

**Racism and Islamophobia in Aym Zighen's Still  
Moment: A Story about Faded Dreams and  
Forbidden Pictures□**

**العنصرية و الاسلاموفوبيا في رواية ايم زيغن الموسومة  
بـ"لحظات ثابتة: قصة الأحلام المتلاشية و الصور المحرمة"**

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**Abstract:**

Since September 11, 2001, Western discourse has promoted the idea that civilizations are distinct monolithic entities that can be divided into allies and adversaries and that cultures are isolated from one another. Hence, conflicts between civilizations are now occurring on a scale that has never been seen before. *Still Moment* by Aym Zighen deals with fundamental issues that are essential to comprehending the sociopolitical conflicts that characterize our modern world. This autobiographical novel illustrates how Islamophobia and racial profiling have increased in the United States since 9/11. The story illustrates how Muslims are viewed entirely via religious and ethnic lenses through the protagonist, a brown-skinned Algerian photographer who is classified as a terrorist. Muslims are seen as being distinct, as "Others" who pose a threat to the values and ideals that the West holds dear. This article, which draws on the discourses of postcolonialism and Islamophobia, illustrates how Zighen's story questions the very existence of civilization itself, which is the largest social group where equality is unquestionably the most

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important right. The world is hostile because of the "Us and Them" dichotomy which breaks humans' union and destroys their hope for a peaceful existence.

**Keywords:** Racism; Islamophobia; Neo-Orientalism; Aym Zighen; still moment.

### ملخص:

منذ 11 سبتمبر 2001 روج الخطاب الغربي لفكرة أن الحضارات كيانات متجاوزة متميزة يمكن تقسيمها إلى حلفاء وخصوم وأن الثقافات معزولة عن بعضها البعض. ومن ثم فإن الصراعات بين الحضارات تحدث الآن على نطاق لم يسبق له مثيل من قبل. رواية "لحظات ثابتة" بقلم أيم زيغن تتناول القضايا الأساسية التي تعتبر ضرورية لفهم الصراعات الثقافية والسياسية التي تميز عالمنا الحديث. توضح هذه الرواية الذاتية كيف زادت كراهية الإسلام والتميط العرقي في الولايات المتحدة منذ 11 سبتمبر. توضح القصة كيف يُنظر إلى المسلمين بالكامل من خلال عدسات دينية وعرقية من خلال بطل الرواية وهو مصور جزائري ذو بشرة سمراء يُصنف على أنه إرهابي. يُنظر إلى المسلمين على أنهم متميزون ، على أنهم "آخرون" يشكلون تهديداً للقيم والمثل التي يعتز بها الغرب. يوضح هذا المقال الذي يعتمد على خطابات ما بعد الاستعمار والإسلاموفوبيا كيف تطرح قصة زيغن تساؤلات حول امكانية وجود الحضارة نفسها و التي هي أكبر مجموعة اجتماعية تعتبر المساواة فيها بلا شك أهم حق. إن العالم عدائي بسبب ثنائية "نحن وهم" التي تكسر اتحاد البشر وتقضي على أملهم في العيش السلمي.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** العنصرية، الإسلاموفوبيا، الاستشراق الجديد، ايم زيغن، لحظة ثابتة.

## 1.Introduction

9/11 attacks heralds a new world order, and they inaugurated a new era known as the clash of civilizations. This clash is mainly between the West and Islam, which is seen as the arch-enemy of the West and its cherished values. In fact, Islam has always been misrepresented in Western discourse even before 9/11. In his discussion of the Orientalists' misrepresentation of Islam, Edwards Said (1997, p.55) states that "Islam represents a resurgent atavism, which suggests not only the threat of a return to the Middle ages but the destruction of what is regularly referred to as the democratic order in the Western world." In the 2003 preface to his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said refers to the twenty-first century Orientalism as "belligerent neo-Orientalism"(xxi). This article evinces how Muslims became subject to racism and Islamophobia in Post-9/11 America. They are seen as violent terrorists who threaten the West's security and safety.

## 2.Racial Profiling and the Fear of Muslims in Still Moments

Zighen's *Still Moments* is divided into 9 chapters, each chapter opens with an epigraph. This autobiographical narrative shows the dire life conditions of Arabs, Muslims, and blacks in the US in the post-9/11 era. It is a very disturbing narrative of Islamophobia and ethnic profiling.

