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Culture and Identity Scars of American Muslims in Sam Younis's *Browntown* and Betty Shamieh's *The Black-Eyed*

ندوب ثقافية على هوية المسلمين في أمريكا في *براونتاون*

لسام يونس و *بلاك ايد* لـ بتي شاميه

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in English Language and Literature

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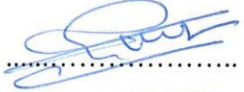
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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the martyrs of Iraq, Palestine, and Syria.

To my dear father and beloved mother.

To my beautiful wife who supported me and provided the appropriate conditions to complete my academic journey.

To my brothers, sisters, friends, and colleagues who helped and supported me at all stages.

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***Browntown* and Betty *Shamieh's* The Black-Eyed**

Prepared by: Mohammed Fadhil Jabbar
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Abstract

Islamic identity and culture have always been subjected to stereotypes and racial discrimination in many societies around the world. In particular, in American societies, Islamic culture and identity have been exposed to many scars and rejection due to stereotypes such as terrorist, extremism jihadist etc. these stereotypes propagated by the media, in magazines, films and news headlines, as well as American writers and critics in their literary works such as plays and novels. On the other hand, Arab and Muslim American writers felt the need to express their opinions and positions, and to represent their true identity and culture away from stereotypes and false narratives, especially since they suffered from racial discrimination and social exclusion according to their personal experiences. This thesis aims to examine representations of American Muslim culture and identity scars in Sam Younis's "*Browntown*" and Shamieh's "*The Black Eyed*."

In this dissertation, a number of concepts such as: identity, belonging, cultural hybridity, representation, and orientalism are used to be discussed with the main ideas and characteristics of characters in literary works. These concepts presented within the conceptual framework of postcolonialism in the writings of Homi Bhabha, Edward Said and Bernard Lewis to show the results of the study from the point of view of Arab writers or American Muslims.

Keywords: American Muslims, Culture, Scars.

ندوب ثقافية على هوية المسلمين في أمريكا في *براونتاون* لسام يونس و *بلاك ايد* لـ بتي شاميه

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الملخّص

لطالما تعرضت الهوية والثقافة الإسلامية للقوالب النمطية والتمييز العنصري في العديد من المجتمعات حول العالم. على وجه الخصوص، في المجتمعات الأمريكية، تعرضت الثقافة والهوية الإسلامية للعديد من الندوب والرفض بسبب الصور النمطية التي تروج لها وسائل الإعلام والمجلات والأفلام وعناوين الأخبار، وكذلك الكتاب والنقاد الأمريكيين في أعمالهم الأدبية مثل المسرحيات والروايات. من ناحية أخرى، شعر الكتاب الأمريكيون العرب والمسلمون بضرورة التعبير عن آرائهم ومواقفهم، وتمثيل هويتهم وثقافتهم الحقيقية بعيدًا عن الصور النمطية والروايات الكاذبة، خاصة أنهم عانوا من التمييز العنصري والإقصاء الاجتماعي وفقًا لتجاربهم الشخصية. تهدف هذه الأطروحة إلى التحقق من تمثيل الثقافة والهوية الإسلامية الأمريكية وندوب الهوية في "براونتاون" لسام يونس و "العين السوداء" لبتي شامية.

في هذه الرسالة، سيتم استخدام عدد من المفاهيم مثل: الهوية والانتماء والتهجين الثقافي والتمثيل والاستشراق لمناقشتها مع الأفكار الرئيسية وخصائص الشخصيات في الأعمال الأدبية ومن ثم سيتم تقديم هذه المفاهيم ضمن الإطار المفاهيمي لنظرية ما بعد الاستعمار في كتابات هومي بهابها وإدوارد سعيد وبرنارد لويس لإظهار نتائج الدراسة من وجهة نظر الكتاب العرب أو المسلمين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المسلمين في أمريكا، ثقافة، ندوب.

CHAPTER ONE
Background of the Study

1.1 Introduction

Arab immigration to America began several centuries ago, and Arab immigrants found a welcoming home in America. The United States of America's multicultural society and the diversity of its races, customs, and employment possibilities made it attractive to Arabs to move to the country. As a result, early Arab immigrants to the United States rarely had a sense of shared identity. They were unable to create strong Pan-Arab organizations or societies throughout the country. The establishment of a unique Arab American identity grew through time, beginning in the late nineteenth century, and went through many stages until reaching its current position (Al-Shetawi, 2021).

Estimated number of Arabs in the United States of America in in the 2010 census, nor in the next census in 2020, Arabs were estimated at 1.7 million (0.5%) in the 2010 US Community Survey of ancestry, including 291,000 Arabs. 190,000 Egyptians, 106,000 Iraqis, 62,000 Jordanians, 502,000 Lebanese, 82,000 Moroccans, 93,000 Palestinians, 148,200 Syrians and 224,000 other Arabs. Additionally, the 2010 poll estimated that there were 464,000 Iranians, 475,000 Armenians, 107,000 Assyrians / Chaldeans / Syriacs and 195,000 Turks, although in many cases informal or independent estimates suggested that the communities are more numerous. Data cited by the Arab American Institute suggests that about 3.7 million Americans can trace their roots to an Arab country. (Al-Shetawi, 2021).

As a result of dramatic events in both the United States and the Middle East, Arabs and Muslims have been demonized and linked to terrorism. The 1973 Oil Embargo, the

1995 Oklahoma City Bombing, the terrorist assaults of September 11, 2001, the 2003 Iraq invasion, and the "War on Terror" are just a few examples. All those events affected the West's view of the Arabs as terrorists, and they are the reason for all these dramatic events. These attacks were highly effects on, Arabs, and Muslims in general. As a result, Arab Americans countered anti-Arab, anti-Islamic discourse and fought back against accusations that they were terrorists or harboring terrorists through various organizations and political channels (Selim, 2012).

As a result of Western media's portrayal of Arab Americans and Muslims as internal foes, they have become targets of hatred and abuse. They are unfairly grouped with terrorists and unfairly stereotyped based on racial and religious grounds (Mohammed & Jawad, 2020). Following September 11, there has been an uptick in American literature that demonizes Arabs and Muslims and encourages Islamophobia. Indeed, a significant amount of post September 11 literature, fiction, theater, and poetry has linked Arabs and Islam to terrorism and hatred. Terrorist (2006) by John Updike and Falling Man (2007) by Don Delillo demonstrate the unflattering portrayals of Arabs and Muslims in modern American fiction.

The current study deals with violence against Palestinian women. The Palestinian-American writer Betty Shamiya pays excellent attention to the crises of violence against Palestinian women due to the Israeli occupation. In her plays *The Black-Eyed*, Betty illustrates the impact of violence against Palestinian women over four different eras.

The goal is to show the effect of violence against Palestinian women by presenting the stories of the four women who tell in the afterlife. This movement is considered an appropriate theoretical framework for analysing the feminist characters in *The Black-Eyed* of Betty Shamiya.

On the other hand, it sheds light on the effects that emerged after September 11, the cultural influences, and how the identity became engraved in the body of the ethnic minority of Muslims in America due to the bloody attacks. It explains how the authors embodied the unfair stereotype of Muslims and its impact on shaping their subjects' private and professional lives, which led to their partial or complete desertion and insult to their cultural and religious identity.

On the other hand, American novels which are written by Arab and Muslim American writers emphasize that the Arab and Islamic identity suffer while facing the accusation of terrorism. The reaction of American society and the new policies of the United States dealt with Arab and Muslim Americans as the other through the abusive representation and stereotypes inflicted by the American media (the other). Over the past two decades, American literature has been booming enough. Arab and Muslim American writers have appeared in all kinds of literary genres such as poetry, short story, drama, and novel.

Since the beginning of 20th century and the migration of Arabs and Muslims in the United States, there are many Arab/Muslim writers who have been famed in American literature like Khalil Gibran, Khaled Mutawa, Munir Akash. In 1992 Barbara Nimri Aziz established RAWI (Radius of Arab American Writers).

RAWI organization provides guidance to the Arab American community, support to Arab-American writers with roots in the Arabic-speaking world, in the Diaspora to support a sense of belonging, communication, and resistance stereotypes prevalent in American society and media.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Arabs and Muslims have been demonized and stereotyped in every form of Western media, including film, literature, the media, and other forms of expression. Arabs and Muslims have been ridiculed and condemned as enemies of Europe and what it represents since the middle Ages. Islam has long been seen as a constant foe of the West, with Arabs being stereotyped as backward, sensual, aggressive, and lacking in self-control and restraint.

Nevertheless, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in New York on September 11, 2001, the image of Arabs and Muslims as terrorists and criminals increased. As a result, Arabs and Islam have simultaneously become suspects and targets of all kinds of attacks. Arabs are associated with terrorism, violence, and extremism, and Islam as a faith and culture is seen with fear and terror. Arabs and Muslims in Western nations and the United States have reached a stalemate in their efforts to debunk preconceptions that they contain violence and hatred toward their hosts and that Islam and terrorism are two sides of the same coin.

From the foregoing, the problem of research is to show hostile prospects to Arabs in the United States of America and negative psychological and social effects that led it.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The current study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1) What is the effect of violence against Palestinian women in Shamieh's *The Black-Eyed* play?

2) What are the feminist characters in the play *The Black-Eyed* of Betty Shamiya?

