

## **American Myths Reconsidered in the Poetry of Some Arab American Poets**

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The aim of this paper is to reexamine some of the most common American myths as they are alluded to or explicitly presented in the poetry of some Arab American poets. Focus will be on three myths, one of which is America as a land of pluralism. In other words, it is composed of diverse ethnic communities that live together in harmony, enjoying the same rights and possibilities for achievement. This idea is often represented in different images such as the mosaic, the symphony, the salad bowl, the pizza and the patched quilt. In all these metaphors the parts are different but the whole is one-- the harmonious nation of the United States of America. The second myth that will be dealt with in the paper is that of individualism as one of the major American philosophies. "The innocent nation" is the third myth that will be explored in the paper.

The paper will deal with two bodies of work: 1) political, social, historical and philosophical studies dealing with the above myths from different perspectives, 2) poems in two anthologies of Arab American poetry; namely, *Grape Leaves: A Century of Arab-American Poetry* (1988, rpt. 2000) and *Inclined to Speak: An Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Poetry* (2008). Stress in the reading and analysis of the poems in the two anthologies will be on the extent to which the poems discuss or allude to the three myths mentioned above. An attempt will also be made at tracing the development of handling the American myths and the attitude towards them in the years that elapsed between the publication of the former anthology and the latter one.