



Orientalism in Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land*

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Received: 23 Mar 2022; Received in revised form: 16 April 2022; Accepted: 23 April 2022; Available online: 30 April 2022

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Abstract— *In this paper, the researcher show how Laila Halaby presents informative perception into the conflicts confrontation Arab Americans in post 9/11 America. Halaby turns the Western look upon the Arab societies. Laila Halaby symbolizes an America which is conspiratorial and submerged with religious enthusiasms. After 9/11, Halaby's American characters become increasingly fanaticism and mistrustful of Arabs and Islamic cultures. Halaby, then, portrays intolerant and xenophobic American characters overwrought with doubts and discloses a post 9/11 America that is widespread with anti-Arab racism. Halaby also propounds that the widespread American perception of a world patently divided between East and West only arouses global crises such as drought, poverty and war. She also declares that the juveniles that occurred on September 11, 2001, were a direct result of these epidemics. Moreover, Halaby offers a perspective of Americans as ignorantly perceiving the United States as alienated from crises impending all nations. For this reason, Halaby's novel functions as a cautionary story decreeing Americans to transcend a binary frame of reference for avoiding further crises from escalating within or beyond American borders.*

Keywords— *Orientalism, Eastern and Western cultures, Racism, Arab Americans.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Many authors of the Arab American have been published their works since the events of 11 September, 2001. These authors imagined how these works' characters of the Arab American struggled to keep their identity in the middle of the anti-Arab society. This 11 September events spurred Arab Americans to get out of the invisible world a "highly visible community that either directly or indirectly affects America's so-called culture wars, foreign policy, presidential elections, and legislative tradition" (Salaita, 2011: p.110). Arab American authors have portrayed characters trying to come to terms with the complicate of both their crossbred identity and fraught position in the United States, finding themselves alienated from Arab and American cultures alike. The characters of Arab American who cannot put themselves in position either Eastern or Western cultures are common to many fictional accounts of post 11/September in America, and this rendering is undoubtedly applicable to the central characters in Laila Halaby's 2007 work, *Once in a Promised Land*. Before the 11/September attacks,

Halaby's protagonists, Jassim and Salwa Haddad, had stayed in the rich suburbanites just outside of Tucson, Arizona. After the attacks, Jassim becomes the focus of an unsubstantiated FBI investigation, and Salwa begins to experience longing for her homeland, feeling ostracized by the inhabitants of the country in which she was born.

The post 11/September time finds Jassim and Salwa isolated from the lifestyle to which they were once accustomed and estranged from one another; eventually, their marriage begins to fall apart. Although the challenges which faced her central characters after the attacks of 11/September, Laila Halaby's novel draws more attention to the mansions of the American individuals who react with her Arab American protagonists than the identity challenges facing the protagonists themselves. When it put in a post 11/September environment, increasingly, Halaby's Arab American characters realize that many Americans have adopted the oppositional discourse propagated by the discourse of American politicians at the beginning of the war against terror, which aggravated the American

misunderstanding of Arabic and Islamic immigrants already in America before to the 11/September attack.

Once in a Promised Land is an especially compelling account of post 11/September in U.S.A because she moves the American stereotypical picture of Arab countries, she displays Western extremism, introducing an indictment of American society as it is full with conspiracy and religious fundamentalism. Halaby also proposes that the pervasive American perception of a world starkly divided between East and West only exacerbates global crises such as drought, poverty, and war. According to Halaby, the actions that took place on September 11, 2001, were a direct result of these worldwide pestilences, which cannot, ultimately, be contained within the third world. Halaby's novel, therefore, works as a cautionary story, directing Americans to exceeds the binary discourses to avoid further crises from spiraling either within or beyond American borderlines. Halaby emphases that the U.S. is as susceptible to crises as nations currently perceived as third world. She draws attention to class inequalities, environmental disasters, and a troubled population that exist within U.S and offering sometimes, the American public and mainstream media overlook and underestimate epidemics taking place within U.S. boundary.