3) How the authors embodied the unfair stereotype of Muslims and its impact on shaping their subjects' private and professional lives, which led to their partial or complete desertion and insult to their cultural and religious identity?

1.4 Questions of the Study

This research aims to answer the following questions to attain the goals mentioned above.

1) 1) How did Betty explain the impact of violence against Palestinian women in her play The Black-Eyed?

2) What are the effects that emerged after the events of September 11, the cultural influences, and how the identity became engraved in the body of the ethnic minority of Muslims in America due to the attacks?

3) How did the authors embody the unfair stereotype of Muslims and its impact on shaping their subjects' private and professional lives?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of the current study stems from the fact that it sheds light on literary works to discuss the term violence against women in general and Palestinian women in particular, and sheds light on the effects and causes of violence against women that appeared after the events of September 11.

In addition, the cultural influences and how the identity became engraved in the body of the ethnic minority of Muslims in America due to the attacks. Thus, it explains how the authors embodied the unfair stereotype of Muslims

and its impact on shaping their subjects' private and professional lives, which led to their partial or complete desertion and insult to their cultural and religious identity.

In addition, the current study argues that Arab American dramatists and theatrical groups respond to the hegemonic polemics against Arabs and Muslims that have become all too common in modern American literature and media in the aftermath of September 11. And it shows how Arab-American playwrights and actors have made huge strides in changing stereotypes about Arabs.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The current study analysis Betty Shamieh's *The Black-Eyed* and Sam Younis's *Browntown*. The findings cannot be generalized to all the literary works of Shamieh and Younis.

1.7 A brief biography of Sam Younis

Sam Younis is a playwright, writer, and actor of Lebanese descent. He was born to a Lebanese father and a Syrian Lebanese mother in Houston, Texas. Younis obtained his Master of Fine Arts in Acting from New York City's Columbia University School of the Arts. He has appeared in at least fourteen theatre shows as an actor. He has appeared on Broadway, off-Broadway, and off-off-Broadway, as well as on television and in films.

Younis made his acting debut in his own play, *Browntown*, in 2003. This play explores prejudices in the workplace and in social contexts, cantering on three brown-skinned actors auditioning for the role of a terrorist in a television film.

1.8 A brief biography of Betty Shamieh

Betty Shamieh, a Palestinian-American playwright, claims to have been reared in a very Arab-American household. Arabic was spoken. My community was integrated, but I felt a minority very much, more so than just an Arab American." Shamieh was inspired by the events of September 11, but she has broadened her scope to include not only September 11 related brutality but also numerous forms of violence against Palestinian women throughout history. In June 2002, Shamieh travelled to the Palestinian Occupied Territories with many other famous American writers, including Naomi Wallace (1960), Tony Kushner (1956), and Kia Corthron (1961). Shamieh ended by saying, the cost of ignoring what is happening there — and ignoring how those happenings affect the stability of the entire world is unbearable. Shamieh's work was influenced by her Palestinian heritage. Najjar declares,

> "I think that by showing them as human beings, it humanizes
> people whose stories never are told. I feel my job at first was to
> show (Arab Americans) as human beings, to show them as people

who can lust, who can be ambitious, who can be mean, who can be loving" (Najjar, 2015,554).

Shamieh praises her supporting family, giving her the confidence and inspiration to develop plays with Arab-American themes. Shamieh was motivated to pursue a career in the arts by the creative experiences she was exposed to as a kid. During the mid-1960s, Shamieh's father and mother relocated to San Francisco, California. Her parents were also art enthusiasts who pushed their daughter to attend local theatre performances. Thus, she became acutely aware of her artistic abilities almost immediately. Shamieh enrolled in different playwriting, theatre, and English courses in the United States to be ready for a profession in playwriting. She attended the University of California, Berkeley for three years before transferring to Harvard University as a junior. Shamieh started to discover her identity as an undergraduate student at Harvard as a playwright. Shamieh's debut play, One Arabian Night, was staged at Harvard University in 1995.

1.9 Definitions of Terms

– **Terrorism:**

Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political,

philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them. (Weinberg, 2004)

– **Culture**

Culture is defined by ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and normative or expected behaviour patterns, influencing everything individuals do in their community. Culture is not inherited genetically and cannot exist by itself, but society members always share it.

It changes as it is passed down from generation to generation because each generation inserts something new before moving it on. (Johnson, 2013).

As it is the only one, or at least the first, to be learned, one's culture is usually taken for granted and presumed to be a right.

Thus, culture is a complex term, and no one definition has been agreed upon in the literature. As a result, among the several definitions that were reviewed, this study is guided by the following description, "culture is a set of shared and enduring meaning, values, and beliefs that characterize national, ethnic, or other groups and orient their behaviour" (Johnson, 2013,99).

– **Identity**

Identity is a nebulous and ephemeral concept. It has been used—and even overused—in a variety of circumstances and for a variety of reasons,

especially in recent years. On the one hand, identity is personal to each of us, and that we expect it will remain constant (and hence the same) across time. On the other hand, identity indicates the connection to a larger collective or social group (Vignoles, 2017).

CHAPTER TWO
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The concept of staging Arab America is fraught with difficulty, particularly for new Arab American authors like Shameem and Younis. Arab Americans are seen as fragments of a faraway adversary in post September 11 America. Turning an adversary into a collaborator on stage is a struggle and a reshaping of a popular culture that has long swallowed falsehoods about Arab culture and has a fascination with reading and interpreting the Arab as an Oriental.

Layla Al Maleh says, in her book Arab Voices in the Diaspora, that the growth of the Arab American literature can be explained by political events in the Arab world that have contributed to raising the political awareness of the Arab American community and consolidating relations with the country of origin. It also has a lot to do with the collective efforts to combat distortion, especially in the media. Arab American writers are to present a more positive image of themselves and their community to be trustworthy citizens. "Walking the line between their Arab origin and their American identity" (Al Maleh, 2009, 24-25).

Arab Muslim American writers contributed greatly to the brilliance of American literature and achieved many awards through literary works in American literature. Consequences of September 11 attacks have affected Arab Muslims American writers by the terrorist attacks that targeted their new homeland America and their identity.

The efforts of Arab Muslim American writers in writing were doubled, about the most prominent event.

One of the most important aims of Arab Muslims American writers is to write about September 11 focusing on the Arab and Islamic identity. They resist the distorted marginalized stereotype that has been circulated by the American media about Arabs and Muslims in post September 11. American immigrants have intended to return of their countries by stereotypes and negative images of Arabs and Muslims in American society about them and they also felt insecure and threatened.

Despite the diversity of their dramatic topics, all Arab American playwrights have repeatedly and methodically tackled the heritage of negative stereotyping of Arabs in their plays. Arab American playwrights have re-appropriated the right of self-representation to regain their stage identity in response to a long-standing practice of misrepresentation.

Arab-Muslim American writers such as Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), Mohua Kahn's *The Gril in The Tangerine Scarf* (2006), Shayla Abdullah's *Saffron Dreams* (2009) and Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2007) shed the light on the identity of Arabs and Muslims from an internal perspective or inside or deep view describing their suffering and their experience of stereotypes.

This chapter summarizes what has been published about Betty Shamieh's *The Black-Eyed* and Sam Younis's *Browntown* thus far. The theoretical literature seeks to discover what theories currently exist and have been studied to describe the significant subjects addressed by authors. It also discusses the literature around their works.

 Furthermore, the empirical section looks at research that has been published to assess and critically reflect on the two authors' efforts.

2.2 Theoretical Studies

From 1880 through the beginning of the twentieth century, when most women in industrialized nations obtained the right to vote, first-wave feminism encompassed the suffragists' generation and organizations supporting women's rights. Women's participation in sexual equality and abortion was a goal of the second wave. Third-wave feminism is a new generation of feminists that want to attain a broader view of women's issues by focusing on each group's unique characteristics, as well as the cultural, socioeconomic, religious, ethnic, and sexual variety that is a part of women's lives all over the world. The feminist movement's third wave might be seen as a continuation of the movement's two prior stages. Betty Shamieh is considered a member of the third wave of post-colonial feminists. She focuses on exposing the unique experiences of Palestinian women living under Israeli occupation and fighting against political violence (Elweza, 2015).

Women are subjected to violence in a variety of nations. At least one out of every five women in the globe has been physically or sexually assaulted by a man at some point in their lives. Kumari defines violence against women as:

"Violence against women includes domestic violence in the home, sexual abuse of girls in schools, sexual harassment at work, and rape whether by husbands or strangers, in refugee camps, or as a tactic of war. This violence, which is reinforced by discriminatory cultural, social, and economic structures, devastates lives, fractures communities, and stalls development" (Kumari, 2007,1)

In Lewenza's (2015) study, she dealt with the term violence against women in general and Palestinian women. She also explained that Betty Shamiyah challenges the stereotypical Western view of women in the East directed by Mishra's theory and addresses the violence these women were subjected to through Kumara's definition of violence against women. And she stated that "Betty Shameem has also applied Mishra's theory concerning post-colonial feminism successfully in *The Black Eyed*" (Lewenza, 2015,20).

