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## **The Other Side of Islamphobia in El Guindi's *Back of the Throat*: A Play Review**

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Youssef El Guindi's long-run play *Back of the Throat* is an astonishing reality that shocked its audience with its honest articulation of the situation that Arab Americans have gone through after the September 11 attacks. The play falls in a long single scene that discusses in actions more than words the stereotypical representation that fixes certain attributes to the image of non-European Americans which are enhanced by political and social prejudices.

El Guindi derived the title of his play from the phonetic obstacle of pronouncing the initial sound of the names of the two main Arab American characters, Khaled and Asfoor, which are pronounced only at the back of the throat, two sounds that most non-Arabs can hardly produce. Ironically enough, this phonetic obstacle articulates an inability and/or unwilling to understand the real personality of Arabs or Muslims.

The play also cleverly shows that even when knowledge of the East is available, as it happens with those who have personal experience of the East, as Carl, the FBI's agent, it is reversed to stand against the Arabs. The situation results in creating a huge gap that is far from being recovered. The chasm between the West and the East is magnified by the structural Islamphobic regimes, under whose pressures such Arab Americans as Khaled and Asfoor (the Arabic word for a little bird) are forced by "kicking and screaming into the FBI's story that interrogate [them] to a terrorist attack in Manhattan."

The predicament continues to develop into more cruel and inhuman practices, disgracing and violating the most peculiar privacy for Muslims that is the sexual privacy, a violation that is much similar to those happened in Guantanamo and Abu- Ghraib prisons.

El Guindi could sum up the whole predicament of Arab Americans after the attacks in Asfoor's words, unraveling; thus, the colonization prestigious scheme that never allows the West of a better understanding of the East away from the prejudiced politics of identity.