LITERARY FORM AND IDEOLOGICAL CRITIQUE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF JOHN UPDIKE'S *TERRORIST* & MOHSIN HAMID'S *THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST*

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I certify that all the material in this thesis borrowed from other sources has been identified and that no material is included for which a degree has previously been conferred upon anybody.

Dated: 25 May, 2010 Amal Sayyid

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Signature

Abstract

Marxist criticism views all human consciousness and activity as being conditioned by ideology. Consequently in Marxist criticism, aesthetic practice is considered as inextricably linked with historical and political processes. The current study seeks to compare and contrast the ideological nature of the representations of post 9/11, American capitalism and Islamic terrorism in the novels of John Updike and Mohsin Hamid, two authors of vastly differing nationalities and civilizational backgrounds. It aims to evaluate how post 9/11 literature is influenced by contemporary ideological conflicts between Islam and the West leading to the cataclysmic events of the terrorist attacks on the twin towers in New York. The present research further seeks to combine an investigation of the aesthetic mores of a literary work with a study of its historical and ideological connotations. For this purpose, the model of symptomatic reading given by the Structural Marxist critics Althusser and Macherey will be employed in order to investigate how gaps and fissures in the formal elements of the narrative constitute an unconscious implicit critique of authorial ideology inbuilt in the very fabric of the textual fable.

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Dedication

To

Ammi, Baba Jan, Ibrahim and Abu Bakr

The well-spring of love, motivation and strength in my life

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Poetics or literary criticism has traditionally theorized aesthetics and sociology of literary practice as distinct and irreconcilable spheres. This is manifested in the rise of apolitical theoretical movements such as formalism and New Criticism which focus solely on the aesthetic and formal dimensions of literature. On the other hand, under the influence of these long established systems of thought, schools of sociological and political criticism were deemed to deal merely with the content to the exclusion of all artistic concerns. This belief was given credence by the critical objectives of Marxist, Feminist and Black American criticism in their initial stages of development, in which they addressed only thematic issues of representation and political meanings of textual writings and did not give much thought to issues of form and style. However, an analysis of the subsequent developments in these areas highlights how this neglect was later redressed and a study of the close correlation between form and content became integral in the different schools of literary theory. In Marxism, Structural Marxist ideological criticism formulates a poetics which combines a study of the historical and ideological nature of literature with a formalist analysis of its aesthetic qualities.

Structural Marxists, drawing on Althusser ("Lenin and Philosophy", "Marx") and Gramsci's ("Selections") notion of all human consciousness and activity being shaped by ideology, reject apolitical formalist approaches which view literature as an autonomous auto-telic artifact to be studied merely for its intrinsic aesthetic qualities. Instead according to Althusser, literature is a part of the ideological superstructure and is one of the Ideological State

Apparatuses or ISAs which disseminate ideological values and norms to accomplish the interpellation and subjectification of individuals ("Ideology and Ideological State-Apparatuses" 143). For Structural Marxists such as Althusser ("Lenin and Philosophy") and Macherey ("Problem", "Towards a Theory") critical enterprise must therefore focus first and foremost on analyzing and unearthing the historical ideological configurations of production of a literary text.

According to Metscher and Belsey, for Structural Marxists, it is through an investigation of the formal mores of a literary work that the critic can highlight and reveal the ideological project of a literary text. The compositional processes of literature are viewed as giving ideology a concrete form and revealing its inconsistencies. Thus formalist analysis serves as the conduit for discovering the political meanings of a literary work.

The foremost practitioner of this combination of aesthetic and ideological analysis is the French Marxist Pierre Macherey ("Problem", "Towards a Theory"). Drawing on Althusser's ("Reading") notion of symptomatic reading Macherey proposes a critical methodology which analyses fissures and gaps in the literary narrative or figuration in order to highlight what has been excluded or repressed by a text on account of its ideological preference or bias. In order to unearth textual fissures and gaps, Macherey calls for a close formal analysis of generic elements such as characterization, plot, narrative technique, dialogues, textual descriptions and rhetorical tropes and figures, etc. These fissures and gaps in Macherey's words reveal the ideological omissions and constitute within the text an implicit critique of the writer's conscious ideological project. This method of analysis thus illuminates the formal aesthetic processes of literary production and also positions the text in its historical moment of production.

The post cold war era has been accompanied by an intensification of political, cultural and military conflicts across the globe. The collapse of communism did not mark the end of ideological discords or usher in an era of utopian peace as was widely hoped. Instead the Soviet threat was replaced by another enemy and Western capitalist nations headed by United States of America identified a new menace emanating from Islamic countries in the form of the rise of Fundamentalist Islam or "Islamism" which in the words of Daniel Pipes is a "twentieth-century-style ideology" (8). Islamism was viewed in the West with skepticism and concern on account of its ideological narrative in which the Western civilization was characterized as immoral, decadent and godless (Townshend 108).

The critic Bernard Lewis in his article "The Roots of Muslim Rage" identified Islamism's exhortation to its followers to wage a holy struggle against the capitalist system for undermining piety and holiness as forming the basis of clash of civilization debates in academic circles. This ideological clash between the capitalist liberal democracies of the West and Fundamentalist Islam is believed to have been finally crystallized in the form of the terrorist attacks on the twin towers in New York on September 11, 2001 (Pipes; Steger). It not only resulted in the tragic loss of life and resources but also permanently altered the course of global geo-politics with a resurgence of nationalist and ideological identifications and sympathies (Dizikes and Neuman; Talbott and Chanda). Thus 9/11 generated various responses with a visible display of patriotic fervor within America and a sense of national bereavement and outrage (Sardar and Wyn Davies) in contrast to celebratory displays over the humiliation of an imperial superpower in other nations (Rozsa).

In this post- cold war and post- 9/11 world, where ideological conflicts form the very basis of all geopolitical developments and historical processes, the domain of literature too

cannot be considered impervious to and insulated from ideological concerns and motivations. As a matter of fact, in the aftermath of 9/11 a burgeoning literature has emerged from the East and the West offering varying perspectives on the themes of fundamentalism, terrorism, American consumer capitalism and clash of civilizations according to the ideological and political leanings of the authors. Pankaj Mishra in his article "The End of Innocence" highlights how many important British and American novelists including Martin Amis, Ian McEwan, Don DeLillo "felt compelled to confront the implications of that day" and to redefine and reconsider the thematic focus of their artistic endeavours (par. 1). In the essay "In the Ruins of the Future", Don DeLillo proclaims the suitability and potential of novels or works of fictions as a medium for representation of the implications of the incidents of 9/11. Bent Sorenson in "American Post-9/11 Fiction" is of the view that postmodern fiction is one of the many genres that deals with the effects generated as a result of 9/11.

John Updike's *Terrorist* and Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* are the literary efforts of two authors from vastly different backgrounds and ideological affinities to deal with the pressing political themes associated with 9/11.

Updike is an American author whose country was attacked by terrorists of Muslim and Arab origin. Updike is characterized as an incisive presenter of American suburbs. His works are remarkable for their explicit portrayal of American middle class in the era of depression and the Vietnam War, with its hedonistic sex, infidelity, family obligations, yearning for freedom, cynicism and religious searching. Christopher Lehmann-Haupt in a tribute in *The New York Times* terms Updike as "a lyrical writer of the middle class man" (par. 1). He further quotes from an interview with Jane Horward in which Updike describes his subject matter thus, "My subject

is the American Protestant small-town middle class" (par. 5). Michiko Kakutani also highlights how the middle class American life style formed the subject of Updike's fiction.

An analysis of Updike's biography and critical analyses of his works reveal the predominance of a nationalist and religious strain in his works. Daniel Quentin Miller in his book *John Updike and the Cold War: Drawing the Iron Curtain*, highlights the nationalist element in Updike's writings and claims that Updike's fiction is marked by the need to "reexamine a national identity" (2). Bruce Webber sums up the main themes of Updike's fiction thus, "the self-conscious American character, the religious strain in American life and the social and sexual patterns in American communities ..." (par. 6). The website of National Broadcasting Corporation, msnbc.com and Associated Press in their obituary on Updike's death reveal that he was a regular church-goer and a fervent protestant. These elements are highlighted in Updike's own analysis of his famous *Rabbit Angstrom: A Tetralogy* in which he says,

> The tetralogy to me is the tale of a life, a life led an American citizen who shares the national passion for youth, freedom, and sex, the national openness and willingness to learn, the national habit of improvisation ... He is furthermore a Protestant, haunted by a God whose manifestations are elusive, yet all-important (qtd. in The Associated Press par. 24).

Ideologically Updike is considered as a spokesperson for the establishment by the critic David Walsh who in his articles "Novelist John Updike Dead at 76: Was he a "Great Novelist"?" and "John Updike's *Terrorist*" argues that Updike subscribed to the dominant ideological narrative of American exceptionalism and moral superiority and consequently defends the neoliberal values of capitalism.

Hamid, on the other hand, is a Pakistani born Muslim author who also has a first-hand experience of living in America where he studied and graduated from Princeton and Harvard Business School, some of its top universities. An analysis of his interviews and writings reveals that he is a secular and liberal Muslim. In an online interview with Foreign Policy in April 2007, he reveals how he voted for President Musharraf's reelection in 2002 with the hope that he would continue his campaign of enlightened moderation. In a journalistic essay, "Art and the Other Pakistans (The Ones that Don't Make the Headlines)", Hamid highlight once again the secular and liberal sections of Pakistani society which persisted even in the puritanical era of the Zia regime. In the light of his background it can be assumed by the readers that Hamid is likely to give a secular nationalist perspective.

In several essays and interviews, Hamid expresses sentiments and a deep affection for Pakistan. He moved back to Pakistan in 2009 with his family saying in an article "It had to be a sign. Time to move the family to Pakistan" in the British newspaper *The Guardian*, "... my heart remained stubbornly Pakistani ... And although I left Lahore at 18 to study abroad, the city of my birth never lost its grip on me. I continued to go there often, usually for two or three month-long trips every year and a couple of year-long stays each decade" (par. 10). In the same article, Hamid also expresses dismay at the stereotypical representation of his homeland in the media as a place of anarchy, violence and bloodshed. As a matter of fact in an interview with Jennifer Reese in the *Entertainment Weekly* in June 2007, he critiques John Updike for portraying a clichéd, stereotypical, dehumanized and inauthentic Muslim protagonist. In another article for *The Washington Post*, "It's Troubled, but it's Home" Hamid expresses similar discontent over the misrepresentation of Pakistan and Muslims in the Western media.

Considering the vastly differing backgrounds of two authors, a comparative analysis of their fictional works becomes relevant and important in order to highlight contrasting viewpoints on the attacks of 9/11, an event that is believed to have changed the world.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study seeks to answer the following questions

1. What is the conscious ideological project of the two authors?
2. Why are there divergences in the authors' portrayal of the same historical phenomena?
3. How do features of literary form and genre create fissures, gaps and silences which undermine the ideological aim of the authors?

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study aims at analyzing how literature embodies and concretizes ideology and mores of social consciousness. Through an analysis of the generic elements of the fictional narratives of Updike and Hamid, it seeks to assess to how an investigation of the formal modes of literary production can lead to an understanding of the texts relation to ideology and history.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To evaluate the conscious ideological project in Updike's *Terrorist* and Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.
2. To have an in-depth analysis of the literary features such as characterization, literary tropes, plot, narrator, etc., and to identify gaps and fissures in them.

3. To analyse how literary features contribute in undermining the aim of the novelists.

4. To explore divergences in authors portrayal of the same historical phenomena.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present research seeks to investigate how literature is one of the important means for the embodiment and dissemination of ideologies. Thus it seeks to highlight how literature is not merely an aesthetic artefact but is a historically embedded activity with deep political and sociological significance. In the contemporary age of global political turbulence, creative and critical enterprises cannot and should not be detached from ideological perspectives.

The current study aims to analyse and study how literary authors, particularly writers of fiction, are addressing and portraying the events and impacts of 9/11 and themes of terrorism, fundamentalism, American capitalism and imperialism, clash of civilizations and war on terror associated with it. In view of the current global importance of this phenomenon, this study assumes a special significance.

This critical investigation particularly seeks to evaluate and highlight the ideological nature of the literary representations of the clash between American neoliberal capitalist system and Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism in the wake of 9/11. For this purpose the current research is a comparative study involving a well established and critically acclaimed American author John Updike, and an emerging Pakistani writer Mohsin Hamid. By incorporating authors of completely different civilizational backgrounds it is hoped that a wider, more encompassing and holistic view of the ideological configurations of post- 9/11 phenomenon will emerge.

The current study is concerned not only with the content of fictional representation of 9/11. It is also seeks to evaluate authorial attitudes and the style and literary form which the author adopts to present contemporary global events. This study is thus aimed at evaluating whether in the current age of global mistrust and suspicion authors are contributing to civilizational harmony and understanding through their literary creations or whether they deepen the distrust through stereotypical and prejudiced representations which exclude the perspective of the other civilization. Thus this research seeks to analyse how an American author with allegiance to his own civilizational ethos and values represents the proponents of the Arab world and Islamic civilization and how a Pakistani Muslim author with pronounced nationalist sentiments characterizes the American people standing for the Other, the West. In an age characterized by the proverbial clash of civilizations, a study of how these clashing entities, the East and the West, represent each other in their literary discourses is indispensable and can have a corrective critical function.

This research in the final analysis seeks to study Pakistani and American 9/11 fiction from the perspective of Structural Marxist ideological criticism, which has not previously been used to study literature of 9/11. It aims at showing how the model of literary analysis provided by Macherey is applicable in the postmodern world to investigate the ideological leanings of literary authors.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

In this qualitative study a close textual analysis of the two texts will be carried out from a comparative perspective in order to analyse the ideological configurations informing their presentation of American capitalism and Islamic fundamentalism. The framework of comparison

will be developed on the basis of the theories of ideology, superstructure, literary production and textual unconscious propounded by Althusser and Macherey. The current research in keeping with the theoretical formulations of Althusser and Macherey will analyse the fictional works of Updike and Hamid to identify the conscious ideological projects of the authors. It will then use the model of symptomatic reading given by Althusser and Macherey in order to establish a theoretical framework for linking ideology with literary form. Using this framework various formal elements of the narratives such as characterisation, dialogues, textual descriptions, literary tropes and point of view, etc., will be analysed in order to highlight the unconscious incoherences and gaps in the fables of the two literary works. Through an analysis of the textual unconscious, the silences and fissures in the authors' informing ideologies will be uncovered.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This chapter will present a review of literature related to Marxist literary criticism and critique of ideology in order to clarify the theoretical and conceptual background of the study. It will be divided into three main sections. It will begin with a review of literature related to the different concepts of ideology in the Marxist tradition. The second section will review and analyse the works of Marxist critics who have explicated the relation between literature and ideology with particular emphasis on the theoretical tenets of Althusser and Macherey, pioneers of Structural Marxist ideological criticism. The third and final section will outline and summarize some of the major ideological debates shaping the post cold war era leading up to 9/11.

2.1. MARXISM AND THE CONCEPT OF IDEOLOGY

Marxism does not contain a single uniform definition of ideology. In the course of evolution of Marxism from its Hegelian origins to its Structuralist formulations and in its development in the Frankfurt School, cultural and media theory, the concept of ideology has witnessed considerable modifications and revisions (Eagleton "Ideology"; Gerring; Hawkes; McCarthy; Williams; Zhao).

The development of Marxist theory can be traced back to the influence of the epistemological premises of the German philosopher Hegel. Hawkes in his seminal work *Ideology* outlines how working on the foundations of Hegelianism, Marx and Engels derived their focus on historical evolution and developed a theory which explained the development of mankind's history in materialistic terms (89). Hawkes and McCarthy further point out

divergences between Hegelian Marxist critics and their German predecessors by highlighting Marxism's materialist emphasis and its critique on the idealism of German philosophers.

Within Hegelian Marxism, major proponents of which include Marx and Engels ("German Ideology"), Lenin and Lukacs ("Theory"), ideology is characterized as an entity related to human cognition. Following the Napoleonic tradition, ideology is used in a pejorative sense to imply false consciousness, abstract and illusory thinking and distorted world view (Drucker; Eyerman; Gerring; McCarthy; Williams). The notion of ideology as false consciousness and distorted perception was later taken up by critics of the Frankfurt School (Eagleton "Ideology"; Eyerman; Hawkes).

Marxist critics have identified different causes of ideological false consciousness. Adorno and Horkheimer ("Dialectic") and Marcuse ("One-Dimensional Man"), influenced by the Hungarian critic Lukacs, attributed distorted cognition to reification and commodification of the human mind in capitalist society. According to Drucker, Eyerman and Williams, for Marx, Engels and Lenin representing the Hegelian tradition within Marxism, in addition to reification, abstract philosophical theorization and speculation divorced from material processes of history and society resulted in ideological false consciousness. Thus philosophers engaged in the error of idealism, which was caused by the overlooking of material and historical determinants, produced a conception of the world which was fragmented and incomplete and blinded the proletariats to their true interests.

Eagleton ("Ideology"), Gerring and Williams highlight that within Marxism while characterizing ideology as a system of ideas, the term is also used in a descriptive or neutral sense to simply stand for world-view or an expression of the interests of a particular class. In this

definition, the notion of false consciousness and cognitive distortion is not associated with ideology.

Hegelian Marxism gave way to the school of Structural Marxism which developed under the influence of the ground breaking theoretical formulations of the French critic Althusser ("Marx", "Lenin and Philosophy") and gave rise to its own theory of ideology. The materialist and functionalist concept of ideology developed by the Structural Marxists represents a complete break with the cognitive and epistemological theories of the phenomenon which existed in the Hegelian tradition of Marx, Engels and Lukacs and the Western Marxism of the Frankfurt School (McCarthy; Rivkin and Ryan). Critics such as Benton, Eagleton ("Ideology") and Hawkes analyzing the rise and development of Structural Marxism instead trace the roots of Althusser and his successor's concepts to theoretical innovations of the radical Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. In his seminal work *Selections from Prison Notebooks* Gramsci highlighted the materialization and dissemination of ideology in various institutions of the civil society. This materialist emphasis defines the Althusserian redefinition of ideology (Bertens; Ferreter; Kavanagh; Hawkes; McCarthy).

Influenced by Gramsci, Althusser in the essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus" sees ideology as taking shape within "the *material existence of an ideological apparatus…*" and dilates at length the role of material institutions such as the education system, the family, political parties, the trade unions, the legal system, the media and Church and all other forms of organized religion etc in the materialization and dissemination of ideology (166, 168). As part of the "Ideological State Apparatuses or ISA's", ideology becomes a material means for the reproduction of production in Capitalist society, which are in fact relations of exploitation, by equipping individuals with ideas, values and beliefs and forms of consciousness

necessary for them to assume their roles in material production (148-9). Macherey in *Towards a Theory of Literary Production* and "The Problem of Reflection" also views ideology as existing in the material sphere of the ideological superstructure.

Althusser led the way in the change in previous ways of thinking about ideology by defining it as a matter of an individual's lived relations and experience of the world ("Marx" 63). Ideology thereby came to be regarded not as a cognitive phenomenon or as a matter of true or false consciousness but rather as a system of signifying practices and symbolic representations which defined, structured and modulated the individual's perception and experience of his relation to society as a whole (62-3). According to Eagleton, Structural Marxism pioneered by Althusser witnessed a transition in the concept of ideology from an epistemological and rational category concerned with "insight" to a practical force embodied in "experience" ("Ideology" 149). According to Benton, by characterizing ideology in this way as a "social reality" the reductive concept of ideology as "'mere' mystification and illusion in the mind of agents" prevalent in the Hegelian tradition of Marxism was undermined and rejected (186).

According to Belsey, Eagleton ("Ideology"), Higgins and Kavanagh, for Structural Marxists ideology's structuring and definition of an individual's perception of social reality and his relation to the social whole involves an element of unreality, falsehood and even distortion. In the opinion of these critics, a dialectic of reality and unreality thus marks the Althusserian concept of ideology and distinguishes it from the earlier Hegelian Marxist notion of false consciousness which implied a total and complete falsification of cognitive processes. Althusser observes that "ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" ("Lenin and Philosophy" 162). In another essay *Marxism and Humanism* he notes, "In ideology men do indeed express, not the relation between them and their

conditions of existence but the way they live the relation between them and their conditions of existence: this presupposes both a real relation and an 'imaginary', 'lived' relation" (63).

This ideological restructuring provides an imaginary, symbolic and mythical model of the social totality which is necessary for the production of compliant social subjects, indispensable for the harmonious functioning and reproduction of an existing mode of production and a given social formation (Althusser "Marx", "Lenin and Philosophy"; Warren). Thus Structural Marxism gives a functionalist account of ideology in which it is viewed as the primary force for the adaption of individuals to their social roles. According to Eagleton, ideology in this regard becomes

> an organizing social force which actively constitutes human subjects at the root of their lived experience and seeks to equip them with forms of values and beliefs relevant to their specific social tasks and to the general reproduction of the social order ("Ideology" 222).