Post-colonial theory rejected Western feminism because of its European fanaticism. The trend of the West towards totalitarianism and generalization against women in the Middle East led to the emergence of the post-colonial feminist movement. This movement is considered an appropriate theoretical framework for analyzing the feminist characters in *The Black-Eyed* of Betty Shamiyah. The four women fight against the stereotypical Western view of women in the colonial countries, which focused on making the eastern woman a victim of female genital mutilation, patriarchal control, the domination of family systems, or a misunderstanding of Islamic teachings.

The Palestinian-American writer Betty Shamiyah fought against this stereotype brilliantly, showing the four women exposed to violence and then death due to their active participation in the political struggle against colonialism. This research paper indicates that Beti Shamiyah challenges the stereotypical.

In the study of Selim (2012), *Roar* and *The Black-Eyed* by Betty Shameem are discussed. Shamieh portrays Arab Americans as victims of Orientalism in these plays. The author illustrates that:

"Shamieh is confused between using drama as an art of resistance to establish a post-colonial image of Arab America and her desire to cross the hyphen of Arab-Americanism and establish herself as a successful American playwright. This confusion between resistance and crossing the hyphen distorts the image of Arab America in her plays" (Selim, 2012,301)

As Selim demonstrates, Shamieh's incapacity to present a unified positive picture of Arab America reveals that Arab Americans are still yearning for creative freedom and a space to express their obsessions without being suppressed. While Brogan (2012) examines the powerful, non-traditional Arab female characters in these four plays and discusses Betty Shamieh's early career as a playwright. In addition, by describing these female personas and the non-conforming roles they depict, analyzing the difficulties women with hyphenated identities have while striving to assimilate into a new society. These ladies use loud voices that will not be suppressed to express their unique viewpoints. Brogan states that:

"Betty Shamieh and her plays will not go unnoticed. Instead, she will be recognized as one of the most relevant Palestinian-American female voices of the 21st century and her work will always continue to resonate with a diversified audience. Betty Shamieh will fortify the female voice". (Brogan, 2012,66)

Prior to September 11, Arab-American drama was erratic and uneven, with a dearth of Arab-American theater and writers making their voices known across the United States. Following September 11, however, the American theater landscape saw a rise of Arab-American drama and theater geared at targeting the American audience to articulate Arab Americans' worries, fears, and anxieties. They intended to remove many of the stereotypes that

had been incorrectly connected with them because of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

Considering transnationalism and diaspora theory, the study of Al-Shetawi (2021) examined Arab American writers' dramatic efforts to make their voices known via drama, performance, and theater. According to the research, Arab-American dramatists and theatrical groups respond to the hegemonic polemics against Arabs and Muslims that have become all too common in modern American literature and media in the aftermath of September 11. Considering the anti-Arab American literary debate, Arab-American playwrights and actors have made significant progress in transforming perceptions about Arabs and challenging the loud voices of those who want to fan the fires of Islamophobia. Where Al-Shetawi (2021), mentioned that:

> "In writing *Browntown*, Younis exposes all lies and falsehoods that are unjustly ascribed to Arabs and Muslims. For example, it is falsely known in Western media and film industry that Arabs are wealthy because of oil and that they abuse their wealth on women and pleasure without attempting to follow the path of technology and the caravan of modern *civilization*." (Al-Shetawi, 2021,520)

Younis in *Browntown* expresses Arab-American artists' fears that the September 11 events have instilled in America a strong sense of animosity and suspicion toward Arabs and Muslims, who are indiscriminately stereotyped based on their race and faith. Younis use humor to make the audience laugh at the absurdity of the situation in America, which is essentially an immigrant culture made up of people of many races and ethnicities.

In another study performed by Ali (2017), the main aim was to examine how Arab American playwrights have used the theater arena to offer self-representation as an alternative to culturally and institutionally imprinted stereotypes in response to an urgent necessity for cultural, social, and political survival. Ali describes *Browntown* as:

> "The *Browntown* play introduces its Arab American characters as vulnerable, perplexed, and in search of an identity that appears to always summon two dichotomies: the American Self and its other in a post September 11 suspicious America. Sam Younis attempts to give voice to the Arab Americans so they could represent themselves and subvert an ideology of stereotyping which has continually "Othered" their identity. By reclaiming self-representation, these playwrights work towards transcending Arab Americans' negative portrayals in the media. Their aim is to erase suspicion as a dominant component of their identity and fortify the multicultural essence of their Arab Americanism. " (Ali, 2017,89)

In Ithawi (2018), the main aim was to investigate the practice of "othering" Arab Americans as an ethnic group in the time between September 11 and the advent of ISIS through the literary lens of theater.

The research looks at how Arab-American playwrights deal with hyphenated identities and cultural in-betweenness in their personal lives or on stage through imaginative characters who embody the challenges of average Arab Americans. The research also investigates plays written by Yussef El Guindi, Sam Younis, and Jamil Khoury. The anxieties and disappointments of the communities they represent are reflected in the issues tackled by these playwrights, he said that it is indeed a good 'start' to try to produce a play about Arab American actors their frustrations and anxieties

in the general context of the cultural ignorance surrounding their identities. Ithawi presents Younis,

> "Through theater, Younis tries to break the stereotypes and dismantle the negative representations that the silver screen, TV shows, and Media channels have constructed over more than a century and a half. *Browntown* creates a space for a more authentic, culturally sensitive role playing for Arab-American actors. Presenting this predicament is testament to the way in which the theater remains open to more authentic and diverse ethnic voices, including Arab-American voices" (Ithawi, 2018,69).

Although Hollywood and other forms of media have the ability to affect people's thoughts and minds, theater is likely to have a similar impact, where Ithawi (2018) clarifies that as:

> "The fact that Younis is writing about Arab American actors' plight is very revealing and empowering. *Browntown* is artistically and professionally empowering because it is not only written for the general audience to ponder over the tough the questions that the play is asking, but it is also written to be acted by Arab American actors. " (Ithawi, 2018,68)

Furthermore, the study of Sayyid (2019) aimed to bring attention to the events of September 11 considering liberalism, politics, conspiracy theories, and drama in order to bridge the gap between many allegations and claims in order to arrive at true facts about the destruction of the WTC buildings, the declaration of war on terror, and the stigmatization of Islam and Muslims.

 Sayyid stated that, Younis' target in this play is to inform himself, and other actors and playwrights how to have a role to push Hollywood to present Arab

groups in a right way. And he added "Thus, *Browntown* is a consequence of factual encounter the playwright faces in a TV audition as an Arab American actor." (Sayyid, 2019,133).

Sayyid mentioned that the indictment of bin Laden and Arab countries as the perpetrators and organizers of the September 11 atrocity is a great way to demonize Islam and the Middle East as a whole. As a result, to paint a thorough picture of the September 11 events and their aftermath, it is necessary to include the perspectives of immigrant Middle Easterners, their feelings, and the issues they confront as a result of these crimes:

> "Yussef El Guindi's Back of the Throat and Sam Younis' *Browntown* unveil the ugly consequences of this period. Racial profiling is the tool to degrade one's existence and rights. The American society and government behave in a hysteric manner." (Sayyid, 2019,134)

In study of Mohammed & Jawad (2020), they focus on cultural and identity scars have been etched in the bodies of ethnic minorities of Muslims in America due to the bloody attacks of September 11. These occurrences have resulted in painful experiences for those who experienced the events up close and for those who bear the brunt of the blame, Muslim Americans. The assaults led in a strong reassertion of national morality and community purity among Americans, from which Muslim Americans were excluded. For Muslims, this reassertion is accompanied with the restoration of a cultural identity far from their birthplace, and under pressures and biases that make the process extremely difficult, where they stated:

> "Accordingly, developing an Islamic identity is a challenge for Muslim Americans, particularly for the second generation of Muslim

Americans, those who were born and live in non-Muslim environments. The challenge creates a kind of trauma between integrity in the American society as its citizens and the presentation of the values related to their culture and religion"(Mohammed & Jawad, 2020,93).

In addition, they explained that Younis and Akhtar are trying to prove that culture and race enslaved people in their plays *Browntown* and *Akhtar's Disgraced.* In fact, they believe that the two playwrights are a good example of Arab-American writers who tried to improve the image of Arabs and Muslims after the September 11 incident.