Halaby's valuation of the 11/September in U.S attacks as a significance of a broad spectrum of worldwide concerns is again proved in her application of techniques and imagery used by Leslie Marmon Silko in her groundbreaking 1977 work, *Ceremony*. Silko merges traditional Native American folklore with contemporary poetry to assert her theme of growing transnational conflict. Similarly, Halaby compares Arabic mythology and Western fairy stories to expose causes of the struggle between Eastern and Western countries that, according to Halaby, are imperceptible to many Americans and Arabs alike. Halaby focuses much of her novel on the growing universal water unavailability, concentrating on regions in the Middle East and the southwestern United States. Her implication that the potential for worldwide disasters unites all universal inhabitants in a common fate is recollection of Silko's warning that the possibility of nuclear extermination affects all cultures unrelatedly of location

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since then, many scholars influenced by Said have continued to probe and develop

the study of Orientalist phenomena. Orientalism as a discourse functions as an example of the postcolonial predicament of Asians and Westerners alike. In Western

scholarly work the West has been either implicitly or explicitly, but nevertheless often rather uncritically, accepted into a dichotomous relationship with "the Rest." The Western imagery of the Orient has been required to make the image of the Occident possible, and it has produced a discourse that has evolved into a kind of imagined binary ontology. This ontology has remained surprisingly strong, although at the same time it has become more obvious that the "two parts" are less distinguishable because of reasons like globalization and its interconnecting phenomena like large labor movements, global markets, ethnic tensions, diseases, the mass media and so forth.(James,1992)

There is also a direct connection between Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* and Leslie Marmon Silko's 1977 work, *Ceremony*. Both Halaby and Silko texture traditional stories with their own narratives. In addition, Halaby's conclusion that the latent for universal disasters unites all worldwide citizens in a common fate is reminiscent of Silko's cautionary that the likelihood of nuclear annihilation affects all cultures, nonetheless of position. Consequently, both authors encourage cooperation between Eastern and Western states and put onward that it is indispensable for all civilizations to surpass country wide boundaries and cultural partitions in order to solve universal crises.

Abdallah (2016) conducted a comparative study on the portrayal of the Arab Muslim character in Laila Halaby *Once in a Promised Land* writings. Hence, topics on stereotyping should be incorporated in this study as he claims that: "It clarifies and explains the issues being examined from varying perceptions, through numerous cultural perceptions, endeavoring to mark the demarcation between the discourse which spreads stereotypical images of Arab Americans, and the alternative which illustrates the inherent human principles of the portrayed characters" (p.2). Consequently, the writer utilises Orientalism lens in the analysis of the aforementioned novels that are to be analysed from the Arab and Western perspectives.

Laila Halaby's *Once in a promised Land*, as a diverse of secession politics is major to her work. Furthermore, whereas some of her Arab American character's practice Arab beliefs and conventions, Jassim and Salwa are infrequently portrayed as doing so. They are enthusiastic contributors in American consumer culture, and their home is representative of a prosperous American couple, lacking almost any indication that they once exist in another part of the world:

That afternoon, driving up recently repaved asphalt to his

nestled-in-the-hills home, Jassim pulled up his glinty Mercedes next to one of many identical expectant mailboxes, each painted a muted rusty brown ... in the coolness of his house, Jassim removed a gleaming glass from a glossy maple cabinet and filled it with the purest spring water money could buy ... [h]e pulled the trashcan out from under the right side of the sink (the spot where 92 percent of Americans keep their kitchen trashcans, he remembered hearing somewhere, though he doubted the statistic) so that he could reach the recycling basket, into which he deposited a handful of direct mail and ads (except for Salwa's overpriced-underwear-catalogue ...) Salwa's two magazines (one ... with a photograph of someone's pristine white living room) found themselves on top of the underwear catalogue. (Halaby, 2009: p.23-24)