One day, while at home, Aym received a call from the FBI. The caller mentioned that they received a report saying that he took pictures of trains on railroad 66. The FBI agent insisted to meet Aym at home despite the latter's proposal to meet him in the office. For a moment, expressions were blocked, and words fail him. A deep anxiety shakes him at the core, and he wonders which secrets the FBI wants to divulge. He says: "Except for the mess of books, articles and pictures in my office, I had nothing to hide. The intrusion into my private life would be a humiliating experience" (3). However, Aym consents to live these moments of humiliation and shame in the privacy of his home. He was very terrified, but he did not inform his children about the call. He was also unable to tell what happened to

his parents. Before being called by the FBI, Aym was interviewed by a police officer on route 66. But it was the FBI call, which deeply disturbed him and prevented him from going on with life as usual.

Aym expected to be interrogated for more deeper and serious reasons than taking photographs. He felt deeply degraded. He says: "It was very hard to accept the change from my role as a silent spectator to the events that followed the 9/11 attacks to the role of a suspected terrorist. I remained in the basement as I struggled to find a logical explanation for this suspicion"(3). The suspicions are groundless, but they can be explained by the words of Mouloud Feraoun, which are used in the epigraph of the first chapter. The epigraph reads: "Each one of us is guilty for the sole reason that we belong to a category, a race, a people."(1). The police officer sees Aym through the visible marker of difference which is the skin color. His brownness, which indicates his non-Americanness, is the main reason of being subject to racial profiling. Leadership Conference Education Fund defines racial profiling as "any use of race, religion, ethnicity or national origin by law enforcement agents as a means of deciding who should be investigated" (Qtd in Graig Considine 12).

The incident evokes a fleeting memory of a similar event in Algeria. when he was captured by the police taking pictures during the dark decade. He says: "I found myself having to prove that pgotography was a hobby and that I was not spying for a foreign agency or government. However, this time, something was definitely different. As I was to find out later, my skin color made my taking pictures appear suspicious"(4). In the US, taking pictures makes him a suspect because his skin color and origin fit the stereotypical profile of a terrorist.

Aym was deeply shocked by reducing people to their race and skin color. The incident has called the whole Western civilization into question. It enables Aym to know the verity that American civilization is hollow at the core. Zighen admits: "On the one hand, the blatant racial discrimination has shattered my optimism. On the other, it has opened my eyes and allowed me to see firsthand the sad reality of racial profiling and the beast that feeds on it." (xiv). To his

dismay, the American civilization rejects difference and resents Otherness. It condemns outsiders like himself to its fringes.

Contrary to “us” and “them” rhetoric which depicts Muslims as others who are threatening to the West’s peaceful existence, Aym opposes this dualistic outlook which dominates Americans’ life. Aym expresses his humanistic attitude and sympathy with the victims of 9/11 attacks, and he shared Americans’ tears and sadness. In his comments on 9/11, Aym says: “The scenes of the airplanes ripping through the towers and the ensuing destruction had stunned me. The TV images were unbelievable, beyond comprehension. When I first saw them in the workplace cafeteria, tears had filled my eyes. Just like in Algeria, civilians in America had fallen victims to indiscriminate violence”(6). Though the dramatic events of 9/11 moved him deep to the core, and though he felt warm sympathy towards its victims, this does not prevent accusations from being leveled against him for the simple reason that he belongs to a different race, culture, and religious sect.

When Aym came to America, he noticed how much skin separated people, but he had never felt that he was concerned with this issue. He says: “deep in me, I knew that associating a skin color with actions was preposterous. Both brain and skin, two distinct organs, could not share the same function in a human body. And I continued to believe that most people did not judge others by their skin color and that the official claims of justice, equality and opportunity for everyone were genuine”(7-8). The bitter reality that Aym came to know too late is the deepening of the various fault lines between people by religion and color. He finds that America looks unfavorably on the ‘Others’ and his ideal world becomes insanely irrational.

The color of skin makes “Us” distinguishable from “Them.” Aym’s vigorous intellectual inquiry led him to the conclusion that the suspicions hurled at him are because of the color of his skin, which makes him seem radically different from them. He says: “I realized that [...] a person with my TNT profile must have seemed even more unusual to drivers and passengers on Route 66. (Oops, I forgot to explain TNT. No, it is not the acronym for Trinitrotoluene, an explosive chemical compound. It means Tall and Naturally

Tanned)"(14). Because he was TNT, people were eying him with great distress. Aym's flaw, which is the color of his skin, cannot be smoothed over or erased. Thus, he is doomed to suffer in America because of this imperfection.