"Omar and Amir are examples of what means to be Muslims in the United States. Each one of them fails because of the trauma of belonging and assimilation. While Amir has lost because of renouncing his faith and Islamic roots, Omar has lost because he is unable to resist the stereotyping. The two plays display Muslim Americans' responsibility as well as the culture they are in for having the trauma of identity and home. The blame cannot be on one part, each one has his share of the blame." (Mohammed & Jawad, 2020, 100)

2.3 Review of Empirical literature

Study of Polat (2015) dealing with the devastating impacts of discrimination, persecution, and exploitation that Arab women have been subjected to in Palestine for many years, as well as in the United States today as immigrants and minorities. This research describes how, following the September 11 terror attacks, playwright Betty Shamieh was able to use her play *The Black Eyed* to demonstrate the detrimental effects of the years-long

conflict on people's psyche, particularly women's psychology. She explains how Arab American playwrights, such as Betty Shamieh, try hard to portray the tough situations Palestinian women face as a result of the never-ending war in a critical yet compassionate tone from a Marxist-feminist viewpoint,

"Therefore, Marxist-feminist perspective shows that each woman character in *The Black Eyed* unveils the oppression and exploitation both in patriarchal family structure and society Arab women have to endure in the face of the war, which is one of the outcomes of capitalism, as they passively fight against it, particularly in Palestine. In order to analyze and support this claim accordingly, this paper includes each character's symbolic story, their dialogues and finally the discriminative effect of the media in the establishment of a stereotyped Arab image after the September 11 attacks. " (Polat, 2015,4)

Stahl (2016) looked at how contemporary Arab and Muslim American female playwrights and solo performers are confronting stereotyped racial discourses about Arabs and Muslims in the aftermath of September 11th. The main goal of the study was to highlight and investigate the commonalities that have evolved as a consequence of dramatic resistance, as well as the cultural and political identities that have been presented to modern audiences as a result of such activities, as Stahl illustrate,

"The playwrights in this study use solo performance as a means of negotiating current tensions surrounding the representation of their race, culture, and gender, simultaneously demonstrating and critiquing the construction of collective identities."(Stahl, 2016,22)

She believes, however, that there is a significant difference in the way loyalty is portrayed in plays written by Arab American males versus those written by women,

> "For example, works by Betty Shamieh (arguably the most prominent female Arab American playwright) and Leila Buck are more concerned with loyalty primarily as it pertains to the well-being and self-discovery of their female characters, rather than focusing on loyalty as a function of national allegiance. " (Stahl, 2016,24)

Ali A. (2018) performed a study that focuses on the mental health effects of anti-Muslim discrimination and prejudice, the pervasiveness of xenophobic and Islamophobia viewpoints in the United States, and the normalization and acceptance of discrimination as indicated by Donald Trump's presidential election, where he beliefs the rise of Islamophobia has undoubtedly disrupted the identity and way of life of Muslim Americans in the last decade and a half. The study's main findings show that Muslim Americans' marginalization and othering has resulted in negative psychological symptoms such as dread, tension, concern, isolation, numbness, desensitization, and insecurity.

In addition, this research looks at how Muslims in the United States re-negotiate their identities once their faith is denigrated. The Collective Trauma Theory is used to discuss both the larger-scale impact of Islamophobia on the Muslim American community's collective awareness as well as the community's collective resiliency.

In the study of Schiavini (2021), he examined the relationship between Arab American representation and Arab American cinema and the film industry as a topic in contemporary theater through the perspective of Arab

American theater artists and playwrights. In response to the re-emergence of stereotypes and the binary representation of good and bad Muslims in film and television after September 11, Arab American playwrights have used theater to confront ignorance and prejudice by chronicling the daily struggles of Arabs American artists—and actors in particular—against the oversimplifications and demands of the film industry. trending. Emphasis placed on two plays: Jihad Jones and *Kalashnikov Babes* (2014) by Youssef El Gendy, and *Brownton* (2004) by Sam Younis. Both question prevailing culture and prejudices through humorous representations of the role of Arab-American artists in the film industry and their struggle to emerge outside the terrorist mask. And Schiavini (2021), described Younis's play as: *Browntown* is the response to Younis's experience as an Arab-American actor who was constantly offered terrorist roles.

As the playwright of Lebanese origin explains Younis, this stereotyping worsened after the September 11 attacks, especially in the television production divisions and networks, which cast Younis parodies. The play is set in the Wide Net Talent Casting office in New York, in November 2003—that is, after the invasion of Iraq, when the US government needed to gain consensus and reinforce the idea of the Arab as the Villain was one of its strategies In addition, he added the play is clearly about the film industry's complicity in perpetuating negative ethnic stereotypes, particularly (but not exclusively) of Arabs and Arab Americans, it's also about the final products' responsibilities—with the inevitable negotiations, compromises, and (to some extent) complicity of actors themselves.

Alqahtani (2018) examined how drama as a means of expression for Arab-Americans helped to shatter conventional views of Arab- and Muslim-Americans following the September 11 attacks in 2001, as well as the growth

and forms of Arab-American theatre in the US. It concentrates on the works of Arab-American playwrights Yussef El Guindi and Sam Younis, who have acted as exemplars of the post-September 11 age in Arab American theatre. El Guindi's works examine how Arab- and Muslim-Americans are routinely found guilty in the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation interrogation system, whereas Younis' work examines the influence of Hollywood's perpetuation of Arab-American stereotypes. She clarified that,

> "Younis's aim in writing *Browntown* is to launch a ground for dialogue between minority actors and professionals in mainstream theatre, television, and film. He hoped that this dialogue would build a better understanding of Arabs and Muslims in particular, as he believes that cultural misunderstanding has led to dire political and mortal consequences. According to Younis, putting all the blame on the shoulders of "any single party such as Muslim Arabs for the terrorist attacks is irresponsible." (Alqahtani, 2018,402)

She believed that many plays have been created and performed to discuss critical concerns in the lives of Arab-Americans that should be addressed in academia.

Nonetheless, the theory used in this study is still relevant today, extending to the threats presented by ISIS and the likelihood of identifying these threats with Arabs and Muslims in the United States and the rest of the Western world. This problem is ammunition in the systematic attempt to homogeneously locate all Arabs and Muslims globally in terrorist zones, so legitimizing prejudice, and violence against them. It is shamelessly used by conservative media outlets, with the unintentional support of liberal sections.

CHAPTER THREE
Methodology and Procedures

The section clarifies the methodology that the researcher uses to carry out this study. It consists of the method, sample of the study, procedures, and theoretical framework.

3.1 Methodology

This research adopts a perspective study approach to literary representations of Arab/Muslim Americans in two literary works. The first is Betty Shamieh's *The Black-Eyed* and the second is Sam Younis's *Browntown*. These two works discuss and represent the reality of the situation of Arab/Muslim Americans.

The present study explores the importance of Arab American playwrights and theater groups responding to the anti-Arab and anti-Muslim hegemony arguments that have become so common in modern American literature and media in the aftermath of September 11, as presented by two celebrities. Arab American Writers. Moreover, to create meaningful and legitimate comparisons between the two plays. In this thesis, several concepts introduced within the post-colonial conceptual framework in the writings of Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, and Bernard Lewis are used for a better understanding. These concepts include identity, belonging, culture, hybridity, representation, orientalism, racism, stereotype.

3.2 Procedures of the Study

The researcher conducts the study according to the following steps to achieve the objectives of the study:

- Read critical reviews of novels that have already been published.
- Read the biography of Betty Shamiya and Wissam Younis in depth.

- Gather and study information about the two plays, as well as Arab American lives in the aftermath of September 11, including reviews of previous literature and research.

- Studying post-colonial theory and the most important literature that explains the theory.

- Discussing literary works based on postcolonial theory

- Presentation of the results and final recommendations of the researcher.

- Document references for books, articles, and web resources based on the APA style.

3.3 Theoretical framework

This study applied to postcolonial theory because it is one of the scholarly and basic speculations of social and political nature. To begin with, postcolonial theory deals with the cultural, social, political, and financial impacts of colonialism on the colonized individuals.

According to Edward Said, postcolonial views Orientalism may be a way of regularized (or Orientalized) composing, vision, and consider, overwhelmed by goals, viewpoints, and ideological predispositions apparently suited to the Arrange. It is the image of the 'Orient' communicated as a whole framework of thought and scholarship.

Edward Said is one of the foremost critical originators of post-colonial thinks about, particularly in his well-known book *Orientalism* (1978) which looks for to appear the relationship between East and West. In his book, Said characterizes Orientalism as "a Western fashion for overwhelming, rebuilding, and having specialist over the Arrange" (Said, 1978,24). In other words, orientalism portrays the relationship between East and West as a relationship of control, control, and authority.

Besides, the foremost imperative bequest of Orientalism is the Orientalist generalizations and the presumptions that create the picture of the East and proceed to be a source of fascination for numerous within the West. This in any case, ought to not occupy us from the truth that these same Orientalist generalizations are based on and fueled by the prevailing majestic powers.

Said sees on the representation of Middle easterners and Muslims was depicted as a political development has been categorized into three components, to begin with history of Western narrow mindedness against Middle easterners and Muslims, moment figure is the struggle between the Middle easterners and Israeli Zionism, and its effect on Jews and after that American as well as on liberal culture. The third figure is the total need of any social position Lets empathize with the Middle easterners and Muslims (said, 1978,27-28).

Edward Said expresses his feeling of an intellectual and moral responsibility and that man must create his own history, with abstract ideas that celebrate the exceptionalism of America and the West in Orientalism. So, it is not an aerial European imagination about the East, but rather a huge body of theories that are invented and applied, and that includes theories that are invented and applied. Its continuation made it a knowledge system about the East, and an acceptable filter for infiltration of the East into Western consciousness.

In case Edward Said passed on in 2003, he did not witness the changes that came upon the classical era of European Orientalism. According to Hamid Dabashi in his *book After Orientalism: Knowledge and Power in the Time of Terrorism*, Arabs and Islam are now not secured by the attempt to understand and know, but rather by scorn and scorn.

As this contempt has not as it were ended up the periphery of Western talk, it has moreover gotten to be the center of Western legislative issues and techniques.

This picture of Islam and Muslim radicalism, or the modern Orientalism, is fortified within the media and social media, as the awkwardness in scope of Muslim news contributes to antagonistic vibe towards the Islamic religion.

