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The Reaction to Violence in *The Black Eyed* by Betty Shamieh, *The Domestic Crusaders* by Wajahat Ali and *Back of the Throat* by Yussef El Guindi

A Dissertation

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	I
Abbreviations.....	II
Preface.....	III-V
The Introduction:" Violence, Trauma, and Post Colonial Feminism....	1-71
First Chapter: <i>The Black Eyed</i>	72-140
Second Chapter: <i>The Domestic Crusaders</i>	141-193
Third Chapter: <i>Back of the Throat</i>	194-252
Conclusion.....	253-267
Works Cited.....	268-279

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Abbreviations

INS	The United States Immigration and Naturalization Service
ADC	Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
VAW	Violence against women
USA PATRIOT ACT	Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism
DOJ	Department of Justice
CAIR	Council on American-Islamic Relations
SEVIS	The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System
CAPSS	The Computer Assisted Passenger Screening System
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
DSM-IV- TR	The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition, Text Revision
APA	American Psychiatric Association
ATFP	The American Task Force on Palestine
SRTP	Silk Road Theatre Project

Preface

This dissertation discusses the different types of violence that faced Arabs and Muslims in the United States of America following 9/11 attacks. It analyzes the reasons and consequences of that violence. Therefore, violence is spotlighted through the examination of the violent incidents in three plays; *The Black Eyed* by Betty Shamieh, *The Domestic Crusaders* by Wajahat Ali, and *Back of the Throat* by Yussef El Guindi. The post colonial feminist resistance to the Western feminist misrepresentation of Eastern females is a secondary frame of reference to this dissertation. Ali and Shamieh depicted Eastern female characters that refute the Western discourse while El Guindi depicted Western females that assert the Western distorted images of Eastern females. Trauma is logically an expected reaction to violence; that is why it is another frame of reference to the dissertation through examining Wahiba Abu-Ras's 2008 and 2009 researches about the traumatic effect of 9/11 on the Arabs and Muslims who live in the United States of America.

The introduction discusses the theoretical background to violence along with its definition and typology. The researcher has chosen the academic examination of sociologists Peter Iadicola and Anson Shupe in their book *Violence, Inequality and Human Freedom* (2012) to frame the analysis because sociologists seek to understand the common features of societies that produce a particular pattern of violence; that is actually required to comprehend the reasons and consequences of the phenomenon of violence. A brief analysis to the immigration circumstances and condition of the three targeted minorities,

the Palestinians, the Pakistani and the Egyptians, is presented in the Introduction too. *The Introduction* also discusses the Post Colonial Feminist refutation conducted by Chandra Mohanty to the Western Feminist approach to Eastern females. Then, an examination to the definition and the nature of trauma is analyzed with a clear focus on the Arabs and Muslims in America following 9/11.

Chapter I tackles Betty Shamieh's *The Black Eyed*. It traces the reasons and consequences of violence throughout four different ages with Shamieh's female Palestinian characters who have met in the afterlife to discuss the price of violence. Shamieh has intentionally chosen to follow violence from the past in order to comprehend the reasons for the present violent events of 9/11. She is distinguished among the other two writers with her focus on Palestinian women's crises that resulted from the imperial and Israeli violence. She deserves to be called the Palestinian female representative. She has strongly refuted the Western Feminist discourse about Eastern women through depicting female characters that play vital roles in shaping history. The traumatic effect of the violent incidents that faced these women is also going to be discussed thoroughly.

Chapter II discusses Wajahate Ali's masterpiece *The Domestic Crusaders*. Ali who was 21 during 9/11 attacks reacted positively to the hostility and backlash following 9/11. *The Domestic Crusaders* has been hailed as “one of the first major Muslim American plays” and compared to “*A Raisin in the Sun*” and works by Tennessee Williams and Eugene O’Neill. It depicts the dreams and despairs of a Pakistani Muslim family showing them as simple human beings not as crusaders. Ali has depicted the family’s struggles and strives to achieve their dreams showing how

9/11 backlash destroyed most of them. The family consists of three generations, a grandfather, two parents, and three adult children. Each member of the family will introduce a different coping method to his PTSD which resulted from the violence and hostility. The two Eastern females also defeat the Western image of female women since they prove to be the strongest characters in the play.

Chapter III displays Yussef El Guindi's *Back of the Throat*. It is a straightforward play about racial profiling and state violence against the Arabic and Muslim minority following 9/11. It has one protagonist, Khaled, who has been exposed to violent investigation by two FBI agents. This chapter significantly displays the distorted Western perception of the Muslims and Arabs through a well depicted dialogue between the two agents and Khaled. Khaled faces dehumanization, physical abuse and humiliation. He will suffer from severe PTSD due to 9/11 and the violent investigation he faced. Two American females are going to assert their perception of the Western feminist fallacious discourse about Eastern women when they utter tough comments about Muslim women.