After his earth-shattering experience, Aym starts to view things under a totally different light. It felt like his world shifted in that moment, and he started to change his perspectives. He imagines Americans' look of pure venom, and he feels scrutinized like an insect in a research laboratory. He even ponders the possibility of dishonest and false-hearted treatment of him by the Americans before the FBI call. After being called by the FBI,

while shopping in stores or walking in streets or parks, I found myself scrutinizing and analyzing the way people looked at me, wondering if their greetings were sincere and whether they noticed my complexion. I once went as far as imagining them attacking me as I walked by them. Another time, I even refrained from greeting people because I was afraid to attract the attention of a vengeful person (8).

The incident makes Aym more remote and detached. He starts to imagine that people are eying him with great distress. Thus, he tries to avoid people's scrupulous look and their Islamocritical gaze, which might ignite their flames of hostility against him and spur their hate crimes, because he is a Muslim with a brown complexion.

Aym no longer harbours the elusive hopes of safety and security. A voice whispers to him things about the dark reality that was hidden from him before, and it echoed loudly within him; “You thought you were safe here in America” (4). The incident provokes in him an intense fear and shivers of horror. His aspirations vanished, and he becomes bitterly disappointed by the reality that America is not a livable place for “Them.” He says:

I felt doubly targeted. As I continued to worry, my belief in America as a safe heaven started to fade, my optimistic outlook on life began to blur, and my dream of a glowing future in my new country dimmed. My journey from North Africa to North America seemed somehow less exciting, and a strange feeling of fear, an inch below panic, started to creep into my mind”(9). .

Aym tried to get rid of his emotional stress, to consign his fears to oblivion but in vain. What happens enable him to see the realities behind appearances. He discovers the bitter reality that civilization is a fragile surface over an abyss. Thus, his beautiful world literally exploded around him.

Aym and his wife left Algeria when it began to slide into a horrific civil war. They headed for America because of the repression, violence, and injustice that plagued the country. His journey is also to fulfill his academic dreams. He avows that “Once [he] became a citizen, [he] felt that I had gained the biggest citizenship possible on this rotating planet”(36).In the US, he expected to find more freedom,

opportunities, and he was hopeful to achieve all their dreams there. Soon after stepping foot in America, Aym could pull himself up from lowly beginnings. However, the FBI event makes all his dreams seem ephemeral.

When interrogated by the police officer, Aym was cautious not to point his camera at him, because it could be mistaken for a gun, and thus, ultimately leads to his murder by the police officer who was armed to the teeth. Aym finds the scene reminiscent of Bruce Springsteen's song 'American Skin' in which "a black mother tries to get her young son to make her a promise: to understand the rules, to be polite, never run, and keep his hands in sight"(15). This tear-inducing song, about racial and ethnic profiling, voices his exact feelings. It was composed in reaction to the murder of a black Guinean boy by four police officers in New York. The boy, who was stopped in front of his apartment, puts his hands in his pocket searching for his wallet, but thinking that it is a gun, the police men fired 41 bullets at him. Tzvetan Todorov points out how fear of the Others reverses the constructed binary opposition civilized/barbarian. He writes: "The fear of barbarians is what risks making us barbarians. And we will commit a worse evil than that which we initially feared"(Fear of the Brabarians 6). After 9/11, fear of the Others, who are seen as the fount of evil, has become deeply implanted in Americans' heart. This results in the policy of racial profiling which has run amuck, inflicting wounds and pains without measure.

Aym was puzzled by the sentence subject "we" that is used by the police officer. It bespeaks the utter failure of the melting-pot theory, which Aym has already kicked to pieces. The police agent's statement that Aym does not fully belong there wreaks a havoc in his nervous system. It "hit [him] like a rock"(16). This remark about his origin which is loaded with racist and supremacist ideas, makes Aym feel as an outsider. It clearly reveals America's antagonistic rejection of difference. In fact, Muslims are seen as shadow shapes flitting over the globe. The question "where are you from?" had discomfited [him]"(17). It interpolates Aym as not belonging to America, which is associated with whiteness. His non-belonging is evident in his skin color. The question evinces racial profiling and the failure of the so-called civilization, which is defined mainly by difference and not

sameness. In fact, cultural conflicts ensue when one civilization or the other or both are yet insufficiently evolved to merge and become a single larger component.