And it gets to be the foremost antagonistic in American Orientalist talks, particularly with the Orientalist Bernard Lewis. In case the ancient Orientalism received the talk of the Illumination and the civilizational message to legitimize the colonial period, at that point its employments the unused colonialism to serve America's war or what is called. The events of September 11th had a clear impact on literary writings, especially on American writers of Arab origins, in the narration of the American writer of Arab origins.

Since the events of September 11, 2001, and we live in a world other than the world that existed before that date, this is an undeniable fact. Almost everything has changed, especially for us in the Arab and Islamic worlds, where we have been put under an accusation that is still standing and it will take a not short time until we get rid of the accusations that She adhered to us haphazardly in order to justify strategic goals that were not born of their moment according to our knowledge of the way of thinking of Western societies that do not make emotional decisions as happens in our world called the third, but rather that decisions there are carefully studied - sometimes - and the reaction and expected results are calculated so as not to leave things to chance.

According to a report published by the Saudi website Empowerment, the West showed a focus on the Arab product after the events of September 11, 2001, where there was a desire to learn more about the region and its culture, the impact of the war on

terrorism helped to develop translation from Arabic to English, and to receive Arab literary works, and this effect may have a negative impact on the field of English translation of Arab literature, where the novels are now read as social documentaries by those seeking information about politics in the Middle East instead of focusing on the value of literary works of art.

CHAPTER FOUR
Discussion and Analysis

4.1 Discussion and Analysis

The dissertation discusses the perspective of two novels: Betty Shamieh's *The Black-Eyed* and Sam Younis's *Browntown*. Through the novel's plot elements, characters, setting, and points of view is revealed as well as each writer's biography. Representation of American Muslim culture and identity revealed, and an inner perspective described.

Sam Younis, in the play *Browntown*, describes group of Arab-American (or Arab-American-looking) actors trying to make a living in an industry currently most interested in hiring them to play terrorists.

Sam Younis is a playwright, writer, and actor of Lebanese descent. He was born to a Lebanese father and a Syrian Lebanese mother in Houston, Texas. Younis obtained his Master of Fine Arts in Acting from New York City's Columbia University School of the Arts. He has appeared in at least fourteen theater shows as an actor. He has appeared on Broadway, off-Broadway, and off-off-Broadway, as well as on television and in films.

Younis made his acting debut in his own play, *Browntown*, in 2003. This play explores prejudices in the workplace and in social contexts, centering on three brown-skinned actors auditioning for the role of a terrorist in a television film.

Younis specialized in the field of culture and the identity crisis, as the topics that she covered in most of her literary works were about cultural dissonance and overlap between American Muslims and other societies, both religious and secular such as: Islam, Ethics, Politics, Feminism, Human Rights, Body, Sexuality, and Sexual Desire.

This chapter discusses the play *Browntown* in particular. Special emphasis has placed on the issue of the identity of Arab Muslim Americans in post September 11 and their struggle against stereotypes in American society. These issues discussed in the framework of post-colonial theory. The discussion of this chapter results in presenting a diagnosis of the image of Muslim Arab Americans in American literature from the perspective of Arab and Muslim American writers.

Betty Shamieh in *The Black-Eyed* play discusses a reality of about four Arab women of different ages who meet in the afterlife. Violence haunts the four Palestinian women who occupy an antechamber from the afterlife. This zany and hilarious play shows traditional perspectives on sex, family, and terror.

Although the women in Shamieh play have suffered or committed horrific acts, there is plenty of humor and even whimsy when they sort out identities and tell their stories.

There is an interesting equivalence in the Shamieh worldview. *The Black Eyed* may take its name from the Houri in the Islamic paradise, but the afterlife where these women meet is full of Jews, Christians, and Buddhists as well.

It is a subtly written Shamieh play about unanswered questions and unquestioned answers that is deceptively cute, funny, and entertaining without compromising the seriousness of issues of violence, heroism, and sexuality.

Shamieh in *The Black Eyed* focuses on the misidentification of Arab Americans in the United States, but it also gives anti-Arab signals.

The play was written in response to the events of September 11 and how to represent Arabs and Muslims. Betty Shamieh, an American playwright of Palestinian origin, claims

to have been raised in a very Arab-American family who speak Arabic. But she felt a very large minority, more than just an Arab American. Shamieh was inspired by the events of September 11 but expanded her scope to include not only the brutality associated with September 11 but also the many forms of violence against Palestinian women throughout history. Shamieh was inspired by the events of September 11 but expanded her scope to include not only the brutality associated with September 11 but also the many forms of violence against Palestinian women throughout history.

Shamieh praises her supportive family, giving her the confidence and inspiration to develop plays with Arab-American themes. Shamieh was excited to pursue a career in the arts through the creative experiences she had as a child. During the mid-1960s, Shamieh 's father and mother moved to San Francisco, California. Her parents were also art lovers who pushed their daughter to attend local theater performances. Thus, she became fully aware of her artistic abilities almost immediately. Shamieh attended various playwriting, theater, and English courses in the United States to be ready for a career in playwriting. She attended the University of California, Berkeley for three years before transferring to Harvard University as a student. Shamieh began to discover her identity as an undergraduate at Harvard University as a playwright. Shamieh 's first play, One Night, premiered at Harvard University in 1995.

Shamieh presents Arab Americans as victims of Orientalism. It places Arab Americans in the context of the epics of immigrants in the United States to give their experience validity and identify within larger racial experiences.

4.2 Sam Younis's *Browntown* Characters Analysis

Sam Younis is a playwright, writer, and actor of Lebanese descent. He was born to a Lebanese father and a Syrian Lebanese mother in Houston, Texas. Younis holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in Acting from Columbia University School of the Arts in New York. He has appeared in no fewer than fourteen stage productions as an actor. Younis made his acting debut in his own play, *Browntown*, in 2003. This play explores prejudices in the workplace and in social contexts, focusing on three black actors who audition for a terrorist role in a TV movie. Younis points out that Arab American characters have become hostages to their social and cultural stereotypes in American societies. Younis Browntown factor is a relay of the character's experience as an Arab American actor who was constantly offered terrorist roles. Among the pivotal characters are Omar and Little Malik. He presents these two characters as actors of Arab origin with Middle Eastern features who co-star in The Color of Terror, a made-for-TV movie that needs black actors. It is the latest in a series of auditions for brown parts (ie, Middle Eastern roles) for films filled with stereotypes of Arabs and other minorities. While Malek naively tries to defend some of the screenwriter's choices regarding the characteristics of the protagonist, Omar, older and more disenchanted, sees them for what they are: discriminatory and limited, human and artistic, so much so that his main wish is translation. "An ordinary guy, " even an "ordinary bad guy" (Younis, 2009,236), but he is not racially describable. While they wait, they are joined by Vijay, an actor of Indian descent who often gets Arab-American parts, because neither the cinema nor the theater industry seems to know the difference between Arabs, Muslims, and Indians (a fact confirmed by the audition itself).

Younis mainly highlights stereotypes in the American film and film industry. He introduces, through the character of Omar, that he describes the treatment of Arabs as

very bad in the film industry, and that racial profiling is the general rule in American cinema.

Younis portrays the anger and frustration Arabs experience in American societies over racial profiling. The absurd characterization of a terrorist Omar suffers during an acting audition impresses Anne, the casting director, so much that she orders another audition in the afternoon.

Through the play's characters, Younis tries to present the imagination of American writers who put terrorist scenarios through stereotypes that simulate the idea of jihad and jihadists who want America to become an Islamic state "Mark my words! If the United States does not become an Islamic state within the next forty-eight hours, you will face All of God's wrath!" (Younis 2009, 231).

Younis introduces the character of Vijay, who gets fired from acting and gives Omar more lines to study. Sam discusses the role of the film industry and the media in perpetuating stereotypes and racial representations, especially of Arabs and Arab Americans.

Most Western writers and novelists rely on the formulation of the plot and the characters of their novels on the use of Arab and Muslim characteristics such as the beard, features of Arab and Middle Eastern race, and Arab and Islamic traditions in dress and veil, some of which are common. Names among Arabs and Muslims such as Muhammad, Hamad, Amir, Ahmed, etc. and concepts related to the Islamic religion.

These and other characteristics are used to represent Arabs and Muslims to complement the narrative scenes. "Why do all terrorists got to be named Mohammed in these movies?" (Younis, 2009,235) Omar asks his fellow actor and audience. Moreover,

the name encourages the association between the terrorist type and the Islamic religion, especially after the events of September 11, which were fabricated by people of Arab and Muslim origins. The terrorist of this TV drama encapsulates all the cliches about pan-Arabism: he has several wives, "he hates all Jews, he drives a Mercedes that he bought with his family's oil money and he's conspiring with a guerrilla group called 'Allies for Allah"(Younis, 2009,235-236).

Younis refers to the Arab stereotyping of Muslim women through the headscarf or headscarf through the character of Sherry as she suggests helping Ann impersonate an Arab woman, forgetting that the latter text is covered from head to toe. Through *Browntown*, Younis aims to introduce the audience to Arabs in the area of comedy free from menace, and to establish the disparity between what defines them as Arabs, and those culturally shaped stereotypes that recognize and define them as Arab. On the other hand, Younis presents a satirical criticism of the consequences of ignorance, as the three actors recount how they all auditioned.

