

“A Critical Study Of Misrepresentation Of Islam, Qur’an And Muslims In John Updike’s Literary Works”

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Abstract

The article examines John Updike’s literary polemics against Islam, the Holy Quran, and Muslims. It aims to look into the characters’ fabricated portrayals and their imaginary remarks on Muslim civilization, and the treatment of women in the Quran. This subjective rendition of Muslim characters in Updike’s novel is a likely reflection of the negative stereotypes and Islamophobia that are common in American society and misrepresent Islam and the Arab world. Updike tries to depict Muslims and Islamic culture as foreign, exotic, and ultimately dangerous to the Western world. The novel instigates interreligious and racial conflicts in oriental and occidental worlds, the postcolonial cultural divide identified by Edward Said. Such literary pieces, for Said, contribute to the postcolonial cultural clash and foster racial and religious tensions in the East and the West. The study analyses the malicious interpretation of Qur’anic verses by Updike who ignores the context of the passages being cited in the novel. It reveals that Terrorist serves as an illustration of how he has novelized his anti-Islamic agenda. Hence, this blatant

demonization of Muslims in the novel is the offshoot of Updike's partial study of Islam based on his theoretical biases, abstractions, and generalizations.

Keywords: Islam, Qur'an, Muslims, Misrepresentation, Islamophobia, Postcolonial.

1. Introduction

The paper examines how John Updike's novel *Terrorist* is a literary assault on Muslims, Islam, and the Holy Quran in literature. Western literature published after 9/11 typically contains anti-Islamic objectives and themes. These literary works fuel interracial and interreligious conflict in the Eastern and Western nations, adding to the postcolonial culture clash that Edward Said emphasised. The natives are portrayed by Western authors as uncivilized and savage individuals. Hence, they present inaccurate images of Islam, Muslims, the Qur'an, the East, and the Arab world. The Islamic faith and the way of life are at the heart of this confrontation between Muslims and non-Muslims. Bernard Lewis (1994) indicates that the cause of the misrepresentation is the Western animosity to the fundamental Muslim belief that the holy Quran and the Sunnah are the prime sources of Islamic law. This law transcends the barrier of time and space and is compatible with modern life. Contrary to this belief, western writers and academicians allege the Holy Qur'an is an antiquated and anachronistic text that encourages its followers to intimidate and terrorize the people of other religions. According to him, there was another change in the European perception of Islam as barbaric religion.¹

The novel *Terrorist* by Updike is a story of an American-born Muslim teenager who is named Ahmad Ashmawv Mulloy who has been portrayed as a fundamentalist and a potential threat to American society. Gradually, he gets closer to his faith, starts practising it, and devotes his life to Jihad. Furthermore, he cites selective Quranic verses and prophetic sayings to vindicate his terror ambitions. The study critically analyzes Updike's biased authorial intentions to reveal the hidden anti-Islam agenda in the novel. It employs a contextually methodological perspective to complement its thorough examination of the Qur'anic passages cited in the novel. Edward Said says, "Criticism must think of itself as life-enhancing and constitutively opposed to every form of tyranny, domination, and abuse".² The article also analyses the Qur'anic references that Updike distorts to defend the accuracy of his sources. It reveals Updike's partial writing, which undercuts the

importance of the contexts and backgrounds of the cited Quranic passages. This research attempts to present a counter-discourse to Updike's neo-colonial prejudices against Islam and Muslims by providing real context for the mentioned Qur'anic verses and Prophetic sayings.

This study classifies and situates such sections to demonstrate how ideologically selective and prejudiced Updike is in this literary project. In his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said argues, "Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."³ Western powers hate the oil-rich Eastern territories because they dampen their interest. He interprets this conflict between East and West on three dimensions: anti-Islamic beliefs, the rivalry between Arabs and Israeli Zionism, and the portrayal of Muslims, and their culture as antique, backward, and illogical.⁴ From the perspectives of Bulent and Fikret Guven in Updike's *Terrorist*, it is said that the Orientalist hostility between Islam and the West is the foundation of post-9/11 writing. Said views the 9/11 incident as the Terrorist assaults on September 11th were unrelated to anything. It was a trip into another world filled with absurd abstractions and mythical generalizations about those who had misappropriated Islam for their gain. Islam is represented as a traditional, anti-Western religion that rejects modernity.⁵ To support and advance the political and economic colonial objectives, this ideological position made an effort to emphasize the superiority of Western colonialism.

