

been represented variously as villains, oppressed veiled women, exotic belly dancers, rich sheikhs with harems, and most remarkably as terrorists. While representations of Arabs and Muslims as terrorists continue with increased dedication after 9/11, the second significant shift is that sympathetic portrayals that humanize Arab and Muslim Americans have entered the mainstream. Prime-time TV dramas—such as *The Guardian*, *The Education of Max Bickford*, and *7th Heaven*—have explicitly sought to counter representations of Arabs and Muslims as terrorists and fundamentalists, backward and uncivilized. Instead they present Arab and Muslim Americans as unfair targets of hate and discrimination. Through prime-time TV dramas, stories of Arab and Muslim Americans being misunderstood, detained, harassed, attacked, and murdered have entered U.S. living rooms, reaching millions of viewers.²

This shift toward representing Arab and Muslim Americans and portraying them sympathetically is particularly significant when considering how audiences have been positioned throughout the history of representations vis-à-vis Arabs and Muslims in the U.S. media.³ Over the past four or five decades,⁴ the majority of television and film representations of Arabs and Muslims have been as terrorists, seeking to elicit a celebration from the audience upon their murder (e.g., *True Lies*, *The Siege*, and *Executive Decision*). Within this historical framework, contemporary prime-time TV dramas evoking sympathy

2. For example, an estimated 25.2 million people in the United States tuned into *The West Wing*'s post-9/11 special episode, according to Nielsen ratings.

3. Granted, how various audiences read and interpret media is not passive, but complex and varied. As José Esteban Muñoz (1999), Ien Ang (1991, 1995), Purnima Mankekar (1999), and others have demonstrated, audiences have agency; audiences accept, reject, resist, critique, identify, disidentify, and interpret the media with which they come into contact. Hence an insistence has arisen within cultural studies to examine not only the site of the production of an image, but also various sites for its reception. A thorough examination of reception is beyond the scope of this chapter, which seeks to examine dramatic televisual narratives produced for public consumption.

4. The inauguration of the state of Israel in 1948 and particularly the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 are turning points in representations of Arabs in the U.S. media. Before 1967, reflective of a Eurocentric colonial ideology (see Shohat and Stam 1994), Arab men were largely represented as rich and exotic, living in the desert outside of civilization with harems of women. Some were good and some evil. The good Arabs often required help from white men to defeat the evil Arabs. After 1967, Arab men came to be predominantly represented as terrorists, and Arab women became absent from representations (see Shohat 2006, 17–69; Naber 2000).



from viewers are a noteworthy development. Sympathy is a device used to gain audience identification and is usually associated with a "good" character as opposed to an "evil" one. In portraying Arab and Muslim Americans as victims of injustice, sympathy is sought from viewers, and an attempt is made to rework the hegemonic racial configuration that marks Arabs and Muslims as fanatical terrorists who threaten U.S. national security. Instead of presenting Arabs and Muslims as justifiable targets of hate, violence, and discrimination, some TV dramas represent Arab and Muslim Americans as unfair targets of misdirected fear and anger.

As the events of September 11 had the effect of confirming the stereotype of the Arab terrorist, some writers and producers of prime-time television programs created a new type of character and story line in an attempt to avert the dangerous potential of the stereotype. Characters that humanize Arab Americans were introduced along with story lines reflecting Arab and Muslim Americans in a post-9/11 predicament, caught between being associated with the terrorist attacks by virtue of ethnicity or religion and being American. Such TV episodes told the tale of the unjust backlash against Arab and Muslim Americans, seeking to garner audience sympathy as opposed to blame and hatred. Thus within some mainstream representations of Arabs and Muslims, there has been a shift from celebrating the murder of Arab terrorist characters to sympathizing with the plight of Arab Americans after 9/11.

This chapter examines a selection of TV dramas that represent the plight of Arab and Muslim Americans post-9/11. The central questions I pose are: How are Arab and Muslim Americans represented in TV dramas since 9/11? How are race, religion, citizenship, and nationalism configured in these representations? What kinds of explanations are offered about the current historical moment and alleged crisis in national security? What stories are being narrated to the U.S. public about Arab/Muslim Americans through the media? What is the relationship between media viewership and citizenship? I argue that the TV dramas examined here, even when seeking to resist hegemonic racist configurations of the monolithic Arab Muslim terrorist, participate in reworking U.S. sovereignty through narrating ambivalence about racism in the case of Arab and Muslim Americans. I conclude by considering how media viewership is a form of virtual citizenship through which viewer-citizens are interpellated into national discourses through the virtual courtroom in TV dramas.

AMBIVALENCE

AN

According to Giorgio Agamben, sovereignty is the power to suspend the law. By ambivalence, I mean concurrently unjust and unreasoned through "exception" for a suspension of established abuses of power. Agamben's Western politics is that, in other words, he writes, becomes "a system rest[s]" (Agamben, in an exceptional state "not through a perpetual 'state of emergency' power, such as detention of Muslims, and waging wars

By ambivalence in the case referring to an undecidedness of good and bad and has been the civil rights movement. In the case of sovereign power, it would be illegitimate in the case of 9/11 often featured politicians. Profiling is good or bad, and indefensible and as if racialization and racism in an exceptional state of national

In order for this thing to had to be reconfigured after momentary diversity and Arabs and Islam. By momentary American citizen came to and united in the "war on terrorism" as terrorist and Arab groups became temporarily while Arabs and Muslims

AMBIVALENT RACISM, MOMENTARY MULTICULTURALISM,
AND ARAB/MUSLIM RACIALIZATION

According to Giorgio Agamben, ambivalence is central to modern democratic sovereign power. By ambivalence, Agamben means regarding the same act as concurrently unjustifiable and necessary. Such a breach in logic comes to be reasoned through “exceptional” moments of crisis, which the state uses to call for a suspension of established codes and procedures to legitimize government abuses of power. Agamben claims that what characterizes modern democratic Western politics is that the exceptions have become the rule. The state of exception, he writes, becomes “the hidden foundation on which the entire political system rest[s]” (Agamben 1998, 9). Thus the United States is not necessarily in an exceptional state of crisis during this “war on terror,” but rather operates through a perpetual “state of exception” to justify and enable exercising unilateral power, such as detaining, deporting, and denying due process to Arabs and Muslims, and waging wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

By ambivalence in the case of Arab and Muslim Americans post-9/11, I am referring to an undecidedness about racism. Given that racism cannot be both good and bad and has been established as unjust over the past few decades since the civil rights movement, in order for this ambivalence to justify U.S. sovereign power, it would be necessary to reconfigure racism as bad in general but legitimate in the case of Arabs and Muslims after 9/11. News and talk shows often featured politicians and civil rights lawyers debating whether or not racial profiling is good or bad, right or wrong. Racism came to be articulated as wrong and indefensible and also reasoned as necessary for a short period of time (as if racialization and racism can be contained) because the United States is in an exceptional state of national security.