They played Arab/Muslim terrorists who were Latino, South Asian, Greek, and even Jewish Israelis. Younis also depicts the incorporation of cultural, linguistic, and ethnic characteristics of the Arab/Muslim race that supports the confusion of Arab and Islamic identities. This construction of mixing between Arabs and Muslims is not a condition that every Arab and Muslim, nor every Muslim, be an Arab. So, Younis portrayed that Omar could not distinguish between an Arab and an Indian actor because he did not consider that Indians could also be Muslims: "Not all Indians are Hindus. Indians can be Muslims, too. I'm Indian and atheist, my family is Catholic, and I'll have you to know I eat beef shawarma all the fucking time! Vijay burst out" (Younis, 2009, 241).

Younis presents the West's degrading depiction of Islam through Muslim actors, only because they are in mortal need for a job, here Omar realizes facing the deterioration of his cultural identity as a Muslim, and also Malik becomes frustrated because he knows, as all other Muslim actors in America know, that he has no chance of being represented. The true picture of his cultural identity is in performance and will and that he has repeatedly had to make that identity darkly dark.

Omar rejects the politics the film uses in trying to portray the bad Muslim in all aspects tests already taken. He tells Malik of his sincere desire to do his script writing on ordinary Muslims, not bad Muslims, as an attempt to make some change in the current film industry, but his friend Malik is not enthusiastic about this idea in order to adapt to the prevailing attitude in the film industry disappointingly. "That will do what? Reverse centuries of negative depictions of the brown man?"(Younis, 2009,236).

Younis's perspective is considered as a challenge to stereotypes and an attempt to present a positive image of Arab and Muslim Americans that contrasts with stereotypes prevalent in American society in post September 11. Amanda Lloyd presents in her thesis entitled *Reverse Orientalism*: Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2012), that the Arab American characters in the novel have realized that the Americans have adopted the point of view of American politicians. Lloyd states that,

> When placed in a post September 11 milieu, Halaby's Arab American
> characters become increasingly aware that many Americans have adopted the
> oppositional discourse propagated by the rhetoric of U.S. politicians at the
> onset of the war on terror, which aggravated the American misperception of
> Arabic and Islamic immigrants already in existence prior to the September 11
> attacks. (Lloyd,2012,2).

Younis at *Browntown* presents three brown characters Omar, Malik and Indian Vijay, The Color of Terror. Younis refers to the way film industry professionals are interested in creating Arab, Islamic, or even Middle Eastern characters in their screenplays that are produced in the form of films. Yonuis focuses on conveying a message to the American community that what they might see in Hollywood movies are nothing but characters looking for a job opportunity and wearing make-up to represent the script set by the author.

Douglas Little notes that, Orientalism American style became a staple of popular culture during the 1920s through such media as B movies, best-selling books, and mass circulation magazines. Hollywood blockbusters such as The Sheik (1921), *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924), and *Beau Geste* (1926) propelled Rudolph Valentino, Douglas Fairbanks, and Ronald Colman to stardom while reinforcing popular stereotypes of the Arabs as a culturally backward, sexually depraved, and congenitally violent people. (Little, 1945, 17)

The film industry and television program have contributed greatly to the spread and development of stereotypes. Representing Arabs and Muslims as irrational and backward, and their actions indicate violence, hatred, and terrorism.

4.3 Sam Younis's *Browntown* Themes Analysis

Younis sheds light on the issue of the stereotyped image of Arabs and Muslims in American society through the characters of the play. Where he embodies a role as a character in the play, he is confused and asks questions about the nature of the Arab person in American society, and searches for the reason for the accusation of terrorism

that was attached to the name of Muhammad and the people who have Middle Eastern features.

> "Why am I routinely a candidate for terrorist roles? Why `are these terrorists always named Mohammed? Why does that Indian guy keep getting the Arab terrorist parts over me? Why should that upset me? Am I a sellout?" (Younis, 2009, 225)

Younis points out that the Arab and Islamic identities have been greatly distorted in the minds of Americans, to the extent that the name of Muhammad has become associated with terrorism and Al-Qaeda attacks. So, he poses a question to the Americans "But that's the thing, man. Why is his name Mohammed? Why do all terrorists got to be named Mohammed in these movies?" (Younis, 2009, 235).

Younis tries to represent Arab and Muslim Americans in the play's characters, to help reverse the prevailing stereotype in the minds of American society. And, to present their identity and culture that contradicts the stereotyped image that has been attached to them.

Youins' idea lines with Edward Said's idea to explain the Western view of the East, and on the other hand, he represented Arab and Muslim Americans from a completely internal perspective. Contrary to the stereotypes prevalent in American society and transmitted by the media and film production companies.

Arab and Muslim Americans are most vulnerable to offensive perceptions and stereotypes that have been produced at the time and to this day. Arab and Muslim Americans who were dreaming to move to US Little did they know that this long-awaited dream has turned into a nightmare that haunts them in all areas of their lives, at work, stores, restaurants, schools, universities, books, magazines, novels, TV screens, websites, even on radio stations. And movie screenings.

The occasions of September 11th were among the foremost vital occasions of the twenty-first century. Numerous journalists, faultfinders, writers, scholars, and scholastics have taken these occasions to specific and write about. Arabs and Muslims were the most theme within the situation of scholarly works, TV appears, promotions, and movies.

The representation of Middle easterners and Muslims was not adjusted between the representation of Middle easterners and Muslims of themselves as an inner viewpoint and their representation by others as an outside point of view. The September 11 occasions contributed to the rise of American Orientalism, and the American see of the Middle easterners, of Islam and Muslims in specific, and of the Center East in general. The American organization created the term "war on terrorism" to legitimize its hones towards the East, Middle easterners, and Muslims, such as the intrusion of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The term has been received by numerous masterminds, orientalists, scholars, partisans, media experts, publicizing and film generation. Therefore, American writers and playwrights of Arab-Muslim origin or a Middle Eastern condition have joined forces to confront stereotypes. Younis used Arabic names in the play's characters such as Malik and Omar, and Vijay for the Indian character. And the play was loaded with all the stereotypes specifically associated with it with the Arabs and Islam.

Younis introduces himself in the preface to *Browntown* as a response to his auditions as an Arab-American actor. When he got my MA in Acting and started looking for work in New York, he encountered a lot of bewilderment, some indignant, some comical. So, Younis decides to write his play to show the American society that it would be foolish to view all people of Arab or Muslim origin as terrorists and seeking bloodshed.

Younis classifies the stereotypes that the American media spread in the minds of society, such as that the Arab Muslim man always seeks polygamy and obtaining four wives. Also, the names of all terrorists are always "Muhammad", and all Arab men are willing to die to go to heaven and enjoy the riches of Paradise and countless virgins (Hoor al-Ain).

> Ann: Omar, the thing I would say about this scene is this: Mohammed has a major decision in front of him. He has two choices. He can either abandon the jihad and do good deeds or choose evil to feed his own hatred. We have to see that Mohammed chooses to hate. And that Ali lures him into that hatred by promising him riches and virgins and all that BS (Younis, 2009, 243).

As for the Muslim Arab women, they were represented as wearing headscarves from head to toe and therefore their identity was not identified. For the events of September 11, Arabs and Muslims were stereotyped as being trained as terrorists or jihadists, always in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and they believed that killing American Jewish children would please God.

Younis uses a comedic style to show the absurdity of racial profiling and linking terrorism to Arabs and Muslims. Perhaps Younis wrote this comedy to represent his personal experience as an Arab immigrant actor. "Authenticity is really important. It's Barry's number-one priority. So, from now on you really need to ask these guys where they're from" (Younis, 2009, 248).

While the US administration adopted the term war on terror. Younis emphasized that his play is a kind of war on terror against Arabs and Muslims in cinema, films, literature, and media produced in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. The literary works of

Arab or Muslim American writers may be considered a kind of reverse Orientalism, but what they are trying to do is to rewrite the Arab-Islamic identity in American society.

Younis tries to prove that his play writing style is cultural representation and not Orientalism, or in another words, it is to establish cultural and ethnic borders in addition to cultural representation, and to highlight the role of Arab and Muslim American writers in contemporary American literature. "Arab-American writers increasingly seek to challenge established cultural and racial boundaries in their articulation of Arab-American identity, and to assert their identity on their own terms" (Majaj, 2000, 330).

One of the most important goals of Arab and Muslim American writers is for their works to replace the biased American media. The American media is unfair to Arab and Muslim Americans. Since the term terrorism was first introduced and circulated in the American media. This term has become attached to the Arab and Islamic divide in post September 11.

The term terrorism became part of the stereotypical image of the identity of the Arab or Muslim person. The term terrorism did not include the racist practices that Arab and Muslim Americans are subjected to in American society. Every time the US media shed light on a terrorist issue, it deliberately focused on terrorists of Arab or Islamic origins. The media influence reflects negatively on Arab and Muslim Americans who live in American societies and have no affiliation with any terrorist organization.

As a result of what the media broadcasts, children in schools and young people in universities, and many others who live in American society and belong to Arab and Islamic roots, are exposed to racist terrorism, which causes them a lot of verbal and physical attacks.

Younis envisions the cultural clashes that occur between members of a single community that includes several types of identities, races, and origins. Arabs and Muslims have always been the anomaly in American society, and they were always viewed as the "other". All age groups, including Arabs and Muslims, are subjected to the assassination of their identity in American society, as children are mocked by their colleagues, women are persecuted for wearing the hijab, and men are subjected to racism and branding them as terrorists for practicing their religious rituals.

