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*ISLAM IS A FOREIGN COUNTRY: American Muslims and the Global Crisis of Authority*

by Zareena Grewal (review)

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Pennsylvania, Nebraska, and Ohio, the center of gravity for Smith's photography—as with Evan's images in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*—is the American South. One of Smith's most searing portraits, "Demopolis, Alabama (For Walker Evans)," featuring a handsome, intent, but unsmiling African American man standing in front of the town bank, is part of a sequence of Smith photographs that address questions of race and poverty as experienced in the Deep South. In their sensitivity, intimacy, and empathy, Smith's images are reminiscent as well of Dorothea Lange's famous documentary images for the Farm Security Administration during the Depression and Eudora Welty's lesser-known but important photographs from Mississippi taken during her years as a WPA photographer during the 1930s.

Smith's Southward-tending images from 1970s middle America figure as an admirable reprise and supplement to work by the earlier generation of documentary photographers, providing an implicit homage to artists such as Walker Evans, Robert Frank, Eudora Welty, and Dorothea Lange, while revisiting American life in the Midwest and South. It is also worth remembering the uneasy politics smoldering during Smith's documentary tour, which took place during the final months of the Nixon presidency and less than a year after the end of United States military involvement in Vietnam. They were incendiary political contexts crucial for the 1970s—to say nothing of 1970s Yale student and faculty activism—and impossible to forget or ignore as these images powerfully conjure the human experience of that era. One wonders if during his documentary tour of the American South this remarkable photographer was made aware of his fellow Yale alumnus Bill Clinton (J.D. 1973), who was in Arkansas running a strong and eventually successful Congressional campaign during the summer of 1974.

Following the fifty-two images are lucid essays on the artist and his work by Richard H. King and Alexander Nemerov, and there is a brief afterword by Smith. Together, they give a fuller account of Smith's life and activities in the 1970s and situate his work within a rich and now expanded tradition of important American twentieth-century documentary photography.

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ISLAM IS A FOREIGN COUNTRY: American Muslims and the Global Crisis of Authority. By Zareena Grewal. New York: New York University Press. 2014.

Perhaps no twenty-first-century trend in the field of American Studies has been more pronounced than the transnational turn. As with any scholarly fad, the move to link the United States to hemispheric and global histories and stories has had its share of facile or forced ideas, but when these connections have worked best, they have offered profoundly potent new lenses through which to analyze American cultures and communities, issues, and identities. Dr. Zareena Grewal's *Islam is a Foreign Country* exemplifies the possibilities of such transnational scholarship, while also and, even more importantly, crossing two other borders.

For one thing, Grewal's book mines the genre of autoethnography more successfully than any I have read in years, and bears comparison to gold standards such as

*The Woman Warrior and Borderlands/La Frontera*. From the introduction's nuanced and convincing depiction of Grewal's transformation into a "Native Orientalist" through the epilogue's reflections on the unfolding (at the time of her writing) Arab Spring, Grewal consistently analyzes her own identity and perspective with the same complexity and thoughtfulness she brings to her focal historical and contemporary Muslim communities. Since much of her argument depends on a definition of those communities as experiencing a form of Du Boisian "double consciousness," the book's autoethnographic layers offer a nicely complementary depiction of the author as both scholar and subject.

Grewal's text is also impressively layered in its disciplinary lenses. Chapters 2 and 3 wed historical anthropology to immigration, migration, and race studies, locating the twentieth-century Muslim diaspora and the American communities it produced alongside the African-American Great Migration (Chapter 2) and the global effects of the 1965 Immigration Act (Chapter 3). And the four chapters in Part II weave a number of other disciplines into this evolving pattern, from religious and gender studies in Chapters 4 and 5 to media studies and digital rhetorics in Chapters 6 and 7. As with her willingness to include her own identity as part of her analysis, what Grewal consistently demonstrates in these chapters is an ability to go wherever her subjects demand, and to utilize each disciplinary lens with analytical sophistication and a clear awareness of the broader scholarly conversations in each case.

One of the ways I would define the best scholarship is that it opens up additional connections and investigations beyond those on which it focuses; in the case of Grewal's impressive book, I would be very interested to read how she might bring this lens to bear on more longstanding Muslim American histories. I am thinking in particular about South Carolina's Revolutionary-era Moroccan "Moorish" community, the members of which were legally defined as "white" in one of the period's most complex laws, the state legislature's 1790 Moors Sundry Act. That is, if many of Grewal's contexts—from 9/11 and the Second Iraq War to the Arab Spring—are quite specific to our twenty-first-century moment, I would argue that her focal questions and themes have been part of American communities, Muslim and otherwise, from the outset.

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LITERARY EXECUTIONS: Capital Punishment and American Culture, 1820–1925.  
By John Cyril Barton. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2014.

Midway through his exploration of literary responses to the rancorous spectre of the gallows—that "instrument" of monarchical oppression, and the exercise of undue rights—Barton reproduces a single page of text from Unitarian minister Sylvester Judd's avowedly anti-gallows novel, *Margaret*. Bruised by criticisms about his failure to draw a discreet veil over the violence of the execution scene itself, Judd answered his critics by having the printer blot out the relevant paragraph entirely in the revised edition of 1851. That bar of black is startling, reminiscent "of a coffin" or the "dark abyss" (131) that is the opened trap. "Like the so-called private hangings