Aym felt paralysed, unable to voice his upbraids. He quotes, as an epigraph for the fourth chapter, the following famous statement by the Algerian writer Tahat Djaout: “Silence is death. And if you speak, you die. If you are silent, you die. So speak and die”(23). However, Aym prefers to keep silent when the authority speaks even if silence is universally interpreted as a production of weakness and disempowerment. Aym’s silence signifies the absence of agency in the face of what Gayatri Spivak calls “epistemic violence.”

Aym tried not to give the matter the might it deserves, but being lonely without anyone who can protect him from the FBI is an unpleasant feeling. He says: “I did not know to whom I could turn for protection when a government was putting my liberties at risk. The word ‘liberty’ made me think of the ACLU, the American Civil War Liberties Union ”(34). In the ACLU, Aym spoke to an assistant counselor who promised to help. So, he was assigned a lawyer, but the latter’s silence, at the beginning and his reluctance to defend him against such kind of treatment and discrimination disappointed him. He quotes Djaout’s *The Watchers* to show the lawlessness of the American government. The last chapter opens with the following epigraph: “the law has never defended just causes-in fact, it has nothing to do with justice or truth”(63). But later, his lawyer intervened and said that Aym’s interest in photography is purely artistic.

The West, for Aym’s wife, crystalizes the fallacy of the American values of equality and justice. She asks: “Why is the government then going only after terrorist suspects and never after suspects of hate crime? I have not heard of the FBI arresting one single suspect of a hate crime. Are they trying to prevent hate crime? Or will they show up after a crime has been committed? [...] Then keep fooling yourself about having rights in America, if you want”(35). The hostility that swamps many Americans makes them commit horrid crimes against innocent people for the simple reason that they are Muslims or non-Americans. These heinous hate crimes

have never been questioned by the FBI, which sits back and averts its eyes when the victims are Muslims. When an act of violence is committed by an American, it is not terrorism, but when the same act is committed by a Muslim, alarm bells start to ring in the west.

Aym longs for a transcendence of racial difference, and he wishes that people's worth do not depend on their physical features. He says: "I would like to believe in M. L. King J.R's dream in which people would not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character"(37).

Aym's lawyer asks the FBI police officer: "If my client was Swedish looking, nothing would have happened? Was it a case of profiling?"(43). In agreement, Agent Mike replied "Sure"(43). The officer's response that the incident is a case of profiling deeply shocked Aym. This response, according to him, "proved that this whole incident was a government's blatant violation of the US Constitution, which is supposed to protect people from discrimination based on race and national origin. Not only did it trample the Constitution, it was a human rights violation too and amounted to a collective punishment for people with my complexion"(44). In theory, people are equal before the law and the American Constitution forbids discrimination and ethnic profiling, but in reality, humanity is stripped of the ornament of civilization, which basically respects people regardless of their differences. The practice of ethnic profiling makes some Americans liable to evil and destruction. According to Tzvetan Todorov, "Another way of progressing towards civilization consists in behaving so that the laws of the country you live in treat all citizens equally, without distinction of race, religion or sex; the countries that maintain these differences, whether in the form of legal privileges or of apartheid, are on the contrary closer to barbarity" (*The Fear* 23)

Photography, which is a hobby, encompasses "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness", which are enshrined in Thomas Jefferson's preamble to the American Constitution. Aym thought about quoting the preamble to defend himself and to show the police officer's violation of the American values of liberty and freedom. Aym realises that the slogans of the American constitution sound empty and that

Americans become peripheral to humanity, preferring to shrink to 'one-ness' and 'us-ness'. Aym says:

I started to think that I was in the wrong too: I was guilty of having believed in the powers of the Constitution. I should not have believed in the powers of the Constitution. I should not have believed that the more than two century-old ink scribbling, imprisoned in a piece of paper, could protect me from the abuses by other humans, for it was not made of steel. Like my wife, I should have been skeptical of official claims and rhetoric, and I watched helplessly as my belief in the Constitution crumbled. Yet I still wished its words to come alive, jump off the original paper, and fly to Central Illinois to my rescue(45).

The American Constitution preaches to iron out difference, but Aym discovers that America does not live up to its founding ideals. Despite its bombastic claims of being civilized, America does not respect others' freedom and specificities, which is one of the touchstones of civilization. The reality is that equality is not a total equality. It simply means that Americans are 'more equal than the others'. Aym realised "that the words 'human rights, democracy, freedom, justice, equality, land of opportunities, liberty, melting pot, checks and balances, support for the troops, fairness and balance, country, homeland, way of life' were devoid of any meaning?"(45).