According to Eagleton ("Ideology") thus, Structural Marxism propounds a "subject-centred" theory of ideology (143). Althusser in his seminal essay "Ideology and Ideological State- Apparatuses: Notes Towards an Investigation" expostulates the theoretical notion of "interpellation" whereby ideology addresses and speaks to individuals in a manner such that social roles appear natural and obvious and are willingly and freely adopted by them ("Lenin and Philosophy" 172-3). In the same essay Althusser assigns this process of interpellation to "Ideological State Apparatuses" or ISAs which include religious, educational, cultural, political, legal and social institutions, etc. (143). Swingewood in *Sociological Poetics and Aesthetic Theory* outlines how the concept of interpellation not only forms the basis of Structuralist

formulations of ideology but was also later on taken up by critics of Frankfurt School such as Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse.

Structural Marxists such as Althusser ("Marx"; "Lenin and Philosophy") and Macherey ("Towards a Theory") contend that on account of interpellative processes ideology is internalized by individuals and thus operates on an unconscious level. Terry Eagleton further highlights how the strategy of naturalization results in ideology being regarded as "habitual behavior rather than conscious thought" ("Ideology" 18). He argues that ideology has an affective structure operating through a set of emotive images and symbols which moves people to action without conscious reflection (148-9). The notion of ideology as an unconscious structure is also discussed by Higgins in his discussion of Althusserian concept of interpellation. In his essay "The Uncertain Future of Ideology: Rereading Marx", the critic E. Doyle McCarthy shows that the characterisation of ideology as an unconscious structure is also found in Hegelian Marxist criticism (419). Gramsci defining hegemony characterizes it as the "spontaneous consent" given by the masses to for the continuation of the rule of an elite class ("Selections" 12). Salamini observes that Gramsci characterizes ideology as "common sense" (84), an association which Belsey notes is also drawn by Althusser (5).Furthermore, according to Bertens and Selden, it is unlike the commonly held notions of ideology outside Marxism which characterize it as consciously held beliefs.

An analysis of the works of Drucker, Gerring, Rivkin and Ryan, Rose, Warren and Zhao highlights how in other strands of Marxism, too, ideology has consistently been associated with concerns of domination seeking to maintain and perpetuate social and economic relations of power and the hegemony of a particular class, or to challenge and subvert dominant political and economic formations and existing status quo. Thus Marx and Engels ("German Ideology"),

Lukacs ("History") and Adorno and Horkheimer ("Dialectic") all attribute the ideological reification and alienation of the human consciousness to the desire to sustain the capitalist system. To this end ideology adopts a number of different strategies in order to sustain domination. According to Gerring and McCarthy one way in which ideology operates is through integration and unification whereby individuals are knitted to the social community through a set of common values and beliefs.

A comprehensive outline of some of the strategies commonly adopted by ideology to legitimate domination and inequality is given by Eagleton in his book *Ideology: An Introduction*. Some of the primary tactics outlined by him include "rationalization" whereby ideologies offer logical and consistent explanations of the existing status quo in order to make it appear acceptable and ethical (51) and "universalization" whereby interests which are limited to a particular class or group are represented as the common interest of all humanity (56). Deception, naturalization, repression and exclusion are some of the other strategies whereby ideologies, both dominant and oppositional, accomplish their goals.

For Structural Marxists the concept of free and autonomous human agents is an illusion carefully nurtured by ideology (Belsey 67). In reality ideology is all encompassing and in the words of Althusser it "*has no outside*" ("Lenin and Philosophy" 175). In the words of Eagleton all human action takes place within the sphere of ideology ("Ideology" 141). As a matter of fact ideology is viewed as a permanent and unending trans- historical category which will persist even in classless socialist societies in order to produce social subjects necessary for the functioning of society (Hawkes119; Sprinker 207-8; Higgins 149). Althusser in *For Marx* and "A Letter in Reply to Andre Daspre" while emphasizing the impossibility of evading ideology,

also postulates the existence and possibility of a theoretical scientific discourse characterizing it as having the potential to resist and reveal the machinations of ideology.

According to McCarthy and Hawkes, the concept of the all-pervasive, permanent and unchanging nature of ideology negates the Hegelian Marxist notion of the possibility of a liberated and autonomous proletarian or revolutionary consciousness found in Marx and Engels, Lukacs, Goldmann and some other Marxist critics. In contrast Structural Marxism puts forward a strictly anti-humanist and materialist concept of ideology. In this regard Structural Marxists bear affinity with Marxist cultural and media theorists who view human consciousness as being shaped by the social, historical and ideological matrix (Fiske; Hall "Culture, the Media"; Rivkin and Ryan).

Structural Marxism like other strains within Marxism believes that ideologies function to unify to classes, groups and even entire social formations characterized by disharmony, contradictions and conflicts. For this purpose ideologies attempt to produce coherent and logical narratives of the social formation and existence. A reading of Benton, Eagleton "Ideology" and Montag reveals that Structural Marxists view this coherence and unity as precarious and theorize ideological narratives as being marred by incoherences and fissures. In this regard Althusser and his disciples are influenced by Gramsci who in *Selections from Prison Notebooks* viewed ideology as a splintered and contradictory entity on account of a conflict between vastly differing world views it embodied and negotiated, drawn on the one hand from the ideas of the ruling class and on the other hand from the masses practical experience of reality. The incoherence and disorder of ideology is discussed at length by Macherey who notes that ideologies endeavor to resolve their conflicts and to "efface all trace of contradiction". However, this apparent coherence and seamlessness of ideology in his opinion "is a false totality". It is exposed and

breaks down when ideology is given a determinate form such as in the shape of a literary text ("Towards a Theory" 147). Eagleton attributes the heterogeneous and fissured nature of an ideology to its relational character whereby it coexists with one or several opposing ideologies in a given historical moment and is thus forced to "ceaselessly negotiate" "conflicting interests" ("Ideology" 222).

Belsey, Bertens and Zelnick discuss how according to Structural Marxists such as Althusser and Macherey ideologies never reveal their inconsistencies and discords explicitly. Instead ideological meta-narratives seek to exclude and repress all that is undesirable. As a result ideologies are characterized by silences, omissions and elisions which constitute an unconscious. Althusser sees all ideological practices as being structured by an unconscious "problematic" which is a theoretical structure which seeks to unify by determining what can be articulated and what must be excluded and not spoken of ("Marx" 32, 67; "Reading" 25). Macherey also highlights this characteristic of ideology ("Towards a Theory" 147).

Benton, Kavanagh and Sprinker highlight how Althusser and Macherey assert the relative autonomy of the ideological superstructure. Althusser in his essay "Contradiction and Overdetermination" gives a model of the social formation in which the superstructural levels and practices are relatively independent of and have a reciprocal determining effect on the economic base (99-101). The notion of relative autonomy of the ideological superstructure is also given by Macherey in his essay "The Problem of Reflection." Consequently Althusser "Lenin and Philosophy" and Macherey ("Problem") characterize the ideological superstructure is seen as the site of conflict and struggle between those in power and the oppressed, a point which is also noted by Montag in his analysis of these critics. McCarthy highlights how this is opposed to the Hegelian Marxian notion of ideologies as illusions and distortions emanating from and as the

passive “effects of a material economic determinant” which leaves no scope for intellectuals and masses to resist.

Under the influence of the theoretical formulations of Gramsci and Althusser, Marxism has developed in conjunction with theories of culture, media, semiotics and discourse (Belsey; Eagleton “Ideology”; McCarthy 1994; Rivkin and Ryan). Marxist cultural theorists drawing on Althusser’s concept of ideological state apparatuses and interpellation, view ideology as materializing in and being disseminated through cultural practices. Both cultural and media theorists view human subjectivity as a cultural and social construct, a notion based on Althusser’s concept of interpellation (Fiske; Higgins; Rivkin and Ryan).

In the age of Post-structuralism and postmodernism, fierce debate about the relevance and validity of the concept of ideology has ensued with some critics describing it as an obsolete and irrelevant term (Fukuyama “End of History”; Hirst and Hindess; Laclau & Mouffe) and others arguing in its favour (Eagleton “Ideology”; Hall “The Rediscovery of ‘ideology’”; Hawkes). Drawing on the epistemological skepticism and unremitting textuality of Post-structuralism, the concept of ideology is seen as being deprived of its theoretical foundations. According to Zhao, the poststructuralist and postmodern concept of reality being reduced to hyper-reality and all human experience being shaped by the endless play of signifiers has altered the very concepts of truth and falsehood which formed the cognitive underpinnings of the theory of ideology. However, Marxist critics refute these arguments and emphasize the continuing importance of ideology as a category for social and political analysis by pointing out the continuing ideological conflicts in the 21st century such as the one between terrorism, fundamentalism and Western civilization and also by emphasizing the primacy of geopolitical social and economic conditions over textuality (Eagleton “Ideology”, “Marxism”). In

interdisciplinary approaches such as Cultural Studies ideology occupies a central place in the analysis of the power configurations informing cultural institutions and practices (Hall "Signification"; McCarthy; Zhao).

2.2. LITERATURE AND IDEOLOGY

A review of Marxist critical works reveals that the conception of literature developed by Marxist aesthetics is greatly different from the apolitical and aesthetic concept developed by the earlier liberal humanist and formalist approaches. The notion of all consciousness and social subjectivities as being shaped by ideology leads Marxism to view literature as being ideologically conditioned (Althusser "Lenin and Philosophy; Eagleton "Marxism"; Macherey "Towards a Theory"; Marx and Engels "Literature and Art"; Metscher; Resch; Swingewood). In the words of Metscher, "the work of art [is] an objectification of social consciousness ... a formation of the intellectual appropriation of the world by the social subject" (25).

The Marxist conception of art and literature as an ideological formation is based on the notion of material and economic determinism given by Karl Marx in the "Preface" to *A Critique of Political Economy* in which he postulates that the legal, political and cultural superstructure rises and develops on an economic base or infrastructure and gives rise to corresponding forms of social consciousness which are ideological. Literature being part of the superstructure is thus seen as being shaped and conditioned by the social perception or ideological outlook of the age and as being embedded in the historical processes of class domination and struggle. This view is expressed and shared by critics such as Adorno ("Prisms", "Aesthetic"), Althusser ("Lenin and Philosophy"), Bertens; Eagleton ("Marxism", "Criticism"), Horkheimer and Adorno ("Dialectics"), Macherey ("Towards a Theory"); Marcuse, Selden, Swingewood and Trotsky.

Marxist poetics assign literature a dual role of dissemination and subversion of ideology (Bertens; Eagleton "Marxism"; Selden; Swingewood). This two-fold role of literature is highlighted by the Hegelian Marxist critics such as Marx and Engels ("Literature and Art"), Lukacs ("Historical Novel", "Essays") and Trotsky who make a distinction between reactionary or bourgeois art which is an expression of class and political ideologies and authentic or great art which exposes the dehumanizing effects of capitalism and strives to produce a revolutionary consciousness. Ryan observes how according to the Althusserian approach literature is one of the ideological tools which seek "to preserve social power through culture in the absence of direct coercion" (203). However, according to Althusser ("Lenin and Philosophy", "Marx") and Macherey ("Problem", "Towards a Theory"), literature is also seen as having the ability to critique ideology. Gramsci ("Selections") too views literature as one of the tools through which to challenge the dominant hegemony. Marxist Feminist criticism also considers literature as having the potential of both perpetuating and subverting patriarchal ideology (Ryan). Popular and mass art is viewed as a source of dissemination and reinforcement of ideological false consciousness and reification necessary for the continued existence of the capitalist system by the Frankfurt School critic Adorno ("Prisms"). Hawkes and Swingewood highlight how, on the other hand, for the Frankfurt School, an elitist literature carefully nurtured by a select group of intellectuals is seen as the way to overcome this reification.

A number of Marxist critics such as Eagleton "Marxism", Macherey and Balibar, Macherey ("Problem"), Williams, Newton ("Theory") and Selden discuss how the notion of reflectionism in Marxist critical tradition sees literature as being directly and mechanically determined by socio-economic reality and thus by ideology. The work is thus considered as a mere uncritical expression or reproduction of ideology, and the writer is viewed as being

completely conditioned by his socio-economic class affiliation. This notion of reflectionism was derived from Lenin who saw art as "a special form of reflection, of cognition of the world" (qtd. in Beardsley 356) and characterised Tolstoy's works as a mirror of the Russian revolution of 1905 (42). Beardsley and Zima highlight how the Hegelian Marxist critics Lukacs and Goldmann, and Socialist realists Zhadanov, Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov also characterised art as being related to social reality in terms of mimesis and reflection. Eagleton ("Criticism", "Marxism") and Newton ("Interpreting") further show how the notion of passive reflectionism was also adopted by and subscribed to by several British Marxist critics such as Christopher Caudwell and Ralph Fox. This school of Marxist criticism which views literature in terms of the notion of economic determinism and reflectionism was subsequently termed as Vulgar Marxism.

For Structural Marxists literary texts are embedded in and have an intimate relationship with ideology (Resch 269; Kavanagh 33; Metscher 25, 27; Althusser "Lenin and Philosophy" 222; Macherey "Problem" 16; Eagleton "Criticism" 20). Bertens, LaCapra, Lovell, Selden and Newton ("Theory") highlight how in contrast to the mechanical one to one correspondence between the economic base and superstructure postulated by the Vulgar Marxists, materialist aesthetics assert the relative autonomy of the cultural superstructure and hence of art. The ability of art to transcend ideology is attributed by Structural Marxists to the notion of relative autonomy of the superstructure given by Althusser in *Lenin, Philosophy and Other Essays*. Subsequent major theorists of the school of Structural Marxist ideological criticism Macherey ("Problem", "Towards a Theory") and Eagleton ("Criticism", "Against the Grain") support this notion of specificity and autonomy of art.

Sprinker, Belsey and Resch observe that Structural Marxism having discredited the notion of reflection or homology given by the Hegelian Marxists, considers literature as being linked to ideology in a relation of production, transformation and appropriation. This concept of the aesthetic process as an act of production is the central focus of Macherey's seminal work *Towards a Theory of Literary Production*. It is based on Althusser's concept of social practices as having a structure of production with their own "mode of production" complete with their specific raw materials, instruments of labour, labour processes and products or effects discussed in *For Marx* and explicated by Benton in his influential book *The Rise and Fall of Structural Marxism: Althusser and his Influence* (36). According to Kavanagh and Lovell, under the influence of Althusser, literary production is thus seen by Macherey as one of the sub-practices constituting the ideological sphere which takes as its raw materials ideological notions and pre-existing generic and formal conventions and through its labour of production transforms them into a specific product which is the literary text. Being an act of production, literature, according to Macherey ("Towards a Theory"), cannot be reduced to the ideological notions on which it is based. This concept was later on taken up by Eagleton in his *Criticism and Ideology*.

Macherey sees the literary text as the result of 'a real labour of production' which "interrupt[s]", "realis[es]" and "completely transform[s]" ideology or the language of illusion ("Towards a Theory" 72). Furthermore, for Macherey the author is not the artistic creator of the text. Rather he is to be seen as a worker who transforms certain ideological raw materials through the available means of literary production (62). Macherey also elaborates this process of literary production in his essay "The Problem of Reflection". Likewise Eagleton explains the relation between the literary text and ideology by using the analogy of "a dramatic production" ("Criticism" 64). According to Eagleton just as a dramatic staging transforms the textual script

into a unique product by utilizing theatrical implements such as the stage, actors, costumes, lighting and acoustics; likewise, literature too transforms ideology through its specific tools (65, 68-9).

According to Bennet, Kavanagh, Metscher and Resch, Structural Marxists such as Althusser and Macherey view literature's specific mode of production whereby it gives a determinate shape and structure to ideological raw materials as its signifying activity or its aesthetic processes of formal composition. Macherey ("Towards a Theory") discusses how the fictional discourse of literature through its images and rhetorical strategies embodies ideology. Thus, for Macherey, the formal realization of an ideological project takes place in the form of a narrative "fable" (209) or "figuration" (195) created by the writer by drawing on all the elements of a literary genre including characters, symbols and images, motifs, setting, plot structure, etc. Macherey further observes that the literary discourse parodies and caricatures ordinary language or ideology (68-9). Likewise Eagleton highlighting the aesthetic dimension of literary production observes, "the text constitutes itself as a structure: it destructures ideology in order to reconstitute it on its own relatively autonomous terms, in order to process and recast it in aesthetic production" ("Criticism" 98-9).

It has been noted by Belsey (137), Bennet (129), Eagleton ("Criticism" 101), Ferreter (105), Montag (41) and Resch (270-1) that Structural Marxists influenced by Formalist notions view literary discourse as generating distancing or estrangement effects on account of its figurative and rhetorical apparatus which results in the defamiliarization of ordinary human experience immersed in ideology. In this way literature has the potential to lead to a heightened awareness and critical consciousness of ideological machinations and operations.

For Althusser, in this way literature provides experiential access to ideology and the raw materials for a scientific discourse which can explicate and deconstruct ideological structures ("Lenin and Philosophy" 223). He describes this as the characteristic "aesthetic effect" of literary practice, whereby a text forms at or creates within itself an "internal distance" from ideology which enables the readers to "'see', 'perceive' and 'feel'" "the ideology from which it is born" (222-3, 225). In his analysis of the plays of Bertolazzi and Brecht, Althusser highlights how the decentred formal structure of the plays disrupted and transformed the spectator's ideological consciousness and revealed the illusions and contradictions characteristic of humanist melodrama through an estrangement effect ("The 'Piccolo Teatro': Bertolazzi and Brecht." 174). Likewise in this regard Macherey observes that in the process of embodying ideology in a particular aesthetic form, the literary text has the effect of internally displacing ideology ("Towards a Theory" 149). Furthermore, Macherey notes that aesthetic activity "interrupts", displaces and deforms ordinary ideological discourse instead of imitating or reproducing it. In the process, it produces a fictional discourse which achieves both a reality or identification effect and an effect of unreality. This transforms the readers' relationship to ideology and enables them to achieve a "release" from it (73-4).

The concern with the relation between ideology and literary form is carried forward by Structural Marxists Althusser and Macherey from Hegelian School of thought which emphasized the dialectical unity of form and content. As a result literary form is viewed as inseparable from and a bearer of ideology. Thus Marxist critics have investigated how literary genres have arisen out of and developed in close conjunction with certain ideological perceptions of the world (Lukacs "Studies", "Theory", "Essays"; Eagleton "Marxism"; Swingewood; Selden; Barry; Anchor). Marxist emphasis on the relationship between ideology and literary form is apparent in

the historical debate between Lukacs and Brecht on the merits and demerits of realist and modernist aesthetics in the subversion of bourgeois ideology. Zima and Bhatti highlight how following the tradition of Marx and Engels, Lukacs attributed to the realist novel of the nineteenth century the ability to transcend bourgeois humanist ideology and to capture the world view or spirit of the age through its totalizing character found in well rounded plots, use of typical characters, etc. Eagleton ("Marxism"), Selden and Swingewood, show how Brecht, on the other hand, viewed realism as complicit with bourgeois ideology and advocated instead the use of the experimental shock techniques of modernism to undermine humanist ideology. They further note how these points of disagreement led to the development of 'Epic theatre' which aimed at subverting ideological consciousness through radical experimentation with the formal structure of drama. The defamiliarization techniques developed by Brecht drawing on concepts of Russian formalism later provided the theoretical foundation for the aesthetic doctrines of Althusser and Macherey.

Macherey in "The Problem of Reflection" and *Towards a Theory of Literary Production* observes that Structural Marxism lays the foundation for a Marxist aesthetics which combines the formalist concern with the intrinsic aesthetic qualities of literature with the Marxist focus on the sociology of literature. In this regard Resch highlights that while for Structural Marxists such as Althusser, Macherey and Eagleton, literature is relatively autonomous of ideology it cannot be conceived as an aesthetic artifact complete within itself and independent of ideology and history as advocated by Formalists. As a matter of fact, Montag, Sprinker and Zelnick in their analyses of Macherey stress that literary texts are to be considered as determinate historical productions which need to be studied in relation to the historical and social formations out of which they

emerged. This point is also foregrounded in the discussion of Bennet (127), Kavanagh (34, 36), Pecora (501) and Lovell (116).

Macherey in *A Theory of Literary Production* outlines the aims of his critical project as an attempt to combine "[a]esthetic and political theory" in order to develop a mode of literary analysis in the lines of Lenin (119). The critical practice he proposes is a historicizing process which seeks to explain a text by studying it in relation to the historical period and social formation of its production. In his analysis of *The Mysterious Island* some of the historical determinants of Verne's novel highlighted by Macherey include the distinctive characteristics of the historical period, the author's social position and perspective, the literary genre, the publishing situation, the ideology of the literary profession and the intended audience among others ("Towards a Theory" 194). Similarly Eagleton in *Criticism and Ideology* too formulates a criticism which seeks to account for "certain determinate conditions" which make the appearance of a literary text possible (17, 21). Historical determinants of aesthetic production identified by Eagleton include general ideology, authorial ideology, aesthetic ideology, general mode of production and literary mode of production of a social formation (44).

This notion of multiple determinations of literary production is based on Althusser's concept of overdetermination whereby the various levels of the social formation and different social practices constituting the superstructure on account of relative autonomy are seen as having a causal and determining role in addition to the economic level ("Marx" 106, 111-2). The concept of literary production as being overdetermined in structure is also discussed by Zelnick.