Halaby places her novel on both sides of the critical discussible outlined by El Said and Aboul-Ela. She depicts some Arab American characters exercising Arabic conventions, yet in some segments of *Once in a Promised Land*, Halaby portrays Jassim and Salwa as almost decreased-cultured on the contrary to her other Arab American characters. Halaby refers to that the expatriation Jassim and Salwa experience post the attacks is escalated because of their sponsoring of an American lifestyle and endeavoring of the American dream. Halaby perceives Salwa's friend, Randa, for instance, as more satisfied with her existence in America than Salwa because of her devotion to Arabic habits Salwa does not practice. When Salwa's marriage starts to destroy, she feels in homesick and endeavors solace in Randa's company. Randa prepares Arabic coffee for the two women:

Randa pulled the pot off the burner and added two spoonful of coffee, each heaped to the ceiling. She stirred them in, reached across the continental

United States, stretched her arm across the Atlantic until she found Beirut, and ... the coffee boiled away thousands of miles of homesickness. (283-284)

Banita deduces both of two characters, Jassim and Salwa, are faced by "citizens spurred by Bush's invitation to work as the spies of USA government" and emphasis Halaby's intent is to cast Arab Americans as "one step behind other social outsiders" in the eyes of the Americans they encounter (p.246). Banita emphasis in his article "Uses and Abuses of Trauma in Post-9/11 Fiction a Contemporary Culture," Ulrike Tancke suggests that Salwa and Jassim bear the shock has not any issues with 9/11, but he ignores to consider the racism that directly resulted from the attacks and its impact on their lives:

It is not the repercussions from 9/11 as such that causes Salwa and Jassim's life to disintegrate. The traumatizing events in the novel are the result of coincidence and only vaguely connected events, and of the propensity of human beings to ... inflict pain on each other. Hence, once in a *Promised Land* critically and self-consciously explores the contemporary fascination with trauma: we tend to sweepingly apply ubiquitous and simplistic categories such as "9/11," while the traumatizing potential of violence and guilt inherent in human relationships are impossible to predict. (Georgiana, 2012).

Simon Gikandi presents a viewed didactic to Halaby's work. In his essay "Globalization and the Claims of Post-colonial," he refers to the tendency of colonized countries to come back to other time frames to re-formulate their history from an opinion which precedes the reach of the colonizers (615). So, colonized countries create a few or local histories that depict their community in a style that the West would not discriminate them (p.615). Colonized countries can re-establish their true identity and refuse the

identity that the colonizer has coerced upon them. (Simon,2005)

Both aspects of the critical engraver relating the turn of Arab American writers in a post 9/11 timeframe which makes Gikandi's theory especially pertinent to Laila Halaby's novel which situated between the two arguments. El Said proposes that Arab American authors almost concentrate their interesting on affairs of family life to keep their hybrid identities and Self. (201). Aboul-Ela refuse the view of El Said, this also can be considered as application for Gikandi's theory to Arab American writers: alternatively requiring Arab American writers to create "little histories" to regain their identity which forced upon them by colonizing nations.

III. CRITICAL DISCUSSIONS

Despite there were little published criticism of Halaby's novel to date of this day, an analysis of her novel *Once in a Promised Land* is especially germane to the critical inscriber surrounding post September,11, U.S 2001 Arab American literature. Many scholars suggested the events of September 11, U.S 2001 such as Evelyn Alsultany, Nadine Naber, and Steven Salaita (2007), led Arab Americans who were once perhaps the most invisible members of U.S. society into a realm of "hypervisibility." Naber points out, nonetheless, that in the months following the events of September11,U.S.2001 in spite of the "hypervisibility" that Arab Americans encountered, the starting of state-sponsored attacks against Arab Americans, such as the "PATRIOT Act, special registration, and FBI investigations" received little attention (Naber, 2000.p:2, 3).

Instead of, most mass media outlets concentrated their coverage on "individual hate crimes that took place in the public sphere while downplaying attacks against those targeted by state violence at detention centers, airports, immigration and naturalization service centers, and the workplace" (Arab Americans 3, 2). The traditional U.S. media overlooked the reality that Arab Americans who hadn't have any relationship with the attacks were under attack themselves. Halaby's novel pays specific consideration to the very examples of state-sponsored violence that Naber mentions in (2008). She opens her novel with a scene exposing the treatment of Arab Americans at U.S. airports, and one of her central characters, Jassim, becomes the theme of an FBI investigation due to unconfirmed suspicion over his work as a hydrologist.