In order for this illogical ambivalence to acquire weight, race and racism had to be reconfigured after 9/11. This adjustment was accomplished through momentary diversity and simultaneous racialization and criminalization of Arabs and Islam. By momentary diversity, I am referring to a process by which the American citizen came to be ideologically redefined as diverse instead of white and united in the “war on terror,” defined in opposition to Arabs and Islam, signified as terrorist and anti-American. Thus non-Arab, non-Muslim racialized groups became temporarily incorporated into the notion of American identity, while Arabs and Muslims were racialized as terrorist threats to the nation. By

racialization, I am referring to the process of assigning derogatory meaning to particular bodies distinguished by ethnicity, nationality, biology, or geography, as well as legitimizing discourses, in this case the process by which the categories “Arab” and “terrorist” came to be conflated, consolidated, and interchangeable. Thus racism toward Arabs and Muslims is configured as legitimate and racism toward other groups illegitimate. Rachad Antonius (2002) refers to this process of justifying racism specifically towards Arabs and Muslims as producing “respectable racism.” By defining racism toward Arabs and Muslims as legitimate or respectable, even necessary, not only are individual acts such as hate crimes or employment discrimination condoned, but government practices of detaining and deporting Arabs and Muslims without due process are enabled. By racializing Arabs and Islam, producing momentary diversity as the paradigm of U.S. citizenry, and articulating ambivalent racism, the Constitution and principles of democracy come to be suspended based on the logic of the state of exception, and thus, according to Agambem (1998), furthers U.S. imperial power.

The TV dramas examined in this chapter on the surface appear to contest the dominant positioning of Arabs as terrorists, Islam as a violent extremist ideology, and Arabs and Islam as antithetical to U.S. citizenship and the U.S. nation. These TV programs are regarded as “liberal” or socially conscious as they take the stance that racism toward Arab and Muslim Americans post-9/11 is wrong, while other TV dramas do not (e.g., many TV dramas, such as *Threat Matrix*, *JAG*, *The Agency*, narrate that U.S. national security is at risk because of Arab Muslims). Nonetheless, despite somewhat sympathetic portrayals of Arab and Muslim Americans, they narrate the logic of ambivalence—that racism is wrong but essential—and thus participate in serving the U.S. government narratives.

I argue that, ultimately, discourses of the nation in crisis not only trump the Arab American plight, but also inadvertently support U.S. government initiatives in the “war on terror.” I further claim that these prime-time stories seek to bring viewers into various national debates to participate in a form of virtual citizenship and serve as a racial project to redefine U.S. borders, U.S. citizens, and the position of Arabs and Muslims vis-à-vis the U.S. nation. This chapter specifically examines two episodes from the prime-time dramatic series *The Practice*.⁵

5. This study is part of a larger project that examines representations of Arab and Muslim Americans in the mainstream U.S. media after 9/11, including TV dramas, news reporting, and nonprofit advertising.

The programs examined are prime-time television, the slot for television programming with the largest viewing audience, targeting post-9/11. Nielsen ratings indicate that the given program during these stations (ABC, CBS, NBC) are comedies (sitcoms), “reality” shows, and prime-time genres, dramatic series, because most address serious issues and tend to represent institutionalized power, the legal system. *The Practice* (1997 to 2004), it tells the story of courtroom verdicts. It is part of *Blue*, and others that represent the struggle to pursue justice while navigating such prime-time dramas in the wake of events of 9/11.

TV dramas are critical sites to define a racial project as “simultaneous” nation of racial dynamics, along particular racial lines, to explain the current racial conflict and Muslim Americans have become a threat to the United States, a variety of other post-9/11 government measures to detain, deport, and Muslim Americans, and their citizenship rights. In other words,

6. While reality television shows do not carry the same reputation for depicting facing individuals and the nation (most notably *The George Lopez*).

TV DRAMAS AS RACIAL PROJECTS

The programs examined are a sampling of the prime-time TV drama genre. Prime-time television, the 8–11 P.M. time slot, is the most sought-after time slot for television program producers because it lends itself to the largest viewing audience, targeting people at home after a standard nine-to-five workday. Nielsen ratings indicate that eighteen to thirty million viewers tune in to any given program during these prime-time hours on a major television network station (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX). The majority of programs in this time slot are comedies (sitcoms), “reality” television programs, and dramas. Of these three prime-time genres, dramatic series are considered to be “quality television” because most address serious and realistic issues reflecting news stories.⁶ They also tend to represent institutions of authority: a government agency, the police, or the legal system. *The Practice* is about the legal system. Broadcast on ABC from 1997 to 2004, it tells the story of lawyers and their cases and culminates with courtroom verdicts. It is part of a genre that includes *Law and Order*, *NYPD Blue*, and others that represent institutions of authority, and individuals seeking to pursue justice while confronting ethical and moral dilemmas. After 9/11, such prime-time dramas became forums to articulate and work through the events of 9/11.

TV dramas are critical sites for post-9/11 racial projects. Omi and Winant define a racial project as “simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines” (1994, 56). TV dramas interpret, represent, and explain the current racial dynamics in which Arabs, Arab Americans, Muslims, and Muslim Americans have come to be signified as terrorists, anti-American, and a threat to the United States and its citizens. TV dramas operate alongside a variety of other post-9/11 racial projects, such as the PATRIOT Act and government measures to detain, deport, and monitor Arabs, Arab Americans, Muslims, and Muslim Americans, that mark Arab bodies as dangerous and undeserving of citizenship rights. In other words, racialization is not only promoted on the state

6. While reality television programs have gained a large prime-time audience, they do not carry the same reputation for quality as dramas that seek to reflect and engage with real-life issues facing individuals and the nation. Similarly, while some sitcoms do take on issues such as racism (most notably *The George Lopez Show* and *Whoopie!*), most focus on interpersonal relationships.

level, but operates through a complex web that includes media discourses, institutional measures, and individual citizenship acts (e.g., hate crimes).⁷ TV dramas sometimes collaborate and at other times resist collaborating with government discourses. Either way, they explain these racial projects and the controversies surrounding them to the public and offer viewers subject or citizenship positions in relation to such national debates.

As TV dramas narrate, explain, and debate government-initiated racial projects, they also operate as racial projects themselves. Through performing ideological work, rationalizing or contesting government measures that redistribute resources along racial lines (such as who gets a lawyer, who is eligible for citizenship, who gets a visa, a job, etc.), and articulating momentary diversity, they participate in defining and redefining racial dynamics (which bodies are threatening, deviant, suspect, criminal, terrorist, and un-American and therefore merit and justify denying rights). The connection between media and government is particularly palpable when examining these TV dramas that not only respond to and represent post-9/11 national debates, but also represent government agencies such as the police and court system. The story lines within the programs examined revolve around these institutions and therefore, I later argue, have a particular significance in positioning the audience as a virtual citizen. While other programs might encourage viewers to imagine themselves in relation to fashion or sexuality trends (MTV), or family (sitcoms), for example, these prime-time TV dramas encourage viewers to think about national issues and debates and their own relative position as citizens.

DEBATING ARAB AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE VIRTUAL COURTROOM

The Practice takes viewers into the courtroom and after 9/11 into debates about the rights of Arab and Muslim Americans. On an episode entitled "Bad to Worse" (initially aired on December 1, 2002, and rebroadcast several times since), an airline seeks to bar Arabs from being passengers on their airplanes in the name of safety and security after 9/11. An Arab American man is suing the airline for discrimination, and the preliminary case goes to court. It is clear that the Arab American man, who is a university professor, is innocent and the unfair target

7. See Volpp (2003).

of discrimination, but the case involves the racial profiling of Arabs and Muslims. In the episode, a young white woman, named Dole, a young white woman, is "We Don't Fly Arabs," and the most security conscious airman, while defending the airline, aware that she takes it on to further her career, argues that racial profiling is justified and necessary, and asks whether there are legal grounds for such a ban.

