



Interrogating the War on Terror: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Deborah Staines

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Interrogating the War on Terror presents a critique of contemporary war culture and politics, introducing a range of political, philosophical, legal, artistic and social perspectives on a devastating war. Bringing together contributors from the United States, UK and Australia implicitly dissenting from within the Coalition of the Willing this volume explores the discourses and cultural effects of the current war on terror. Is the so-called war on terror justified? Seeking an ethical engagement with the problems and paradoxes of this global conflict, the authors situate the historical and legal meanings of terror and terrorism alongside the exploitation of such terms by the Bush Administration and other governments in recent years. Contributions by philosophers, sociologists, and law and literature scholars raise questions about neo-conservatism, freedom, security and the new legitimization of torture, and demonstrate how this war brings political and discursive power to bear on democracy, human rights and individuals in places as far-flung as Iraq, Bali, and the U.S. Artworks by internationally renowned war artist George Gittoes, and several essays by cultural theorists return a critical emphasis to the role of visual media, affect, gender and popular culture in understanding and rethinking war. Interrogating the War on Terror's multi-disciplinary and international perspectives will be useful to scholars and students alike in addressing this highly topical issue. The essays reference mainstream sources and widely-documented events in the war on terror, making it accessible also to the general reader. This collection is a brilliant contribution to the burgeoning literature on the 'war on terror'. Thoughtful, poignant, and elegantly constructed, the authors offer fresh, interdisciplinary perspectives on some of the most important questions of our times. From start to finish, I was enthralled. Joanna Bourke, Birkbeck, University of London What kind of imagination, what sort of reasoning made possible the proclamation of a 'war on terror' so vaguely defined that it could never end? Without condescension or self-righteousness, the essays in this book look for answers to the catastrophe of US foreign policy as it responded to the events of 9/11. This is rhetorical analysis at its most persuasive: passionate, eloquent, deadly serious, and seeking hard to make sense of a counter-terror that mirrors its opponent. John Frow, University of Melbourne

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