The school of Structural Marxist criticism pioneered and developed by Althusser and Macherey reject the Hegelian Marxist conception of a literary text as a unified totality found in

the works of Marx, Engels, Lukacs, Goldmann, etc. Literary texts are instead seen as complex, uneven, disparate, contradictory and fractured entities on account of their relationship with ideology and the complex conjuncture of historical determinants informing their production (Ferreter; LaCapra; Lovell; Macherey "Problem"; Montag; Sprinker). Macherey in *Towards a Theory of Literary Production* considers the literary text to be "decentred" and "profoundly dissymmetrical" (138) and relates the "complexity" and "disorder" of the work to "the complexity of the historical process" and "disorder of ideology" (137, 174). Macherey, in keeping with Althusser's notions, postulates that the text in spite of having relatively autonomy is ultimately determined by ideology. He further outlines how the text attempts to efface the contradictions of ideology by building a coherent narrative. However, the text's production is also seen as being constrained by pre-existing generic and formal elements which are autonomous of and sometimes even in contradiction with ideology. Belsey, Kavanagh, Newton ("Interpreting") and Selden highlight how for Macherey the contradiction between the ideological project and the formal implements such as the symbols, myths, characters, etc used to realise it put the text into contradiction with the result that it becomes disparate and multifarious.

According to Althusser ("Cremonini") and Macherey ("Problem", "*Towards a Theory*"), literary texts on account of their ideological configurations contain certain silences, absences and gaps which are generated on account of the exclusion of elements which ideology is unable to explain. According to Bertens, Eagleton ("Criticism", Marxism") and Resch, a dominant ideology is seen by these Structural Marxist critics as having a structure of repression which seeks to silence and make invisible all things that contradict and threaten to undermine the coherence of its imaginary narrative of the conditions and relations of production in a society.

Silences and gaps form one of the main themes in Macherey's *A Theory of Literary Production* where he discusses the dissonance of the text in close conjunction with the "incompleteness" of the work (143). According to Macherey, "the work exists above all by its determinate absences, by what it does not say, in its relation to what it is not" (172). According to Goldstein, Ross and Sprinker this very incompleteness of the work, its absences and gaps, connect the work to ideology and establish its real meaning. Furthermore, for Althusser ("Lenin and Philosophy") and Macherey ("Towards a Theory"), these fissures and gaps are to be found in the formal elements of the literary and artistic work.

Althusser ("Lenin and Philosophy") and Macherey ("Towards a Theory") contend that the text itself is not aware of its silences, gaps, contradictions and conflicts. They enter the text at its subconscious level and constitute in the text an unconscious. Eagleton ("Criticism", "Against the Grain") and Montag highlight how in this regard Macherey and his proponents draw on the psychoanalytic concepts of Freud and ideology in the text is to be interpreted in a manner similar to that of interpreting dreams, i.e., by means of slips, distortions, contradictions and absences.

The method of textual analysis developed by Structural Marxist ideological criticism is termed as symptomatic reading (Davis; Ferreter; Newton "Interpreting"). The notion of symptomatic reading and textual unconscious was first given by Althusser and Balibar in their analysis of the philosophical discourse of Karl Marx in *Reading Capital*. It was taken up and fully developed as a model for the analysis of ideology in the literary text by Macherey in *Towards a Theory of Literary Production*. This model of reading presupposes the concomitant presence of two discourses in a literary text, with the explicit narrative being accompanied by a latent discourse constituted on account of absences, gaps, silences and lapses in the manifest narrative. These silences and gaps are viewed as leading to an unconscious in the text which

links it to those historical conditions of production of which the text has no awareness. Montag, Newton ("Interpreting", "Theory"), Pecora, S. B. Smith, Sprinker and Zelnick in their studies of Althusser and Macherey highlight how the unconscious is seen as the gateway to the literary work's relation with ideology and history. Furthermore, the fissures and gaps and absences in the text highlight ideology's distortion of history and thereby reveal the social and political conditioning of reality. Thus in contrast to Hegelian Marxists who view the text as containing within it the historical truth, for Structural Marxists, literature can only indirectly lead to history through knowledge of the omissions, gaps and contradictions in ideology (Bertens; Resch; S. Smith).

Macherey in "Jules Verne: The Faulty Narrative" analyses the novels of Verne as a means of illustrating his thesis on the link between literary form, textual unconscious and ideology ("Towards a Theory" 177-277). In his analysis Macherey highlights how a contradiction and gap between Verne's conscious ideological project and the fable he shapes to embody it highlighted through textual imagery forms an implicit critique of the author's ideology within the text. The model of symptomatic reading for the analysis of ideological configurations in a literary text forms the basis for Eagleton's analysis of a vast range of literary works including the novels of George Eliot, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy and Joseph Conrad ("Criticism", "Against the Grain"). Belsey's analysis of the stories of Sherlock Holmes and the presence of silent female characters on their margins highlights the relation between the realist narrative and ideological sexual politics of positivism. Vambe in his analysis of the novels of Charles Mungoshi examines the ideology of the use of the narrative strategy of stream of consciousness. Ross analyses the narrative features of Australian writer Marsden's novels such

as literary tropes, characterization and generic conventions to illustrate the ideological marginalization of the aborigines.

Structural Marxist ideological criticism through its model of symptomatic textual analysis seeks to reform and reshape traditional criticism which it sees as ideological. According to Belsey, Eagleton ("Criticism"), Kavanagh, Montag and S.B. Smith, based on empirical and realist conceptual presumptions, traditional criticism is seen as tied to bourgeois ideology. Althusser sees criticism based on empirical notions as giving rise to "an aesthetics of consumption" concerned merely with the appreciation and description of a pre-existing literary artifact ("Lenin and Philosophy" 226). Macherey too sees criticism marred by the empirical fallacy as becoming a passive activity cultivating aesthetic taste and judgment ("Towards a Theory" 6-7), a view shared by Eagleton ("Criticism"). According to Montag and Belsey this traditional critical practice merely reproduces, summarizes and imitates a work and is therefore trapped in ideology.

Another fallacy associated with earlier criticism by Althusser and Balibar ("Reading") and Macherey ("Problem", "Towards a Theory") is that of the hermeneutic or interpretative approach which emphasizes the principle of textual unity and coherence and seeks to uncover a single unifying interpretation. In this way, according to Belsey, Montag and Lovell, traditional criticism is seen as occluding ideological gaps and silences engendered in the text and visible in its disparity.

Pioneered by Althusser ("Lenin and Philosophy"), Structural Marxists seek to instead lay the foundations of a materialist aesthetics which enables criticism to free itself from the illusions of humanist ideology and instead gives rise to a critical method which can produce a scientific

knowledge and demystification of the ideology in which the literary text is trapped. For this purpose criticism must produce disrupt the text bringing to the fore its conflicting significations. A project of complete restructuring and reformulation of criticism in order to shape it into an objective scientific enterprise is the principle objective of Macherey's *A Theory of Literary Production* and Eagleton's *Criticism and Ideology*.

2.3. IDEOLOGICAL DEBATES AND CLASHES IN THE CONTEXT OF 9/11

The contemporary age has witnessed a paradoxical dichotomy between end of ideology debates in the abstract theoretical realm of academics and an implosion of ideologically motivated conflicts in the form of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the war on terror. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the cold war and the waning influence of its ideology of socialism, right wing neoconservative political intellectuals in the U.S. headed by Fukuyama proclaimed the demise of ideological conflicts. Fukuyama in his groundbreaking article, "The End of history?" claimed that as a consequence of "an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism", "the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution" had been reached (1). Thus Fukuyama proclaimed the advent of a Utopian age marked by "the universalization of Western liberal democracy" and the end of the era of ideologically motivation political clashes. Samuel Huntingdon another influential US political scholar, while opposing Fukuyama's contention of the end of geopolitical conflicts, nevertheless subscribed to his concept of end of ideology. In his seminal work, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Huntingdon too claimed that contemporary conflicts would not be ideological clashes, but rather civilizational conflicts motivated by religious and cultural elements.

Contrary to this rightwing academic rhetoric of demise of ideology, the U.S. policies and contemporary global politics reflects the rise of ideological conflicts with Paul Berman

highlighting how American foreign policy is shaped by neoconservative right wing academicians such as Fukuyama who disguise American imperialist expansionist policies through an ideological rhetoric of spreading democracy and freedom and protection of human rights. Jin Canrong also reveals the centrality of ideology in American foreign policy in the post cold war era and observes, "Actually, the United States has been more idealistic than any other power in history. In the post-cold war era, it would be a real part of the US policy to improve global democratization" (4). Zia-ud-din Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies in *American Dream, Global Nightmare* reveal how America's very self-image is in reality an ideological construct built on the notion of American exceptionalism, a notion supported by referring to America's liberal democratic character.

The right wing academic discourse against ideology is countered by left wing intellectuals such as Terry Eagleton. In his "Introduction to the 2007 edition" of *Ideology*, Eagleton traces the roots of the events of 9/11, the rise of fundamentalism and religiously motivated terrorism and the war on terror to conflicting ideologies of Islamism, neoconservatism and neoliberalism. Eagleton highlights how in reality the post cold war age and particularly the post 9/11 era is an age of renewed political and ideological conflicts with the primary clash being between Islamic fundamentalism and the West. This notion is also supported by Benjamin R. Barber in his article "Jihad vs McWorld" and his subsequent book *Jihad vs McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism are Reshaping the World* in which he shows how Islamism is an opposing ideology to American liberal democracy and its ideological narratives of globalism and economic liberalism.

The leftwing Pakistani born Marxist critic Tariq Ali in *The Clash of Fundamentalisms* explains how America justifies and legitimates its invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq and the war

on terror through an ideological rhetoric of democracy which he dubs as "neo-liberal fundamentalism at home" having a "militarist logic abroad" (314). Ali further highlights how in this neoliberal ideological discourse Muslims are stereotyped as medievalists and barbarians with "a blind hatred for Americans and all secular aspects of US life, politics and culture" (282).

The predominance of ideology in all spheres of life in the post cold war age is also highlighted by critics of globalization who characterize this phenomenon as an ideological construct shaped and formed by the US in order to extend its economic and cultural hegemony across the globe. Thus Steger and Freeman and Kargalitsky highlight how American capitalist neoliberalism has morphed into globalism, an ideology which in the guise of democracy, liberty, free markets, private enterprise, prosperity and global homogenization, is actually furthering American imperialist interests.

Neoliberal imperialist agenda and globalism are seen by critics such as Ray and Steger as being the root cause of contemporary political and military conflicts such as terrorism and America's war on terror. Ray sees the war on terror as a global imperialist enterprise thinly veiled as a war of retribution and observes, "… the putative war against terrorism… [is] in actuality a war to determine the end game of globalization" (576). Ray goes on to characterize the terrorist attacks of 9/11as a direct consequence of American imperialism and its global incursions. This view is also echoed by Steger who writes, "Globalism consists of powerful narratives that sell an overarching neoliberal world view, thereby creating collective meanings and shaping people's identities…the Al Qaeda attacks of 11 September 2001 have shown, the expansion of this globalist ideology has encountered considerable resistance" (112). Thus 9/11 is believed to have crystallized simmering ideological tensions in the post cold war and post modern age.

Ideologists are also dominant in the Islamic world and the East where Islamism is identified as the ideological fount of fundamentalism (Townshend 107). Bernard Lewis and Martin Amis, two leading Western intellectuals and literary theorists, trace the roots of the attacks of 9/11 to Islamism's hatred of Western capitalist society which is seen as godless, materialistic and corrupt. Fundamentalist Islam's antagonism towards the West and particularly America which is seen as "the Great Satan" form the focus of Lewis's article "The Revolt of Islam" (6). Amis in several articles after 9/11 including "The Age of Horrorism" and "9/11 and the Cult of Death" deplores the rise of Islamism which bolstered and shaped by radical extremist Muslim scholars advocates violence against the West. Thus Islamism's vitriolic rhetoric against the West and America in particular as being responsible for the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and as leading to the attack on the twin towers. Both these writers subscribe to Samuel Huntingdon's concept of clash of civilizations characterizing 9/11 as an assault by a backward intolerant militant civilization against the more superior, evolved and humane civilization of the West.

In an age characterized by renewed intensity of ideological conflict, materialist aesthetics critical synthesis of sociological and aesthetic aspects of literature offers an important critical mode to analyse the ideology informing the production of literary texts.

CHAPTER 3

Analysis of *Terrorist*

This chapter will present an analysis of *Terrorist* using Macherey's model of symptomatic textual interpretation with the aim of uncovering fissures, gaps, omissions and silences within Updike's literary narrative. Elements of literary form including characterization, dialogues, literary tropes, figurative devices, descriptions, etc., will be analysed to highlight textual discordances which in turn will be explicated and interpreted to show how they constitute an unconscious, embedded or latent discourse in the novel which undermines and critiques the author's conscious ideological project.

After 9/11 several literary writers addressed ideological motivations and implications of the event with particular reference to the phenomenon of Islamic terrorism (Foer; Messud; McEwan; DeLillo "Falling Man" etc). John Updike's *Terrorist* is part of a body of fictional works originating from the West which by building a narrative revolving around 9/11and its aftermath seek to portray the threat posed to American liberal democratic capitalist civilization by terrorists shaped by fundamentalist Islamist ideology.

An analysis of *Terrorist* reveals that Updike's conscious project seems to be informed by the ideology of neoliberalism which in the words of Fulcher is enshrined in the American capitalist values of individualism, democracy and liberty. In particular, Updike in this post- 9/11 text seems to be endorsing the neoliberal notion of an imminent clash of civilizations between the West and Islam in the post-cold war and post-modern era put forward by American social and political theorists such as Samuel Huntingdon and Bernard Lewis. In order to accomplish

this ideological aim the author has built a narrative which supports the view of insurmountable divergence and discordance between the liberal democratic ethos of American capitalist system and the fundamentalist and obscurantist iconoclastic worldview of Islamism. In keeping with his national, racial, religious and civilizational affinity, John Updike champions the cause of America and the West which he portrays as the superior and more humane civilization braving the onslaught of a bitter enemy in the shape of fundamentalist Islam which is out to destroy it.

Terrorist celebrates the American social and political system, which informed by the ideology of democratic liberalism, is shown as perpetuating the values and principles of individual liberty, openness, moderation, tolerance, multiculturalism, modernity, respect for human rights and universal suffrage. The novel is thus structured around the mythical and ideological narrative of "American exceptionalism" which according to Henry Schwarz asserts the moral preeminence of the world's lone superpower by narrating "the dominant story told about exceptional American values" (8, 10).

A reading of the text highlights that Updike depicts freedom for the individual as the foundation of American consumer capitalist democratic society. This is reflected in the comments of the Secretary of Homeland Security who is shown to be a fierce patriot and believer in the American system and declares, "…democracy and consumerism are … an outgrowth of each individual's instinctive optimism and desire for freedom" (47). As a matter of fact, according to the author, ironically it is this principle of freedom which enabled the enemies of America, the terrorists, to attack the American homeland. Updike's character Jack Levy echoes this general public perception in the wake of 9/11 when he remarks, "Even our vaunted freedom is nothing much to be proud of, with the Commies out of the running; it just makes it easier for terrorists to move about, renting airplanes and vans and setting up websites" (27).

In the novel the author highlights how the liberty engendered within the ethos of the American liberal democratic society is acknowledged even by fundamentalist Islamists. This is reflected in Ahmad's remarks to his high-school counselor in which he says, "You believe this, I believe that, we all get along- that's the American way" (39). As a matter of fact, the narrator reveals that it is the American belief in the importance of individual choice which sets Ahmad, the principle Muslim character in the text, on the trajectory of discovering and nurturing his Islamic roots. Thus Ahmad's quest is shown as being made possible by the encouragement and support of his Irish-American mother Teresa Mulloy who believes that, "Your life isn't something to be *controlled*. We don't control our breathing, our digestion, our heart beat. Life is something to be lived. Let it happen" (91).

The notion of American exceptionalism is also reaffirmed through the narrative's foregrounding of the tolerance nature of the American system. Updike's narrator thus highlights how the American constitution based on the ideology of liberalism lays the foundation for tolerance of diversity and multiplicity of viewpoints. This is reflected in Charlie's conversation with Ahmad when he observes, "Contending energies- that's what the constitution allows for. That's what we get" (182). The text further shows how open mindedness in American society extends to the domain of religion whereby all citizens are given the right to hold and practice whatever faith they choose. Thus Ahmad's mother tells the guidance counselor, "My son … believes in the Islamic God, and in what the Koran tells him. I can't, of course, but I've never tried to undermine his faith" (85).

Updike celebrates and portrays at great length American multiculturalism and ethnic diversity made possible by the principles of broadmindedness and liberalism engendered in American civil society and its cultural fabric. The American multicultural society is depicted as

not only allowing immigrants to enter the country, but also as providing them with opportunities to prosper. Charlie says about his father, "My father is an old-fashioned immigrant, loyal to the system that took him in and let him prosper" (199).While discussing Ahmad's future with Teresa Mulloy, Jack Levy observes, "[A]ny college these days… wants diversity, and your boy, what with his self-elected religious affiliation, and … his ethnic mix… they'll snap him up" (84). American multiculturalism is also highlighted during Ahmad's graduation ceremony in which, "the benediction is offered by a Catholic priest… an imam. A rabbi and a Presbyterian had delivered the invocations…" (111).

Updike shows how the American multicultural society is predominantly free of discrimination on ethnic and religious grounds. Charlie's father acknowledges this fact thus, "America… I came here as a young man … and nowhere was there the hatred and shooting of my own country… Christian, Jew, Arab, indifferent, black, white, in between- everybody get along … This is honest and friendly country" (146-7).

In this way Updike asserts the moral primacy of America and perpetuates the neoliberal ideological narrative of American exceptionalism which in the words of Chow promotes "an invisible but adamant moralistic perspective in which the United States is seen as superior" (qtd. in Spivak xvi). This is reflected in the Secretary of Homeland degrading remarks on Fundamentalist Islam,

> What do these people have to offer instead? More Taliban- more oppression of women, more blowing up statues of Buddha. The Mullahs in northern Nigeria are telling people not to let their children be given polio vaccine, and then the kids are brought in paralyzed to the health-aid clinic (258).

Updike's reaffirmation of neoliberalism is accompanied by a hostile depiction of Islamism, the ideology of fundamentalist Islam, as dogmatic, intolerant, bigoted, obscurantist, misogynist and violent.

The narrative of *Terrorist* portrays Muslims as "enemies of freedom" (47). Conditioned by Islamist ideology, Muslim terrorists are seen as seeking to replace the Western democratic system which ensures civil liberties, tolerance and respect for human rights with "an ascetic and dogmatic tyranny" (47).

Updike highlights time and again how Islamists denigrate the American ideal of absolute freedom as an empty and meaningless pursuit symptomatic of moral slackness of the Americans. This is seen in the way in which Ahmad sums up his mother's character:

> His mother is, he sees now, looking back, a typical American, lacking strong convictions … She is a victim of the American religion of freedom, freedom above all, though freedom to do what and to what purpose is left up in the air. *Bombs bursting in air*- empty air is the perfect symbol of American freedom (167).

Updike further outlines before his readers how rather than being considered as paragons of freedom, American consumer capitalist system is viewed by fundamentalist Muslims as propagating a culture of idolatory and enslavement to material commodities thereby giving rise to a "Godless", soulless, corrupt and immoral society (38). Thus in the opening monologue of the novel, the narrator highlights how the would-be terrorist Ahmad attributes the moral failings of his teachers to the values of consumerism and observes,

> …they are men and women like any others, full of lust and fear and infatuation with things that can be bought… they think safety lies in accumulation of the things of this world, and in the corrupting diversions of the television set. They are slaves to images, false ones … (4).

Time and again in the narrative, Updike highlights how the iconoclastic world-view propagated by Islamism cannot accommodate the materialistic ethos of the Western consumer capitalism and condemns it in unequivocal terms. Thus the Muslim characters in the novel are shown to characterize non-Muslims in general and Americans in particular as "infidels" and "devils" that face eternal damnation and torment in Hell on account of their sins (3, 6). Hostility towards the American civilization is reflected in the conversations between Shaikh Rashid and his pupil, Ahmad reported by the narrator. In one exchange with his pupil the Imam prophesizes, "…the infidels and Zionists, whose torments in the furnaces of Jahannan are well described in the seventh, eleventh, and fiftieth suras of the Book of the Books" (6). Ahmad, who has imbibed the teachings of his spiritual mentor, too is reported as predicting doom and destruction for the American infidels on several occasions particularly in his discussion with Joryleen (73). In this way Updike highlights the antagonist attitude of Islamists towards America.

Updike further foregrounds the emotional hostility harboured by Islamists against America by showing how fundamentalist Muslims regard the Americans as sexual perverts. In a conversation with Jack Levy Ahmad echoes Islamist perception of Western immorality as follows, "… it is obsessed with sex and luxury goods. Look at television, Mr. Levy, how it's always using sex to sell you things you don't need" (38). This view of American immorality is shown as being shared by the Imam, who comments to Ahmad, "Did you discover that the world, in its American portion, emits a stench of waste and greed, of sensuality and futility, of

the despair and lassitude that come with ignorance of the inspired wisdom of the Prophet?" (233).