Despite the cultural coexistence that immigrant societies witnessed, it does not reach the total integration and full integration between cultures. In societies that embrace more than one culture, minorities suffer from some clashes with other cultures with the majority, and sometimes they may be exposed to racism or social rejection. Homi Bhabha in his writing *The Location of Culture* discusses many issues related to cultural contradictions, describing the individual situation in the diaspora in a struggle between pain, embarrassment, and contradictions. "Continually positioned in space between a ranges of contradictory places that coexist" (Bhabha, 2012, 47).

The Orientalist discourse still seeks to marginalize the Arab-Islamic identity, as it tries to portray Islam as an oppressive principle that harms women and their freedom.

"That Islam was innately and immutably oppressive to women, that the veil and segregation epitomized that oppression, and that these customs were fundamental reasons for the general and comprehensive backwardness of Islamic societies" (Ahmed,1992, 152).

When Western novels shed light on the lifestyle and practices of Arabs and Muslims, their aim was not to focus on formalities, but rather aimed at portraying the Arab mind

and the Islamic religion as something strange that could not be in harmony with the Western lifestyle, and it must always be questioned and placed in particular suspicion.

Arab and Muslim women face a real threat due to societal rejection of their identity. This is what they must dare to give up some formalities that suggest that they are of the Arab race or belong to the Islamic religion.

RAWI organization has won the approval of many writers as they realized their existence through their literary works and writing that discuss issues related to Arab and Islamic identity in American societies. In a comment to the head of the organization, Randa Jarrar, she says:

> "Both before and after September 11, Arab American writers have had to balance the desire to be read and recognized for the quality of their work with being hyper-visible spokespeople for their homelands while struggling to live and work amid ongoing hostility toward Arab people. With the president's recent ban on travelers from several Arab-majority countries, Arab Americans face increased challenges"(Helal,2017,19).

Whereas the American media published many stereotypes that offend the Arab mind and the Islamic religion, as the Arab mind was portrayed as backward, and those who belong to the Islamic religion as terrorists and murderers.

> "In the early 1980s, Jim Lehrer, cohost of the PBS evening news hour, agreed that network television's fascination with terrorism and sectarian strife in the Middle East. feeds the stereotype that many Americans have of Arabs as bloody people who just go out killing each other all the time"(Little,1945,37).

For a long time, the East has been dealt with in a systematic way that includes many of the methods broadcast by the media, and the views and stereotypes that are transmitted in the minds of the people.

4.4 Shamieh's *the Black-Eyed* Characters Analysis

Betty Shamieh, an American playwright of Palestinian origin, claims to have been raised in a very Arab-American family. Arabic was spoken. My community was integrated, but I felt a very large minority, more than just an Arab American. Shamieh was inspired by the events of September 11 but expanded her scope to include not only the brutality associated with September 11 but also the many forms of violence against Palestinian women throughout history.

Shamieh praises her supportive family, giving her the confidence and inspiration to develop plays with Arab-American themes. Shamieh was excited to pursue a career in the arts through the creative experiences she had as a child. During the mid-1960s, Shamieh's father and mother moved to San Francisco, California. Her parents were also art lovers who pushed their daughter to attend local theater performances. Thus, she became fully aware of her artistic abilities almost immediately. Shamieh attended various playwriting, theater, and English courses in the United States to be ready for a career in playwriting. She attended the University of California, Berkeley for three years before transferring to Harvard University as a student. Shamieh began to discover her identity as an undergraduate at Harvard University as a playwright. Shamieh 's first play, One Night, premiered at Harvard University in 1995.

Shamieh presents Arab Americans as victims of Orientalism. It places Arab Americans in the context of the epics of immigrants in the United States in an effort to give their experience validity and identify within larger racial experiences.

Shamieh deals with four main characters in her play. Delilah, Tamam, Aisha, and the architect. They are four Palestinian women of different ages. Delilah was one of the Sami

people ancient Near East, who inhabited part of Canaan during the tribes and the royal periods, Delilah, lived before religion, and she was a martyr for whom she sacrificed herself Nation.

She tells her version of the biblical story of Samson and Delilah. Delilah sacrificed herself to save her country, the Philistines, and her people from Samson womanizer who killed most of her people in the banquet hall.

The second era falls, Tamam's story during the era of the Crusades. The Crusades were military campaigns ratified by the Latin Roman Catholic Church during the Middle East ages and the late middle Ages.

As for Aisha, she is an Arab Muslim suicide bomber in the modern era, whose events take place during the period of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. This period began in 1917 with Balfour Proclamation' which announced the British government's support for the Zionists' plans to establish a Jewish "national home" in Palestine. Finally, the architect, a secular modern-day Christian Arab American woman, died on a plane on September 11 at the hands of Arab terrorist hijackers.

Shamieh completely broadens her perspective to question Price through four different eras. It indicates that it is connected history and the past lead to the present and will lead to the future. The characters in this play either foreshadow or relive the Palestinian trauma of displacement, occupation, and loss. Postcolonial feminism has never functioned as an entity separate from colonialism; Rather, it directly inspired the forms and power of colonial politics backed by the institutional and legal discrimination of violence, sexual assault, rape, and torture (Mishra, 2013).

Although the women in Shamieh novel have suffered or committed horrific acts, there is plenty of humor and even whimsy when they sort out identities and tell their stories.

There is an interesting equivalence in Shamieh worldview. *The Black Eyed* may take its name from the Houri in the Islamic paradise, but the afterlife where these women meet is full of Jews, Christians, and Buddhists as well.

It is a subtly written Shamieh play about unanswered questions and unquestioned answers that is deceptively cute, funny, and entertaining without compromising the seriousness of issues of violence, heroism, and sexuality.

Shamieh in *The Black Eyed* focuses on the misidentification of Arab Americans in The United States, but gives anti-Arab signals. The play was written in response to the events in the events of September 11 and how to represent Arabs and Muslims. The events of this play center around the character of Aisha and the architect who lived in the diaspora and died on a plane that was hijacked and blew up by the Arabs. Aisha is a talented woman, but her Arabism stigmatizes her as a half-breed. Her talents as an architect are ignored and she finds solace only in a world of fantasy that gives meaning and validity to her identity as an Arab American.

"All fiction of every genre hinge around some kind of crisis, internal or external, that a book has to see its way through. This can take many forms. But September 11 is in a sense a bigger crisis than many novels can contain or capture: it's a situation where truth is both bigger and stranger than fiction."(The Economist, 2011).

Shamieh presents an Orientalist scene that shows the Orientalist view that contains the stereotyped images that Orientalists draw in the minds of Western society. In the

1960s, the Palestinian-American author Edward Said came with his book *Orientalism*, which explained the view of the East and defined the essence of Orientalism as: "The essence of Orientalism is the inevitable distinction between Western superiority and Eastern inferiority" (Said 1978, 42). Said classified Orientalism as a political movement that includes several factors and systematic practices aimed at imposing the hegemony of the West over the East. First, the history of Western intolerance against Arabs and Muslims. Second, the Arab-Zionist-Israeli conflict, and its impact on Jews and then Americans as well as on liberal culture the complete absence of any cultural standing to sympathize with Arabs and Muslims (Said 1978, 27-28).

Finally, literary works belonging to writers of Arab or Muslim origins contribute to reflecting the stereotypes prevailing in American society that were transmitted by the media and film production companies.

Arab and Muslim American women, in particular, are more susceptible to the abusive perceptions and stereotypes that were produced at that time and to the present day. Arab and Muslim American women who had dreamed of moving to the United States, did not know that this long-awaited dream had turned into a nightmare that haunts them in all areas of their lives, in work, stores, restaurants, schools, universities, books, magazines, novels, television screens, websites and even on radio stations. And movie shows.

4.5 Shamieh's *the Black-Eyed* Themes Analysis

Shamieh begins by telling the first story of Palestinian women in the character of Delilah, the biblical character who begins by confessing that she used her sensual tricks on Samson to discover the secret of his power. Her tribesmen used her to seduce him. By now she had her own motives, specifically to avenge her brother's death.

Delilah, a Palestinian girl whose brother Samson was killed. Samson was the most powerful Israeli man who was killing hundreds of Philistines daily. The inability of the Philistines to defeat Samson made them count on one of their girls to do so. Delilah says:

> They made me think it was my idea. They asked me to take my father's place
> in their meetings, although I was a girl, because my only brother died. We
> talked about many things. Listen as if my opinions matter, as if you matter.
> They were polite. (Shamieh, 2009, 13)

Delilah has been trafficked or forced into prostitution. Although she practiced it tolerably, she later discovered that her tribe had deceived her and mocked her efforts. Although the term exploitation as used in this definition includes sexual exploitation, forced Laboure, slavery and servitude. On the other hand, Shamieh documents another suffering of a Palestinian woman. All from the era of the Crusades. She beautiful girl.

Her only brother joined the resistance groups against the Crusaders. Arrested "With weapons in his hand and curses on his lips" (Shamieh, 2009, 41). They put him in prison. Tamam went to free her brother. Soldiers raped her before her brother's eyes to force him to tell them something they want I know.

Tammam says:

> They raped me in front of him and forced me to do so his brother's eyes were
> open, so he had to watch. They wanted to know something. They twisted the
> support of their argument to my body. Crusaders He thinks rape will anger our
> men (Shamieh, 2009, 40).

