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Marketing Islamophobia: A Post-Colonial Analysis of the John Updikes *Terrorist* (2006)

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Abstract: *Many people's opinions of Muslims and Islam have evolved since the World Trade Center attacks on September 11, 2001. Muslims and Islam have been blamed for helping to breed terrorists. This prediction has thus been included in the literature. The same thing is done by John Updike in his book Terrorist. He has played Jews and Muslims. The disparity between the two identities fuels Western viewers' and Americans' fears about Islam. Updike masterfully alienates his Muslim protagonist from his community by utilising language, narrative style, concepts, and symbols. To analyse the Islamophobic and Orientalist elements in Updike's Terrorist, this study analyses and contrasts the two. American Jews and Muslims from Egypt are two very different populations.*

Key Words: Islamophobia, Terrorism, Fear of Islam, Stereotyping, Otherness

Introduction

Since September 11, 2001, attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City, American views about Muslims and Islam have changed. According to the study, before the World Trade Center attacks in 2001, "survey data on American attitudes about Islam indicated a virtually equal gap between positive and negative sentiments of Islam." However, after September 11, the pendulum swung the other way due to popular misconceptions. In 2001, just 25% of Americans thought that Islam encouraged violence, whereas 51% had the opposite opinion. As of 2011, 40% of Americans still maintained this attitude (Jungkunz, S., et al 2019). This paradigm shift and change of perspective are directly attributable to the terrorist outbreaks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, and the terror campaign on London subway trains on July 7, 2005.

The word "Islamophobia" was used in the 1990s to describe the growing trend of seeing Islam and Muslims through the lens of "essential terrorism" (Skenderovic, D., & Späti, 2019). In an effort to define the phrase, there has been much discussion

over it. However, since the term's debut, there hasn't been agreement on what it means. However, academics like Neil Chakraborty, Irene Zempi, Carl W. Ernst, and Christopher Allen have made an effort to define the definition of the word. In his book of the same name, Christopher Allen describes Islamophobia as "the demonization of human beings for no cause other than their Muslim faith". By extension, to fear or despise Islam as he portrays it later in the book is to dread or detest all or the majority of Muslims. Carl W. Ernst has made an effort to describe it as "the manifestations and repercussions of anti-Islamic bigotry,". According to Gabriel Greenberg, who sees it as an irrational cultural dread of Islam and Muslims, the focus on the fear of Islam is greater than that of other stereotypes. This kind of Islamophobia, according to Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, is closely related to violent media depictions.

Neil Chakraborti wrote in their book Islamophobia Victimization, and the Veil. These many uses of the word have certain basic characteristics. The majority of the European Union

(EU) countries, the United States, the United Kingdom, and other terrorist-attacked countries in the West are all afflicted with "Islamophobia," which is defined as "hate, prejudice, and fear of Islam and Muslims." Assaults West in the 2000s transformed how the rest of the world views Muslims and Islam. (Karjo, C. H., et al [2020](#)). Islam and Muslims were vilified as terroristic, underdeveloped, and "backwards" nations by their adherents. Edward Curtis draws attention to the racism-related effects of Islamophobia by connecting it to the government's repression of political opposition. Jihadists are immediately associated with all Muslims. The Western world makes generalisations about them without taking into account their unique personalities, points of view, social contexts, and psychological conditions. The West is similarly uninformed about Islam. Terrorist assaults and jihadism have only been shown in the media. (Alghamdi, E. A. [2015](#)).

In order to give the public something to fear, the Western media and government continuously depict Islam and Muslims in a negative light. Russia was used in a similar way before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Because of the advent of the Taliban and the Iranian Uprising, when Khomeini and his exciting beliefs were supremacy in Iran, Western political elites were forced to criticise Islam and Muslims in the years that followed the fall of the Soviet Union. (Dabashi, H. [2017](#)).