Most critics involving into an argument of Arab American literature in a post September 11,2001milieu build off Edward Said's seminal 1978 work, *Orientalism*. For

example, Maha El Said, in her article "The Face of the Enemy: Arab-American Writing Post- 9/11," points to the fact that, since 9/11 "Arab-Americans, who are a mélange of Arab and American, become trapped in an attempt to redefine their identity, and reconstruct a hybridity that seems impossible in a world that is divided into 'we' and 'them'" (El Said ,2008. p:201). While Maha El Said concentrates on Arab American poets attempting to represent their identity on their own terms, her description of Arab Americans can also be applied to Halaby's protagonists, Jassim and Salwa Haddad.Though Alsultany, Naber, and Salaita (2011) properly propose that Arab Americans were undistinguishable members of American society before to the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.So, the characters Jassim and Salwa are able to keep an identity that is both Arab and American through this timeframe. By comparison her wealthy protagonists with less financially fortunate Arab Americans who are initially invisible to even Jassim and Salwa, Halaby suggests their ability to maintain cultural hybridity is directly related to class structures. On the one side, they sometimes cook distinct foodsto their homeland and create friendships with other Arab American families; on the other side, they eagerly adopt the life of American way, engaging in American consumerism by surrounding themselves with luxuries like high-priced cars, expensive silk pajamas and towels larger than sheets. Nevertheless, after the attacks had finished, Jassim and Salwa find it increasingly difficult to maintain their accepted place in American identity. Their Arab American identity becomes all the more tenuous as their interactions with Americans become progressively more strained.

Whereas El Said emphases on the issue of Arab American identity in post September 11,2001,U.S. Hosam Aboul-Ela calls for Arab American novelists to suggest an openly political response to anti-Arab discrimination. In his article "*Edward Said's Out of Place: Criticism, Polemic, and Arab American Identity*," Aboul-Ela notes, "The post-September 11 moment in Arab American history has seen an acceleration of interest in [a] 'multicultural' view of Arabs in the United States" one that "treat[s] the Arab American experience as a set of specific anthropological details related to cuisine, courtship, religion, language, and various social practices" (Aboul-Ela, 2008.p:16). Aboul-Ela believes that this attitude is possiblyhindering, and therefore argues that "a dissident relationship to United States foreign policy in the Middle East is foundational to the experience of many Arab Americans and to a potential sense of Arab American community"(p:15) Aboul-Ela maintains that Arab American literature since September 11,2001,

America is often written from a "multicultural" and sometimes counterproductive perspective:

[E]ven a few novels have appeared by writers of Arab descent; while the

vast majority of this work has held to a high artistic standard that suggests

Arab American diversity, its packaging has been opportunistic and openly ethnic. (p:16)

Aboul-Ela's representation should not be applied to Halaby's novel of Arab American fiction post September 11, 2001, America, as a diversity of dissident politics is central to her work. Furthermore, while some of her Arab American characters' practice Arab traditions and cultures, Jassim and Salwa are seldom depicted as doing so. They are avid participants in American consumer culture, and their home is typical of a wealthy American couple, lacking almost any indication that they once resided in another part of the world:

That afternoon, driving up recently repaved asphalt to his nestled-in-the

Hillside home, Jassim pulled up his glinty Mercedes next to one of many

identical expectant mailboxes, each painted a muted rusty brown ... in the

coolness of his house, Jassim removed a gleaming glass from a glossy

maple cabinet and filled it with the purest spring water money could buy

... [h]e pulled the trashcan out from under the right side of the sink (the

spot where 92 percent of Americans keep their kitchen trashcans, he

remembered hearing somewhere, though he doubted the statistic) so that

he could reach the recycling basket, into which he deposited a handful of

direct mail and ads (except for Salwa's overpriced-underwear-catalogue

...) Salwa's two magazines (one ... with a photograph of someone's

pristine white living room) found themselves on top of the underwear

catalogue. (pp:23-24)

Although Salwa and Jassim are theist consumers, one still might expect them to preserve their dedication to Islam;

instead of, they seldom occupy in religious practices.

