, its Islamic, or in this case, its Western imagined meanings.² In France, for the first time, the Front National's leader, Le Pen, was one of the two alternative candidates for the 2002 presidential election. His populist and islamophobic political speeches appeared to have some appeal. Like Pim Fortuyn, he presented himself as the last defence against the Islamisation of France and Europe. In Pisa, Italy, I saw a meaningful example of the political use of the fear that Islamic symbols and practice can instigate, when I came across a leaflet of the xenophobic Italian party, the Northern League. It was showing a picture of a group of Muslims praying in their prostration position, and, in capital letters, the caption read 'If we do not stop them, we will have to prostrate like them'. Again, the Northern League, as the other populist parties we have discussed, presented itself as the last 'crusader', that can save our 'civilisation' from Islam. What the Northern League tried to communicate through that picture, was that Islam may change the culture, traditions, and civilisation of the perceived 'us' (the non-Muslim majority), which should be only based on Judaeo-Christian values.

Integration and, although less openly discussed, assimilation of Muslim immigrants and Muslim second-generations are often presented as the best, if not the only, solution to immigration issues (Haddad 2002). However, Muslim immigrants have to deal with a schizophrenic language and political behaviour. On the one hand, Europe asks them to become part of it, in other words to become, if not 'fully' Europeans, at least *Muslims of Europe*; in other words, Muslims that re-elaborate their cultural and religious identity to become citizens of a new Europe, which include also Islam. But, at the same time, Europe acts in a way that Muslims can only remain *Muslims in Europe*; in other words, aliens in a Christocentric European environment to whom tolerance might be only granted. It is Islamophobia and, in particular, what could be called institutional Islamophobia that prevents Muslims to become of Europe.

After September 11th, the Italian government has introduced a new law that forces immigrants, with non-EU citizens, to have their fingerprints stamped on their identity cards. The new immigration law was again presented as a defence against Islamic terrorism; only the Italian Constitution prevented the law being applied exclusively to Arabs or Muslims (as afterwards the US government did). Djamel, my Algerian friend, commented on the new law in this way: 'Now in Italy we have two kinds of citizens: the non-fingerprinted and the fingerprinted ones'.

According to *The Economist*, among the draconian anti-terrorism laws that European countries have so far developed, Britain have the most radical. From

April 2003, the British home secretary has the power 'to strip immigrants of their British citizenship' (*Economist*, 1 March 2003). Furthermore, immigrants who are suspected of terrorist links can be arrested without trial, while a British person is not subject to the same law. Samir, a Syrian living in Bristol, emphasised:

they [politicians] say that these laws are not against Muslims, that they are not against Islam. But how can they say this? Europe have suffered many different kinds of terrorist actions by fascist, communist, and, if you think about Northern Ireland, Christian organisations. Did they [politicians] react in this way? The adjective 'Islamic' seems to have a strong effect on them when they write these laws. These laws affect the freedom of Muslims.

Therefore, in many parts of Europe, Muslims feel in danger for their human rights, economic interests, and now, due to the recent anti-terrorism raids in some European mosques and Islamic cultural centres (*Economist*, 25 January 2003), also for their religious freedom. Newspapers and magazines in Europe are depicting mosques as the lions' den, in which bearded fanatical throat-cutters are meeting to organise the next plot against Western civilisation. This representation leads many European non-Muslims to fear mosques and to limit possible, positive cultural exchanges. For instance, during my fieldwork in Italy, some teachers of an Italian primary school organised a visit to the local mosque. They wanted to show their students that the 'Mohameds' and 'Abdullahs', studying in their classroom, were not different children, but only children who believed in a different faith but in their same God. When the children's parents were told about the initiative, many of them decided to keep their sons and daughters at home, and the planned visit was withdrawn.

Europe requires integration, if not assimilation, of Muslims as *conditio sine qua non* to accept them within its geographical boundaries and cultural life; they have to become *Muslims of Europe*. Hence, there is a strong pressure on Muslims to move towards what Tabi defined as Euro-Islam:

The concept of Euro-Islam is intended to provide a liberal variety of Islam acceptable both to Muslim migrants and to European societies, one that might accommodate European ideas of secularity and individual citizenship along the lines of secular democracy. In other words, Euro-Islam is the very same religion of Islam, although culturally adjusted to civic culture and modern secular democracy. (2002, 17)

At the same time, Europe constantly reminds Muslims that they can only be *Muslims in Europe*, by emphasising Europe's Judaeo-Christian heritage (used as an antibody), developing laws that Muslims perceive as threatening their civic and religious freedoms, marking, in different contexts, the 'us' versus 'them', and reinforcing the impression of an ongoing clash of civilisations.

What in my opinion we find in this 'schizophrenic' attitude is Islamophobia. We have seen that Islamophobia is said to be an 'unfounded hostility towards

Islam'. It is my contention that we need to rethink this definition, and see Islamophobia not as 'unfounded hostility', but a hostility for which reasons may exist.