The misrepresentation of the Holy Qur'an, women and Muslims by Updike in *Terrorist* is a malicious and illogical attempt to exploit the prestige and authenticity of Islam.⁶ He chose and misinterpreted "Thirty-three verses from the Holy Qur'an," according to Awan (2010, 521)⁷. Moreover, Rodwell's rendering of the Holy Qur'an contained many errors and may alter the intended meanings of these verses. Muhammad Sultan Shah argues that Rodwell's translation tries to portray the Holy Qur'an as a text based on Judaism and Christianity to establish that the authorship of the holy text belonged to Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH).⁸ Furthermore, Davut W. S. Peachy asserts that the entire purpose of these European translations was to discredit and demonise Islam and the Qur'an.⁹ Edward Said describes the objectives of imperialism, "Part of the main plan of imperialism... is that we will give you your history, we will write it for you, we will re-order the past".¹⁰ Thus, Updik's biased and maligned interpretation of the holy book attempts to reflect Islam as an extremist religion,

Muslims as Terrorists and barbaric, and the treatment of women as slaves.

Hatem Bazian asserts that Islam and Muslims are misrepresented by the West to define identity, culture, politics, and religion after the Cold War. Islam was perceived as an extremist religion after the fall of the Soviet Union because of its violent nature and potential threat to the West.¹¹ Daniel Pipes contends that Americans recognize an enemy when they see one more powerful, as they did during the Cold War with communism, and that the West is in danger from Islam because it is a violent religion¹². V.S. Naipaul, Martin Amis, Ian McEwen, Don DeLillo, and John Updike, who are part of the Western ideological state apparatus, write with a Western lens and portray Islam as an extremist faith. The Western perception of Islam, for Said, is, "The sense of Islam as a threatening Other - with Muslims depicted as fanatical, violent, lustful, irrational - develops during the colonial period in what I called Orientalism."¹³ Likewise, Updike mischaracterizes Muslims and Islam in his *Terrorist* and *The Coup*.

The platform on which the West attempts to impose its will on Muslim countries is their economic reality. To gain access to the Arab world's oil reserves, the West attempts to associate Islam and the Arabs with terrorism. Neo-colonialism, according to Elizabeth Poole, counts on contemporary Western media to demonize Islam as a source of terrorism to destabilize Middle Eastern countries and seize control of their natural resources. Islam, for Poole, would be viewed as the most threatening religion in the events that it went after Western interests in the Middle East.¹⁴ Losing control over oil prices would challenge the US's position as the world's superpower. Charlie and Ahmed criticize the colonial this way of thinking. In *Terrorist*, Mulley acknowledges that "the Western nations steal our oil and invade our territory".¹⁵ Resultantly, the literature that supported this point of view is a component of a larger justification of the ideology, methods, and objectives of Western colonial and exploitation of Muslim and Arab nations. However, Updike's statement that "I am a product of nearly forty years of Cold War" in an interview from 1988 is noteworthy.¹⁶

Samuel Huntington construes the conflict of polarization between the East and the West a struggle for superiority and dominance between Islam and Christianity. Because of various elements, including the inflow of Muslims into the West and the spread and practice of Islamic culture, civilization, and religion in the West, the contention among religion and progress developed

more extraordinary in the twentieth 100 years.¹⁷ Therefore, Western activists of Christianity oppose Islam and Muslims and consider them as a potential threat to their culture, civilization, and beliefs. Ironically, communism has emerged as a common adversary to both cultures and forged a fictitious conflict between Islam and the West. The conflict between Christianity and Islam, according to Bernard Lewis is the foundation for the conflict between the West and the East.¹⁸ "Islam has never been welcomed in Europe,"¹⁹ as Said noted in *Covering Islam*. In other words, Islamophobia existed before 9/11 and became more prevalent after it. The so-called 9/11 incident has created civilizational and religious prejudice, and hatred. This is a wave of anti-Muslim attitudes that has intruded into literature extending a long history of colonial animosity. Hence, the Western media and literature have both fueled psychopathological oppression and aided its political goals.²⁰