In this instance, the word "West" is not used negatively but rather to distinguish between two extremes. The West created both the East and the West, the two unequal halves of the planet. Compared to their Western counterparts, eastern countries have fewer resources. It is also more bizarre, archaic, and primitive (Said, E. [2018](#)). Part of what makes Europe (or the West) unique is how it contrasts with the Orient in terms of image, thought, personality, and experience. Knowing that the West has always attempted to demonise the Orient, Islam, and Muslims is essential to understanding its values and identity (Said, [2006](#)). Islamophobia must thus be tackled with related problems like racism, Orientalism, Strangeness, Stereotyping, and the White Man's Burden. All ideas intersect when discussing Islamophobia since Islam is a religion with origins in the Far-off East, and as such, its members are not from the "West" and do not resemble White

Men. Muslims thus regularly encounter prejudice and discrimination in Western culture.

Research Questions

- What tactics were used to promote islamophobia in the wake of the World Trade Center attacks?
- How were Muslims portrayed by the West as being different and innate terrorists?
- How did John Updike depict Islam, Muslims, and Jews in his Book *The Terrorist*?

Research Objectives

- To explore the marketing of islamophobia after the attacks on the World Trade Center.
- To examine the Muslims as other and natural-born terrorists.
- To investigate John Updike, portrayed the picture of Islam, Muslims and Jews in his novel *terrorist*
- To study the perceptions and manifestations constructing the identity of Islam and Muslims in the selected American literary texts

Literature Review

Updike (2006) explores that terrorism has drawn both favourable and unfavourable reviews. Negative reviews of the book are mainly due to Ahmad's inaccurate representation of the subject matter itself. According to Stufflebeam, the author believes that "John Updike's *Terrorist* is a thriller born of the everyday news we read". It explains a terrorist's beginnings without preaching or fervors was absolutely perplexed for at least the first third of the novel, Stufflebeam, and I still don't sure who the terrorist is since all of Updike's characters are so real and have both admirable and repugnant qualities.

According to Miller, *The Terrorist* is "a contemporary work of literature that is well-written and crammed with observation and description". Updike gives insight into the psychology and potential motivations of terrorists by placing the reader in the terrorist's head. Weis claims that *Terrorist*, the most current book by John Updike to be published in the US, is selling like "hotcakes". The author, John Updike, may have contributed to its quick success. Or maybe Americans are fascinated by

the inner workings of a terrorist's mind. There are certainly many people in the Arab world who view the twenty-first century in the same manner. Updike (2006) recounted how his early inspiration for the character of "a young seminarian who perceives everyone around him as a demon attempting to take his faith" came to him. I guess I thought I could see how an Islamic believer might view our civilization with disdain and contempt.

There is no question about Updike's goals, which inspired him to support the causes of his society. However, he does badly since the place he sees is outside of his purview. The flaws have been pointed up by several reviews. A limp bitterness lingers in the narrator's attempts at omniscience, according to Badar Sheikh. Ahmad is persuaded to join the bombing expedition by his whiny, spoiled-child demeanour and boring name. It's as if Updike gave solid skeletal muscle and intellectual tissue to the CNN caricature of a terrorist—an anti-American, anti-consumerist, social outcast of Muslim heritage. In *Terrorist*, Updike's empathy "does not carry him quite far enough to become the voice and suffering...of his young protagonist," similar to earlier stories that support a Neo-Orientalist point of view.

Another significant factor in changing Westerners' opinions of Islam and Muslims is Updike's *Terrorists*. Any political, historical, or philosophical characterization of Muslims must begin and finish with the fact that they are Muslims: violent, intolerable, and life-haters, according to Deyab, Updike seems to have thought it was his duty to inform Western readers of this. My argument is that Updike, like Joseph Conrad a century earlier in *Heart of Darkness*, seems to really want to reveal the shallowness and sleaziness of his own civilization. However, he was unable to do so because of his ideological and cultural preconceptions, which tainted Ahmad's character image and caused it to resemble how Muslims are currently portrayed in Western media, which equates Islam with terrorism. Any noble intentions Conrad may have had in *Heart of Darkness* are undermined by his ideological and racial prejudices. Conrad was forced to describe the civilization of the Africans he was writing about most on the basis of hearsay because he had no firsthand experience with them.

Updike's concept of prejudices towards Islam and Muslims foils his attempts to utilise Ahmad as a

platform to critique the declining morals and superficiality of American capitalist culture. The tale is distorted as a result of his stereotypical representation of Muslims, his misinterpretation of Quranic verses, and his ignorance of Islamic doctrine.

