

Since the nineteenth century, editorial cartoons have borne witness to popular American views about an array of issues, individuals, and communities. Although cartoonists argue that they equally hold everyone to critique, women, Jews, and African Americans all have had to challenge their stereotyped depictions. However, Muslims have remained the target of cartoon stereotyping. As demonstrated by the recent controversial image of Barack Obama, cartoons use stereotyped representations in ways that reflect American antipathies to both Muslims and Islam long pre-dating the attacks of September 11. These stereotypes can be seen in Hollywood movies and in bestselling books but seldom with the starkness emblematic of editorial cartoons. An examination of cartoons from over fifty years of newspapers demonstrates how Muslims have served as a foil to define American values as normative by depicting Muslims as extreme in either their lack or excessiveness, whether in regard to masculinity, feminine freedom, or morality.