In the years he lived in the US, before the FBI affair, Aym thought that he was living in a civilized country which is a melting pot of cultures where race, religion, and nationality do not matter. He thought that he was in a land where all distinctions vanish, and he took his hopes for reality. Later, his ideal world comes to wear a dismal aspect. Despite living for 18 years in the US, as an American citizen, and despite his “educational and professional accomplishments, [he] was surprised to find out that [he] was no longer submerged in American life and culture. Instead, [he] found [himself] floating at the top of the melting pot called America, sticking out as a target for ethnic profiling and random racist violent crime”(45). The terrible reality is that the West always points its accusing finger at ‘Others’. Aym found himself in a land which does not truly shelter the strangers. The cruelty of that environment that he is hurled into fills him with contempt. He found that there is a chasm between “Us” and “Them” despite the common set of traits that bind humans together. The “Us” and “Them” categorization of people is likely to engender heinous acts that will never die down. This is suggested in the epigraph of the seventh chapter by James Madison; “If tyranny and oppression come to this country, it will be in the guise of fighting a foreign enemy”(49).

Fury wells up inside him as the FBI wanted to ferret out the secrets of his life. He felt obliged to reveal all that has been shrouded in secrecy, both his personal and professional information. He views this not just as a humiliation but also a trampling on the legal standard of “innocent until proven guilty.” When asked by Agent Robert about his children’s names, Zighen could not answer for he was very scared about the future, the future of children whose father was interrogated by the FBI. Aym says: “To pronounce their names would be to sully their beautiful innocence and their young lives. I did not want them to be mentioned in the files the FBI has on me. Instead I just wanted to scream, ‘I just love photography. Stop dissecting me like a laboratory animal’ But even the words ‘You cannot do this to me’ stayed inside my mind”(48). To give the names of his children would run the risk of staining their reputation forever, because they will always be described as the children of the terrorist. Aym was tormented by these dark and explosive thoughts.

The interrogation culminates in the question whether Aym is a terrorist or belongs to a terrorist organization. Aym says:

I had not answered the question that shamed, degraded, and humiliated me into complete silence. I thought that being asked whether I was a terrorist was the worst accusation and insult ever hurled at me. I felt ashamed, because if people saw a terrorist in me, then there must be something wrong with me. I felt degraded, because despite my accomplishments, in life they still saw me as a terrorist (51).

Accused of being a terrorist, Aym felt that the heavens will fall upon his head. He came to know the true version of America. His dreams crash on the hard rock of bitter realities, and his hopes have melted away. Despite his intellectual credentials, his academic profile was not considered. Aym “ felt humiliated because [his] humanity was not recognized”(52). The police agent fails to recognize their human kinship, meaning that they are members of the same human community, and they belong to the same human race. He felt dehumanized, depersonalized, and treated with an utter disregard for his sentiments. According to Todorov, “Barbarians are those who deny the full humanity of others. This does not mean that they are really ignorant or forgetful of their human nature, but that they behave as if the others were no human, or entirely human”(The Fear 16). Aym was seen as a venomous creature who has come to spoil and ravage America. He, sadly, remarks that he has none of the qualities

of the terrorist which would impel irrational violence and congenital barbarity. He asks:

How could I be a terrorist?  
Where is the state of mind of the  
terrorist in me? Where is the  
anger that would blind my eyes  
from seeing the suffering of  
others? Where are the political  
propaganda and the religious  
arguments that would have made  
me a violent person? Where is the  
illogical reasoning to me that  
would justify violent acts against  
people I know or do not know  
(52).

Aym does not even have this atavistic aversion to modernity, or an instinctive recoiling from those who are different.

Deep inside him, Aym believes that his color and his accent are not plausible reasons that make him seem locked outside the gates of civilization. They also do not mean that he is inherently violent. He says that. "like many things in life, terrorists come in different colors, shapes, attitudes, and disguise"(52). The reality is that being a brown Muslim makes him seen through a eurocentric prism as a violence monger who is hatching a plot to destroy America.

Aym comes to know the veneer of civilization that is supposed to accept the Others within its borders and to give them the same rights as the natives. He vents his diatribe against the policy of racial profiling. He also blames media for propagating conspiracy theories which ignite the clash of cultures. He says:

What I deeply believe is  
that the shame and

humiliation should be reserved for those who issue laws to profile others, those who blindly apply them, and finally those who allow such laws to be passed. Yet, the worst shame should be on those who spread and promote such racist ideas through media and government policies and then turn around to profir from them, either through remunerations, product sales, or service contracts (52).