2. Literature Review

Riyad Abdurahman Manqoush analyses the works of John Updike and Lorraine Adams, *Harbor* (2004) and *Terrorist* (2006), respectively in his study titled "Islamophobic Irony in American Fiction: A Critical Analysis of Lorraine Adams' *Harbor* and John Updike's *Terrorist*"²¹ The study aims to investigate the Islamophobia irony in the art of characterization, authorial voice, and incidents having relevance to the Muslim world, particularly the Middle East. The novels under discussion partially criticize Islam and Quran and accuse Muslims of spreading terrorism in the world. The authors malign that the employment of Muslims in America is questionable because of their extremist mindsets. Moreover, they accuse the Muslim diaspora as disloyal to America and European countries. The biased and rancorous approach of the authors is an attempt to constitute a global outcry to declare Muslims as terrorists. They ridicule the fundamental principles and their practice like Hijab (veiling), Namaz (Prayer), and Jihad and try to portray Muslims as fanatics and uncivilized, a threat to world peace and stability. In their writings, the authors use a variety of ironic devices, including situational irony, linguistic irony, and dramatic irony; however, they unintentionally expose and ridicule their Islamophobic mindsets, so-called democratic values, and the success of the American dream.

According to M Ikbal M Alosman's study, "Colonial Shadows in John Updike's *Terrorist*," John Updike fictionalizes the post-9/11 reality in his book *Terrorist* and bases his anti-Islamic narrative on the so-called war on terrorism in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine.

The purpose of the essay is to examine how Muslims are portrayed in the geopolitical context of the post-9/11 world as Terrorists. It attempts to elaborate how the Occidentalists imagine the orient and (mis)represent them in Western media, art, and literature. M Ikbal M Alosman points out that colonial shadows in literature are the colonial implications and inferences of the literary texts purported by Western authors. These writers try to vindicate the colonial acts and agendas in their writings. Likewise, John Updike attempts to justify the so-called war on terrorism by maligning Islam, Quran, and Muslims in their writings. The narrative of colonial shadows illustrates how colonial implications and associations overtly and covertly undermine and demean the religious, social, and cultural topographies of the previously colonized nations. Updike misrepresents the Palestinians and accuses them of violence, extremism, and terrorism in the region. However, he vindicates the Israelis as nonviolent and peaceful in all their anti-Palestinian acts.²²

In his article *Islam and Advancement*: H. Pirnajmuddin argues in “A Study of John Updike's *Terrorist* (2006)” that Islam and Muslims are portrayed in black and white in Western media, literature, and politics as barbaric, uncivilized, and aliens who despise Christianity, civilization, modernity, and technology. Muslims have been facing this menace of Western extremism since the end of the cold war. Moreover, the West considers them not only uncivilized but also Terrorists. The article aims to examine the American novel *Terrorist* by Updike which represents Islam as dictatorial religion, and Muslims as a violent and savage “other”. In the novel, the Arab-Muslim protagonist attempts to conduct a Terrorist attack and reflects an intolerant view of Islam. Thus, the misrepresentations of Islam and Muslims render the subscription of the orientalist conception of Islam and Eastern civilization. Since the beginning of the Renaissance age, western colonialism and imperialism have attempted to represent Islam as an authoritarian religion with having narrow and anachronistic culture and tradition.²³

3. Discussion and Analysis

a) The Qur'an as Patriarchal, and Fanciful in Updike's *Terrorist*

The status of women in Islam is a highly debated topic in John Updike's novel *Terrorist*. The study aims to portray the real picture of women's status in light of the Qur'an. It is important to keep in mind that the novel offers a unique perspective on the issue of women in the Qur'an while analyzing the point. The story of Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy, a young man inducted into a

revolutionary Islamic group, is told in the original fear-monger. Throughout the book, Updike shows how women are treated in the Qur'an. The extremist Islamic group does not consider women to be equal to men. Women frequently feel like second-class citizens and have low social status. This does not imply that the Qur'an does not value women; instead, it means that the extremist Islamic group's interpretation of the Qur'an does not entirely recognize women's status. Overall, the novel *Terrorist* provides an insightful look into the status of women in the Qur'an. The Qur'an does value women; however, the interpretation of the Qur'an by certain radical Islamic groups does not recognize the status of women. While discussing the position of women in the Qur'an, it is crucial to take this viewpoint into account and to understand that the interpretation of the Qur'an by certain groups does not always reflect the true status of women in the Qur'an.