Herman, P. C. (2015) The repercussions of this portrayal, which tend to reinforce the already dominant Western trend of thought regarding Islam and Muslims, do not appear to have been addressed by Updike. Said warns, demonstrating his strong awareness of the peril posed by such biased representations: "Demonizing and dehumanising an entire civilization on the basis that it is 'enraged' at modernity is to convert Muslims become the objects of therapeutic, punishing attention."

Research Methodology

The researchers chose a qualitative approach for their investigation. The social world and its issues are the primary focus of the qualitative technique. The experiences of the people they study are regularly used by qualitative researchers to generate fresh ideas (Neuman 1999, p. 145). Finding the causes of social phenomena is their goal. This kind of study enables a thorough analysis of the aforementioned elements. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, Muslims residing in the West were seen as potential threats by Westerners. We read and analysed a number of literary works that highlight how the West treats Muslims and the assault on their religious beliefs from Edward Said's perspective in order to better understand Islamophobia as a kind of racism. Said continues by noting the widespread belief among Orientalists that Islam and Islamic culture pose a danger to Western civilization. Orientalists usually categorise the East as either "Near Orient" or "Far Orient" as a result of this.

In his book *Covering Islam*, Edward Said investigates how Islam was portrayed in American media before the September 11 attacks. Despite the term's seeming simplicity, he thinks that it is "part fabrication, part ideological label, and part minimum description of a religion termed Islam" in its current usage (1). He claims that biased fictional depictions and ideological goals have an influence on how Muslims are seen in American popular culture.

Results And Discussion

The Rynnymade paradigm has been used by

Christopher Allen to describe the issues the West has with Islam. He asserts that Muslims in the West are misunderstood because they are thought of as "massive and static rather than diversified" (Allen, 2012). Religion is an easy target for hatred and animosity since it is an immutable institution. They do not recognise their interconnectedness and dependence upon one another, instead labelling it "Other or different." (Allen 2012). It is not unexpected that this religion has been the target of much mockery because it is in our nature to have negative opinions of things about which we know nothing. Reject outright everything they believe to be fundamentally different from themselves. Muslims are seen as "an opponent, not a partner," and the Islamic faith is presented as "inferior, not unique." (Allen 2012). Consequently, in the interest of nationalism (Allen 2012). The Western world sees it as morally required to be at war with and despise its "enemy" all the time. Muslims are commonly described as "manipulative and dishonest". Allen also claims that prejudice towards Muslims is tolerated rather than condemned. Additionally, "anti-Muslim treatise is seen to be common and not harmful" (Allen 2012). As a result, the hostility between Islam and Muslims is realized as a national obligation. Disliking Muslims and injuring them is occasionally advocated as a way for citizens to show their loyalty to their nation. These issues cause generalisations about Muslims and obscure their diversity. The media immediately popularised these concepts. Media portrayals of Muslims, Islam, and Arabs, particularly in the United States, contribute to the rise of Islamophobia (Yenigun, 2004).

The political agenda of the government occasionally influences how certain subjects are covered in the media. To evoke certain reactions from its target audience, the media spreads stories about Islam and Muslims (Allen, 2012). "Tend to be built in a way that furthers the prevailing authority of the country's political agenda. Additionally, media portrayals of Muslims and Islam, in general, have been more open to distortion and misrepresentation after the September 11 attacks in the United States. Muslims are only seen as a threat from terrorists in the media, politics, and literature. They typically show the bearded bomber as a Muslim killing helpless Americans while yelling "Allahu akbar." Due to this, it is now a common misperception in the

West that Islam supports terrorism and is somehow connected to it. The persistent criticism of Western culture has contributed to the pervasive but false perception of Islam and Muslims as "backward, primitive, and odd" (Said 2006).

