

Muslim Worldviews and Everyday Lives

El-Sayed el-Aswad



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el-Aswad introduces the concepts of worldviews/cosmologies of Muslims, explaining that the different types of worldviews are not constructed solely by religious scholars or intellectual elite, but are latent in Islamic tradition, embedded in popular imagination, and triggered through people's everyday interaction in various countries and communities. He draws from a number of sources including in-depth interviews and participant observation as well as government documents and oral history. Through the perspectives of ethno-cosmology, emic interpretation of sacred tradition, modernity, folklore, geography, dream, imagination, hybridity, and identity transformation, he examines how culturally and religiously constructed images of the world influence the daily actions of people in various Muslim communities. The worldviews of Sunnis, Shi'as, and Sufis are covered in turn, and Muslims in the UAE, Egypt, Bahrain, and suburban Detroit are the focus. el-Aswad also discusses the effects of Western attempts at imposing its essentially secular worldview through the process of globalization and how cyberspace has promoted connectivity among Muslim communities and, especially in the United States, opened up unlimited options and new possibilities.

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