The narrative of *Terrorist* presents before the readers how instead of freedom Islamism requires a complete submission to God. In this way the narrative reinforces the perception of civilizational disparity. This can be seen in Ahmad's musings in which he contrasts the American liberal democratic system unfavourably with Islam in the following words, "no encompassing structure of divine law that brings men rich and poor to bow down shoulder to shoulder, no code of self-sacrifice, no exalted submission such as lies at the heart of Islam, its very name" (168). In this way the image of Islamism as an oppressive system is reinforced by Updike.

Updike's narrative also highlights at several places the intolerant and bigoted outlook of Islamism contrasting it with the broadminded nature of the American democratic system. This disparity can be seen in the exchange between Ahmad and Jack Levy

> Did the imam ever suggest… that a bright boy like you, in a diverse and tolerant society like this one, needs to confront a variety of viewpoints?
>
> "No," Ahmad says with surprising abruptness … Shaikh Rashid did not suggest that, sir. He feels such a relativistic approach trivializes religion" (39).

Islamic rigidity and inflexibility is also highlighted in the following lines: "'The will of Allah,' Mr. Levy says, trying to be funny or friendly; trying to insert himself where Ahmad's insides are clenched shut, filled with the All-Encompassing" (95).

The narrative further reinforces the perception of Islamist bigotry through recurrent references to the misogynistic nature of Islamic teachings. Thus Ahmad and the Shaikh refer to women as pollution and as unclean on several occasions (10, 108). On one occasion the Shaikh advises Ahmad, "Do without these women of non-Heavenly flesh, this earthly baggage, these unclean hostages to fortune" (108). Teresa Mulloy recounts her meeting with the Shaikh and remarks, "To him I was a piece of meat- *unclean* meat" (166).

The chauvinism and intolerance of Islamism is also strengthened by the author through textual references to its message of hatred for people of all other faiths. Updike's narrator thus reports Ahmad describing jihad as "war out of hatred of those who mock and ignore God" (270). Extreme hatred and bias against non-Muslims is further reflected in the physical revulsion experienced by Ahmad in the company of Christians and Jews. Ahmad's condition while attending the church service is described by the narrator thus, "Ahmad finds his eyes heated and his stomach in such a stir that he fears he might vomit, here among these yelping devils…" (66). Updike depicts this fanaticism as the driving force behind the clash of Islamism and Western civilization causing Muslims to rejoice over the destruction of America. Thus Charlie predicts that Ahmad's suicide attack will be greeted by great jubilation in the Muslim world. He tells Ahmad, "They'll be dancing in the streets of Damascus and Karachi, because of you Madman" (249).

Updike's narrative underlines the negative image of Islamism by documenting its militant teachings through which urge its followers to wage jihad in order to obliterate and destroy West on account of its immorality and faithlessness. Islamist ideology is thus shown as brainwashing people to take up violence. This is seen in Ahmad's summing up of Islamist justification and exhortation of killing of non Muslims particularly Americans by quoting "the Egyptian …

political philosopher Sayyid Qutub" as follows, "He concluded that no people is more distant than the American people from God and piety … makes them legitimate targets for assassination" (302). In a conversation with Joryleen, Ahmad again echoes the violent nature of Islam when he says, "My teacher at the mosque says that all unbelievers are our enemies." He further adds, "The Prophet said that eventually all unbelievers must be destroyed" (68). Updike thus shows Islamist ideology is nurturing terrorist attacks against America.

Updike presents the threat of Islamic fundamentalism by constructing a narrative revolving around a teenage American born and bred potential terrorist Ahmad Ashwamy Mulloy. Using the generic framework of the psychological novel, the author aims to present an incisive and penetrative insight into the psyche of a terrorist blinded by Islamism's message of hatred and violence and thereby participating in acts of terrorism which seek to destroy and at the very least to harm America and its interests. In this way the author attempts to authenticate his ideological claim of a clash of civilizations in the post-cold war era in which the threat of communism to liberalism has been replaced by a resurgent Islam.

In addition by employing the tropes of thriller fiction and by constructing a plot based on the threat of massive destruction to innocent people due to the devious machinations of a villain, Updike seeks to dramatize the danger posed to American democratic society and liberal values by Islamist ideology which fosters terrorism and bloodshed. In keeping with the generic elements of the thriller, evil is shown as being confronted by good, uprightness and honorableness embodied in a hero who seeks to thwart the villain and thereby save people from destruction. In this case the heroic figure is Jack Levy, the disillusioned and world weary but humanitarian Jewish High school guidance counselor who rescues Ahmad from the clutches of a destructive

fundamentalist ideology and prevents a terrorist attack which would have wreaked havoc on a large scale.

The narrative of *Terrorist* contains a number of Muslim characters with fundamentalist leanings. Foremost amongst them is the protagonist of the novel, Ahmad, who is an idealistic teenager with a puritanical religious approach to life. In addition Updike has sketched the character of an "Imam" or Islamic religious teacher with rigid extremist views in the form of Shaikh Rashid. The other Muslim characters include Charlie Chehab, apparently an advocate of Jihad who later turns out to be an undercover CIA agent, his father and an uncle, and a group of shadowy men coordinating and preparing for an attack on American soil. Apart from the character of Mr. Chehab, who expresses love, gratitude and admiration for the democratic, liberal and multicultural ideals of the American system, and Charlie's loyalty to his adopted homeland which is revealed towards the very end of the novel, all the Muslim characters are shown as being openly hostile towards America. As a matter of fact, they are all shown to be involved directly or indirectly in the terrorist bombing plot designed to humiliate America and to destroy what they perceive as its atheistic Capitalist civilization.

An analysis of the Muslim characters portrayed in the novel reveals that Updike has presented stereotypical, clichéd and inauthentic figures whose personal histories, emotional ties, human interests, formative influences and psychological motivations have been left out in an imbalanced narrative which focuses merely on their obsession to destroy America. They are thus presented as having a single-tracked mechanical mind which seeks the obliteration of the infidel enemy. Updike's portrayal of Muslim characters is devoid of emotional intricacies, conflicting passions, sympathy and any and all humanity. The narrative is silent on their personal lives, the

emotional upheavals they might have experienced and any legitimate or rational and logical grievance that might motivate their hostility and enmity towards America.

This stereotyping can be observed in the case of Ahmad, the central Muslim character of the novel who is brainwashed and trained to carry out a terrorist attack in New Jersey on the eve of the anniversary of 9/11. Purportedly a psychological novel, *Terrorist* fails to give a credible insight into the workings of the mind of the home-grown terrorist in the novel, Ahmad. The character of Ahmad emerges as weak and inauthentic on account of several factors. First and foremost, Ahmad's parentage and brought up as discussed by Updike in the novel makes it difficult to understand what motivated and attracted him to Islam in the first place. It is hard to accept that a child of mixed racial and cultural origin, brought up in a secular country like America by a non-practicing Catholic Irish American mother, with an absent Muslim father, became obsessed with Islam. Given his background and upbringing, Ahmad's initial attachment to Islam seems irrational and is not explained or justified by the author. Updike seems to be attributing Ahmad's attraction towards Islam to an obsession with his father and a desire to be like him. As the narrator records, "He thought he might find in this religion a trace of the handsome father who had receded at the moment his memories were beginning" (99). However, this filial affiliation and desire to resemble a father who had abandoned him and his mother to a life of penury and misery is highly illogical and baffling and makes Ahmad an unbelievable character with implausible motivation.

Ahmad's transition into a terrorist is strongly foreshadowed by Updike in order to fulfill the conventions of thriller fiction. While reading the catalogue of truck driving regulations the narrator records Ahmad's reactions as follows, "Transportation is full of dangers that Ahmad has never before contemplated" (75). Joryleen in her final meeting with Ahmad portends the crisis

when she warns Ahmad, "… that Charlie friend of yours has some sort of game going … It's almost like they're fattening you up … You heard my advice. Get away from that truck …" (226-7).

Ahmad's evolution and development into a terrorist is not presented logically by the author. In his depiction of Ahmad's character, Updike omits the character's reasons for turning to terrorism thereby depriving him of an authentic critical consciousness and reducing him to a stereotype. Influenced by a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, Ahmad is shown to be critical of America's perceived lack of religiosity and wayward consumerist ways. Yet this repulsion of the cultural and ethical norms of the society around him does not explain why Ahmad, who is a sensitive individual averse to hurting a single insignificant bug, is willing to go out and slaughter thousands of innocent people in cold blood. Thus Jack Levy while trying to deter Ahmad from detonating the bomb says, "I'm betting you won't set it off. You're too good a kid. Your mother used to tell me how you couldn't bear to step on a bug. You'd try to get it on a piece of paper and throw it out of the window" (296). A contradiction is thus engendered at the very heart of Updike's portrayal of the terrorist.

One explanation offered by Updike in the narrative seems to be Ahmad's mother's evaluation and analysis of his character whereby he is presented as someone who is naïve and incredulous and who is easily swayed and influenced. Thus Teresa says to Ahmad, "Even as a baby, you were so trusting and easy. Everything I suggested, you thought was a good idea. It worried me, even, you seemed so easily led. I was afraid you'd be influenced by the wrong people as you grew older" (239).

The author conveniently presents to incredulous and unconvinced readers the suggestion that Ahmad was merely brainwashed by the Imam, his religious teacher, to explain a life changing decision to become a terrorist. This suggestion is reinforced when Ahmad on a number of occasions explains his actions by referring to the instructions of his religious teacher. When Jack Levy asks Ahmad why he had switched to the "voke track" Ahmad attributes the decision to the advice of Shaikh Rashid (37). At another point in the narrative he tells Joryleen that he viewed all non Muslims as his "enemy", a view engendered in him by his "teacher at the mosque" (68). Likewise, at the end Ahmad in spite of his conviction and commitment and the pledges of faith made to Charlie, the Imam and above all to himself is easily convinced by Jack Levy to abandon his terrorist plan. There is a tone of resignation in Ahmad's voice in the final lines of the novel, "*These devils ... have taken away my God*" (310). This is an acknowledgement of defeat in the light of realization of this fear which was expressed by him at the very start of the novel. Thus Ahmad is presented by Updike as a weak and caricatured character who lacks critical insight, has no free will of his own, is deficient in decision making ability and is led blindly by the other characters around him.

Ahmad is further dehumanized by an omission of the emotional history shared by him with his mother. Throughout the narrative the relationship between Ahmad and Teresa Mulloy is presented merely in terms of Ahmad's revulsion and disgust at her lax sexual mores and practices. On several occasions in the novel Ahmad expresses hostility towards what he perceives to be depraved and sexually provocative behavior on his mother's part. He is shown by Updike to be embarrassed by her (94) and even as expressing a wish to "disown" her (194). While focusing on Ahmad's puritanical disapproval of Teresa's morality on account of his fundamentalist Islamist ideology, the author completely omits any record of an emotional bond

which should have developed between mother and son in the course of their long time together. Resultantly the Muslim protagonist emerges as an unfeeling monster incapable of forming natural emotional human attachments.

Ahmad is not the only Muslim character to be stereotyped and dehumanized in Updike's narrative fable. Shaikh Rashid, Ahmad's Yemeni religious teacher is also presented as an enigmatic and inscrutable character. Of Shaikh Rashid's past Updike only mentions his militant tribal ancestry leaving out any reference to real meaningful human relationships in his past. He is presented as a man without any family or friends. Even for Ahmad, his faithful and devoted student who looks upon him as a surrogate father, the Shaikh is unable to experience any true or sincere feelings of love and affection. Thus the narrator observes, "Shaikh Rashid … does not offer himself as a father; there is in his regard of Ahmad something fraternal and sardonic, a splinter of hostility" (145).

Western clichés and stereotypical notions of Muslim religious figures abound in the character of Shaikh Rashid. The Imam is presented as a stereotypical mullah who is backward and primitive and who prevents Ahmad from pursuing college education as it would have "exposed [him] to corrupting influences" (38). In keeping with the formulaic notion of the Muslim imam, Shaikh Rashid is shown as preaching an ideology of hatred and violence and as brainwashing his pupil to kill and maim innocent people in the name of jihad. As a matter of fact all the lessons of the Shaikh attended by Ahmad are shown as revolving exclusively around venomous outbursts against the West and America and advocation of jihad against the infidels. No reference is made to Islamic injunctions regarding any other social, legal or ethical matter. All of the sessions contain either a reference to historical examples of violence against the non Muslims (104) or a call for such aggression to be perpetuated in the present (76, 233). The jihad

advocated by Shaikh Rashid is revealed to be mindless, irrational and sadistic aggression and bloodshed with no logical justification.

Stereotypes of the Muslim fanatical jihadist abound in Shaikh Rashid's tempting of his protégée with the promise of "paradise" and "dark-eyed houris" (170, 234). Furthermore, in keeping with the typical image of the Mullah, Shaikh Rashid is shown to be a misogynist who considers women as inferior and loathsome creatures. Thus he refers to women as unclean "sharmoota" on more than one occasion (238, 267).

Shaikh Rashid is thus presented as a thoroughly repulsive and abhorrent character. He is the principle villain in this fictional thriller who plots a terrorist attack in New Jersey and manipulates Ahmad to execute the evil plan.

Depiction of the inner recesses of the human mind and affective sensibility is totally missing in the case of the Muslim operatives planning and providing the resources and technical expertise for the terrorist attack in America. These characters are totally caricatured and stereotyped and are shown to be jihadist fanatics with an admiration for Osama Bin Laden and a hatred for America. They are presented as shadowy and mysterious figures on the margins of the text. They remain nameless and are given no clear identity in the narrative. Furthermore they are shown to speak in halting English with incorrect syntax and limited vocabulary which gives the suggestion they do not have a modern education and are not directly familiar with the culture, norms and values of the enemy they are attacking. This is brought out through the exchange between Ahmad and the Arab characters to whom he delivers an Ottoman with money hidden inside.

"Karini not here. I sign for Karini."

> "None of you is Mr. Karini?" The three men smile the quick, hopeful smile of those who have not understood what has been asked. (193)

Thus the narrative presents terrorists as ignorant young men blinded by a fanatical ideology of hatred and violence with no clear logical or rational motives behind their destructive agenda. In this portrait of Muslim terrorists, the personal emotional lives of the operatives are totally omitted and they are reduced to brainless extremists blinded by a bigoted ideology.

Ostensibly the Muslim characters that are portrayed with sympathy and approval are those of Mr. Chehab and his son Charlie who are loyal and faithful to the American liberal democratic system. However, even in this case any detailed psychological development of the characters is not given.

The character of Mr. Chehab makes no contribution to the progression of the action and seems to have been included merely for the purpose of positive projection of Western liberal democratic ideals through a Muslim figure and to serve as a constructive foil for the irrational and blind hatred of fanatical Muslims who advocate Jihad against America. Mr. Chehab emerges a passionate advocate and defender of the values of American multicultural liberal society with its ostensible freedoms of speech, religious practice, commercial activity and economic mobility. More importantly the character of an Arab-American Muslim and a Lebanese immigrant is used by Updike to present and authenticate the American view of 9/11 as an attack on American sovereignty and an atrocious massacre of innocent civilians; the war on terror as a campaign of self-defense and not as an imperialist venture and the American concept of Taliban as enemy soldiers to an Arab-Muslim readership. Furthermore, he also serves as the author's mouthpiece and enables Updike to launch a strong critique of the atavism, tyranny, intolerance and prejudice

of Muslim countries and their rulers, a wide-spread view of Arab and Islamic regimes in the Western world. Thus a contrast between the open liberal society of America and the repressive regimes is made by Mr. Chehab when he says to Ahmad,

> You have never known a prison. In this country, people have no fear of prison. Not like Old World. Not like Saudis, not like Iraq before … Your friend Saddam Hussein, he knows prisons … In this country the average man knows nothing about prisons. The average man has no fear (148).

While giving an in depth analysis of the political views of Mr. Chehab, Updike leaves out all details of his personal and private life. No account of the reasons behind Mr. Chehab's immigration to America, apart from an oblique hint at political repression in his native homeland, is given by the author. The narrative also excludes and skips over the struggle of this Lebanese American to settle down and establish a flourishing business in America. It gives no idea of the family life of Mr. Chehab leaving out all emotional intricacies and psychological complexities which emerge from such relationships. Thus Mr. Chehab is not presented as a 3-dimensional round character with a clearly developed personality and psychological consciousness. His role is confined to that of a puppet or agent echoing the ideological views of the author.

The character of Charlie has been presented with some degree of authenticity by Updike. Charlie is shown as a genuine American with a command over the language, its rhythms and patterns, and an understanding of the culture. Yet even his character is not without a glaring paradox. Throughout the novel he is shown as criticizing America for its imperialistic misadventures and advocating jihad to destroy it, while expressing an admiration for its

revolutionary origins and a fascination with its exciting popular culture as embodied in advertisements. It is only towards the end of the novel that the readers are informed that Charlie was an undercover CIA agent and was actually trying to infiltrate and dismantle a Muslim terrorist group which enables them to understand this contradiction in his personality.

Charlie's character enables Updike to focalize the Muslim terrorist threat on the American home soil strengthening the claims of vociferous supporters of clash of civilizations. Yet even in Charlie's case his domestic life and his relationship with his wife and children, which would have given him a more human and personal face is left out. His wife is introduced only on the margins of the narrative and remains a silent figure thereby reinforcing the stereotypical conception of Muslim societies as patriarchal systems which marginalize women. Her character is thus presented by Updike, "Charlie is married, to a Lebanese woman Ahmad sees rarely… He never speaks of her, yet speaks of women often, especially the women who appear on television commercials (170-1). Charlie's chauvinistic attitude is reflected by the fact that the ideal image of his wife in his mind as reflected in the "the photograph [he] … keeps on his desk" is that of a fully covered domesticated woman who "wear[s] an extensive head scarf that conceals every hair, and smiles above the faces of two small children" (170). This is opposed to the overt sexual references which abound in his conversations with Ahmad in which he is obsessed with the physical contours and sexuality of women. Thus the stereotype of hypocritical chauvinism and sexual lasciviousness of the Muslim male is reinforced through Charlie's character.

In contrast the two characters that are authentic, plausible, credible and believable are the white American characters Jack Levy and Teresa Mulloy who stand for the author's cause of championing the cause of liberal humanism and embody the values of liberalism.

Updike gives a vivid portrayal of the psychological dilemmas of Jack Levy who is shown as a world-weary individual experiencing existentialist angst. The causes of his despair and gloom are given in detail by Updike. Levy is shown to be an idealist who following in his grandfather's steps dreamt of "a revolutionized society", only to see his hopes dashed and defeated by the decadent materialism around him (23). "America … paved solid with fat and tar" succumbed to a materialistic stupor which crushed Levy's revolutionary sentiments and left him with only disgust and weariness with life (27). Levy's acute awareness of the cultural and social problems besetting contemporary America shows him to be a character with critical consciousness. Through his interior monologues the readers become aware of his intelligence and perceptive and sensitive nature.

Updike also presents Levy's unhappiness in his marriage in detail, a factor which is seen as contributing to his despairing attitude. The initial affection of their marriage followed by a gradual growing frigidity and frostiness between the husband and wife is described minutely by the author giving us a sense of a believable realistic character. Unhappiness in marriage drives Jack to seek solace in the arms of Teresa, an Irish-American woman and the mother of Ahmad who is a nurse's aide and an aspiring artist with a zest for life.

The love scenes between Jack and Teresa and the psychological conflicts gnawing them are presented in great detail to give them a sense of authenticity. Jack is shown as torn between loyalty to his wife and an irresistible attraction to the vivacious and spirited Teresa Mulloy who takes him back to his lost youth and makes him feel alive, energetic and passionate once again. Jack remarks about Teresa, "All those mornings waking up too early, he was giving himself time to die in … This zaftig redhead isn't dead yet, and she knows it" (207). On losing Teresa, Jack experiences immense pain which adds a human touch to Updike's portrayal of Jack's character.

Thus he confesses to Ahmad, "… you're telling me: it was no big deal. But it was to me. Losing her, it's like I had a big operation. I *hurt*. I'm drinking too much. You can't understand" (301).

Through his encounter with Teresa, Levy is provided with an opportunity of regeneration in the narrative making him a well rounded three-dimensional character. Jack describes Terry as his "last reason to live" and his "last reason for joie de vivre" (210). Regenerated and revitalized by the exuberance and energy of Teresa, Jack Levy finds renewed purpose in life and emerges as the hero of this thriller and defeats the nefarious aims of the enemy in the process rescuing a talented but misguided youth from the clutches of evil and destruction.

Teresa Mulloy, Ahmad's white Irish American mother, too is portrayed with great psychological adeptness. She is shown as trapped between the need for companionship and the realization that Jack would never leave his wife leading their relationship to a dead end. Critical consciousness and incisiveness is reflected in Teresa's realization of Jack's selfish reasons for becoming her lover. She refuses to become a prop to support his sagging spirits and asserts her independence when she remarks, "Don't be a leech … Sucking, sucking the life out of a woman, dragging her down into your feeling so sorry for yourself… I've given what I can, Jack, and *must* move on" (208-9).The feelings of ecstasy, fulfillment, rejuvenation torn by guilt and remorse, make these characters poignantly human and genuine.

