

# OPINION

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## 'American Sniper' encourages Islamophobia

"Nice to see a movie where the Arabs are portrayed for who they really are – vermin scum intent on destroying us," said a Twitter user, as quoted by The Guardian.

The film "American Sniper," currently sweeping American box offices, has gained wide critical acclaim since its release on Jan. 16.



BY ANNIE FULLWOOD  
STAFF WRITER

The movie has amassed a large number of supporters, including Michelle Obama, as well as six Oscar nominations. But, it also ignores negative aspects of the main character, Chris Kyle, and makes him into an undeserving hero.

Concerns have noticeably arisen from the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, who claim that since the release of the film there has been a significant increase in threats towards Muslim and Arab citizens.

"We are in receipt of hundreds of violent messages targeting Arabs and Muslims from moviegoers of the film," wrote the committee in a letter to both the film's director, Clint Eastwood, and its star, Bradley Cooper.

The worries of the civil rights group seem justified when you consider the opinion Kyle expressed towards Iraq citizens in his book, "American Sniper: The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History."

"Savage, despicable evil," said Kyle in his book. "That's what we were fighting in Iraq. That's why a lot of people, myself included, called the enemy 'savages.'"

"There really was no other way to describe what we encountered there. I only wish I had killed more. Not for bragging rights but because I believe the world is a better place without savages out there taking American lives."

Kyle's sentiments towards Iraqi citizens may have been heavily influenced by his war experiences. However, by making a hero out of Kyle, the film has exposed thousands of American moviegoers to Kyle's opinion of Arab and Muslim citizens. This has encouraged many to post alarming and threatening messages on social media reflecting on their own interpretation of the movie.

"It must be clearly noted that Hollywood glorifies violence,"



Bradley Cooper portrays Chris Kyle in "American Sniper," which has been greatly celebrated, but also heavily criticized by viewers.

said Visiting Professor of Religious Studies Betsy Mesard. "That's what Hollywood does."

"And, the film industry has a long history of producing white male heroes who confront enemies depicted as subhuman, and these enemy figures are all too often Arab and/or Muslim."

What these moviegoers do not see in "American Sniper" is one of the most prevalent flaws in Kyle's character.

Kyle had been known to tell tales of his time at home, during which he claims to have sniped armed looters from the roof of the Superdome following Katrina. He also claims to have shot

and killed two carjackers at a Texas gas station and that he was released with no charges by police.

Both statements have been discredited by county sheriffs and fellow SEALs.

Sophomore Jeff Brahey said he has only heard great things of the film and hopes to see it soon. This frame of mind is clearly shared by many Americans, as the ticket sales remain impressive.

As to how this will impact Muslim and Arab Americans, only time will tell.

## Society should relax the rules about men's clothing

"This discussion of visible penises is not just about sexual expression but what societies claim to be inappropriate and what is acceptable."

"Clothes are politicized objects, a sartorial billboard, a manifesto on your back," said Alexander Fury of The New York Times. "The boundaries of men's wear are easier to ... outrage when their conventions are challenged."



BY BENJAMIN ACHILLES  
STAFF WRITER

Our society restricts men's clothing with guidelines that are too severe.

On Jan. 22, Rick Owens, a designer who is challenging men's wear conventions, decided to send some of his male models down the runway with tunics that subtly showed good ol' genitalia.

The Internet certainly ate this up in a stir of controversy and displayed it as the headline for Paris' fashion week. GQ magazine headlined with "Ballsy looks from Rick Owens."

What is so "ballsy" or outlandish about showing penises?

"This particular display of genitals does not so much elicit lust as it does a naïve honesty," wrote Jeremy Lewis in an article for VICE News.

In terms of penises being a presence on the runway, this show is a first. In contrast, fashion's history is well known for its fair share of female nudity.

"Owens' show was partially an attempt to even the playing field," wrote Erika Adams in an article for Racked National.

"Well, isn't it time?" said Owens in an interview with i-D.

Guilford College is known for being more of a genderqueer than most, but that does

not mean there is an even playing field across campus.

Last school year, a controversy arose as Matt Pots was told to leave the weight room because of multiple complaints. Sophomore Leonard Davis reported these complaints were a reaction to Pots wearing spandex. Davis said he ran over to the Campus Life offices, livid.

A new rule arose after this altercation as now no men or women are allowed to wear spandex or leggings in the gym. While attending the gym weekly last school year, I never noticed any women following these rules or being told to leave.

First-year Amaris Clay did not know that was a rule.

"Women, and myself, show up to the gym and walk around campus in leggings," said Clay. "I never get backlash for wearing them. I mostly get compliments. And yes, wearing leggings shows my dick more than pants. Big deal."

In the gym's attempt to create gender equality, the culture of Guilford outside and even inside appears to have changed. It has become more accepting of clothing being gender-neutral.

This discussion of visible penises is not just about sexual expression but what societies claim to be inappropriate and what is acceptable.

"The standards are white, middle class and heteronormative," said Fury.

It seems that Tricky Ricky wants to shift a paradigm, hoping that men will be able express their private area to not be so private anymore.

"Most people take my clothes more seriously than I do," said Owens in an interview with Telegraph.

Owens may be able to show people who complained about Pots working out that no one should judge a book, or a penis, by its cover.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Steven Salaita's visit promotes division in Guilford's community

While I, some of my peers, a few Guilford faculty and staff are attempting to create a safe campus climate for all students, I am sorry to hear of a campus event that is a step backwards in our efforts to make Guilford a more inclusive and safe place for Jewish students. This event will create walls and divide the student body at Guilford to an extent that I do not care to see.

On Tuesday, Feb. 3, Steven Salaita will be speaking at Guilford. He is sponsored by the English Department, the peace & conflict studies program, Friends Center, the women's, gender & sexuality studies program and Students for Justice in Palestine.

"A Palestinian-American author and scholar, Salaita was recruited by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's Department of American Indian Studies," reads the Guilford website. "In July, just before classes started, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Chancellor Phyllis Wise 'dehired' him because he posted tweets critical of Israel's bombing of Gaza. The tone and language were deemed 'uncivil.'"

To say his tweets criticizing Israel were merely "uncivil" is a mischaracterization.

"Zionists: transforming 'anti-Semitism' from something horrible into something honorable since 1948," read one tweet.

"At this point, if Netanyahu appeared on TV with a necklace made from the teeth of Palestinian children, would anyone be surprised?" read another.

"You may be too refined to say it, but I'm not, I wish all the f— West Bank settlers would go missing," he tweeted after the kidnapping of three teenage Israeli youth.

To Steven Salaita's sponsors, I mean no disrespect, but I need to say this: We can do better than this man. We deserve better than an anti-Semitic, spiteful voice on our campus. Over the past few months, we have strived towards understanding and kindness to others, towards compassionate listening and careful words. We have made great strides. So why give the podium to a man who conducts himself in such a disgusting, outrageous manner? And unapologetically? Why choose a speaker that divides us rather than unifies us? Having this man on campus will make students uncomfortable and will create more walls than you can possibly imagine. I am not against having a variety of different speakers on campus. However, this is a radical loose cannon who will do nothing to create a healthy discussion.

I am disappointed and disturbed by Salaita's visit, and I hope the College can avoid hosting such antagonizing speakers in the future.

L'shalom (towards peace),

Josh Weil, senior