The September 11 incident was used by the West to show how Muslims despise everything Western in an effort to show how fundamentally hostile Muslims were to Western civilisation. These Orientalist and Islamophobic stereotypes have been reinforced and made commonplace by the media. The historical disputes and "differences" symbolised by September 11 were used to highlight them, stir up unreasonable fears and concerns, and justify using force against the opposition (Shahbaz and Ahmad 2016). vs this foe called "Muslims" (Shahbaz and Ahmad, 2016). The "clash of civilizations" idea put out by Samuel Huntington "portrayed Islam as the main adversary of the West in all wars and conflicts." In the eyes of the West, Muslims are just Muslims. According to Shahbaz and Ahmad, they must combat and vanquish this adversary. As a result, the West has created two distinctly different and incompatible sides of the world. Because of this, American media have made it their duty to portray Islam as a "monolithic, immobile" religion (Allen, 2012). Despite the fact that American media coverage of Muslims is no longer unified, Muslims continue to be depicted consistently.

Muslims are presented in the media in a transparent way. The antagonist is shown as a huge, bearded, costumed person who can easily be identified as a Muslim. Since the attacks of September 11, this prejudice has never changed in the American media. Some books and movies feature both good and bad Muslims in an effort to show their neutrality, yet the bad Muslims and the brave police officer finally succeed in killing or imprisoning the villains. Each tale seems to have at least one character that refuses to broaden their viewpoint and stays entrenched in the past, using archaic language and ideas. These Muslim men are commonly portrayed in fiction as violently abusing their wives, with Quranic passages being cited to support their actions. Some writers use verses from the Quran to inform the terrorist's philosophy in order to criticise the terrorist's environment. These ideas will alter how the general public perceives Islam. An inaccurate and incomplete opinion about Islam and Muslims is likely

to be held by the typical reader who has access to such literature.

In his book with the same title, Edward Said provides three distinct definitions of "Orientalism." Only the first and second definitions, however, are pertinent to our research. "Everyone who teaches, writes about, or investigates the Orient in its specific or general dimensions is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism," Said illustrates via his own conduct. (Said 2006). Second, Orientalism is a school of thought that draws a contrast between "the Orient" and (typically) "the Occident" from an ontological and epistemological standpoint. (Said 2006) As a result, it is possible to assert that Orientalism is present whenever someone reads literature that creates a distinction between the East and the West. It is easier to see "Otherness" when East and West are divided and contrasted.

Another definition states that "Otherness is the outcome of a discursive process in which a dominant in-group ('The US,' the self) constructs one or more dominated out-groups ('Them,' the Other) by stigmatising a difference, real or imagined, that is resented as a negation of identity and therefore a potential source of discrimination". Different people are seen as the Other so often. An example of prejudice against them is exclusion from services. Because they do not adhere to the faith or worldview of the majority, Muslims in the United States face religious discrimination. Islamophobia thus developed as a direct outcome of prejudice and a feeling of otherness. Therefore, Islamophobia is fueled and sustained by Otherness, bigotry, and Orientalism. These notions commonly overlap because it is not always apparent whether the cause or the effect arrived first.

These ideas exist, and Muslims frequently bear the brunt of their effects. Orientalist stereotypes that have endured for years are the main foundation for how Muslims and Islam are portrayed in the media. It also shows how Islamophobia is promoted by the media. It illustrates how prejudices about Muslims portray them as odd, "alien" (Said, 2006), "the Other Terrorist," etc. Islam and Muslims have long been portrayed in literature. A Disorder Peculiar to the Country by Kalfus and Baer, Falling Man by Don DeLillo, Adam's Harbor, Ferrigno's Prayers for the Assassin, Terrorist by Updike and Baer, and Blow the House Down by Baer and Updike all have

unflattering portrayals of Muslims. The novel Terrorist by John Updike is typical of the literary canon that depicts Muslims as unyielding, brutish savages because of their beliefs.

These literary devices—narrative, themes, imagery, figures of speech, intertextuality, etc. are used to express this point in these works. The writers' goal is to provide evidence that Islam turns its adherents into innately evil beings. To show their patriotism and commitment to their country, the authors take advantage of this inaccurate picture of Muslims. Writers who were brought up in a hostile environment against Muslims in the West are constrained by the prejudices of their parents. They were taught from an early age that Islam is a creed that encourages and justifies violence. This study contrasts the protagonist's perception of the Egyptian with his own to analyse the Islamophobic and Orientalist elements in John Updike's Terrorist. The subject is explored by Levy and Ahmad, both Americans and Muslims.