This particular episode, like other TV dramas, represent specific occurrences of racial profiling of non-Arab passengers on airplanes, including Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians, and their removal from flights. A Muslim man was removed from a flight in New Jersey because of his name, and therefore the pilot had to call the FBI. A Muslim man in Texas was barred from an American Airlines flight because he was "to be suspicious." Dozens of Arab Americans have filed suits for being barred from flights, and some have been searched, extra security, and some have been asked to remove their children from an Airlines flight.⁸ Meanwhile, a Republican writer Ann Coulter, who has argued that the United States should invade Muslim countries, "furthered the public opinion that the United States should invade Muslim countries."⁹ Further, she publicly expressed the opinion that

8. See the Council on American-Soviet Relations, <http://www.casr.org/civilrights2002/>.

9. "Inquiry into Secret Service Security," <http://www.annecoulter.com/2001/US/12/28/rec.agent.a>.

10. Council on American-Soviet Relations, <http://www.casr.org/civilrights2002/>.

11. See <http://www.annecoulter.com/>.

of discrimination, but the case is heard to determine whether or not the racial profiling of Arabs and Muslims after 9/11 can be reasoned to be justifiable. Ms. Dole, a young white woman lawyer, is hired to defend the airline, whose slogan is “We Don’t Fly Arabs,” and it seeks to advertise and publicize itself as “the most security conscious airline in the new world.” Ms. Dole is conflicted about defending the airline, aware of the racism and injustice inherent in the case, but takes it on to further her career. A debate ensues in the courtroom over whether racial profiling is justified and whether certain biases can be considered reasonable or whether there are legitimate forms of racism.

This particular episode and others correlate with actual events, as they represent specific occurrences. After 9/11, for example, there were instances of non-Arab passengers on airlines complaining about and refusing to fly with Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians who were mistaken for Arab, leading to their removal from flights. A Muslim man was escorted off his America West flight in New Jersey because other passengers were uncomfortable with his presence and therefore the pilot had *the right* to exclude him.⁸ An Arab American Secret Service agent on his way from Washington D.C. to President Bush’s ranch in Texas was barred from an American Airlines flight because the pilot found him to be suspicious.⁹ Dozens of Arab, Muslim, and South Asian Americans filed suits for being barred from flying, and many submitted complaints for the extra searches, extra security, and racial profiling. In Lincoln, Nebraska, a Muslim woman was asked to remove her *hijab* in public before boarding an American Airlines flight.¹⁰ Meanwhile, news programs featured debates on whether or not it was just to profile Arab and Muslim Americans racially to ensure safety. Republican writer Ann Coulter, best known for her comment that the United States should invade Muslim countries, “kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity,”¹¹ furthered the national debate on racial profiling when she publicly expressed the opinion that airlines ought to advertise the number of civil

8. See the Council on American-Islamic Relations’ 2002 Civil Rights Report at <http://www.cair-net.org/civilrights2002/>.

9. “Inquiry into Secret Service Agent Barred from Flight.” CNN.com. <http://www.cnn.com/2001/US/12/28/rec.agent.airline>.

10. Council on American-Islamic Relations’ 2002 Civil Rights Report. <http://www.cair-net.org/civilrights2002/>.

11. See <http://www.anncoulter.com> (Sept. 13, 2001).

rights lawsuits filed against them by Arabs in order to boost business. When asked how Arabs should fly if discriminated against, she replied that they should use flying carpets.¹² Through the “Bad to Worse” episode of *The Practice*, the viewing audience participates in this debate as jurors in a virtual courtroom.

According to the debate within the virtual courtroom of *The Practice* about discrimination against Arab Americans, citizens have one of two options: political correctness or safety. The choice becomes clear, as there are grave consequences. If political correctness is chosen to avoid being racist, then safety is forfeited. As for electing safety over discrimination, not all racisms are alike in keeping with how the debate is framed: some are reasonable, others are not. Racism is reduced to political correctness and political correctness reduced to useless pleasant etiquette. Here is where we see the construction of the discourse of exceptionalism: racism is wrong except in certain cases and only during *exceptional* times of crisis. The CEO of Seaboard Airlines, the fictional airline represented in the episode, claims it would not be reasonable to discriminate against African Americans, but it would be and is reasonable to discriminate against Arabs, Arab Americans, Muslims, and Muslim Americans. As is often the case, “Arab,” “Arab American,” “Muslim,” and “Muslim American” are conflated and used interchangeably as if they denote the same identity.¹³ The attorney for the Arab American client, Mr. Furst, and the airline CEO debate the issue of political correctness versus safety in court:

Mr. Furst: What if research showed that blacks were more likely to commit mayhem on a plane?

12. “An Appalling Magic,” *The Guardian Unlimited*, May 17, 2003. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/usa/story/0,12271,957670,00.html>.

13. Omi and Winant have referred to this type of conflation as the consolidation of oppositional consciousness and attribute the erasure of difference and diversity within communities to being a common phenomenon of racism (1994, 66). To clarify, “Arab” refers to persons from a collective of countries in North Africa and West Asia. There are approximately 300 million Arabs in the Middle East. “Arab American” refers to persons who are citizens or permanent residents of the United States and who trace their ancestry to North Africa or West Asia. There are approximately 3 million Arab Americans in the United States. “Muslim” refers to persons who practice the religion of Islam. It is estimated that there are 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide. “Muslim American” refers to persons who practice the religion of Islam and who are citizens or permanent residents of the United States; estimates are at 7 million.

Airline CEO: I would consider that bias to be unacceptable.

Mr. Furst: There are no alternatives to discriminating against all of them.

Airline CEO: Starting with them should get the same court case.

Mr. Furst: We don't have a choice.

Airline CEO: How do you want to live?

The CEO's assumption is that safety and in order to make his company as he desires. What is the right to be racist? The “right” to be safe? Do Arab Americans win this debate, safety trumps racism, and eliminating racism is more important to be safe than it is concerned with being politically correct. In this case African Americans' conceptualization of America is necessary to the logic of racism against all racialized groups. It becomes necessary to consolidate racism against into a coherent war (the war on terror) in order to hold: that racism is both necessary at this time. Thus, momentary racism against Muslims and to create respect surrounding the right to be safe. Closing arguments through:

Mr. Furst and Ms. Doan's children for additional evidence. Daughter recently told him: cans used to be required by

Airline CEO: I would never exclude against blacks because I would consider that bias to be unreasonable. This prejudice isn't.

Mr. Furst: There are 1.6 billion Muslims in the world. So you're discriminating against all of them because of the actions of 19? That's reasonable?

Airline CEO: Start your own company and run it the way you'd like. I should get the same courtesy.

Mr. Furst: We don't give people the right to be a bigot in this country.

Airline CEO: How about the right to be safe?

The CEO's assumption is that Arabs and Muslims are a threat to flight security and in order to make passengers safe, airlines should have "the right" to bar Arabs from their flights. Moreover, as a CEO, he has "the right" to run his company as he desires. What "rights" will be protected? Do people have the "right" to be racist? The "right" to run their business as they wish? The "right" to be safe? Do Arab Americans have citizenship "rights"? According to the terms of this debate, safety trumps all other rights during times of crisis. Safety requires racism, and eliminating racism compromises safety. Ultimately, it is more important to be safe than it is not to discriminate; times are too urgent to be concerned with being politically correct. Furthermore, other racialized groups, in this case African Americans, are momentarily incorporated into the dominant conceptualization of American national identity during this "crisis" in order to consolidate the new racialized enemy. The inclusion of African Americans is necessary to the logic of exceptionalism. If we can simultaneously be racist against all racialized groups, then these are no longer exceptional times. It becomes necessary to consolidate groups that have been historically discriminated against into a coherent whole (U.S. citizens of all backgrounds united against the war on terror) in order for the logic of ambivalence within the argument to hold: that racism is both wrong and necessary against Arabs and Muslims at this time. Thus, momentary multiculturalism is used to racialize Arabs and Muslims and to create respectable or legitimate forms of racism. This debate surrounding the right to be racist and the right to be safe is elaborated in the closing arguments through defining the U.S. nation in crisis.