Jassim, in fact, is depicted as not mainly spiritual:

Jassim delighted in the stillness the morning offered, a time before

emotions were awake, a time for contemplation. This day was no

exception as he got up, washed his face, brushed his teeth, and relieved himself, the beginning of a morning ritual as close to prayer as he could

allow. (p:3)

Laila Halaby portrays some Arab American characters involved in Arabic traditions, in some parts of the novel, she depicts Jassim and Salwa as nearly de-cultured in compare to her other Arab American characters. Laila Halaby indicates that the alienation Jassim and Salwa experience after the attacks is heightened because of their implementation of an American way of life and pursuit of the American dream. Halaby imagines Salwa's friend, Randa, for example, as more content with her existence in America than Salwa due to her devotion to Arabic customs Salwa does not practice. When Salwa's marriage begins to untangle, she becomes nostalgic and seeks solace in Randa's company. Randa prepares Arabic coffee for the two women:

Randa pulled the pot off the burner and added two spoonfuls of coffee,

each heaped to the ceiling. She stirred them in, reached across the

continental United States, stretched her arm across the Atlantic until she

found Beirut, and ... the coffee boiled away thousands of miles of

homesickness. (Halaby, 2009. pp:283-284)

As well as offering a unique adjacency of Arab American characters' commitment to habits with her protagonists who are less traditional. Laila Halaby in the same time, engages in the political oration that Aboul-Ela asks. For example, she portrays short-sighted American characters laying flags on their cars alternatively coming to a comprehending of the actual crisis at hand. One of Salwa's colleagues in the work offers her an American flag decal in an effort to face the racism she is sure Salwa is bound to face: "You should put one on your car, on the back window. You never know what people are thinking, and having this will let them know where you stand" (p:55):

Each time the president spoke about the War on Terror [Penny] was

outraged, sickened that there were people so sinister that they would want

to harm innocent Americans ... As the president said, Americans were

bringing democracy to places that knew only tyranny and terror, that

didn't have freedom to choose. (Halaby, 2009, p: 280)

Whereas Halaby's Arab American characters are not openly political Halaby's novel itself is acutely political. By depicting American characters' recurrence, the xenophobic and split oration put forward by U.S. media outlets and politicians, Halaby is practicing the objecting to American foreign politics that Aboul-Ela calls for.

In spite of the George Bush administration and American main mass media were not exclusively in charge of racializing the post September, 11, 2001 moment. Laila Halaby concentrates on these two particular channels of communication in her novel. In her article "Race, Risk by Georgiana Banita, and Fiction in the War on Terror: Laila Halaby, Gayle Brandeis, and Michael Cunningham," examines what she refers to as the "second wave" of post September, 11, U.S. ,2001 literature—authors who choose to concentrate on the implications of the war on terror rather than on the days directly following the attacks:

The division of the world into good and evil as proposed by the Bush

administration in the days leading up to the invasion of Afghanistan and

the start of the war on terror culminated in what may be called moral

racialization, that is, the articulation of a racially suspicious enemy figure

propagated through the visual media and intended to imbibe and redirect

as much public resentment as possible. (Banita, 2012, p: 245)

Banita deduces that Jassim and Salwa are confronted by "citizens galvanized by Bush's call to act as the eyes and ears of the government" and emphasizes that Halaby's intent is to cast Arab Americans as "one step behind other social outsiders" in the eyes of the Americans they encounter (p:246).