The fable of *Terrorist* unfurled from the vantage point of an omniscient all-knowing narrator is curiously selective in its disclosure of the psychological workings and affective sensibilities of the characters. A categorization and division seems to have been introduced along religious and civilizational lines. The thorough and scrupulous presentation of the consciousness of the American Judeo-Christian characters is in contrast to the deficient and flawed portrayal of

Muslim characters whose psychological motivations, personal relationships, domestic and family lives have been left out of the narrative making them inauthentic and thereby introducing gaps, silences and fissures in the text and the author's conscious ideological project of presentation of the threat of Islamic terrorism. It can be argued that the narrative falters due to cracks in the façade of its informing ideology, i.e., liberalism which is unable to account for the humanity of its detractors, the Islamists who present a worldview which contradicts and calls into question the moral supremacy of liberalism on account of its imperialist misadventures. Impelled by the silence of liberalism, the narrative too is unable to give a human face to the Muslim characters and deprives them of an authentic critical consciousness. Unable to break off from ideology, Updike creates stereotypical and clichéd Muslim characters who are mindless fanatics and coldblooded terrorists. In the process the author leaves out the cognitive and affective impetuses of Islamism and Muslim terrorism in the post cold-war and postmodern era, which creates gaps and fissures in his narrative and undermines the specious coherence of the fable of *Terrorist*.

Updike's failure to create authentic characters to depict the phenomenon of Muslim terrorism also affects the coherence and causality of the plot of his novel. In the absence of credible Muslim characters, implausibility and improbabilities enter the plot making his portrayal of Islamic terrorism incoherent and dubious. Thus the plot of *Terrorist* is based more on chance and coincidence rather than logical development. In order to achieve foiling of the terrorist plan by the hero Updike creates an unlikely chain of relationships and events. Thus Jack Levy comes to know of the terrorist plot through his wife's sister, who coincidentally happens to work for the secretary of the Department of Homeland Security who is worried about the possibility of a terrorist attack in New Jersey around the eve of the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. Even the ending is illogical and implausible with no credible reason given for Ahmad's change of heart

apart from a proverbial miracle of 'seeing the light'. These improbabilities in the plot can be linked with fault lines in the text's ideological narrative of the threat of Islamic terrorism and the inability of liberalism to logically account for the motivations of the terrorists.

The stereotypes of Muslim characters are reinforced through a number of different elements of the narrative. Foremost amongst them is the use of dialogue. The language attributed to the Muslim characters reinforces their image of frigidity, awkwardness, primitiveness and lack of awareness of modern sensibilities.

Ahmad, the chief Muslim character in the novel, is an American born and bred teenager. He himself says, "I am not a foreigner. I have never been abroad" (35).Yet he talks in stilted and formal prose which is remarkably different from and unlike the manner of American teenagers. Thus explaining his parentage to Jack Levy, Ahmad speaks in a pretentious, stiff and unnatural manner. He says, "I am the product of a white American mother and an Egyptian exchange student. They met while they both studied at the New Prospect campus of the State University of New Jersey" (34). The same overformal manner is apparent when he describes his father to his guidance counselor, "He had hoped my mother has explained to me, to absorb lessons in American enterprise and marketing techniques. It was not as easy as he had been told it would be" (35).

Jihadist and Islamist clichés abound in Ahmad's dialogues. For example: "…the American way is the way of infidels. It is headed for a terrible doom" (39), "I am a good Muslim, in a world that mocks faith" (69), "[t]heir virtue enjoys its reward …"(71), "I will die … if it is the will of Allah" (234), "As God is my witness … I burn to do it" (242), "I have placed myself in God's hands, and feel very serene" (243). "Who says that unbelief is innocent?... *Be*

ruthless to unbelievers. Burn them, crush them, because they have forgotten God" (294). Updike seems to be offering a justification of Ahmad's unnatural style through Jack Levy's observation, "The boy speaks with a pained stateliness; he is imitating, Levy feels, some adult he knows, a smooth and formal talker" (34). Yet given Ahmad's background and his lack of foreign exposure, this manner of speaking is highly improbable and seems to arise from stereotypes of jihadists which pervade the Western consciousness of the author.

Furthermore, in contrast, Charlie, the character who is sympathetic to America and is the son of a Lebanese immigrant, speaks in an authentic American manner. His dialogues are replete with slang and jargon drawn from popular culture. Charlie is shown as a voluble and raucous character and is given considerable volume of dialogue which forms a telling contrast to the terrorists who are presented as largely silent figures who break their silence to only spout clichéd Arabic expressions such as "La ilaha illa Allah", to express their admiration for Osama Bin Laden and disgust with America and to give Ahmad instructions on how to detonate the bomb. They are given no opportunity to record their view point or to present their side of the story and to explain the motivations and reasons behind their actions. Their silence speaks volumes and represents the marginalization of Muslims in the narrative. In order to justify the silence of these characters and to exonerate himself of all blame of misrepresentation the narrator states, "They resent being asked to talk" (246). However, this puzzling cryptic statement can only be termed as an insufficient justification.

Textual descriptions of physiognomy and space also strengthen the violent, hostile and revolting nature of Muslim characters. Thus Shaikh Rashid's physical appearance is shown to be revolting and menacing. In his farewell visit to Ahmad, the narrator records Shaikh Rashid's appearance thus, "… Ahmad saw, a number of small scars, traces on his waxy white skin of

some disease… With these roughnesses was revealed something disagreeable about his violet lips…" (266). A couple of pages later, the same emphasis on the repellant physical appearance of the Shaikh is found when the narrator observes, "Something ugly, a disfiguring little twist, crossed the Shaikh's clean-shaven face…" (271). The Shaikh's voice is described as having a "soft knife-edge" which emphasizes his menacing impact (102). The physical appearance of the Muslim operatives providing technical expertise for the terrorist attack is described in the following terms, "…they exuded this same sullen tension, as of distance runners who have been trained too long … Ahmad sees that no merely human response, no nuance of sympathy or humor, is expected of them; they are operatives, soldiers, units" (246)

Likewise the spaces associated with the Muslim characters in the novel such as the mosque and the garage where the terrorists are planning their activities reinforce the negativity associated with Islam in the narrative. The mosque is described as a closed dark space with very high windows which block out the sky and light. The entrance to the mosque is through a "windowless long flight of stairs" which Ahmad acknowledges had frightened him on several occasions (99). This physical description symbolically reinforces the intolerant, bigoted and closed nature of Islamism. The mosque is further described as having been created in the place of a dancing school. The narrator claims that attempts are made by the imam to block out the creative past of the building. The author's description thus suggests that the place has been reduced by the proponents of Islamism to an infertile and barren space which once again corresponds to stereotypes of fundamentalist Islam.

Literary tropes such as allusions, metaphors and analogies also reinforce stereotypical conceptions of Islam and its adherents. Quotations from the Quran are introduced to illustrate the author's familiarity with Islam and the painstaking research which he put in to create an

authentic narrative of the threat of Islamism and Muslim terrorism. Yet the references which have been incorporated reinforce the hostile and negative image of Islam given by Updike in his novel. In one of the Quranic lessons presented by the author, Shaikh Rashid and Ahmad discuss the sura "the Elephant" which is based on the account of destruction of the non-believers. The violent nature of Islam is reinforced through other Quranic allusions such as that to "Hutuma, the Crushing Fire … *that which breaks into pieces"* (287) and "the Meccan sura called the Blow, *on the day when man shall become like scattered moths and the mountains like tufts of carded wool"* (276). Islam is shown as prone to intrigues and scheming as Charlie quotes from the Quran, "*And the Jews plotted, and God plotted. But of those who plot, God is the best*" (201).

In another place Ahmad quotes the following Ayah from the Quran which assigns an inferior status to women and characterizes them as pollution, "*Your wives are your field: go in therefore, to your field as ye will … Separate yourself therefore from women and approach them not, until they be cleaned…*" (156). In another place the perception of Islam as a chauvinistic and licentious faith is reinforced when Ahmad quotes, "The Book promises: *And theirs shall be the dark-eyed houris, chaste as hidden pearls: a guerdon for their deeds*" (170).

A lexicon of desert and animal imagery is used in relation to the Muslim characters. Thus while talking of the possibility of a terrorist attack on American soil, Beth suggests to Jack that they should move to Albuquerque reasoning that, "They would never bomb the desert" echoing the stereotypical notion of Muslims as primitive Bedouins (32). At another point Ahmad's Muslim teacher the Imam exhorts him to pronounce the Quranic words properly so that he can hear "the desert wind (103). The image of the desert is also associated with the Quran itself. Shaikh Rashid translates an ayah from the Quran thus, "As for the unbelievers, their works are like a mirage in the desert" (235). This implies that Islam is a religion restricted to the Arab

desert contrary to its claim of being a universal message. The clichéd perception of Islam's inferiority and bigotry is reflected in the conversation between Hermione and the Secretary of Homeland Security which abounds in animal imagery, "They hate the light … Like cockroaches. Like bats" (48).

Animal, death and disease imagery is associated with the Muslim characters whenever they think of non-Muslims indicating extreme repulsion and hatred of Muslims for people of other beliefs. Thus Shaikh Rashid in a conversation with Ahmad uses the analogy of insects for non Muslims comparing them to "[t]he cockroaches that slither out from the baseboard and from beneath the sink" and "[t]he flies that buzz around the food on the table, walking on it with the dirty feet that have just danced on feces and carrion" (76).Ahmad says of the worshippers at the Church, "To worship a God known to have died- the very idea affects Ahmad like an elusive stench, a stoppage in the plumbing, a dead rodent in the walls" (49). Depiction of the Muslim characters consciousness is thus reduced to their hostility for followers of other faiths and their narrow-mindedness.

Muslim characters are also shown as speaking using the jargon and metaphorical association of warfare and battlefields. Thus Ahmad's thoughts on getting the job with the Chehabs are recorded as follows by the narrator, "Ahmad feels himself about to be enlisted in the armies of trade…" (152). At another place Charlie says, "… the lines are clear …The lines of battle. The armies of Satan versus those of God (201)." Shaikh Rashid characterizes Charlie thus, "He is a brave soldier in our cause, the cause of the true God, and God never deserts those who wage war on his behalf" (271).

This stereotypical portrayal of Muslim characters and Islam, strengthened through different elements of the narrative and the literary tropes employed by the author, creates undercurrents of Orientalism in the text which in the words of Said is a "sign of European-Atlantic power" (6). Orientalist prejudice is most apparent in the "Manichean allegory" or binary opposition being created between the Muslim and white characters (JanMohammed 21). The narrative of *Terrorist* is thus structured around a binary relation that privileges the white characters over the non-whites thereby trying to assert the superiority of liberalism over Islamism.

A binary opposition is being created first and foremost between the two teachers of Ahmad with a contrast being formed between the Muslim Imam and the secular non-observant Jewish high school guidance counselor. In contrast to the Imam who deprives his pupil of personal and professional advancement by taking him off the college track, Jack Levy seeks to rescue the misguided youth from the clutches of a prejudiced and destructive ideology. At one point exasperated by not having his concerns being taken seriously by Teresa he muses aloud to himself, "Is Jack Levy the only person in the world who cares about the boy's future? "You've got to help me," he tells his mother earnestly, "to get Ahmad's future more in line with his potential"" (96). In contrast the Shaikh is seen as harbouring hostility and prejudice against Ahmad on account of his racial origin. The narrator informs the readers, "To him, Ahmad is American. No amount of zeal and Quran studies can change his mother's race or his father's absence" (145).

Another binary opposition is also created between the characters of Ahmad's Muslim father and his Irish-Catholic mother. Omar Ashwamy is presented as a disloyal and unreliable husband and father who abandons his family and never looks back to inquire about their welfare.

Teresa Mulloy sums up his character thus, “An opportunistic, clueless loser, who hasn’t sent us a postcard, let alone a fucking check, for 15 years” (89). Teresa on the other hand is shown to be a caring mother who brought up Ahmad to the best of her ability fulfilling his every need. Jack Levy evaluates her role as a mother in the following words, “Levy likes the way she says “my son”. There’s a homier feeling here than his interview with Ahmad had led him to expect. She may be one of these single women trying to get by on sheer brass, but she is also some kind of nurturer” (88).

A binary opposition or juxtaposition is thus being formed between characters along ideological and civilizational lines.

Some of the Orientalist stereotypes of Islam being echoed and perpetuated by Updike include that of lasciviousness and promiscuity shown through Ahmad’s constant and irrepressible desire for Joryleen, the open sexual banter of Charlie and the sensual manner of Shaikh’s address to Ahmad. The Shaikh is shown as having an effeminate sensuous appearance with “soft white hands” (103) and addresses Ahmad as his “beautiful tutee”, “dear Ahmad”, “comely young man” (108), “dear boy” (237). Even the content of his conversation is of sexual nature as is reflected in the references to houris and virgins in heaven.

In keeping with the discourse of Orientalism, Updike asserts the cognitive incompetence and intellectual simplicity of Muslims and shows them as having defective mental capabilities. In a conversation with Ahmad Charlie terms the Muslim jihadists as “brainless tools” (251).The naivety of the Muslims terrorist plotters is explained thus by Charlie, “Interesting to see their minds work. Tools, hero: no shades in between. As if Mubarak and Arafat and the Saudis don’t all have their special situations and their own intricate games to play” (250). At another point the

Secretary of Homeland Security remarks to his assistant, "There's something weird about the language- it makes them feeble-minded somehow" (259).

Another stereotype presented by Updike is that of Oriental confusion and ambivalence. In the course of the narrative Ahmad emerges as a confused character who is unable to judge and appreciate the true worth of the people around him. One example is that of his attitude towards his mother. After Omar Ashwamy abandoned his family, Teresa Mulloy has been shown by Updike as courageously and single handedly raising her son respecting his rights of privacy, religious practice and choice of career. Yet throughout the novel, Ahmad thinks and talks of his mother in hostile and derogatory terms viewing her as an immoral and vulgar woman. In his first conversation with Jack Levy he describes his mother as "trashy and immoral" (35). In contrast all of Ahmad's reverence is directed towards his father whom he has never met or talked to in his consciousness an attitude, which is baffling and incomprehensible. However, towards the end just before Ahmad sets out on his suicide bombing mission, there is a sudden and inexplicable realization on Ahmad's part of his mother's worth when he says, "I mean, all those years, there I was observing about my father, and *you* were the one taking care of me" (241). Updike fails to incorporate in the narrative any rational explanation of this strange attitude of Ahmad towards his parents strengthening the view that Ahmad is an unstable, confused and misguided Muslim youth.

The stereotype of untrustworthiness and deceptiveness is also given in the Secretary's comments about Muslims, "They all cover for each other, even on our payroll, you can't trust your own recruits anymore" (260). This is in contrast to the virtue of truthfulness and honour attributed by Hermoine to the American people when she remarks, "In their native Pennsylvania, she knows, people could be trusted. A dollar is still a dollar there, a meal a meal, a deal a deal …

elemental land of genial sincerity" (260). Thus the representatives of the American civil establishment in Updike's novel subscribe to the liberalism's ideological myth of American exceptionalism and their thinking is structured by Manichean allegory and Orientalism.

Orientalist stereotyping of Muslim figures and the Manichean allegory informing Updike's narrative can be interpreted as pointing to the imperialist strategies and expansionist aims of America which it seeks to mask behind the rhetoric and façade of universal humanist values of democracy, liberty, human rights and multiculturalism. Neoliberalism, the ideology of the American system, cannot openly acknowledge this imperialist agenda which contradicts the coherence of the discursive narrative which it has built for itself and thus seeks to erase it. Consequently in a text informed by the workings of the ideology of neoliberalism, the reality of American imperialism too can only enter in the margins of the text or as a latent discourse constituting an unconscious in the text. Updike's narrative can thus be interpreted as belonging to a long list of imperialist fictional texts which behind the guise of an apparently innocent realist liberal humanist narrative perpetuate stereotypes of the Orientals and Islam in order to disguise and mask its hegemonic designs.

References to America's imperial origins, its discriminatory social and political system and its expansionist policies in the present age enter the text obliquely on the margins through Charlie's speeches. Charlie, who turns out to be an undercover American intelligence agent, in order to win the trust of a Muslim terrorist group with the aim of foiling their nefarious plans, pretends to be a fundamentalist Muslim with Jihadist tendencies. In the process Charlie echoes all the political grievances which the Islamists have against America and which cause their hatred of America and the terrorist attacks on its homeland. Charlie conversations with Ahmad are replete with references to American imperialist policies which cause it to adopt a

manipulative foreign policy and thereby earn it the wrath of the fundamentalists who then advocate jihad against what they perceive to be an oppressive and tyrannical regime. Muslim grievances against American imperialist foreign policy are echoed by Charlie when he says, "Those people worked in finance, furthering the interests of the American empire, the empire that sustains Israel and inflicts death everyday on Palestinians and Chechnyans, Afghans and Iraqis" (187).

Charlie justifies Islamic terrorism by characterizing it as jihad which he claims is similar to the American war for independence in its struggle against a mighty oppressive power. Thus he says, "The jihad and the Revolution waged the same kind of war, Charlie explained- the desperate and vicious war of the underdog, the imperial overdog claiming fouls by the rules he has devised for his own benefit" (286).

Charlie also expounds the Muslim and Arab perception of the war on terror when he says about George Washington, "He showed the world what can be done against the odds, against a superpower. He showed- and this is where Vietnam and Iraq come in- that in a war between an imperialist occupier and the people who actually live there, the people will eventually prevail" (181).

Presented through a character, who turns out to be loyal to the system and concerned with its defense, these grievances and complaints against American imperialism acquire an ambivalent status in the text. This seems to be an attempt on the part of the author to suppress and exclude this issue from the text by discrediting Islamist discourse of American imperialist ambitions as a meaningless and false propaganda which seeks to brainwash Muslim youth to train them as jihadists, by presenting it as a parody. Yet ironically this attempt is unsuccessful

and fault lines and fissures enter in the narrative and undermine the imaginary coherence of both the ideological project and the fable.

Allusions to America's violent imperialist past and present which belie its claim of liberalism, democracy and multiculturalism enter the text through oblique textual references to America's historical role in the displacement and enslavement of African Americans and the continuing discrimination against racial minorities even today.

A glance at the Jefferson memorial produces an inadvertent and involuntary reference to American oppression of Black African Americans and pervasive racism by the Secretary of Homeland Security's who muses, "People blame Jefferson now for holding on to his slaves and fathering children by one of them, but they forget the economic context of the times and the fact that Sally Hemmings was very pale" (261). Allusion to American enslavement of blacks also enters the margins of the text in Ahmad's reflections while passing through a black neighborhood, "…those born here for generation after generation embrace dirt and laziness as a protest, a protest of slaves …"(281).

Continuing racial tensions and white prejudice and hostility against blacks in American society is reflected in the remarks of the Secretary of Homeland security when he says, "… these poor black teen-age girls think it's just the thing, to bring a baby into the world without any father. Except Uncle Sam. He gets the bills, and no thanks from them…" (261). This points to the racist tensions and prejudices lying beneath the façade of a tolerant, open, multicultural and liberal society and is symptomatic of historical racial discrimination and prejudice against the blacks a discourse which the writer has attempted to repress and efface.

Updike's attempt to assert the tolerant and humane nature of democratic neoliberalism as embodied in American multiculturalism is undermined through a stereotypical representation of the only two African- American characters in the novel. After High School, Tylenol is shown as becoming a pimp and Joryleen a prostitute which reinforces the dominant American perception of black Americans as immoral, law breakers and backwards. This also points to the prejudices and discrimination inbuilt in the American system which traps the blacks in a vicious cycle of poverty and unemployment forcing them to take up such professions and preventing them from prospering. This systematic deprivation of the blacks and the resultant stereotypical notion of black poverty and depravity are highlighted in Levy's remarks to Teresa, "black families, the kids idealizing the absent dad and directing all their anger at poor old Mom, who's knocking herself out to keep a roof over their heads" (89).

Descriptions of the dreadful and appalling decaying conditions of the neighborhoods of Blacks and immigrants also indicates the poverty of these minority groups and belies the claims of a fair and just system providing equal opportunities to all its members regardless of race and creed. Joryleen's neighborhood is shown to be in a shabby condition with "houses unpainted", "peeling doors" "cracked" sidewalks and "little front yards … speckled with dust" (71).

Another fissure is thus introduced in Updike's ideological project of championing the cause of liberal humanism on account of the representation of black African Americans and their ambiguous position in America's ostensibly multicultural society. The narrative contradicts liberalism's claim of multiculturalism and tolerance by introducing racial tensions and undercurrents on the margins of the text. The author consciously attempts to build a narrative which highlights American multiculturalism and diversity principally through the assertions and musings of Jack Levy's character. However, neoliberalism's claim of American society as free,

tolerant, multicultural and democratic and providing equality for all its citizens is undermined by oblique and indirect hints and references to systematic injustice and discrimination against racial minorities particularly the black community in America. It can thus be said that the narrative attempts to conceal or repress a dark history of systematic bigotry against its racial minorities which can only emerge in the margins of the text.