Mr. Furst and Ms. Dole each give heartfelt closing arguments invoking their children for additional emotional gravity. Mr. Furst says that his nine-year-old daughter recently told him that she was surprised to learn that African Americans used to be required by law to sit at the back of the bus, and he appeals to

the court not to repeat a similar mistake with Arab Americans. Ms. Dole states that she cries for her son who is growing up in a world where planes are used as bombs, and therefore in order to create safety, it is unfortunately necessary to racially profile Arabs and Muslims.

The closing arguments center on defining the U.S. nation and its borders. Mr. Furst concedes that it is in fact reasonable to be suspicious of “Muslims” (“They blew up the World Trade Center for God’s sake!”), but encourages people to put those feelings aside and to consider larger and more important issues, namely “our civil rights,” “our freedom,” and how we define this country. In so doing, he sets up an “us”/“them” dichotomy: “they” blew up the World Trade Center, but “we” need to think about who “we” are as a people and whether or not “we” stand for equal rights; and although “they” violated “us,” “we” cannot in turn violate “our” freedom. On the one hand, he defends his client’s rights but at the same time he fails to acknowledge that his client is American, too, and also has the right to be safe. Importantly, Mr. Furst draws a parallel between barring Arabs from flying on airplanes and segregating African Americans from the white population to sit at the back of the bus. Through drawing this historical and comparative parallel, viewers are asked if perhaps presumed-reasonable racisms come to haunt “us” later. Do “we” agree that having blacks sit at the back of the bus is regrettable and shameful, and do “we” want to repeat this history by barring Arabs/Arab Americans from airplanes? He asks, haven’t “we” learned the importance of judging people by their character and not by the color of their skin? Mr. Furst makes an important case against repeating a racist past and for defining the nation according to moral principles. His case, however, rests on acknowledging the public’s right to be racist. Although he advocates not to act upon feelings of violation, Arab bodies are reinscribed as outside of American citizenship through appealing to “real” Americans not to be racist because greater moral principles are at stake.

In contrast, Ms. Dole argues that American citizens are entitled to security, and though racial profiling is “a terrible thing . . . it has become necessary.” She states that although people want justice and revenge, what is most important is safety—and the desire for safety is not “paranoia” or unreasonable because the government tells us every day that we are still at risk. Not only is the courtroom, a site of national authority, represented, but government authority is also asserted when viewers are confronted with the discourse from the daily news about the crisis in national security. She continues that “we” are faced with an enemy and

that enemy has clear features—racial mythology of the United States, history of racist immigration, a land with open borders, a dream, but that it is no longer a dream. While Mr. Furst seeks to defend civil rights, and equality, Ms. Dole defines the nation’s borders: the borders of racial profiling in order to make us safe and uses the very language of the suspension of its application to Arab and Muslim Americans.

The main question that arises is whether we can justify discriminating against Arab Americans when we have been discriminated against according to *The Practice*. Mr. Furst states that he finds it “almost impermissible to discriminate based on race.” He addresses Mr. Furst and Ms. Dole when he is being asked to waive legal fees for boundless terrorism. To Ms. Dole, he responds and became a judge to protect the public and concludes his verdict in the following manner:

The reality is that we need to act now. . . . none of them is innocent. . . . It is just so terribly unconstitutional to say that we have been one other long standing. . . . We will never be free. With great respect, I am asking for a TRO.

Although this episode sees a court ruling against Arab Americans after 9/11 and represents a government representing what is considered to be the ultimate message is that these rules do not apply. The judge re-

that enemy has clear features: they are Arab. Contributing to a broader historical mythology of the United States as a land of open borders, and neglecting a history of racist immigration restrictions, Dole says that America used to be a land with open borders, a place for any immigrant to fulfill the American dream, but that it is no longer possible so long as planes can be used as weapons. While Mr. Furst seeks to define the nation according to principles of freedom, civil rights, and equality, Ms. Dole instead shifts the discourse to defining the nation's borders: the borders should be closed and Arab Americans should be profiled in order to make U.S. citizens safe. Ms. Dole defines a nation in crisis and uses the very language from the Bill of Rights ("we the people") to argue for the suspension of its application in specific racialized configurations—vis-à-vis Arab and Muslim Americans.

The main question that is posed by this program is: Can we as a nation justify discriminating against Arabs, Arab Americans, Muslims, and Muslim Americans when we have been taught that discrimination is wrong? The answer, according to *The Practice*, comes in the form of the judge's verdict in which he states that he finds it "almost unimaginable" that whether or not it is legally permissible to discriminate based on ethnicity is even being debated in court. He addresses Mr. Furst and Ms. Dole's closing arguments. To Mr. Furst, he says that he is being asked to waive legal and moral principles in the face of potentially boundless terrorism. To Ms. Dole, he says that he too loves being an American and became a judge to protect the freedoms provided by the Constitution. He concludes his verdict in the following way:

The reality is that we make exceptions to our constitutional rights all the time. . . . none of them is absolute. The legal test for doing something so patently unconstitutional is basically: you better have a damn good reason. There has been one other long-standing reality in this country: If not safe, one can never be free. With great personal disgust, I am denying the plaintiff's motion for a TRO.

Although this episode seeks to demonstrate sympathy for Arab and Muslim Americans after 9/11 and repeatedly states that discrimination is unjust, representing what is considered to be a "liberal," "progressive," or "left" position, the ultimate message is that these times are unlike others and therefore normal rules do not apply. The judge recalls an article that he read in the *New York Times*

written by Thomas L. Friedman in which he described the events of 9/11 as “beyond unimaginable.” The writings of Friedman are used to justify an assault on Arab American civil liberties. Friedman, Foreign Affairs columnist for the *New York Times* and author of numerous books based on his many years of reporting in the Middle East, has gained mainstream status with his interpretations of 9/11 and other crises. He has won numerous Pulitzer Prizes for his reporting on the Sabra and Shatila massacre, the first Palestinian Intifada, and 9/11. He is considered a “liberal,” however, he supported the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 and his post-9/11 writings included encouraging the government to create a blacklist of those who critique the U.S. government for contributing to terrorism as opposed to counterterrorism. Friedman wrote in one of his *New York Times* columns that those who point to imperialism, Zionism, and colonialism as causes for terrorism are hatemongers who are in league with the terrorists (Friedman 2005). It is quite fitting that the mainstream, presumably liberal, writings of Friedman are used in the mainstream, presumably liberal story line of *The Practice* to articulate that the Constitution can be violated if there is a good reason. And, alas, there is a good reason, thus practicing discrimination against Arab and Muslim Americans is necessary and justifiable.