The story centres on Mr Jack Levy, a Jewish "guidance counsellor," and Ahmad Ashmawy-Mulloy, a young Muslim Egyptian-American. The story addresses the differences between Muslims, Christians, and Jews, with particular emphasis on the last two. Throughout the story, Updike gives equal emphasis to the Jewish protagonist Levy and the Muslim protagonist Ahmad. The major character, Ahmad, is believed to have quite extreme beliefs and behaviours by the reading audience. He quotes from the Quran in an effort to deal with his culture, but this only serves to further alienate him from the group he wants to be a part of Jack Levy, an American citizen who recently underwent naturalisation, on the other hand, has never encountered or even heard of this type of social marginalisation. He is an established professional who serves as a "guidance counsellor" for those looking for help (Updike, 2006). Levy and Ahmad are at polar opposite ends of the personality spectrum. Levy wants to protect and preserve "New Prospect," whereas Ahmad wants to wipe off the state he lives in.

The Islamophobic stereotypes that American readers have grown up with will only be strengthened by this book. The book's title, "Terrorist," supports the stereotype that extremist Muslims are violent by nature. It is hard to ignore the author's usage of anti-Muslim prejudices given that the protagonist of

Updike's book is a Muslim adolescent boy and that the novel concentrates on his relationships with his community. He doesn't give the audience any room to form their own opinions. A terrorist's name has all the information you want about it. Readers of Muslim, Arab, and Oriental origin have criticised this book as racist, stereotyped, and Islamophobic because it portrays Muslims as violent barbarians who follow a violent religion. Given that Updike doesn't discuss Ahmad's mental health issues or the psychological effects of how his staff treated him, this would be upsetting for some readers. Ahmad and Sheikh Rashid, two of Updike's Muslim main characters, are shown to be homicidal extremists and religious radicals. Ignoring how their personalities are impacted by other variables

Ahmad is a young Muslim who is still coming to terms with who he is. Ahmad is unable to function in a society populated by "Kafir guys" (Updike, 2006). "His personal reticence may be due to his identification struggle," he said in his compound. He and his coworkers make up the "Arab" group. He is a lost American who has come to the mosque looking for direction on the right and holy way. He feels alone in America since he is both American and Egyptian. He has bullying at school from Tylenol and discomfort from his Sheikh at the mosque, which causes him to "often return distressed after one of their meetings" (Updike 2006). Ahmad feels so unwelcome there that he is unable to even leave the place he once called home. The history of Ahmad has a significant impact on his development and judgement. He wants to set himself apart from his American peers, yet he is hesitant to assume the sheikh character. Rashid, in his opinion, is overbearing.

Ahmad Ashmawy-Mulloy plans to go by Ahmad Ashmawy once he is an adult, despite his love for his Egyptian heritage. Despite never having travelled outside of the United States and never having even been to Egypt, this shows that he feels uncomfortable in his surroundings. According to one commentator, "...he was nurtured in a vacuum of pithy Islamic allusions, separated from American society" (Bell, p.56). He wants a place he can call home, but his only previous residence makes him feel unwelcome (Updike 2006). The word "trespassing" appears frequently in the story as a representation of the internal turmoil Ahmad is experiencing (Updike,

2006). He doesn't feel welcome anywhere, not even at home. natural environment

Ahmad's use of specific vocabulary reveals his narrow interpretation of Islam. He refers to non-Muslims as "Kafir men" and "infidels" (Updike, 2006). Ahmad routinely refers to the Church as "this Kafir Church" and everything rooted in American culture as going the "kafir path" (Updike, 2006). These topics appear often in the work. He commonly uses the term "infidel" to describe non-Muslims. Built by Updike. Ahmad is shown by Updike (2006) as a religious extremist who criticises his own nation using passages from the Quran and harsh language. John Updike seems to be trying to say that there are no answers in Islam, just criticism.

Levy, Ahmad's "Jewish guidance counsellor" (Updike p.56), "felt" after a single encounter with Ahmad that something was amiss and went to investigate. None of Ahmad's peers nor his mother shared the same opinion. By doing so, Updike raises the Jewish character Levy to the position of a heroic American citizen, one who is willing to put the interests of others before his own in order to keep them from sliding into darkness. Now Ahmad is at a loss on what to do. According to Updike, his faith compels him to behave against his nature.