Rethinking Islamophobia

Western Culture is challenged by groups within western societies. One such challenge comes from immigrants from other civilizations who reject assimilation and continue to adhere to and to propagate the values, customs, and cultures of their home. This phenomenon is most notable among Muslims in Europe. ... In Europe, western civilization could also be undermined by the weakening of its central component, Christianity. (Huntington 1996, 304–305)

In his book (1996), Huntington has explained, more than he did in his article (1993), what, in his opinion, challenges 'Western Culture'. In the first instance, we might think that the 'enemies within' against whom Huntington has spoken out are the immigrants and the settlers, particularly its most 'dangerous' embodiment, the Muslim immigrants. Yet I suggest that, by reading the previous Huntington paragraph from an anthropological perspective, we have to change our opinion. Actually, it is not the immigrant that anguishes Huntington, but multiculturalism and the connected risk of *transculturation* processes.

Indeed, Nye observes that multiculturalism:

Is about more than having a society/nation-state which is made up of people with different cultural identities, and with various clusters and groups which can be called cultures and religions. A multicultural society does not simply have plurality: its political leadership needs to show a recognition of this and to operate with the diversity rather than against it ... (2001, 281)

However, it seems that we are far from such a political recognition, and Huntington is not the only one fearing the effects of multiculturalism:

Multiculturalism means always having to say you're sorry ... Multiculturalism means celebrating Diwali but banning Christmas, it means tolerating a mosque named after Saddam Hussein in the middle of the second bigger city but banning the Union Jack on the ground that it is 'offensive' to minorities. ... Multiculturalism means worshipping all cultures and traditions, other than those of the majority ... it means denigrating our ancestors' achievements and making children ashamed of their country's past. ... Multiculturalism is nothing less than a ruthless, concentrated assault on the glue that binds our society together. (Richard Littlejohn, *The Sun*, 29 May 2002, p. 20)

Multiculturalism not only 'promoted racial, ethnic and other subnational cultural identities and groupings' (Huntington 1996, 305), which Huntington see as negative factors, but also promotes transcultural exchange, so that:

in the constructions of identity, each person and group is changed—British identities have not simply adapted to the presence of alternative cultural forms, they have themselves been transformed. (Nye 2001, 281)

Many people are deeply concerned about this process and take a defensive attitude, by transforming Western culture into 'the Culture'. For instance, Okin (1999) in the book *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* has asked whether cultural practices and cultures that she has defined as sexist should be forced to change or even helped to become 'extinct'. After supporting her statement with examples that go from veiling and polygamy to clitoridectomy and child marriage, she has argued:

[people] *might* be much better off if the culture into which they were born were ... to become extinct (so that its members would become integrated into the less sexist surrounding culture). (Okin 1999, 22–23).

The extinction of any culture is very regrettable; cultures may change, adapt, and modify. Furthermore, what is perceived as barbaric, illogic, absurd by people living in certain cultural contexts, may be seen as civilised, logical and ordinary by people living in other cultural contexts. Indeed, the experience of colonialism has showed that the enforcement of cultural changes are rarely successful and more often dangerous.

Letting the 'other' express himself/herself through culture means every time challenging our cultural position and ask 'Who am I?' and 'Why am I so?'. Huntington's clash of civilisations may be seen as a theory stemmed from the will to resist these challenging questions by opposing a Western supremacy rooted in a (more imaged than real) Judaeo-Christian heritage.

Hesse (2000) has introduced the concept of *transruption* to explain why multiculturalism is perceived as a challenge to the social norms and 'hegemonic concepts and practices' of societies. He has described *transruptions* as:

phenomena that, although related to what is represented as marginal or incidental or insignificant, that is identifiable discrepancies, never the less refuse to be repressed ... Transruptions are troubling and unsettling because any acknowledgement of their incidence or significance within a discourse threatens the coherence or validity of that discourse, its concepts or social practices. (Hesse 2000, 17)

Islam is, among many others, a *transruptive* culture, and religion in Europe. But today in the West, Islam is seen as the most *transruptive*, the culture/civilisation that resists (although through it different and variegated national and cultural expressions) to Western values, challenges the Western concept of democracy, refuses to acknowledge the European exclusive Judaeo-Christian heritage. In other words, Islam becomes the culture/civilisation that 'never the less refuses to be repressed'.

So, is Islamophobia 'an unfounded hostility towards Islam'? It is my contention that Islamophobia is a 'phobia' of multiculturalism and the

transruptive effect that Islam can have in Europe and the West through trans-cultural processes.