This is the formation of ambivalence Agamben identifies as necessary to the state of exception and sovereign rule. Ambivalence lies in defining racism as simultaneously wrong and necessary. Arab and Muslim Americans are unfairly victimized, but the real unfair victim in all of this is the U.S. nation and its citizens, who fear for their safety. By the show stating that what happened on 9/11 was unimaginable, the United States assumes a position of innocence, and the audience is not encouraged to imagine another perspective. The judge’s words, “If not safe, one can never be free” evokes the president’s rhetoric of freedom—“they hate us because we are free,” and thus “we must discriminate in order to be free.” Ultimately, despite representative sympathy, which comes in the form of deep regret and remorse surrounding the verdict, racism is legitimized: sacrifices to Arab and Muslim American civil rights must be made in the interim. This is not a verdict to celebrate: Dole is not proud; the judge is filled with disgust; and the Arab American man holds his wife as she cries. Within this apologetic moment, hatred toward Arabs is rendered “understandable,” but the roots of terrorism are “beyond our imaginations.”

This plight is indeed represented: it is established that Arab Americans are the unfair targets of discrimination after 9/11. Yet sympathy for the Arab

American in the episode is a weight: namely, the right to protesting against Arab American who committed a terrorist act, and are still at risk of another terrorist act. The “plight” of the Arab Muslim debate on racial profiling and Muslims. The Arab American himself to the audience, sitting in a lawyer, a white man, speaks of a foreigner in the minds of Americans. “supposed to be” is debated. The closing remarks make a larger suggestion that the United States “they” ruin America by mass only is racial profiling justified to detain and deport Arabs.

Apparent here is the moment of exception so needs the nation in crisis needs to it is not difficult to make to be Arab and Muslim and Second, the necessity of that, a norm of democracy to be affirmed. Thus, it can African Americans and groups temporarily into the and Muslims need to undergo a threat to the nation background and religious beliefs, but compulsory against this particular exceptional time of crisis, to exercise power without outside of democratic legal invade Iraq, wage war in Afghanistan, and initiate mass

American in the episode is compromised through discourses that hold more weight: namely, the right to be racist and national security threats. Discriminating against Arab Americans is reasonable at this time because, first, “they” committed a terrorist act, and, second, the government tells us everyday that we are still at risk of another terrorist attack. What comes to be represented is less the “plight” of the Arab Muslim after 9/11 and more the staging of the national debate on racial profiling and the national anxiety about flying with Arabs and Muslims. The Arab American man remains silent and unable to represent himself to the audience, sitting in the background not uttering one word, while his lawyer, a white man, speaks for him. Thus, the Arab American man remains a foreigner in the minds of American viewers. Furthermore, what America is “supposed to be” is debated in relation to Arab and Muslim Americans. Dole’s closing remarks make a larger statement about how America has changed. She suggests that the United States should no longer be open to immigrants because “they” ruin America by making “us” unsafe. Through arguing for security, not only is racial profiling justified, but so are closed borders and new INS measures to detain and deport Arabs and Muslims.

Apparent here is the important function of racialization in creating the moment of exception so necessary to the abuse of government power. First, the nation in crisis needs to be established. Given the events of September 11, it is not difficult to make this point: we do not want terrorists, who are likely to be Arab and Muslim and who hate our freedom, to attack and kill again. Second, the necessity of exceptionalism needs to be established. In order to do that, a norm of democracy and freedom for all peoples regardless of race needs to be affirmed. Thus, it can be stated that it was wrong to discriminate against African Americans and gestures are made to bring disenfranchised racialized groups temporarily into the dominant designation of “American.” Then, Arabs and Muslims need to undergo a process of racialization in which their potential threat to the nation becomes intertwined with their ethnic/racial background and religious beliefs. And lastly, it can be stated that racism is wrong but compulsory against this potentially threatening population at this particular exceptional time of crisis. Thus the logic is in place for the U.S. government to exercise power without constraint and use national crisis to justify acting outside of democratic legal conventions: implement the USA PATRIOT Act, invade Iraq, wage war in Afghanistan, hold prisoners in Guantanamo without legal recourse, and initiate mass deportations of Arabs and Muslims from the

United States. This very logic comes to be articulated in TV dramas through portraying a sympathetic Arab American character, and while it seems that the audience might be encouraged to sympathize with the Arab American's post-9/11 plight, as opposed to celebrating the murder of Arab terrorists, viewers are presented with the very logic that supports U.S. imperial projects at home and abroad.

"IN WAR, LAW IS SILENT"

Another episode of *The Practice*, entitled "Inter Arma Silent Leges"¹⁴ (initially aired December 9, 2001), which translates from the Latin to "in war, law is silent," again represents the plight of Arab/Muslim Americans after 9/11. Similar to the episode examined above, it also appears to sympathize with Arab Americans while simultaneously narrating the U.S. nation in crisis, the logic of exceptionalism and ambivalence, the regretful need for security over liberty, and thus the logic to support government abuses of power. The story begins with the information that the U.S. government is unfairly detaining an Arab American man. As the plot develops, viewers learn that he has refused to speak to his wife and children and is apologetic to them for what he has done. What he has done remains a mystery to viewers, who are left to assume that he was involved with terrorism. It is ultimately revealed that the man is innocent and so intent on proving his loyalty to the United States that he has voluntarily given up his rights and agreed to be held prisoner in order to assist with the government's terrorism investigation.

Ms. Washington, an African American woman attorney, is hired by Dr. Ford, a white woman, to find and represent her husband, Bill Ford, the Arab American man being detained by the government. She admits that her husband's "real name" is Bill Habib but they both use her maiden name, "Ford," signaling that white names are "safer" or more acceptable than Arab ones. Dr. Ford has been

14. "Inter Arma Silent Leges" is not in the Constitution, but it has become common wartime ideology for the courts to become deferential. The phrase came from Cicero's writings in B.C. Rome and has appeared time and again in U.S. legal documents during times of war. For example in the *Korematsu v. United States* case (323 U.S. 214, 219–20, 1994): "We uphold the exclusion order [of Japanese Americans from the West Coast] . . . hardships are part of war, and war is an aggregation of hardship."

unable to get any information. She learns that the information is that Mr. Habib is being detained with a U.S. citizen. Ms. Washington asks an FBI representative that she ask the FBI representative what Mr. Habib is not being charged with anything something classified by the FBI. She orders that Mr. Habib be permitted to protect what is left of the Constitution. She challenges the judge's orders, but the notion that courts have reduced the judge seeks to resist the court's authority to allow Ms. Washington

In addition to raising the issue, this episode focuses on the government's "voluntary interview program" to address the injustice in detaining Arabs. Ms. Washington's practice of not releasing the Justice Department initiated a program they sought to interview thousands between the ages of eighteen and thirty. The criteria of people who might have been of the "voluntary interview program" for terrorism. Many Arab and Muslim Americans with being "voluntarily" interviewed might jeopardize their citizenship after 9/11, over a thousand Arabs were up and detained. The Justice Department people detained—how many, the

15. "Ashcroft Announces 'Voluntary Interview Program' for Muslims," <http://www.islamonline.net/english>

16. "Hundreds of Arabs Still Detained," <http://www.islamonline.net/english/news/2002/03/13/terrorism/main.html>

unable to get any information on her husband, and Ms. Washington quickly learns that the information is classified, requiring security clearance and that Mr. Habib is being detained without representation, which violates his rights as a U.S. citizen. Ms. Washington appears before a judge in court to argue against an FBI representative that she has a right to see her client. When she asks the FBI representative what Mr. Habib is being charged with, she is informed that he is not being charged with anything, but is being held as a material witness to something classified by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. The judge orders that Mr. Habib be permitted to see his lawyer and wife, stating that he will protect what is left of the Constitution. The FBI representative begins to challenge the judge's orders, but the judge warns him not to test his authority. The notion that courts have reduced power during times of war is set forth here, but the judge seeks to resist the complete suspension of the Constitution and uses his authority to allow Ms. Washington to see her client, Mr. Habib.