Discriminatory policies and practices in American society are not restricted just to the African American community. Rather American history of violence against other races and its imperialist origins emerge through a singular but telling remark of Beth to her sister where she says, "…We come into this country and pen the Indians into reservations and build skyscrapers and super-highways…" (138). As a matter of fact, the veneer of American tolerance is further dispelled through an allusion to general American xenophobia and anxiety about migrants which is reflected in Beth's musings, "…people are so afraid of the Arabs, but it's the Japanese and Chinese and Mexicans and Gautemalans and those others in these low-wage platforms who are doing us in, putting our workforce out of work" (138).

These splits and cracks indicate a repressed narrative of American racial discrimination and prejudice and constitute an unconscious in the text which undermines the author's dominant ideological narrative of liberalism, tolerance and multiculturalism.

In conclusion it can be argued that American obsession with the threat of Islamic terrorism and fundamentalism particularly in the wake of 9/11 is actually an attempt to deflect attention from its imperialist activities and policies particularly with reference to the Muslim world. However, the fact of American imperialism which the author attempts to conceal through an ideological discourse of American democratic liberalism and moral exceptionalism can only

emerge in the unconscious of the text. This textual unconscious is created through cracks and fissures in the formal structure of the narrative. An analysis of the constitutive elements of the fable such as characterization, dialogues, descriptions, rhetorical tropes and plot structure leads to the uncovering of an embedded narrative of imperialist fear and fascination of the Orient and its derivates incongruous with the author's ideological intent. The ideological claims of neoliberalism are further undermined through a latent narrative of American enslavement and marginalization of its Black populace.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is a tale of awakening of national consciousness of a Pakistani youth Changez. The narrative records how the American response to the attacks of 9/11 in the form of the war on terror proves to be a catalyst which shocks Changez into a realization of America's imperialist designs, the ignominy of his own status as an enslaved subject and by extension his nation's subjugated standing. Informed and motivated by the ideology of nationalism, Hamid gives a scathing indictment of the American project of global domination, which guided by the ideology of neoliberalism, threatens the sovereignty and welfare of weaker 3rd world nations and impels its citizenry to take on fundamentalism as a means of political resistance and protest. Thus fundamentalism and radicalism are seen as the direct corollary and outcome of the nationalist fervor which is strengthened by the American assault on the autonomy, economy, culture and ideals of nation states.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist combines a poetics of patriotism with an unmasking of the forces of imperialism which threaten the survival of the author's homeland. Hamid thus weaves a tale which celebrates the heritage, customs and sounds and smells of his native Pakistan and which highlights the callousness, deviousness and brutality of the American hegemonic enterprise. This dual purpose is made possible through the author's delineation of the transformational effect of the events of 9/11 on a young Pakistani student immigrant to America who is deeply conscious of his native roots.

Hamid's ardent nationalism is reflected in the text's foregrounding and reaffirmation of his native cultural identity. The most spontaneous expressions of his patriotism are to be found in his detailed descriptions of the gastronomic delights of his country. Pakistani pride in their cuisine is echoed in Changez's declaration to his American companion, "… we Pakistanis tend to take an inordinate pride in our food. Here in Old Anarkali that pride is visible in the purity of the fare on offer … These, sir, are *predatory* delicacies, delicacies imbued with a hint of luxury, of wanton abandon" (61).

This emphasis on culinary details is symptomatic of Pakistani nationalist psyche in which food is not just a matter of tastes and smells. Rather it is a sign of hospitality and generosity deeply ingrained in Pakistani culture. Thus when Changez takes Wainwright to a Pakistani restaurant in New York he observes, "Moreover, it is a mark of friendship when someone treats you to a meal- ushering you thereby into a relationship of mutual generosity- and by the time … I saw Wainwright licking his fingers … I knew I had found a kindred spirit at the office" (24). Thus descriptions of cuisine enable Hamid to foreground the warmth and kindness of his fellow countrymen.

To realize his nationalist project of cultural assertion Hamid builds the picture of a nation with long standing aesthetic traditions and a rich cultural and artistic legacy. Thus a painting in Erica's room reminds Changez of "our miniature paintings, of the sort one would find if one ventured around the corner to the Lahore Museum or the National College of Arts" (32). At another point Changez describes his house thus, "its enduring grandeur, its unmistakable personality and idiosyncratic charm. Mughal miniatures and ancient carpets graced its reception rooms …it was rich with history…" (75). Through this reference to the Mughals, famed patrons of arts, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* resonates nationalist discourses of the Muslims of Pakistan

which celebrate the historical greatness and grandeur of its artistic, literary and architectural mores. Thus in a defiant assertion of patriotism Changez declares to his American interlocutor, "For we were not always burdened by debt, dependent on foreign aid and handouts; in the stories we tell of ourselves we were not the crazed and destitute radicals you see on your television channels but rather saints and poets and-yes- conquering kings" (61).

In order to accomplish his aim of cultural reaffirmation Hamid foregrounds the strong family and kinship system of Pakistan. Hamid highlights how the close knit family structure of Pakistan cultivates the individuals' affective and moral sensibilities making them loyal, selfless, kind and sensitive individuals. Changez, the protagonist of the novel, is shown as hailing from a traditional close-knit extended family set up in Pakistan having grown up in his grandfather's house where his father and his brothers lived together with their families. His strong family values are reflected in his inability to focus on his work when India threatens to invade Pakistan in response to the terrorist attacks on the Indian parliament and his family's safety is at risk. Deep rooted family ties are also reflected in Changez's decision to send over all his money left after paying his loans back home to help his family to repair their house.

The strong moral consciousness and empathy engendered in Changez through his rearing ensures that his life is not governed by the principle of profit. At one point in the narrative he tells his American listener, "I had been raised to favor mutual generosity over mathematical precision…" (98). Thus in spite of his training at Underwood Samson which exhorts mechanical single-minded focus on the pursuit of profit, Changez retains his capacity for human sympathy and feeling which leads him to understand the emotional hostility of the jeepney driver in Philippines while his co-worker remained oblivious and disconnected with his surroundings in his concentration on his work. Changez's sensitivity is also reflected in his deep emotional

attachment with Erica and his caring attitude towards her which is expressed by him as follows, "… I was filled with protectiveness … I wished to serve as her anchor in these moments…" (51). For Erica this warmth and compassion in Changez's personality is the result of his upbringing. Thus in Greece Erica tells Changez, "You give off this strong sense of home… You know that? This I'm-from-a-big-family vibe. It's nice. It makes you feel solid" (12).

The strong moral character of the Pakistani social and cultural fabric is also highlighted in Hamid's delineation of the refinement, sophistication and moral character of Pakistani mannerisms. Throughout the text Changez is consistently respectful and polite towards elders. Thus in Greece, Changez whose upbringing has inculcated a "traditional sense of deference to one's seniors" is shocked by the rudeness of his American friends who order around people much older than themselves (13). At Underwood Samson he earns universal praise and approval of his seniors due to his "natural politeness and a sense of formality" (25). Through a depiction of Changez's elegance, Hamid can be said to be countering Orientalist conception of Muslims and Pakistanis as uncouth barbarians.

Hamid's fervent nationalism seems to be a protest against the stereotyping of Pakistan in the American consciousness whereby Pakistan is viewed predominantly as a backward and uncivilized failed state. This perception is echoed by Erica's father, who characterizes the woeful state of Pakistan in the following terms, "Economy's falling apart though, no? Corruption, dictatorship … And fundamentalism. You guys have got some serious problems with fundamentalism" (33).

Hamid attributes this stereotypical representation to American imperialist hubris which offends the nationalist pride of the author and his narrator. Thus Changez outraged by Erica's

father's statement gives a bristling response and states, "I felt myself bridle... his tone- with … its typically *American* undercurrent of condescension- struck a negative chord with me …" (33).

Thus the detailed delineation of the cultural norms and traditions of Pakistan can be interpreted as an attempt on Hamid's part to dismantle American stereotypical conception of the country as the hub of an anarchic and ascetic fundamentalism devoid of civilization. He instead presents before us the image of a nation with a humane, generous and hospitable populace, strong moral values and a glorious and rich cultural legacy.

In the novel, nationalist reaffirmation is thus closely linked with a seething critique of American imperialism. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* discloses before its readers the devastating economic, political and humanitarian consequences of American hegemonic policies for 3rd world countries including Pakistan.

Hamid shows how like earlier imperial powers the American project of global domination is also informed by economic and commercial motives. Thus American global hegemony is closely linked with America's financial might and its control of the world economy, a fact which is expressed by Changez thus, "… finance was a primary means by which the American empire exercised its power" (94). In Hamid's analysis of the American empire, U.S. multinational corporations and valuation firms are characterized as "the officers of the empire" and are shown as controlling and shaping financial markets all across the globe and as wielding immense power (92). Thus Changez during his period of employment at Underwood Samson participates in the firm's business ventures in far flung areas such as Philippines and Chile. On a number of occasions he highlights the immense clout exercised by the financial analysts of his firm. This enormous influence is foreshadowed in Changez's initial impressions of the

Underwood Samson in which he states, "… nothing had prepared me for the drama, the *power* of the view from their lobby" (20). Describing his firm's work in Manila, Changez exults, "I felt enormously powerful on these outings, knowing my team was shaping the future" (39).

Hamid's critique of American imperialism seems to hinge around the fact of increasing economic and social stratification, poverty and suffering in the 3rd world countries. Through his delineation of the offshore workings of Underwood Samson, Hamid highlights how the imposition of the American model of privatization and deregulated free markets in 3rd world countries like Pakistan has provided American firms further opportunities to fill their coffers at the expense of the welfare of the locals.

The exploitative mechanisms of American capitalism come under a scathing attack from Juan-Bautista, the Chilean book publisher when he tells Changez that cold blooded and unfeeling valuation firms such as Underwood Samson earn their profit "by disrupting the lives of others…" (91). Changez himself acknowledges this ruthless streak of American financial and business conglomerates while expressing commiseration for those "whose lives the empire thought nothing of overturning for its own gain" (92). This sympathy felt by Changez for the oppressed people of Philippines and Chile is intensified due to a perceived similarity and a "shared … Third World sensibility" which causes him to correlate these nations with his country (40).

The poor quality of life in third world nations which includes Pakistan is noted at several places in the narrative by Changez. The narrator alludes to the present impoverished state of his country on a number of occasions and attributes it to foreign debts and sanctions. The beggar who pesters Changez and his guest in Anarkali is but one symptom of the widespread poverty in Pakistan. While in Valparaiso, Changez notes the impoverished surroundings and comments,

"The neighbourhood was a poor one, with colourful murals like graffiti on the walls and children racing by on wooden carts that appeared to be shipping crates to which had been attached" (89). In his description of Manila Changez particularly highlights the class distinction and enormous gulf created between the rich and the poor in 3rd world countries after the adoption the American neoliberal capitalist model. Changez contrasts Manilla's "skyscrapers and superhighways" and "glittering skyline and walled enclaves for the ultra-rich" with "its slums" consisting of "vast districts of men in dirty white undershirts lounging idly in front of auto-repair shops" (38).

Hamid anti-imperialist tirade seems to be motivated in part by the callous indifference and insulation of Americans to the devastating consequences of their economic practices. On several occasions he records the immense global hostility and anti American feelings which this inhumane attitude sprouts. At a number of places in the text Changez comments on arrogant, self absorbed and "unsympathetic" attitude of Americans to outsiders (74). On several occasions Changez notes his and his fellow workers perfunctory pursuit of wealth regardless of the feelings and welfare of 3rd world countries. In Philippines he comments on his colleague's "oblivious immersion in the minutiae of our work" and his failure to register the hostility and anger of the jeepney driver (40). In Valparaiso he criticizes his co-worker thus, "… I was beginning to resent him as well. I could not respect how he functioned so completely immersed in the structures of his professional micro-universe" (87).

Hamid's critical appraisal of the devious machinations of the American financial empire also extends to a condemnation of the brain drain from poorer 3rd world countries such as Pakistan. Hamid highlights how by robbing the intellectual talent and youth of countries like his homeland, America maintains its status as the most advanced nation in the world and perpetuates the economic disparity and inequality between it and third world countries. The author traces the

success of this phenomenon to America's ideological narrative of meritocracy which through the promise of wealth, status and prosperity lures bright, talented and hard working young individuals like Changez to contribute their talents and energies for furthering the American "project of domination" (95). Changez describes this process of brain drain from the third world thus,

> We international students were sourced from around the globe, sifted … by well-honed standardized tests … until the best and the brightest of us had been identified… Students like me were given visas and scholarships … and invited to join into the ranks of meritocracy. In return, we were expected to contribute our talents to your society… (3).

Changez characterizes such individuals as "modern-day jannisar[ies]" who serve a foreign empire with fierce and utter loyalty to ironically "erase their own civilizations" (91) By becoming a part of the American meritocracy, youth such as Changez betray their nation for the sake of wealth and monetary advancement. Thus while returning to America leaving behind his family and country facing the threat of war and destruction Changez exclaims, "…I would soon be gone, leaving my family and my home behind … And what was I abandoning them for? A well-paying job and a woman whom I longed for…" (77).

Hamid is particularly critical of how America's imperialist designs have historically brought death and destruction to the globe. He sees America's hand in all the recent global military conflicts a fact which he expresses through the character of Changez thus, "Vietnam, Korea, the straits of Taiwan, the Middle East, and now Afghanistan: in each of the major conflicts and standoffs that ringed by mother continent of Asia, America played a central role"

(94). Hamid reveals how all these conflicts, including the latest war on terror, behind the mantra of self defense and the spread of democracy, are actually a cover for the covert imperialist aim of "the advancement of a small coterie's concept of American interests" (108). Hamid blasts this hypocritical imperialist superpower for the immense human suffering it causes to fulfill its expansionist and hegemonic aims. Hamid's frustration is vented through Changez, the narrator, who gives several statements such as, "no country inflicts death so readily upon the inhabitants of other countries, frightens so many people so far away, as America" (110); "… America was able to wreak such havoc in the world- orchestrating an entire war in Afghanistan…" (78); "America … [was] bringing so many deaths to Afghanistan and Iraq … risking so many more deaths by tacitly using India to pressure Pakistan…" (108).

Hamid's critique of American military misadventures is informed primarily by nationalist ideology and is based on a concern for the preservation of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Thus Changez's condemnation of the war on terror and the American invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq is mainly based on a concern for the welfare and survival of Pakistan. His apprehension seems to stem from how America's global war on terror in the wake of 9/11 has irreparably damaged the inviolability and sacredness of territorial integrity and has legitimized the invasion of weaker countries by stronger ones. Changez thus fears that American's violation of international diplomatic norms will remove all political and moral restraints on India, his homeland's more powerful and hostile neighbor, which would then invade and occupy Pakistan. Changez expresses his fear thus, "America … legitimatizing through its actions the invasion of weaker states by more powerful ones, which India was now proposing to do to Pakistan" (78).

Hamid's fundamentalist Changez is not a religious bigot or fanatic. He is actually a nationalist with just political grievances against America. His cause is a political one and he

seeks to dismantle the hegemony of an imperialist superpower which seeks to extend its global hegemony by exploiting weaker 3rd world countries such as his own homeland. Thus his hostility against America is not on account of a fanatical hatred of the American civilization rather it is motivated by concern for the welfare of his nation which he feels is suffering due to its enslavement by this imperialist superpower. He thus informs his American listener that his struggle centers around an "advocat[ion] [of] a disengagement from your country by mine" (108).

Hamid accomplishes his ideological project by constructing a fable structured by the generic conventions of dramatic monologue, a form in which a single speaker explains his actions, feelings and motivations and in the process lays bare his soul and psyche in front of his audience. The speaker in Hamid's story is Changez; a young Pakistani Muslim who tells the story of his times and experiences in America to an American stranger he meets in Anarkali. By selecting Changez as his narrator Hamid privileges the perspective of his countrymen. Furthermore, the form enables Hamid to present Changez's psyche and sentiments in detail, and in the process to humanize the figure of the terrorist.

Changez, the protagonist of Hamid's tale and the fundamentalist, is not the formulaic madressah- trained, backward radical terrorist. Rather he hails from a secular Westernized elitist family. As a matter of fact, he qualifies from Princeton, one of America's top Ivy League universities and also gains employment at Underwood Samson, a select valuation firm. Hamid delineates in great detail the personal history of Changez showcasing his liberal upbringing in a family of broadminded educated professionals with a sympathetic attitude to America and the west. Thus Changez confesses to imbibing alcohol, a practice frowned on by devout Muslims and characteristic of Pakistan's Westernized elite. His frequent references to Hollywood films

and celebrities such as Star trek, Star Wars, "Paltrow" and "Spears" are also reflective of his Americanized liberal consciousness (13). This affinity to the West and its culture can actually be attributed to the educational background of his predecessors with both his father and grandfather attending "university in England" (6). This detailed delineation of Changez's liberal background not only makes Changez a 3-dimensional and credible character, but also rejects the simplified explanation of civilizational clash and orthodox fanaticism as the primary cause behind 9/11and the terrorist attacks on the American soil.

Changez is no religious ascetic. Rather he is obsessed with wealth and status and admires American consumer culture and economy primarily due to the material luxuries and comforts it offers. He sums up his excitement at getting a job at one of New York's top valuation firms thus, "… Underwood Samson had the potential to transform my life … making my concerns about money and status things of the distant past" (8). Thus he narrates in great detail the luxurious vacation he undertakes with members of the Ivy League after his graduation from Princeton and confesses, "I gave in to the pleasures of being among this wealthy young fellowship" (12). Likewise after joining Underwood Samson he is thrilled with the privilege of "an expense account" given to employees which enables him to "with impunity spend in an hour more than … [his] father earned in a day" (22).

An analysis of the novella reveals that Changez at the outset of the narrative is greatly enamored with America. He expresses unqualified admiration and approbation for America and seems to be quite in awe of American financial, political, academic and technological clout. Thus on his arrival at Princeton he observes, "*I have access to this beautiful campus*, I thought, *to professors who are titans in their fields and fellow-students who are philosopher kings in the making*" (2).

He even derives a sense of empowerment from being part of this society and its institutions. This is reflected in Changez's thoughts on his first impression of the offices of Underwood Samson in which he remarks, "… supporting my feet were the most technologically advanced civilization our species had ever known" (20). Further on in the narrative Changez describes his "initiation to the realm of high finance" thus to his interlocutor, "I felt empowered … all manner of new possibilities were opening up to me" (22).

Hamid is at pains to highlight how Changez's transformation from a "lover of America" to its most scathing critic is not on account of virulent radical Islamist propaganda (1). Rather he portrays how Changez's transformation from liberalism to fundamentalism takes place while Changez is operating within the American system after disillusionment with the exploitative imperialist machinations of U.S capitalism and a realization of his humiliating status as an enslaved imperial subject. Changez's development is explained by Hamid as a logical evolution caused by political, affective and moral elements and not a descent into mindless chaotic psychosis.

Hamid delineates in great detail for his readers the factors which are responsible for Changez's changing attitude to America. In the process he highlights Changez's strong moral and political consciousness, intelligence, sensitivity and introspective and intellectual bent of mind. The narrative thus highlights how even in the initial thrill and intoxication and satisfaction with the benefits afforded to him by American corporate capitalism, Changez experiences disquiet and unease over the disparity and inequity engendered within the system. Hamid shows how this feeling of dissatisfaction with American financial practices and his role in it is awakened and reinforced through Changez's first- hand experience of immense poverty third world countries caused by capitalist misadventures. The voice of conscience proves stronger than

the Machiavellian and utilitarian principles instilled in him by the capitalists and leads Changez to empathize with the lot of those whose lives are destroyed in capitalism's blind and insatiable lust for profit. Hamid thus seems to be giving Changez's fundamentalism a moral undercurrent.

The pivotal event which completely changes Changez's life and puts him on course to interrogate and reassess the American system and his position in it is the bombing of 9/11. Thus Hamid shows that how America's belligerent rhetoric, hostile posturing, increasing xenophobia at the domestic level and its export of death and destruction abroad in the form of the war on terror in the wake of the attacks on the twin towers crystallizes Changez's growing discontent with America and convince him of its imperial ambitions and its ruthless disregard of the welfare of all others. Changez, as depicted by Hamid, has a strong political consciousness and keeps himself abreast of all the latest political developments. His knowledge of political affairs is reflected in his awareness of all recent military conflicts in Asia's history such as the wars in Vietnam, Korea, Taiwan and the Middle East (94). His interest in geopolitical news and happenings is intensified after America's launching of a global war and selection of his native region as the first front in this battle. Furthermore, it is his political understanding which leads him to identify the bias in America's foreign policy disguised as neutrality as leading to the intensification of the conflict between India and Pakistan to the detriment of his countrymen. Changez's political astuteness leads him to identify the imperial ambitions of the U.S. informing its foreign and military policies. Thus for Changez the war on terror was not merely a war of retribution. Contrary to popular rhetoric of security and counterterrorism, Changez views it as a declaration of American imperialism. Thus he says, "What your fellow countrymen longed for was unclear to me- a time of unquestioned dominance? Of safety? Of moral certainty? I did not know… (69). The imperialist rhetoric emerging from America is explained by Changez thus,

"*We are America ... the mightiest civilization the world has ever known; you have slighted us; beware our wrath ...* I wondered what manner of host would sally forth from so grand a castle" (47). Thus Changez's disillusionment with America is portrayed as also being fuelled by political factors.