Women's rights have been acknowledged and gender discrimination has been condemned ever since the inception of Islam. The holy Qur'an says: "Whenever one of them is given the good news of a baby girl, his face grows gloomy, as he suppresses his rage. He hides from the people because of the bad news he has received. Should he keep her in disgrace, or bury her 'alive' in the ground? Evil indeed is their judgment."²⁴ This emphasises the blessings of the life of the female soul. He puts away from society due to dishonesty he is aware of the birth of the baby girl whether it is better for him to let her die in the dirt or to retain her in shame. They made a horrible decision, it is obvious. Islam also respected women's rights and glorified their roles as wives, mothers, and other family members. It also recognised the importance of their contributions to the family and community.

Islam has undoubtedly granted women the right to an honourable role in the public view, transforming their status from ignorance and betrayal to recognition and respect. Critics from the West have voiced a variety of criticisms of Islam's perspective and treatment of women and denounced the religion's justice to women while citing verses from the Qur'an and the Prophet to back their claims. For instance, women in Islam are in a subordinate position because, for Andreas Maurer "according to the Qur'an, a woman is inferior to man and must submit to him. He linked it to the changing of the conventional roles, which still place men in charge of working and women in charge of taking care of the home and the kids."²⁵

Islam's enlightened teachings, on the other hand, liberated and elevated women and recognised that each gender

has obligations to the other in terms of rights and responsibilities. Several intellectuals in the West acknowledged this and the way Islam granted women the rights they had been denied before. Marilyn Ann Friedman claims that the Qur'an would clarify its command to murder oppressive ladies throughout these ten years. This type of orientation-based racial classification was occasionally used in Western nations.²⁶ In Western countries, women were undervalued and ignored, Mahmudul Hasan says that in Europe, the woman was seen exclusively as a sexual individual whose presence was believed to be required solely to meet the close-to-home and lewd requests of men and to keep up with the continuation of mankind, he writes.²⁷

Islam is portrayed as being anti-women in Updike's *Terrorist* through inaccurate and out-of-context references using only a few verses from the Prophet's sayings and the Holy Qur'an, and the Muslim characters' attitudes. Updike views several women from various religious backgrounds unfavourably. The novel's primary female characters are Irish-American; Teresa Mulloy¹, Ahmed's mother; Jack's spouse Beth²; and Tylenol's girlfriend Joryleen. Beth is Jewish, and Teresa and Joryleen are Christians. Tylenol claims that the Lord loves active women, and Joryleen notifies Ahmed of this. "Nasty ladies for dirty men," and "Fantastic women for lovely men," is Ahmed's response. Updike has taken this verse from "Surah Noor (The Light Sura)" out of context. This verse is interpreted differently by several Muslim scholars. This verse is explained by Ibn e Abbas as follows: "Good words are for good men, and good men are for good words," says Abdul-Rahman."²⁸ Those who speak wicked words are likewise bad people. Regarding A'ishah and the liars, the following was made very clear: Ahmed also remembers the following passages while Charlie and he are in the truck:

"Your wives are like farmland for you, so approach them 'consensually' as you, please. And send forth something good for yourselves. Be mindful of Allah, and know that you will meet Him. And give good news to the believers".²⁹

Moreover, Ahmed reads the passage that precedes it, which states: "Beware of its harm! So keep away, and do not have intercourse with your wives during their monthly cycles until they

¹ Ahmad's mother whose secular and liberal lifestyle leads Ahmed to fall a prey to fanaticism, additionally she plays adultery with Jack, Ahmed's best friend at college.