In the article "Uses and Abuses of Trauma in Post-9/11 Fiction a Contemporary Culture," Ulrike Tancke suggests that the upheaval Salwa and Jassim afford has little to do with 9/11, but he neglects to consider the state-sponsored

racism that directly resulted from the attacks and its effect on their lives:

It is not the repercussions from 9/11 as such that causes Salwa and

Jassim's life to disintegrate. The traumatizing events in the novel are the

result of coincidence and only vaguely connected events, and of the

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in a *Promised Land* critically and self-consciously explores the

contemporary fascination with trauma: we tend to sweepingly apply

ubiquitous and simplistic categories such as "9/11," while the traumatizing

potential of violence and guilt inherent in human relationships are

impossible to predict. (Tancke, 2010, p: 85)

Whereas Tancke is right to point out that September, 11, 2001 should not be considered as the motivation for all of Salwa and Jassim's marital problems. There is much evidence in the novel to refer that the events following 9/11 contribute to their divided relationship. Tancke overlooks the suffering the two characters directly encounter resulting from the post 9/11 American image of Arabic culture propagated by government-sponsored racism. After all, Laila Halaby opens her novel with the observation that "Salwa and Jassim are both Arabs. Both Muslims. But of course they have nothing to do with what happened to the World Trade Center. Nothing and everything" (Tancke, 2010, p: viii). Banita would also argue with Tancke's position: "Certainly the attacks have a powerful impact on the couple's lives" (Tancke, 2010, p:246).

Salwa and Jassim meeting after the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks become

increasingly intolerant and suspicious. Even the American characters, Laila Halaby portrays as ethnically accepting and open-minded earlier in the novel begin to either distrust Jassim and Salwa or engage in anti-Arab racism as a result of the actions of the American government. For instance, Jassim's boss, Marcus, who defends at first on his friend of fifteen years at the onset of an FBI investigation, starts to question Jassim's innocence through a conversation with his wife:

Something had been different in Jassim lately, something Jassim was not

talking to him about. It could be anything, he had told himself over and

over. It could be medical, or something in his marriage ...

Not for the first

time, his wife had brought to the surface the very thing that was nagging at

him, harvested that vague doubt that had been lodged way back in his

brain, undercutting the faith he had in others. (Halaby, 2007.p:237)

Despite Marcus firstly trusts his close friend Jassim, his distrust in him grows after he learns of the FBI investigation, and Jassim's otherness subsequently becomes all the more clearer to him.

In a short time after the attacks of September, 11, 2001, one of the employees at the mall named Amber follows Jassim and calls a security guard. Amber is a sales clerk at the mall. Salwa seems angry of Amber and she said: "Excuse me, young lady ... Why did you call that security guard on my husband?" (p: 29). Amber answers, "He just scared me ... He just stood there and stared for a really long time, like he was high or something. And then I remembered all the stuff that's been going on" (p:30). When Mandy, Amber's manager, asks Amber about the actions and he said: "You told us to report anything suspicious, and I just thought he looked suspicious" (p:31). Amber's misplaced distrust is based simply on Jassim's non-Western appearance, and for the first time since the attacks, Salwa comes into contact with anti-Arab racism meted out in the form of suspicion.

Other American characters in the novel are only able to see Jassim and Salwa as non-Western others even before the events of 9/11 transpire. Jack Franks, for example, reveals his crushing ignorance of Islamic culture shortly before the attacks occur. Jack meets Jassim at the fitness center, and is distrustful of him instantly solely based upon his appearance. When Jack begins to probe into Jassim's background, Jassim discloses that he is from Jordan, to which Jack responds, "I went to Jordan once ... followed my daughter there. She married a Jordanian. Not one like you, though. This one was from the sticks—or the sand, as the case was ... [s]he's converted. She's an Arab now" (6).

In reverse of Jack and Marcus, Penny has and obtains faith in Jassim, but Laila Halaby finds out that Penny does not extend the same sympathy to Arabic cultures as a whole. Through an interlocution she has with her mate, Penny reveals the firm reaction to Arabs she forms after the attacks on the World Trade Center: "Jassim is a good guy, he's not like them, shouldn't be

judged like them. But those people over there, they oppress women and kill each other. They're the ones who should be bombed" (Halaby, 2009. p:281). Laila Halaby refers that Penny does not include Jassim in her sweeping classification of "them" because of his wealth. By depicting American characters using such racially charged language, Laila Halaby, instead of focusing wholly on the identity struggles of her Arab American characters, also chooses to portray Americans viewing the world with an "us" versus "them" mentality. This binary divides both East from West and rich from poor alike. Laila Halaby's point is that, unless Americans are able to consider themselves as universal citizens, Eastern and Western cultures will remain isolated and estranged, perpetuating the current crises of drought, poverty, and war occurring in all corners of the globe.