In addition to raising the issue of suspending the Constitution during war, this episode focuses on the government's practice of detention and their "voluntary interview program," both initiated after 9/11. It questions the possible injustice in detaining Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians and also the government's practice of not releasing information about the detainees. After 9/11, the Justice Department initiated a "voluntary interview program" through which they sought to interview thousands of Arab and Muslim immigrant men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-three, also referred to as those who "fit the criteria of people who might have information regarding terrorism."¹⁵ The point of the "voluntary interview program" was to obtain assistance on the "war on terror." Many Arab and Muslim Americans feared that if they did not comply with being "voluntarily" interviewed, it would be perceived as unpatriotic and might jeopardize their citizenship and lead to detention or deportation. Also after 9/11, over a thousand Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians were rounded up and detained. The Justice Department refused to release information on the people detained—how many, their names, or what they were charged with.¹⁶

15. "Ashcroft Announces 'Voluntary Interviews' with 3,000 U.S. Visitors." IslamOnline.net . <http://www.islamonline.net/english/news/2002-03/21/article04.shtml>.

16. "Hundreds of Arabs Still Detained." Mar. 13, 2002. CBS News. <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/03/13/terror/main503649.shtml>.

As Leti Volpp has written, “while the government refused to release the most basic information about these individuals—their names, where they were held, and the immigration or criminal charges filed against them—the public did know that the vast majority of those detained appeared to be Middle Eastern, Muslim, or South Asian. We knew, too, that the majority were identified to the government through suspicions and tips based solely on perceptions of their racial, religious, or ethnic identity” (2003, 148). Volpp’s point is that the information released and concealed functioned to appease part of the population that could find comfort in the knowledge that the government was being proactive in fighting terrorism—knowledge and comfort based on the racialization of Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians. Detaining these particular racialized bodies comforted some and alarmed proponents of civil rights who demanded information and due process. In this episode of *The Practice*, the government’s practice of detention and voluntary interviews of Arabs and Muslims is questioned. The judge acknowledges that the Constitution is put at risk by keeping Mr. Habib from speaking to his wife and children and demands that he be brought to the courtroom for his full citizenship rights.

Mr. Habib is first brought to the court conference room before being led into the courtroom. He is shackled, and his wife is instructed by a government official not to speak to him in case she is perceived to be giving him code. We learn that Mr. Habib has “voluntarily” turned himself in as an act of patriotism. Ms. Washington introduces herself to Mr. Habib as his lawyer and informs him that he is about to have a hearing. Mr. Habib objects: he did not request a lawyer or a hearing (his wife had hired her). Mr. Habib worries about his family and their safety. His wife assures him that they are fine. Once in the courtroom for the hearing, Mr. Habib takes the stand:

Ms. Washington: Do you know why you’re in custody?

Mr. Habib: The government believes I may have information about someone. . . . I don’t really know. He didn’t do anything, but he may have known some people with ties to others who are wanted for questioning.

Ms. Washington: What information? What do they think you know?

FBI Representative: Objection.

Judge: Sustained. You can’t know that Ms. Washington.

Ms. Washington: You haven’t talked to your family in weeks. Why did they keep you from speaking to your family?

Mr. Habib: They didn’t. I chose not to call my family.

Ms. Washington: Why?

Mr. Habib: I was told. I do not want to be questioned. I do not want to be brought here. I was born here. They have no right to question me.

Ms. Washington: Habib?

Mr. Habib: Many things.

Ms. Washington: I’m sorry, what’s present?

Mr. Habib: I waived.

Ms. Washington: Yes?

Mr. Habib: I talked to my family. I did it any way.

Ms. Washington: Did you?

Mr. Habib: Am I free to make my own decisions voluntarily?

Ms. Washington again questions Mr. Habib about his family, and he reiterates his position. The judge asks why Mr. Habib is cooperating. The FBI representative says that wiretaps and overseas contacts are constantly learning new information.

FBI Representative: We’re getting information we need to stop terrorism. That means depriving someone of their rights—that’s how it is.

Ms. Washington: You’re not a lawyer.

Mr. Habib: Ms. Washington, I’m here, I will stay here.

Ms. Washington: You’re not a lawyer.

Mr. Habib: Yes, I am a lawyer.

Ms. Washington, in disbelief, asks Mr. Habib if he was treated. The judge asks him why he is cooperating. Mr. Habib clearly states that he has cooperated voluntarily. The judge concludes the hearing with the phrase, “In war, law is silent.”

Ms. Washington: Why?

Mr. Habib: I was told anyone I spoke with would be subject to investigation. I do not want to bring my family into this. My wife and children were born here. They have no connection to any Arab, other than me.

Ms. Washington: Have you been interviewed?

Mr. Habib: Many times.

Ms. Washington: Did you know you had the right to have an attorney present?

Mr. Habib: I waived my rights.

Ms. Washington: You waived them? Voluntarily?

Mr. Habib: I talked to them on my own. They didn't force me. Not in any way.

Ms. Washington: Did they make you afraid?

Mr. Habib: Am I fearful, I guess I would say yes. But I have made all my decisions voluntarily.

Ms. Washington again questions Mr. Habib about his decision not to speak to his family, and he reiterates that he did not want to risk involving them in any way. The judge asks why Mr. Habib needs to be held in custody when he is clearly cooperating. The FBI representative says that Mr. Habib is helping through wiretaps and overseas contacts and that it is necessary to hold him as they are constantly learning new information.

FBI Representative: We can't risk losing him. Look. We're trying to get the information we need to stop the potential murder of thousands of Americans. That means depriving some Americans of their civil rights. I don't like it, but that's how it is.

Ms. Washington: You're imprisoning an innocent man.

Mr. Habib: Ms. Washington, enough. If my country thinks I should be here, I will stay here.

Ms. Washington: Your country?

Mr. Habib: Yes, I am an American. I am serving my country.

Ms. Washington, in disbelief, asks Mr. Habib if he has been tortured or mistreated. The judge asks him whether or not he objects to being held further. Mr. Habib clearly states that he has not been mistreated and that he is being held voluntarily. The judge concludes that Mr. Habib will remain in custody because "In war, law is silent."

Much like in the episode discussed above, viewers are presented with the plight of Arab/Muslim Americans after 9/11. In the prior episode, an Arab American man is barred from flying, and in this case, an Arab American man is detained by the government. Both men are innocent, but guilty by association. In this case, Bill Habib is helping the government because he might know someone who knows something about someone involved in terrorism. Mr. Habib accepts that he is guilty by association. He proclaims that he is American and that he wants to protect his family from interrogation because they are truly innocent, having no ties to any Arabs (all of whom are presumed terrorist suspects) except for him. Meanwhile, he is of Arab descent, has ties to the Arab world, and therefore accepts a degree of guilt and responsibility. A line is drawn between innocent Americans, Arabs involved with terrorism, and helpful Arab Americans who can assist the U.S. government and prove their loyalty and patriotism. Although he is being unfairly detained with no rights or representation, it is justifiable to hold him and deprive his family of him and any information on him because it is a matter of national security. A similar message is repeated from the aforementioned episode: it is justifiable to suspend civil rights for the greater good and safety of the American citizenry because it is a time of crisis. Although unfair, it is both “voluntary” and necessary.