Conclusions

Djamel is in his hospital bed, the man from Pisa is still trying to understand who the Muslim man might be. The man introduces his family to Djamel, and again stresses how kind he is. Djamel decides to read the Qur'an and opens a drawer from which he takes his Arabic copy. Now, the man has no doubts about whom the Muslim is. For the rest of his stay in hospital, the man neither would speak to Djamel nor would accept his help. The man likes Djamel the human being, but fears Djamel the Muslim. Between Djamel and the man there is not Islam, but the man's fear of the 'cultural other'. Earlier, Fallaci said that Muslims do not want 'the conquest of our territories ...', but certainly wants to *conquer our souls*'. The soul of which Fallaci is speaking about is not, in my opinion, the 'spiritual' soul, but the cultural 'soul', the Judaeo-Christian 'soul'.

To create a multicultural society, as Nye (2001) has argued, is not enough to allocate a space for the 'other', but also to accept the transformations that the cultural contacts and cultural interchanges with the 'other' may cause. In this article I have tried to show how Islamophobia, today, is increasingly connected to the fear of a real multicultural society, in which Islam may become a recognised and meaningful part of a new Europe.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An earlier version of this paper was presented at Race, Racism & Interculturalism, AAI Annual Conference, Maynooth, Ireland, 8–9 June 2002. I would like to thank the participants for their comments and suggestions. I am grateful to my anonymous reviewers and especially to Malory Nye for their useful comments and ideas. I thank Penelope Pollard for having read and proofed my paper.

NOTES

1. Fortuyn was killed a week before the 15 May 2002 Dutch elections, by an extreme ecologist who declared he wanted to stop Fortuyn's xenophobic and Islamophobic rhetoric.
2. Such as the idea that the *hijab* represents Muslim women's oppression and submission to patriarchal authority (see Dayan-Hezbrun 2000, 74–78).

REFERENCES

- DAYAN-HERZBRUN, S. 2000. The issue of Islamic Headscarf. In *Women, immigration and identities in France*, ed. J. Freedman and C. Tarr. Oxford, New York: Berg.
- FALLACI, O. 2001. *La rabbia e l'orgoglio*. Milan: Rizzoli.
- FORTUYN, P. 2001. *De islamisering van onze cultuur* Uitharn: Karakter Uitgevers.

- FOX, J. 2001. Civilization, religious, and national explanations for ethnic rebellion in the Post-Cold War Middle East. *Jewish Political Studies Review* 13 (2): 177–204.
- HADDAD, Y. Y. 2002. *Muslims in the West: from sojourners to citizens*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- HALLIDAY F. 1999. 'Islamophobia' reconsidered. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22 (5): 893–911.
- HESSE, B. 2000. Introduction: un/settled multiculturalism. In *Un/settled multiculturalism*, ed. B. Hasse. London: Zed Books.
- HUNTINGTON, S. 1993. The clash of civilizations? *Foreigner Affairs* 72 (3): 22–28.
- HUNTINGTON, S. 1996. *The clash of civilizations*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- HUSSEIN, S. A. 2003. On the end of history and the clash of civilizations: a dissenter's view. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 21 (1): 25–38.
- LUNSIING, W. 2003. Islam versus homosexuality? Some reflection on the assassination of Pim Fortuyn. *Anthropology Today* 19 (2): 19–21.
- MARSDEN, P. 2002. *The Taliban, war and religion in Afghanistan*. New York: Zed Books.
- MUSTAFA, H. 2002. Islam and the west in an era of globalization: clash of civilizations or coexistence. In *Muslim Europe or Euro-Islam, politics, culture, and citizenship in the age of globalization*, ed. N. Alsayyad and M. Castells. New York: Lexington Books.
- NYE, M. 2001. *Multiculturalism and minority religions in Britain*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- OKIN, M. S. 1999. Is multiculturalism bad for women. In *Is multiculturalism bad for women*, ed. J. Cohen, M. Howard and M. C. Nussbaum. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- PIPPIDI, M., and MINDREUTA, D. 2002. Was Huntington right? Testing cultural legacies and the civilization border. *International Politics* 39 (2): 193–213.
- POOLE, E. 2002. *Reporting Islam. Media, representations of British Muslims*. London and New York: Tauris.
- RUNNYMEDE TRUST. 1997. *Islamophobia*. www.runnymedetrust.org/meb/islamophobia
- RUTHVEN, M. 2000. *Islam a very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- RUTHVEN, M. 2002. Islam in the media. In *Interpreting Islam*, ed. H. Donnan. London: Sage.
- SHANKLAND, D. 2003. *The Alevis in Turkey: the emergence of a secular Islamic tradition*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- TABI, B. 2002. Muslim migrants in Europe: between Euro-Islam and ghettoization. In *Muslim Europe or Euro-Islam, politics, culture, and citizenship in the age of globalization*, ed. N. Alsayyad and M. Castells. New York: Lexington Books.
- TRIFKOVIC, S. 2002. *The sword of the prophet*. Salisbury, MA: Regina Orthodox Press.

Gabriele Marranci (author to whom correspondence should be addressed),
Aberdeen University, School of Divinity and Religious Studies, King's
College, Aberdeen, Scotland, UK. E-mail: g.marranci@abdn.ac.uk