The author views Ahmad to be an exemplary United States citizen.

Updike presents Islamic teaching as a "weapon," according to Updike's illustration, designed to "invade [people's] human compassion." Human nature is contrasted with Islam by Updike, who labels Islam as the "sword" and human nature as "human tenderness". This reveals the Islamophobic undertone of the work.

Islam and Muslims are the Other for Updike; he portrays them as primitive, violent, bizarre, and "strange" (Said 2006). Therefore, he needed to contrast Islam with the principles held dear by the typical American. Updike intends to teach his fellow Americans about Islam by comparing it to Christianity.

Ahmad is presented as a religious zealot who constantly has Quranic verses in the back of his head. It is evident that Updike has conducted substantial research on the Qur'an since several Qur'anic verses are mentioned throughout the work. His research disregarded the necessity for context in Islamic

studies, yet he nonetheless learned a great deal about the text itself. To comprehend the intended meaning of a verse, one must first study its context and then its shape and content. The issue is that Updike and, by implication, Sheikh Rashid only examine the verses' surface level. Studying Islam in seclusion is one of the primary reasons for the epidemic, pertaining to Islamophobia

To inspire hatred and make readers compulsively Islamophobic, the author draws analogies between everyday American behaviour and prohibited Islamic behaviour. The majority of Americans would be scared if they were forced to leave their familiar environment. In *Terrorist*, the differences between Muslims and Americans, whether factual or imagined, are emphasised and differentiated. Sullivan's study, one of the most prevalent depictions of the Muslim character in "Frightening Islam: Building American Uniqueness in the 9/11 Novel" is as a terrorist "as a person or thing to which Americans are not (at least in theory) (at least in theory). Muslims are prejudiced and narrow-minded individuals who desire the reappearance of simpler times, but eventually, find fulfilment in their trust in God and enjoyment of the natural environment. Americans, on the contrary, respect individual freedom, expect change, and..." (Sullivan, [2014](#)). Since Islam and Muslims' values and objectives are antithetical to those of the normal American, a true American would naturally harbour hostile attitudes against them. The irrational fear of Islam may be understood in the context of the war between the West and Islam, in which Islam is depicted as the adversary of everything civilised. Essentially, it is drawn to this. opposition to the advancement of civilization

Ahmad's discourse allows Updike to criticise several aspects of Muslim and American society. Updike chose the third-person point of view because he did not want any of the characters' perspectives to dominate the plot. In addition, while adopting third-person narration, the author has the opportunity to emphasise the story's most essential parts while glossing over others. *Terrorist* employs third-person narration to emphasise Ahmad's social alienation and isolation. It enables the narrator to observe everything that happens to each character, represented

Terrorist focuses on Ahmad, the main character.

However, a new character is introduced who changes the reader's perspective. Jacob Levy, or Jack as he is known to his friends and family, is simply being himself. As a devout Jew, he possesses a profound spirituality. Initially, he is unable to decide on anything, but he finally finds his life's purpose and is able to move past this phase of uncertainty. His life's mission is to create a handbook for the intriguing but misled Muslim barbarian. Levy is depicted as a confused character who finally regains his composure in time to save his country and spare the deaths of tens of millions of innocent Americans. Typically, Levy is the antithesis of Ahmad. It has previously been said that they fall on opposite extremes of the spectrum. They are from two distinct worlds. Despite having certain similarities, the two are sufficiently distinct from one another. Levy is a wise and mature individual. In contrast to Ahmad and Islamic modernism, he champions the antiquity of Judaism. When he refers to their criticism, Levy embodies not just American culture but also Jewish people. Like Levy's role as a guidance counsellor, they had to be the ones to lead people in the right way, yet it is in everyone's nature to deviate. Christianity is more closely linked to Judaism than it is to Islam, and Updike considers this a crucial point to stress. symbolises Judaism

Levy's wife, Beth, is an Elizabethan. With her, he leads a life of monotony. He no longer cares about her, or he has ceased to care. Since he lives in another state, his only child does not live with him and his wife. This makes it easy to see why Levy wants to be a father figure to someone. This is why he cares so much about Ahmad's circumstances. Throughout the book, Updike depicts Levy as if he were a divinely appointed messenger. The objective of Levy is evident from his work as a "guidance counsellor" (Updike 2006). In contrast to Ahmad's insignificance, his character resonates as significant with Muslim readers. The protagonist of the work, Ahmad, is introduced early on and remains essential until the conclusion when Levy eventually succeeds in persuading him to change his perspective about the worth of human life. Levy frames Ahmad as the antagonist of the plot, and he himself takes centre stage. (Salehnia [2012](#)). The novel's shifting perspective reinforces preexisting preconceptions about the novel's plot.