² She is a wife to Jack. She does not like to work and keeps eating cookies at home. Moreover, she reflects the middle class background of Jack.

are purified.”³⁰ These two verses are taken from Surah Al Baqara (The Cow Sura, verses 222-223, wherein God commands men to refrain from approaching women when they are menstruating and to hold off on sexual practices until they are clean. It is important to understand the context of this verse. This demonstrates how Islam and Judaism can be contrasted. The Jews used to avoid their menstruation ladies; they wouldn't even sit down to eat or talk to them in the house. Abdul-Rahman writes in Tafsir as opposed to this, Prophet Muhammad (PUH) said in response to a question regarding it, “Do whatever you want, but don't have sexual intercourse”.³¹

This distinction makes it evident that Updike's inaccurate portrayal of Islam is founded on the savage misinterpretation of Quranic passages. Additionally, there are fundamental differences in how Muslims and Jews view the world, which contribute to the notion that a man's wife is his field. According to Abdul-Rahman (2009, 206), “Jabir bin. Abdullah (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Jews used to say that when one comes to one's wife through the vagina, but being on her back, and she becomes pregnant, the child has a squint. So the verse came down: “Your wives are your field; go then unto your field, as you may desire.”³² Tafsir Ibn Kathir Juz'2 (Part 2) acknowledged Jewish beliefs. However, when questioned about this scripture, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stated that it was acceptable.

b) Muslims as Barbarian and Uncivilized in Terrorist

Updike portrays Mulloy as a complex character and speculates that Muslims are barbaric and uncivilized. Muslims can be just as intelligent, moral, and compassionate as any other group of people. Mulloy is a thoughtful young man who is deeply committed to his faith. He is a devoted Muslim and takes his faith seriously, but he is also open-minded and curious about the world around him. Because he is passionate about comprehending the world, he studies philosophy and literature. The way Updike depicts Mulloy is a powerful reminder that Muslims should not be stigmatized because of the actions of a few extreme people. Given everything else being equal, we should believe that Muslims are equally capable of being moral, intelligent, and compassionate as any other group. The novel is a corrosive reminder that we should evaluate others based on their behaviour and views, not based on their religion or culture. By doing this, we may contribute to a more accepting and tolerant society. In his 2006 book “Terrorist,” John Updike depicted how Americans felt about Islam and its supporters during the war on terror. Updike depicts Muslims and

Islamic culture as being foreign, exotic, and ultimately dangerous to American society. These portrayals of Muslims in Updike's novel are a likely reflection of the negative stereotypes and Islamophobia that was common in American society at the time.

Updike misinterprets verses from the Qur'an, leading to misunderstandings of Islam and stereotypes of Muslims as barbarians who disdain women. In the end, it is important to keep in mind that he had a deeply ingrained anti-women viewpoint, which is evident in much of his writings, notwithstanding his misinterpretation of Islam as a religion that despises women. Similar female imagery reappears in Updike's *Fear Monger*, but this time Islam is blamed for it because of the way he "sardonically and frequently cruelly" depicted women in a "suspiciously puckish" manner. It's conceivable that Updike also possessed anti-Islamic attitudes. Fejer claims that Updike was misogynistic because he disliked "free women's unrestrained power."³³

In addition to having negative ideas of Muslim women, Updike's figures also have negative opinions of Christian and Jewish women. His primary goal is to disparage Islam by equating Muslim ladies with Jewish and Christian women. Ahmed's relationships with female characters are dominated by these anti-woman beliefs. Two people share a connection with Ahmad: the first is Joryleen, and the second is his mother Teresa. These two women do not follow the Islamic faith. Because of Muslim men's sexism and disdain for women, Updike looked to be concentrating on Western women. Although Ahmed is captivated by her beauty, yet does not want to advance in a relationship with her because of her infidelity. Moreover, she becomes a prostitute to financially support her boyfriend³. In any event, it should be highlighted that the book contains several indicators that point to Updike's tendency to be an adversary of women.