Hamid in his novella seems to be showing how Changez's transformation is rendered inevitable due to an exceptionally incisive and penetrative mind which causes him to probe the nefarious ideological agenda of corporate capitalism as embodied in Underwood Samson's mantra of single-minded focus on the fundamentals of profit. It is critical reflection and analysis of the policies, practices and process of training at Underwood Samson which leads Changez to realize how American corporate capitalism is actually a form of neo-imperialism and trainees such as him are in reality imperial enslaved imperial subjects. The tale of Janissaries, Christian boys captured in childhood by Ottomans and made impervious to their enslaved status through an ideological conditioning which erased their identity and shaped them as reified robotic soldiers of the empire, told to Changez by Juan- Bautista strikes a chord with the perturbed young man and awakens him to a realization of his similar fate which he expresses thus, "… Juan-Bautista's words plunged me into a deep bout of introspection. I spent that night considering what I had become … I was a modern-day janissary, a servant of the American empire …" (91).

The fact that Changez's transformation is an intellectual change based on sound reasoning, is highlighted through Changez's own words in which he recounts the dispelling of an ideological false consciousness created by the Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser "Lenin and Philosophy") of the American empire and the awakening of a true consciousness thus,

> I resolved to look about me with an ex-janissary's gaze … I was struck by how traditional your empire appeared … I myself was a form of indentured servant whose right to remain was dependent upon the continued benevolence of my employer. *Thank you, Juan-Bautista,* I thought as I lay myself down in my bed, *for helping me to push back the veil behind which all this had been concealed!* (95).

Hamid highlights how Changez's fundamentalism is actually a plan of political resistance based on this intellectual insight into the workings of the American empire and not an act of mindless fanaticism and terrorism. Thus Changez outraged by a realization of the devastating consequences of American imperialist misadventures resolves to oppose America declaring, "Such an America had to be stopped…" (101). For this purpose, Changez returns home and organizes rallies and protests calling for accountability of America and for an end to its imperial policies which brought death, suffering and poverty to millions across the globe.

Parallel to the narrative of Changez's disillusionment with America, is a second narrative of his growing nationalist sentiments. An analysis of the text reveals that Hamid draws a close link between Changez's political consciousness and anti-imperialist course of action with the awakening and strengthening of his nationalist identity. It is Changez's concern for the welfare of his homeland and his family and his anger at American policies that were undermining Pakistan's security which complete his breach with America in the text. Thus Changez informs the readers' that his protests against America were actually motivated by patriotic motives. He says, "I had … gotten a job as a university lecturer, and I made it my mission on campus to advocate a disengagement from your country by mine" (108).

Wounded nationalist pride and self esteem, as a matter of fact, is one of the primary affective factors identified by Hamid which cause Changez's transition to fundamentalism. This is reflected in the negative comparisons which Changez makes between America grandeur and clout and Pakistan's weakness seems to be one of the main elements which create cracks in Changez's commitment to America. Thus his first view of Underwood Samson's offices, the embodiment of American financial and technological advancement, evokes sentiments of resentment in him and he observes,

> Four thousand years ago, we ... had cities that were laid out on grids and boasted underground sewers, while the ancestors of those who would ... colonize America were illiterate barbarians. Now our cities were largely unplanned, unsanitary affairs, and America had universities with individual endowments greater than our national budget for education. To be reminded of this vast disparity was, for me, to be ashamed (20).

Hamid highlights for his readers how, for Changez, the nationalist, this discrepancy not only results in feelings of humiliation but also produce resentment against the entity which he holds responsible for his nation's inferior status.

The author depicts how following 9/11 America loses its tolerant cosmopolitan character while caught in the grip of an intense nostalgic patriotic fervour and a paranoid xenophobic mistrust of foreigners and of young male Asian immigrants in particular. Reports of the victimization of Muslims in the wake of 9/11 with "Pakistani cab drivers being beaten to within an inch of their lives; the FBI … raiding mosques, shops, and even people's houses" and the

disappearance of Muslim men all greatly perturb Changez and awaken in him a civilizational solidarity and resentment against America (56).

The text also outlines how Changez's relationship with America is further strained on account of the personal humiliation and abuse he has to suffer on different occasions on account of his ethnicity and faith. On their return from Manila, Changez is separated from his companions at the airport on account of his racial origin and is subject to a humiliating interrogation in which he is made to strip down to his boxer shorts. Even at Underwood Samson, in spite of the apparent congeniality, he detects a change in the attitude of his colleagues towards him and becomes aware of what he terms as "the growing importance of the tribe" (70). On one occasion he is mistaken for an Arab and is abused which greatly injures his self esteem. Thus American xenophobia in the wake of 9/11 is thus one of the affective factors which cause Changez to re-evaluate his allegiance to America.

An analysis of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* shows how Changez is the only character who is shown as undergoing change and transformation and is consequently the sole round character in the novella. Changez's evolution is engendered in the fable through a depiction of the protagonist's existential crisis and shifting identities. As a matter of fact Hamid seems to be drawing on the tradition of a frame narrative used by Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* as is highlighted in Changez's reference to Marlowe and Kurtz in the narrative (110). Just as the story of the voyage down the Congo River served as a frame through which Conrad enabled Marlowe to narrate his personal spiritual odyssey, likewise the setting of a conversation between Changez and the American interlocutor seems to be the structural framework encasing the main narrative which is the story of Changez's transformation from an imperial subject to an ardent nationalist.

An analysis of the text reveals the protagonist's wavering and changing allegiances. At different places in the text Changez seems to be articulating contradictory identities ranging from an American westernized self to a fundamentalist nationalist. Thus initially the readers encounter an image of an Americanized youth who "was the product of an American University", was "earning a lucrative American salary" and was "infatuated with an American woman" (44). However, we are also shown how this American identity which Changez has fashioned for himself is beset by cracks underneath the apparently smooth veneer. Thus when the attacks of 9/11 take place, Changez does not experience empathy for his adopted homeland nor does he share the trauma of the people around him. Rather his reaction devoid of any and all sympathy stuns the readers. Thus he says, ""I stared as one-and then the other- of the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center collapsed. And then I *smiled*. Yes ... my initial reaction was to be remarkably pleased" (43). Thus Changez's identification with America, is however, never complete and is undermined by undercurrents of resentment.

A different and conflicting conception of self emerges in Changez's attachment to his homeland. Thus Hamid shows how even while he is enthralled with America and living the American dream, he retains a strong sense of patriotism. Thus he confesses to the American interlocutor, "Princeton made everything possible for me. But it did not, *could* not, make me forget such things as how much I enjoy the tea in this, the city of my birth …" (9). Nostalgia for his homeland emerges in Changez's recollections and descriptions of Pakistan to Erica who comments, "I love it when you talk about where you come from. You become so alive" (49). Likewise, New York with its taxi cab drivers who spoke Urdu, samosa and channa serving establishments such as the Pak-Punjab Deli and its strong and visible South Asian community feels like home to Changez.

These conflicting allegiances and existential ambivalence is resolved through the completion of Changez's disillusionment with America and his adoption of a nationalist position. This detailed depiction of Changez's inner psychological conflict of identity not only makes him a round character but also an authentic character with critical consciousness. In the process Hamid also highlights how it is not the blind hatred of religious extremism but the fundamentalism of American capitalism and imperialism which is responsible for Changez's becoming an extremist. Through the character of Changez Hamid achieves and reaffirms his nationalist project and critique of imperialism.

In contrast all the American characters presented in the text including the silent interlocutor, Erica, Jim and Changez's co-workers and fellow Princetonians are flat and inauthentic and deprived of critical consciousness.

The main American character in the novel seems to be that of the stranger Changez meets in Anarkali and to whom he subsequently tells his entire tale over a shared meal. Thus the American stranger remains present throughout the length of the action and is the first hand recipient of Changez's tale. However in spite of this extended presence, he remains unnamed and unheard from. The author and his narrator do not clarify what he is doing in Anarkali, what his profession is and what his plans are with the result that this stranger remains a shadowy and enigmatic figure whose origin, motivations and thoughts remain unexpressed and unclear.

In his portrayal of this American interlocutor, Hamid completely omits his personal history which results in the dehumanization of this character. The readers are not told who he is, whether he has a family, where did he grow up and what, if any, inner conflicts he has. This once again sets up a contrast between Changez and his listener. While Changez's background is given

in great detail and his crisis of identity forms the pivotal point of the narrative, no similar detailed characterization is visible in the case of this silent man. He thus emerges as a character without any substance or authenticity.

The only function assigned to the American is listening. From start till end he is the silent interlocutor of Changez. It is quite incredulous that he spends an entire evening and devotes several hours listening to the incessant story of a complete stranger without any protest. Thus the very situation in which he is placed and presented by the author is quite unbelievable and improbable. This silence and unexplained passivity make the American interlocutor an inauthentic character.

The silence of the American interlocutor can be contrasted with the eloquence of Changez. Hamid attributes to his narrator a sophisticated lyrical language replete with metaphors, similes, imagery drawn from a variety of sources and other figurative devices. This metaphorical style can be observed when Changez describes himself thus to the American interlocutor, "I was a perfect breast, if you will- tan, succulent, seemingly defiant of gravity…" (3). On one occasion he describes Erica using a simile thus, "I met her eyes, and for the first time I perceived that there was something *broken* behind them, like a tiny crack in a diamond that becomes visible when viewed through a magnifying lens…" (31). Beautiful use of adjectives and personification and a lyrical quality is reflected in the following characterisation of the New York weather, "It was one of those glorious late-July afternoons in New York when a stiff wind off the Atlantic makes the trees swell and the clouds race across the sky… the humidity vanishes as the city fills its lungs with cooler, briny air" (35).

While Changez, the character who represents the nationalist position of the author, is given a refined poetic idiom in the text, the American is completely deprived of language and thus of the agency of presenting his perspective. This discrimination can be explained with reference to the ideological project of the author which causes him to strengthen his nationalist cause by representing the character who is his mouthpiece as eloquent and the one who represents the standpoint of the opposite position as silent and dumb. The absence of speech in case of the stranger can thus be attributed to the writer's ideological position and the inability of an ardent nationalist to record and present the perspective of the imperialist civilization. This silence not only makes the American an inauthentic character but also effectively silences and excludes the American perspective. Thus in this tale of critique of imperialism, the perspective of the entity being condemned is effectively marginalized.

Due to the absence of any speech, the readers are unable to form any independent opinion about the American interlocutor's character and remain completely dependent on Changez's reportage. Even when he says something we do not hear his words, but rather we are only presented with Changez's reaction. Thus the readers have to rely on Changez's words to register the American's appearance, physical and facial gestures, feelings and emotional reactions and viewpoint. An analysis of the text reveals that this reportage is not a neutral or balanced affair. Rather, the image being built through Changez's commentary is predominantly negative and hostile.

A sense of menace and hostility is associated with the American on account of his description as a military or intelligence figure. Through Changez's hints the readers are left with the impression that this interlocutor is a man of military background with "short-cropped hair" and an "expansive chest", characteristics common to "soldiers of all nationalities" according to

Changez (1). His strange phone and the gun he seems to be wearing and the fact that he seems to know a lot about Changez indicates that he is probably an undercover agent. The perception of the American as an intelligence agent is strengthened through Changez's description of his mobile phone, "… your mobile phone! I have not previously seen its like; it is, I suspect, one of those models capable of communicating via satellite when no ground coverage is available" (18). Changez comments on this unusual phone several times in the narrative and thus reinforces the sinister quality associated with the American. The perception of the American as hostile menacing man is strengthened through multiple references to a bulging object he seems to be hiding under his jacket and which is characterized variously as a wallet or a pack of business cards . However the suggestion or description of the object that sticks in the reader's mind is that of it being a weapon. Thus Changez says, "… a bulge manifests itself through the lightweight fabric of your suit, precisely at that point parallel to the sternum where the undercover security agents of … all countries tend to favor wearing an armpit holster for their sidearm" (84). These descriptions give the American interlocutor a particularly sinister quality.

The American actually emerges as a mysterious and enigmatic character in the narrative. Not only is his appearance suspicious even his purpose for being in Anarkali is unclear. Once again the readers' do not have any concrete information and have to rely on Changez's guesses. Time and again Changez asks him about the reason behind his being in the market place but he never gets a straight or clear answer. Rather the American evades the questions. Changez based on his own estimations concludes that the American is definitely not a tourist and seems to be on some sort of mission probably of a military nature. This lack of concrete information makes the American an ambiguous and untrustworthy figure.

Even facial expressions, physical gestures and emotional responses associated with the American build up an unpleasant and unsettling image. At one point the American's expressions are recorded thus, "It is impossible to tell, sir, given the gloom about us and the unexpressive cast of your face, but I suspect you are looking at me with a degree of revulsion…" (64). Changez reports a similar revulsion and reports how the American "recoil[s]" when he sees a disfigured beggar in Anarkali (24). On the very first page, Changez refers to the American's harsh expressions when he says, "…I see your face has hardened…" (1).

In Changez's reportage the emotions which are associated with the American include anger, fear, paranoia and aggression and reinforce a negative image of the American. Anger, antagonism and fear is reflected in Changez's following comment on the American, "Ah yes, the bats; they are circling rather low. They will not touch us; allow me to reassure you on that score. You know, you say? Your tone is curt; I can see that I have offended you, *angered* you even" (45).

As a matter of fact, the predominant emotions associated with the American are those of obsessive paranoia and fear. This suspicion and mistrust is expressed by the American when tea was served to them causing Changez to reassure him thus, "Do not look so suspicious. I assure you, sir, nothing untoward will happen to you, not even a runny stomach. After all, it is not as if it has been *poisoned*" (7). Thus when Changez advises the American to avoid the yoghurt and salad, he is shown as immediately jumping to the conclusion that the food is poisoned. As a result Changez has to assure him thus, "No, no, I meant nothing sinister; your stomach might be upset by uncooked foods, that is all. If you insist, I will go so far as to sample each of these plates myself first, to reassure you that there is nothing to fear" (73). Similarly the American is shown to be afraid of the server who is a burly Pathan and in Changez's words "seem[s]

worried" (3). When there is an electricity outage, the American is reported as jumping up in fear by Changez. At a number of places Changez comments on unease of the American (1, 19, 24, 36 & 65). The interlocutor's reactions of alarm and fear reinforce the image of Americans as paranoid and neurotic. Thus through the character of the American paranoia, fear and insecurity are thus the predominant impressions associated with the American in the text.

The American interlocutor is a one-dimensional character whose consciousness is pervaded by stereotypes of the East and of Muslims. Thus he views bearded men with mistrust treating them as potential terrorists. When Changez first meets the American he reports to the readers that his beard alarms and frightens the man. Looking at the scar on Changez's forearm, he seems to jump to the conclusion that Changez is a dangerous fellow and is engaged in training for jihad at some camp. Changez sums up the American's reaction thus, "I detect certain seriousness in your expression, as though you were wondering what sort of training camp could have given a fellow from the plains such as myself cause to engage in these activities" (28).

In this narrative presented from the perspective of a Pakistani Muslim author, the figure of hostility and menace is thus not that of the religious fundamentalist. Rather the characteristics of suspicion, hostility and negativity are attached with the American. Thus it is the American who is portrayed as a military figure, and who is presented as shadowy, neurotic and narrow minded.

The other major American character in the novel is Erica, who forms the love interest of Changez the protagonist. Even though she is the beloved of the narrator and becomes his obsession, her character remains ineffectual and flat. As a matter of fact, a deep strain of misogyny seems to inform Hamid's characterization of Erica.

In the text, the element most highlighted in relation to Erica is her physical beauty. Her intellectual pursuits are not given much space and remain in the background. In most of the encounters between Changez and Erica, the text shows the narrator focusing on her nudity or her limbs. She thus appears as the object of male gaze and fantasy. At a number of places in the text there are detailed sensual descriptions of the shape, touch and feel of Erica's navel, thighs and breasts.

Changez's reports in detail his erotic feelings and reactions when Erica's takes off her bikini and he sees her bare breasts. While taking a bus ride with Erica in Greece, Changez is shown as being highly conscious of Erica's bare legs and thighs. Even the scene of their lovemaking is delineated with all the minute details. Thus Changez seems to be obsessed with her physical beauty.

In this process of objectification Erica is deprived of authentic consciousness and her intellectual pursuits and interests are pushed to the margins of the narrative. Erica is reported to have won an award at Princeton for her "creative thesis" which was a work of long fiction. But its topic and subject is never broached by Changez who is obsessed with her physical beauty. Even when Changez reads it he records his disappointment. His reaction thus generates an anti-climatic feeling in the readers. Thus Hamid seems to be belittling the intellectual achievements of Erica through his narrator's lack of interest.

Erica is actually shown to be a mentally and emotionally unstable character. As a matter of fact, the narrative focuses on and records the progressive decline of Erica and how she slips away into insanity and madness. Changez reports how the death of her boyfriend Chris has left Erica irreparably damaged psychologically. She is shown to be an emotionally fragile character

who is unable to deal with the tragedy in her life and thus loses her grip on reality and descends into neurosis eventually committing suicide. At a number of places in the text Changez comments on how she seems to be slipping away and vanishing, how she seems to be receding into herself and how fragile and delicate she is. By portraying Erica in this way Hamid seems to be echoing the stereotype of weakness, madness and hysteria for women.

In some ways, Hamid appears to be drawing a parallel between the character of Erica and America particularly through the destructive influence both of them have on Changez. Thus the name of Erica is actually the second part of the word America. Furthermore, like America, Erica is shown as having a majestic and alluring presence drawing all towards her. In Greece Changez describes Erica as "stunningly *regal*" (10) and describes her effect on those surrounding her thus, "She attracted people to her; She had presence, an uncommon *magnetism* (13). At the start of the narrative Changez is shown as experiencing a similar attraction and pull towards America. Thus Changez's attraction to America can be paralleled with his infatuation with Erica. Both America and Erica initially welcome Changez and draw him closer. Hence Changez reveals in this narrative of his life how he was invited to join the American meritocratic system through the offer of scholarships and later on through a job at Underwood Samson, a top financial firm in New York, which seemed to offer him an opportunity to assimilate in the American system. Likewise Erica too brings Changez closer to her through frequent invitations to social events, by calling him to meet her parents over dinner and through several intimate moments.

Another similarity seems to lie in how both America and Erica in Changez's words give themselves up to a powerful nostalgia after 9/11. Thus Changez reports about Erica's condition following the twin tower attacks, "…she was disappearing into a powerful *nostalgia* …" (68). Likewise America in the wake of 9/11 is characterized thus, "America, too, was increasingly

giving itself over to a dangerous nostalgia at that time" (69). At this stage both America and Erica shut out Changez and abandon and harm him. America in the grip of a patriotic nostalgic fervor loses its tolerant character and becomes increasingly racist and discriminatory. Changez experiences this discrimination firsthand and is taunted by racist gibes. This results in the shattering of his personal American dream. Likewise Erica at this stage withdraws from Changez's life and stops replying to his mails and calls. For the infatuated youth who had started dreaming of spending the rest of his life happily married to Erica, this is a devastating change. Just as America abandons Changez and destroys him, so does Erica. Erica like America emerges as cruel, callous, self centered and harms Changez. They both awaken in Changez a vision of a prosperous and happy life and then through their indifference and selfishness destroy his hopes and dreams. Thus in the wake of 9/11 Changez's life crumbles and America and Erica play an important part in it. Disillusioned by the American financial and political system and disappointed in love, Changez finds himself unable to work and consequently loses his job and career and has to come back to Pakistan.

As a matter of fact, the author seems to be attributing the unraveling of Changez's life and dreams and his gradual descent into chaos to the influence of Erica. Changez reports how after Erica had abandoned him, he becomes unstable and starts behaving like a neurotic lunatic. Changez describes his state thus,

> I was an incoherent and emotional madman, flying off into rages and sinking into depressions. Sometimes I would lie in bed, thinking in circles, asking the same questions about why and where Erica had gone; sometimes I would find myself walking the streets … craving conflict with anyone (101)

Changez informs his listener how even after Erica's suicide and his return to Pakistan he has hallucinations and visions in which he imagines himself married to Erica and leading a happy life with her. He too thus becomes ambiguous and seems to be losing grip with reality. He characterizes these phantasmal images as journeys of his emotional being and explains how his relationship with Erica made it impossible for him to restore his emotional and mental balance. He thus tells the listener,

> Such journeys have convinced me that it is not always possible to restore one's boundaries after they have been blurred and made permeable by a relationship: try as we might, we cannot reconstitute ourselves as the autonomous beings we previously imagined ourselves to be (105).

In this narrative of 9/11, the tragedy being focused on is thus not that of the victims of the bombings and their relatives. Rather the misfortunes being mourned are that of a brilliant and promising Muslim youth whose dreams and aspirations are crushed by the callous attitude of the American capitalist system and an American woman.