Judea and Christianity in this instance, Updike

allows Levy to speak on his behalf. Ashmawy is his "mental barrier with the other name" (Updike, 2006), he tells Ahmad upon meeting. Levy rejects Ahmad in his current state and is unable to determine his identity. This might be interpreted as a reference to the Arab-Israeli conflict, given that Levy is Jewish and Ahmad is of mixed Egyptian and Muslim background. (Allen, C. 2012). Levy is a genuine American who does not like to interact with Muslims, but he feels bound to protect Ahmad and other innocent Americans in this scenario. In addition, Ahmad's name, Ashmawy, is very meaningful in Egyptian values. In Egypt, people responsible for carrying out the death penalty are referred to as Ashmawy. As a result, Updike once more establishes an emotional barrier between the reader and Ahmad. Consequently, neither Ahmad nor Levy had a father figure. Consequently, they require one another's presence.

Being a parent, Levy wants to play that role in the lives of other individuals. Therefore, it is his responsibility to assist Ahmad in making the best options for his future. As a decent Jew, he determined it was his responsibility to set an example. While Levy's lack of religious enthusiasm is significant, the fact that he still identifies as a Jew implies that his Judaism is core to who he is; otherwise, it would be meaningless for someone to use a distinguishing trait that has no significance to them. Therefore, when people introduce themselves, they usually emphasise what they think to be their most noteworthy trait. Even though Levy may not be very religious, he employs religious categories and dichotomies in his thought processes. Updike describes the Christian and Muslim prayer procedures, but he makes no mention of the Jewish prayer process or Jewish religious rituals. Thus, he demonstrates that Levy is not engaged in religious activities, but that his Jewish identity defines him. Despite his religious apathy, Levy enjoys a superb reputation among his fellow Jews. Even if Ahmad claims to be a "decent Muslim," American readers will recognise them as Islamic teachings (Updike, 2006). This serves to exacerbate Islamophobia.

Levy's portrayal of the terrorist inspires readers to appreciate and support him, "demonising" the Muslim character to elevate and glorify non-Muslim characters like Joryleen and Levy. Updike shows Ahmad as a target for racism and prejudice. Thus, it's

clear that Ahmad has developed Islamophobia toward American society. Ahmad's anxiety drives him to use the explosives Charlie Chehab taught him to make.

In *Terrorist*, Updike draws blatant references to 9/11, making it hard for readers not to acquire an extreme animosity towards Muslims. As they are a component of the freedom that Muslims hate and despise, he believes he has the right to campaign for them. He uses September 11 to argue that such violent, barbaric individuals have no place in a civilization founded on the ideas of compassion, liberty, and democracy. therefore Muslims

Levy is shown as an all-around lovely man who always prevails. He was in charge at school, together with Ahmad's mother, and when Ahmad eventually exacted justice against his racist tormentors. His mother reported to Mr Levy t were receiving "hate calls" because of her son's faith, Islam, in the wake of the events of 9/11." accordance with (Updike, 2006).

It was not Ahmad's religious ideas that moulded him into a fundamentalist and terrorist, but rather his upbringing and surroundings. Levy and Ahmad are shown in opposing ways that emphasise their uniqueness. Ahmad is depicted throughout the poem as the terrible "Other" who should not be befriended. He exemplifies the terroristic, extremist strain of Islam. All of the Muslim characters in the novel are terrorists who loathe America. They are depicted in an extremely unfavourable way, with the intention of provoking animosity and disgust. In the film, Levy serves as a stand-in for the heroic American who would sacrifice his life to protect the defenceless. Religion-based conflicts symbolise Western animosity toward Islam and Muslims. Moreover, it is representative of the Islamophobic community. controversies in Western media and their nature

Islamophobia has been part of American and Western society since the growth of the Taliban and the Islamic Uprising in Iran. As a result of the September 11 attacks in the United States, however, garnered additional focus and attention. It appeared for a time that fundamentalist terrorist organisations no longer posed a threat to Americans. Consequently, they felt forced to eliminate their attackers in reaction to these attacks. Consequently, all Muslims have been the subject of Islamophobic, Orientalist, and bigoted discourse. They were

persecuted due to the fact that they were religiously devoted.