The conclusion summarizes all the findings and results of the three chapters and the introduction. It verifies that violence leads to further violence and it hinders the traumatized people from fulfilling their potential.

The Introduction

Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him. (Martin Luther King, Jr. 452)

During the early hours of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, nineteen men took control of four commercial airliners en route to Los Angeles and San Francisco from Boston, Newark, and Washington D.C. The first hijacked aircraft struck the north tower of the World Trade Center at 8:46 A.M. Then at 9:3 A.M., a second airliner, traveling at more than five hundred miles per hour slammed into the south side of the tower. A third plane, American Airlines Flight 77, was crashed into the Pentagon (the headquarters of the United States Department of Defense), leading to a partial collapse in its Western side. The fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93, was targeted at Washington, D.C., but crashed into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania after its passengers tried to overcome the hijackers. Soon, the Federal Bureau of Investigation declared the personality of the hijackers as Muslims who belong to Al Qaeda and that Osama Bin Laden was behind these attacks (Fouda 113).

These attacks unleashed an almost unimaginable torrent of pain and destruction. They reshaped the world's politics and the system of ethnic stratification throughout the world. Since that day, there were extraordinary waves of hostility and backlash from Western nations against the Arabs as a race and the Muslims as a religious congregation globally. The term race connotes "biological differences among peoples skin color, facial features, statures, religion and the like that are transmitted from generation to generation"(Feagin 3). Ethnic strife exists

in virtually every part of the world, and it is a force that drives people to kill each other or, at the very least, to treat one another as inferior or dangerous. It is the force that mobilizes the most intense hatred and animosities, often leading to war among nations and violent reactions within a society or in the world. Specifically, this research chronicles the violence and ethnicity that Muslim and Arab Americans faced in the aftermath of 9/11. It draws on the voices of Arab and Muslim American writers who described the range of discrimination they experienced and discussed in their works. Violence has led Arab/Muslim Americans to suffer from severe post traumatic stress disorders.

The introduction to this dissertation focuses on violence as a main reason for trauma. Violence is discussed as a sociological phenomenon from Peter Iadicola's and Anson Shupe's perspective. The introduction also discusses their definition and typology of violence. It traces forms of violence that face the Arab and Muslim Americans following 9/11 demonstrating examples of their suffering. It gives a brief overview of the history of Palestinian, Egyptian and Pakistani immigration to the United States of America. Many researchers including Wahiba Abu-Ras have found that the Arabs and Muslims in America have suffered from post traumatic stress disorder as a main reaction to the violence incidents after 9/11. Thus, Abu-Ras's findings about the PTSD of the Arabs and Muslims in America following 9/11 are in focus as main consequences of violence. Another type of violence is also present, namely, prejudice and racism against Arab Muslim women in particular from Western feminist writers. Therefore, a postcolonial feminist approach is highlighted at the end of the chapter through examining Chandra Tolpad Mohanty's theory, 'The Politics of Feminism'.

Religion has been chosen as a variable for a few reasons. First, Muslims are the focus of a lot of attention today, and it is important to clarify some assumptions and misconceptions that are out there, as well as to see how the fear of Islam affects assimilation. Second, religion is an essential part of many Americans' identity, and the same is true for Arab Americans. Third, since part of Arab Americans is primarily Christian, it will be interesting to see how Christians of Arabic heritage receive the violence of the West against them as well. The thesis is also framed chronologically during the period following 9/11 attacks. Ethnic stratifications are also a targeted variable in this dissertation since the global system of stratification classifies the world's nations ethnically. According to Iadicola's and Shupe's theory, the dominant positions in the world in general are occupied by whites of European ancestry who reside in countries referred to as the center of the world political economy. Mainly, they are the United States, Western Europe, Japan, Canada and Australia. Those who occupy these positions have the greatest power within societies and have the greatest ability to fulfill their potentials as measured in terms of life expectancy, illness rates, educational level, control over resources, freedom, human rights and so on. While those who occupy the most dominated positions in society and the world in general are female, ethnic minority group members of the following regions: Africa, Hispanic, and Asia. People who occupy this position have the least ability to fulfill their potential as measured in terms of life expectancy, illness rates, educational level, control over resources, freedom, human rights and so on just to mention some of the problems they face (Iadicola and Shupe 321).