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Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge (Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics)

Roxanne L. Euben

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The contemporary world is increasingly defined by dizzying flows of people and ideas. But while Western travel is associated with a pioneering spirit of discovery, the dominant image of Muslim mobility is the jihadi who travels not to learn but to destroy. *Journeys to the Other Shore* challenges these stereotypes by charting the common ways in which Muslim and Western travelers negotiate the dislocation of travel to unfamiliar and strange worlds. In Roxanne Euben's groundbreaking excursion across cultures, geography, history, genre, and genders, travel signifies not only a physical movement across lands and cultures, but also an imaginative journey in which wonder about those who live differently makes it possible to see the world differently.

In the book we meet not only Herodotus but also Ibn Battuta, the fourteenth-century Moroccan traveler. Tocqueville's journeys are set against a five-year sojourn in nineteenth-century Paris by the Egyptian writer and translator Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi, and Montesquieu's novel *Persian Letters* meets with the memoir of an East African princess, Sayyida Salme.

This extraordinary book shows that curiosity about the unknown, the quest to understand foreign cultures, critical distance from one's own world, and the desire to remake the foreign into the familiar are not the monopoly of any single civilization or epoch. Euben demonstrates that the fluidity of identities, cultures, and borders associated with our postcolonial, globalized world has a long history--one shaped not only by Western power but also by an Islamic ethos of travel in search of knowledge.

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