Accusations that the U.S. government is treating detainees unfairly are countered with Mr. Habib’s insistence that he is not being held against his will. The fact that he has not contacted his family because he wants to protect them demonstrates that the U.S. government is being thorough in their questioning of all Arabs/Arab Americans and anyone associated with Arabs/Arab Americans in order to prevent another attack during this “war on terror.” Nonetheless, “voluntarism” operates to excuse the government from abusing their power. If Mr. Habib and presumably other Arab, Muslim, and South Asian Americans detainees agree to being held, and voluntarily refuse legal representation, it excuses the government from wrongdoing and from abusing its power. If voluntary, then citizen-patriots are collaborating with the government in the “war on terror.” Suspending civil rights comes to be rescripted: it is not a sovereign, totalitarian, or dictatorial endeavor, but a cooperative and well-intentioned one. Even if it is unfair to be in prison while assisting the government, not only is it an exceptional time of crisis and therefore necessary and justifiable now as opposed to during normal times, but it is voluntary: no one is being explicitly forced by the government.

Mr. Habib is very clear that the question remains: what if he does not have a lawyer, to call his family, or with consequences and thus on. Within the terms of this discourse, or the many men he represents. Butler has written regarding Sep

Dissent is quelled, in part by an uninhabitable identification of the person, as a collaborator, in order to sidestep the terror. The strategy of quelling dissent is not only through a series of terrorization as their effect will not count as a viable space in public domain. (2004, xiv)

If Mr. Habib had chosen a different investigation, but also he would not. The terms are binary and clear. The of quelling dissent and limiting the producing exceptionalism as a of Arab, Arab American, Muslim stories that the media tells and the discourse of national security. A terrorist acts as within our imagination. Such discourses are not permissible spaces. For example, when the disapproval of the U.S. war on terrorism in the United States remains patriotic.” Similarly, when Linda a song to filmmaker Michael M

17. “Dixie Chicks Pulled from .com/2003/SHOWBIZ/Music/03_14

Mr. Habib is very clear that he has made his own choices. Nonetheless, the question remains: what if he made different choices? What if he had chosen to have a lawyer, to call his family, to be released? He states that such choices come with consequences and thus he chose the options with fewer consequences. Within the terms of this discourse of crisis and exceptionalism, had Mr. Habib or the many men he represents refused, he would be a traitor-terrorist. As Judith Butler has written regarding September 11:

Dissent is quelled, in part, through threatening the speaking subject with an uninhabitable identification. Because it would be heinous to identify as treasonous, as a collaborator, one fails to speak, or one speaks in throttled ways, in order to sidestep the terrorizing identification that threatens to take hold. This strategy of quelling dissent and limiting the reach of critical debate happens not only through a series of shaming tactics which have a certain psychological terrorization as their effect, but they work as well by producing what will and will not count as a viable speaking subject and a reasonable opinion within the public domain. (2004, xix)

If Mr. Habib had chosen a different path, not only would his family undergo investigation, but also he would inhabit the position of traitor. During times of war, the terms are binary and clear: good or evil, "with us or against us." This strategy of quelling dissent and limiting debate that Butler describes also operates through producing exceptionalism as an acceptable logic and thus justifies the suspension of Arab, Arab American, Muslim, and Muslim American civil rights. Thus the stories that the media tells and viewers receive are also restricted by the dominant discourse of national security. Critical debates, such as story lines that render terrorist acts as within our imaginations and comprehension, do not surface because such discourses are not permissible within the dominant available rhetorical spaces. For example, when the country music trio The Dixie Chicks voiced their disapproval of the U.S. war on Iraq during a concert in London, country music stations in the United States refused to play their albums, branding them as unpatriotic.¹⁷ Similarly, when Linda Ronstadt, during a concert in Las Vegas, dedicated a song to filmmaker Michael Moore in honor of his controversial film *Fahrenheit*

17. "Dixie Chicks Pulled from Air after Bashing Bush." Mar. 14, 2002. <http://www.cnn.com/2003/SHOWBIZ/Music/03/14/dixie.chicks.reut/>.

9/11, which criticizes the Bush administration's response to 9/11, hundreds of fans booed, left the theater immediately, and defaced posters of her.¹⁸ If these speaking subjects become attacked, shamed, and terrorized in public spaces, what can pass through the mainstream media is also discursively restricted.

After 9/11, there were pressing debates over the treatment of Arab and Muslim Americans, and particularly over "voluntary interviews," detentions, deportations, and civil rights afforded to Arabs and Muslims—both American and not. The "Inter Arma Silent Leges" episode ends on the note that we are back to the times of interning people and unfairly suspecting people because of their racial/ethnic/religious identity. We have not learned from our mistakes and are engaged in repeating history—committing injustice and practicing racism. Ms. Dole, the defense attorney from the previous episode, interjects that the public is afraid and thus it is reasonable *though* unjust. Like the other episode of *The Practice*, this one, too, seeks to draw a parallel to injustices committed toward other racialized groups—in this case Japanese Americans during World War II. Japanese internment represents another exceptional time of crisis in which overt discrimination came to be seen as legitimate and necessary. A case is presented against the detention of Arabs and the violation of civil rights in light of a history of racism repeating itself. Regardless, the nation is constructed as being at risk and Arabs as threats to the nation, therefore such arguments for civil rights cannot be sustained when the nation is in crisis. Thus, like the aforementioned episode, this one also ends on a morose and apologetic note despite representing Arab Americans sympathetically through their post-9/11 plight: there is nothing to celebrate about this moment, but in crisis, injustice is justifiable and "in war, law is silent." Detention, discrimination, and racism are both wrong *and* essential. This ambivalence, justified through the politics of fear and rule of exception, enables the U.S. government to exercise sovereign power both within and outside its borders. This logic, articulated through TV dramas, is the same logic articulated by the U.S. government to the citizens about the current state of national crisis.

NATIONAL CRISIS AND VIRTUAL CITIZENSHIP

Representations of Arabs and Muslims have indeed shifted since 9/11. While representations of them as terrorists persist, some writers and producers of TV

18. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200407/s1158278.htm>.

dramas have sought to make Arab and Muslim Americans more visible. While such efforts should be closely to reveal whether they intervene or further the logic of fear on the one hand while supporting and signifying newer and more complex even liberal writers and producers to subvert racial hierarchies that defines inferential racism as "a set of premises and propositions (institutions)" (2000, 273). The writers are seeking to make an intervention that support the government's notion that the nation is in crisis by naturalizing the current state of crisis that merits U.S. intervention.

Audience sympathy is evoked, but the right to be racist and to be discriminated against, and government practices that vilify Arabs and Muslims are accepted as victims and guilty only because the government's discourse about national security is narrated, and viewers participating in these national debates are hearing the various perspectives, and perspectives or the news media. Viewers and Muslim American plight are seen as unreasonable times.

