

Is America Islamophobic?

Josh Van Dine

Note: The Whetstone staff is not responsible for any of the opinions expressed within this article.

Over the past few weeks a controversy has been raging all across America about Imam Abdul Feisal Rauf's plans to build a mosque near Ground Zero in New York City. This controversy involves everyone from Glenn Beck to Barack Obama, and while everyone agrees that Muslims have the right to build a mosque in that location, the big question is whether or not this is the right thing to do. In response to this controversy, Time magazine published an article in this month's issue titled *Is America Islamophobic?* In the article, it talks about how all over the nation there have been objections to Muslims building mosques in cities

like Sheboygan County, Wisconsin. The article also quotes people like Franklin Graham who says that Islam is "a religion of hatred. It's a religion of war." Former Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich is mentioned since he associates Islam with Nazism. The article finally ends with a series of polls conducted by Time, including one that says 46% of Americans believe that Islam is more likely than other faiths to encourage violence against nonbelievers while 6% believe that it is less likely.

So is America Islamophobic? The answer is a definite yes and with good reason. With the 9th anniversary of 9/11 just past the attacks that took place on that day are still fresh on our mind, plus we are still at war against Al-Qaeda

in Afghanistan and Iraq. Also, a Muslim gunman killed 12 soldiers in Fort Hood, Texas, in a shootout that took place in November of last year, and in May of this year another Muslim tried to blow up a car in Times Square. So if Americans start thinking that their president is Muslim or if we protest the building of a Muslim place of worship near the area where 3,000 people were killed by Muslim kamikaze pilots, it's not because we're racist; we're just scared because radical Islam is a threat to our country right now. Also you may never know what may happen next—the building of a mosque near Ground Zero could be the beginning of things. We could soon find minarets built on top of the Capitol, or one day a flag with the moon

and a star on it could be flying on the White House, or the Supreme Court could decide to rewrite the Constitution to correspond with Sharia Law.

But this isn't the first time that America has been scared of a certain group of people. We were like this during World War II after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and we declared war on the country. For the sake of security during the war FDR signed an Executive Order in 1942 which put Japanese Americans in internment camps. Whether or not that was the right thing to do is another issue, but after we defeated the Japanese and we no longer felt the Japanese were a threat we let them go and now we are on friendlier terms. However, after World War II ended we

were faced with another threat in the form of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. So as we had done with the Japanese we began looking out for Communists in the US and a certain Senator named Joseph McCarthy began rooting out Communists in the government. We also tried our best to stop the spread of Communism in other areas which sparked the Korean and Vietnam wars—which we failed at. As soon as the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 we no longer thought of Communism as a threat, however. Now our current president has surrounded himself with them and may or may not be one himself. My point with this history lesson is that our Islamophobia is temporary and will soon end.

How to Train your Dragon Review

Lucas Smith

When I first saw the trailer for *How to Train your Dragon* I was skeptical. It looked liked your average kids film. Boy, was I wrong—this movie was amazing. The voice acting and music were great, and the story was surprisingly deep. Everyone, including adults, will find something they love about this film. The only drawback is that it can get a little intense and scary at points, so I would not recommend taking children under the age of six or seven.

The film follows a young Viking named Hiccup who, unlike the other Vikings, is scrawny and more brains than brawn. Because of this, he is never allowed to help fight the dragons

whenever they attack. One day, he builds a contraption to shoot dragons out of the sky and as luck would have it, it works. After seeing the injured dragon he takes down, he has a change of heart and sets it free. Thus a new friendship begins. Not to spoil anything, but this is one of the few movies that made me cry.

The voice work was phenomenal. Hiccup and his father (voiced by Jay Baruchel and Gerard Butler respectively) are both great. With Hiccup, you get the feeling that he's an out of the ordinary and not respected young man who wants to make a name for himself. Although he has minimal lines,

Butler shows he has a knack for a more serious role. America Ferrera voices the love interest Astrid. She is portrayed as a tough character who wants to be the best, and Ferrera does a really good job of it. The comic relief is done very well, and Snoutlout (Jonah Hill), Fishlegs (Christopher Mintz-Plasse/McLovin) and the fraternal twins Tuffnut and Ruffnut (TJ Miller and Kristen Wig respectively) never overstay their welcome. The humor is mostly physical, which works well in the Viking setting. Everyone will laugh during this movie.

The CGI and camera-work were phenomenal, especially in 3D. I'm mostly against 3D in

films, but the flying sequences (along with the accompanying music) were breathtaking. At one point, Toothless, the dragon, narrowly escapes a crash by pulling sharply up. When he pulls up, you can actually see the wind trailing behind his wings. The 3D was used to great effect and was not the gimmicky "throw stuff at the screen" type. It made you feel immersed in the universe. During one of the flying sequences, Toothless glides across the water and it "splashes" you. It's hard to explain, but it was a great immersive experience.

One of the movies strongest points was the music. John Powell has crafted an amaz-

ing score. The music that plays during the above mentioned flying sequences is some of the best I have heard in ages. It really makes you believe you're flying, too. He uses a smart mix of various Scottish instruments along with more traditional instruments to immerse you in the movie.

How to Train your Dragon will be released on Bluray Disc and DVD on October 15th, 2010. Unfortunately, there are no plans at this time for a 3D Bluray/DVD release. Despite this, I highly recommend you buy this movie. It's one of Dreamwork's best movies in a long time.