Given the attention Laila Halaby pays in pestilences all over the world as well as Edward Said's Orientalism and post colonialism in general, it is particularly valuable to apply globalization theory to Halaby's novel. Simon Gikandi offers a perspective instructive in particular to Halaby's work. She points to the tendency of colonized countries in his article "Globalization and the Claims of Post-coloniality," to revert back to other timeframes in order to refashion their history from a point of view that preceded the arrival of the occupation (Gikandi, 2005.p: 615). so, colonized countries create "little" or "local" histories that portray their society in a way that the West would not mark them (p:615). Colonized nations are then able to both re-establish their true identity and reject the identity that the colonizer has forced upon them.

Both parties of the critical debate on the role of Arab American authors in a period after September, 11, 2001 in America adhere to Gikandi's position. This position makes Gikandi's theory particularly pertinent to *Once in a Promised Land*, a novel of Halaby which situated between the two arguments. El Said, on the one hand, proposes that Arab American writers often focus their attention on affairs of family and domesticity to maintain their mongrel identities and sense of "Self" (p:201). Aboul-Ela, while seeming to disagree with El Said, can also be viewed as applying Gikandi's theory to Arab American authors: instead of requesting Arab American authors to create "little histories" to restore an accurate identity that has not been imposed upon them by colonizing nations, he asks them to engage in dissent in order to participate in and reconnect with a shared identity, thus separating themselves from an often overwhelming Western culture (Aboul-Ela, 2008.p:15).

The opening scene of Halaby's novel had shaken all the Americans and American street. This scene in a Washington airport when an Arab American passenger is put under the questioned. The airport security guard asks the passenger to place personal possessions in a recycle bin. Instead of responding to the security guard's information and questions, the passenger takes on the role of a narrator, asking readers of the story that is about to follow to place preconceptions into a small box:

And for good measure, why don't you throw in those
hateful names as

well, ones you might never even utter: Sand Nigger, Rag
Head, and

Camel Jockey. You don't need them for this story, and
you might find

they get in the way, like a small child who's just
had a candy bar and a can

soda and has to attend a funeral ... I don't need to lock
the box, for it

has a power of its own and will stay closed for the
duration of our story?

Do you feel lighter now, relieved of your excess baggage?
(Halaby, 2009)

The narrator works as the novel's security guard and he asked the readers to apply any stereotypes into the box before their journey. During this detour, Halaby deploys yet another reflection and sets the tone for the rest of her narrative.

IV. CONCLUSION

Halaby's novel *Once in a Promised Land* remains as relevant as it did when it published in 2007 at the first time. This novel occurred after eleven years of the events of September 11, 2001. The significance is due not only to Halaby's verdict not to shy away from broaching controversial subjects, but also to the cruelty of American consternation and prejudice. Halaby's novel, *once in a Promised Land*, discriminates from other literature works written by Arab American authors which follows 9/11 due to her deep connection of the attacks to a theme of persistent global crises through the war on terror and orations surrounding it. However, Halaby's accusation of American society seems to stand the test of time. For instance, the reaction to the so- well known "ground-zero mosque" stands as a witnessing to the fact that many Americans still realize all Arabs and Muslims as "the enemy. The opening scene of Halaby's novel had shaken all the Americans and American street. This scene in a Washington airport when an Arab American

passenger is put under the questioned. Also Pastor Terry Jones's intent to burn the Koran on the anniversary of 9/11 and the recent Koran burning carried out by U.S. troops in Afghanistan serve as further proof of American Islamophobia.

All these tendencies of some Americans to fear all Middle Eastern peoples during the acts of a few extremists proves that the American misplaced reaction to terrorism is not likely to change in the immediate future. And this will be a further evidence of the lack of change in American sentiment toward Arab Americans.

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