In addition to conspiracy theories, which have a major role in spreading anti-Muslim hate crimes, media have made people more credulous than before. It reinforces and confirms the already existing anti-Muslim bias, and it has played a great role in the persistency of paranoia about Muslims and Islam. In a conversation between Zighen and his wife, the latter says: “Don’t you think a general paranoia is taking over the country and fear is being spread among citizens?”(38). Aym responds that: “It’s a good tool of control and manipulation”(38). In fact, fear of the Others becomes a psychopathological case in the West. It tears down barriers between people, and it makes them live in a hellish world that reeks of inhumanity and barbarity. Todorov states that “Fear becomes a danger for those who experience it, and this is why it must not be allowed to play the role of dominant passion. It is even the main justification for behavior often described as ‘inhuman’”(The Fear 6). In the same vein, Todorov writes: “In the West, fear has moved in: it makes every Muslim look like a potential terrorist and incites us to trample on his rights. If we think he is a deadly danger, any and all means of combating him are legitimate”(10). This fear of the Other is fed by media and conspiracy theorists who fabricate discourses that serve

some selfish interests and political aims. It makes those who feel threatened by the Others act their fiction of the clash of civilization, and this shatters people's unity and makes "US" cut off from "Them."

The incident weighs heavy on Aym's heart. Though it leaves him drowning in a deep sorrow, he could control his tears during these gloomiest moments. He tries to sweep his worries aside and keep cool. He states: "The pain in my heart grew, and a knot formed in my throat, but my eyes remained dry at all times. It was not time for tears and I needed to steel myself against any terrible ordeal that might lie ahead. My salvation required that I control my anger and pain and show my strength"(53).

Aym wants to burst into criticism, anger, and outright opposition to that racist treatment. He wants to show the police agent their bigotry and falsehood, but he kept silent because he was afraid of the result. He says: "Worried that I might anger the federal agent, I refrained from protesting against the FBI policies of ethnic profiling and telling him that he was an accessory to a repressive system. All I wanted was to get out of that office, be with my family, and take more pictures of railroad tracks, telephone poles, and spider webs"(53). Aym was afraid to express himself freely; instead, he practiced self-censorship. He thought about many things which reveal America's fake ideals. America's defense of human rights is "full sound and fury, but it signifies nothing". Aym remarks that the Bush

Administration's claim to value freedom, democracy, and human rights appeared to [be] a scratch-thin superficial veneer. Walking the talk was not Bush's forte. Furthermore, his rhetorical claims were only mesmerizing catchwords relayed by willing news organizations for for national consumption. 'Marrying the

devil or at least sleeping with him' seemed to fit the Bush Administration's relation with most of the North African and Middle Eastern countries. Once more, money was louder, and it prevailed over human rights and justice (57).

Aym did not dare criticize America's policy. He finds it pointless to show skepticism at the foreign and domestic policies of Bush. He says: "If I openly criticized Bush's foreign policies, I imagined hearing the federal agent say: 'You don't like America' and 'You hate our freedom'"(63). So, Aym could not practice his freedom of speech because he knows that there is a zero tolerance policy towards people like him.

At the end of the investigation, Aym, jokingly, asks Agent Robert, the police agent, if he can get a card which allows him to get pictures. But before he was released, the lawyer and Agent Robert made a connection between UBL initials in Zighen's notepad and Usama Bin Laden. Aym explains that UBL simply means Ultimate Band List e-store. Aym realizes that he cannot be fully integrated and that he cannot cross the boundary line drawn by the West.

## CONCLUSION

Still Moments, which is extremely relevant to the time we live in, is a commentary on Post 9/11 America and a straight forward indictment of America's racial profiling after this dramatic event. Aym's narrative, which is ideologically laden, reveals the polarized world of "Us" and "Them" that is created by the US after 9/11. This event results in the demonization of Muslims and blacks who are seen as terrorists. Americans' views have become biased against Muslims, and they accent to irrational vulgar accusations. Their adamant rejection of the others who are different results in heinous violent acts.

Media and conspiracy theories create an atmosphere of fear that cluttered Americans' mind. Mistrust and fear from the others makes cross-cultural dialogue and communication impossible. Civilization, which is inclusive of all cultures, is still in the process of becoming. It is one that views all humans as colors in the spectrum of the complete human race. For civilization to be realized, one should escape the boundaries of his/her "one-ness" and recognize the full humanity of those who are different.

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