The 3rd major American character presented in the text is that of Jim, Changez's boss and a senior executive in Underwood Samson. Hamid's portrayal of Jim is a one-dimensional portrait focusing solely on his professional pursuits in the world of finance and capitalism. The readers' first introduction to Jim is when he comes to Princeton to interview Changez and other applicants for a job at Underwood Samson. Changez highlights how Jim's life and thinking is dominated by money and capital. Thus the first thing he says to Changez is, "Sell yourself" (4). Further along in the interview, Changez reports Jim's reactions which once again betray a reified consciousness concerned only with profit. Thus Changez says, "His eyes were cold … and

judgmental … like a jeweler's when he inspects out of curiosity a diamond he intends neither to buy nor to sell" (4). Likewise in all subsequent meetings with Changez, Jim extols the virtues of expediency, success and monetary gain.

At a number of points in the narrative it is mentioned how Jim draws a parallel between himself and Changez and feels a particular affinity for him. However, it is highlighted how this attraction and likeness is based on a perceived similarity in terms of economic status and the desire for wealth and success. Thus Jim comments on how both he and Changez started out as poor kids with only their determination and hard work as their assets on the path to financial success. This empathy leads Jim to become a mentor for Changez and on one occasion he even invites him home for a meal. However, this connection does not blossom into a rich emotional friendship and remains a purely professional business relationship at the end. Thus when Changez fails in the assignment given to him in Chile, Jim does not hesitate to dismiss him. His decision is based purely on economic and professional considerations and emotions play no part in it. Thus he says to Changez, "I'm not a big believer in compassion at the workplace. I didn't think twice when it came to firing you" (96). This shows that his life is governed solely by the principle of profit and loss and loyalty and compassion were not important to him. Thus it can be said that Jim has been depicted as a completely reified and commodified character.

Jim's character has actually been portrayed as the ideological and financial hand of the American empire. Time and again he echoes capitalism's ideological mantra of focusing on the fundamentals of profit to the exclusion of all emotional and sentimental humanitarian considerations. As a matter of fact, when Changez develops a growing concern for the welfare of his country after the incidents of 9/11, Jim advises him to suppress such emotions as they were distractions and hindrances in the path of financial success. Furthermore, he tells Changez to

accept the decline of his country as inevitable outcome of the law of evolution whereby the species with lesser efficacy are eliminated. Thus he comments, "We came from places that were wasting away" (58).

This one-dimensional portrayal as a ruthless financial figure devoid of sentiments is reductive and dehumanizes Jim. As a matter of fact, his personal life has been completely omitted from the narrative. The only thing highlighted in his background is the poverty of his childhood. Furthermore, when he talks of his father to Changez, his tone is devoid of any sentimental attachment and he only highlights how his father did not have the skills or the vision to carve a place for himself in the evolving economy and consequently became a part of the section of the workforce that was rendered redundant. There is a subtle suggestion in the text that he might be gay through a reference to "a not insignificant number of male nudes" in his flat (71). However, his personal life and relationships have been omitted from the text creating for the readers a flat stereotypical character who is only obsessed with wealth and money and business pursuits.

Apart from these three major figures, there are also some minor American characters on the margins of the text. These include the Princeton graduates with whom Changez vacationed in Greece and who are portrayed as materialistic, arrogant and spoiled rich youngsters. They do not contribute to the progress of the narrative and seem to have been included merely to critique American imperialist hubris and consumer capitalism. Thus Changez highlights how his companions spend money with impunity paying up to "fifty dollars" a meal, order around people "twice their age" and "conduct themselves in the world as though they were its ruling class" (13). Thus these characters are mere sketches of American lust, greed and materialism.

In the course of the narrative, Changez also refers to some co-workers at Underwood Samson. These characters are never fully developed and seem to be merely caricatures of capitalists. As a matter of fact, the element being highlighted in relation to these American characters is their reified consciousness, loss of personal identity and critical consciousness and lack of humanity. While commenting on the appearance of his fellow recruits, Changez highlights this effacement of individuality, "We were marvelously diverse … and yet we were not … that shorn of hair and dressed in battle fatigues, we would have been virtually indistinguishable" (23). Hamid's portrayal of these corporate workers particularly focuses on how these people have lost their humanity and have become commodified figures. This can be seen in Changez's unnamed co-workers inability to perceive the hostility and resentment against them in the eyes of the Filipino worker. It is also reflected in their imperviousness and lack of sympathy for the workers in the New York cable firm dismissed due to their recommendations. Likewise, it is also highlighted by Changez when he comments about the company Vice-President he was working with in Chile,

> He was a manager of excellent repute … but at the level of human beings our connection was nil … he functioned so completely immersed in the structures of his professional micro-universe… I saw that in this constant striving to realize a financial future, no thought was given to the critical personal and political issues that affect one's emotional present (87).

It can be argued that a great disparity exists in Hamid's depiction and portrayal of the Pakistani character and the American figures in the novel. This disparity can be attributed to the writer's choice of generic form. The very form of the monologue which allows for only one speaker and fully developed character leaves no scope to introduce authentic American

characters. This choice of form can be termed as political and enables the nationalist author to give ample illustration to his grievances against the excesses of the imperial superpower. However, this results in the characters representing the American empire becoming flat, illogical and insubstantial and in the process leaves out the perspective of the empire and its financial capitalist arm thereby creating a significant gap and silence in the author's fable and undermining the coherence of his ideological project. Thus the structural framework selected by the author to embody his ideological project, proves to be the element which undoes the writer's fable and his aim. In this tale of critique of American imperialism, told through the generic framework of the dramatic monologue, the conventions of the fable necessitate the omission of the perspective of the party held responsible for grievous crimes against humanity. So the readers are not given a neutral, credible and balanced picture of American capitalism which undermines the reliability, credibility and authenticity of the author's ideological perspective.

The portrayal of the American characters can questioned on the grounds that they are not presented directly in front of the readers. Rather they enter the narrative only through the agency of Changez, who himself confesses to be an unreliable narrator thus, "I cannot recall many of the details of the events I have been relating to you. But surely it is the *gist* that matters; I am, after all, telling you a history, and in history … it is the thrust of one's narrative that counts, not the accuracy of one's details" (71).

This undermines the authenticity and credibility of the characterization and even of the very tale that Hamid is building to strengthen his cause of nationalism and imperialist critique. It calls into question the motivations of Changez and thus the author behind the inclusion and exclusion of various textual details.

Literary tropes such as imagery, analogies, similes, symbolism and allusions also reinforce the stereotypical image of the Americans as coldblooded, ruthless, reified and inhumane figures.

Throughout Changez's monologue analogies and similes drawing on predator and prey imagery is associated with the American characters. Thus at one point Changez describes the menacing and mysterious demeanor of his interlocutor by comparing his attitude to "the behavior of an animal that has ventured too far from its lair and is now, in unfamiliar surroundings, uncertain whether it is predator or prey!" (19). At another place Changez characterizes the perception and close attention of his listener thus, "… you have … followed the arc of my tale with the uncanny skill of a skeez shooter" (45). Further on in the narrative Changez compares the American stranger with a wily fox sensing its prey (46). Given the supposed military background of the interlocutor, these literary tropes reinforce an image of violence, brutality and deceptiveness of the American military.

A lexicon of predator and prey terminology also dominates the conversation of the American characters associated with finance. Thus Jim commenting on Changez's tenacity, focus and commitment characterizes him as "a shark" (41). Similarly while explaining to Changez the mechanism of transition in capitalist economy, Jim employs jargon drawn from Darwinian evolutionism and creates an elaborate analogy, "The economy's an animal … It evolves. First it needed muscle. Now all the blood it could spare was rushing to its brain… In finance… And that's where *you* are. You're blood brought from some part of the body the species doesn't need anymore. Like the tailbone" (58). Furthermore, the use of such imagery and analogies in relation to the capitalists builds before the readers an image of the ruthlessness, expediency and cold bloodedness of the capitalists.

A hostile image of the capitalists is reinforced through the military jargon and terminology which seems to dominate the conversation of the financial analysts as reported by Changez. The financial and corporate world seems to be characterized as a battle field and the analysts as soldiers. Thus when Changez refuses to work on the Chilean project, Jim exhorts him to reconsider his decision thus, "In wartime soldiers don't really fight for their flags, Changez. They fight for their friends, their buddies. Their team" (92). Similarly Changez terms his training at Underwood Samson "as a form of mental judo for business" (22). Even Jim's terms of praise for Changez are drawn from military jargon. Thus on the completion of his training at Underwood Samson where Changez finished top of the class, Jim commends him in the following terms, "… you've got a bit of the warrior in you" (27). At another point in the narrative Changez describes Jim's hand movements and gestures thus, "There was an almost ritualistic quality to his movements, like … a knight-donning his gloves before striding onto a field of contest" (58).

The narrative of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* contains several allusions to Hollywood films dealing with themes of imperialism, war and violence. The allusion to "*Star Wars*" and Wainwright's quotation from the film, "Beware the dark side, young Skywalker" foreshadows and forebodes Changez's realization of the true nature of the American empire and its evil (23). In another conversation, Wainwright and Changez re-enact parts and lines from the film *"Top Gun"* (21). This not only highlights the intense rivalry in the financial world but also introduces America's role in the Gulf conflict and its controversial military presence in the region on the margins of the text.

Another striking feature is the symbolic association of darkness and gloom with the American interlocutor attaching an ominous quality with him and by extension with America in

the text. On more than one occasion Changez comments on how the American is sitting in the shadows and how his face is shrouded in darkness which not only renders him an enigmatic and suspicious figure, but it can also be interpreted as a symbolic embodiment and representation of the murky reality of American empire hidden and disguised behind the promise of prosperity, meritocracy and empowerment which lured Changez to America at the start of the narrative.

This stereotypical portrayal of America as a ruthless imperial power seeking to dominate the world through financial and military clout built up through various formal elements of the narrative seems to be informed by the tradition of Occidentalism which in the words of Buruma and Margalit (2004) is constituted by "[t]he dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies…" and detractors in the East (5). In their landmark work *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of its Enemies*, they highlight that how this discourse is informed by political ideologies "in which the United States features as the Devil incarnate…" and is portrayed as a soulless, materialistic, decadent and shallow and unfeeling society (4). They characterize this portrayal and characterization of the West as prejudiced and reductive and similar to the misrepresentation of the East in the discourse of Orientalism (5).

The influence of Occidentalism is apparent in several aspects of Hamid's portrayal of America. Thus in keeping with the tradition of Occidentalism, Changez characterizes the American society as being afflicted with the disease of decadent materialism and an alienating loss of spirituality and human values. The reification of this society is reflected in how human consciousness and relations have come to be dominated by the principle of profit and money. Thus all the American characters are shown to be engaged in the blind pursuit of wealth and capital and have no time to form meaningful human relations or to empathize with those whose lives are destroyed as a consequence of their policies. Even an apparently genial character like

Wainwright is nowhere to be seen and does not offer Changez any sympathy when he is dismissed from Underwood Samson and when his life is crumbling.

Likewise in the tradition of Occidentalism, Hamid in his depiction of America gives us in the words of Baruma and Margalit an "image of … arrogant, greedy, decadent, frivolous cosmopolitanism" (11). This arrogance can be seen time and again in the text in relation to the American characters. Changez comments on the predominance of this trait in his comments on his fellow Princeton graduates, Erica's father and generally in America's elite. At one point Changez conveys his irritation to his interlocutor thus, "... that particular type of entitled and unsympathetic American who so annoyed me when I encountered him in the classrooms and workplaces of your country's elite" (74). Greed and decadence is reflected in the lavish lifestyles enjoyed by the American characters in the novel and their grand parties, expense accounts and luxurious vacations.

It is this stereotypical and dehumanizing depiction of Americans which creates gaps and fissures in the author's ideological project and undermines the coherence and effectiveness of his fable. It shows any narrative, informed by the ideology of nationalism in which the imperialist power is seen as a villain, can only caricature and distort the object of derision and consequently strips it of its humanity. Thus when writing from a nationalist perspective, the author is circumscribed by his ideological position to depict the imperialist in only negative terms denying, suppressing and excluding any and all of its positive elements. This ideological constraint can be seen in Hamid's tale of American imperialist excesses and misadventures in the wake of 9/11. America and its representatives emerge in this tale of terrorism and 9/11 as repulsive and abhorrent devoid of any saving grace. They are made to shoulder the blame of the

destruction of not only an intelligent aspiring youth but are also identified as the major cause of disarray and chaos all across the globe particularly closer to the author's homeland of America.

It can thus be concluded that Hamid's nationalist tale of imperialist critique is undermined by a textual unconscious created by gaps and silences in the portrayal of the object of critique, i.e., America. These fissures can be seen in all aspects of the author's fable such as characterization, literary tropes, generic and narrative structure, etc. An analysis of the textual processes of embodiment is the key to deconstructing the author's ideological project and uncovering its critique engendered within the novella.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The present study aimed at investigating and evaluating in a comparative mode the ideological nature of Updike and Hamid's portrayal of the phenomena of capitalism, neoliberalism, terrorism and fundamentalism with reference to the literary form or technique of their novels. The study successfully met the research objectives through a highlighting of the ideological aims of the two authors, an explanation of their divergences and finally through an analysis of how elements of literary form constituted an implicit or unconscious critique of the ideological projects of Updike and Hamid.

The model of comparison was based on Macherey's method of analysis of ideology in relation to literary narrative outlined in *A Theory of Literary Production* and developed under the influence of Althusser's ("Reading") concept of symptomatic reading, the psychoanalytic concept of the unconscious, and the formalist notion of estrangement and defamiliarization effects of literary form. The first step, according to this model, involved the identification of the author's conscious "ideological project" in the works under study. John Updike in his novel *Terrorist* was found to be advocating and supporting the values and social infrastructure developed by American capitalism in the face of an onslaught in the shape of mindless and anarchic Islamic fundamentalism or terrorism. The general project of Hamid's text, on the other hand, was one informed by nationalism. Inspired by patriotic sentiments the author attempted to provide a human face to the stereotyped demonic figure of the Pakistani Muslim terrorist,

attributing terrorism and fundamentalism to disillusionment and angst arising from capitalism's imperial misadventures. Thus it was found that the ideological projects of the two authors were vastly different.

In the course of the study it was established that both *Terrorist* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* while ostensibly dealing with similar issues of terrorism, the attacks of 9/11, fundamentalism and consumer capitalism, were nevertheless greatly different in terms of their presentation of these issues. This disparity in portrayal was discovered to be on account of the authors' vastly differing ideological perspectives shaped by their nationalist and civilizational identities and empathies. Thus Updike presents these issues from the perspective of the liberal West and Hamid's portrayal is informed by his nationalist sympathies.

Identification and description of the author's ideological project was followed by an analysis of the "fable" or "figuration" of the novel, i.e., the formal apparatus used to give shape and structure to the ideological world-view and themes of the author including characterization, imagery, symbolic system, vocabulary, dialogues, descriptions, tropes, setting, narrator, plot, etc. The focus of formal analysis was on revealing the incongruities, fissures, gaps and silences in various elements of the narrative. In accordance with the tenets of symptomatic reading given by Althusser and Macherey these contradictions were analysed to identify an unconscious or silence at the centre of the text, symptomatic of the reality which the text could not say openly because of its ideological determination, but which its fissured, discontinuous and ambivalent narrative nevertheless articulated. The formal structure of the narrative was thus viewed as constituting an implicit critique of ideology and as indirectly revealing the historical conditions of production of the text.

In keeping with the research aims and objectives, the narratives or fables constructed by Updike and Hamid to embody their ideological projects, were found to contain fissures and gaps in various elements of literary form such as characterisation, plot, narrative point of view, imagery and other literary tropes which brought to light silences and omissions in their informing ideology. An analysis of both the texts revealed that neither of the author's was able to transcend his ideological preference or sympathy for his nation and consequently created a fable which was found lacking or defective in terms of representation of the viewpoint of the other side. Thus in Updike's tale of onslaught on Western liberal civilization by an intolerant, fanatical and militant Islamist ideology, the characterization of Muslims is reductive, stereotypical and defective. In Hamid's nationalist monologue, the perspective of America is completely left out and its representatives in the text are dehumanized and caricatured through various elements of the text such as characterization, literary tropes, point of view, etc.

An analysis of characterization in both texts revealed fissures and gaps in the author's conscious ideological projects. Thus in *Terrorist*, Updike delineates the American characters Jack and Teresa in a lot of detail with clearly defined critical consciousness. The Muslim characters including Ahmad, Shaikh Rashid and the figures of Muslim terrorists are however caricatures or stereotypes deprived of humanity. This situation is reversed in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* where it is the Pakistani Muslim character who is developed critically as a round 3-dimensional character and it is the Americans who are given a reductive and formulaic portrayal as violent military figures, imperialists and soulless, reified capitalists. In the first case, the disparity in characterization highlights the inability of the Western ideology of neoliberalism to account for the humanity, rationality or cultural and theological authenticity of its detractors. It thus can only portray the Muslim terrorists and fundamentalists as mindless fanatics and

irrational bigots. In Hamid's novella, the silencing of the American character and their one-dimensional portrayal points to the bias and prejudice of nationalism against the imperialist power. It reflects how the nationalist perspective will always maintain the otherness of the imperialists and for this purpose it will always seek to exclude their motivations and sensibilities from its ideological narrative.

Textual dialogues and the style attributed to various characters also reveal the author's ideological preferences and the gaps in their ideologies. Thus in *Terrorist*, the stereotyping of the Muslim characters is reinforced through their language which abounds with jihadist clichés and Arabic expressions creating an image of medieval fanatics and in the case of the American born and bred teenager, Ahmad, makes him quite improbable and unbelievable. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, the refined embellished and lyrical expression of the Pakistani protagonist forms a glaring contrast to the silence of the American interlocutor. Thus in Hamid's Pakistani narrative of patriotism, the voice of the characters representing the imperial country is excluded on account of ideological reasons.

A comparative analysis of literary tropes and figurative devices employed by the two authors' also brings to the fore certain gaps in the literary executions of their ideological visions. Thus a critical examination of the imagery, allusions and jargon associated with Muslim characters and Islam in Updike's narrative reveals liberalism's stereotypical view of Islamism as a violent, aggressive and morally abhorrent theological narrative. Hamid, on the other hand, deploys a rhetorical strategy of predator-prey imagery, military jargon and symbolism of darkness and shadows to build up an image of menace and aggression in relation to the Americans. In the process both authors' seek to repress and omit the humanity and positive attributes of the targets of their ideological prejudices.

The narrative point of view of the two narratives also comes under scrutiny when considered from the ideological positions of the authors. Thus Updike's omniscient narrator is found to be lacking in authenticity and credibility when analysed in conjunction with the disparity in characterization and the stereotypical and reductive presentation of Muslims and Arabs in the text. The choice of narrative point of view is thus unable to disguise the fissures and gaps in the author's ideology of liberalism. In case of Hamid, the choice of the form of dramatic monologue and a first person narrative, circumscribes the trajectory of the whole tale and clearly leads to the omission of the point of view of the Americans who are reduced to figures of silence or reportage. Once again this reveals how in the ideological nationalist worldview of the Pakistani author, the empire will always remain an outsider or a figure which is repressed and can only appear on the margins of the text.

The gaps and fissures in the formal structures of the two narratives actually point to discontinuities embedded in the ideologies of the two authors' vastly differing and often conflicting civilizations as crystallized in historically transmitted literary and academic discourses of Orientalism and Occidentalism. Thus *Terrorist*, can be placed within the tradition of a body of writings emerging from the West which misrepresent and stereotype the East. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, on the other hand, can be said to belong to the tradition of Occidentalism, which gives a dehumanizing and reductive portrayal of the West and in the context of 9/11, America, the most powerful nation of the Western civilization. The current study thus reveals that representation in the writings of 9/11 is political and authorial ideology leads to a misrepresentation, distortion and even marginalization of the opposing viewpoint. It highlights how Orientalist misrepresentation of Muslims and Occidentalist stereotyping of the West is reinforced through post 9/11 literature.

In the final analysis it can thus be argued that the two authors' are unable to transcend their civilizational identities and echo a deep rooted historical mistrust between the east and the west. Both emerge as nationalists who cannot overcome their ideological conditioning and thus present a partial and incomplete analysis of the themes of 9/11, terrorism, fundamentalism and clash of civilizations. An analysis of the formal elements of the two texts reveals how the ideological projects of both authors' are undermined by the silences, gaps and fissures in their portrayal of the other side. The current study thus reveals the paradoxical strengthening of national identities in this age of globalization on account of the cataclysmic events of 9/11.

This research reaffirms how literary writings, contrary to liberal humanist claims, are always political and are always informed by some ideological perspective or aim derived from the author's civilizational, national or cultural affinity. It reaffirms the ideological nature of literature particularly in the wake of recent geopolitical developments across the globe. It also explores the close relationship between literary form and ideology and the value of formalist analysis for unearthing the ideological configurations of literature.

This study was an effort to apply the formalist techniques of political criticism as developed by Structural Marxists and Macherey to analyse the ideological configurations of literary texts. Illuminating critical studies of the relation between literature and ideology can also be carried out using the theoretical model developed by Frederic Jameson which is an extension of Macherey. It is also felt that a study of the literature of terrorism from the perspective of Marxist cultural theory and Lacanian psychoanalysis can yield interesting interdisciplinary analyses of literary representations of these highly pressing and compelling contemporary geopolitical and ideological issues.

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