Mass media is an essential site of exchange and exchanged between citizens. Morley, and other theorists of media performance ideological work, that is,

19. I borrow the term "interpellation" from

dramas have sought to make a difference through representing the plight of Arab and Muslim Americans post-9/11 to evoke sympathy from the viewing public. While such efforts should be commended, they need to be examined more closely to reveal whether they succeed in making prime-time mainstream interventions or further the official nationalist discourse that disavows racist views on the one hand while supporting racist policies and practices on the other, signifying newer and more complex forms of racism. Stuart Hall has claimed that even liberal writers and producers of media with the best of intentions who seek to subvert racial hierarchies inadvertently participate in inferential racism. Hall defines inferential racism as “apparently naturalized representations of events and situations relating to race, whether ‘factual’ or ‘fictional,’ which have racist premises and propositions inscribed in them as a set of unquestioned assumptions” (2000, 273). The writers and producers of the programs examined here are seeking to make an intervention and have good intentions, but they inadvertently support the government’s discourse on the state of affairs and reinscribe the notion that the nation is in a state of crisis and that Arabs are a threat to the nation by naturalizing the government’s discourse that we are in an exceptional state of crisis that merits U.S. sovereign measures.

Audience sympathy is evoked for the plight of the Arab American after 9/11, but the right to be racist and suspicious of Arab and Muslim Americans is affirmed, and government practices to profile racially, detain, deport, and terrorize Arabs and Muslims are accepted. Although Arab Americans are represented as victims and guilty only by their association to Arabs (non-Americans), the government’s discourse about the continued Arab and Muslim threat to national security is narrated, and viewers are interpellated as citizens virtually participating in these national debates.¹⁹ Viewers virtually sit in the courtroom, hear the various perspectives, and receive more information than offered in newspapers or the news media. Viewers’ fears and biases are privileged over the Arab and Muslim American plight, and consoled and affirmed as reasonable during unreasonable times.

Mass media is an essential means through which meaning is produced and exchanged between citizens of a nation. As Stuart Hall, Toby Miller, David Morley, and other theorists of the media have demonstrated, representations perform ideological work, that is, they do not simply reflect reality but actively

19. I borrow the term “interpellation” from Althusser (2001).

produce meaning that affects and shapes racial categories and national identity. TV dramas after 9/11 came to function as national narratives, as stories broadcast nationwide (and often even beyond the borders of the United States) with versions of what happened, why it happened, who is responsible, how it is being dealt with by the government, and how best to deal with it as citizens. News stories became the subjects of TV dramas and participated in a field of meaning about the place of Arabs and Muslims in the United States, and one site for the articulation of explanations, bringing the U.S. public into current debates about Arabs, Muslims, racial profiling, discrimination, and national security. TV dramas interpret, represent, and explain racial dynamics post-9/11 and in doing so, redefine U.S. borders, U.S. citizenship, and forms of patriotism. They offer a way to think about the current crisis and support the actions of the government.

Although how viewers will relate to and interpret these TV dramas is variable, the media is a powerful tool used to interpellate viewer-citizens into supporting the rule of exception—that is, into internalizing that the U.S. is a democratic government and that the suspension of due process, civil rights, and democratic principles is justifiable because of the exceptional state of crisis. The TV dramas examined here participate in the narrative that we are in a state of exception. They convey a message that U.S. residents are at risk and must give up some things now for the greater good later. The United States is figured as a good democratic country trying to spread peace in the world and therefore that the ends will justify the means. Perhaps it would be more accurate to state, as Agamben does, “means without ends.”

The national discourse on Arab and Muslim threats to national security and the need to profile racially in order to attain safety can be considered a “technology” in the production of truth. Toby Miller defines a “technology” as a “popularly held logic” and truth as “an accepted fact” (1998, 4). True statements, according to Miller, are “contingent on the space, time, and language in which they are made and heard” (5). In other words, truth is produced through the ideological work performed by the media, such as prime-time television programs or government policies, and becomes part of our “common sense.” Miller continues: “When these technologies congeal to forge loyalty to the sovereign state through custom or art, they do so through the cultural citizen” (4). The cultural citizen is interpellated into these logics and becomes a subject for their enactment. Truth is produced and attained not only at the juncture in which media representations and government hegemonic projects congeal and

cooperate, but also more importantly into citizenship. I argue that the place in the virtual courtroom—even virtual court: debates are work to produce common sense—participates in the most (private), and individually (the history of the world . . . the a textual link between solitary interpretation as involves imagining the self as the United States. Not only moments to define borders and reformed on a routine for establishing fact” (5).

According to Hartley, participation in public-decision (1999, 157). He writes, “It over the fifty-odd years that number-one entertainment of citizenship has overlain citizenship is one in which means by which popular participation asphere” (209). In other words, in the sense that it is through of watching television, listening participate in the democratic process.

Above all, what is defined of the Arab Muslim American during threat Arabs and Muslims support national racial projects. As of threat provides support for groundwork for securing ‘the defined community’ of the nation danger” (2001, 6). The rhetoric and TV dramas, has become acc-

cooperate, but also more importantly through the interpellation of the viewer into citizenship. I argue that for some viewer-citizens, such interpellation takes place in the virtual courtroom. The stakes of the nation are defined in court—even virtual court: debates are enacted; racial projects are reasoned; ideological work to produce common sense is performed. As Miller has stated, “The audience participates in the most uniformly global (but national), collective (yet private), and individually time consuming practice of meaning making in the history of the world . . . the concept and occasion of being an audience provide a textual link between society and person. . . . So viewing television involves solitary interpretation as well as collective behavior” (24). In other words, it involves imagining the self as part of a greater collective, in this case citizen of the United States. Not only is race formed and reformed at different historical moments to define borders, citizens, and enemies, but the public is also “formed and reformed on a routine basis through technologies of truth—popular logics for establishing fact” (5).

According to Hartley, we are all “citizens of media”; in other words, “participation in public-decision making is primarily conducted through media” (1999, 157). He writes, “It seems to me that what has in fact been occurring over the fifty-odd years that television has become established as the world’s number-one entertainment resource and leisure-time pursuit is that a new form of citizenship has overlain the older, existing forms” (158). This new form of citizenship is one in which viewers-citizens are part of democrainment, “The means by which popular participation in public issues is conducted in the mediasphere” (209). In other words, “Audiences are understood as ‘citizens of media’ in the sense that it is through the symbolic, virtualized and mediated context of watching television, listening to radio and reading print media that publics participate in the democratic process on a day to day basis” (206–7).

Above all, what is defined through these TV dramas representing the plight of the Arab Muslim American is a nation in danger. The emphasis on the enduring threat Arabs and Muslims pose to U.S. national security operates to support national racial projects. As McAlister has written, “the continuing sense of threat provides support for the power of the state, but it also provides the groundwork for securing ‘the nation’ as a cultural and social entity. The ‘imagined community’ of the nation finds continuing rearticulation in the rhetoric of danger” (2001, 6). The rhetoric of the nation in danger, through the news media and TV dramas, has become accepted as truth and common sense. Discourses

on safety and risk are a form of governmentality. In this case, "crisis" is used to justify racist views and practices; to racialize Arabs, Arab Americans, Muslims, and Muslim Americans as threats to the nation; and hence to use them as the contemporary racialized enemy through which the nation defines its identity and legitimizes its abuse of power.

Arab American in the *New* an

SUAD JOSEPH
with A.

SINCE THE FALL OF THE 11th, Arab American and Muslim American identity and nation have become increasingly politicized in the United States, fueled by the sense of dangerous times, the media's portrayal of Islam as an imminent threat, and no enemy more feared than the

The media mantra of the "Muslims who transport it" travels and project is the manner in which it and reproduce racialization. This paper examines how the *New York Times* newspaper and one of the most influential Arab Americans and Muslim Americans are policing by associating them with terrorism. That the *NYT* is widely considered a pillar of civil and human rights, makes its portrayal of Arab Americans and Muslims

Following September 11, 2001, the concept of citizenship in the United States