Updike had horrible relationships with women, and his own family experience served as the inspiration for many of his later works. In his article *In Couples: A Christian Perspective*, Fahd Hamad claims that Updike exposed his sardonic views on women, women's bodies, and Christianity. There are only two things that are funny in the Western world; the church of Christ and naked women.³⁴ Omar used to make statements that appeared to be taken directly from the Qur'an such as a woman shouldn't try to possess a man; she should serve him. Ahmad was annoyed by his

³ Tylenol Jones is an African American and loves Joryleen; however, he is jobless and depends on his girlfriend who supports him by adopting the profession of prostitution.

mother's actions since she argued that Ahmad had no connection to Islam. Because of this, Teresa's unfavourable opinions about Islam are founded on her strained marriage, which she makes every effort to maintain between herself and their son Ahmad out of fear that he may follow in his father's footsteps. She also dreaded Shaikh Rashid⁴'s influence because "His imam hardly ever made an appearance to say hello. He didn't like shaking hands with me and never really tried to win me over". "How would you know if he has a girl," Jack asks Teresa. "He has always disliked my having male pals," she responds.³⁵

The one who instils these ideas in Ahmed's head is the one who calls women "Unclean meat"; Jack is aware of the shortcomings in the bond between Ahmed and his mother. He claims to be Muslim, according to his wife Beth, "yet still disregarding this industrious Irish-Catholic mother he lives with". He defines their bond in this manner. Teresa quits looking after Ahmad when he joins the Shaikh Rashid organisation because she doesn't like Islam since she believes it mistreats and denigrates women: Let God look after Ahmed if he has such a strong faith in God. Teresa claims that she is unable to help Ahmed because of his religious beliefs: Ahmed thinks that his dad's disappearance and subsequently his faith were the barriers separating them. I am unable to lead Ahmed's life. Using Teresa's terrible interactions with her Muslim husband, child, and Imam, Updike warns Western women against dating Muslims.³⁶

The fact that Islam overtly opposes such a glossed worldview by Updike. Islam places a high importance on mothers. Honouring a mother is a way to heaven and demonstrates a child's loyalty and faith according to the Prophet's teachings. Authorities such as Bukhari and others claim that Abu Hurairah (R.A) related the following incident: The Prophet (PBUH) was approached by a man who addressed him as "O Messenger of Allah! Who has the greatest stake in my success?" "Your mother," the Prophet of Allah (PBUH) added. "Who will have her position?" The man inquired. "Your mother," he said. The man asked, "Who follows her?" once more. "Your mother," he said. The man asked, "Who follows her?" once more. He spoke, "Your father."³⁷

In general, Islam places a high value on parents; The Al-Isra Sura also says that your Lord has commanded you to only worship Him. Also, you follow your parents. Do not show them

⁴ He is Ahmed's mentor and he works as an Imam. He helps Ahmed secure a job at Excellency. Moreover, he instigates him to assist in suicide bombing attack.

disrespect openly or emotionally if one of them gets older over time; instead, treat them with dignity. Since Ahmad was not raised or influenced by Islam, his disrespect for his mother cannot be explained by that. The story also shows several stages of Ahmed and Joryleen's romance. Joryleen's religion has always made Ahmed hate her, but over time, his views have evolved. In this piece, Updike seems to be criticising Muslims and Islam from two angles: he contends that Muslims may forsake their faith in favour of sexual gratification and that Muslims are encouraged to mistreat women. Ahmed makes an effort to avoid women since, in his view, they are easily led animals. Muslims are represented as mindless automatons following the demands of Islam's imposed hatred.

c) Terrorist: The Infiltration of Western Values into Sharia

The infiltration of Western values into Islamic Sharia is a topic that deserves serious consideration. John Updike's novel *Terrorist* provides an interesting insight into this issue, exploring the clash between traditional Islamic values and those of the Western world. The novel presents a thought-provoking examination of the subject and serves as a valuable source for understanding the complexity of this issue. The novel follows the story of Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy, a young man from New Jersey who is caught between his traditional Islamic values and the values of the Western world. Ahmad is a devout Muslim and is deeply committed to his faith. However, he is also exposed to the values of the Western world, which are often in conflict with his own beliefs. As a result, Ahmad is faced with a difficult decision: whether to stay true to his Islamic values or embrace the values of the Western world. The novel provides an interesting perspective on the infiltration of Western values into Islamic Sharia'. Through the story of Ahmad, Updike explores the complexities of this issue and how it affects individuals who find themselves caught between two cultures. The novel serves as an important reminder of the importance of understanding and respecting different cultures and beliefs. Ultimately, it is only through understanding and respect that we can hope to bridge the gap between the two cultures and find a way to coexist peacefully.

