

Identity and Representational Dilemmas: Attempts to De-Orientalize the Arab

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Abstract:

The article explores the representational dilemmas reflected in post-9/11 Anglophone Arab fiction. The aim is to move beyond the Orientalist paradigm and provide fresh perspectives on the possible strategies employed to de-orientalize the Arab. Most Arab American writers address the problems associated with Orientalism. However, their approach to tackle such problems varies depending on their political and social make-up. Some subscribe to the Western discourse and rhetoric. Other writers advocate the Eastern culture, while some other writers remain in-between. This article examines Lailya Halaby's *Once in A Promised Land* (2007), Rabih Alameddine's *The Hakawati* (2008), and Alia Yunis' *The Night Counter* (2009) which represent a range of the post-9/11 concerns in relation to this divide. These novelists reject the very idea of the Orientalist dichotomy. Instead, their novels offer multiple perspectives, interpretations, and reactions that all unequivocally stress the importance of intercultural understanding. Together, they call for the full recognition of Arab American identity, one set apart from Orientalist frameworks.

Keywords: Misrepresentation, Orientalism, Binarism, De-Orientalizing, Arab