Conclusion

The way American culture treats Muslims is shown in John Updike's book *Terrorist*. Muslims have historically faced persecution, been treated as second-class citizens, and been blamed for every social ill in every civilization. They have been and still are held responsible for America's demise. After 9/11, Curtis contends that Americans are more afraid of brown immigrants like Ahmad than of African American Muslims (Ernst, 2013). Persecuting individuals of colour and punishing Muslim organisations for refusing to participate in politics are common practices in the United States. In contrast, every Muslim who engages in politics in the United States is immediately branded a terrorist and seen as someone who is attempting to undermine the values and social fabric of American society.

Islamophobia is the belief that Muslims cannot be morally upright citizens of the United States and that Islam is inimical to Western culture. Because of the prejudice that labels them as terrorists from birth, it is very challenging to see them as patriotic Americans. Islamophobia and anti-Muslim attitudes have grown in the West. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, there has been an increased interest (Allen, 2012). As a result, individuals from all walks of life felt compelled to write down their opinions regarding Muslims. Announcing his intolerance and contempt for Muslims in an open letter, John Updike felt forced to distance himself from the Muslim community.

The unfavourable opinions of Muslims that many Americans have promoted in the book *Terrorist*. To show that Muslims and Islam are aggressive and radical, it misinterprets a number of Qur'anic texts and certain Hadith from the Prophet Muhammad. All of the novel's Muslim protagonists are fanatics, as was already mentioned. Additionally, Ahmad's "imam," Sheikh Rashid, exposed him to fundamentalism at the mosque (Updike, 2006). Ahmad was first sceptical but was persuaded to support terrorism by Sheikh Rashid and Charlie Chehab. Sheikh Rashid quotes from the Quran and

the Hadith, which encourages Ahmad to use his car as a bomb to kill Western and American "kafir" (Updike, 2006).

Western nations, especially American people, see Islam as static and sluggish (Yenigun 2004). As a result, Muslims are stigmatised as being anti-modern, anti-"liberal," and unable to distinguish between religion and state (Ziadan, 2009). (Said 2006). Because Islam does not distinguish between religion and state, as shown by Orientalism, Christians and Jews in the West assume Muslims are incensed about the current condition of affairs (Said 2006). Therefore, this worldview is portrayed in Updike's book *Terrorist*.

Jews and Muslims are pitted against one another by terrorists. The Muslim characters are shown as radicals who despise the riches brought forth by America, whereas one Jewish character represents the true American patriot, prepared to sacrifice all for his nation. There is strong proof that Updike's anti-Muslim bias is the driving force for his labelling of three different Muslims as zealots and extremists. Updike falls victim to the Islamophobic narrative that depicts Muslims as a single homogenous group by creating three characters that are quite similar to one another. people who are identical and lack distinctive characteristics.

Levy is depicted as a character who values peace and hopes for its victory, whereas Ahmad works to upend the natural order of things. In the novel's closing pages, Ahmad exclaims, "These animals... have taken away my God," leaving the reader wondering what will happen next (Updike 2006). It's unclear if Ahmad is referring to Sheikh Rashid, Charlie, Levy, or the other Americans when he makes a reference to "devils". In order to further arouse American readers' fear and hatred toward Muslims, Updike leaves the plot unresolved. He nevertheless conveys to Muslim readers the impression that his assessment was unbiased and fair. The book ends by disparaging Muslims as terrorists and endorsing Jews as the ones who have the way to preserve humanity. Islam naturally bears the similarities that Updike drew between Jews and Muslims. Jews are seen as the adversary, same as in Islam, while Christians are seen as allies. Levy wasn't selected by Updike at random; he had a good reason.

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