Repression and violence led the Crusaders against the Philistines. Tamam describes her feelings with her brother during the rape; The Crusaders want to destroy the Philistines but they were used to torture and the misery was like nothing else: Right when the first hand was laid on me, we both screamed, my brother tried to look in every

direction, but I realized that I needed him, to look me in the eye they thought to make us face each other in our misery it destroys us. But we are used to misery. It's like nothing else.

Of all the religious wars in human history waged by any religion, anywhere, at any time, none have been bloodier, more genocidal, more barbaric, and longer lasting from "Holy Wars".

Shamieh presents the fourth story, which is the architect who belongs to the twenty-first century. Identified only as the architect. She introduces herself "I am an architect of invisible structures and buildings will never be built. I am a mother of children who will not be born" (Shamieh, 2009, 49).

She is the most complete character in the play: a neurotic, uptight woman who had fantasies about having sex with her boss and later dying in a hijacking. She was a Palestinian American living in America with her heritage of Arab customs and traditions for this reason.

The architect experienced psychological violence within the general community, including intimidation at work, and in educational institutions and other places. She has resorted to escaping from the world she cannot live in, to another world of her imagination. For the soul to live in a world of fantasy and daydreaming:

 The architect says

> Why should I speak in words when I think in pictures? Hands! A movement!
> They change! I am an architect of invisible buildings. And buildings that will
> never be built. I am a mother of children who will not be born, Choir (Delilah,
> Tamam) Loving men who will remain unloved. (Shamieh, 2009, 49).

Shamieh describes that many Palestinian women suffer from a lack of integration into American society. She could not balance her Arab customs and traditions with the freedom of American society. And that Arab women in America. Although Islamic groups are also growing in major cities in the United States, as many Muslim women who live here say, integration into Western culture is still exceedingly difficult.

Shamieh presents female stories in *The Black Eyed* to portray hardship and injustice faced by Palestinian women over the course of four different ages due to colonization.

Shamieh deliberately woke her up female voices from death to tell western society that the third world. Women have fought and are still fighting against colonialism, racism, and sexism economic forces. Third world women are not submissive to males' dominance; On the contrary, they have played and continue to play vital roles in the formation date.

There are paradoxes between fact and fiction in portrayals of Arab and Muslim women, and the authors are supposed to be objective when presenting Arab and Muslim identity or Islam. American Muslims have been subjected to brutal crimes such as violence, arson, vandalism and other incidents of property damage, death threats, and public harassment. The most vulnerable to hate crimes are those who can easily identify themselves as Arab or Muslim, especially women who wear headscarves and men who wear turbans. As a result, the illusions of many Americans are that those who wear turbans and headscarves are Arabs or Muslims.

The architect talks about the past to the present. The current violence is the result of hundreds and thousands of years of violence directed against the Middle East in general and the Palestinians in particular.

CHAPTER FIVE

Recommendations and Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

In the twenty-first century, the world witnessed many events that marked a turning point in people's lives. This century did not pass safely, so the balance of the world turned upside down. The accidents were very harsh on people and their nature of life.

It has been more than twenty years since the attacks of September 11, 2001. Despite the events of this era, the events of September 11 are still the most important beginnings of the twenty-first century. From that fateful day to this day, the breaking news pages continue to broadcast news of a suicide attack, terrorist bombing, assault, and so on.

The September 11 attacks led to an increase in conflict in international relations and affected the way countries deal with international problems. It also led to changes and irregularities in international law as the events gave possibilities to the powerful countries and also interfered in the internal affairs of the countries such as the right to make decisions, the right to travel and so on.

It also wanted to interfere and influence the decisions of the United Nations, in addition to violating all treaties and agreements defending human rights.

All these events and changes have contributed to the distortion of the Islamic identity and culture in American society. This led to the need to try to modify the stereotype that spread due to these events.

The events of September 11th were one of the most important events of the 21st century. Many writers, critics, novelists, writers, and academics have taken these events to reflect and write about them.

Arabs and Muslims have been the main theme in the script of literary works, television programs, advertisements, and films. The representation of Arabs and Muslims was not balanced between the representation of Arabs and Muslims of themselves as an internal perspective and their representation by others as an external perspective. The events of September 11 contributed to the emergence of American Orientalism, the American view of Arabs, Islam, and Muslims in particular, and the Middle East in general.

American Muslim writers have multiplied about the highlight. One of the most important goals of Arab and Muslim American writers is to write about the events of September 11, with a focus on Arab and Muslim identity. They are challenging the distorted and marginalized stereotype of Arabs and Muslims in the post-September 11 era that the American media has circulated. American immigrants intended to return home with stereotypes and negative images of Arabs and Muslims in American society about them and also felt insecure and threatened.

In many literary and cinematic works, the characteristics of Arab and Islamic identity are discussed, such as the Arabic names Muhammad, Osama, Ali, Khaled, Hammad, Jasim, Salwa, etc. The turban (veil) and the use of the Arabic language to express terrorism in literary texts and movie scenes.

During political and popular debates about the merits and insanity of Allied invasions of countries allegedly supporting terrorist activities, a host of Hollywood films have emerged that seek to engage and engage viewers in such debates. (Toffoletti and Grace, 2010).

The Arab or Muslim in American society has become like a dangerous virus spreading in the minds of the American people, because of the stereotypes transmitted by the media, films, and novels. American writers were biased towards the direction of the American administration in writing books and publishing literary works. Even if the author, writer, or even thinker is supposed to be objective in representing the truth and not being biased towards authority, doctrine, or religion. "You intellectual is one who can choose between actively representing the truth to the best of your ability and passively allowing a patron or authority to direct you" (Edward W. Said, Representations of the Intellectual, 2012, 121).

It was the choice of those two plays: Shamieh's *The Black-Eyed*, and Sam Younis's *Browntown*. These plays have not been studied extensively and provide the views of writers towards the representation of American Islamic culture and identity.

The characters in Younis play played the reality of people who belong to the Islamic or Arab identity. On the other hand, Younis describes the cultural dissonance and overlap between American Muslims. Younis also focused on the issue of the identity of Muslim Arab Americans in the post-September 11 and their struggle against stereotypes in American society. These issues are discussed within the framework of postcolonial theory. Younis included stereotypes in the film industry and American cinema. He emphasized that racial profiling is the general rule in American cinema.

Younis portrayed the reactions of Muslims or Middle Easterners towards the racial profiling that Arabs and American Muslims suffer because of their identity and culture, which is represented in the Arab and Islamic traditions of dress and veil, some of which are common. Names among Arabs and Muslims such as Muhammad, Hamad, Amir, Ahmed, etc.

On the other hand, Betty Shamieh's play, *The Black-Eyed*, illustrated the reality of four Palestinian women in different life stages. This play presents dealing with four main characters. Delilah, Tamam, Aisha, and the architect. They are four Palestinian women of different ages. Delilah was one of the ancient Semitic people of the Near East, who inhabited part of Canaan during the tribal and royal periods. Delilah lived before religion and was a martyr who sacrificed herself for the nation. She tells her version of the biblical story of Samson and Delilah. Delilah sacrificed herself to save her country, the Philistines, and her people from Samson's womanizer who killed most of her people in the banquet hall.

The story of Tamam was in the era of the Crusades. The Crusades were military campaigns sanctioned by the Latin Roman Catholic Church during the Middle East and late middle Ages. As for Aisha, she is a modern Arab Muslim suicide bomber whose events take place during the Israeli occupation of Palestine. This period began in 1917 with the Balfour Declaration, which declared the British government's support for Zionist plans to establish a Jewish "national home" in Palestine. Finally, the architect, a Christian American woman of secular Arab descent, perished on a plane on September 11 by Arab terrorist hijackers.

Shamia was depicting the four women's suffering from violence and stereotypes across four different eras. It indicates that it is linked to history and that the past leads to

the present and will lead to the future. The characters in this play foreshadow or relive the Palestinian trauma of displacement, occupation, and loss. Postcolonial feminism has never functioned as a separate entity from colonialism; Rather, it directly inspired the forms and power of colonial politics backed by the institutional and legal discrimination of violence, sexual assault, rape, and torture.

The issue of Islamic identity and culture has always been one of the most discussed topics by many writers, critics, novelists, writers, and academics who took these events to express and write about them.

In the context of the modern United States, the increasing proximity of American writers from the Middle East to point to American social systems and the contradictions that Arab and Islamic identity is exposed to.

5.2 Recommendations

Through this study, the researcher suggests the following recommendations to be considered by other researchers:

1. The current study is limited to the scars of American Muslim culture and identity in Sam Younis' "*BrownTown*" and Shamieh's "*The Black Eyed*". The researcher recommends conducting more extensive studies on the issue of Islamic identity and culture for Arabs and Muslims as well as Oriental Americans residing throughout the United States through representation in novels, plays and literary works. A more comprehensive study of Islamic identity and culture can also be conducted throughout the West in general, depending on the representation of Islamic identity and culture in world literature.

2. The researcher recommends conducting more research on the literary works produced by American and international writers and authors of Middle Eastern and Islamic origins. Also including the focus on reverse orientalism, which gives writers and authors of Middle Eastern and Islamic origins to represent themselves in a tangible way completely different from the stereotyped images and distorted representation published by the orientalists.

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