

## THE AMERICAN DREAM REVISITED: THE PERSONAL AND THE POLITICAL IN THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST AND ONCE IN A PROMISED LAND

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### ABSTRACT

This paper looks at how Mohsin Hamid in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and Laila Halaby in *Once in a Promised Land* (2007) debunk the myth of the American Dream in their post-9/11 novels. Set in the tumultuous political landscape of the post-9/11 era, both novels try to capture the loss and the angst felt by Muslim characters owing to a sudden emergence of Islamophobic/xenophobic rhetoric and indiscriminate labelling emanating from official and unofficial discourses alike. Drawing on Tzvetan Todorov's theory of narratology, the paper sheds light on the close affinity between the novels' plot structures. Although the paper does not illustrate a strict application of Todorov's theory, Hamid and Halaby, it is argued, cast their plots in the framework of unrequited love or faltering personal relationships to simultaneously depict the Muslim characters' deteriorating relationship with America, and ultimately the crumbling of their American Dream in post-9/11 America.

**Keywords:** American Dream, Islamophobia, narratology, 9/11.