

ABSTRACT

Exploring at the Fringes: The Bibliography as Database for Teaching American Studies in Arab Universities

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This presentation describes a comprehensive bibliography of books in Arabic dealing with American affairs created to enhance American Studies research and teaching in Arab universities and research institutions as well as by interested Arab scholars, academics, teachers and journalists. *A Bibliography of Arab Books covering American Affairs* (2009), not only does it list books that are needed for the courses offered in the American studies programs, it also includes all books available on the subject that carries in its title the name of the United States or Americans, written in Arabic or translated to Arabic. The bibliography was compiled in the hope that it would aid, as well as, stimulate other Arab scholars to write about and investigate more American issues and topics, as well as, to inform researchers what books written by Americans have been published in their areas of interest, or which books have been translated to Arabic. Once the task was complete and more than 1000 entries were listed, one realized that a comprehensive bibliography, properly understood and analyzed offers much more than meets the eye. In effect, such a bibliography is itself a database from which may be extracted a great deal of useful knowledge and information about both the different fields of interest to the Arab public and the practitioners who work in them. This paper is a preliminary effort to explore how bibliographies store and reveal data and how this information may become most useful in teaching American Studies in Arab universities and schools, and ways it may promote future research and publications. It aims to identify what type of books on American affairs are published in Arabic and what are the areas of concern over a long period of time? One of the most interesting questions that this comprehensive bibliography reveals is, Why do Arabs hate America and how this problem can be dealt with?