Ahmad struggles to balance the Islamic laws that Shaikh Rashid taught him with his admiration for Joryleen's beauty and seductiveness, but ultimately gives in to his desires. Updike creates the sense that Muslims are subject to stringent restrictions under Islam and that their attraction to sexuality may be a way for them to escape those restrictions.³⁸ Once more, Updike disregards

a major Islamic tenet that forbids pre-marriage sex but permits Muslim men to wed non-Muslim women. Despite fraudulently claiming to be a feminist, Updike makes it obvious in *Self-Confessions* that he believes feminism to be an anti-male assault. The puritanical and chastity doctrines of other monotheistic religions, on the other hand, are disregarded by Updike. Updike, on the other hand, is well recognised for his chauvinist masculinity, which claims that women's worth is imparted to them by males rather than being inborn.³⁹

Updike mistakenly ascribes it to Muslims and Islam and criticises Islam as a religion of fiction and imagination. By using passages that are taken out of context and the mindsets of the characters, Updike shows Islam as a religion of fiction and fantasy. He wants to demonstrate that Islam is more about principles than actual practices. Numerous verses in the Holy Qur'an encourage creativity and exhort people to consider the cosmos. These verses were cited by Updike to support his inaccurate portrayal of Islam as being wholly alien to reality. The Holy Qur'an convinces Muslims to obey its teachings by painting vivid pictures of Paradise and its delights. When speaking about heaven, Ahmed quotes the *Ar-Rahman* sura and says to Joryleen that there would be two gardeners who can readily access the fruits of their labours while they unwind on couches covered in brocade.

Conclusion

John Updike describes Islam in his book *Terrorist* as a violent religion that calls for the murder of non-Muslims, disregards women as members of a lower race, and bases it on magical imagination. Updike misrepresents Islam by selectively quoting passages from the Qur'an while ignoring their original contexts and skipping over several verses that would contradict his assertions. By disregarding the original context of the Qur'anic passages, Updike followed a pattern that emerged in American literature after the 9/11 attacks. This is unacceptable coming from a writer who is praised for his amazing grasp of words and it should not be accepted. Therefore, Updike's selective citing is unjust, prejudiced, and even untrue and aggressive. Edward Said criticizes the concept of the imagined East and argues, that making sweeping generalisations about Islam is fairly simple. To observe the radical evil connected with Islam, the Arabs' perverted civilization, and other such things, all you have to do is read practically any issue of *The New Republic*. Additionally, he links his criticized beliefs and behaviours to the Muslim characters he invents, omitting the reality that any other religion including Islam

should be free of any misbehaviour committed by any of its adherents.

On the other hand, Updike portrays women as downtrodden beings in Islam, in contrast to their position in the West, by using specific Qur'anic texts. Once more, these verses are vilely superficially cited and recruited. He disregards the context of those verses as well as the other passages that acknowledge women, their standing, and their privileges because he lacks the understanding required for comprehension of the Holy Qur'an. By equating his decisions with Ahmad's and Shaikh Rashid's racist views, Updike seems to be warning Western women against dating Muslim males whose faith despises women and elevates them to the status of animals. In general, exaggeration, falsification, stereotyping, inadequate presentation, and the exclusion of key truths is the foundations of Updike's negative viewpoint. Edward Said exposes this demonization of Islam, the Quran, and Muslims by the West, in the US, it is unacceptable to generalize in this way about any other racial or religious group. The neo-colonial presumptions that are supported by this mindset are related to the European imperialist mentality, which is built on the dichotomy of a superior, civilised, and dominant West entitled to dominate an inept, primitive, and helpless East.

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