Race and Arab Americans before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects. Edited by Amaney Jamal and Nadine Naber. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2008. xiii + 378 pp. Graphs, tables, notes, index, and bibliography. $55 (cloth); $29.95 (paper).

While commentators have heralded the election of Barak Obama as the start of a new era in which race and color are no longer determinative factors, the jury is still out as far as Arab Americans are concerned. Not long after the 9/11 attacks, a Bush administration official said that a second attack would lead to the rounding up of Arab Americans, just like Japanese Americans during World War II. In *Race and Arab Americans before and after 9/11*, we have a book that provides disturbing evidence supporting this shocking assessment.

Though uneven in analysis and possessing at times a turgid social science jargon, the twelve essays here break new ground in discussing the netherworld of racial identity from the beginning of the 150-year experience of Arabs in America. Since 9/11, the civil rights of Muslims, Arabs, and Arab Americans have been broadly abridged as racial and political paranoia have dominated. In their introduction, the editors provide an excellent overview of how fluid the designation of race has been for Arabs in America since the latter part of the nineteenth century; they were called Syrians, Asians, Turcos, "Mediterranean trash," all before that grand "othering" of our time—"terrorist."

Many contributors take up the question of whether or not Arabs are "white." In the infamous *Dow* case of 1914, citizenship was denied to a Syrian immigrant; although granting that the plaintiff was white, the court ruled him still ineligible for citizenship (because he was, like the Chinese, from Asia). This geographic notion of race was overturned in 1915, and the Syrians set to "proving" their Caucasian roots. As Jen'an Ghazal Read shows, Muslims have always fared more poorly in this matter than Christian Arabs. Not surprisingly, after 9/11 over seven hundred hate crimes and several murders of Muslim and Arab Americans (or those mistaken as them) occurred. As Louise Cainkar arrestingly argues, "Since the darkening of Arabs began in earnest after the beneficiaries of the U.S. civil rights movement had been determined and the categories of 'non-white' and 'minority' had been set, Arabs have experienced the double burden of being excluded from whiteness *and* from mainstream recognition as people of color" (emphasis in original) (p. 49). Perhaps not surprisingly, almost half of Arab Americans checked the "Other" box in the 2000 census. Concerning the community controversy over whether to seek affirmative action protections, Andrew Shyrock favors the term "racialization" over "ethnicity," preferring what he sees as the opportunities of the former to the sentimentality of the latter. Still, this raises potential dangers: counting Arabs for favors can easily be converted to counting them for something quite different. In one of the best essays, Sarah Gualtieri movingly explores the one known lynching of an Arab American in Lake City, Florida, in 1929, in which the victim was lynched for contesting white power.

A number of essays deal with the results of the Detroit Arab American Study (DAAS) conducted in 2003 by scholars at the University of Michigan. Amaney Jamal notes there were over ninety-six thousand calls to the FBI about "suspicious" Arabs and Muslims in the week after 9/11. Jamal found that although Arab Americans support "increased surveillance" of U.S. citizens at similar rates as the general population, the community is seriously alarmed by the focus on them. Two years after the attacks, almost half of Americans (49 percent) strongly supported increased surveillance of Arab Americans and detention of suspicious individuals without evidence to prosecute (47 percent).

Two media studies in the anthology are valuable, particularly Evelyn Alsultany's shrewd examination of the popular television series, *The Practice*. In two episodes involving Arab American cases, the verdicts go against the plaintiffs, supporting profiling on the grounds "that racism is wrong but compulsory" (p. 217)—a case of crocodile tears. An examination of the *New York Times*'s treatment of Muslims and Arabs since 9/11 by Suad Joseph and two graduate students, though incisive at times, is off the mark at others. For example, they criticize an article about Muslims visiting an amusement park for referring to "bias against Muslims, often brought on by their style of dress" (p. 247). The authors argue that this "racialized discourse" implies that "it is Muslim dress, not racism, that causes violence against Muslims" (p. 247). But "brought on" in this context surely means "triggered."

In her challenging, yet overstated, comparison of the editorial choices of three literary collections of Arab American writing, Michelle Hartman favors the feminist collection of Arab American women writers, *Food for Our Grandmothers.* (Boston, 1994). *Grape Leaves* (Northampton, MA, 2000) and *Post-Gibran* (Syracuse, NY, 1999) do not fare quite as well. As a coeditor with Dr. Sharif Elmusa of *Grape Leaves*, I must disagree strongly with her tendency to draw overly broad conclusions from selectively quoted materials.

Obviously, there is plenty to chew on and argue with in *Race and Arab Americans before and after 9/11*. It is a watershed collection for anyone interested in Arab American affairs in these shaky times. Before you declare the death of race with the heady ascension of Obama, read this book.

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